

English articles

It's useful to read articles in English, even if you don't understand every word - it will help you increase your vocabulary and keep up to date with things happening in English-speaking countries!

*This page will be updated on **Mondays**. The first article is aimed at a B1 and upwards level and the second article is aimed at a B2 and upwards level*

Articles of the week



Roses are red, violets are blue, 940 million flowers are traveling (through Miami) to you



By DAVID FISCHER Associated Press

MIAMI (AP) — If any husbands or boyfriends mess up Valentine's Day this week, it's not because of a shortage of flowers.

In the run up to Feb. 14, agricultural specialists at Miami International Airport have processed about 940 million stems of cut flowers, according to U.S. Customs and Border Protection. Around 90% of the fresh cut flowers being sold for Valentine's Day in the United States come through Miami, while the other 10% pass through Los Angeles.

Roses, carnations, pompons, hydrangeas, chrysanthemums and gypsophila arrive on hundreds of flights, mostly from Colombia and Ecuador, to Miami on their journey to florists and supermarkets across the U.S. and Canada.

Miami's largest flower importer is Avianca Cargo, based in Medellín, Colombia. In the past three weeks, the company has transported about 18,000 tons of flowers on 300 full cargo flights, senior vice president Diogo Elias said during a news conference last week in Miami.

"We transport flowers all year round, but specifically during the Valentine's season, we more than double our capacity because there's more than double the demand," Elias said.

Flowers continue to make up one of the airport's largest imports, Miami-Dade chief operation officer Jimmy Morales said. The airport received more than 3 million tons of cargo last year, with flowers accounting for nearly 400,000 tons, worth more than \$1.6 billion.

"With 1,500 tons of flowers arriving daily, that equals 90,000 tons of flower imports worth \$450 million just in January and February," Morales said.

It's a big job for CBP agriculture specialists, who check the bundles of flowers for potentially harmful plant, pest and foreign animal diseases from entering the country, MIA port director Daniel Alonso said.

"Invasive species have caused \$120 billion in annual economic and environmental losses to the United States, including the yield and quality losses for the American agriculture industry," Alonso said.

Colombia's flower industry was recently looking at a possible 25% tariff, as President Donald Trump quarreled with the South American country's leadership over accepting flights carrying deported immigrants. But the trade dispute came to a halt in late January, after Colombia agreed to allow the flights to land.

Colombian President Gustavo Petro had previously rejected two Colombia-bound U.S. military aircrafts carrying migrants. Petro accused Trump of not treating immigrants with dignity during deportation and threatened to retaliate against the U.S. by slapping a 25% increase in Colombian tariffs on U.S. goods.

Officials at Friday's news conference declined to answer any questions about politics or tariffs.

Trump's AI ambition and China's DeepSeek overshadow an AI summit in Paris



By SYLVIE CORBET and RAF CASERT Associated Press

PARIS (AP) — European leaders insisted Monday they must have a say in international talks to end the war in Ukraine despite the clear message from both Washington and Moscow that there was no role for them as yet in negotiations that could shape the future of the continent.

Three hours of emergency talks at the Elysee Palace in Paris left leaders of Germany, the United Kingdom, Italy, Poland, Spain, the Netherlands, Denmark, NATO and the European Union without a common view on possible peacekeeping troops after a U.S. diplomatic blitz on Ukraine last week threw a once-solid trans-Atlantic alliance into turmoil.

U.K. Prime Minister Keir Starmer called for U.S. backing while reaffirming he's ready to consider sending British forces on the Ukrainian ground alongside others "if there is a lasting peace agreement."

There was a rift though with some EU nations, like Poland, which have said they don't want their military imprint on Ukraine soil. French President Emmanuel Macron was non-committal.

European call for working with the US

Macron said overnight he spoke by phone to U.S. President Donald Trump and then Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy following the meeting.

"We seek a strong and lasting peace in Ukraine," Macron said on the social platform X. "To achieve this, Russia must end its aggression, and this must be accompanied by strong and credible security guarantees for the Ukrainians."

"We will work on this together with all Europeans, Americans, and Ukrainians," he added.

Dutch Prime Minister Dick Schoof acknowledged the Europeans "need to come to a common conclusion about what we can contribute. And that way we will eventually get a seat at the table," adding that "just sitting at the table without contributing is pointless."

Starmer said a trans-Atlantic bond remained essential. "There must be a U.S. backstop, because a U.S. security guarantee is the only way to effectively deter Russia from attacking Ukraine again," he said.

Top U.S. officials from the Trump administration, on their first visit to Europe last week, left the impression that Washington was ready to embrace the Kremlin while it cold-shouldered many of its age-old European allies.

The US to leave Europe out of negotiations

Gen. Keith Kellogg, Trump's special envoy for Ukraine and Russia, said Monday he didn't think it was "reasonable and feasible to have everybody sitting at the table."

"We know how that can turn out and that has been our point, is keeping it clean and fast as we can," he told reporters in Brussels, where he briefed the 31 U.S. allies in NATO, along with EU officials, before heading to Kyiv for talks on Wednesday with Zelenskyy.

His remarks were echoed by Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov, who was equally dismissive about a role for Europe. "I don't know what they have to do at the negotiations table," he said as he arrived in Saudi Arabia for talks with U.S. officials.

Last week, Vice President JD Vance and Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth in a flurry of speeches questioned both Europe's security commitments and its fundamental democratic principles.

Macron, who has long championed a stronger European defense, said their stinging rebukes and threats of non-cooperation in the face of military danger felt like a shock to the system.

The tipping point came when Trump decided to upend years of U.S. policy by holding talks with Russian President Vladimir Putin in hopes of ending the Russia-Ukraine war.

Shortly before the meeting in Paris Monday, Macron spoke with Trump, but Macron's office would not disclose details about the 20-minute discussion.

Europeans stand by their support to Ukraine

Starmer, who said he will travel to Washington next week to discuss with Trump "what we see as the key elements of a lasting peace," appears to be charting a "third way" in Europe's shifting geopolitical landscape — aligning strategically with the U.S. administration while maintaining EU ties. Some analysts suggest this positioning could allow him to act as a bridge between Trump and Europe, potentially serving as a key messenger to the White House.

German Chancellor Olaf Scholz told reporters a possible peace agreement with Russia cannot be forced on Ukraine. "For us, it must and is clear: This does not mean that peace can be dictated and that Ukraine must accept what is presented to it," he insisted.

Spanish Prime Minister Pedro Sánchez said that any peace agreement would need to have the active involvement of the EU and Ukraine, so as to not be a false end to the war "as has happened in the past."

He went on: "What cannot be is that the aggressor is rewarded."

A strong U.S. component, though, will remain essential for the foreseeable future since it will take many years before many European nations can ratchet up defense production and integrate it into an effective force.

Sending troops after a peace deal?

Highlighting the inconsistencies among many nations about potential troop contributions, Scholz said talk of boots on the ground was "premature."

"This is highly inappropriate, to put it bluntly, and honestly: we don't even know what the outcome

will be” of any peace negotiation, he added.

European nations are bent though on boosting their armed forces where they can after years of U.S. complaints, and most have increased defense spending to 2% of gross domestic product, but the path to reaching 3% is unclear.

“The time has come for a much greater ability of Europe to defend itself,” Poland's Prime Minister Donald Tusk said. “There is unanimity here on the issue of increasing spending on defense. This is an absolute necessity.” Poland spends more than 4% of its GDP on defense, more than any other NATO member.

Casert reported from Brussels. Associated Press writers Thomas Adamson in Paris, Suman Naishadham in Madrid, Lorne Cook in Brussels, Geir Moulson and Kirsten Grieshaber in Berlin, Dusan Stojanovic in Belgrade, Serbia, Vanessa Gera in Warsaw, Poland, Justin Spike in Kyiv and Karel Janicek in Prague, Czech Republic contributed to this report.

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