# Downing Street and Paris dismiss Russian cocaine claims as coordinated disinformation campaign



Downing Street has urgently dismissed allegations emerging from Russian sources, claiming that cocaine was present on a train during discussions between Sir Keir Starmer, Emmanuel Macron, and Friedrich Merz on their way to Kyiv. This narrative surfaced in an atmosphere tainted by political maneuvering, highlighted by Russian officials amplifying the story across social media platforms. Indeed, the Russian foreign ministry spokesperson Maria Zakharova took to these platforms, blatantly suggesting that the leaders had failed to conceal their “paraphernalia” properly before reporters entered the carriage.

Faltering under scrutiny, a video circulated online portrayed Macron retrieving a tissue from the table, which some critics misinterpreted as a suspicious white powder. This misinterpretation triggered a frenzy of unfounded speculation regarding drug use among the leaders. In response, the Prime Minister’s official spokesman branded the allegations as “fake news,” stressing the tendency of Russian state narratives to flourish during politically fraught times. He stated, “We obviously don’t know who’s behind that particular misinformation,” but hinted at past instances where the Russian government has leveraged similar smears during the ongoing war in Ukraine.

Reflecting the disillusionment emanating from Downing Street, the Elysee Palace also issued a vigorous rebuke of the claims. It noted that when European unity threatens adversarial agendas, disinformation escalates to ludicrous levels, epitomised by transforming a simple tissue into an alleged drug bag. The French government’s condemnation points to a broader strategy aimed at tarnishing the credibility of political leaders, particularly when the steadfastness of Europe against Russian aggression should be emphasised.

There are alarming undercurrents that indicate the French leadership is increasingly alert to foreign influence, especially from Russia, which is perceived as a main actor in disseminating disinformation designed to destabilise democratic processes across Europe. Moreover, the fortuitous timing of the leaders' visit to Ukraine appears engineered to display European solidarity against Russia's invasion, amplifying the implications of such misguided allegations.

Macron has unequivocally called out Russia's systematic campaign of disinformation. During a visit to a new Olympic swimming centre, he lamented, “Every day, Russia is spinning narratives suggesting that we are unable to do this or that, putting the [Paris Olympics] at risk.” This statement underscores a growing alarm among European leaders at Russia's objective not only to sabotage individual politicians but to fracture the broader unity of the European Union.

The accusations of misinformation extend far beyond mere political squabbles; they represent a critical struggle for narrative supremacy amid ongoing conflict. As European nations rally against Russia’s militaristic pursuits in Ukraine, the war against disinformation is viewed not merely as a means to sustain public trust but as a crucial effort to protect democratic integrity.

This incident unfolds against a perilous backdrop where the political battleground stretches beyond conventional warfare into the realms of information and perception management. With tensions in Eastern Europe escalating, the urgency for accurate and responsible journalism has never been more significant, manifesting in the prompt resistance against dubious Russian claims. As the narrative develops, it serves as a stark reminder for political leaders and the public alike to remain wary of manipulation and misinformation, reinforcing values of transparency and truth in an increasingly complex geopolitical landscape.

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## Bibliography

1. <https://m.belfasttelegraph.co.uk/news/uk/no-10-hits-out-at-desperate-russia-after-claims-about-drugs-on-leaders-train/a1761146457.html> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.reuters.com/business/media-telecom/france-accuses-enemies-spreading-fake-news-after-cocaine-bag-claims-2025-05-12/> - The French government, led by President Emmanuel Macron, has denounced claims circulating on social media suggesting that Macron and European leaders used drugs during a train trip to Kyiv. A video showed Macron retrieving a crumpled white object from a table while sitting with German Chancellor Friedrich Merz and British Prime Minister Keir Starmer, which some online users speculated—without evidence—was a cocaine bag. Russian foreign ministry spokesperson Maria Zakharova amplified the claim, prompting strong denials from French and German officials. The Elysee clarified the object was merely a tissue, accusing unnamed enemies of using disinformation to disrupt European unity. Germany’s CDU party echoed the concern, warning of deliberate efforts to weaken democracy. The meeting with Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskiy demonstrated European support for Ukraine amid Russia’s ongoing invasion. In response to growing misinformation, France has bolstered its efforts to identify and counter foreign influence operations, particularly those linked to Russian and American far-right entities. ([reuters.com](https://www.reuters.com/business/media-telecom/france-accuses-enemies-spreading-fake-news-after-cocaine-bag-claims-2025-05-12/?utm_source=openai))
3. <https://www.express.co.uk/news/world/1885045/vladimir-putin-emmanuel-macron-france-fake-news> - Emmanuel Macron has accused Russia of running a disinformation campaign with fake news stories spreading ahead of the Paris Olympics. On a visit to a new Olympic swimming centre on Thursday (April 4), the French president said Moscow was targeting the Games "without a doubt". He said: "Everyday (Russia) is putting out stories saying that we are unable to do this or that so the (Paris Olympics) would be at risk." Alleged Russian disinformation targeted at France is reported to have ramped up in recent weeks as the French leader toughened his stance on the war in Ukraine. Recent "fake news" stories exposed by France include claims Russian intelligence masterminded the daubing of some 60 Stars of David on walls in Paris in the aftermath of Hamas's October 7 attack on southern Israel. That was seen as a bid to stir up tensions between communities. French radio station Europe 1 reported a person in Russia had directed a Moldovan man and woman to carry out the act.
4. <https://www.wsbradio.com/news/world/latest-most-european/Q7U4P6RZGBDWVLUKM3KLW7INC4/> - German President Frank-Walter Steinmeier criticized President Donald Trump in unusually sharp terms for his behavior during the meeting with Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy at the Oval Office. Steinmeier stated, "Diplomacy fails when negotiating partners are humiliated in front of the whole world." He added, "The scene in the White House yesterday took my breath away. I would never have believed that we would one day have to protect Ukraine from the USA."
5. <https://www.ctpost.com/news/world/article/the-latest-zelenskyy-moves-on-after-oval-office-20195828.php> - French President Emmanuel Macron suggested that if anyone is gambling with World War III, it is not Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy but more likely his Russian counterpart, Vladimir Putin. Macron reacted to Friday’s heated exchange between U.S. President Donald Trump and Zelenskyy in the Oval Office, during which Trump accused Zelenskyy of "gambling with World War III." Macron stated, "If anyone is gambling with World War III, his name is Vladimir Putin."
6. <https://www.mymotherlode.com/news/world/3584046/the-latest-zelenskyy-moves-on-after-oval-office-blowout-with-trump.html> - Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orban called on the European Union to initiate direct discussions with Russia on a ceasefire and sustainable peace in Ukraine, following the example of the United States. Orban's letter to the president of the European Council emphasized the need for direct negotiations with Russia, contrasting with the EU's draft conclusions that state there can be no negotiations on Ukraine without Ukraine's involvement.