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Hollande, Merkel urge Putin to broker Ukraine ceasefire

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Hollande and Merkel stressed in a conversation with the Russian president the importance of implementing a deal reached in Berlin on Wednesday between the foreign ministers of France, Germany, Russia and Ukraine in order to achieve a bilateral ceasefire, according to the statement from Hollande's office.

"They (Hollande and Merkel) called on the Russian president to support the organization of a meeting of the contact group before July 5 in order to define conditions for the ceasefire," Hollande's office said in the statement.

"To this effect, they asked President Putin to intervene to encourage the separatists to negotiate and find an agreement with the Ukrainian authorities."

Hollande and Merkel are due to hold a phone conversation with Ukrainian President Petro Poroshenko in the coming hours, Hollande's office added.

(Reporting by James Regan; Editing by Nicholas Vinocur)