

Beat: Politics

FRANCE, GERMANY, POLAND MET FOR THE WEIMAR TRIANGLE COUNTRIES, ON 12th FEBRUARY

FOREIGN MINISTERS' STATEMENT

Paris, Washington DC, 13.02.2024, 10:29 Time

USPA NEWS - The young French PM, Gabriel Attal, recently appointed (January 9,) decided to visit Germany, thus marking his first trip abroad, on February 5, to a neighboring and friendly country. Welcomed after Chancellor Olaf Scholz, Prime Minister Gabriel Attal, spoke on "bilateral, European and international subjects as well as economic policy issues", indicated the German executive. This visit took place a week before February 12, date anniversary of "Weimar Triangle" in La Celle-Saint-Cloud meeting, bringing together the Ministers of Foreign Affairs of France, Germany and Poland reaffirms our determination to give a new energy to our trilateral cooperation. We publish the entire press release resale by the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs, as it was delivered.

MEETING OF THE WEIMAR TRIANGLE COUNTRIES

February 12, 2024

"On the occasion of the meeting of the « Weimar Triangle » in La Celle-Saint-Cloud on February 12th, 2024, we, the Ministers of Foreign Affairs of France, Germany and Poland reaffirm our determination to give a new energy to our trilateral cooperation. Ahead of the second anniversary of the Russian invasion, our meeting takes place at a time when ambiguity, unpredictability, uncertainty and instability characterise international relations.

Extraordinary times require extraordinary measures. Against this background, it is our goal to make the European Union more united, stronger and able to respond to today's security challenges, on a path towards a security and defence union, living up to our citizen's expectations. We are also committed to a strong and united NATO.

We recall our 10-point declaration from 1991, describing the aim of the "Weimar Triangle" as to, among others, "identify shared fundamental interests regarding Europe's future." Our founding values and interests will remain at the core of our common engagement in an ever more challenging world.

We will intensify our coordination within the Weimar Triangle, to put it at the service of the EU and to make it more instrumental than ever in promoting this ambitious agenda for Europe. We are committed to further deepening the cooperation between our respective Foreign Ministries at all levels. Our next meeting of Ministers of Foreign affairs will take place in Weimar early summer.

We also express our intention to hold an enlarged « Weimar + Ukraine » meeting of Ministers of Foreign affairs in the nearest future.

Russia is targeting us with hybrid actions, through disinformation, cyber attacks and political interference, with the aim to sow division in our democratic societies. It remains the most significant and direct threat to our security and to peace and stability in the Euro-Atlantic area.

2024 is a year of major elections, including in Europe. We will not tolerate any attempts to interfere in our democratic processes. The cohesion of our societies is at stake. Together, we will maintain a high level of vigilance and protect our citizens from such manipulations.

We have agreed to set up a Weimar alert and response scheme between France, Germany and Poland on Foreign Information Manipulation and Interference, and we will work towards further EU mobilization in this field, with a view to ensure more effective measures actions from online platforms."

Together, we will focus our efforts on an agenda of peace and security, sovereignty and solidarity among our people.

1. PEACE & SECURITY

Facing the unprecedented deterioration of the security environment in Europe due to the Russian full-scale war against Ukraine, we reaffirm our unwavering determination to support Ukraine in defending its independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity and repelling the Russian aggression. European security interests are at stake in this war. We will take steps to ensure that Russia's illegal aggression fails and will support Ukraine as long as it takes.

The agreement reached on February 1st on the establishment of the Ukrainian Facility sends out a clear signal of support to Ukraine in

the long run. It is now critical to provide Ukraine with timely, predictable and sustainable military support to Ukraine, as reiterated by the European Council, notably through the European Peace Facility, the EU Military Assistance Mission and capability coalitions, as well as through direct bilateral assistance by Member States, in line with Ukraine's needs.

Russia cannot count on European fatigue but should expect full accountability for all unlawful actions and crimes committed in Ukraine. All Russian perpetrators should be brought to justice.

We call also on the adoption of the 13th package of sanctions against Russia. We commit to fighting against sanctions evasion, strengthening the compliance with adopted restrictive measures and implementation of further sectoral and individual sanctions aiming especially at limiting Russian capacity to wage the war. In this context, we should shape our targeted sanctions against Belarus also with a view to prevent it from being a hub for the circumvention of EU sanctions against Russia while maintaining a clear differentiation to the aggressor.

Building effective CSDP and EU defence initiatives will contribute positively to global and transatlantic security. We will push jointly for the further development of military capabilities and European armament cooperation, and an increase in EU defence spending, which will ensure a stronger European contribution to Euro-Atlantic security.

We will consult in the run-up to the NATO summit to be held in Washington in July, contributing to further strengthen the Alliance's deterrence and defence as well as to demonstrate the Alliance's unabated support for Ukraine, towards its Euro-Atlantic integration.

No one should doubt our strength and resolve to defend every inch of Allied territory in accordance with Article 5 of the North Atlantic Treaty. We will also continue to work in our mutual assistance and solidarity under Article 42.7 of the Treaty on European Union. We will continue to substantially contribute to NATO's deterrence and defence posture, including through the presence of our Armed Forces in the Baltic and Black Sea regions. As Europeans and Allies, we will strengthen our cooperation to address the whole range of threats posed by the Russian Federation to our countries. We will ensure our nations meet the commitments under the Defence Investment Pledge to make sure that the Alliance has all the capabilities required for collective defence and other tasks. Together, we will push for reinforced EU – NATO cooperation and military mobility.

We will continue to work together to help Ukraine move forward on the path to its membership in the EU. We fully support Ukraine's right to choose its own security arrangements. Together, we will continue to support Ukraine's progress on interoperability and additional security sector reforms. Ukraine's future is in NATO.

Regarding the situation in the Middle East, we agree on the necessity to urgently address the catastrophic humanitarian situation in Gaza, to avoid a regional escalation and to revive the political process towards the two-state solution. We insist on the immediate release of all hostages held by Hamas. Our fight against terrorism will not stop. We will keep on sanctioning terrorists from Hamas. We are determined to maximize European efforts towards a united international peace and stability offer for the region. Settler violence against Palestinians in the West Bank is unacceptable and shall be sanctioned.

We also welcome EU operation EUNAVFOR ASPIDES soon to be launched in the Red Sea as part of these efforts and a contribution to maritime security in the region.

We call for a fair and sustainable peace in the South Caucasus and support the mediation efforts of the European Union and of the United States of America to facilitate dialogue between Armenia and Azerbaijan. We reiterate our support to the sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity of the states of the South Caucasus.

A politically stable and secure Sahel is in our long-term interest. We reaffirm our strong support to African Union and ECOWAS efforts to counter unconstitutional regime change. We are deeply concerned about the decline of the rule of law and the increase of human rights violation in the Sahel region, undermining regional and international efforts towards peace and stability. We stand by the people in the Sahel, including through humanitarian assistance, support to civil societies and projects strengthening resilience against violent extremism.

We are ready to further reinforce EU and bilateral cooperation with West African coastal states in order to prevent the spillover of terrorism and organized crime. Integrated approaches combining security and civilian measures are key in this regard.

2. EUROPEAN SOVEREIGNTY

We must strengthen the EU's capacity to act through implementing and expanding the agenda that we committed to in the Versailles

Declaration in March 2022, in the wake of the Russian aggression, in the fields of defence capabilities, energy, health, critical raw materials, semi-conductors, food security and digital.

- Strengthening our European resilience, defense capabilities and boosting production capacities of the European defence industry is of utmost importance. We call on the future European Defence Industrial Strategy (EDIS) to propose measures to increase the EU's overall defense readiness and we will use all appropriate European instruments, including new ones, to further strengthen its defense technological and industrial base, promote innovation and ramp up production capacities in the EU and the European Economic Area.

- We are also committed to implementing NATO's Defence Production Action Plan. We will help aggregate demand to meet our common capability requirements, encourage multinational cooperation, and more agile procurement, including with small and medium size enterprises, and enhance transparency with industry.

- We also need to make the European industry more resilient, innovative and competitive, across the EU, as part of a wider and reinforced EU's innovation agenda. It is crucial that the next institutional cycle enables the EU to keep or develop a leadership role in the key technological sectors that will shape our future. This should be a central feature of the Strategic Agenda to be defined by June.

- The EU's resilience and capacity to act should also drive our approach to enlargement and EU internal reforms, in line with the Granada declaration. We will, in particular, work towards strengthening the EU's coherence and efficiency in external action. We will closely coordinate on enlargement and reforms and explore formats at technical level within the Weimar Triangle, also with a view to the upcoming Polish presidency of the Council of the EU.

We look forward to the European Commission's update on Ukraine's reforms to be presented as soon as possible ahead of the launching of accession negotiations. We will cooperate to assist Ukraine in building up knowledge about central areas of the EU acquis, and will formulate concrete projects for Ukraine in the EU accession process. It is also our strong desire to work together to invest in the future of Ukraine, including through possible joint projects to rebuild Ukraine. We will be fully mobilized to make the 3rd Ukraine Recovery Conference on 12/13 June in Berlin a success.

In order to support the EU accession process of Moldova and Ukraine to the EU, we will enhance trilateral initiatives fostering cooperation between democratic, non-governmental stakeholders from France, Germany and Poland with Moldova and Ukraine. We will continue to support the EU-path of the six Western Balkans countries, including through the Berlin Process.

3. SOLIDARITY AMONG OUR PEOPLE

We express our willingness to develop a closer cooperation in the Weimar Triangle, with a particular emphasis on deepening solidarity and understanding among our citizens, especially in a cross border context, and with emphasis on young people. The more our citizens understand each other, the stronger European cohesion will be.

We will hold regular diplomatic consultations in the Weimar format, promote joint diplomatic training and hold a series of policy planning exchanges, with the participation of independent experts.

We will establish a roadmap including i.a. the following initiatives:

- "Weimar of citizens": promoting participation in the elections to the European Parliament, as well as trilateral cooperation among our fellow citizens, especially in the border regions through "townhall meetings" in a Weimar format;

- "Weimar of Youth": advocating for a strong "Weimar" reflex within the Franco-German and Polish-German youth offices and enhancing trilateral projects, starting with a project bringing together young people to discuss the future of the Weimar cooperation;

- "Weimar of excellence": giving a decisive impulse to academic cooperation by financing common summer programs of excellence between European Universities alliances involving our three countries;

- "Weimar of Culture": supporting artists from Ukraine as well as Belarus and Russia in exile through dedicated programs. »... Source: French Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Article online:

<https://www.uspa24.com/bericht-24177/france-germany-poland-met-ofr-the-weimar-triangle-countries-on-12th-february.html>

Editorial office and responsibility:

V.i.S.d.P. & Sect. 6 MDSStV (German Interstate Media Services Agreement): Jedi Foster, Rahma Sophia RACHDI

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