

Joint statement by the Ministers for European Affairs of the Weimar Triangle (Genshagen, 12-13 December 2024)

On the occasion of our meeting in the Weimar Triangle format in Genshagen on 12 and 13 December 2024, we, the Ministers for European Affairs of France, Germany and Poland, reaffirm the importance of our cooperation and the pivotal role of the Weimar Triangle in shaping a strong, secure, adaptable and resilient Europe. Recent months have underscored that our close collaboration within the Weimar Triangle is crucial for strengthening Europe's unity and addressing the challenges we face as European Union. We welcome that strengthening security in its broadest sense will be the core objective of the Council of the EU in the coming 6 months. Together, we will continue to focus our efforts on several key areas: advocating for EU enlargement and EU reforms, promoting the rule of law, combating disinformation, enhancing democratic resilience, and competitiveness and green transition.

Enlargement

Since the Russian war on Ukraine, EU enlargement has become a geopolitical necessity. We reiterate our support for all candidate and potential candidate countries, which demonstrate credible commitment to their EU path.

In recent months, the EU accession process has gained new momentum, which we work to maintain and strengthen under the Polish presidency of the Council in the first half of 2025.

Both Ukraine and Moldova have proven themselves to be well-prepared during the ongoing screening of the Commission, which has been confirmed again by this year's enlargement package. We aim at opening the first negotiation Cluster with both countries, once all necessary conditions are met. Meanwhile, we remain committed to stand with Ukraine in defence of its sovereignty and territorial integrity within internationally recognized borders as long as it takes. We reiterate our position that any peace arrangement must not be concluded without Ukrainian consent.

We once again reaffirm our full and unequivocal commitment to the EU membership perspective for the six Western Balkan countries. We welcome in particular the progress made in the accession processes of Albania and Montenegro, which have recently achieved major milestones. Apart from Bosnia and Herzegovina, all countries have submitted extensive reform agendas under the Western Balkan Growth Facility. On this note, we remain concerned about the reform standstill in Bosnia and Herzegovina and we hope that the country will submit its reform agenda soon.

Our countries are strongly committed to the Berlin Process as an additional framework to foster regional cooperation and good neighbourly relations and we would like to highlight the deblocking of CEFTA as a recent important result.

We express our concern over recent developments in Georgia. We strongly condemn the disproportionate use of force against peaceful protesters as well as the targeting of the opposition and media representatives. We deplore raids of offices of opposition parties and civil society organisations, arrests of members of political opposition and call for their immediate release and express our solidarity with Georgian civil society that is peacefully protesting in the streets of Tbilisi and other Georgian cities. Fundamental rights, including freedom of peaceful assembly and freedom of expression, must be upheld and protected as per Georgia's Constitution and international commitments. We urge the Georgian Dream to de-escalate tensions and open an inclusive dialogue with all political forces and representatives of civil society. We recall that it was Georgian Dream's course of action since the beginning of 2024 that has led to the de facto halt of the EU accession process and to the downgrading of our relationship with Georgia. In that context we regret the Georgian Dream's recent statement on suspending the accession talks with the EU until 2028 – a step that contradicts the European aspirations of the Georgian people as enshrined in the Constitution of Georgia. We underscore our support for the democratic and European aspirations of the Georgian people.

We welcome the positive role Albania is playing by hosting the next European Political Community summit in 2025.

EU Reforms

We must ensure that the EU advances on its own reform in parallel with the enlargement process, as both the Union and future Member states must be ready at the time of accession. Internal EU reforms constitute a necessary parallel process to ensure that enlargement strengthens the Union. They are needed to achieve the objectives set out in our Strategic Agenda, as well as in the Versailles, Granada and Budapest declarations, including strategic autonomy, reducing harmful dependencies, diversifying and securing strategic supply chains.

Referring to the European Council Conclusions from 27th June 2024, including the path outlined in the EU Roadmap for future work on internal reforms, France, Germany and Poland look forward to the presentation of the Pre-enlargement Policy Reviews by the European Commission by spring 2025. Together we will strive to advance work on reforms in adequate formats and on all four strands outlined in the roadmap: values; policies; budget and governance, and present Council's follow-up report by June 2025.

The overarching goal remains to fulfil the Union's long-term ambitions, to address key questions related to its priorities and policies, and to ensure the EU's capacity to act in the face of a new geopolitical reality and increasingly complex challenges. France, Germany, and Poland are committed to continue working with EU partners on concrete proposals.

Democratic resilience

Foreign actors relentlessly strive to undermine our free and democratic societies with false information, malign interference and information manipulation. In order to prevent the erosion of public discourse and trust in democratic institutions, we need to significantly strengthen our cooperation and our reactivity on countering Foreign

Information Manipulation and Interference (FIMI), across the EU and including other European partner countries.

Resilient democratic societies require free and open discourse. We recognize the invaluable role of independent media and civil society organizations in detecting, analyzing and debunking FIMI. Media literacy is also an essential tool in debunking FIMI.

We stand ready to support transnational efforts to build capacity and cooperation among NGOs and think tanks across EU countries aiming at boosting EU's capacities and synergies towards a resilient and democratic Europe. This requires efforts towards enhanced strategic communication with the aim to increase trust in European Union and its values. In this regard, we reaffirm our collective commitment in the Rapid Alert System of the EEAS and the need to further reinforce coordination and partnerships on a European scale, in particular with the candidate countries, which are directly threatened and destabilized by these manipulative campaigns.

France, Germany and Poland call for cooperation between EU and NATO and other like-minded international partners on countering Russian and other anti-Western narrative, both within our societies and globally, with a focus on Global South.

France, Germany and Poland believe that responsibility lies with the social media platforms. The measures introduced by the Digital Services Act should be enforced by them according to the law in a swift and effective manner to protect our societies from malign influence. We also call for the inclusion of ongoing efforts to combat FIMI (including strategic communication, strengthening democratic and societal resilience) in the EU and candidate countries in discussions at the Council and its working parties.

Election observation missions

France, Germany and Poland consider the conduct of international election observation missions in EU candidate countries, led by the OSCE's Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR), based on a robust and impartial methodology, as highly important. We suggest that EU member states support these election observation missions by seconding sufficient numbers of national observers and by helping EU candidate countries to implement ODIHR's recommendations in order to bring electoral legislation and processes in line with OSCE standards and commitments.

Competitiveness and green transition

We, the Ministers for Europe of the Weimar Triangle, while striving for social acceptance, strongly advocate for Europe's pathway to climate neutrality in line with the Paris Agreement and for the green transition to translate into growth, investment, innovation and huge market opportunities for the industries of tomorrow, and to create new, well-paid and secure jobs. We need to ensure that the EU's climate policy provides a fair, reasonable, clear and stable framework for businesses and citizens alike. We therefore call for an ambitious Clean Industrial Deal that fosters the green transition, in particular, by allowing for a successful transformation of our industrial base, and brings immediate benefits for the EU's citizens and companies, including lower energy prices. Through developing and implementing an effective

industrial policy, we need to ensure that Europe remains a manufacturing powerhouse and becomes a global leader in key technology sectors.

By fostering stronger international partnerships and collaborations on climate action on the one hand and by successful implementation and extension of CBAM to downstream sectors and products at risk of carbon leakage on the other hand, the EU can both drive global climate action and ensure that its industries remain at the forefront of innovation and competitiveness.

Quelle / Source / Źródło: <https://www.diplomatie.gouv.fr/en/country-files/germany/the-weimar-triangle/article/joint-statement-by-the-ministers-for-european-affairs-of-the-weimar-triangle>

(Accessed 16 December 2024)