

# Joint statement by the Ministers for Foreign Affairs of the Weimar Triangle (France, Germany and Poland) - Jean-Yves Le Drian, Heiko Maas and Zbigniew Rau

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At a time when the European Union's neighbourhood is affected by the emergence or continuation of serious crises and conflicts, and the basic rules of international law are being violated, we, the Ministers of Foreign Affairs of France, Germany and Poland, meeting in Paris on 15 October 2020, in the Weimar Triangle format, reaffirm the European Union's vocation to act and promote peace, security, democracy and human rights and to protect the values on which it is founded, as well as its own interests.

The Weimar Triangle plays an important role not only in coordinating our positions, but also in initiating efforts towards an even more solidary, more united and stronger Europe on the international stage. Our exchanges have shown how close our analyses converge regarding most crisis situations and how much we wish to cooperate more closely together.

On the eastern flank of the European Union, the situation in Belarus, the conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan, the persisting conflict in Ukraine, the ongoing illegal occupation of Crimea, and the assassination attempt on Mr Navalny with a chemical weapon are a source of deep concern.

Our three countries strongly condemn the violence by the Belarusian authorities and the arbitrary arrests following the presidential election, the results of which they do not recognize. They call for a new free and fair election, in accordance with international standards and in the presence of OSCE/ODHIR observers, without outside interference. They support the OSCE mediation efforts aimed at facilitating an inclusive dialogue with the Belarusian society at large. They reiterate their call on the Belarusian authorities to release all political prisoners and those arbitrarily detained, to thoroughly investigate all human rights violations, and to co-operate within the framework of the OSCE Moscow Mechanism. They welcome the firm EU response through the adoption of sanctions which will be regularly monitored and stand ready to take further restrictive measures, including against entities and high-ranking officials, including A. Lukashenko. They encourage the European Commission to develop a comprehensive plan for economic support to a democratic Belarus. France and Germany express their full solidarity with Poland and Lithuania following the recall of their ambassadors in Minsk; our three countries will ensure a coordinated European response on this issue. Furthermore, our three countries are determined to support the Belarusian people, both inside Belarus as well as in exile, in their struggle for democracy, an ending of violence and repression and the release of all political prisoners. A set of measures will be put in place to further strengthen civil society that is active in advancing the principles of democracy, human rights and the rule of law in Belarus as our common goal. This will include, inter alia, supporting independent media, human rights defenders and women's organizations. We welcome Germany's civil society Programme ('Expanding Cooperation with Civil Society in the Eastern Partnership Countries and Russia') which is open to Polish and French civil society players. The programme will see some 1

million Euro being made available for joint Weimar Triangle civil-society engagement which will increase our trilateral commitment to support civil society actors in Belarus.

France, Germany and Poland welcome the humanitarian ceasefire between Armenia and Azerbaijan established on 10 October and call on the parties to strictly respect it. They condemn all the ongoing violence wherever it comes from. They urge the parties to engage in substantive negotiations under the auspices of the Co-Chairs of the OSCE Minsk Group, without preconditions and on the basis of agreed principles. They reaffirm their support for the current format of negotiations and reiterate that it is essential for the European Union to give its full support to this diplomatic process. They call for cooperation to address the humanitarian situation.

Current events in this region demonstrate the relevance for the European Union of the Eastern Partnership, which must remain strategic policy and the privileged framework for dialogue with the Eastern partner countries, while remaining attentive to maintaining the balance between inclusiveness and differentiation. More than ever, the Eastern Partnership policy must focus on supporting resilience of the Eastern partner countries, including reforms implementation, the rule of law, governance, the fight against corruption and support for civil society. The Eastern Partnership Policy should also support economic development in the partner countries, in particular in order to counterbalance the negative impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.

France, Germany and Poland also closely monitor the current developments in the Kyrgyz Republic after the parliamentary elections on October 4. We call on all parties to find a way out to the current crisis through inclusive dialogue across the political spectrum and through the organization of new, free and fair elections in line with international standards and under the OSCE/ODIHR's observation. We reiterate our support to the democratic right of the Kyrgyz people to cast their vote free from any interference or malpractice. We encourage close cooperation with the OSCE/ODIHR and call on the Kyrgyz authorities to respect the rule of law and basic freedoms, including freedom of speech and peaceful assembly.

Our three countries reaffirm the importance of maintaining a firm stance vis-à-vis Russia on all issues that constitute a threat to peace on the European continent. We reaffirm that the five guiding principles agreed by the EU constitute the framework of current and future EU-Russia relations. We recall the importance of a realistic and demanding dialogue with the Russian authorities, in particular with the aim to prevent unintended escalation and to strengthen the rules based-order and European security and stability. With regard to the poisoning of Mr Navalny, our three countries continue to call on Russia to clearly and fully establish the circumstances of this attempt to assassinate a member of the Russian political opposition using a military-class nerve agent, which is strictly forbidden under the Chemical Weapons Convention, in order to identify those who carried out the attack and bring them to justice. In the meantime, our three countries welcome the adoption of individual restrictive measures against those sharing a responsibility in this assassination attempt. We reiterate our concern on the situation of human rights and civil society organizations in Russia and reaffirm our support to human rights defenders and civil society organizations and cooperation in this field, in the framework of the 5th guiding principle.

France, Germany and Poland reiterate their unconditional support for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Ukraine and strongly condemn the illegal annexation of Crimea and Sevastopol by the Russian Federation. They condemn the acts of destabilization by Russia since February 2014 and remind that the Minsk Agreements remain the sole basis for the resolution of the conflict in the East of Ukraine. They underline the need to fully implement the measures agreed by the parties on the occasion of the Normandy Summit in Paris in December 2019.

France, Germany and Poland recommit themselves to supporting the process of reforms in Ukraine, in particular regarding rule of law, the judiciary and the fight against corruption, in the framework of the Eastern Partnership.

On the southern flank of the European Union, France, Germany and Poland, in accordance with the conclusions of the European Council of 1 and 2 October, emphasize that the EU has a strategic interest in a stable and secure environment in the Eastern Mediterranean and in the development of a cooperative and mutually beneficial relationship with Turkey. Our three countries call on Turkey to refrain from any unilateral action in the eastern Mediterranean and to show its willingness to engage in dialogue in good faith. They call for the continuation of de-escalation gestures in the region and reaffirm in this respect the conclusions adopted on 1 and 2 October by the European Council. They also support the speedy resumption of negotiations, under the auspices of the UN, for a comprehensive settlement of the Cyprus problem, within the UN framework and in accordance with the relevant UNSC resolutions, including UNSC resolutions 550 and 789, and in line with the principles on which the EU is founded, as well as the proposal for a Multilateral Conference on the Eastern Mediterranean.

On Libya, our three countries welcome the significant progress achieved through the Berlin Process and the International Follow-Up Committee in support of the United Nations' mediation efforts. They also note the volatility of the situation on the ground in Libya and the continuous risk of escalation. They believe that there can be no military solution to the crisis and that all foreign interference must stop. In particular, they call for the full enforcement of the UN arms embargo. In this regard, the recent adoption of EU sanctions against entities violating this embargo is a positive step. The EU should continue to pursue sanctions against embargo violations, illegal oil exports, human rights violations and, against spoilers of the political process unfolding under UN auspices. The EU is also strongly committed to implement the embargo, through the Iriini operation. The priority should be to consolidate the cessation of hostilities on the ground and, on that basis, to support the Libyan Political Dialogue Forum under UN auspices, as well as to obtain the quick conclusion of a sustainable ceasefire-agreement under the auspices of the UN, in the framework of the Joint Military Commission (5+5). The way forward out of the Libyan crisis involves finding a political solution leading to elections, in the framework of an inter-Libyan dialogue based on the Berlin Conference conclusions and under the auspices of the UN.

Our meeting was also an opportunity to discuss the future of EU-China relations. There is a need to rebalance economic relations with China in a spirit of reciprocity and mutual interest in order to address current asymmetries in market access and to contribute to a level playing field. We also want to achieve meaningful commitments in the field of sustainable development, biodiversity and climate, in line with the objectives set out in the Paris Agreement. Our three countries believe that European unity is essential to achieve concrete results. Furthermore, we remain gravely concerned about the human rights situation in China, including developments in Hong Kong and the treatment of persons belonging to ethnic and religious minorities, particularly in Xinjiang and Tibet.

The EU needs to adopt an ambitious agenda in the Indo-Pacific region to respond to the rise of unilateralism and regional instability. In this respect, France, Germany and Poland recall their commitment to the adoption of a specific European strategy for the Indo-Pacific, with the aim of promoting a common approach in this region, in cooperation with like-minded countries, including the transatlantic partners, and with a particular emphasis on the promotion of multilateralism openness, inclusiveness and cooperation, also with a view to reinforcing the EU's cohesion.

Reaffirming NATO's role as the foundation of the collective defense of the Allies in the Euro-Atlantic area, our three countries stressed the importance of continuing to build a strong EU Security and Defense Policy. A more autonomous European Union which promotes peace and security and protects its citizens entails strengthening EU member states' defense engagement, closer defense cooperation between EU member states notably through EU defense initiatives and a stronger EDTIB. A strong Europe is a Europe more

capable of contributing to its own security and of enhancing the European engagement in NATO.

The Weimar Triangle is convinced that the new MFF 2021-2027 and Recovery Plan should be formally adopted as soon as possible so that their implementation could start on 1 January 2021. France, Germany and Poland express their willingness to adopt as soon as possible the New Pact on Migration and Asylum that assures the proper balance between responsibility and solidarity in line with the European Council conclusions of June 2018.

France, Germany and Poland support the intensification of the overall coordination effort in the management of the COVID-19 pandemic, in particular the Access to COVID-19 Tools (ACT) Accelerator, and the work towards the development and distribution of a vaccine at EU level. France, Germany and Poland call for making future vaccines against COVID-19 global public good in order to guarantee equitable and fair global access to a vaccine for all. Without global access, we will continually face this pandemic. They also declare their will to continue supporting all Eastern Partnership countries in their fight against the adverse effects of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The common values underpinning our democratic and societal models are the foundation for freedom, security and prosperity in Europe. The Weimar Triangle underlines its common commitment to strengthen the respect of the rule of law by all Member States.

France, Germany and Poland are attached to increasing contacts and a better respective knowledge between their civil societies, and intend to work together to strengthen academic cooperation, scientific exchanges and scholarship programs, and to develop initiatives to enhance our tripartite cooperation in the cultural field.

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