

**Joint statement of the Ministers for European Affairs of the Weimar Triangle (France, Germany and Poland)**

**- Amélie de Montchalin, Michael Roth and Konrad Szymański –**

*(Lens, 21 January 2020)*

As the European Union is embarking on an ambitious new programme for the next five years, we, the Ministers for European Affairs of France, Germany and Poland, meeting in Lens, Hauts-de-France, on 21 January 2020 in the Weimar Triangle format, adopt this joint statement to reaffirm our commitment to strengthen the EU, protect its core values, foster cohesion, competitiveness and solidarity and deliver tangible results that meet our citizens' expectations.

We are convinced that the Weimar Triangle can play an important role to promote a strong, sovereign, democratic and fair Europe. Our talks highlighted many issues of common interest where France, Germany and Poland are willing to work more closely together. In particular, we focused on how Europe can ensure prosperity for its citizens in a way that is sustainable and leaves no one behind.

France, Germany and Poland advocate for an ambitious implementation of the Strategic Agenda of the European Council to increase Europe's capacity to act and to address future challenges in all areas.

Our countries share the commitment to fight against the climate change, which constitutes a threat to humanity and biodiversity and is increasingly important for European citizens. We recall the objective of achieving a climate-neutral EU by 2050 as endorsed by the European Council which took note of the European Green Deal presented by the European Commission. We are fully aware that achieving climate neutrality will bring significant opportunities while also raising serious challenges. Therefore, the Weimar Triangle is convinced that the transition must be just and inclusive and aim to safeguard prosperity and increase cohesion while protecting our planet, taking into account different national circumstances in terms of starting points and respecting the right of the Member States to decide on their energy mix and to choose the most appropriate technologies. Finalising a framework to support sustainable investment is also a priority. We agree that the next MFF should significantly contribute to our fight against climate change, in particular through specific targets for climate action, biodiversity and the fight against pollution as well as additional funds to support a just transition of the EU to climate neutrality in 2050 which should take into account needs and specific situations at a regional and national level. Finally, these efforts must preserve the EU's competitiveness, including by developing effective measures to tackle carbon leakage in a WTO compatible way. In this context, we will examine the means to implement a carbon adjustment mechanism at the EU borders concerning carbon-intensive sectors

In the fight against climate change, Europe must continue to show the way. France, Germany and Poland therefore recall the EU's commitment to submit its long-term strategy to the UNFCCC in early 2020 and in good time before COP26 to update its NDC, taking into account the need for clarity, transparency and understanding of the NDC, as agreed at the COP24 in Katowice.

Europe has achieved major progress in economic and social upwards convergence. Yet, more has to be done to build a prosperous, fair and social Europe. France, Germany and Poland call for further implementation of the European Pillar of Social Rights, with due regard for respective competences of the Union, its Member States and the social partners. We are ready to discuss the recent Commission proposals on building a strong social Europe for just transitions. We acknowledge the importance of the Single Market and its four freedoms in fostering prosperity, convergence and competitiveness in the EU. The Single Market should be further deepened and strengthened, which requires eliminating remaining unjustified barriers but also ensuring fair competition and social convergence.

In a context of accelerated technological change and new trade-related challenges, we see the need for an ambitious European industrial policy that will enable Europe to preserve a globally integrated, sustainable and competitive industrial base, by investing in innovation, adapting our regulatory framework to global competition practices and adopting effective measures to defend and foster our technologies, companies and markets. France, Germany and Poland call for increased efforts to ensure the technological autonomy of the European Union, in particular through integrated European value chains in our strategic sectors based on the European Battery Alliance model.

We also recall our support for a strong and modernized European competition policy and enforcement framework in line with the statements of our Ministers for the Economy in Poznań on 4 July 2019. We are looking forward to the industrial roadmap of the Commission to reach technological autonomy to be delivered later in 2020.

The common values underpinning our democratic and societal models are the foundation of European freedom, security and prosperity. The Weimar Triangle underlines its joint commitment to further strengthen the respect for the rule of law by all Member States. We welcome the recent initiatives proposed by the Commission to this end, while reiterating the principles listed in the 2014 conclusions of the Council of the European Union, including non-discrimination and equal treatment of all Member States. In this framework, we agree that the ongoing discussions among all Member States on a periodic peer review mechanism on the rule of law should continue, whilst avoiding duplication and ensuring the necessary coherence.

France, Germany and Poland reaffirm their commitment to the enlargement of the EU and their support to the European perspective of the Western Balkans and in that context look forward to the upcoming Commission's proposals on the accession process.

France, Germany and Poland share the view that fostering a wider area of stability and economic prosperity in Europe and beyond is in the EU's core interest. Thus, the Weimar Triangle reaffirms its commitment to further develop the Eastern Partnership and identify new concrete areas of cooperation such as in the fields of youth, the environment and climate change. We also call for the strengthening of the EU Southern Neighbourhood Policy.

We are committed to continue our dialogue and cooperate closely in the Weimar Triangle format to bring Europe forward. In this regard, our three countries will also contribute actively to the Conference on the Future of Europe, with the goal of making the voice of European citizens even better heard in setting the path for our Union.