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Pressemitteilung

Joint Communiqué of the Weimar Triangle Foreign Ministers Frank-Walter Steinmeier (Germany), Laurent Fabius (France), and Grzegorz Schetyna (Poland) in Wrocław, April 3, 2015

The Foreign Ministers of the Weimar Triangle - Mr. Laurent Fabius, France, Mr. Frank-Walter Steinmeier, Germany and Mr. Grzegorz Schetyna, Poland - met today (April 3, 2015) in Wrocław (Poland). Since its establishment in 1991, this Forum has been at the center of the strategic cooperation between France, Germany and Poland. The venue of the meeting is symbolic. Wrocław was in ruins 70 years ago. Today, this city so heavily affected by history is a vibrant, multicultural and open European metropolis and European Capital of Culture 2016. It stands as a vivid symbol of the Polish achievements in the European Union and as a place which embodies Europe.

The Ministers met right after the negotiations in Lausanne came to an end. They acknowledged the importance of the agreement on the definition of key parameters for the future Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action to be finalized by June 30. The Weimar Triangle is fully supportive of an agreement which will have to be robust and verifiable.

During their meeting in Wrocław, the Ministers discussed the challenges the EU is facing, in particular in the Eastern and Southern Neighborhood. They underlined the Weimar Triangle contribution towards strengthening the effectiveness of a coherent Common Foreign and Security Policy, emphasizing the need to ensure the unity of all Member States and the efficient use of all available EU instruments in order to protect the interests of the Union, stabilize the situation at the EU borders and shape the international order based on principles of international law.

The Ministers discussed developments in Ukraine and the role of Russia in the conflict. They expressed concern about the deteriorating humanitarian situation in Eastern Ukraine as well as the continuing violations of human rights by forces supported by Russia, including the rights of ethnic minorities on the Crimean peninsula. France, Germany and Poland do not recognize the illegal annexation of Crimea by the Russian Federation and continue to condemn this act of violation of international law, which is also a direct challenge to international security. All three countries also fully support the EU's active non-recognition policy in this regard. These actions by the Russian Federation undermine the stability and trust in our region.

The Ministers stressed the need to find a lasting solution to the conflict in Eastern Ukraine by peaceful means, respecting Ukraine's independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity. They call on all parties to swiftly and fully implement the Minsk Agreements of September 2014 and February 2015, supported by the quadrilateral Declaration of the Head of State or Government of France and Germany and endorsed by UNSC 2202 Resolution of 17 February 2015, which is a step towards a sustainable political and peaceful resolution of the crisis, based on respect for Ukraine's independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity. The Ministers underlined Russia's responsibility in this regard.

At the same time, the Ministers agreed that all sides need to fully respect the ceasefire and provide the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) Special Monitoring Mission with the necessary information and full, unescorted and unrestricted access to enable it to effectively monitor and verify the ceasefire and the withdrawal of heavy weapons. France, Germany and Poland call on all parties to fully support the efforts of the OSCE Trilateral Contact Group, including by setting up working groups, with a view to advancing the political process agreed upon in the Package of Measures signed in Minsk.

The Ministers will continue to support all diplomatic efforts aimed at a swift implementation of the Minsk Agreements, notably the efforts by France and Germany within the Normandy format. France, Germany and Poland stand ready to support the process, notably as regards the OSCE's ability and capacity to monitor and verify the implementation of the Minsk Agreements.

The Ministers recalled that the duration of restrictive measures is clearly linked to the complete implementation of the Minsk agreements and the calendar agreed therein, as stated in the conclusions of the European Council of March 20, 2015, bearing in mind that this is foreseen by December 31, 2015. The Ministers underlined that the EU stands ready to take further measures if necessary.

The three countries are committed to supporting Ukrainian reforms and assisting in the changes taking place in Ukraine now. The Ministers confirmed readiness to provide support for implementation of the reforms that serve the stabilization and modernization of the country.

The Ministers welcomed first important steps taken by the Ukrainian government on reforms. They called on Ukraine to further intensify its work on all urgent reforms, especially concerning the promotion of the rule of law and the fight against corruption, and their full implementation in order to address the population's aspirations for a democratic and modernized Ukraine. In line with the International Monetary Fund's conditionality France, Germany and Poland will act in close coordination with the European Commission's Support Group for Ukraine, the Council of Europe, the OSCE, in the framework of the Visegrad Group and with other donors. That includes possible assigning of further resources from the EU's Macro-Financial Assistance if deemed necessary.

The three Ministers reiterated their full support for the European Commission's engagement in the trilateral EU-Ukraine-Russia talks on energy issues and on implementation of the EU-Ukraine Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Agreement (DCFTA), which were also endorsed in the quadrilateral Declaration in support of the Package of Measures for the implementation of the Minsk Agreements of February 12, 2015.

Also, welcoming the trilateral meeting between the EU, Ukraine and Russia on March 20, 2015, the Ministers expressed their full support for the European Commission's ongoing mediation efforts and welcomes the new gas package which has been concluded. They also urged the European Commission to speed up the joint mission with the US administration to update an energy contingency plan for Ukraine and underlined that these should go hand in hand with swift energy sector reforms in Ukraine in lines with EU acquis under the Energy Community.

France, Germany and Poland are also concerned about Russia's recent withdrawal from Joint

Consultative Group, which completes Russia's earlier suspension of its implementation of the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe (CFE). It is yet another worrisome signal sent by Moscow, which does not contribute to rebuilding trust and confidence on our continent, but further weakens security architecture in Europe.

Recalling their Statement of April 1, 2014, the Ministers emphasized that France, Germany and Poland would continue to work together on an ambitious reform of the European Neighborhood Policy (ENP), to make this policy more political and responsive to diverse challenges in the Southern and Eastern neighborhood. A tailor-made approach to EU's neighbors should take into account their needs, commitment to reforms, but also geopolitical environment and the EU's interests. France, Germany and Poland recognize the need to use the ENP instruments more widely to strengthen the stability and security of the EU's neighborhood. To this effect, in line with the comprehensive approach, CFSP/CSDP tools should be used in the framework of the ENP. The ENP partners should never be forced to choose between the EU and other neighbors. The Ministers stressed the necessity to make EU support mechanisms more flexible and adjustable to a changing situation on the ground.

The upcoming Eastern Partnership Summit in Riga (May 21-22, 2015) should reconfirm the high importance we attach to the Eastern Partnership and the EU's determination to strengthen, in a differentiated way, relations with each of its six partners. The Ministers stressed that the Eastern Partnership aims at building a common area of shared democracy, prosperity, stability and increased cooperation and is not directed against anyone.

The Ministers underlined that the Eastern Partnership continues to serve as the inclusive framework for multilateral engagement, cooperation and reforms. Particular efforts should be devoted to advance cooperation in state building, mobility and people-to-contact, market opportunities and interconnections. France, Germany and Poland stress that implementation of AA/DCFTAs, accompanied by necessary internal reforms, will be a top priority of the EU and its partners for the coming years, as it is the key means of achieving the deep modernization of partner countries' economies and societies for which their citizens are calling. They look forward to the provisional application of the DCFTA with Ukraine on January 1, 2016, and underline the importance of swiftly resuming the trilateral talks Ukraine-Russia-UE on the DCFTA. The enhanced EU support and the partners' determination will be crucial for the success of the reforms. The Ministers reaffirmed the willingness of Poland, France and Germany to support these reform processes, however conditioned on concrete reform steps.

The Ministers emphasized that the Eastern Partnership Summit should take a holistic view of the entire Eastern Partnership. They shared the vision that the Summit in Riga should contribute to strengthening of the Eastern Partnership. The European Union's offer must be an answer to the needs, ambitions and capabilities of all EaP partners, and take into account the EU's own interests. The principle of differentiation calls for inclusive tailor-made solutions. Thus it will be possible to use to the maximum the potential for cooperation, all while linking European support with the necessary internal reforms in the spirit of the "more for more" principle. In line with the principle of differentiation the EU needs to develop new offers for Armenia, Azerbaijan and, in due course, Belarus, which would take into account the interests of both the EU and these countries without questioning our own values and principles.

The Ministers reconfirmed that the Eastern Partnership Summit should also focus on enhanced mobility of citizens in a secure and well-managed environment. This will facilitate easier and more frequent travel, business and people to people contacts. They look forward to

completion by Ukraine and Georgia of the implementation of the 2nd phase of their Visa Liberalization Action Plans once all required reforms are implemented and all benchmarks are fulfilled. They also looked forward to further steps in the negotiations on Visa Facilitation and Readmission Agreements with Belarus. They welcomed the progress to date in the implementation of the Visa Facilitation and Readmission Agreements with Armenia and Azerbaijan.

The Weimar Triangle emphasizes that it attaches equal importance to the Southern Neighborhood. It underlines the necessity, with a view to the ongoing review of the ENP, to make this policy more efficient, more responsive, more flexible as stated in the Weimar declaration on ENP adopted in April 2014.

The Ministers follow with great concern the situation in Syria and Libya. France, Germany and Poland welcome the adoption of the EU regional strategy for Syria and Iraq as well as towards the Da'esh threat by the Foreign Affairs Council on March 16, 2015 that must be implemented swiftly. The Ministers also agreed that a comprehensive set of measures needs to be adopted and implemented both by the EU as well as other international organizations and mechanisms in order to effectively fight against growing terrorist threat coming from jihadist organizations active in Middle East and North Africa, especially from Da'esh and Al-Qaeda affiliated groups.

Recent terrorist attack on March 18, 2015 in Tunisia confirms the trans-border and imminent terror threat in the region of North Africa, Middle East as well as in Europe.

The EU, taking into consideration socio-economic challenges of Tunisia, recently adopted an Action Plan in the framework of Tunisia's privileged partnership with the EU. Cooperation between the EU and Tunisia should be significantly strengthened to better assist Tunisia in tackling its challenges, particularly in the security sector. The EU must accelerate the ongoing security sector reform programs, especially with regard to the fight against terrorism and border security management. The EU should also speed up the already programmed payments, first and foremost the macro-financial assistance, and, where appropriate and under pertinent conditions, recur to frontloading measures.

The Ministers stressed that the democratic process in Tunisia is an important signal for the whole MENA region. They expressed their appreciation of the conduct of the recent Parliamentary and Presidential elections in Tunisia and welcomed their results. It constituted the next step towards successful democratic transformation of the state.

The Ministers look forward to the upcoming informal ministerial meeting in Barcelona (April 13, 2015), focusing on the Southern dimension of the ENP, and are willing to actively contribute to the discussion on how to make the EU Neighborhood Policy towards the Mediterranean partners more effective. They will give special attention to the contributions of the Southern partners in this framework and reaffirm the need to increase the ownership of these countries in order to better match our offers with their needs and priorities and set realistic and achievable goals for the EU's engagement. They reiterate the importance to further develop regional integration and cooperation and underline the central role of the Union for the Mediterranean in this regard.

The Ministers stressed their determination to work towards meaningful decisions of the European Council in June 2015 in order to help further develop the Common Security and Defence Policy as an essential element of the EU's comprehensive response to security

challenges. To that effect, they agreed on common ideas to be presented to the High Representative, Federica Mogherini, in the form of a joint letter to foster the process of the EC's preparation. This letter was earlier signed by Ministers of Defense of the Weimar Triangle in Potsdam on March 30, 2015.

The Ministers agreed that the NATO Summit in Warsaw should demonstrate that the decisions taken in Newport in September 2014 are implemented as a response to security challenges and changes in the security environment on NATO's borders and further afield. It should also contribute to the long-term strategic adaptation of the Alliance to the new security environment.

In view of the 2015 Paris Climate Conference the Ministers welcomed the submission of the EU's intended, nationally determined contribution to the global agreement. They noted this was an important political signal in support of agreeing in Paris on an ambitious universal and legally binding agreement applicable to all Parties. They also urged all other states in the position to do so, in particular major economies, to communicate their intended, nationally determined contributions well in advance to Paris, in a manner that facilitates transparency and clarity. The contributions should be equivalent, to the extent possible, to the EU's 2030 target.