

Conclusion of the 26. Franco-German Ministerial Council

Augustusburg, 17 July 2026

In line with the Franco-German Ministerial Council on August 29th 2025 in Toulon, and committed to the goals and the implementation of the Treaty of Aachen, France and Germany reaffirmed the fundamental role of the Franco-German partnership and friendship for a more sovereign, more competitive, more prosperous and more resilient European Union. The 26th Franco-German Council of Ministers agreed on new initiatives to foster our bilateral friendship and partnership for the benefit of our economies and societies.

I. Strengthening the competitiveness of our economies

Germany and France share the conviction that a prosperous, robust and interconnected economy plays a pivotal role in shaping the EU's global standing, internal cohesion, and long-term sustainability. This includes a strong industry, which is currently under severe pressure. The economy is not merely a driver of growth but also a cornerstone of social welfare, innovation, and geopolitical influence. By leveraging its economic power, the EU can negotiate trade agreements with partners across the world, promote fair competition, and address global challenges such as the digital transformation.

We welcome the significant progress made in the implementation of the Franco-German Economic Agenda adopted in Toulon in August 2025. We wish to continue implementing the current flagship projects and take on new ones.

[Space]

Germany and France have convened a high-level working group on outer **space**. We recognize the crucial role of **IRIS²** for a resilient, combined and robust European space infrastructure. It is a first step towards a European system-of-systems, with IRIS² as its data backbone. As a result, both countries agree on the following principles for IRIS²: (i) timely provision of services, (ii) consideration of use-cases (bandwidth, latency, security, and quality of service), including the identification of distinct user groups with diverse and varying demands, (iii) commercial approach to stimulate private investments and competition, and (iv) public-private partnerships as core of the programme, in order to leverage the financial capacity and innovation for the public sector, and at the same time keep markets open for commercial players (*cf.* joint non-paper: "IRIS2: A Pivotal Component in the European Space Infrastructure and economic Landscape"). The working group will pursue these principles in its further efforts.

In the geopolitical context, we recognize that **frequencies** matters constitute a strategic stake (*cf.* joint non-paper: "Spectrum management is essential to preserve the Union's ability to play a global role in space affairs"). France and Germany agree that the ITU global governance of radio frequency spectrum and satellite orbits, rooted in a multilateralism and based on international law and the United Nations Charter, is the suitable and valid basis for all nations to coordinate on radiocommunication systems. In order to develop their space policies, France

and Germany will support the key role of the ITU in the frame of the International Space Summit which will take place in Paris on 9th and 10th of September 2026. Unlike the terrestrial telecommunication market the satellite communication market is inherently pan-European; therefore a more harmonised framework for satellite services within Europe brings value for both consumers and satellite operators, always taking into consideration that it has to lead to an efficient use of spectrum and respect of member states competencies, in particular as regard to security and defence.

The **MSS 2 GHz frequency band** is key to securing European's competitiveness and sovereign connectivity and should be used as a lever, in order to strengthen both, sovereignty and the market (cf. joint non-paper: "Frequencies Memo"). Taking into consideration that the MSS 2 GHz band has a very strategic importance, GER and FRA agree that the selection procedure shall offer a wholesale access under objectively justified, non-discriminatory, proportionate and transparent conditions (cf. joint non-paper: "Joint Analysis MSS 2 GHz"). Securing for IRIS² an adequate portion of the 2 GHz MSS radio spectrum in Europe for device-to-device (D2D) services is essential and should be made clear in the proposed regulation (cf. joint non-paper: "IRIS²: A Pivotal Component in the European Space Infrastructure and economic Landscape"). In addition, France and Germany have initiated joint forward-looking work on critical space technologies, and will deepen their cooperation on their development in order to ensure our common sovereignty in these strategic fields.

[Innovation and technologies]

Germany and France have stepped up their cooperation on cutting edge **technologies**, for instance through:

- binational AI research with DFKI and INRIA as well as with the cooperation on high-performance batteries within the successful project "HIPOBAT". Building on the successful joint collaboration, France and Germany commit to deepen and expand it to other EU Member States.
- cooperation on **industrial AI, advanced semiconductor technologies and nuclear technologies/fusion** in the framework of IPCEI projects and have conducted two workshops on improving venture capital financing for microelectronics.

The Task Force on **Breakthrough Innovation**, an outcome of the Franco-German Council of Ministers 2025, has presented its report and supports France's ambition to establish a national entity for breakthrough innovation. We have agreed on a roadmap for a future cooperation between the German Federal Agency for Breakthrough Innovation SPRIND and the upcoming French agency through the launch of joint challenges, as announced today.

We recognise the crucial role of **fusion energy** as a safe, sustainable and carbon-neutral solution to meet the future energy needs of Europe and the world. France and Germany are establishing a framework for enhanced cooperation and have agreed on a Joint Declaration of Intent (*signed today*).

Quantum technologies are key for technological sovereignty, economic value creation and national security. Germany and France are strongly committed to bilateral cooperation as a nucleus for European leadership. A position Paper on Common positions towards the EU Quantum Act was signed today.

[Energy]

As agreed in Toulon, we aim to advance system flexibility, enhance energy independence, shape a decarbonized energy market, and ensure secure and affordable **energy** supplies. Key priorities include electricity market design including network charges, the EU Energy Framework for 2040, joint study with Poland and the development and de-risking of cross-border hydrogen infrastructure to enable a cost-effective hydrogen scale-up.

To advance these priorities, we will strengthen cooperation on **electricity market design**, in particular by coordination on positioning on network charges, network codes, i.e. capacity allocation & congestion management (CACM), and on demand response to ensure fair and affordable charges. We will develop a joint non-paper for the Electricity Market White Paper process, with a focus on governance and streamlining and accelerating the development of network codes and an improvement of governance and regional coordination. In parallel, we will establish a regular dialogue on the **EU Energy Framework for 2040** to ensure reliability and investment certainty for renewable and low-carbon energy as well as non-discrimination among all net-zero and low-carbon energy technologies in their respective contribution to European energy, sustainability and climate goals. To advance the project South-West Hydrogen Corridor, we will further discuss on key elements of a de-risking technical and regulatory framework jointly with Spain, Portugal and the European Commission over the coming year, and strengthen regional **hydrogen** cooperation along our border.

[Digital Sovereignty, AI and Datacentres]

In the field of digital policy Germany and France have significantly deepened their bilateral cooperation, building on the Summit on European Digital Sovereignty held in Berlin in November 2025 and the VivaTech fair in Paris in June 2026. Both nations formulated a joint position designed to actively shape the EU Tech Sovereignty Package, including a common understanding of **digital sovereignty** as strengthening Europe's capacity to act independently while preserving open markets, innovation, technological competitiveness and cooperation with trusted international partners. Germany and France are joining forces for the upcoming negotiations at EU level.

Both nations reaffirm their commitment to establishing streamlined, innovation-friendly, and competitive frameworks, while fostering the development of their own technological capacities - for instance through the **European Frontier AI initiative**, which has created important momentum for closer European cooperation on frontier AI. We will build on this momentum by strengthening Europe's frontier AI ecosystem through world-class compute, talent, research and investment. These measures aim to strengthen Europe's digital sovereignty and significantly reduce dependencies on non-European tech suppliers. Germany and France will continue partnering with leading nations in digitalization and AI and thereby remain an attractive destination for investments in digital technologies and AI. Next steps will focus on structuring the European Frontier AI's entities that will carry the initiative forward in the very short term. On top of Germany and France, a third Member State is also expected to join the initiative before the end of the summer.

Germany and France recognize that **datacentres' capacities** are a prerequisite for Europe's AI ambitions, digital sovereignty and competitiveness. They will deepen their cooperation by promoting favourable framework conditions for investment, energy integration, waste heat

utilisation, resilient digital infrastructure, industrial value chains and mutually beneficial cross-border opportunities, while exchanging best practices on planning and permitting procedures. Moreover, Germany and France will jointly pursue initiatives to favour faster **adoption of AI** in the industrial sector, especially SMEs, and make industrial AI a key priority. Germany and France will drive the implementation of the IPCEI-AI and identify flagship industrial AI use cases in strategic industries, including the automotive sector, as a blueprint for wider European deployment.

[Critical Raw Materials]

Germany and France will further enhance their cooperation on raw materials on security of supply, in line with the commitments made at the G7 Summit in Evian. Both countries agree to set up a Joint Roundtable with German and French companies C-level on “Securing the Rare Earth Permanent Magnets Value Chain for Europe” supported by a joint Statement by both countries.

Germany and France share a common ambition for a sovereign and competitive Europe in critical raw materials and will support the development of a Mineral Intelligence Platform within the future EU Critical Raw Materials Center (EU-CRMC). Building on this common intelligence effort, we will jointly advocate for the reorientation of existing European financial instruments towards projects across the critical metals value chain and support a more operational European approach to market structuring for critical raw materials.

[Simplification and Modernisation]

France and Germany will intensify their cooperation and discussions on the issues of government modernisation and reduction of bureaucracy and, in particular on the topics of ensuring nationwide availability and improvement of digital public services as well as measuring bureaucratic costs and regulatory impact analysis.

II. Strengthening the European Union

Germany and France reaffirm their close partnership and their **joint commitment to a strong and united European Union**. In line with the Treaty of Aachen on Franco-German Cooperation and Integration, both countries are convinced that a continued German-French cooperation has been and will remain a decisive factor for a strong, competitive and sovereign Europe. In the spirit of jointly advancing key files on the European agenda, Germany and France have coordinated their positions on the following topics:

[Competitiveness, simplification, Single Market]

Reducing EU bureaucracy remains a key part of the **EU competitiveness agenda**. Germany and France agree that more ambition is needed in the negotiations of the remaining Omnibus packages, especially digital, environmental and outermost regions, while maintaining relevant standards and policy goals, and decide to set up a high-level Franco-German working group to bring their negotiations to a swift conclusion. We task our stakeholders and business

organisations with regularly reporting on the issues where the EU rulebook still needs to be simplified, as we are closely following the Commission's "Regulatory Deep Cleaning" to help generating substantial new omnibus packages or other concrete proposals for simplifying legislation, including on initiatives to speed up planning and permitting procedures, best as early as the Commission work programme 2027 will be presented. Moreover, Germany and France expect the Commission's Digital Fitness Check to deliver tangible and measurable improvements in competitiveness and a meaningful reduction of administrative burdens, in particular for SMEs, small mid-caps and start-ups. At the same time, the EU needs to strictly limit new unnecessary bureaucratic burdens in future legislation. Germany and France are advocating for a targeted mechanism to address regulatory, administrative and compliance costs and avoid such burdens in the legislative process as tasked by European Council in March 2026.

The **One Europe, One Market-Roadmap** is a key path to strengthen Europe's competitiveness. It supports the implementation of the priorities we mutually agreed upon – within the specified timeframes. We want to develop the Roadmap further and in particular include priorities agreed upon at Leaders' level, e.g. the financial services simplification package. One crucial element of the Roadmap is the proposal for a 28th regime / the EU Inc., whose adoption by the end of 2026 is key.

We call on the European Commission to submit proposals on time, and on the Council and the European Parliament to align their legislative processes with the deadlines set out in the Roadmap. Germany and France will continue to support its implementation.

Germany and France will continue their good cooperation in contributing to the reduction of the most harmful Single Market barriers and to unlocking the full potential of the European Market.

[Savings and Investment Union]

France and Germany reaffirm their shared determination to achieve the **Savings and Investment Union**. Europe needs deeper, more integrated and more competitive capital markets, fostering financial innovation, and supported by efficient European supervision. The Market Integration and Supervision Package is one of the key initiatives to bring forward European capital markets. On the basis of the recently shared contribution by the Finance Ministers of France, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, Poland and Spain from 28 May 2026 on the key parameters of the Market Integration and Supervision Package including the new supervisory tasks expected from ESMA, we support reaching a Council general approach by October and the timely conclusion, by the end of this year, of an ambitious agreement. Moreover, on the key priority of mobilising European savings, France and Germany call for the swift implementation of the "Finance Europe" label, building on the high-level follow-up meeting to be held in Berlin in autumn.

We welcome the interim report of the Franco-German Taskforce on the Future of Digital Finance from June 2026. We fully share the taskforce's ambition to enhance Europe's competitiveness, resilience and sovereignty in digital finance, notably through scaling up the tokenisation of capital markets, accelerating the deployment of wholesale central bank money and fostering euro-denominated digital settlement assets. We look forward to the final report by the end of the year.

Following the Noyer-Kukies report and the January 2026 ministerial roadmap, we reaffirm our commitment to strengthening scale-up financing in Europe and confirm the launch of a Franco-German network for scale-up financing, open to the progressive association of other Member States.

France and Germany will also make the best use of these initiatives to support strengthening the international role of the euro.

[Global economic challenges]

Recognising the current **global macroeconomic imbalances** and its detrimental effects on the European industries, Germany and France furthermore advocate for a united and ambitious European response to bolster a level playing field, diversify and derisk our economies. We support a pragmatic trade agenda by the conclusion of further ambitious and fair bilateral and regional trade agreements, to secure new export markets for EU companies, help diversify value chains and derisk the EU economy while defending core EU interests and ensuring a true level playing field. In addition to continued engagement in constructive dialogue with our main economic partners and following the discussion at the G7 Summit in Evian and at the meeting of the European Council on 18/19 June 2026, we call for swift and systematic use of all existing instruments. As a complement, we call on the European Commission to promptly submit concrete proposals on how to strengthen our trade defence toolbox, industrial policy as well as economic security, e.g. with a new resilience instrument to reduce dependencies in critical and strategic sectors and address supply chain overconcentration to avoid structural vulnerabilities.

[EU ETS]

France and Germany strongly support the **EU ETS** as the central market-based instrument for achieving the EU 2050 climate neutrality objective. An effective carbon price sends a critical signal for mobilizing capital towards net zero and low carbon technologies and supporting the transformation of production processes. Maintaining both, the ambition and the integrity of the ETS is therefore crucial to achieving our climate objectives while ensuring Europe's competitiveness. In line with the agreed enabling conditions to meet the 2040 target as set out in the EU Climate Law, the upcoming reviews needs to make the system future-proof with targeted adjustments, and to strengthen our competitiveness in order to safeguard the EU's industrial basis. This goes both for the ETS system, including on free allowances, as well as for ETS benchmarks, where we jointly encouraged the Commission to ensure that the updated fallback benchmarks and the corresponding methodology to determine these fallback benchmarks more accurately reflect the actual decarbonization capacities of our industries.

[Automotive industry]

Building on the Franco-German Economic Agenda, we will support the European Commission in ensuring global competitiveness of the European automotive industry, accelerating the uptake of zero and low emission vehicles and securing a strong European manufacturing base. The European Commission's review proposal is an important basis for advancing adequate technology-neutral, flexible CO2 regulations and EU content requirements, in line with the EU

climate targets, while taking into account relevant technological developments. We will contribute constructively to the ongoing legislative process, seeking to develop a joint Franco-German approach on the **automotive package**, as well as on the related automotive provisions within the **Industrial Accelerator Act**, by the end of summer.

[MFF]

The next **Multiannual Financial Framework** will be essential to ensure Europe's capacity to act in an increasingly uncertain world. It must deliver on our common priorities and stabilize national contributions. Germany and France will work to further progress on the necessary conditions to reach a comprehensive and balanced agreement, including on new own resources, the overall volume, a modernized architecture and reduced red tape, aiming at concluding MFF negotiations in 2026.

[Enlargement and reforms]

Convinced that **enlargement** contributes to a secure, prosperous and democratic Europe and therefore lies in our joint strategic interest, Germany and France reaffirm their willingness to give a new impetus to the enlargement process. To that end, Germany and France launched an initiative at the EU-Western Balkans Summit in Tivat, Montenegro, in June 2026, to provide additional incentives as part of a merit-based and enhanced gradual integration process for all candidate countries. We want to streamline and advance the current process to make it more efficient and to allow for faster and deeper integration into the EU on the basis of the Copenhagen criteria. Recalling the Granada declaration, Germany and France also support parallel progress on internal reforms of the EU, to address key questions related to its priorities and policies as well as its capacity to act. We look forward to the in-depth discussion at the European Council in October 2026. As some candidate countries get closer to the end of their accession negotiations, Germany and France will work together to ensure that future accession treaties will strengthen the EU and enhance the security of its neighbourhood, including with the necessary safeguards and transitional measures.

With the geopolitical developments we are facing, Germany and France emphasize the need to **reform the EU's internal set-up for external action**, to allow for stronger, swifter and more coordinated EU responses at the international level. The European Council in October 2026 should ask the Council Presidency to initiate this work, notably in the Council, with a view to a stronger and better coordinated EU external action. This should comprise the role and the institutional set-up of the relevant EU institutions and bodies, including the HRVP, the Commission and the EEAS. The Presidency should report to the European Council by the end of 2026.

III. Strengthening our societies and bringing our people closer together

Germany and France believe that bilateral cooperation must deliver tangible benefits for citizens and enable us to jointly uphold our democratic model based on shared values. We pursue a multifaceted approach to strengthen our societies in the face of economic and social

challenges through an in-depth social dialogue, bringing our people closer together through culture, media and joint youth projects, to ensure citizens' safety online, as well as to simplify and improve the daily lives of citizens in our cross-border regions.

[AI Safety]

France and Germany have agreed to step up their cooperation on **AI safety** and security by means of future collaboration between their respective AI safety institutes (INESIA and its German counterpart). Both institutes will share best practices and build capability through exchanges of knowledge and expertise. France and Germany will deepen their institutional cooperation and contribute to European efforts in this field.

[Safer digital space for minors]

We are committed to providing a **safe digital space for our minors**. We must take action against any practices and business models that endanger the safety and well-being of our children. It is crucial that digital service providers develop and apply technology and systems that ensure safe, secure and age-appropriate experiences. We welcome the many ongoing national initiatives among EU Member States to establish "digital majority" rules, including the introduction of a minimum age for access to social media at national level in accordance with the Digital Services Act (DSA) Guidelines on protection of minors online. We will work together at European level to establish a harmonised digital majority. Reliable, data-minimising, privacy-preserving and interoperable age verification systems are key for implementing effective youth protection, including the protection of minors on online platforms. In this regard, we welcome the initiative taken by the European Commission to develop an Age Verification App Blueprint. We are strongly committed to strengthening the full enforcement of EU law aimed at protecting minors, in particular the DSA. We will establish a regular High-Level Expert Exchange between the Federal Agency for Child and Youth Protection in the Media (BzKJ) and the Audiovisual and Digital Communication Regulatory Authority (ARCOM) to contribute to the protection, empowerment, and meaningful participation of children and young people in digital life.

[Fighting digital violence against women and girls]

We reaffirm our shared commitment to preventing and **combating online violence against women and girls**. The rapid development of emerging technologies, including AI, risks further exacerbating this phenomenon by enabling new forms of abuse. We are stepping up our cooperation at both bilateral and European level, and will jointly advocate for the development of a comprehensive EU Action Plan to prevent and combat online violence against women and girls.

[Social Dialogue]

The **Franco-German Social Summit** has successfully initiated an ongoing process of dialogue involving the social partners with the aim of supporting the reforms and adaptation of the labour market and social protection systems as we face domestic and global economic

challenges. It will meet again on November 10, 2026, in Paris and will be dedicated to “Work as a mean of fighting poverty and promoting social inclusion”. It will set priorities which will be taken into account when drawing up the 2026-2027 work program of the Franco-German Expert Group on the future of work, which meets quarterly to discuss current common challenges in the field of labour market and social policies, such as increasing participation in the labour market and the use of AI in the workplace. Dialogue must continue between German and French stakeholders, including in the light of the reforms announced in Germany this summer regarding pensions, taxation and healthcare.

[Franco-German Youth Office and Citizens' Fund]

The Franco-German Youth Office has connected more than ten million young people in over 60 years of work. We support the development of exchanges and partnerships between young people of our countries, both through the mobility schemes which have proven successful in strengthening mutual understanding and knowledge of languages, whilst also opening up new territories and reaching new audiences. In addition, the Treaty of Aachen established the **French-German Citizens' Fund**, designed to support joint projects set up by members of civil society. We welcome the envisaged integration of the Fund into the Franco-German Youth Office. By bringing together civic engagement and youth cooperation under a common institutional framework, we will create new synergies and further strengthen both institutions in pursuing their shared objectives.

[Democratic resilience: Media, countering disinformation and ensuring electoral process' integrity]

Free media and access to reliable information are indispensable pillars of democracy. Therefore, we reaffirm our support and we will continue the cooperation agreed upon in Toulon on the '**Information Shield**' of **Deutsche Welle** and **France Médias Monde**, as well as for the Europeanization of **ARTE**, in their search for sustainable European funding. These projects will contribute to the promotion of European values and the fight against foreign information manipulation and interference (FIMI) and, in doing so, the strengthening of our democracies. In light of the above, fair competition conditions between platforms and traditional media are needed, which we will jointly advocate for so as to ensure they are included at European level within the Audiovisual Media Services Directive.

In 2026 and 2027, numerous elections will take place in Europe. In this context, we underline the importance of setting up our collective efforts to **counter information manipulation** operations and foreign interferences that show a growing hostility towards the European model and its democratic values. We call on the European Commission to update, as soon as possible in 2026, its guidelines on the mitigation of systemic risks for electoral processes, pursuant to Article 35 of the Digital Services Act (DSA), so as to enforce digital platforms obligations and contribute to the resilience and integrity of Member States' electoral processes. We also encourage the Commission to make a full and active use of the powerful instruments already at its disposal as direct supervisor of very large online platforms (VLOPs) and very large online search engines (VLOSEs), and call the Commission to a constant and narrow cooperation between Member States capacities and European instruments.

[Migration and security]

We will strengthen our cooperation at European level to ensure the smooth functioning of the **Schengen Area**, notably through the revisions of the mandates of EU agencies Frontex and Europol. We also welcome the EU's action plan for the Channel migration route, which constitutes a European response to the challenges faced by Member States, and must be implemented without delay. In this context, we will join forces to better prevent irregular migration flows leading to crossings of the Channel and we will continue our cooperation in the fight against the criminal networks that organise them. We will ensure close coordination of our internal border controls and strengthen our common tools to enhance our cross-border cooperation in the fight against irregular immigration, in particular by gathering experience to reach an agreement under Article 23a of the Schengen Borders Code. We aim to finalise negotiations of the new intergovernmental agreement on police and customs as soon as possible. Finally, we will strengthen our bilateral cooperation on crisis management, in particular through joint exercises and exchanges of best practices to enhance our resilience.

[Cross-Border Cooperation]

As recalled in Toulon through the adoption of an action plan on **cross-border cooperation**, we are committed to implementing priorities aimed at improving concrete and effective cooperation and removing the obstacles our border populations are facing, from apprenticeship to mobility and healthcare. We commend the work of our cross-border committee and the progress made in healthcare (signing of the additional protocol to the MoSar Convention, ongoing deliberations on piloting a cross-border healthcare corridor), energy sector (deployment of geothermal potential in border regions) and mobility (simpler booking procedures for cross-border journeys, realization of cross-border regional rail projects). We welcome the strong demand for cross-border vocational training under the Lauterbourg Agreement and strive to enable as many training contracts as possible for cross-border apprentices benefiting from this unique scheme, as of the 2026 academic year. We will also demonstrate how cross-border data integration on the basis of our national “digital twins” helps us better analyse environmental impacts and gain shared overview in the event of disasters.