

#ThinkingEuropeAnew

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# Pushing the EU agenda forward with the Weimar Triangle

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WARSAW SECURITY FORUM REPORT 2024



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## Introduction



Prof. Katarzyna Pisarska  
Chair of the Warsaw Security Forum

*Dear Friends of the Warsaw Security Forum,*

In the aftermath of World War II, visionary European leaders such as Konrad Adenauer, Robert Schuman, and Jean Monnet dared to reimagine Europe's future. Determined to prevent the tragedies of the past from recurring, they laid the foundation for what would become a union that has since grown into the most successful international organisation in the world. Their leadership, driven by the desire for peace, stability, and cooperation, transformed a war-torn continent into a beacon of unity and prosperity.

Today, Europe stands at another crossroads, facing a complex array of challenges that threaten the stability of the European project. Recognizing the critical need for renewed leadership, the Warsaw Security Forum has embraced this year the theme **#ThinkingEuropeAnew**. This message is not just a call to action but a guiding principle as we seek to navigate the turbulent times ahead. By channelling the spirit of those post-war leaders, we aspire to push the European agenda forward, ensuring that the EU remains resilient and capable of addressing the challenges of the 21st century.

To secure the future of the European project, there is an urgent need for strong, decisive leadership, a renewed sense of dynamism, and a clear redefinition of its long-term vision. These qualities are essential as the continent faces unprecedented challenges: a direct military threat from the Russian Federation, instability in its Southern neighbourhood, the escalating impacts of climate change, and the pressures of irregular migration – all of which are already

affecting people's daily lives and raising doubts about the stability of Europe's future.

The Weimar Triangle initiative, which had been overlooked for years, has recently seen a resurgence of interest in Warsaw, Berlin and Paris. As representatives of three significant, yet diverse EU members align on the most pressing issues, they could serve as a model for others, helping to advance much-needed reforms within the EU. **The goal is not to impose a direction, but rather to demonstrate a cooperative approach that could inspire broader consensus across the EU.**

That is why, after the successful debut of the Warsaw Security Forum Report in 2023, the Casimir Pulaski Foundation has decided to dedicate the 2024 report edition to mapping out the Weimar Triangle initiative and discussing the format's role in shaping the future of EU affairs.

It is thus with great pleasure that I present to you the 2024 Warsaw Security Forum Report entitled **#ThinkingEuropeAnew: Pushing the EU agenda forward with the Weimar Triangle**. The report is a result of the work of over 25 French, German and Polish members of parliament and experts, supported by the Casimir Pulaski Foundation's team.

As the WSF program takes a closer look at the future of the EU, **the aspiring role of the presented report is to shape the debate on the opportunities of cooperation within the Weimar Triangle for a renewed European project**. I trust this report will contribute to finding the right solutions for the EU and beyond.

# Executive summary

The Weimar Triangle is uniquely positioned to provide leadership in several areas within the EU, like, for example, defence, foreign policy, and energy. This collaboration leverages several strategic advantages, making it an effective platform for advancing EU-wide initiatives in these critical areas.

The geographic diversity yet in the vicinity of Poland, Germany and France facilitates timely cooperation, allowing for quicker implementation of security, defence, and energy solutions. This proximity enhances the overall effectiveness of the Triangle's advocacy, while the countries' complementary political, economic, energy, and military profiles create a synergistic approach to addressing Europe's complex challenges.

The Weimar Triangle could also serve as a **valuable mediation forum within the EU**, proactively addressing and resolving differences before they escalate into crises. By facilitating discussions and decisions among its members, the Triangle can set examples of effective multinational partnerships in defence, foreign policy, and energy, which can inspire broader cooperation across the EU. Together, they can exercise broader acceptance and adoption of joint initiatives across the Union.

In security and defence, the Weimar Triangle can demonstrate leadership by **enhancing Europe's military capabilities, particularly in response to external threats like the war in Ukraine**. Their coordinated efforts are capable of offering a model for joint defence projects and a more unified European approach to security, creating a stronger and more resilient Europe.

In foreign policy, the Triangle can lead the way in **shaping coherent strategies for EU enlargement**, deeper transatlantic ties, and stronger engagement with key global partners like India and African countries.

Furthermore, the Weimar Triangle's proactive energy collaboration could **reduce Europe's reliance on external energy sources, enhance**

**resilience to energy crises**, and accelerate the transition to a sustainable and secure energy future.

**These initiatives do not intend to replicate or compete with EU-level programs but rather to complement and expand them.** By identifying gaps in existing EU frameworks, the Weimar Triangle can propose innovative approaches that, once proven successful, can be adopted across the EU. This effort enhances the implementation of current EU legislation and ensures that Europe's collective efforts in security, defence, foreign policy, and energy are more efficient and impactful.

The ideas presented in this report should first be adopted at the trilateral level within the Weimar Triangle. Tailored to the specific strengths of Poland, Germany and France, these initiatives can then be scaled across the EU, ensuring that the Weimar Triangle leads Europe's future security, defence, foreign policy, and energy collaboration by setting an example for others to follow.

This year's WSF report is divided into two parts. First, it proposes six advocacy causes for the Weimar Triangle to focus on in three main areas: defence, foreign policy, and energy & state resilience.

Then, **it proposes an operational tool** as a main recommendation of the report aimed at boosting the long-term sustainability of the Weimar Triangle format, namely the establishment of the **International Weimar Fund (IWF)**. Modelled after successful frameworks like the International Visegrad Fund, this trilateral initiative aims to foster sustainable collaboration among research institutions and civil society within the Weimar Triangle. The fund will provide consistent financial support for educational and research initiatives across France, Germany, and Poland, **creating an bottom cooperation that transcends political cycles**. Through the IWF, the Weimar Triangle will foster long-term ties between the three countries, promoting democratic values, economic resilience, and joint innovation.



### 1. Road to NATO: Supplementing Ukrainian security

The first advocacy cause emphasises the urgent need for the Weimar Triangle to lead European efforts in securing Ukraine's future. As a response to Russia's continuing aggression, the Weimar states are called to spearhead military, financial, and political support for Ukraine, ensuring its sovereignty and eventual path to NATO membership. The report advocates for a security initiative for Ukraine, which would synchronise aid packages, bolster defence capabilities, and prepare Ukraine for its integration into Western security frameworks, ensuring long-term peace and stability in Europe.

### 2. The European Industrial Vanguard

To address Europe's growing defence needs, the second advocacy cause proposes the creation of a Weimar-led European Industrial Vanguard. This initiative seeks to strengthen Europe's defence technological and industrial base by coordinating research, development, and production efforts among the three countries. The Weimar Triangle nations, with their robust industrial capacities, are encouraged to lead the charge in standardising, avoiding unnecessary duplications and enhancing military equipment production, fostering greater interoperability, and preparing Europe for future challenges in an era of great power competition.

### 3. Towards New Wider Europe

The cause calls for the development of a comprehensive New Wider Europe strategy, focusing on EU enlargement and deeper engagement with Eastern European and Western Balkan nations. The Weimar Triangle should champion efforts to integrate these regions into the EU, providing them with political, technical, and economic support. This strategy will not only reinforce European stability and security but also strengthen democratic governance and economic development in the region. Additionally, through building up on existing formats such as the European Political Community, the Weimar Triangle can play a proactive role in shaping relations with countries that may not seek full EU membership but are crucial for Europe's broader geopolitical interests.

### 4. Enhanced Parliamentary Cooperation

Regular joint parliamentary consultations between Poland, Germany and France will address key legislative issues, particularly in the fields of defence, foreign policy, and energy, ensuring a coordinated approach to Europe's most pressing challenges. Such cooperation will not only provide a platform for deeper political engagement but also send a strong signal of unity and leadership within the EU, potentially serving as a foundation for a more unified stance for the EU abroad, which is particularly important for the transatlantic relations and can serve as a good start to craft more unified approach to EU external affairs further, for example with India.

### 5. NECPS Synergy Initiative

The initiative lays the foundational groundwork needed to forge a coordinated trilateral energy vision by pioneering a framework to coordinate national strategic planning processes, as well as national policy tools to better exploit synergies. The proposal focuses on application of technological neutrality, creating a cohesive approach to tackling the challenges of climate change and energy security as pointed out in the TFEU and the 'European Green Deal'. This way each country retains the flexibility to determine its precise path to net-zero emissions as long as it commits to reducing its overall carbon output.

### 6. Cross-Border Energy Data Sharing Framework

The Cross-Border Energy Data Sharing Framework provides the tangible tools and technology necessary to operationalize these policy goals. Based on the data sharing transparency approach, the proposal postulates creation of energy data exchange platforms, energy management tools and facilitating data sharing processes. Once implemented, they will enable effective trilateral cross-border collaboration and solidify energy solidarity.

# Acknowledgments

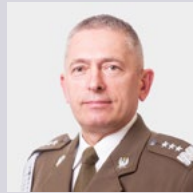
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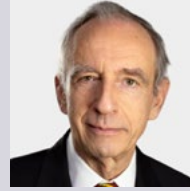
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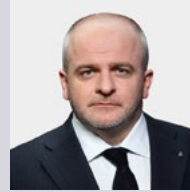
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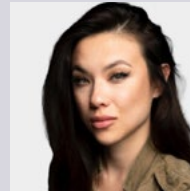
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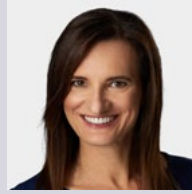
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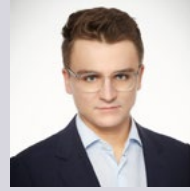
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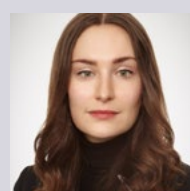
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# Why the Weimar Triangle?

The functional **Berlin-Paris axis has historically been imperative for the EU** to thrive. The authority of these two largest countries repeatedly propelled the EU agenda forward and led the rest of the Union. The inclusion of Poland in the Franco-German tandem's discussions through the Weimar Triangle format enables Warsaw to contribute in areas crucial to the development of the European Union, adding an Eastern flank perspective, increasingly

important at a time when the region is under growing security pressures.

The history of the Weimar Triangle demonstrates that its activity is correlated with security crises, and during periods of peace it recedes into a dormancy. The coordination of strategic efforts among these three countries has added value to European security, but the format has struggled to maintain consistent activity over time. This pattern must change.

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## The fluctuating history of the Weimar Triangle

The Weimar Triangle was established in 1991 by Foreign Ministers Krzysztof Skubiszewski of Poland, Hans-Dietrich Genscher of Germany, and Roland Dumas of France. Its **primary objective was to support Poland and the entire Central and Eastern European (CEE) region's transition from communism to democracy and to facilitate integration into European and Euro-Atlantic structures like the EU and NATO**. In its early years, the Weimar Triangle had a clear purpose and was highly active in promoting European integration and cooperation, with key meetings held from 1991 to 1997 – focused on Poland's political and economic reforms and broader European cooperation.

The secondary objective was to position Poland as an advocate of the region alongside France, which was less optimistic about Eastern Enlargement compared to the other key EU leaders at the time – the UK and Germany. The aim was to persuade the sceptics in Paris that an expanded EU would also greatly benefit France, without compromising its security concerns or strategic interests.

**The format was instrumental in facilitating the EU's Eastern enlargement in 2004**. However, as Poland's EU accession negotiations took centre stage, they overshadowed the Weimar Triangle's activities, leading to fewer notable meetings and a shift in focus to bilateral and EU-wide engagements.

Following Poland's accession to the EU in 2004, there was renewed interest in the Weimar Triangle as a forum for deeper integration. Despite efforts to reactivate its activities, the format saw only sporadic meetings. By 2011, there were increased efforts to address EU-wide issues such as the financial crisis and security concerns, bringing a revival of the Weimar Triangle's engagement in broader European matters. **However, since the late 1990s, the Weimar format has lacked a clear and sustainable purpose**, struggling to create lasting projects.

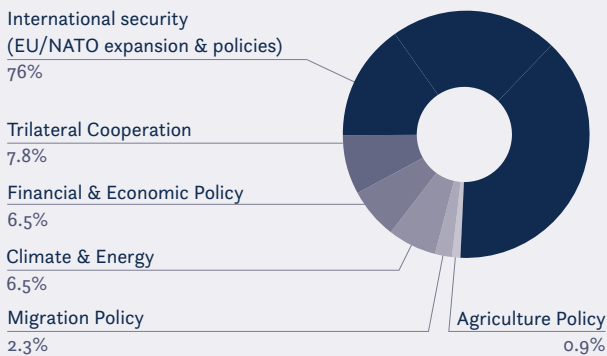
In 2014, **the annexation of Crimea by Russia and the conflict in Eastern Ukraine revitalised the Weimar Triangle**, leading to significant diplomatic activity, including a joint visit to Kyiv by foreign ministers to support Ukraine's pro-EU stance. High-level meetings from 2015 to 2016 focused on security, EU sanctions against Russia, and support for Ukraine. Despite these efforts, Poland was not involved in the Minsk agreements.

By 2017, as the conflict in Ukraine froze, **national political changes and differing priorities among the Weimar Triangle member states led to reduced activity**. Political shifts in Poland and France, along with divergent views on EU policies and relations with Russia, contributed to minimal engagement during this time.

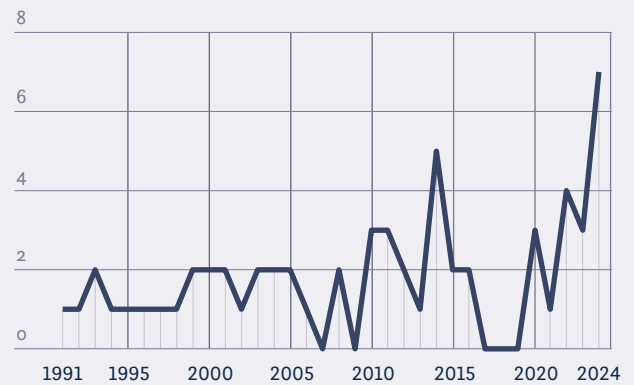


## Trilateral meetings on the ministerial or heads of state level of the Weimar Triangle

### Topics raised



### Number of meetings



### The strategic challenge posed by Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine in 2022 prompted a renewed focus on the Weimar Triangle.

Key meetings from 2022 to 2023 involved frequent high-level summits to discuss support for Ukraine, European defence, and transatlantic relations. In 2024, following Poland's parliamentary elections, the format received an additional push for a pro-EU agenda, including strategic cooperation, military support for Ukraine, and addressing broader European security concerns. Even after the recent legislative elections in France, there is still a majority in the French parliament for continuous support for Ukraine. Weimar's current focus includes strengthening NATO's Eastern flank, coordinating military and humanitarian aid to Ukraine, and addressing long-term European security and political stability.

Fluctuations in the Weimar Triangle's activity can be attributed to several factors:

- political changes,
- geopolitical crises,
- major EU integration milestones,
- and bilateral relations overshadowing the trilateral format.

The Triangle's dynamics was also impacted by:

- persistent differences in national interests and policies;
- lack of continuous coordination;
- consistent agenda-setting;
- and external influence, such as changes in US foreign policy.

## Flattening the Activity Curve

**The Weimar Triangle repeatedly commits two major errors.** During periods of engagement, **it becomes overly ambitious and vague**, opening too many formats and consultations without setting a specific agenda, leading to unsustainable long-term projects. During periods of inactivity, **it neglects the need for regular meetings and consultations on pressing issues**, leading to rising divisions.

This report aims to steer the format into calmer waters, **focusing on a sustainable agenda in areas of common interest, including more countries** where relevant, and setting realistic policy goals. It is crucial to acknowledge division lines, but small steps can help avoid misunderstandings.

This report does not see the Weimar Triangle as an attempt to take over European leadership. **Intra-regional formats should never be exclusive or universal.** The EU consists of smaller groups of like-minded countries, uniting efforts in areas of common interest. These groups should boost the agenda forward rather than replace any existing institutions. In times when no single country can emerge as a clear leader of the European project, the initiative must be taken by coordinated formats that provide guidance. Among such formats, few are as representative as the Weimar Triangle, and the lessons from this cooperation can be relevant for the entire continent. Hence, **the report presents an aspiring path for Weimar** not to substitute or duplicate already existing EU/NATO policies, but to set an example, inspire, highlight issues, and actualize relevant agendas.

Moreover, the Weimar Triangle's diverse composition – combining Poland as the largest country on the Eastern flank with serious security concerns, Germany as the largest EU economy located in the centre of Europe with a strong impetus to bring everybody together, and France as a country with strongest military of the EU, with its nuclear capabilities and more global perspective and an advocate for European Strategic Autonomy – provides a strong foundation to commence an exercise for crafting best ideas for the EU.

However, Weimar cooperation should not be limited to Poland, Germany and France alone. It should seek opportunities to involve more states in 3+1 and 3+2 formats. By engaging Poland and more member states to the Berlin-Paris axis, the Weimar Triangle can enhance EU project cohesion.

The main part of the report is divided into three thematic areas: Foreign Policy, Defence, and Energy and State Resilience. Each area identifies two advocacy causes for initiatives that could mobilize cross-party support and serve as foundations for more unified policies in areas where the EU currently lacks capacity and needs stronger agency. The division into short-term, mid-term, and long-term goals highlights the implementability of the proposals, starting with ideas that could be initiated almost immediately to those that would require more coordination or years of policy development. Each section also highlights challenges and areas where achieving a unified stance requires longer cooperation.

As the final recommendation, the report proposes creating an International Weimar Fund, which would galvanize cooperation between the three states and ensure the long-term sustainability of the project. It would also boost the connectivity of ideas, making it easier for the advocacy causes to be implemented effectively across all areas.



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# 1 Defence



# Introduction

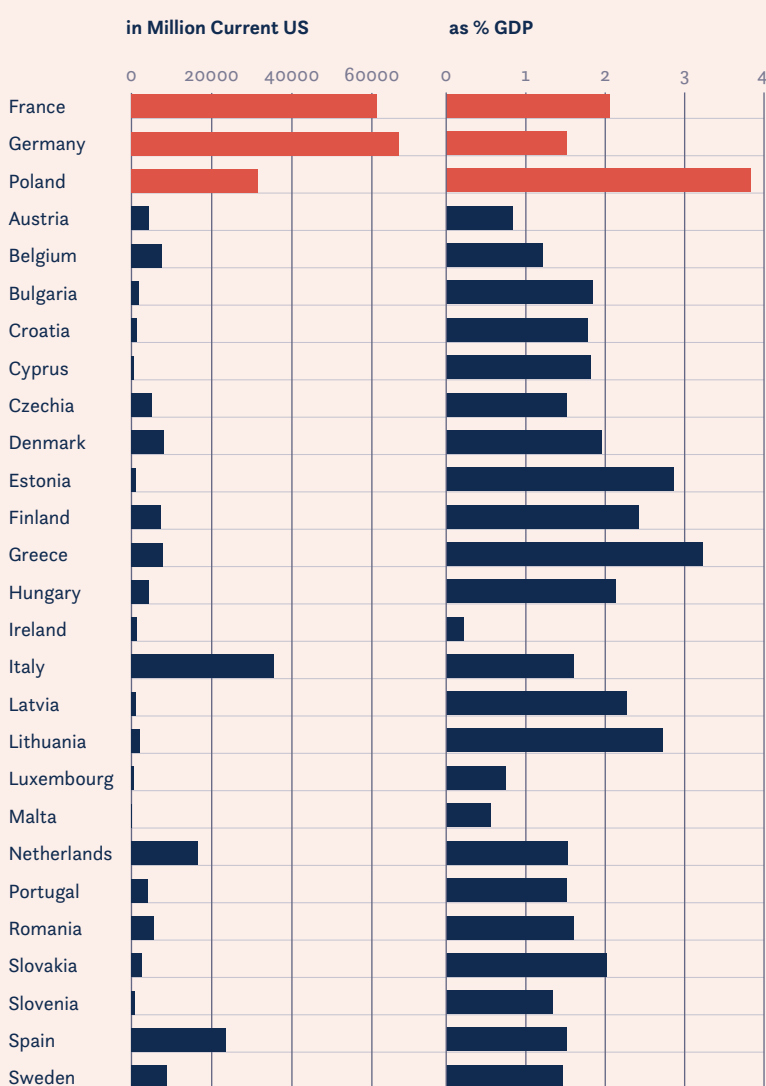
The Weimar Triangle has the potential to become a major driving force of the European Union. The three countries possess the economic strength to spearhead European efforts in the defence sector, with Germany and France

maintaining the EU's highest GDPs, and Poland having one of the fastest growing economies. The Weimar states also heavily invest in defence, with Germany and France spending over USD 60 billion each Poland is on track to approach 5% of its GDP on defence spending, with plans to allocate as much as USD 50 billion in 2025 toward defence.<sup>1</sup> Additionally, all three states have heavily supported Ukraine's defence against Russia's war of aggression, and have keenly felt that Europe has to reorganise and cooperate to achieve long-term security. The lessons from Ukraine have clearly shown that no country can feel safe while isolated; the threat posed by Russia can only be neutralised through unity.

Therefore, the economic and military capabilities of the Weimar Triangle could be used to spearhead wider European initiatives in security and defence areas where consensus is difficult due to the sensitivity of topics and their link to national interests. Although, traditionally, the Weimar states have differed in their perceptions of threats and sensitivities, their cooperation seems necessary in light of escalating threats to the EU. In the coming decades, security will be determined by great power competition on the global stage.

In the short and long term, the EU will have to address the key issues in security and defence: the future security of Ukraine, filling the gaps in European defence capabilities, ramp up military equipment manufacturing and support in the long run the competitiveness and readiness of the EU's Defence Technological and Industrial Base (EDTIB). In both cases, the Weimar group (potentially in cooperation with other willing states, e.g. UK), due to its military and industrial potential, could act as a vanguard of cooperation and mobilise other states to engage.

**Defence Spending in the EU (2023)**



source SIPRI Military Expenditure Database<sup>18</sup>

## Road to NATO – supplementing Ukrainian security

After two and a half years of conflict, the Russo-Ukrainian war shows no signs of abating. However, in the absence of a decisive victory by either side, there will be a willingness to seek a diplomatic resolution. Any such agreement will likely encompass territorial settlements and security guarantees for Ukraine. It is difficult to believe that Russia, whose initial objective was the complete political subjugation of Ukraine, will be content with only partial success. This implies that **Moscow will regard any agreements with Ukraine as a tactical ceasefire**, aimed at rebuilding its potential before the next confrontation, potentially **leading to another war in Europe within a few years**.

Given the ineffectiveness of past assurances (such as the UN Charter, the Helsinki Final Act, and the Budapest Memorandum), **it is improbable that any general political agreement with the current Russian regime would be sufficient to secure Ukraine's future** and restore regional security. Security guarantees

are particularly crucial as post-war reconstruction in Ukraine will require public-private investment and the engagement of private enterprises, which will not materialise if there is a risk of conflict, however according to Ukrainian policymakers, **the only credible long term security guarantee for Ukraine is NATO membership**.

It is no coincidence that Russia has refrained from hostile actions against militarily weaker NATO members. Although there is currently no political will within NATO to offer Ukraine membership in the immediate future, this possibility may arise once the Russian war of aggression concludes. However, the Allies reaffirmed that Ukraine's bridge to NATO for Ukraine should be short. The Weimar Triangle countries, which have a vested interest in strengthening Europe's security architecture, should therefore take steps to develop effective international measures for Ukraine that would supplement its security in the interim of its NATO accession.

## Roadmap for attaining the goal

SHORT  
TERM

### Weimar Security Initiative for Ukraine

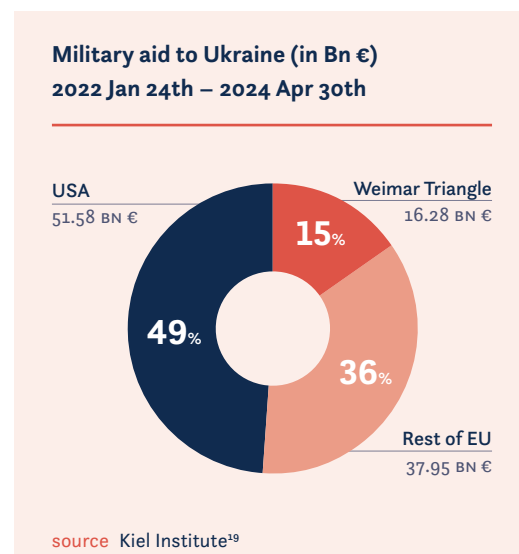
One way of supporting Ukraine, and arguably the most important task for the transatlantic community, is to ensure steady deliveries of financial and military assistance, enabling Kyiv to continue fighting until victory or a peace agreement acceptable by Ukraine. These deliveries encompass a wide range of systems, from crucial air and missile defence capabilities to main battle tanks and Infantry fighting vehicles (IFVs).

**Increasingly, this responsibility may lie with Europeans**, as indicated by the difficulties in passing the Ukraine Security Supplemental Appropriations Act in the U.S. Congress, to allocate for military aid to Ukraine. Already, the scale of European military support for Ukraine exceeded that of the US with around EUR 54 billion of European (including UK, Norway, Iceland, and Switzerland) aid and EUR 51.6 billion worth of US aid.<sup>2</sup> The Weimar countries will have a particular responsibility in this area, as they have **the largest defence budgets in the EU** (Poland's defence budget in net terms will surpass Italy's in 2024) and possess extensive arms industries.

A unified approach is necessary in achieving a secure future for Ukraine and the country's greater integration with Europe and the West. However, **there are visible divisions in the approaches of European allies which can also be spotted within the Weimar Triangle** among its three

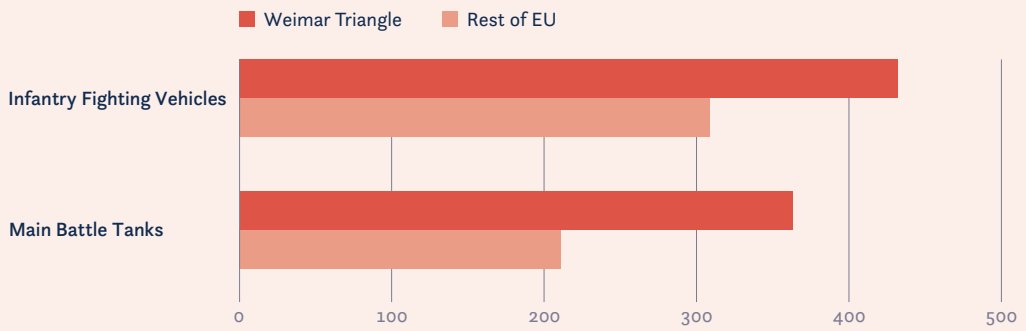
countries, with each harbouring different ideas towards e.g., the way Ukraine should fight Russia.

While several entities have already been created to coordinate support for Ukraine – like NATO Security Assistance and Training for Ukraine (NSATU) or the Ramstein group, they still function in a way which simply groups the disjointed efforts of each of the participant countries. To better support Ukraine, it would be useful to establish, within the frameworks of such wider forums, **regular consultations at the defence ministry and parliamentary level** where Weimar countries should first hold meetings where key issues and challenges can be discussed and tackled directly in an effort to prevent disaligned ideas. This way Weimar states could spearhead European efforts to support Ukraine – creating cohesive aid packages that could be then allocated/utilised within the framework of the existing instruments and initiatives like NSATU. Additionally Weimar states should utilise the Capability Development Plan (CDP), Coordinated Annual Review on Defence (CARD), Permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO), which have admirably tried to organise European efforts in the areas of defence, security and military-industrial development, as pathways to present a united endeavour and coalesce the European approach to common defence and security. The first issue that could be addressed in such a way is **supporting Ukraine and bolstering its security, while it awaits accession to NATO** via comprehensive aid and military equipment transfer, so as not to repeat the mistakes of the past initiatives like it was in the case of the modern main battle tank initiative under the Ramstein group. While rightly focused on providing key capabilities to Ukraine the transfer of equipment was disjointed, with each participant of the initiative following their own timetables and approach to implementing this new equipment in Ukrainian structures. This situation forced Ukraine to create ad-hoc new forces using what was available, leading to incompatible equipment being placed into units, which resulted in unpredictable results on the battlefield. In such cases, to prevent these mistakes from being repeated, the Weimar states should therefore present a common front that can not only provide the foundations for long-term solutions but also **inspire other allied states to act in unison.**



**LONG TERM**

**Heavy Equipment Deliveries to Ukraine (2022–2024)**



source Oryx<sup>20</sup>

**Supporting Ukraine’s NATO Membership**

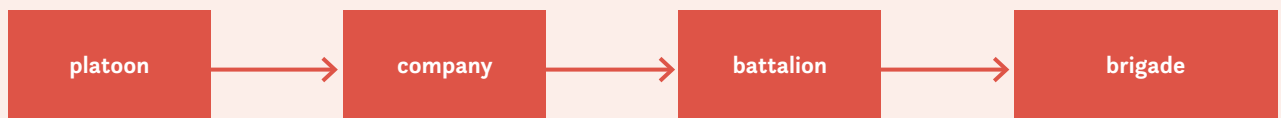
NATO remains the most powerful and reliable modern military alliance, guaranteeing the security of the transatlantic community for already 75 years. However, the Russian invasion of Ukraine has demonstrated that **security and stability in Europe will remain threatened if risk zones persist in the European security architecture**. Although the timeline for Ukraine’s accession to NATO remains uncertain, Allies agree that Ukraine’s path to NATO is irreversible.<sup>3</sup> Beyond political will, an essential condition for NATO membership is meeting the Alliance’s standards by Ukraine’s Armed Forces and state structures.

Finland and Sweden, despite minor political issues, were relatively quickly admitted to NATO with the process being sped up as their armed forces had met the Alliance’s standards and could contribute to Allied capabilities. There is no doubt that **powerful, battle-proven Ukrainian Armed Forces would also be an invaluable contribution to transatlantic security**. However, for this to happen, they must be interoperable with other Allied armed forces, as NATO’s Standardisation Agreements (STANAG) cover a wide range of issues from ammunition sizes to rail gauges.

Supporting Ukraine in this regard, according to the decisions of the NATO summit in Washington D. C., will be an important task for the entire

Organization. While the framework provided by NSATU can be very beneficial in supporting and coordinating the Ukrainian transition to the NATO standards, it unfortunately offers little in terms of actual capabilities that can be provided to Ukraine to bolster this process. The Weimar Triangle could play a significant role in this project. The Weimar states, due to their significant training capabilities and unique experiences (e.g., Poland underwent a modernization of its armed forces to meet NATO standards, Germany is already training Ukrainian forces on German soil and France has experience in advanced defence cooperation with numerous partners worldwide), **are well-positioned to lead the effort and be an example to follow**.

Similar efforts have been undertaken like for example, Operation Interflex, the British training programme for Ukrainian troops, however that only consisted of a five-week-long basic infantry course. This level of training was insufficient for reliably reinforcing the Ukrainian Armed Forces and bringing them up to NATO standards. The soldiers put through this training served only to reinforce existing Ukrainian structures which still follow the older post-soviet structure. The West should understand that the stress and resources required to undertake the restandardisation of the Ukrainian armed forces are staggering, making the endeavour highly difficult if not impossible while having to fight a brutal conventional war and resist occupation at the same time.



Therefore to bring Ukrainian forces up to NATO standards, the West should prepare fully coherent and battle-ready military formations, which have completed training on higher levels of operations, for Ukraine's use. Such units could operate independently, or semi-independently, and serve as foundations for the modernisation and adaptation to NATO standards for the rest of Ukraine's forces.

A good example of this is the recently announced Polish-Ukrainian initiative to create from the ground-up a formation called the Ukrainian Legion. This Legion would recruit Ukrainian volunteers currently residing outside of Ukraine to be fully trained and equipped by Poland on Polish soil. This unit would be established as a brigade-level formation and then transferred under the command of Ukrainian armed forces. As stated by Minister Sikorski of the Polish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, already several thousand volunteers have either signed up or expressed a desire to join.<sup>4</sup>

This programme should be adapted to become an EU-wide endeavour to allow for not only the

increased reinforcement of Ukrainian forces but also the creation of higher echelon military structures in accordance with NATO standards – for example, an entire division. Such an endeavour would support Ukraine's ongoing war effort and, at the same time, prepare its military for integration with NATO in the future by providing ready 'building blocks' which could form the foundation of the restandardised Ukrainian army. This project should be conducted in concert with NATO Security Assistance and Training for Ukraine (NSATU) which oversees the process of Ukraine's transition to NATO standards and the training of Ukrainian troops by NATO. However, as NSATU fails to provide actual capabilities in terms of troop equipment and usable formation preparations. Weimar Triangle countries need to be the vanguard of this project, as they possess the necessary facilities, resources, and capabilities to push such a project forward, and having built the foundations of such an operation they could draw in other European members of NATO to join, resulting in a European driven endeavour that rebuilds Ukrainian armed forces from the ground up.

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## Obstacles and Limitations

One major obstacle is the divergence in perspectives among the Weimar countries regarding the appropriate level and type of military support for Ukraine. Poland, Germany and France have different historical relationships with Russia and varying levels of commitment to Ukrainian security, which complicates the creation of a unified strategy.

Another significant challenge is the potential fatigue among domestic populations within the Weimar countries. As the conflict drags

on, public support for sustained military and financial aid may wane, leading to pressure on governments to reduce their commitments to Ukraine.

The rise of nationalist parties within the Weimar states poses an additional risk. These groups may push back against international defence cooperation, advocating for policies that prioritise national sovereignty over collective security, thereby undermining the unified approach needed to support Ukraine effectively.

## The European Industrial Vanguard

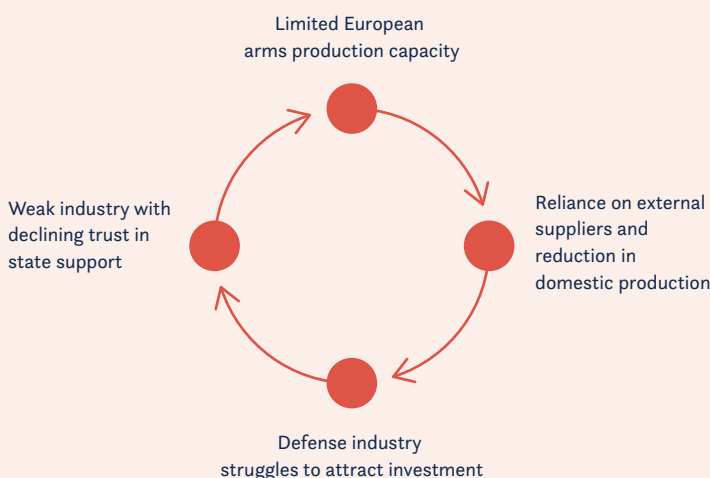
While enjoying an era of relative peace in Europe, the European defence industry slowly degraded over the last few decades. Fledgling contracts and funds for the production and development of military industry and technology have left Europe reeling in the face of Russia’s aggression on Ukraine in 2022. **The full scale invasion has highlighted the issues faced by European militaries: their inability to produce military matériel on a scale sufficient for sustaining high-intensity combat.** Even jointly, European countries cannot sufficiently supply and maintain Ukraine without American support.

However, American military support might grow thin. Europe has to reorganise itself to create an independent and self-sufficient military industry capable of sustaining it through prolonged armed conflict. A key role could be played by the Weimar Triangle states. Poland, Germany and France possess the capabilities and the will to spearhead the reformation of the European defence industry.

Ensuring steady and stable support for Ukraine, as well as preparing Europe for an era of great power competition – where conflicts, crises, and tensions increasingly affect European security – will require expanding capabilities and achieving some level of security self-agency for NATO’s European pillar. One can envision a scenario where **the United States, due to its involvement in Asia-Pacific and the Middle East, may not be able to support Europeans with certain capabilities, military equipment, or ammunition in the event of a conflict or crisis in Europe.** Even in the shorter term, replenishing the equipment and ammunition provided to Ukraine with the current production capacity of the European defence industry will take many years.

Despite some progress and specific actions, such as the EU ASAP initiative or EDIP in ammunition production, the needs are still significant. Europe had drastically reduced the scale of production of certain key capabilities, such as main battle tanks. Additionally, when the need to quickly replace equipment gaps and strengthen

### European industrial vicious cycle





their own armed forces arose after the Russian invasion of Ukraine, some European countries had to seek the needed equipment outside Europe, for example from the United States or South Korea.

This leads to a vicious cycle where some European countries acquire military equipment outside Europe due to inadequate production scale which leads to the industry lacking incentive to increase production capabilities due to insufficient orders from European countries. At

the same time, it is in Europe's interest that European industry provides the capabilities where possible. This is due to both economic reasons (money stays in Europe, driving the European economy) and strategic reasons (geographical proximity, easier access to spare parts and service centres, and shared threat perceptions). Such an endeavour would not only reinforce the EU's Defence Technological and Industrial Base and improve EU industry readiness but also build up the capabilities of the EU pillar within NATO.

## Roadmap for attaining the goal

### SHORT TERM

#### Coordination, Standardisation and Interoperability

Despite significant defence expenditures by European countries, Europe's defence capabilities are much smaller compared to those of the United States. This disparity is due to the well-known issue of **duplication of capabilities and the desire of individual EU countries to protect their own defence industries**. Compared to the United States, EU countries and the UK together use six times more weapon systems, spend half as much as the US on defence, and achieve less than 10% of its operational capabilities. The armed forces of EU countries and the UK operate 17 types of main battle tanks, compared to only 1 type employed by the US. This significantly raises the costs of research and development, production, and procurement of individual weapon systems (due to limited economies of scale) and negatively impacts operational aspects. This was evident in Ukraine, where, **despite the required standardisation, European howitzers needed different propelling charges for ammunition of the same calibre**.

Furthermore, a common set of standards would increase the interoperability of European troops, easing up logistical burdens and at the same time making the cooperation of units in the field easier. For example two units utilising two different howitzer types (even of the same calibre) would operate in a different manner due to the technical capabilities provided by the equipment – effective combat range, target acquisition, resilience against enemy countermeasures. Such a situation not only increases planning time but

units equipped and trained with howitzers of one type would not be able to effectively support units that have been trained to operate with the support of other howitzers.

The key to overcoming these problems must be coordination, and a positive example could come from the **Weimar Triangle**, which **could serve as the vanguard of European defence cooperation**. In addition to the broader EU CARD mechanism, Weimar states could conduct consultations and share more in-depth information about their plans for the development of their armed forces and the acquisition of new capabilities. This would facilitate cooperation (e.g., joint procurement of specific weapon systems), the preparation of a competitive offer compared to foreign suppliers, or securing production capacities to meet partner needs according to the expected schedule.

#### EU countries and the UK compared to the United States

**6x greater**  
use of weapon systems

**50% lower**  
defense spending

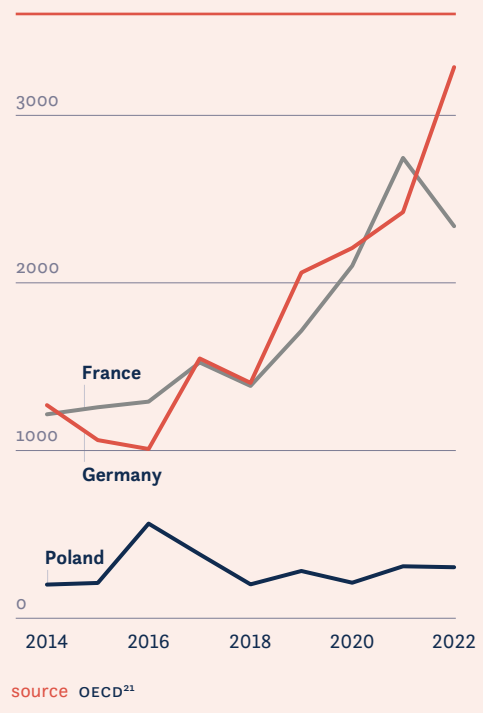
**<10%**  
of the US's operational capabilities achieved

**17**  
types of main battle tanks used (compared to 1 type in the US)

Weimar countries could also **agree on certain specialisations in the production of specific capabilities within their industries to avoid duplicating investments in R&D and benefit from economies of scale.** In such a model, each country would commit politically – as far as European law (Article 346 (b) of the Treaty on the Functioning of the EU) allows – to preferentially treat partner solutions, benefiting from similar preferential treatment on a reciprocal basis. This will be challenging due to the specificities of individual countries’ doctrines (e.g., France strives to avoid dependence on other partners, producing all key capabilities on its territory), but cooperation could start with less sensitive systems. A key consideration here should be that, while the Weimar states would spearhead such endeavour they should do so in cooperation with other European states. In this way the capabilities possessed by Weimar would be supplemented and work in accord with the needs of European allies.

Moreover, Weimar states should prioritise the spread of the European defence industry among partner countries. This would create key strategic capabilities for each state which would allow for greater sustainability and maintenance of armed forces in case of conflict. Additionally, such an approach would create greater safeguards – should one sector suffer (either due to sabotage, enemy actions or other causes) the others would be able to cover its role and provide

**Weimar Triangle Defence R&D Budget in the years 2014–2022, in current USD PPP, (Million)**



key war materiel for the affected country. Such investments would also allow Europe to become less reliant on foreign production of key military matériel, such as ammunition. In such a way the initiative kickstarted by Weimar would benefit other European states and benefit itself from such cooperation.

**LONG TERM**

**Joint Projects**

The most advanced form of industrial cooperation is the joint production of specific weapon systems, from research and development to their implementation into the armed forces. **The advantages of European industrial cooperation in the defence sector are well-known and widely documented.** Successful international projects involving European countries include the Panavia Tornado, Eurofighter Typhoon, and Joint Strike Fighter.

Jointly produced equipment offers lower research and development, production, and servicing costs for each collaborating country. It also helps avoid interoperability issues and may even feature enhanced combat capabilities (e.g., through integration with various weapons

produced by different countries). For European countries, additional incentives for cooperation include financial support from instruments such as the European Defence Fund (possibility of obtaining up to 30% funding for research and development costs).

In recent years, major joint European weapons development programmes have been launched, such as the Future Combat Air System (FCAS) and the Main Ground Combat System (MGCS) with the latter focused on developing a future European combat system. Such initiatives could have had the potential to deepen industrial cooperation among Weimar states, as all of them possess production capabilities for heavy weaponry, and their armed forces have significant needs for MBTs and other armoured vehicles.

However, despite expressing interest, Poland was not included in the German-French consortium, resulting in a significant loss for the programme. Poland may need over 1,500 new main battle tanks, and has not been able to take part in the initiative, and has opted to pursue a partnership with the US and South Korea. The joint project with Seoul is primarily aimed at restoring the ability to manufacture main battle tanks in Poland. Additionally, due to political reasons, the future of FCAS and MGCS programmes remain uncertain. Therefore, despite some difficulties, **it is essential to examine whether there are capabilities that Weimar countries could develop jointly in the coming years.** A special working group should be established to analyse whether there are any capabilities that all Weimar and/or other European states wish to develop in a similar timeframe and where cooperation would have economic and strategic justification. The dialogue on the parliamentary level should also be supported with the engagement of the civil society. Civil society, in the form of think tanks, research centres and other such institutions, could support efforts to localise key cooperation opportunities and capabilities as well as signpost any challenges that might lie in the way of successful cooperation.

A positive example may be a recent letter of intent to jointly develop long-range cruise missiles signed by Poland, Germany, France and Italy. European countries have experience in this dimension as both Storm Shadow – SCALP-EG missiles and the Taurus missiles have been created as joint projects between European countries – British-French and German-Swedish cooperation. In the first case the production of these weapon systems has been stopped as European demand for them was not enough to sustain the production, however SCALP-EG is still being produced in France. The war in Ukraine has vividly highlighted that such systems are key components of contemporary armed conflicts and are required in vast amounts to continuously support combat operations. The Weimar Triangle should cooperate on the sustainment of European capabilities to produce long-range cruise missiles, with Germany and France providing the necessary know-how, stemming from their achievements in this field. Poland on the other hand could offer additional investment funds, as well as some of its advanced information and recon systems which could facilitate the employment of cruise missiles. This endeavour would also allow European NATO states to transfer the stockpiles of older munitions to Ukraine to boost their capabilities on the field of battle.

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## Obstacles and Limitations

The protection of domestic defence industries is a key obstacle to harmonising defence procurement and production among Poland, Germany and France. Each country has a vested interest in maintaining its industrial base, which can lead to resistance against deeper cooperation and the sharing of technology.

Technological disparities between the three countries also present a significant challenge. Poland, Germany and France have different levels of capability in defence production, which

could lead to inefficiencies and complicate efforts to standardise equipment across their militaries.

Financial constraints and political shifts within the Weimar countries could undermine the long-term viability of the proposed reforms. Economic uncertainty and changing political landscapes may lead to reduced investment in the defence sector, slowing down the progress needed to build a self-sufficient European defence industry.



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# 2 Foreign Policy



# Introduction

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The global landscape has undergone profound transformations, with new power dynamics, geopolitical shifts, and the rise of non-Western actors challenging the stability and influence of the European Union. In this increasingly multipolar world, the EU faces heightened threats at its borders from Russia's aggression in Ukraine to instability in its southern neighbourhood. At the same time, the EU must navigate complex relationships with major global powers like the United States and China, as well as foster stronger ties with emerging democracies across Asia, Africa, and Latin America. The challenge for Europe is clear: it must assert itself more decisively on the global stage or risk being sidelined in the strategic decisions that will shape the 21st century.

The Weimar Triangle, composed of France, Germany, and Poland, offers a unique platform to enhance European foreign policy, leveraging the strengths of three key nations that together represent a wide range of interests, geographic perspectives, and global reach. France's global diplomatic networks, Germany's economic leadership, and Poland's focus on security in Eastern Europe create a powerful alliance capable of driving EU

foreign policy in a more coordinated and effective direction. Together, these countries can build a coherent European voice in international affairs, demonstrating unity, resilience, and purpose.

The need for Europe to take a more active role in global governance is paramount. Through its foreign policy, the EU must promote democratic values, human rights, and multilateralism while addressing pressing global challenges such as climate change, migration, and geopolitical competition. The Weimar Triangle can serve as the forerunner in these efforts, spearheading initiatives that strengthen Europe's influence abroad and ensure that the EU remains a key player in shaping the future global order.

This section of the report outlines two crucial advocacy causes that can mobilise the Weimar Triangle to lead on foreign policy: first, by advancing the concept of a 'New Wider Europe' that ensures stability and prosperity in the EU's neighbourhood, and second, by pushing the EU to project a unified voice on the global stage through more strategic and aligned engagements with global democracies through parliamentary diplomacy.

## Towards New Wider Europe

The geopolitical environment in the EU's immediate neighbourhood has dramatically worsened, becoming increasingly volatile. Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine has amplified this situation. The concept of a 'wider Europe,' conceived two decades ago, assumed that the liberal logic of 'Europeanization' would spread, growing to encompass the EU's neighbours. These neighbouring countries were expected to adopt the model of European integration, which promoted mutual benefits, win-win solutions, and the soft transfer of EU policies to bordering regions. This was envisioned to create a world surrounding the EU that was Europe-like, and conducive to peace and development.

After a decade, **the concept of a 'wider Europe' has already become outdated.** Instead of transforming the neighbourhood into a 'ring of friends,' the EU ended with the 'ring of fire' next to its borders. The Arab Spring spread across North Africa while on the Eastern front, Russia began its aggression against Ukraine. Then, the EU abandoned exporting its values to other regions as it began grappling with its own 'existential' crises, often referred to as a 'poly-crisis.' This inward focus prevailed over the EU's strategic expansion.

Two decades later, the idea of a 'wider Europe' is in limbo. It requires reconceptualization. **The aspiration to improve the EU's neighbourhood is not just idealistic but a matter of survival for the EU itself.** This has become a zero-sum game in an increasingly hostile, violent, and volatile world. Either the EU will safeguard its

closest geopolitical environment or be susceptible to external storms coming from it.

This new geopolitical environment demands a recalibration of the EU's strategy. A shift in tone is already visible in the language of enlargement documents and speeches of EU leaders, where arguments are increasingly geopolitical and security-related. This reflects the understanding that **the fate of Ukraine, Moldova, Georgia, and the countries of the Western Balkans is critical to the EU's long-term stability and security.** Their successful 'Europeanization' must be driven by bottom-up reforms and a strong top-down engagement from EU institutions and member states. The European Political Community (EPC) can play an integral role here, providing a flexible platform for broader political engagement with these nations. By creating a space for dialogue on key security, energy, and economic matters, the EPC offers an inclusive forum that complements traditional EU accession pathways while involving non-EU states that are critical for regional stability. If managed loosely, enlargement efforts can be derailed by external actors.

However, a **New Wider Europe concept cannot contain itself to enlargement.** While the countries to the South of Europe do not aspire to join, the EU should not be devoid of ambitions regarding North and Sub-Saharan Africa and the Middle East. The challenges coming from that part of the world are profound and complex. They will obviously hit Europe in multiple areas. Though the tools of EU impact are entirely different, there is no choice between paying



attention to the East or the South. They must both receive it.

Naturally, the question of EU leadership arises. Germany played a decisive role in the 2004 enlargement to the East, while France remained reluctant. Now, with future enlargement at hand, the entire EU is more unified and aware of the need to invest in it. However, collective leadership is required due to the scale of the challenges ahead. **Even the trio of major EU countries will not be sufficient to lead alone, but it can be crucial in initiating necessary new policy initiatives.** It applies both in cases of enlargement policy, and the EU's approach to the Southern countries. In this regard, the EPC becomes crucial in aligning member states' foreign policy approaches with those of neighbouring countries and even key global partners.

The diverse interests of Poland, Germany and France, when strategically planned, coordinated, and compromised, can leverage more significant, effective, and inclusive EU actions. The momentum that the Weimar Triangle is experiencing, if

wisely harnessed, can help develop New Wider Europe policies for the years to come, whether in security, migration, or other critical areas.

In many respects, it is valid to repeat the truism that the world will never be the same since February 24, 2022. By helping Ukraine defend itself, inviting Ukraine into the EU, and drastically reducing energy dependency on Russia, **the EU has become a geopolitical actor.** This transformation was not the result of meticulous planning but rather the consequence of crucial choices made during pivotal moments.

Every geopolitical actor needs a conscious and bold strategy. Therefore, **it is essential for the EU to adopt a strategy that aims to transform its neighbourhood rather than allowing it to drift.** Developing a comprehensive New Wider Europe Strategy will enhance the EU's political influence and its ability to address challenges in its neighbourhood, from security threats to economic development and democratic governance. **Enlargement cannot be a purely technical issue focused solely on closing negotiation chapters.** Instead, it must be a comprehensive and strategic endeavour to reinforce European stability and prosperity.

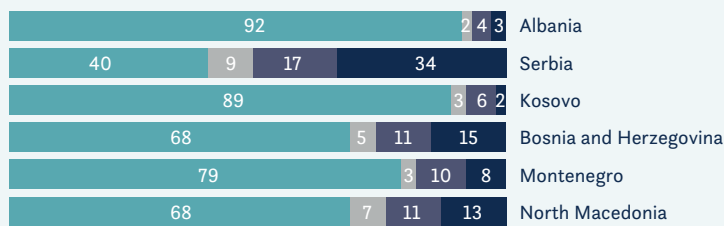
The combined experiences of Poland, Germany and France can facilitate the integration of Eastern Europe and the Western Balkans into the EU. This integration can occur if the trio sets clear priorities for the EU regarding neighbourhood and migration policies. Additionally, addressing the necessary internal EU reforms in preparation for enlargement is crucial to ensure that the accommodation process for new members proceeds smoothly and effectively.

Finally, **EU unity is needed in this geopolitical endeavour,** where many hurdles exist. On a political level, the trio can help build this unity. However, it can also be achieved on a practical, functional level. Due to the scarcity of financial resources, the EU will be forced to economise as needs escalate. Hence, 'pooling and sharing' and the 'One for All' diplomatic approach among EU member states can help. We should avoid unnecessary duplications. The European External Action Service can play a more significant role in representing the entire EU and ensuring more coordinated actions. This service can optimise diplomatic missions and burden-sharing, ensuring coordinated and impactful EU representation and action globally.

### Increasing risk of enlargement fatigue in Western Balkans

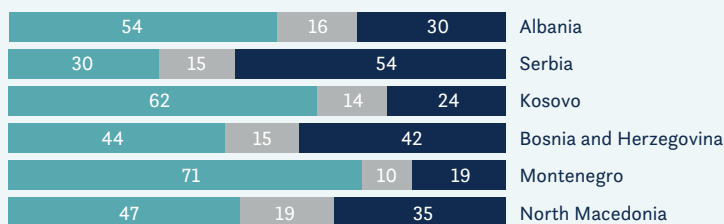
**If referendum were held today on our country joining the European Union, how would you vote?**

- Would vote to join the EU
- Don't know
- Would not vote
- Would vote against joining the EU



**Is the European Union serious in its intention to offer membership to Western Balkans?**

- Yes
- Don't know
- No



source International Republican Institute, Western Balkans Regional Poll, February–March 2024<sup>22</sup>

## Roadmap for attaining the goal

### SHORT TERM

#### Setting Priorities for the Neighbourhood

Enlarging the EU has historically been a lengthy and often frustrating endeavour. From the perspective of acceding countries, the space for negotiation is minimal. They cannot ‘cherry-pick’ the policies they wish to implement; rather, they must adopt the entire *acquis communautaire*. The only negotiation space concerns the timing of implementation. More than 100,000 pages of EU legislation must be incorporated into national law, an enormous task requiring extensive reforms and overcoming domestic veto points. **One of the most crucial factors in this process is the unification of domestic political elites around the single aim of joining the EU.** When this consensus is achieved, remaining divisions are typically about the pace rather than the direction of integration, significantly enhancing the chances of successfully completing the accession process.

The European Commission plays a key role on the EU side, but the real negotiations occur behind the scenes, where numerous national interests are at play. At the conclusion of each negotiating chapter, the EU Council (member states) has its say, while the European Parliament is involved throughout the process, especially at the end. The Accession Treaty must subsequently be ratified by EU member states, where potential referenda can derail all previous achievements.

Acceding countries must manage these components with great care, despite their lack of prior experience in this complex process. Therefore, **they require effective counsel from supportive EU members.** The Weimar Trio can assist by advising on the establishment of appropriate management structures, setting priorities, and sequencing reforms. Furthermore, building a multi-level advocacy network within Europe would facilitate the eventual passage of the Accession Treaty through EU member states.

As a single approach does not fit all, **each acceding country from Eastern Europe or the Western Balkans needs a tailored, actionable roadmap.** This represents a vast amount of work, making a dedicated Weimar Triangle task force highly desirable. This task force would support these countries’ EU membership bids through political advocacy, technical assistance, and capacity building.

The Trio can also conduct joint diplomatic and parliamentary missions to key EU and acceding countries to garner support for these accessions, emphasising the strategic importance of these regions to European stability. Such support was expressed already on the Ministerial level, for example during the joint delegation of three Ministries of the EU to Skopje in July 2023, ahead of elections in North Macedonia.<sup>5</sup>

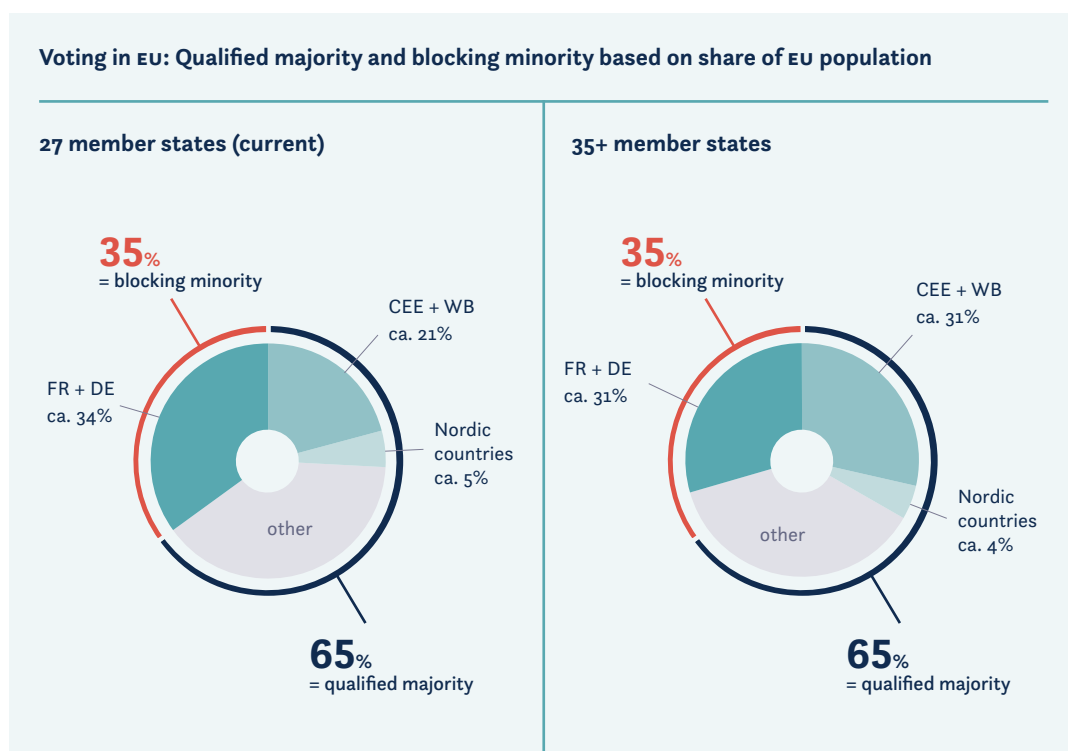
### MEDIUM TERM

#### Addressing Enlargement and EU Reforms

Recently, three significant initiatives have reignited the discussion on EU reforms. Firstly, the Conference on the Future of Europe<sup>6</sup> introduced a set of wide-ranging recommendations for improving the EU and charting its future course. Secondly, a group of independent experts from Germany and France presented an analytical report

proposing various reform scenarios.<sup>7</sup> Thirdly, the European Parliament proposed reforms to the Lisbon Treaty, although this proposal was passed by only a slim majority in the EP. Additionally, there have been numerous calls to double the EU multiannual budget (Emmanuel Macron), make substantial investments in the development of EU defence policy (Donald Tusk, Kaja Kallas), and fast-track the EU single market (Enrico Letta).

## Voting in EU: Qualified majority and blocking minority based on share of EU population



It is notable that **EU reforms have not been a prominent item on the European Council agenda** for some time. Most members have been reluctant to push for a European Convention, fearing the implications of discussing necessary EU reforms that could potentially lead to treaty changes.

One must acknowledge that while the Lisbon Treaty is designed to accommodate future enlargements of the EU, it does so only minimally concerning institutions and decision-making processes. It is less well-suited functionally to address the governance needs of twenty-first-century challenges. Moreover, **it is pertinent to consider how to govern a future Union of nearly 40 countries**. There is a risk that it could evolve into a kind of Council of Europe+ or OSCE+.

The Weimar Triangle is well-positioned to initiate a serious debate on the necessary EU reforms to accommodate new members **without sacrificing governability, unity, and cohesion**.

Although the timing before the 2024 European Parliamentary elections was not ideal, the beginning of the new terms of the EU's primary institutions provides an excellent opportunity to start this process. Specific reforms would need to address not only EU institutional and decision-making dimensions (voting procedures, representation of EU institutions) but also policies (the level at which they are exercised, allocation of competencies) and their structure. For example, there is a growing awareness that Ukraine's accession to the EU would necessitate prior reforms of the cohesion and common agricultural policies. The Common Foreign and Security Policy also needs to be rapidly advanced to fit such an enlarged EU. For example, the issue of skipping veto in certain CFSP areas should be seriously examined.

However, the Weimar countries must begin with trilateral meetings to align their positions on major issues, acknowledging existing differences. These differences must be resolved to ensure greater influence in debates beyond the format.

### Developing a New Wider Europe Strategy

Enlargement does not occur in a vacuum. It is a geopolitical process that must consider variables beyond just EU policies and laws. EU accession conditionality was effective for Central and Eastern Europe (CEE), but it has had much more limited influence in the protracted accession process of Western Balkan countries, where the malicious influence of external actors is more prevalent. Conversely, Russia's war of aggression has fast-tracked internal reforms in Ukraine, propelling it directly towards EU membership.

A New Wider Europe Strategy deserves its name. It should encompass not only market integration but also the creation of a strategic environment conducive to these countries' accession or advanced forms of partnership. **Security pillars of accession are essential because, without security, market integration cannot progress effectively.** Democratic governance, resilience, and sustainable development depend on security (or the lack thereof) and must be strategically strengthened to mitigate the risk of regression.

Earlier projects such as the Mediterranean Union or the Eastern Partnership are either defunct or no longer relevant, though the latter proved partially successful. **It is time to devise**

**new strategies encompassing the EU's neighbourhood, considering that Europe is competing for influence in these regions.** The fate of these regions is not predetermined. Recently, Armenia provided a good example of a pro-EU shift, which, if left unsupported, could revert in the future.

Even more challenging will be creating effective policies regarding the countries to the South of the EU. The EU's influence there is waning, so it should strive to re-examine its strategy and the tools of influence at its disposal. A New Wider Europe concept can offer an occasion to trigger this necessary rethink.

The European Political Community, a pan-European intergovernmental forum created at France's initiative, can also be a useful format for dialogue with non-European partners. The contribution of some non-EU countries is already indispensable in many of Europe's challenges.

Due to its membership, the Weimar Triangle is well-suited to initiate the EU discussion in this sphere. It can introduce joint initiatives and projects in these regions to address security, political, and economic challenges, and counter foreign interference. Considering the engagement of Weimar's foreign ministers during Ukraine's 2013 'Dignity Revolution,' the Weimar



Triangle could also play a more active role in conflict resolution in countries such as Georgia, Moldova, and Armenia. It could devise scenarios for a post-Lukashenko Belarus or strategies to strengthen Russian civil society and promote freedom of thought.

The New Wider Europe Strategy should be a comprehensive framework aimed at enhancing

security, fostering democratic governance, and promoting sustainable development in the EU's neighbourhood. By doing so, **it will not only support the accession process of these countries but also help transform countries that will not be part of the EU**, especially from the South, but are increasingly important to Europe's security and prosperity. This would reinforce the EU's geopolitical standing.

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## Obstacles and limitations

One obstacle is the differing strategic interests of Poland, Germany and France in relation to global powers like Russia, China and the United States. These differences can lead to fragmented foreign policy approaches, negatively affecting and reducing the effectiveness of the Weimar Triangle's efforts in the EU's neighbourhood.

External interference from actors like Russia is another significant challenge. The Kremlin has a vested interest in preventing EU enlargement. It could be ready to take more risk than current

member states using various means, including disinformation and economic pressure, to destabilise the region and thwart the Weimar Triangle's efforts.

The influence of eurosceptic and nationalist parties within the Weimar countries is also a critical risk. These groups often oppose deeper EU integration and international commitments, which could weaken the Weimar Triangle's ability to present a united front on foreign policy matters, particularly in the context of EU enlargement.

## Enhanced Parliamentary Cooperation

European countries have more areas of common interest than differences, enabling unified action more often than is currently executed. **Shared values such as democracy, human rights, and the rule of law, along with similar economic interests and security concerns, provide a strong foundation for cooperation among European nations and a synergy of their efforts abroad.** For instance, EU member states consistently collaborate on issues like climate change, technology, international trade, finance, development, consumer protection, and counter-terrorism efforts, showcasing their alignment on key global challenges.

Meanwhile, **the EU too often presents itself to the world as fragmented, internally divided by national interests and policy inconsistencies.** This paradox, where one of the most united international organisations is seen through its setbacks and points of difference, undermines its global standing. This fragmentation, compounded by competing national priorities, has led to a perception of European disunity, which weakens its influence abroad.

The misleading default message sent by the EU as a whole abroad can have devastating effects and lead to misunderstandings from key allies. For example, when the U.S. military aid package to Ukraine was frozen in Congress, it revealed a lack of awareness in Washington regarding Europe's significant financial contributions to Ukraine. **Without unified communication, key global partners are left with a shallow**

**understanding of Europe's role** in major global issues.

Although governments primarily shape a nation's foreign policy, elected representatives in national parliaments and the European Parliament can significantly influence policy directions. **They ensure government accountability and strengthen the democratic framework** supporting global peace, cooperation, and human rights efforts.

Moreover, while the ruling coalition in a given country often changes, the **overall structure of the parliament is less vulnerable to short-term shifts** in focus and can maintain engagement outside of polarising front-row politics and mass media attention. In times of broad coalitions, minority governments, or legislative gridlocks, parliamentary diplomacy can fill the void of continuity.

If the administration of a given country is unable to address foreign challenges, other democratic institutions, including parliaments and civil society organisations, must mobilise. This year's experience with the frozen US aid package indicates how much power lies in the hands of the legislative branch. Moreover, parliaments often represent different groupings than the government or serve as breeding grounds for future leaders who may soon take the lead in their own countries, making the time of their mandate extremely valuable to foster long term relationship and understanding.

Furthermore, the EU faces challenges within its still-developing institutional framework and decision-making processes. Therefore, implementing a complementary approach to

coordinate national legislative procedures could serve as a supportive mechanism across the EU, especially if led by the Weimar countries.

## Roadmap for attaining the goal

SHORT TERM

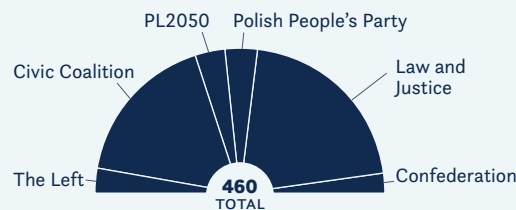
### Initiating regular joint parliamentary consultations

The Aachen Treaty, signed in January 2019 between Germany and France, was the result of a collaborative effort by parliamentary working groups from the Bundestag and the Assemblée Nationale. These groups drafted the agreement

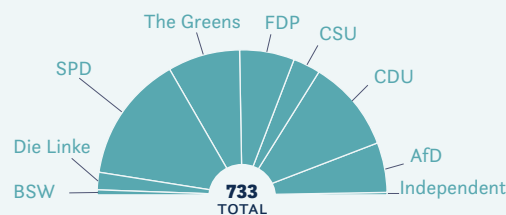
through regular meetings the previous year. This cooperation also led to the creation of a new parliamentary assembly, which held its first session in March 2019 in Paris. With fifty delegates from each country, **this assembly has been useful for improving mutual understanding** and contributed to developing a common strategic culture between Germany and France.

### The fragmented composition of the lower chambers of Weimar countries demands more parliamentary cooperation to bridge foreign policy understanding

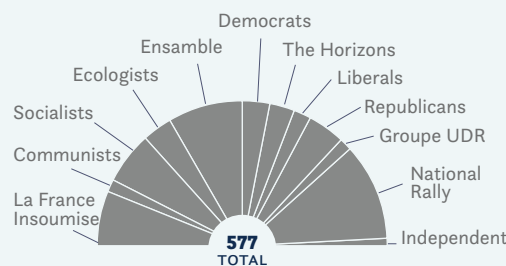
#### POLISH SEJM elected in 2023



#### GERMAN BUNDESTAG elected in 2021



#### FRENCH NATIONAL ASSEMBLY elected in 2024



#### EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT elected in 2024

230 TOTAL

##### The Left

4 9

##### Greens

15 5

##### Socialists & Democrats

3 14 13

##### Renew Europe

1 8 13

##### European People's Party

23 31 6

##### European Conservatives and Reformists

20 4

##### Patriots for Europe

30

##### Europe of Sovereign Nations

3 14 1

##### independent

3 10



Although the idea and outcome were invaluable, there are some lessons to take from the execution that took time to be appropriately scaled. Dozens of delegates from each country formed the assembly, but with only two days of sessions, there was insufficient time for meaningful exchanges, networking, or side discussions. The rotating composition of the delegation further hindered the development of lasting relationships. Additionally, the variety of specialisations made it difficult for the assembly to focus on specific issues.

Based on this experience, **any interparliamentary dialogue in the Weimar Triangle format should be appropriately scaled** and focus on specific areas of common interest, in particular in strategic and security issues.

Even with two countries, an assembly can become unwieldy and fail to deliver added value. For a tripartite framework, specificity in goals is crucial. **The fluctuating activity of the Weimar Triangle illustrates that opening too many fronts of cooperation during peak moments can quickly lead to fatigue and unmet expectations.** If the format is to address key challenges ahead of the EU – where member states differ and struggle to reach mutual understanding – the focus of the joint sessions should remain on defence and security, European foreign policy, and energy and climate matters.

Regular joint sessions of specific committees or contact groups from the parliaments of Poland, Germany and France to coordinate key legislation and policy issues will serve two main objectives. First, they will **facilitate communication and the identification of common ground among**

**the three countries.** Second, they will **help define the interests of individual member states and the EU as a whole.** These meetings should be the culmination of a thorough preparation process, where parliamentarians from each country are briefed and discuss the joint message with domestic delegation members first. Such delegations should be bipartisan, involving a broad political spectrum, including both governing parties and the opposition, which may eventually assume power. Apolitical cooperation at the parliamentary level can have a significantly positive impact on higher-level diplomacy in the long term.

A closer network among the three parliaments could also send a strong signal abroad and be complementary to the MFA. Parliaments can issue coordinated resolutions on situations in countries around the world. Such resolutions, while tailored to each country, **if issued simultaneously, would send a powerful message that governments alone may not be able to convey sufficiently,** for example in addressing human rights issues.

Parliamentarians must also work to reduce the vulnerabilities of their political systems, media environments, financial sectors, and cyber and critical infrastructure. Each country is targeted by the Kremlin on a daily basis and must better coordinate its intelligence and law enforcement activities to combat Russian disinformation and subversion, and find ways for authorities to cooperate with the private sector to counteract such meddling. The exchange of know-how among different legislative bodies would be invaluable in sharing experiences and best practices.

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### Galvanising transatlantic relations in turbulent times

Once basic parliamentary cooperation is established, it can be elevated by extending efforts abroad, starting with the USA. **In times of significant potential misunderstandings between administrations in the White House and European capitals, it is crucial for parliaments to strengthen transatlantic ties and make them more resilient to political populist pressure.** The first joint Weimar parliamentary delegation to Washington, DC, organised by the Casimir Pulaski Foundation in April 2024, is

an excellent example of this initiative<sup>8</sup>. Such delegations can foster mutual understanding and reinforce the importance of coordinated strategies between Europe and the USA, especially in addressing global security and foreign policy challenges.

During the visit to the US Congress, it was observed that current **European efforts for Ukraine and continental security often go unnoticed by partners in Washington.** The level of military and financial support provided by the EU and its member states to Ukraine is frequently overlooked.





The very first Weimar parliamentary delegation to Washington D.C. organized by Casimir Pulaski Foundation in April 2024, joined by Paweł Kowal from Polish Sejm, Natalia Pouzyreff from French National Assembly and Norbert Röttgen from German Bundestag.<sup>23</sup>

There is a need for ongoing engagement of European parliamentarians in relations with the USA, encompassing a strong component of parliamentary diplomacy, addressed to both Democrats and Republicans. **Security is a matter of concern for both sides of the political spectrum in Europe and the USA.** To manage mutual expectations appropriately, we must work across party lines and keep our partners informed of ongoing actions. Europeans have not adequately recognized the societal changes in the USA since the end of the Cold War, which have weakened the transatlantic orientation of American legislators. Maintaining the transatlantic bond requires communication that reaches beyond the current generation of American politicians. Europeans should further engage in public diplomacy projects aimed at a broader audience, especially youth, involving long-term communication efforts on European foreign policy priorities.

The role of the Weimar Triangle is to create a coordinated and long-term strategy for transatlantic cooperation. **American politicians and**

**citizens must see how much Europe contributes to security.** Poland, Germany and France should counter the growing isolationism gaining traction in American strategic thinking, which is based on internal political trends in the USA. The goal is to inform American partners about the changes occurring in Europe to avoid divisions or bilateral security alliances. It should also be emphasised to American partners how important coordinated strategies are for the structure of their alliances worldwide, especially in the Western Pacific. **It must be clarified that European efforts to strengthen their own defence capabilities are not aimed at excluding the USA from Europe.**

This task is not limited to the Weimar Triangle. While the format's actions can serve as a good example, all states and friends of the transatlantic bond should make an extra effort to increase their visibility in the USA and amplify it by cooperating with other member states. Pan-European communication in the USA can have an incomparably more powerful effect than the efforts of a single minister.

### Stronger EU in the world

The path forward is clear: Europe must act united or risk irrelevance. In a multipolar world, fragmented European countries cannot hope to exert influence on their own.

Once regular consultations between parliaments are established and the European public diplomacy efforts in the USA prove efficient the EU lawmakers should try to significantly strengthen its international presence beyond the transatlantic through joint delegations abroad. The initial success of these efforts with allies could serve as a model for further expansion.

A cohesive and unified European approach, crafted through parliamentary consultations and joint diplomatic missions, can demonstrate a stronger, more coherent EU stance on global issues. This model of cooperation can then be extended to other strategic regions around the world. By presenting a united front, the EU can enhance its influence and effectiveness in international relations.

India with its vibrant, largest-in-the-world democracy, 788 members of its two-chamber parliament, and a civil society eager for engagement presents an excellent starting point for executing such an approach. As a rising global power with significant economic and strategic importance, New Delhi represents a critical

partner for the EU. India's long-term future is more likely to lie in partnerships with democracies, even though it currently pursues a multi-vector policy and engages with Putin's Russia. Unlike with China, the EU nations do not have any major conflicts with New Delhi, making India a better-positioned partner for the EU to conduct a joint policy. Furthermore, the Indian-European parliamentary ties remain largely unexplored, with significant potential and willingness from both sides to engage.

Similarly, the EU can deepen its focus on other Asian, Latin American, and African countries by **ensuring that European lawmakers fully understand the diversity and complexity of these regions** and engage with them more seriously. By leveraging the unique position of Central and Eastern European countries, which do not have a colonial history, the Weimar-led delegation could build bridges and facilitate discussions between Western European and African nations. This approach could help address historical grievances and foster new partnerships based on mutual respect and shared goals. Together with parallel efforts such as the Global Gateway Initiative, this would contribute to the rebuilding of European soft power on the global stage.. This is particularly important as Russia through its disinformation and on-site campaigns continues to spoil the relations of the developing world with the West

## Obstacles and limitations

Differences in legislative priorities and national interests among the Weimar countries could impede effective parliamentary cooperation. These discrepancies may lead to misalignments in key policy areas, making it difficult to coordinate legislative efforts across Poland, Germany and France.

The increasing influence of nationalist and eurosceptic parties within the Weimar states is another significant obstacle. These parties may

resist deeper parliamentary cooperation, viewing it as an erosion of national sovereignty, and could push for policies that prioritise national interests over collective European action.

Maintaining consistent engagement from parliamentarians across the three countries poses another challenge. Political shifts, particularly following elections, could disrupt ongoing initiatives and reduce the continuity of parliamentary dialogue, making it harder to achieve long-term goals.

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# 3 Energy and State Resilience



# Introduction

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The European Union's (EU) two largest economies and most populous member states, Germany, and France are the bloc's two largest energy consumers and greenhouse gas emitters.<sup>9</sup> Poland, another major European state with a large population, is among the fastest-growing economies in Europe and still largely relies on fossil fuels to power its industry.<sup>10</sup>

**These countries manifest significant differences in energy choices such as industrial landscape, technological structures, institutions, regulatory practice and, above all, energy mixes.** The diversity of national strategies (e.g., included in the National Energy and Climate Plans – NECPS) is also noteworthy which up to date have indicated differences in the countries' energy transformation ambitions.

A more constructive coordination between their respective national positions through the Weimar Triangle format could pave the way for **enhanced cooperation between EU countries in energy security and climate**, and should, above all, help to innovate European energy policy.

Considering the renewed interest among the political leadership in the Weimar Triangle countries, joint energy security and climate-related initiatives presented in this report offer an obvious and attractive opportunity to relaunch and reaffirm the cooperation of Poland, Germany and France. A more constructive coordination between their respective national positions through the Weimar Triangle format could also support the strengthening of European entities offering technologies necessary for the transition to a climate-neutral economy. A well-functioning energy system that provides affordable low-emission energy sources to European industry is key to maintaining the competitiveness of the EU.

The publication of REPOWEREU<sup>11</sup> highlighted the **need for critical transformations of the European energy system** and requirement to accelerate the energy transition and establish a more resilient and sustainable energy landscape. In this context, the proposed advocacy causes, (1) the NECP Synergy Initiative and (2) the Energy Data Sharing Framework, advance this agenda by taking the next critical steps toward achieving these goals.

These advocacy causes emphasise the importance of transnational, interregional, and intergovernmental cooperation to foster tighter energy collaboration among Poland, Germany and France. These collaborative approaches can not only effectively address the challenges outlined in REPOWEREU, but also **ensure that the member states work in concert to enhance energy security and drive forward the collective climate objectives** of the European Union. They are mutually reinforcing and are designed to boost competitiveness, allow better adaptation to the changing geopolitical environment and further increase energy solidarity in Europe.

While the NECP Synergy Initiative sets the strategic direction and regulatory standards, the Energy Data Sharing Framework increases trust among the partners and enables governments to introduce sound, fact-based policies. This harmonious relationship between policy framework and practical tools is crucial for building a resilient and interconnected European energy landscape that can respond adeptly to current and future challenges.

Given the wide range of instruments available to Poland, Germany and France, a pragmatic and results-oriented approach, focused on these concrete projects would lead to decisive changes in the energy security and climate domain.

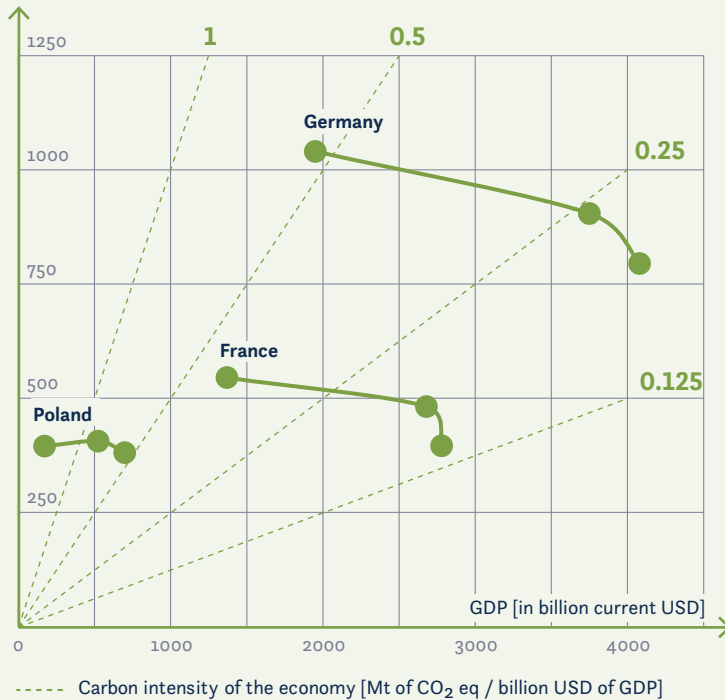
## National Energy and Climate Plans (NECPs) Synergy Initiative

The Weimar Triangle NECP Synergy Initiative stands as a ground-breaking effort to forge a unified energy vision among Poland, Germany and France. This initiative is designed to coordinate national strategies presented in respective

NECPs (National Energy and Climate Policy Plans<sup>12</sup>) documents aimed at **achieving net-zero emissions while simultaneously bolstering energy resilience in the face of potential crises**, such as geopolitical disturbances or supply chain disruptions.

### Carbon intensity of the Weimar economies in 2000, 2011 and 2022

Total emissions of all greenhouse gases (UNFCCC)  
[in megatonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> equivalent]



source World Bank and European Environment Agency<sup>24</sup>

This advocacy cause emphasises the need for the technological neutrality aspect which postulates that a specific energy generation technology should not be the sole focus. Instead, **the proposal prioritises the overall reduction of carbon emissions, allowing countries to implement the most efficient and sustainable solutions tailored to their unique contexts.** This approach encourages investment in a variety of technologies, be it renewables, hydrogen, nuclear, or even transitional fossil fuel solutions integrated with carbon capture, all to support the net-zero target. By not favouring any particular technology, the Weimar Triangle can adapt to emerging technologies and innovations, ensuring a flexible and effective transition to a low-carbon economy.



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## Embracing Technological Neutrality

A ‘one-size fits all’ solution to achieve the countries’ climate goals might be difficult to agree upon given the plethora of European approaches to energy transformation. By applying a technological neutrality principle, the Weimar Triangle should embrace the application of various technologies – renewables (solar, wind, bioenergy), nuclear energy, carbon capture and storage (CCS), and fossil fuels with low-emission technologies – to contribute to the decarbonization process in each country. Furthermore, every nation should also have the autonomy to decide on their technological preference and/or disfavour upon their inherent conditions and specific circumstances. This would also address the ongoing discussions about the benefits and drawbacks of nuclear energy generation alongside other renewable energy sources.

Furthermore, Poland, Germany and France, despite their different energy systems and decarbonization trajectories, should now further coordinate their strategies. France is increasingly adopting renewables and acknowledging the role of molecules in decarbonization, while Poland is rapidly expanding its renewable energy capacity. With Russian gas no longer a divisive factor, there is strong mutual interest in CCS, hydrogen, and, to some extent, biomethane. **During recent energy crises, the complementarity of these energy systems allowed each country to support its neighbours, highlighting the importance of diverse energy sources.**

This trend towards technological neutrality is not unique to Europe; it is a global movement embraced by major economies like China, the United States, Japan, and other OECD countries, where a variety of energy technologies are being deployed to achieve decarbonization goals.

**The approach not only allows different technologies to coexist and compete but also fosters the emergence of new, efficient solutions to address climate change while ensuring that the transition to a sustainable economy is inclusive and accessible across various sectors.** This flexibility would also ensure that different regions and sectors can choose the most effective and efficient technologies suitable for their specific circumstances.

### 1. Market-Driven Decision-Making

The Weimar Triangle could postulate that incorporating market dynamics into the decision-making process may be beneficial and allow for greater flexibility and responsiveness to regional energy needs while still collaborating effectively with the EU. Encouraging a set of diverse technologies promotes technological diversification, as opposed to concentrating on (a) single solution(s) and its associated supply chains. This approach allows for flexibility and adaptability, considering the unique circumstances of each country and region. By applying a more systemic perspective that values local contexts and market signals, stakeholders can make informed decisions that align with actual needs and capabilities, fostering innovation and competitiveness in the energy sector. This empowers countries to develop solutions best suited to their specific energy profiles and requirements while driving overall progress toward sustainability and efficiency.

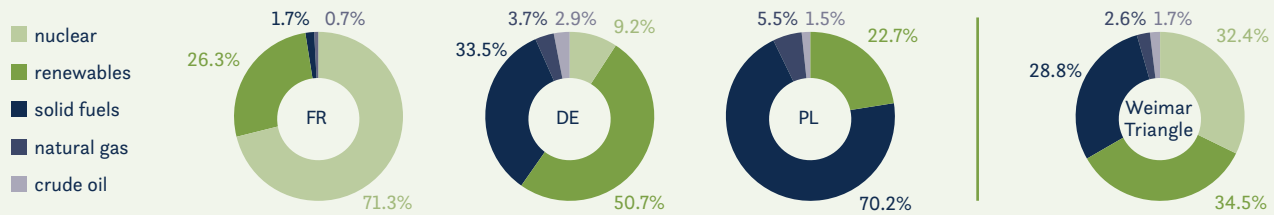
### 2. Market-Driven Innovation

By not prescribing specific technologies in regulatory frameworks, the Weimar Triangle will encourage market-driven innovation. Companies and researchers are incentivized to develop and implement solutions that may outperform existing technologies. This could lead to breakthroughs in energy efficiency, storage solutions, or offsetting carbon emissions processes, granting the benefit of a vibrant, diversified, and responsive technology landscape.

### 3. Consumer and Business Choice

Technological neutrality aligns with the principles of consumer protection and market competition. By allowing diverse technologies to thrive, businesses and consumers can choose the solutions that best meet their needs, preferences, and circumstances. At the same time, Member States should be able to use instruments that will further allow them to shelter vulnerable households and SMEs from extreme volatility. Such measures can and should be set up to maintain incentives for beneficiaries to improve energy efficiency and respond to market signals.

## Share of energy production by source in the Weimar Triangle



source Eurostat 2022<sup>25</sup>

In such a scenario, energy suppliers can offer a range of energy sources, providing consumers with options that align with their values while enhancing competition among providers.

#### 4. Consideration for Emerging and Existing Technologies

The European Fit for 55 and Green Deal recognize the importance of new and emerging technologies, such as hydrogen, energy storage solutions, and electric mobility, in transition to a low-carbon economy. At the same time, they should continue to recognize existing and proven technologies, such as nuclear energy and transitional fossil fuels, as viable options, particularly when they contribute to reducing carbon emissions. Through funding and supporting initiatives across all energy sources, the EU can facilitate pilot projects and research

without explicitly favouring one technology over another, allowing the most promising solutions to emerge organically from technological innovation and market competition. The EU legal framework should ensure the market provides appropriate remuneration for zero-emission solutions.

#### 5. Holistic Climate Policy

Technological neutrality helps ensure that climate policies are cohesive and support multiple pathways to achieving its carbon neutrality targets. This holistic approach fosters collaboration between industries, enabling sectors like transportation, construction, and agriculture to innovate and adapt to regulations based on current and future economic and technological landscapes rather than rigidly conforming to predefined methods.



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## The Importance of Aligning National Energy and Climate Plans

Aligning the NECPS among Poland, Germany and France is of paramount importance for several reasons.

The alignment process fosters a collaborative approach to tackling shared energy challenges, facilitating information sharing, joint energy projects planning, and coordinated responses to crises. **By harmonising their policies, the three countries can make informed choices** based on comprehensive data and analysis improving decision-making.

Furthermore, through coordinated NECPS, **resource allocation is optimised allowing the countries to pool resources and investments in energy infrastructure more efficiently.** By recognizing their complementary strengths, collective resource allocation can be tailored to meet common goals more effectively.

The coordinated strategy also enhances crisis resilience, allowing the countries **to better withstand energy supply disruptions caused by geopolitical tensions or natural disasters.** By synchronising their efforts, the countries can collectively improve overall energy security and

adaptability to changing circumstances and improve their responsiveness.

It is important to note that **alignment of national energy plans does not imply that Poland, Germany and France must choose identical energy sources. Instead, these plans should be mutually aware and may even complement each other,** leveraging the diverse strengths of each country to enhance overall energy resilience.

This synchronised approach not only facilitates further market integration among the three nations, leading to greater efficiency and lower prices for consumers, but it also promotes a stable energy supply. **In addition, this approach can also become a kind of ‘best practise’ for other European countries and for the EU as a whole.**

Finally, fostering innovation is a crucial outcome of this alignment, as it creates a stronger investment environment for research and development in energy technologies. By focusing on shared priorities, the countries can drive advancements in areas such as energy storage, smart grids, and carbon capture and storage, ultimately enhancing their industrial competitiveness.

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## Shared Objectives for the Weimar Triangle

### Strengthening Energy Security

Developing a common resilient energy system that can withstand disruptions while ensuring a stable supply for consumers and businesses.

### Enhancing Market Integration

Creating a more integrated and efficient energy market that benefits consumers through lower prices and improved quality of service across borders.

### Promoting Technological Innovation

Fostering advancements in energy technologies through combined funding to enhance efficiency, sustainability, and competitiveness.

### Supporting low-emission Industry

Enhancing the conditions for European industrial companies to develop and offer technologies necessary for the transition to a climate-neutral economy, ensuring that these technologies contribute to the EU's global competitiveness.

### Emissions Reductions

Meeting national and EU climate targets faster and at lower cost through coordinated efforts in emissions reduction.

### Improving Resource Management

Optimising the allocation and management of shared energy resources and higher responsiveness to fluctuations in supply and demand.

## Roadmap for attaining the goal

### SHORT TERM

#### **Establish Governance Structures**

Formation of a dedicated joint task force comprising representatives from the energy ministries and relevant regulatory bodies of Poland, Germany and France, to oversee the implementation of the NECP Synergy Initiative, providing a structured platform for coordination and decision-making.

#### **Conduct a Baseline Assessment**

Performing a comprehensive review of the current NECPs from each country to identify

common goals, differences, and potential areas for alignment. This will include evaluating existing policies, targets, and measures aimed at achieving net-zero emissions.

#### **Trilateral Consultations**

Host regular trilateral consultations involving key stakeholders – government officials, industry representatives, and civil society – to discuss and streamline the alignment process. These meetings will gather input, share best practices, and generate support for cooperative initiatives.

### MEDIUM TERM

#### **Develop Coordinated Policy Framework**

Creating and implementing a unified policy framework that harmonises the NECPs of the three countries. This framework should outline specific objectives, shared targets, and mutual commitments related to emissions reductions, technological deployment, and energy infrastructure investments.

#### **Enhance Data Sharing Mechanisms**

Establish protocols for data sharing that facilitate real-time exchange of information about energy demand, generation capacities, and infrastructure development among the three countries. This will support informed decision-making and effective resource management.

#### **Joint Risk Assessments**

Conducting regular risk assessments and scenario planning exercises to identify potential disruptions in case of energy crisis, geopolitical impact on energy supply chains and strengthen collective preparedness and responsiveness measures.

#### **Create a Comprehensive Energy Database**

Implementing a shared database that consolidates data on energy supply and demand, generation technologies, and resource availability across Poland, Germany and France. This database will support ongoing assessment and adaptation of policies and investments based on real-time data.

### LONG TERM

#### **Monitor Progress and Adapt Strategies**

Establishing a framework for continuous monitoring and evaluation of the cooperative initiatives' effectiveness. Regular assessments will inform adjustments to policies and strategies to ensure alignment with changing energy needs and market conditions.

#### **Promote Continued Cross-Border Collaboration**

Advocate for the **expansion of collaborative energy initiatives beyond the Weimar Triangle.**

Encourage other EU member states to adopt similar approaches to strengthen energy security and climate objectives at the regional level.

#### **Launch Joint Energy Projects**

Initiate collaborative projects focused on shared and complementary energy technologies, such as renewable energy installations, nuclear plants, energy storage systems, and carbon capture initiatives. These projects should leverage the complementary strengths of each country to enhance overall energy resilience.

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## Obstacles and limitations

Regulatory divergence among Poland, Germany and France is a significant obstacle to the NECP Synergy Initiative. Differences in national regulations and bureaucratic processes can complicate the harmonisation of National Energy and Climate Plans, slowing progress toward a coordinated energy strategy.

Technological disparities between the countries present another challenge. Variations in infrastructure and technological capabilities

could hinder the development of standardised data-sharing protocols, making it difficult to achieve seamless energy collaboration.

Achieving political consensus on energy policy across the Weimar countries is also challenging. Domestic political pressures, particularly during times of economic uncertainty or geopolitical tension, could reduce the commitment to sustained cooperation, risking the success of the initiative.

## Cross-Border Energy Data Sharing Framework

The Weimar Triangle Cross-Border Energy Data Sharing Framework is **an initiative designed to establish a robust system of energy data sharing tools and platforms** among Poland, Germany and France. The initiative advocates for the sharing of critical energy data through a transparent exchange process which will serve as a cornerstone for enhancing cross-border collaboration and strengthening energy solidarity, particularly in times of energy crisis.

In the context of the ongoing threat of potential Russian military aggression on the eastern flank of the EU, **this initiative positions the Weimar Triangle as a proactive leader, setting an important precedent for other European nations** in promoting energy resilience.

At the core of developing a transparent and collaborative energy data-sharing platform will be a consultation-based regular energy data exchange process. This will occur at both technical and political levels and will facilitate a comprehensive understanding of current and future energy demand and supply levels, energy (and electricity) generation requirements, and ongoing energy infrastructure development projects (e.g. electricity grid expansion or visibility of the grid evolution) across the participating nations.

Furthermore, the framework will include the implementation of real-time data exchange capabilities, allowing for more efficient cross-border electricity transfers. **By leveraging their**

**respective national generation capacities, the countries can collectively address demand gaps and energy oversupply** in a manner that enhances resource management and minimises energy curtailment, particularly during seasonal demand fluctuations and the intermittent nature of renewable energy generation. By facilitating this data exchange, countries can achieve more effective cross-border coordination and strategic planning. **This not only enhances energy security but also diminishes the risk of energy shortages during peak demand periods or unforeseen disruptions**, thereby improving overall resilience.

This initiative also significantly strengthens existing EU frameworks, such as the Solidarity Regulation and the REPOWEREU Plan, which focus on energy crisis response, diversification of energy sources, and diminishing dependency on Russian gas imports. **While substantial progress has been made in energy solidarity at the EU level, energy data-sharing capabilities remain a critical gap that this initiative addresses**, making it a key component of a multi-layered support system for European energy resilience.

Moreover, the Weimar Triangle format is uniquely suited for expanding and building upon these existing frameworks due to the shared energy interests of its member countries. As the EU seeks to aggregate demand and optimise infrastructure through initiatives like



the EU Energy Platform, the Weimar Triangle can amplify these efforts by fostering national energy data-sharing policies and developing digital tools for real-time energy analysis.

This project also lays the groundwork for future infrastructure improvements. **These improvements may include the development of**

**interconnectors, additional electricity lines, and enhanced grid development**, which can evolve from the strengthened collaboration and better informed decision-making process established through this initiative. Ultimately, this framework represents a strategic step forward in ensuring a more resilient and interconnected European energy landscape.

## Building Stronger Alliances Through Transparency of Energy Data

Transparency of the energy data serves as a crucial mechanism to enhance collaboration among Poland, Germany and France by promoting seamless information exchange within the energy domain of these three countries. This pioneering approach would become the forefront of new openings in political relations of the Triangle and have substantial impact on countries' decision-making processes, resource management, and crisis response.

### 1. Facilitation of Energy Data Exchange

Establishment of protocols for energy data sharing capability would enable the member countries to access critical energy information, including electricity demand, generation levels, electricity grid evolution and other energy infrastructure development

projects. By having this information readily available, Poland, Germany and France can collaboratively assess their energy landscapes, which is essential for informed decision-making that aligns with their respective National Energy and Climate Plans (NECPS).

### 2. Building Trust and Competitiveness

Transparency through trilateral energy data sharing helps build trust among the participating countries. By openly sharing critical information, Poland, Germany and France can foster a spirit of collaboration that enhances competitiveness within the energy market. This trust is integral for encouraging private-sector involvement and investment, ultimately driving innovation in energy technologies and sustainable practices.

### 3. Improved Resource Management

Promoting comprehensive data sharing, enhances the management of energy resources among the three nations. **Understanding real-time generation and consumption data enables countries to optimise their resource allocation** and leverage each other's energy capabilities more effectively. In such a scenario a surplus of energy generated in one country (e.g., from renewable sources) can be easily coordinated with neighbours who are experiencing high demand minimising waste and enhancing overall efficiency.

### 4. Support for Technological Neutrality

This initiative aligns with the principle of technological neutrality by facilitating the sharing of diverse data sources and insights about various energy technologies. By providing a solution that encourages a range of energy solutions – renewables, nuclear, and fossil fuels – countries can focus on collaboratively reducing carbon emissions while adapting to the most efficient technologies suitable for their unique contexts. In this context, **information regarding surplus energy generation from different sources in one country can play a crucial role in mitigating high energy demand in another country.** This collaborative approach not only optimises resource allocation but also enhances overall energy security across the region, allowing countries to respond effectively to fluctuations in demand and supply.

### 5. Enhanced Collaborative Efforts

Transparency fosters a collaborative environment where countries can share insights into their energy operations, successes, and challenges. This openness encourages joint efforts in addressing energy-related crises, thereby contributing to a more resilient energy system. **The initiative creates a valuable framework for establishing coordinated contingency plans that can be swiftly activated in times of geopolitical disruptions or natural disasters,** directly supporting the energy resilience objectives.

#### Exposure to hybrid threats requires establishing coordinated contingency plans

##### Exposed infrastructure

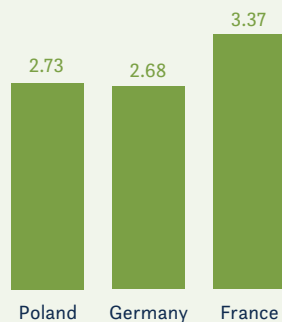
- Power grid
- Power plants
- offshore wind farms
- LNG terminals
- Refineries
- Underwater fiber-optic cables

##### Potential hybrid threats

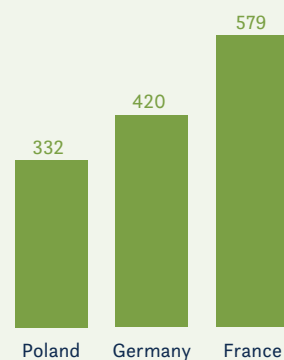
- Drones
- Cyber attack
- Physical sabotage
- Underwater operation
- Electromagnetic pulses
- Insider threat

#### Differences in the potential of renewables require the energy data sharing scheme to minimise waste and enhance overall efficiency

Average Direct Normal Irradiation [kWh/m<sup>2</sup>]



Average Power Density for 10% Windiest Areas at the High of 50 Meters [W/m<sup>2</sup>]



source Global Wind Atlas and Global Solar Atlas developed by World Bank<sup>27</sup>

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## How Sharing Energy Data Boosts Energy Solidarity, Competitiveness, and Technological Neutrality in Times of Crisis

### 1. Real-Time Situational Awareness

One of the most crucial aspects of data sharing is the enhancement of real-time situational awareness. Access to current data on electricity demand, generation, and supply levels enables countries to gain a comprehensive understanding of the energy landscape. This situational awareness is particularly critical during crises when prompt decision-making is essential. Moreover, data sharing allows for better forecasting of energy needs and available resources which would impact the national energy strategy of each country. This capability not only helps countries prepare for potential shortages or disruptions but also enables more competitive strategies by allowing stakeholders to identify and capitalise on market opportunities.

### 2. Improved Coordination and Response

Improved coordination and response capabilities are significant benefits of data sharing. Countries can jointly assess vulnerabilities and risks associated with energy supply disruptions through collaborative risk assessments. This results in coordinated contingency plans tailored to specific scenarios, such as natural disasters or geopolitical tensions which could be then included in the respective NECPS. Furthermore, data sharing enhances the capacity for coordinated energy transfers among countries. By identifying regions with an excess generation or low demand, nations can swiftly assist neighbours in need, allowing for quicker and more effective responses during critical times, which ultimately boosts the competitiveness of their energy markets.

### 3. Optimising Resource Utilisation

Understanding the combined energy generation capabilities of neighbouring countries allows for better resource management. This collaborative approach not only enhances energy security but also embodies the principle of technological neutrality; it emphasises that a variety of energy technologies – whether renewables, nuclear, or transitional fossil fuels integrated with carbon capture – can be employed effectively to meet emissions reduction

goals. Countries can leverage their distinct energy sources to create competitive advantages, such as using countries with high wind generation to support those with nuclear capabilities during periods of low renewable output.

### 4. Enhanced Grid Stability and Reliability

Moreover, sharing energy data helps enhance grid stability and reliability. By exchanging information about grid performance, interconnection capacities, and potential system constraints, countries can collaborate to reduce the risk of blackouts or supply interruptions. This collective effort leads to the establishment of crisis management protocols, ensuring that all parties clearly understand their roles and responsibilities during a disruption. Enhanced grid reliability also improves competitiveness, as a stable energy supply attracts investment and economic growth.

### 5. Supporting Policy Alignment

Data sharing supports policy alignment, enabling countries to harmonise their energy policies and regulations (as postulated in the advocacy cause 1: Weimar Triangle NECPS synergy initiative). This alignment facilitates cooperative investments that advance shared energy goals and can lead to collective infrastructure investments. Understanding interconnected energy systems allows countries to identify joint investment opportunities, thereby enhancing energy security across borders and promoting an environment favourable to innovation and competitiveness.

### 6. Adaptability to Changing Situations

Finally, sharing energy data increases adaptability to changing situations. With access to comprehensive energy data, countries can rapidly adjust their strategies to respond to evolving circumstances, such as sudden supply losses or demand surges. Collaborative scenario planning based on shared data empowers nations to prepare for future energy crises and develop effective responses in advance. This **adaptability fosters a resilient energy landscape where competitiveness is sustained even under pressure**, ensuring that innovation continues to thrive.



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## Shared Objectives for Poland, Germany and France

### **Improving Energy Solidarity**

Establishing mechanisms to facilitate the sharing and distribution of energy resources during crises to ensure stability and continuity of supply among the three nations.

### **Enhancing Efficiency through Data Sharing**

Developing a system for real-time data exchange regarding electricity demand and generation, enabling more effective cross-border energy transfers and better utilisation of combined generation capacities.

### **Strengthening Infrastructure and Interconnection**

Identifying bottlenecks and vulnerabilities in the energy infrastructure of each country to propose solutions and foster investments that enhance interconnectivity.

### **Promoting Sustainability and Diversification**

Leveraging data to support the diversification of energy sources and investments in renewable energy, thereby contributing to the EU's broader climate goals.

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## Roadmap for attaining the goal

### SHORT TERM

#### **Establish Governance Structures**

Forming a joint governance body composed of representatives from energy ministries and regulatory agencies of each country to oversee the platform's implementation.

#### **Standardise data formats**

Standardising data formats and reporting mechanisms across countries to ensure compatibility and ease of data integration.

#### **Address Data Privacy**

Addressing concerns over data privacy and cybersecurity must be proactively managed to protect sensitive energy-related information.

#### **Trilateral consultations**

Implementing a consultation-based regular energy data exchange process at both technical and political levels to facilitate a comprehensive understanding of current and future electricity demand and supply levels, electricity generation requirements, and ongoing energy infrastructure development projects at the national levels.

#### **Initial Data Exchange Protocols**

Developing and implementing protocols for regular data sharing, focusing on current electricity demand, generation levels, and planned infrastructure projects.

### MEDIUM TERM

#### **Creation of a Real-Time Data Exchange Platform**

Developing a robust real-time data exchange platform that enables seamless sharing of energy information to facilitate the continuous flow of data regarding electricity demand, generation capacity, and grid performance, allowing stakeholders to make informed decisions rapidly.

#### **Joint Risk Assessments**

Conduct regular risk assessments and scenario planning exercises to identify potential

disruptions in case of crisis and strengthen preparedness measures collectively.

#### **Cybersecurity integrated approach**

Developing a comprehensive and integrated approach to cybersecurity, ensuring the protection of shared energy data and systems as part of the overall strategy. At a later stage this can include common cybersecurity measures and best practices covering the entire energy infrastructure of the countries.



**Create Comprehensive Energy Database**

Developing a comprehensive shared database that consolidates energy supply and demand data, generation capabilities, and vulnerability assessments among the three nations.

**Monitor and Refine Framework**

Establishing a process and best practices for continual monitoring and refinement of the data-sharing framework to adapt to evolving energy needs and external threats.

**Promote Cross-Border Investments**

Advocating for incentives and financial support for joint investments in energy infrastructure based on energy data exchange analysis and synthesis.

## Obstacles and limitations

Data privacy and cybersecurity concerns are a primary obstacle to the Cross-Border Energy Data Sharing Framework. Ensuring the protection of sensitive energy-related information is critical, and any perceived weaknesses could undermine trust and hinder the willingness of countries to share data.

Technical disparities among Poland, Germany and France present another significant challenge. Differences in technological infrastructure may

complicate the integration of data-sharing systems, leading to inefficiencies and potential delays in implementing the framework.

Finally, political commitment to sustained cooperation is essential but not guaranteed. The framework requires ongoing support from all three governments, which could be threatened by shifts in political priorities or external pressures, particularly during periods of geopolitical tension.



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# **4 Operationalising Tool: International Weimar Fund**



# Introduction

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**Cooperation within the Weimar Triangle misses institutional instruments for sustainable cooperation.** In effect there is a visible lack of cohesive, strategy-building culture that transcends political dynamism. Public needs vary widely across Poland, Germany and France, limiting their governments' ability to build strategic consensus. Moreover, global trends shape public priorities and grievances, prompting governments to address emerging issues, often by redefining existing ones. Geopolitical shifts also shape the states' priorities, diverting involvement and resources away from Weimar-wide initiatives.

**Establishing transnational cooperation at the civil society level can ensure continuity that endures governmental shifts.** Monitoring of ongoing affairs by the community of experts is an integral part of upholding democracy, as it acts in the public's interest while holding governing institutions accountable. Civil society organisations (csos) represent the public's diverse voices, build stakeholder support, provide deep subject matter expertise, and provide long-term perspectives.<sup>13</sup>

Many think tanks operate outside the politicised, public realm of policy-making, rendering them effective tools for fostering unity. Since non-governmental organisations are not bound

by political cycles, often driven by short-term electoral considerations, they can adopt long-term views to address underlying issues.

**At the civil society level, the Weimar Triangle will be insulated from external triggers, electoral cycles, and agenda shifts.** It is, therefore, an essential format for achieving unified policy visions, democracy promotion, joint economic progress, and collaborative innovation.

**Joint research, cultural and educational projects create comprehensive strategies and solutions** that help to establish long-term cooperation that is resistant to political changes.

Regional initiatives such as the International Visegrad Fund demonstrate the effectiveness of coordinated civil society networks. For over 20 years, the Fund has successfully advanced regional cooperation, promoted partnerships, and knowledge-sharing, fostered mutual understanding, and upheld European values across Central Europe by supporting transnational civil society collaborations.<sup>14</sup>

Financed by its founding countries and third-party states, the Fund's impact extends beyond the original v4 countries, fostering regional collaboration.

## Selected effects of the Visegrad Fund in 2023



source international Visegrad Fund<sup>28</sup>

A similar institutionalised Weimar Fund would foster strengthened coordination among three influential EU and NATO member states, joint economic and innovation progress, enhanced security mechanisms, cultural and educational exchange, and democratic value promotion.

Current political **momentum in the Weimar Triangle should be leveraged to establish cooperation mechanisms resilient to electoral cycles.** The Triangle has experienced waves of revitalised collaboration, followed by periods of stagnation (see page 13). **The institutionalised mechanisms for achieving policy objectives, will help sustain the initiative on the operationalizing level.** Its renewed momentum should now be leveraged to establish lasting Weimar cooperation outside the political realm.

Existing trilateral civil society projects between Poland, Germany and France have enhanced regional cooperation, addressed common chal-

lenges, and promoted mutual interests. Weimar Triangle civil society collaborations, although limited, already reflect a commitment to regional stability, research and education collaboration, economic prosperity, and cultural exchange. However, **ideas and strategies drafted together by experts, stakeholders and think-tanks from all three countries are constrained by insufficient funding.**

The Weimar Triangle is a worthy pan-European exercise, enabling each country to contribute its strengths. Collectively, Poland, Germany and France – representing 40 percent of the EU population – can offer diverse geopolitical, security, and economic assessments to create more unified European strategies.<sup>35</sup>

To build on existing successes, **the civil society component must be an integral part in the Weimar structure** to ensure consistent operations and progress.

## Establishing the International Weimar Fund

To achieve smoother policy coordination, a step back from state administration level should be taken, engaging expert communities from various countries and institutions in joint research projects addressing the most urgent European challenges. Poland, Germany and France's commitment to establishing a Weimar Fund would ensure ample resources for initiatives that reinforce and sustain the Weimar Triangle's dedication to robust transnational relations in security, economic development, innovation, and diplomacy.

The Weimar Fund can promote interregional expertise within EU member states and candidate countries, cultivating deeper collaborations between experts across Europe. Levelling the knowledge field through the fund is crucial for enhancing understanding and effectively addressing common challenges.

Poland, Germany and France could follow the successful International Visegrad Fund model to establish an independent International Weimar Fund. This fund would be equally contributed to by all three countries and trilaterally managed to ensure impartiality and effective resource allocation.

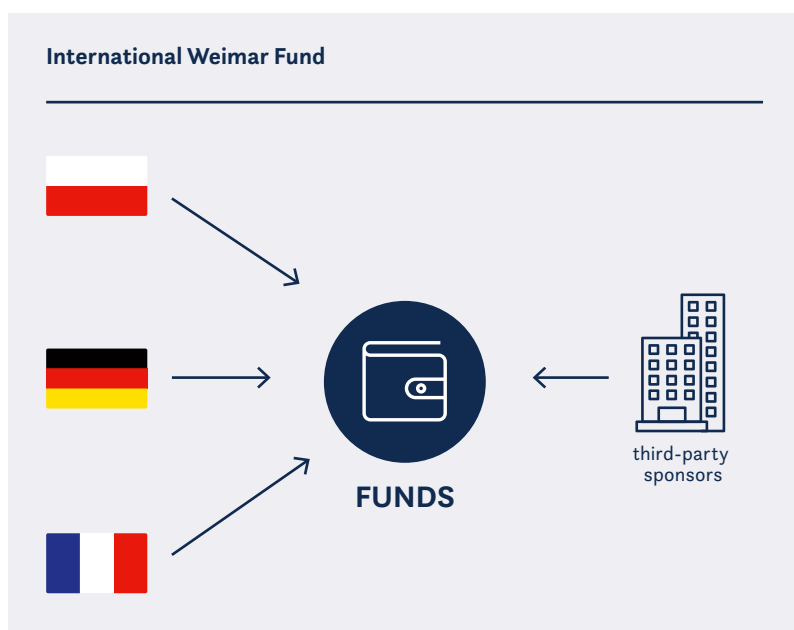
In the early stages of the initiative, **to facilitate the creation of the fund and build momentum, it could be run as a granting scheme** supervised by dedicated ministries (ideally MFAs) from each country with a rotating chairmanship. These ministries would cooperate to oversee the fund and allocate the necessary resources. This management structure will ensure that the fund is adequately supported and aligned with the strategic goals of all three nations.

Similar to the Visegrad Fund, the Weimar Fund can incorporate contributions from third-party stakeholders, including other European states, private sector partners, and international organisations. These additional contributions would enhance the fund's capacity to support a broader range of projects and initiatives.

**By leveraging a multilateral funding model, the Weimar Fund can address shared challenges**, promote regional stability, and foster stronger trilateral relations. This initiative would not only enhance cooperation among Poland, Germany and France but also contribute to a more integrated and resilient Europe.

**For a start, similarly to the Visegrad Fund Poland, Germany and France could equally allocate an initial annual budget of 10 million euros to the International Weimar With annual contribution of ca. 2 to 3 million per country such fund** will provide grants for trilateral or broader research, as well as educational and cultural projects designed to operate on a bottom-up level, ensuring the inclusion of Europe's diverse voices.

The International Weimar Fund will launch calls for proposals focusing on pressing European issues such as climate change, security, economic development, and countering disinformation. Grants will require transnational cooperation between applicants and projects to create Europe-wide solutions. These **initiatives should be scalable and sustainable beyond the initial applicants in the long term.**



## Fostering Trilateral Research, Educational, and Cultural Collaboration

The International Weimar Fund should grow to bring together experts from Poland, Germany and France, aiming to develop innovative solutions for the EU. Europe is currently facing an array of issues, including the ongoing war on NATO's eastern border, stalemates on EU candidate expansion, climate change impacts and a migration crisis.<sup>16</sup> Joint research employed just below direct decision makers' level and transnational approach would tackle these Europe-wide issues with a unified strategy.

**The International Weimar Fund will sponsor conferences showcasing project results and facilitating dialogues among researchers and policymakers,** leading to research-based and sustainable policies. Such events have proven to effectively cultivate networks among civil society organisations, and have expanded their reach by introducing CSO members to experts from relevant fields, government officials, and academics.

The Fund will organise annual workshops, showcasing essential know-how and toolkits for participants. Workshops will spotlight ongoing trends and effective responses, while enhancing the capacities of all attendees and establishing

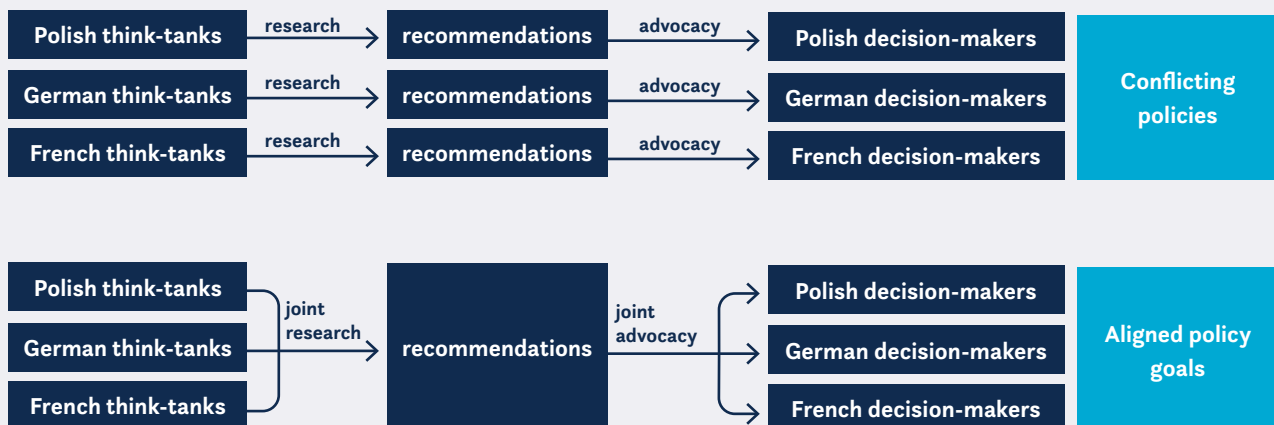
comprehensive frameworks for addressing issues. Moreover, workshops will connect civil society organisations from across Europe, fostering integrated projects.

Such events can cultivate knowledge, cultural exchanges, and capacity building, advancing holistic projects across European states.

All projects will establish and maintain digital platforms for sharing research findings, best practices, and collaborative opportunities, thereby enhancing visibility, impact, and stakeholder engagement. Digital formats enable real-time updates on key projects and facilitate contributions from experts within one interconnected space. This approach prevents redundancy and ensures efficient use of resources. Additionally, **digital platforms facilitate mapping and identification of region-wide patterns that might otherwise remain unnoticed.**

This format ensures an optimal division of tasks, guaranteeing efficiency in project completion. Digital platforms provide wide-reaching visibility, influencing and enhancing future projects across Europe.

Thanks to joint projects within the expert community, the implementation of successful policies becomes more feasible.





## Institutionalising the Weimar Fund and Expanding Its Scope

**The International Weimar Fund eventually should be established as a permanent entity with a stable budget and governance structure, ensuring long-term sustainability.** The Fund's mission of promoting European integration projects addressing Weimar- and EU-wide issues must be clearly communicated and promoted.

To ensure effective governance, the Weimar Fund should adopt transparent decision-making processes and rigorous accountability measures. This includes regular audits, public reporting, and stakeholder consultations to maintain trust and credibility among donors and beneficiaries.

**Ultimately, the Weimar Fund should expand to encompass broader civil society initiatives,** including cultural exchanges, educational programs, and grassroots advocacy campaigns. This expansion involves addressing a wider range of issues and collaborating with corresponding international and regional initiatives. By fostering partnerships, the Fund can maximise

its impact and contribute more effectively to European solidarity.

**To promote a culture of strategic cooperation and long-term thinking across Europe, the Weimar Fund should grow to include initiatives from other EU member states and candidate countries.**

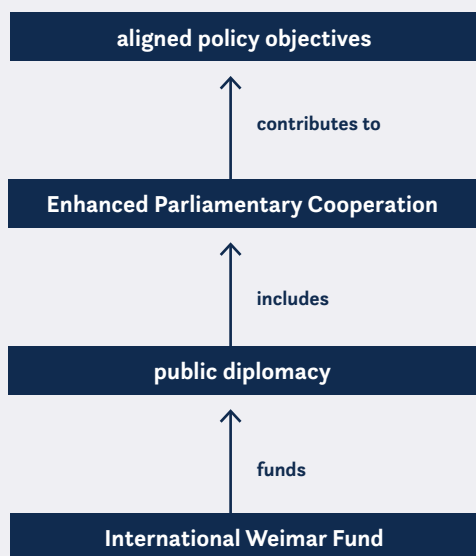
Stable and adequate financing is a critical condition for establishing and maintaining this inter-governmental fund.<sup>17</sup> **The budget of the Weimar Fund must be placed on track for consistent growth and donor expansion** through the German, Polish, and French Ministries of Foreign Affairs responsible for the fund's management. Efforts should be made to attract contributions from third-party countries and private sector stakeholders to diversify funding sources and enhance financial stability.

### Conclusion

The recent resurgence in Weimar Triangle activities highlights the importance of maintaining sustainable, institutionalised cooperation mechanisms among Poland, Germany and France.

Leveraging the current political momentum and **establishing a permanent International Weimar Fund with a stable budget and governance structure is essential for addressing Weimar- and EU-wide issues,** and ensuring continuity beyond political shifts.

### Snowball effect of the International Weimar Fund fostering better understanding from the bottom-up approach



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