

STATEMENT BY LE DRIAN FRENCH FOREIGN AFFAIRS MINISTER OVER RUSSIA & UKRAINE

REMINDED FORMAT NORMANDIE'S EFFORTS

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USPA NEWS - Following the tensions and the military escalation on the border between Russia and Ukraine, where Russian troops are being built, discussions were chained, during the end of December, between the top diplomats of many countries, including those from France, Jean Yves Le Drian, his German counterpart and Josep Borell, the Foreign Affairs Minister representing France, Germany and the European Union. On the Russian side, the tensions are based on Ukraine's efforts to draw closer to NATO. France insists on repeating the diplomatic voice through the "Format Normandie", and enforcing the Minsk agreements. These agreements concluded in 2015 to end the war that broke out a year earlier in this Ukrainian region between the forces of Kiev and pro-Russian separatists were never really respected. "The continuation of France's efforts within the framework of the "Format Normandie" to lead to a de-escalation of tensions in and around Ukraine and to move forward towards the implementation of the Minsk agreements, which remain the only approved basis for a lasting solution to the Ukrainian crisis. We publish the entire statement issued by French Minister of Foreign Affairs, Jean Yves le Drian

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STATEMENT ISSUED BY LE DRIAN FRENCH FOREIGN AFFAIRS MINISTER OVER RUSSIA - UKRAINE TENSIONS « I have spoken with my counterparts in Germany, Ms Annalena Baerbock, Italy, Mr Luigi Di Maio, and Poland, Mr Zbigniew Rau, the latter Chairman-in-Office of the OSCE since 1 January, as well as with the High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, Mr Josep Borrell, to discuss the current tensions with Russia and the Ukraine issue. These discussions followed those on 29 December with the American, German and British Foreign Ministers.

I highlighted the importance of close coordination between Europeans ahead of the discussions in various formats planned for the coming week, as well as in the perspective of the informal meeting of Foreign Ministers of the European Union that I will host in Brest on 13 and 14 January under the French Presidency of the Council of the European Union. In this respect, I stressed the responsibility of the Europeans to contribute and participate actively, through tangible proposals, to preparing and conducting these talks with Russia in which their own security interests are at stake. Demanding dialogue with Russia, based on parameters that we deem to be in line with our collective security interests, is useful and necessary to enhance strategic stability in Europe.-----

I reminded my colleagues, as the Heads of State and Government of the European Union did at the European Council meeting in December 2021, that any further military aggression against Ukraine would have massive consequences and come at a high cost in response, including restrictive measures in coordination with partners. We will thus continue close coordination between Europeans

and in the transatlantic relationship. Lastly, I discussed France's continued efforts within the Format Normandie to achieve de-escalation of tensions in and around Ukraine and to move forward towards the implementation of the Minsk agreements, which remain the only agreed basis for a lasting solution to the Ukraine crisis. Our efforts alongside Germany to achieve that remain total and will continue in the coming days and weeks. » Source: statement issued by the French Minister of Foreign Affairs, Jean Yves le Drian.

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