



By: TA | AP Brief

Germany and France deepen nuclear cooperation



The leaders of Germany and France announced on Friday that the German military would participate in a nuclear exercise under a French initiative to deepen European **nuclear cooperation**.

The move by both countries to deepen nuclear cooperation underscores growing European defense self-reliance amid concerns about the future of **U.S. security commitments** to the continent.

“We will have German conventional forces participate in a nuclear exercise conducted by the French armed forces before the end of this year,” Chancellor Friedrich Merz announced after talks with French President Emmanuel Macron at Norvenich air base near Cologne in western Germany.

He said that the cooperation with France “complements” the NATO nuclear sharing agreement, to which Germany remains committed.

U.S. nuclear bombs are stationed in Germany as part of NATO’s nuclear deterrent, and German fighter jets have been certified to potentially carry the weapons in case of an emergency.

Previous German leaders have refused offers of nuclear cooperation with France, Merz said, but “the world we live in today requires new answers.”

Germany’s participation in the nuclear exercise will be with conventional means for now, Merz said.

“We are proceeding step by step, it may be that this will result in a new doctrine, but it is far too early to say that today,” he said.

Advanced deterrence is very important for European collective security, Macron said, “because it creates strategic doubt among our adversaries.”

The French president said that Germany would have a “vanguard role” in deterrence efforts and that “diluting the presence of the

nuclear deterrent” is what confuses enemies.

Macron said that cooperation would translate into “explaining some aspects of how we operate, sharing certain closely held practices, offering joint exercises, developing joint initiatives and partnerships, and fostering greater ... trust among our teams, experts and military personnel.”

Macron didn't give details about operational measures.

“Complete and absolute transparency is not necessarily the most effective strategy when dealing with adversaries on European soil,” he said.

Enhanced nuclear deterrence won't involve financing from Germany, Macron said.

Symbolic kickoff to the cooperation

On Thursday, French Rafale and German Eurofighter jets participated in a joint in-flight refueling exercise, a symbolic kickoff to the cooperation. The Rafale jets are designed to deliver nuclear weapons.

In early March, Macron announced that his country would increase its nuclear arsenal, and he invited European partners to strengthen cooperation on nuclear deterrence.

France's initiative came amid doubts across Europe about U.S. reliability when it comes to the continent’s defense.

France has been the only nuclear power in the 27-nation European Union since Brexit.

Several countries announced their interest in the French initiative

Several countries announced their interest in the French initiative, including the United

Kingdom, Germany, Poland, the Netherlands, Belgium, Greece, Sweden, Denmark and Norway.

The participation of Germany, which is implementing a major rearmament plan to build Europe's strongest conventional military by 2039, boosts the program.

The German and French leaders also sought to reinvigorate bilateral ties after a planned \$100 billion joint fighter jet program collapsed in June.

The project had aimed to replace Rafales and Eurofighters used by Germany and Spain by 2040.

The two leaders are eager to lock in advances over the coming months, as Macron approaches the end of his presidency, and uncertainty grows over whether his successor will share his commitment to deeper European cooperation.