

Speech

PM remarks at press conference with Chancellor Merz: 17 July 2025

Prime Minister Keir Starmer's remarks at a press conference with Chancellor Merz.

From: Prime Minister's Office, 10 Downing Street (</government/organisations/prime-ministers-office-10-downing-street>) and The Rt Hon Sir Keir Starmer KCB KC MP (</government/people/keir-starmer>)

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Good afternoon.

It's a real pleasure to welcome Chancellor Merz.

And it's great to be here at Airbus today. I'm always amazed at this place when I come to visit, it's not my first visit.

Thank you for showing us the amazing work you do here.

This is one of the most cutting-edge facilities in Europe.

Home to the Exo-Mars Rover, designed with German expertise and built right here in Stevenage.

You are driving innovation in defence and space technology, making us all safer – leading us into the future.

And this is at the heart of what brings Friedrich and I together.

We see the scale of the challenges our continent faces today and we intend meet them head on. But we also see the scale of the opportunities. So, we have a shared resolve to shape this new era with new leadership.

The UK and Germany side by side, delivering growth and security and delivering for working people.

And that's why, earlier today we did something genuinely unprecedented. Building on our new agreement with the EU, together, we signed the Kensington Treaty, the first ever major bilateral treaty between the United Kingdom and Germany.

Two great, modern European nations. It is an expression of our shared aims and values.

But more than that – it is a practical workplan, setting out 17 major projects where we will come together to deliver real results which will improve people's lives.

So a historic treaty and statement of intent and ambition. And we intend to do, amongst other things, as leading NATO powers in Europe, committing not only to our mutual defence but also to maximise the benefits of our defence spending, in the shape of more jobs, more growth and more security.

Under this treaty we will bring our industries together to boost defence exports by billions of pounds and we'll speed up our collaboration on high tech weapons and equipment, strengthening NATO – and keeping our people safe.

Our economic links already support half a million British jobs.

So under this treaty we'll go further, with eGate access for frequent business travellers. I know that's something very popular here.

A direct rail link, and a new UK-Germany Business Forum to boost investment, starting today with new investments into the UK worth over £200 million.

We're also deepening collaboration on science and innovation, supporting great jobs, like those here at Airbus.

And we're delivering new infrastructure projects, including in the North Sea Energy to produce power that is cheaper, greener and more secure.

Crucially – we're also working together on illegal migration. I want to thank Friedrich for his leadership on this.

Pledging decisive action to strengthen German law this year so that small boats being stored or transported in Germany can be seized, disrupting the route to the UK and it's a clear sign that we mean business. We are coming after the criminal gangs in every way we can.

We also discussed the appalling situation in Gaza. We are both working to support efforts towards a ceasefire and also to demand the immediate, unconditional release of the remaining hostages and the immediate, unconditional humanitarian access that is so desperately needed to deliver aid at volume and at speed.

Finally, we discussed the situation Ukraine. Just a few days after Friedrich took office in May earlier this year we were both in Kyiv shoulder-to-shoulder with President Zelenskyy during one of the toughest moments in this horrendous war.

Now we're leading the work to get the best kit to Ukraine as fast as possible. We'll keep pushing this forward – together with the US and other allies because ultimately our security starts in Ukraine.

So this is a partnership with a purpose. And I think it illustrates what our work on the international stage is all about. It's about building the foundations of stability across our continent that make us safer, boost our economy and deliver change across for our people. It's about delivering results and that's what we're working towards.

And, in a dangerous world, we do this together.

So thank you Friedrich – for your partnership and your friendship.

Now, over to you.

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