
MERZ AND MACRON VOWED TO RESTART THE FRANCO-GERMAN ENGINE. IT'S ALREADY SPUTTERING.

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When French President Emmanuel Macron arrives on Wednesday evening at a villa on the outskirts of Berlin where he is set to go for a stroll, listen to a jazz trumpet performance and dine with German Chancellor Friedrich Merz, the two leaders are likely to exhibit plenty of back-slapping bonhomie.

After all, on Merz's first full day in office in May, he traveled to Paris and vowed a new Franco-German start for Europe after years of strained relations between Macron and Merz's predecessor, Olaf Scholz. Merz said at the time that he had already developed a deep personal bond with the French leader that would help them work together.

The atmosphere is completely different, said one senior German government official with intimate knowledge of Franco-German relations. I've never experienced this kind of interaction in all these years.

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