

Starmer says 'ambitious' reset with Europe will not mean reversing Brexit

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## Starmer says 'ambitious' reset with Europe will not mean reversing Brexit

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Prime Minister Keir Starmer has wrapped up his visit to Germany and is now heading to Paris where he'll meet France's Emmanuel Macron on Thursday.

We'll shortly be closing our live coverage but for now here are the key moments from the PM's meeting with Chancellor Scholz:

The UK and Germany hope to sign a new bilateral treaty "by early next year", according to a joint declaration, external released after the meeting on "deepening and enhancing" relations Starmer said the plans are part of a wider "reset" of relations with the European Union

The treaty, though, will not mean "reversing Brexit" or re-entering the single market, the PM said He argued that it will "deliver for working people", having a flow on effects on areas including trade, fault water business and technology

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It will contain a joint action plan to tackle illegal migration, but won't have a youth mobility scheme, the prime minister said

Starmer expressed sympathy for the German people following the attack in Solingen on Friday, in which three people were killed

Both Starmer and Scholz reaffirmed their ongoing support for Ukraine "for as long as it takes" and "the need for de-escalation" across the Middle East

This is the fifth time Keir Starmer has met the German chancellor since he became prime minister last month.

His attempt to reset relations with European neighbours has been a central theme of his first few weeks in office.

But it remains unclear what, if anything, the UK will have to give in order to get the closer collaboration that Keir Starmer seeks.

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The treaty announced with Germany today is purely bilateral, and on defence it is possible to see how a framework could develop.

The UK already has bilateral defence treaties with France, for example.

But how feasible will it really be to deepen trade ties, where the context of Germany being in the EU is impossible to ignore.

It was striking to hear Starmer reiterate publicly that his government has no plans to agree to an EU proposal that could allow young people to live in the UK for up to four years – and vice versa.

His commitment to closer relations with European leaders is real, but it only goes so far – conscious of the political landscape at home.

UK and Germany release joint declaration to take relations to 'next level'

The UK and Germany have published a joint declaration following this morning's meeting between Starmer and Scholz.

The language echoes what the two leaders said in their news conference, and sets out in writing the intention to "take our bilateral relations to the next level", external.

The declaration says the pair hope to sign a new bilateral co-operation treaty "by early next year".

The deal will reflect the "breadth" of the two countries' bilateral relationship, it says, but makes clear it will need to be "in full accordance with Germany's membership of the EU, and the UK's relationship with the EU".

A new defence agreement – for which work is already under way – will be a "key pillar" of the treaty, it says, adding "joint priorities" include economic growth, cooperating on law enforcement, youth and education, energy security, environmental policy, transport and infrastructure, technology and research and innovation.

Asked about the possibility of student exchanges between the UK and Germany when speaking to journalists in Berlin, the prime minister instead emphasised his discussions with Scholz on illegal migration.

Keir Starmer said: "The focus was on the bilateral treaty that we want to develop and the most substantive part of that in the end turned out to be the illegal migration joint work that we can do together, which is obviously important to me.

"We want a close relationship of course, and I do think that can extend across defence, security, education and cultural exchange, and of course trade. But we didn't go into the details of that today."

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Date Created August 27, 2024 Author admin

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