

Beat: Politics

## PRESIDENT MACRON WELCOME HIS COUNTERPARTS FOR A FORMAT NORMANDIE SUMMIT

ELYSEE 9 DEC POUTINE MERKEL ZELENSKY

Paris, Washington DC, 09.12.2019, 03:00 Time

**USPA NEWS** - After three years of freezing negotiations on the conflict in eastern Ukraine, which has already left 13,000 dead in the past 5 years, Russian President Vladimir Putin met his Ukrainian counterpart, Volodymyr Zelensky, for the first time on Monday in Paris, during the "Format Normandie" Summit, organized by President Macron at Elysee, with the presence of the fourth head of state German Chancellor Angela Merkel. Having the opportunity to meet and discuss here in this « Format Normandie » Summit is already a great milestone, explained Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky. The mediation is done by the Franco-German couple to try together with the Ukrainian and Russian President to find a way out of this conflict and establish peace. Russian President Vladimir Putin greeted and thanked Emmanuel Macron and Angela Merkel, for this Franco-German mediation on "a subject far removed from their direct concern", during the press conference at the Elysee. Several hundred political journalists from all over the world were accredited and present from whom only a hundred could be allocated an overlay badge to attend the press conference, which took place at 11: pm instead of 7: pm, initially

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"NORMANDY FORMAT" THE SUMMIT FOR FRANCO-GERMAN MEDIATION PEACE-----

The « Normandy Format » Summit (« Format Normandie »), under the mediation of President Macron and German Chancellor Angela Merkel was held on December 9, in Paris at Elysee Palace. . "We have made progress on disengagement, prisoner exchange, cease-fire and political evolution" and "we have asked our ministers for the next four months to work ... with a view to organizing local elections , with the goal of a new summit in four months," said the French President, Emmanuel Macron, at the press conference with the other three leaders of the Summit Format Normandy, which was revived this year, after several years of "freeze of negotiations" and on stand by. The French Head of State Macron announces then sleep and already of the next Summit Format Normandy which will take place in 4 months.

THE NORMANDY FORMAT EXPRESSION WAS CREATED BY JOURNALIST RAHMA SOPHIA RACHDI IN 2014

The expression, now consecrated, was born in June 27, 2014 at the end of a European Council Summit in Brussels. That day, Rahma Sophia Rachdi, a correspondent for the US Press Agency, was worried about the French President François Hollande at the time if the "Normandy Model" would continue. Unable to pronounce the word "Ouistreham" near the Châteaux de Benouville where the famous meeting of the four heads of state took place, The Journalist Rahma Sophia Rachdi, then uses "Normandy" to use a term phonetically simpler and more understandable Americans. Indeed, the "Normandy format" was thus designed in 2014 to try to stop the conflict in eastern Ukraine, in the form of a new format of diplomacy, quadripartite quite unique and born of this initial meeting Spontaneous at the Chateau de Benouville, between President Francois Hollande, host of places, Chancellor Angela, Presidents Vladimir Putin, and Petro Poroshenko, on the sidelines of the 70-year celebration of D-Day, American landing of Allied troops in Normandy, to release France, at Ouistreham, on this occasion.

A year ago, Rahma Sophia Rachdi came back on her linguistic find with Ouest France "I used this expression because it was a new diplomatic model to four, quite new in my eyes. I think that, in the end, he thought there was something to be reiterated. " Adapted in French, the term soon became the "Normandy format" and designates a quadripartite meeting, unprecedented, bringing together the

representatives of France, Germany, Ukraine and Russia, seeking a political solution to the conflict, born five years ago, which inflames Ukrainian territory and poisons relations between Kiev and Moscow. Source: BFM TV, West France, Le Figaro

#### CONTEXT OF THE DONBASS CONFLICT IN UKRAINE-----

In March 2014, amidst bilateral tensions after the pro-European turn of Ukraine, Russia annexed Crimea, while in April two autonomous republics were proclaimed in the east of the country by secessionist militants close to the Kremlin: the Lugansk Republic and the Donetsk Republic. If the war has not ceased so far, the expression "Normandy format" has flourished.

Fighting between the Ukrainian authorities and two self-proclaimed republics of Donetsk and Lugansk broke out after a coup in Kiev which overthrew President Victor Yanukovich. The talks finally resulted in a peace plan, known as the "Minsk Accords"<sup>[1]</sup>, in early 2015. During the press conference, Chancellor Angela Merkel supported Ukraine's calls for a possible revision of the vague Minsk agreements, citing the difficulty in implementing various interpretations.

#### BILATERAL OF PRESIDENTS POUTINE AND ZELENSKY FOR THE FIRST TIME IN NORMANDY FORMAT

As young Ukrainian, freshly elected, President Volodymyr Zelensky recalled, "The meeting was long but it took place in a concrete manner" about his meeting with his Russian counterpart, Vladimir Putin.-----

Volodymyr Zelensky who then confides to be a "novice" in the "political bilateral" of this level, (because recently elected in April 2019, and former TV host), explains that "there was 21 attempts of cease fire for 6 years, as they are usually not really respected and applied." "They should now be finally respected after being pronounced". He finally admitted, however, said that he was dissatisfied despite the progress made during this first consultation. "Many questions have been raised, my counterparts said that this is a very good result for a first meeting. To me, I say honestly, it is very little: I would like to solve more problems,"<sup>[2]</sup>he said. Among these advances, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky announced a major prisoner exchange with rebels in eastern Ukraine in December, as well as his agreement to extend the OSCE's mandate in the conflict settlement process and granted full access to the conflict zone.-----

After the summit, the Russian and Ukrainian Presidents held a bilateral meeting, at the end of which Vladimir Putin said he was "happy" with today's meetings. Before the summit, Vladimir Putin and volodymoy Zelensky had bilateral interviews with Emmanuel Macron and Angela Merkel. The Ukrainian President added that Ukraine would retain its political independence and sovereignty. "Ukraine would not accept a" federalization "and will not allow anyone to" influence its vector of development ". declared President Zelensky. Indeed, since 2015 the Ukrainian army has been fighting there armed separatist groups supported by neighboring Russia; the front line is supposed to be frozen, rid of its heavy weapons, but the addicts to these commitments are almost daily-----

President Putin has shown concern for "ordinary" people "We must make sure that there are no endless queues, that the thousands of ordinary people who live in this area can pass easily" . The Russian President then added: "Let us not forget the ordinary people who live there. All our agreements must improve their lives, not in the future, but now."<sup>[3]</sup>Regarding in particular the line of contact between the territories under control of the East Ukrainian rebels and the rest of Ukraine.

#### CONDITIONS TO REACH CEASEFIRE BEFORE THE END OF YEAR 2019

What must above all be retained essentially from this high-level meeting of the four heads of state during this "Normandy Format"<sup>[4]</sup> (Format Normandie ») summit are the "cease-fire support measures"<sup>[5]</sup> for eastern Ukraine to "stabilize" the region by the end of the year. The withdrawal of forces in three disputed zones should be completed by the end of March 2020.

Indeed, Volodymyr Zelensky, who got elected by promising to end the war, wants to honor this campaign promise with this question of Donbass. He was put under pressure by part of the Ukrainian population, the most nationalist but also the most pro-European, who feared that he would give in too much, "capitulate" in the face of the Russian will to keep, with the separatists, one foot in the Donbass and therefore a lever to prevent Ukraine from turning more towards the West.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky, also stated "Ukraine is an independent, democratic state, whose development vector will always be chosen exclusively by the people of Ukraine,"<sup>[6]</sup> he said. "Both Donbas and Crimea are Ukraine."<sup>[7]</sup>

#### CONDITIONS FOR ORGANIZING ELECTIONS IN THE DONBASS-----

Elections should be established, under Ukrainian law, under fair monitoring, yet no date has en advanced so far. The election is the first condition to a more political stability in the region, and cold yield to a major step towards peace. However, to organize elections which are held in Donbass before Ukraine has clearly regained control over the region and its border with Russia, would also correspond to saying "No to capitulation". However, "the fear" is that if the separatists manage to constitute a legitimate political force, for elections, the Russians will have won this political part, from a Ukrainian point of view, unless Ukraine presents candidates sufficiently representative and legitimate also from their rating. The ballot boxes will then be able to decide on this conflict, on the way

towards a peace which is desired lasting.-----

Presidents Zelensky and Putin, had also discussed the state gas companies respectively Naftogaz, of Ukraine, and Gazprom of Russia, in whether the continuation of the contract will be signed, before expiration by the end of the year 2019. This signature, could avoid disruption to gas supplied to Ukraine.-----

Eventually the aim of this "Normandy Format" summit was to relaunch the peace process in Donbass, Ukraine. At the end of the meeting, measures were agreed to stabilize the situation in the conflict zone and relaunch the implementation of the Minsk agreements. (See article:FORMAT NORMANDIE IS A SUCCCESSFUL NEW STEP MACRON SAYS ON 9TH DEC AT ELYSEE COMMON AGREEMENTS TO REACH PEACE <http://www.newsrama.uspa24.com/bericht-16248/format-normandie-is-a-succcessful-new-step-macron-says-on-9th-dec-at-elysee.html>) Finally, German Chancellor Angela Merkel and Emmanuel Macron announced that another summit should be held in four months between representatives of the four countries. The French head of state also recalled, during the press conference, that the "Normandy format" was the only diplomatic format allowing the implementation of the Minsk peace agreements. If only diplomacy, and bold diplomacy could, for once, lead to a happy ending, and reaching out peace through this Format Normandie.

**Article online:**

<https://www.uspa24.com/bericht-16239/president-macron-welcome-his-counterparts-for-a-format-normandie-summit.html>

**Editorial office and responsibility:**

V.i.S.d.P. & Sect. 6 MDStV (German Interstate Media Services Agreement): Jedi Foster P/O Rahma Sophia Rachdi

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