
GERMANY'S MERZ TELLS EUROPE TO ASSERT ITSELF TO SAFEGUARD PEACE, PROSPERITY

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Madeline Chambers

Europe must assert its interests more strongly to ensure peace and prosperity in 2026 amid challenges from Russian aggression, global protectionism and changing ties with the U.S., German Chancellor Friedrich Merz said in his annual address.

Since taking office in May, Merz has helped spearhead European efforts to support Ukraine against Russia's invasion. Berlin has also ramped up defence spending since 2023 in a bid to show it is ready to assume more responsibility.

In his New Year's speech, Merz pulled no punches, saying the "terrible" war raging on Europe's doorstep posed a direct threat to continental freedom and security.

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