

**PRESIDENT FERDINAND ROMUALDEZ MARCOS JR.'s  
ARRIVAL STATEMENT FROM WORKING VISIT TO BERLIN, GERMANY  
AND STATE VISIT TO THE CZECH REPUBLIC**

Villamor Air Base, Pasay City

16 March 2024

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Thank you, Secretary Manny Bonoan, for your introduction.

All of you, please take your seats.

The Cabinet Secretaries present here today; our constant companion when we leave and arrive, the Pasay City Mayor Imelda Calixto Rubiano and Pasay City Lone District Representative Antonino Calixto; the AFP Chief-of-Staff and the Service Commanders that are here today; and, of course, the Vice President, Vice President Sara Duterte. Good afternoon to you all.

I am pleased to share with you and the Filipino people the results of my back-to-back visits to Germany and then to the Czech Republic.

My visit to Berlin was also part of the 70th Anniversary of Philippines-Germany diplomatic relations, and the Philippines and the Czech Republic are celebrating, as well, 50 years of bilateral ties.

In Germany, I was able to meet with Chancellor Olaf Scholz and discussed matters of significance to both our countries, particularly on upholding the rule of law and promoting a rules-based international order, as well as enhancing cooperation in the areas of peace and development, defense cooperation, maritime cooperation, trade and investment including on critical raw materials and renewable energy, climate change, and labor. I emphasized the Philippines' commitment to a clean energy future and invited German investments in green energy initiatives. Chancellor Scholz also remarked on the crucial role of our Overseas Filipino Workers in Germany, and once again we highlighted their contributions to the economy and to the society of Germany.

In the Czech Republic, I met with the heads of the Czech government, President Petr Pavel and Prime Minister Petr Fiala, and the heads of the Czech Parliament, Senate President Milo Vystrčil and Speaker of the Chamber of Deputies Markéta Pekarová Adamová.

We discussed ways to further strengthen our bilateral cooperation in the areas of trade and investment, defense, agriculture, renewable energy, transport, and of course people-to-people exchanges.

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I underscored the Philippines' remarkable economic performance and invited Czech businesses to invest in the areas of IT-BPM, electronics, manufacturing, food and agriculture, and automotive and electric vehicle manufacturing, amongst other things.

I also met with German and Czech businessmen; they are keen to expand their ventures to the Philippines, and I am glad to announce that my German visit resulted in business agreements for projects with an aggregate value of USD 4 billion dollars in the sectors of renewable energy, manufacturing, healthcare, innovation and startups, IT-BPM, minerals processing, agriculture and aerospace.

During my time in Berlin, I was able to discuss with Lufthansa Technik its expansion plan in the Philippines, which entails the construction of a second hangar in Clark. This expansion project is valued at USD 150 million dollars or PHP 8 billion pesos.

I also extended my heartfelt appreciation to Siemens for their unwavering support and confidence in Filipino talent and the company's continuing commitment to support the capacity building of Filipino technical personnel in the field of healthcare.

In the Czech Republic, I received business agreements in pivotal sectors, such as semiconductors and IT-BPM, that underscore a shared commitment to bilateral cooperation, facilitating exchange programs, and skill enhancement initiatives. Germany and the Czech Republic have also expressed their valuable support for the resumption of the Philippines-EU Free Trade Agreement negotiations. In this regard, I have authorized DTI Secretary Fred Pascual to make the necessary follow-up on the progress of the FTA discussions at the EU headquarters in Brussels, where he is presently.

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During the visit, several agreements covering important areas of cooperation were signed: the Joint Declaration of Intent on Strengthening Cooperation in the Maritime Sector between Philippines and German transportation agencies, the Cooperation Programme between the Technical Education and Skills Development Authority or TESDA and the German Federal Institute for Vocational Education and Training, and as well as the Joint Communiqué on the Establishment of Labor Consultations Mechanism between Philippine and Czech labor agencies.

This came about also because the Czech Republic has expanded its quota for Filipino workers to go to the Czech Republic from about 5,000 previously to now 10,300 a year.

And finally, I had the honor, of course, of hosting and addressing our kababayans in separate events in Berlin and in Prague. There are more than 35,000 Filipinos in Germany and around 7,000 in the Czech Republic. And I reassured our countrymen of this government's unwavering commitment to creating more job opportunities and improving our economy, ensuring that they can return home to the Philippines and earn a livelihood without having to sacrifice their time with their loved ones.

Overall, I am confident that these visits to Germany and the Czech Republic have strengthened our bonds with these two countries in Central Europe and created opportunities for cooperation and prosperity.

Thank you all. Maraming salamat at magandang hapon po sa inyong lahat.  
(applause)  
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