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# Experts say Kiev's refusal to host Steinmeier shows Europe is losing identity

TASS

3 minutes

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MOSCOW, April 15. /TASS/. Experts told TASS on Tuesday that Ukraine's refusal to host German President Frank-Walter Steinmeier demonstrated that Germany is starting to be seen as losing its great power status and, along with other European countries, forfeiting its identity and becoming a US satellite.

Vladimir Zharikhin, deputy director at the Institute of the CIS Countries, said he thinks Ukrainian President Vladimir Zelensky didn't forgive the German president for the mechanism that he proposed for resolving the conflict in Donbass, which is dubbed the Steinmeier Formula and which the latest summit of the Normandy Format pressed Kiev to follow.

"Zelensky refused to do it and the Normandy Format effectively ceased to exist," the researcher said.

Zharikhin said Zelensky acted disrespectfully regarding Steinmeier.

"He behaves so disrespectfully because he perceives European countries, even major ones such as Germany and France, as US

satellites, just like his own country is at the moment," the researcher said. "He believes that they have no choice. [German Chancellor Olaf] Scholz will come anyway: If Washington commands to come, he will come."

This episode, he said, is a case in point of "how low the former great European powers fell."

## **Europe's second humiliation**

Kirill Koktysh, an assistant professor at the political studies department of the Moscow State University of Foreign Affairs, drew attention to the fact that the refusal to host Steinmeier followed a visit to Kiev by UK Prime Minister Boris Johnson. Kiev's move regarding Steinmeier, he said, was a "deliberate humiliation of Germany" by the UK as Kiev had little say in the matter.

"Britain demonstrated that Kiev is in essence its fiefdom and Britain sets the rules of the game, and all the money spent by Germany plays no role," Koktysh said. "In diplomatic parlance everything is clear. That means 'Germany should know its place.'"

The researcher said that was the second time Europe was humiliated recently. The first time, French President Emmanuel Macron took a hit when Australia, the UK and US created the AUKUS bloc, he said. Australia subsequently tore up a contract to buy submarines from France.

"This is a second humiliation," Koktysh said. "Europe again has been shown its lack of identity and has accepted it one way or another."