



From “grandeur” to “sécurité” and “a Special Relationship”: The Shift in the French-German Relations in a Historical Perspective

Péter Krisztián Zachar¹

ABSTRACT

On the occasion of the 55th anniversary of the Élysée Treaty this study deals with the historical development of Franco-German relations in the 20th century. The focus is on the historical models of rapprochement between the two nations. The author presents in detail the possibilities for cooperation in the interwar years (with a special focus on civil integration). This period may be considered one of the most intensive periods of the French-German reconciliation. Bases that the parties could build on after 1945 were founded as the ideas were similar. Following the successes of the large-scale policy, numerous other very important steps were needed to minimise mutual mistrust in the peoples of the two states. This led to a large number of various organisations and cooperations. The patterns presented here greatly influenced communication after 1945. In the second part of the study the author presents the origin and effect of the Élysée Treaty with some new aspects of the history of diplomacy. Of the numerous new initiatives, the author focuses primarily on civil ones. The great innovation brought about by the treaty, however, was the strong involvement of the civil societies of both countries, particularly in education, research, culture and youth exchanges. As a result of historical cooperation “*Erbfeinde*” (hereditary enemies) have become “*Erbfreunde*” (hereditary friends) within the European integration.

KEYWORDS

Élysée Treaty; Franco-German relations; history of diplomacy; Gustav Stresemann; Aristide Briand; Charles de Gaulle; Konrad Adenauer; European integration.

On 22 January 1963, Federal Chancellor Konrad Adenauer and the French President Charles de Gaulle signed a “Joint Declaration” and the “Treaty between the French Republic and the Federal Republic of Germany on French-German cooperation” in the “Salon Murat” of the Élysée Palace in Paris. This event largely influenced the future of Europe. Nowadays we are happy to claim that this treaty should seal the reconciliation between the peoples of Germany and France. The aim of the Élysée Treaty was to turn enemies into friends. Thus the treaty laid the foundation for friendship be-

¹ Péter Krisztián Zachar, Department for International Relations and Diplomacy, National University of Public Service, Faculty of International and European Studies, H-1083, Budapest, Ludovika tér 2, Hungary, zachar.peter.krisztian@uni-nke.hu



tween the two countries and lasting peace in Europe. These are also features of the Treaty that are well known to the public. But what was really behind the treaty? What did the statesmen de Gaulle and Adenauer really have in mind when they carried out the ceremony? Which historical prototypes came to their aid? The intensification of relations between the two states after World War II was not an ad hoc idea. The aspirations for cooperation, understanding, and reappraisal of the past and good neighbourly relations had their roots — after decades of rivalry — in the interwar period. De Gaulle and Adenauer confirmed their mutual conviction in the agreement, that “*the reconciliation between the German and French people, which ends a centuries-old rivalry, represents a historical event that fundamentally reshapes the relationship between the two nations*”. But was it really such a great novelty what was enshrined in the Treaty? Weren’t there already early models that indicated such a “*friendship treaty*”? The background to the agreement was the recognition on both sides that a united and therefore peaceful Europe can only be achieved by increased cooperation between France and Germany. But this concept was not new. The first signs and the first attempts at implementation date back to the period after the First World War. In this contribution to the diplomatic history of Franco-German relations, I would like to illustrate these attempts and highlight a number of aspects of the creation of the Élysée Treaty and also emphasise the importance of the historical archetypes in the development of the ties between the two nations. At all times there were visionaries who were concerned about rapprochement and reconciliation efforts — politicians, intellectuals, citizens of both countries. They have all laid the foundation for the reconciliation process that began after 1945. Nowadays the “*French-German tandem*” — after the opposition of a century — is considered the driving force of the integration in Europe. Their former opposition eased as a result of the perception of safety and their agreement contributed to further development of the European Union. My aim is to add some notes to a better understanding of the historical development trends, main personalities and exponents of the rapprochement and explain the diplomatic changes, from “*grandeur*” to “*sécurité*” and the “*special relationship*” of our times.

1. CAPTURED BY “REVANCHE” AND “GLOIRE”

In the historical times of the 18th and 19th centuries, crises have shaped the mutual relationship between the two nations, especially since the founding of the German Reich after the Franco-German War in 1870–1871.² These decades were again and

2 The War between the Second French Empire of Napoleon III and the German states of the North German Confederation led by the Kingdom of Prussia under emperor William I is often referred as the Franco-Prussian War, but in our opinion it is right to speak of a Franco-German war, since the war was the foundation stone for the creation of German unity. All German states that united in the German Reich in 1871 were allies of Prussia in the war. For more information see: H. von MOLTKE, *The Franco-German war of 1870–71*, London 1891; D. WETZEL, *A Duel of Nations: Germany, France, and the Diplomacy of the War of 1870–1871*, Madison 2012; Online: “Franco-German War”. Britannica.com. Encyclopædia Britannica Inc. (Retrieved 18 January 2018).



again marked by phases of tension and conflict, interrupted by phases of relaxation and peaceful coexistence or even “togetherness”.³ It is to be held: Napoleon’s interventions in German politics, the attack on the Holy Roman Empire of the German Nation and the attempt to incorporate the Central German territories aroused deep concern not only in the affected territories. On the other hand, the French national pride was deeply injured when the German princes founded the German Empire in the centre of French culture and power on January 18. 1871, in the Hall of Mirrors, in Versailles. The French self-conception of a “grande nation” and a cultural and moral leading power of the time was severely damaged, which called for “revanche”. After an era of attempted rapprochement between 1876 and the end of the Bismarck period, the contrast with France in Germany was consolidated by a culture of vigilance and competition for “imperialist” world status. This constant contradiction forced almost the theory of the “*Erbfeindschaft*” (hereditary enmity), so that the struggle for power continued from generation to generation.⁴

This was no different at the time of the Great War, as contemporaries called the First World War. And even after the war, despite destruction, despite losses, despite Verdun, the symbolically exaggerated site of mutual suffering, despite collapse, rapprochement was hindered by several factors. The consequent global political and diplomatic situation did not facilitate the dialogue of the two countries. The ‘Tiger’ and the peace treaty of Versailles he imposed, then the provisions on compensation all made impossible for the two nations to reconcile.⁵ The notions of a just peace on the French and German sides were too contradictory. The essential factor was that, despite the international agreement, the fear of Germany remained in France. The newspaper *L’Echo de Paris* wrote: “A great Germany can be born again: not tomorrow, but at the cost of a significant weakening on our part”.⁶ And Clemenceau said in a speech to the French Senate on 11 October 1919: “We are the masters. However, if we are to seek reconciliation for our children and for the future, we must make use of this rule with the necessary moderation to ensure its permanence. If we do this, Germany is disarmed.”⁷ That was probably in the background why — as Yves Bizeul and Matthias Schulz put it — the first German democracy, the Weimar Republic reaped a peace that the authoritarian empire had substantially deserved.⁸

The so-called “grandeur” policy, which George Clemenceau and Raymond Poincaré followed, were aimed to suppress the Germans in order to provide security and economic development for the French state. Germany was deemed to be solely re-

3 For more information: R. POMMERIN — R. MARCOWITZ (Eds.), *Quellen zu den deutsch-französischen Beziehungen 1815–1919*, Darmstadt 1997.

4 For more information: W. PABST, *Das Jahrhundert der deutsch-französischen Konfrontation: Ein Quell- und Arbeitsbuch zur deutsch-französischen Geschichte von 1866 bis heute*, Hannover 1983.

5 F. HERRE, *Deutsche und Franzosen: Der lange Weg zur Freundschaft*, Bergisch-Gladbach 1985.

6 *L’Echo de Paris*, 12.11.1918, p. 3.

7 G. CLEMENCEAU, *Discours de paix: Publiés par la Société des Amis de Georges Clemenceau*, Paris 1938, p. 263.

8 Y. BIZEUL — M. SCHULZ, *Die deutsch-französischen Beziehungen Rückblick und aktueller Stand*, Rostock 2000, p. 18.



sponsible for the outbreak of war. This kind of French awareness of greatness was dreaming about a “French peace” and a Europe under French rule.⁹ The economic protectionism and political isolation fuelled German nationalism and thus revisionism instead of fighting it. As a result of this concept the conference in Genoa from 10 to 19 May 1922 failed as well the Ruhr crisis afterward.¹⁰ France became the owner of the most important German industrial district by the occupation. French journalist Raymond Recouly commented: “*In summary, the following can be said: after a poor ceasefire, a treaty full of loopholes failed to resolve the most important issue on which, from an economic point of view, our future, even our existence depends: that of reparations.*”¹¹ The policy of France aimed to establish the French economic power by uniting the iron ore of Alsace and the coal of Ruhr. Therefore it is not surprising that Chancellor Wilhelm Cuno took definite counter steps. Mainly because the political elite in Germany back then, from Hugo Stinnes to Rathenau and Gustav Stresemann, wanted to prevent Germany from being robbed economically and keep owning coal for the German industry.¹² Thus Chancellor Cuno promoted “passive opposition”, “refusal of compliance” and “general strike”. The French and Belgians reacted to the German resistance by expanding their occupation zone. In addition to the Ruhr area, other cities along the border with France (including Offenburg, Appenweier, Mannheim and Karlsruhe) were occupied.

Henry Kissinger revealed with the analytical method of the realist international school that German foreign policy had two options to choose: opposition questioning the peace at the same time, which required further efforts and sacrifices; and cooperation providing time for strengthening, which could demoralize the nation itself.¹³ The decision Cuno made was aimed at making the identity of the new Republic of Weimar strong and keeping the picture of the enemy alive. Especially, because French diplomacy was trying to foster the disintegration of the German state from inside: by supporting different nonconformist movements with weapons and money, too. In Saxony and Thuringia power was taken by chambers of labour, a proletarian rebellion broke out in Hamburg, in Bavaria separatism appeared, while Rhineland was formally transformed to an independent republic and in the meantime Adolf Hitler’s national socialist group attempted to perform the Beer Hall Putsch.

2. HISTORICAL ROOTS AND PATTERNS OF UNDERSTANDING

Until 1923 France pursued a policy of containment, humiliation and isolation. The French historians Raymond Poidevin and Jacques Bariety rightly choose the image of a “cold war” to describe these years.¹⁴ But this policy did not lead to any goal... Cuno’s

9 I. DIÓSZEGI, *A hatalmi politika másfél évszázada*, Budapest 1994, p. 286.

10 Ibidem, p. 296.

11 R. RECOULY, *La Ruhr*, Paris 1923, pp. 175–176.

12 M. ORMOS — I. MAJOROS, *Európa a nemzetközi küzdőtéren*, Budapest 2003, pp. 302–303.

13 H. KISSINGER, *Diplomácia*, Budapest 1996, p. 265.

14 R. POIDEVIN — J. BARIÉTY, *Frankreich und Deutschland: Die Geschichte ihrer Beziehungen 1815–1975*, München 1982, pp. 317–340.



opposition and support for the nation generated only mock results while deepening the economic crisis in Germany: inflation was so high as never before mainly because one of Germany's economic centres fell out. Also the French economy was affected similarly by the Ruhr adventure: French national budget remained unstable and the exchange rate of the French franc was the lowest ever. As regards domestic politics, the government of the "national block" started to become disintegrated. In this background Golo Mann correctly highlighted that in the economic-political situation by 1924 all the three actors understood that peaceful solutions and self-criticism were essential.¹⁵ The French government ordered the evacuation of the Ruhr area in 1924. The rapprochement has also been called for in both countries by ever louder voices, such as in Germany by Heinrich Mann¹⁶ and many committed politicians of democratic parties such as the Reichstag President Paul Loebe (SPD), trade unionists and industrialists who supported the idea of Europe.¹⁷ In France it was mainly the politicians of the so-called "cartel of the left" such as Leon Blum, Edouard Herriot, Joseph Caillaux and intellectuals, who, self-critically, also regarded the idea of revenge as a cause of the Great War.¹⁸ The French need for security was then to be satisfied by Germany's integration into the peacekeeping system and its place in Europe. Politician and writer Louise Weiss, a co-founder of the magazine *L'Europe Nouvelle*, was of the opinion as early as 1921 that "the German people will not become democratic in one day and learn freedom; We must first of all take away the lords, allow them to decide freely about themselves and create in the heart of Europe a great, hardworking and pacifist democracy that can contribute to the construction of Europe rather than work on its destruction."

In France, gradually the policy called "sécurité" hallmarked by Aristide Briand took the leading role: "The followers of this approach believed that the recovery of Germany cannot be hindered after more than one decade and this new Germany is going to be even stronger than France and its allies together. The German revenge may be avoided only if France makes concessions at an early stage to Germany and reconciles the German nation as well as protects French interests."¹⁹ So Briand said in one of his speeches on reconciliation policy: "It is said that the German people will hardly be inclined to accept the results of this war as definitive; it is not to be forgotten that at the end of every war there have been victors and defeated and that the morale of the defeated cannot be exactly the same as that of the victor. For a time, resentment and revenge persist, hopes, perhaps of an unhealthy nature, which could lead their bearers to new bloody conflicts. It takes quite a long time of effort to dispel all this. But it is up to the winner to do this. [...] For the victorious France, it is honourable to speak such a language."²⁰ This concept started to spread after the rabid Poincaré left the government in June 1924. Gustav Stresemann became the head of the

15 G. MANN, *Deutsche Geschichte*, Frankfurt 1958, p. 689; J. ARNAVON et al., *De Versailles au plan Young: Réparations, dettes interalliées, reconstruction européenne*, Paris 1932.

16 A. KANTOROWICZ, *Unser natürlicher Freund: Heinrich Mann als Wegbereiter der deutsch-französischen Verständigung*, Lübeck 1972.

17 BIZEUL — SCHULZ, p. 20.

18 J. BINOCHE, *Histoire des relations franco-allemandes de 1789 à nos jours*, Paris 1996, pp. 147–152.

19 DIÓSZEGI, p. 268.

20 A. BRIAND, *Frankreich und Deutschland*, Dresden 1928, pp. 155–156.



German government reflecting the French concept in September 1923. He was also willing to deal with the compliance of the peace terms in return to political dialogue and the French thaw. Already in 1923 he made it clear: *“There can be no security in the future if we do not first of all move towards moral disarmament, without which material disarmament is not possible. [...] We can choose. On the one hand, all the sufferings of war perpetuated by the spirit of revenge. On the other hand, a sincere reconciliation and the possibility of fruitful work.”*²¹

Stresemann, who was leading the government for a short period, considered the history of France to make decisions. How did the loser power behave after the congress in Vienna in 1815 and what was the first step the French took after the peace treaty of Frankfurt in 1871? Both cases clearly indicate that the defeated France was encouraging the ease of occupation first. For Germany it meant to stop the French-Belgian occupation of the Rhineland in order to establish the required margin for foreign policy. For this the German-French relationship had to be based on trust, which required to pay further compensation and avoid other retaliations by obvious declarations. But real foreign political objectives were aimed at the much desired revision. As it was proven in Stresemann’s confidential letter to Crown Prince Wilhelm dated September 7 1925 (made public in 1932) the German chancellor was aware that “several tricks” were needed to realize the real objectives. The security system of the West had to be entered to review the eastern borders and the accession of German-Austria.²² Nevertheless, traffic was resumed, which had amazing results, establishing the practice of resumption after 1945.

First Stresemann’s policy stabilized the economy, which generated overall development, relatively high level of well-being, economic productivity and cultural boom for the period from 1924 to 1929 in the Weimar Republic. The exchange rate of the German mark was stable, the economy normalized thanks to the loans and the Dawes-plan of 1924, which also contributed to a relaxation in Franco-German relations. In 1925 the production exceeded far beyond that of the last year in peace.²³

21 V. MARGUERITTE, *Der Weg zum Frieden: Mit dem „Aufruf an die Gewissen“*, Berlin 1925, p. 31.

22 *“In my opinion, German foreign policy has three major tasks for the foreseeable future: Firstly, the solution of the reparations question in a way that is bearable for Germany and the securing of peace, which is the prerequisite for Germany’s re-invigoration. Secondly, I count the protection of the Germans abroad, those 10–12 million tribal comrades who now live under foreign yoke in foreign countries. The third major task is the correction of the eastern borders: the recovery of Danzig, from the Polish corridor and a correction of the border in Upper Silesia. In the background is the connection of German-Austria [...]. The most important thing is [...] the liberation of German land from foreign occupation. We have to get the strangler off our backs first. That is why German policy in this respect will have to consist first of finessing (using tricks — editor’s note) and avoiding the big decisions.”* Published in Bundeszentrale für Politische Bildung: Informationen zur politischen Bildung Nr. 261, in: *Die Weimarer Republik*, p. 37.

23 Also, Hjalmar Schacht, the Head of the Imperial Central Bank, had an important role as he established the German Gold Discount Bank in order to stabilize German mark. He was appointed the president of the supervisory committee. Schacht controlled banknote printing, he was involved in planning the provisions of saving, re-regulating tax and customs issues — in accordance with the Dawes Plan — and setting permanent state incomes.



In the same year the Locarno treaties were signed. They were not based on dik-tats already, but they were “agreements providing mutual advantages”.²⁴ The Locarno Treaty was based on the understanding between Germany and France. France’s need for security had been respected, and Germany escaped political isolation by joining the League of Nations in September 1926. On the other hand, the set of agreements was still characterized by “the terms of a state and national sovereignty” and the two great Ministers of Foreign Affairs took steps on the basis of the “protection of sovereignty and the priority of national interests”.²⁵

Thanks to the two ministers of foreign affairs, the relationship between Germany and France became so improved that negotiations — first in secret — could be started on further economic and political rapprochement. Obviously, Stresemann was working on the preparation of a revision, but the idea of expansion to a larger extent has not been known so far. He was interested in the territories lost already (Danzig, Silesia) and German-Austria. The “thaw” in the west, on the contrary, meant higher security and stability for the French government, i.e. it was promising the success of the policy of the “*sécurité*”.

All of these established the possibility to realize the attempt of an agreement partly beyond national context: Stresemann proposed a German financial aid, Briand considered the emptying of the Rhineland as they realized that they mutually needed each other. France needed the German coal as well as Germany needed the French iron ore. The next actions were defined on 17 September 1926 in Thoiry, near Geneva, in a restaurant during a common lunch.²⁶ As a result of the negotiations, the example of a later European economic cooperation was born in September 1926: it was a cartel agreement of German, French, Belgian and Luxembourgian iron and steel factories (Stahlkartell or Internationale Rohstahlgemeinschaft — International Crued Steel Cartel). Austrian, Hungarian and Czechoslovakian firms also joined in 1927.

These actions were internationally acknowledged. Consequently, Briand and Stresemann were awarded the Nobel Peace Prize shared in 1926. Moreover, the following year it was granted to two, a French and a German pacifist: Ferdinand Buisson, the founder and president of the International League of Peace and Freedom, and Ludwig Quidde, representing Germany at several peace conferences.

Cooperation also continued. According to the “spillover” theory on international integration, heavy industry encouraged German-French pharmaceutical firms to form cartels in 1927: the merger of the German *IG Centrale des Matières colorantes* (C.M.C) integrating French firms covering 80% of the German and French market. (It was also expanding when in 1929 the Swiss Basler Chemie and in 1931 the British Imperial Chemical Industries joined.) These economic initiatives started to establish the free circulation of varied products and raw materials, and exact regulation of the markets, raw material supply and job creation. As a result later several important plans were made to unite Europe economically. Ideas of large-scale industrial, economic cooperation are known from 1932. They were also French-German initiatives.

24 I. DIÓSZEGI, *Briand and Stresemann*, in: Rubicon, Nr. 10, 1993; F. BERBER (Ed.), *Locarno: Eine Dokumenten-sammlung*, Berlin 1936.

25 F. GAZDAG, *Európai integráció és külpolitika*, Budapest 2005, p. 61.

26 ORMOS — MAJOROS, pp. 314–315.



Therefore, in 1932 the leaders of the French and German pharmaceutical and electronic industry met in Luxemburg, where the Germans suggested that the compensation payments should be stopped in order to prevent the country from the national socialist and communist takeover. To improve further cooperation they developed the replacement of the American loans with the French funds and also the establishment of a (German-Belgian-French-Luxembourgian) regional customs union. The latter one was an answer to the German-Austrian customs union, and André Tardieu, French Prime Minister's plan related to the establishment of a customs union along the Danube.²⁷ However, all these ideas were eliminated by the upcoming global economic crisis.

Also, the nationalism, protectionism and populism that were generated by the economic crisis swept away the first ideas aiming at the European Union. The plans of a "European Union System" supported by John Maynard Keynes, the most significant economist of the era, which was based on the idea of the well-known Paneuropean Union and the thoughts of Briand, which was developed by Earl Richard Coudenhove Kalergi,²⁸ also failed. Although several European politicians and intellectuals understood the signs of the times and that a tragedy was to come as a result of the economic crisis, it was not time to encourage the European Union by two nations. Neither Stresemann, nor his successor, the new Minister of Foreign Affairs of Germany, Julius Curtius, supported the idea of integration.²⁹ Although Stresemann pointed out in his last speech to the League of Nations meeting that the economic and monetary fragmentation of the countries of Europe is considered an anachronism.³⁰ This brought him closer to Briand, but the times were not yet ripe for closer cooperation.

Nonetheless, this period may be considered one of the most intensive periods of the French-German reconciliation. Bases that the parties could build on after 1945 were founded as the ideas were similar. Following the successes of the large-scale policy, numerous other very important steps were needed to minimise mutual mistrust in the peoples of the two states. The mutual suspicion that Briand and Stresemann were able to overcome was still too deeply rooted in the thinking of both nations. Therefore, further steps had to be taken in the field of culture, education and everyday life. "The Union for the Agreement in Europe" (*Verband für Europäische Verständigung / Fédération pour l'Entente Européenne*) was established in 1926 with divisions in Germany, France and Great Britain. The organization encouraged a Union of the Nations bringing the nations under one umbrella. One of its German founders, Wilhelm Heile, provided active assistance at the establishment of the European Committee. In the same year the "German-French Studying Committee" (*Deutsch-Französischer Studienkommittee / Comité d'Information franco-allemand*) started the operation based on the idea of a publicist, Pierre Viénot, in order to form

27 In connection with the Danube region: L. T. VIZI, *Duna-völgyi együttműködési kísérletek az 1930-as évek első felében. Fejezetek a közép-európai integrációs törekvések történetéből*, in: J. SIMON (Ed.), *Civil társadalom és érdekképviselet Közép-Európában*, Budapest 2012, pp. 17–33.

28 M. ORMOS, *A Briand-terv és Magyarország*, in: *Rubicon*, Nr. 5–6, 1997, p. 58.

29 I. NÉMETH, *Európa-tervek*. Eötvös, Budapest 2001, p. 227; ORMOS — MAJOROS, p. 319.

30 BIZEUL — SCHULZ, p. 21.



a transnational, intellectual and cultural platform.³¹ At the same time, some Germans realized that the people of both countries did not differ significantly from each other. This would have enabled the members of the intellectual elite of both nations to inform their own publicity and contribute to the education, communication and reconciliation of wide societal layers. Emil Mayrisch, a large-scale industrial player, as the most important financial supporter who was thinking as a European citizen from Luxembourg, was behind the initiative. His idea of the International Crude Steel Community was quite successful.

The private law association based in Berlin, the German-French Society (*Deutsch-Französische Gesellschaft*) published the newspaper titled "*Deutsch-Französische Rundschau*", edited by Otto Nikolaus Grautoff, university professor writer, translator (1876–1937). He was a convinced supporter of this mutual getting to know each other. Above all, he saw a good chance for the young people to play an intermediary role between Germany and France and therefore supported the society, just like personalities from Germany and France such as Konrad Adenauer, Albert Einstein, Thomas Mann, Georges Duhamel and André Gide, who also joined the first presidency. The aim of the association was to promote an understanding between the two states and to create a forum for those interested in the neighbouring country. The statute of the association (dated 12 January 1928) noted as one of the most important aims "to contribute to a relaxation between the two countries and build bridges between France and Germany while preserving the national feeling of the two nations".³² In this spirit the German-French Society has repeatedly organised study trips to France in order to immerse themselves in the intellectual and cultural life of the neighbouring country, or to get in touch with the relevant circles in Paris, which pursued the same goal of bringing the two peoples closer together. In addition, a central office would be set up for student correspondence and German and French speakers would be invited to France and Germany time and again. On the last pages of each "Rundschau" issue, German-French events in France were announced on a regular basis and new publications in the German-French context were introduced.³³

On the French side, the "*Ligue d' Etudes Germaniques*" was created in 1928 in close cooperation with the German-French Society and the magazine "*Spes*", which was later called "*Se Connaître*". The partner paper of the "Rundschau" was later the French "*Revue d'Allemagne*". With 12 working local groups, the "Ligue" was the strongest organisation in France, aiming to cooperate with the German civil organisations. The main focus was on the young people and high school and university teachers.³⁴

31 G. MÜLLER, *Deutsch-französische Gesellschaftsbeziehungen nach dem Ersten Weltkrieg. Das Deutsch-Französische Studentenkomitee und der Europäische Kulturbund*, München 2005, pp. 81–106.

32 H. M. BOCK, *Otto Grautoff und die Berliner Deutsch-Französische Gesellschaft*, in: H. M. BOCK (Ed.), *Französische Kultur im Berlin der Weimarer Republik. Kultureller Austausch und diplomatische Beziehungen*, Tübingen 2005, p. 78.

33 *Ibidem*, pp. 80–100.

34 H. M. BOCK, *Weimarer Intellektuelle und das Projekt Deutsch-Französischer Gesellschaftsverflechtung*, in: R. HOHLS — I. SCHRÖDER — H. SIEGRIST (Eds), *Europa und die Europäer. Quellen und Essays zur modernen europäischen Geschichte*, Stuttgart 2005, pp. 422–426.



The “European Cultural Union” (*Europäischer Kulturbund*, its full name is *Internationaler Verband für kulturelle Zusammenarbeit / Fédération des Unions Intellectuelles*) was an Austrian initiative, led by Prince Karl Anton Rohan. This inspired the European philosophers by a bit confusing but exciting mixture of ideologies (e.g. Catholicism, the philosophy of Max Scheler and the poetry of Hofmannsthal and even the idea of the fascism).³⁵ The most important forum of these intellectuals was the “*Europäische Revue*” (Europe Review). The magazine received a great response throughout Europe: articles were cited in the “*Figaro*”, the “*Times*” and numerous other European newspapers. In France, the magazine was praised as a welcome symptom of the rapprochement of the European elites. The journal stayed away from political utopias and radical pacifism, concentrating instead on specific individual areas. Among the authors we can find almost all the most representative writers and authors of the inter-war period: Thomas Mann, Alfons Paquet, Ignaz Seipel, Werner Sombart, Stefan Zweig, Hugo von Hofmannsthal, Alexander Rüstow, André Gide, Georges Duhamel, Paul Valéry, Paul Viénot, etc.³⁶ The philosophers publishing and arguing in the *Europe Review* (*Europäische Revue*) were trying to predict the possible cultural future of Europe. In this basically private union, the most significant European philosophers met, who had only their European existence in common apart from politics, ideology, classes and races. Their slogan was ‘Understanding is the condition of agreement’. In 1924, the French writer Paul Valéry (1871–1945) developed thoughts on a pan-European understanding in the “*Revue Universelle*” in an essay entitled “*Caractères de l’esprit européen*”. He compared Europe with a “huge city”, which is small enough to be crossed in a reasonable time, and large enough to accommodate different cultures and regions. Therefore, it is not external commonalities that are important, but rather what can be built up together.³⁷

These steps by the cultural and economic elite were not an end in themselves during these years. They showed decades ahead and were considered to be the first steps towards the unification of Europe. These aspirations of individual politicians, economists and intellectuals were imbued with the will to integrate Europe, to which they assigned a peaceful, economic and cultural role. But history took a different path. There was no time for reconciliation. With the deaths of Stresemann in 1929 and Briand in 1932, as well as the global economic crisis, the approaches to understanding disappeared from the scene once again. After 1933 understanding was impossible...

3. RESUMPTION OF THE FRENCH-GERMAN THAW AFTER 1945

After the horror of World War II the global scope of action radically changed for the states of Europe too. The old continent was unable to free itself from the war and the consequences and it depended on the powers outside Europe, the Soviet Union and the USA. However, this time the intervention of the two powers seemed permanent

35 MÜLLER, pp. 363–379.

36 Ibidem, pp. 385–396.

37 P. VALÉRY, *Caractères de l’esprit européen*, in: *La Revue universelle*, Vol. 18, Nr. 8, 1924, pp. 132–142.



unlike after World War I. Leading powers of Europe had to conform to the decisions of other states and find possible solutions.³⁸ Consequently, the German-French relationship no longer was a global system of relations with global influence. It was restricted from the platform of global politics to a segment affecting the situation inside Europe (mainly Western Europe).

Their relationship — compared to the period after World War I — in the French politics is characterized by two distinctive trends. One is the idealist policy considering the Versailles Treaty the reason that made the system collapse — and in accordance with the opinion of several other contemporary philosophers — and wanting to remove the selfishness of the national state. This concept was focusing on the solidarity with the Germans, the sympathy with German movements of opposition and the new order of peace in a European Federation. According to the concept only the European collaboration and the elements beyond nations would provide the long term control over the German aggression.³⁹

The leader of the temporary administration had different opinion about the “German issue”. Instead of this idealist concept Charles de Gaulle recalled the “grandeur” concepts after World War I based on historical realities, and even communicated Clemenceau’s wildest ideas.⁴⁰ France pushed for the division of Germany rather than the other two occupying powers, carried out denazification rigorously and used the occupied territories for its own economic interests. According to de Gaulle’s concept the French power may be established with strict regulations toward the Germans and the long argument of the old enemies may be finished only with the competence of the French. De Gaulle called for Germany to be divided into small, insignificant sub-states and for the eastern border of France to be moved to the Rhine.⁴¹ Finally, in July 1945, an agreement was reached on the “*Directives pour notre action en Allemagne*”: The left bank of the Rhine was to be controlled, Saarland was to be subject to a special policy, and the German state of Rhineland-Palatinate was to be granted special status. Economic potential should be used to build France. Considering the effort of the USA in Europe and the power desire of the Soviet Union, the governments of France were trying to balance between the western and the eastern allies all the time. However, while in the east the strict ideas toward the Germans were welcomed, the western allies were against the French politics. The Cold War changed the international coordinate system: the United States and Great Britain insisted on an agreement of the occupation zones and wanted a more constructive German policy, including that of France. This path was slowly achieved by founding NATO and in the course of the Berlin crisis.⁴²

The development after 1945 should have parallels to the period after the First World War: In both cases, France was anxious to achieve lasting protection from its

38 GAZDAG, p. 62.

39 R. SCHUMAN, *Euró pá ért*, Budapest 2004, p. 28.

40 GAZDAG, p. 72.

41 BIZEUL — SCHULZ, pp. 27–28.

42 R. HUDEMANN, *Lehren aus dem Krieg. Neue Dimensionen in den deutsch-französischen Beziehungen nach 1945*, in: R. HOHLS — I. SCHRÖDER — H. SIEGRIST (Eds.), *Europa und die Europäer. Quellen und Essays zur modernen europäischen Geschichte*, Stuttgart 2005, pp. 428–432.



“hereditary enemy” on the other side of the Rhine, and both times this was to be achieved through fragmentation or total dissolution. The French fear of an overpowering neighbor played a major role in the search for new solutions after the world wars and, after a period of “power politics”, led to reconciliation and European unification. The Cold War and the threat of communism in Europe led France to agree to the founding of the Federal Republic of Germany (1949). According to French policy, however, the new state should be anchored in the western system of values in order to ensure political and economic control by the French. This was followed by the first official bilateral rapprochements between the two states: the settlement of the Saarland question and the German compensation payments to the victims of National Socialism in France.

The group that encouraged the reconciliation with the Germans had members mostly from the former Résistance, still insisting on the concepts with idealist and supranational ideas. They used to belong to very different political groups, linked in France to left-wing Catholicism and the idea of the European Federation, in Germany to liberal Catholic-Rhineland milieu and Jesuits. Emmanuel Mounier and Albert Béguin were two of the philosophers working around the periodical called “*Revue Esprit*”. Mounier, died 44 in 1950, was Catholic. He and Alfred Grosser, a French-German sociologist from a Jewish family, established the forum called “*Comité français d’échanges avec l’Allemagne nouvelle*”. The group that involved also Albert Béguin, literary critic, published its ideas first in the *Esprit* in June 1947. Also left wing Catholics joined the common thinking, represented by Walter Dirks, writer-publicist, or Eugen Kogon, political scientist.⁴³ Jean du Riveau, the Jesuit chaplain, published the first issue of the periodical “*Documents-Dokumente*” in two languages, in the French occupied zone in August 1945. The objective of the still existing periodical was to deepen the dialogue between Germany and France by getting mutual and improved knowledge about each other. The periodical publishing current topics of integration and analysis of French-German foreign affairs organized the first French-German meetings across the borders after 1945. The authors, Emmanuel Mounier as well, emphasised that the whole German nation cannot be considered collectively guilty, but collectively responsible based on how the history of the previous decades was assessed and it should involve Europe as a whole.⁴⁴ Civil society organisations that worked together with the French military government quickly emerged. The oldest are the “*Bureau international de liaison et de documentation*” (BILD) and its German twin sister, the “*Gesellschaft für supranationalale Zusammenarbeit*” (GÜZ).

The most important motivation that the groups intending to reconcile with the Germans stressed the necessity of the French-German cooperation. Their opinion was that a free (i.e. not under communist influence) Europe could perform any long-term integration only if its two central nations return to the policy of cooperation like before the war and the economic crisis. Even de Gaulle himself promoted such ideas related to the formation of the GFR.⁴⁵ De Gaulle’s idea of Germany’s strong con-

43 A study on Eugen Kogon’s life and work with Walter Dirks in German: <http://www.die-neue-ordnung.de/Nr32004/AL.html> (Retrieved 15 January 2018).

44 The website of *Dokumente*: <http://www.zeitschrift-dokumente.de/index.php>

45 G. ZIEBURA, *Die deutsch-französischen Beziehungen seit 1945*, Pfullingen 1970, p. 49.



trol was introduced into the political sphere, while the socialist integration concept was applied particularly in the cultural sphere. This let a new chapter begin in the history of the two nations, it seemed that “*le duel franco-allemand paraît historiquement passé*”, i.e. the period of the ancient French-German opposition finished. Especially, as Konrad Adenauer, the key player of the German politics after 1947, from the first moment he returned to politics, stood up for the cooperation with France and the European integration.⁴⁶ The new players of politics in both countries succeeded in creating a link between French and Western European security interests, energy-political interests and constructive European involvement of the new Federal Republic.

This thinking led to the foundation of the Franco-German Institute in Ludwigsburg in 1948. Among the founding fathers were German Democrats such as the lawyer and later Federal Minister Carlo Schmid and the later first Federal President Theodor Heuss, while the historian and publicist Joseph Rovin and sociologist Alfred Grosser were on the French side. It was not only through politics that communication was to be achieved, but also through personal experience, which primarily included the language of the neighbor, but also lectures and events that gave information about life in the former “enemy country”. The European Youth Meeting at the Loreley in the summer of 1951 should not be forgotten, which was of great importance on the road to rapprochement and was an initiative of civil society organisations with some 35,000 participants, mainly from the circle of Franco-German youth.⁴⁷

Despite the positive developments, the “*Section Française de l’Internationale Ouvrière*” (SFIO) warned in 1949 that the fears that still existed in France with regard to the future orientation of Germany should not be underestimated.⁴⁸ Although the memory of the terrible events was still present so soon after the war, French readiness was great, to see the establishment of active cooperation in peaceful work and mutual trust between France and Germany. The interweaving of key industries, control of armaments, increasing prosperity through market integration, laying the foundation stone for a European federation and an economic community and overcoming the Franco-German contradiction were the broad objectives.⁴⁹ An important step in this direction was economic cooperation between Germany and France. Without giving any details of the first phase of the European integration, the sectoral cooperation derived from Jean Monnet and Robert Schuman’s concepts were significant and similar to the industrial cooperation of 1926 described above. The initiative from Christian democrats based on subsidiarity and solidarity (defined by the Catholic Church) was supported soon in the European countries: “*It is not about the fusion of individual states to make a super power. States here in Europe historically exist, they cannot be eliminated psychologically. In fact diversity is welcomed and we do not want to make differences disappear. But a union, a coherent power and cooperation is needed. [...] In terms of politics the*

46 See: *Deutschland und Frankreich: Ein Gespräch der Zeit mit Bundeskanzler Dr. Adenauer*, in: *Die Zeit*, Vol. 4, Nr. 44, 03.11.1949, p. 1.

47 H. M. BOCK (Ed.), *Projekt deutsch-französische Verständigung: Die Rolle der Zivilgesellschaft am Beispiel des Deutsch-Französischen Instituts in Ludwigsburg*, Opladen 1998.

48 H. MÖLLER — K. HILDEBRAND (Eds.), *Die Bundesrepublik Deutschland und Frankreich: Dokumente 1949–1963; Vol. III: Parteien, Öffentlichkeit, Kultur*, München 1997, p. 68.

49 BIZEUL — SCHULZ, p. 29.

*permanent agreement coming from inside between the states has to encourage the recovery of the peace in this divided Europe. To develop mutual agreement of neighbouring countries it is essential to reach the desired cooperation and common well-being.*⁵⁰ Schuman's thoughts were institutionalized by the European cooperations of the Coal and Steel Union and the Treaty of Rome. For the first time, the Federal Republic of Germany should be able to participate on an equal footing in a European post-war project and in the construction of a European institution. At the same time, a concept for the integration of Germany into the western community and the structures for the development of European integration were born.⁵¹



4. THE ÉLYSÉE TREATY

While the integration of six countries started, Konrad Adenauer made an interesting statement in an interview in 1950: He revealed his idea to Kingsbury Smith, journalist of the American International News Service, that was based on the idea of the German-French union during the war, the complete union of Germany and France should be realized. He also meant the complete merger of their economy and parliaments as well as common citizenship. Adenauer thought it would fulfil the desire for security in France and the nationalism in Germany would also disappear.⁵² Naturally, Adenauer was motivated by the wellbeing of his close home, the Rhine, Ruhr and Saar regions in addition to his devotion to Europe. The union of the two countries was aimed to eliminate the competition for coal and steel, but wider stages of the French and German political elite found the Schuman Plan more improved for that.

But it was not only economic cooperation and expressions of sympathy on paper. In fact, town twinning started early on. In 1950, for example, Montbéliard and Ludwigsburg signed the contract for the first Franco-German town twinning. There have also been regular and trusting contacts between the two governments, as evidenced by the memoirs of the former ambassador in Bonn, Maurice Couve de Murville.⁵³

But reality caught up again with the idealists. In particular because the lives of the two countries were rather different those years. In France that decade was the most confused and anxious period of current politics: Indochinese war, the Suez Case, rebellions in Algeria and the fall of the European Security Community (Pleven Plan), which was of key importance regarding integration. Political crisis resulted in an economic situation close to bankruptcy with huge budgetary deficit and lack of foreign exchange reserves. On the other hand, the other bank of the Rhein, due to the policy and social market economy of Adenauer and Ludwig Erhard the era was

50 SCHUMAN, pp. 26–27.

51 C. A. WURM, *Der Schuman-Plan. Frankreich und Europa*, in: R. HOHLS — I. SCHRÖDER — H. SIEGRIST (Eds.), *Europa und die Europäer. Quellen und Essays zur modernen europäischen Geschichte*, Stuttgart 2005, pp. 448–453.

52 J. MONNET, *Emlékiratok*, Budapest 2004, p. 325.

53 M. COUVE DE MURVILLE, *Konrad Adenauer und Charles de Gaulle: Die dauerhaften Fundamente der Zusammenarbeit*, in: F. KNIPPING — E. WEISENFELD (Eds.), *Eine ungewöhnliche Geschichte: Deutschland — Frankreich seit 1870*, Bonn 1988, p. 168.



an “economic miracle” with full employment and complete national sovereignty (the GFR was member of the NATO). Voices requiring new politics were gradually louder in France demanding the return of the “Saviour of the home”.⁵⁴ As Charles de Gaulle lived in the Colombey estate, which was the “island of peace” for him in solitude. Finally, in 1958 he returned to politics as the president with full power, creating a new constitution.⁵⁵

De Gaulle’s political return was interestingly related to the halt of the European integration. Apparently, the cooperation stooped contrary to the Treaties of Roma and further actions was in danger. It was obvious that the common action behind the attempts for the union slackened after the pressure had weakened and several players had left the front line of politics that launched integration. The implementation of the concepts on the European Union was always driven by the unsolvable ‘German issue’, as the most serious stage of the Cold War. At the moment when it was indicated that the bipolar system was consolidated and the nuclear stalemate would also hinder it, the political unity attempts in Western Europe stopped and particular national interests appeared. Dietrich Thränhardt even anticipated the fall of the supranational European dream in the Treaties of Rome as the Committee of Ministers delegated by the national states became the determining power, which destroyed the concepts of the “European Federal State”.⁵⁶ Although this statement may seem exaggerating, it was true that in addition to the fall of the EDC (European Defence Community) and the role of the Council of Ministers, but mainly de Gaulle’s return slowed down the process of integration. The president was known — based on his communication while living retired — that he was against any supranational integration that would hurt or restrict the sovereignty of France. In his opinion “*it cannot be tolerated that the well-being of a country cannot depend on the decisions and actions of another country, even if they have amicable relationship between them*”.⁵⁷ A key question was therefore that what the attitude of the new president would be toward the new situation.

De Gaulle’s absolute objective — as it was indicated above — was to improve and recover the “grandeur”, i.e. the French power politics and the “gloire”, i.e. state glory. He wanted to provide France influence to the global politics as a new pole in the bipolar world. Consequently, he intended France to be a mediator between Washington and Moscow in political terms. However, he was aware that France was not strong alone to play that role. Therefore he tried to recruit the existing organizations of integration for his purposes. The European Europe regaining independence from the United States became an important element of his strategy of foreign policy. Its core was not the integration, but the frequent cooperation of the member nations.⁵⁸ The French president wanted to build such cooperation between nations mainly with the FRG. The first step toward the cooperation was the de Gaulle-Adenauer meeting in

54 F. GAZDAG, *Franciaország története 1945–1995*, Budapest 1996, pp. 132–135.

55 De Gaulle’s idea about the state in details: S. CSIZMADIA, *Franciaország De Gaulle-tól De Gaulle-ig*, in: *Rubicon*, Nr. 1–2, 2000, p. 76.

56 D. THRÄNHARDT, *Geschichte der Bundesrepublik Deutschland*, Frankfurt 1996, p. 77.

57 KISSINGER, p. 598.

58 GAZDAG, p. 198.

September 1958. The French statesman hosted the other right wing, conservative and Catholic politician in his family estate and their conversation was easier than he had expected. Especially when Adenauer could see the library of the French president, which involved the works of all great German writers and poets.⁵⁹ Also the environment emphasised the uniqueness of the meeting: the French President never had invited and would invite statesmen other than the German Chancellor. This gesture expressed his personal respect toward Adenauer as well as the special importance of the French-German relationship. A further step was the unusual meeting in Bad Kreuznach a few weeks later. On 26 November 1958, the two giants of politics (de Gaulle was 193 cm tall, Adenauer 184 cm) met in the small spa town, where de Gaulle had also served as a soldier in the past.⁶⁰ These two meetings laid the foundation for future trust. Maybe this was the first mentioning of the “European Europe” concept de Gaulle wanted to get the support from the FRG. He explained in the concept that common actions of foreign policy should be made in the form of “organic relationships” not only toward the east of Europe, but the regions also further — independently from the USA.⁶¹ De Gaulle’s concept considered the closer German-French relationship part of regaining the global power of France. He wanted to make use of the rapidly developing German economy within the EEC without having to pay high political price for it. The two states would be able to establish the self-defence of Europe, which would be guaranteed by the status of a nuclear power and an independent nuclear arsenal (*force de frappe*). Thus, at the time of modern imperialism and internationalism “Gaulle-ism” was born. It was trying to count on the German state and the European cooperation.⁶²

The cooperation of the two old gentlemen greatly improved after they first meetings. Adenauer and de Gaulle met 15 times personally and sent 40 official letters to each other altogether. Private conversations (both spoke the other’s language well) exceeded one hundred hours. The most epic moment of the French-German thaw must have been a row of events in July and September 1962. They could even be considered — with the expression László Salgó used — “the symbolic finale of the reconciliation of the two nations”. What Stresemann and Briand only managed to do in the beginning was continued and finalized by Adenauer and de Gaulle after the Second World War. As a result of the previous attempts at rapprochement, Adenauer and de Gaulle realized that first of all the populations of both states had to be attuned to a more intensive relationship. The mutual state visits in 1962 served this purpose. A military parade took place at Mourmelon military camp to the honour of the visit in France. Standing on the same off-road vehicle Adenauer and de Gaulle were welcoming the marching French and German companies and returned the

59 Adenauer — in terms of his own supranational and integration supporting concept — has considered Charles de Gaulle a nationalist surely capable of the representation of radical policy and imperialist, as Hermann Kusterer, the interpreter of the chancellor reported in an interview: *Aus Feind wird Freund*. Online: <http://www.arte.tv/de/7233178.html>

60 T. JANSEN, *Die Entstehung des deutsch-französischen Vertrags vom 22. Januar 1963*, in: D. BLUMENWITZ (Ed.), *Konrad Adenauer und seine Zeit*, Vol. 2, Stuttgart 1976, pp. 249–274.

61 GAZDAG, p. 199.

62 F. GAZDAG, *De Gaulle — A francia nagyság bűvöletében*, in: *Rubicon*, Nr. 1, 1994, pp. 30–36.





salutation of the aircraft formations rumbling away. Then they attended a historic church service in the Cathedral of Reims, celebrated by Monseigneur Marty, Archbishop of Reims. This mass for peace was highly symbolic: the city was occupied during the Franco-Prussian War in 1870, became a martyred city in the First World War and was where the German military force signed the documents on the unconditional surrender to the Allies on 7 May 1945.⁶³ The French president returned the visit between 4 and 9 September 1962. He made speeches in Hamburg, Köln, Stuttgart and Munich then in the Ruhr region in German promoting his concept of ‘the European confederation of Europe’. In his German-language speech in Ludwigsburg, he addressed the youth in particular: *“While it remains the task of our two states to promote economic, political and cultural cooperation, it should be up to you and the French youth to encourage you and us to come ever closer together, to get to know each other better and to form closer ties. The future of our two countries, the cornerstone on which Europe’s unity can and must be built, and the highest trump card for the freedom of the world remain mutual respect, trust and friendship between the people of France and Germany.”*⁶⁴ Publicity welcomed the thoughts of de Gaulle positively or was even celebrating him.

During the personal meetings and mutual conferences, the French president explained his concepts of closer cooperation to his German partner on 18 September 1962. It was a short memorandum suggesting the coordination of foreign policy, policy of defence, educational and training issues between the two countries. De Gaulle wanted a political union of Europe that could stand on its own two feet and a German-French axis that would determine it. He thus reached Adenauer’s ears because German relations with the young US president John F. Kennedy had fallen into a crisis. The German response to the French concept arrived on 8 November indicating a few clarifications and corrections, but basically each suggestion was accepted. Finally, both ministers of foreign affairs, Gerhard Schröder (only the namesake of the later chancellor) and Maurice de Murville developed the final draft of the text in Paris on 16–17 December 1962.⁶⁵

The governing parties in Germany were divided by the good relationship between Adenauer and de Gaulle as well as the improving cooperation of the two countries. The Christian democrat and Christian social politicians started a debate of two opposite concepts: One was the group that felt tension in the relationship with the USA, therefore they reviewed the alternative roles of Europe. The chancellor, the Minister of Defence Franz-Josef Strauß and his Minister of Foreign Affairs were seeking for new ways. After the Cuban Missile Crisis, the need to find solution by the dialogues between the Americans and the Russians was strengthening. In the nuclear stalemate the option of armed responses was minimal and the signs of reconciliation were more and more definite. All of these woke up the perception of danger of German politicians: what would happen if the USA removed its defence forces from Europe? As it was highlighted by the political scientist Hans-Peter Schwarz at the anniversary of the Elysée Treaty: the old chancellor could make use

63 L. SALGÓ, *De Gaulle diplomáciaja*, Budapest 1972, pp. 126–127.

64 Cited after KNIPPING — WEISENFELD, 1988.

65 ZIEBURA, 1970.

of a serious tool to put pressure on the USA whose policy he did not completely rely on.⁶⁶ With such background most of the conservative catholic politicians, mainly from the south of Germany supported as close relationship as possible with France, and the “unusual marriage” of Adenauer and de Gaulle.⁶⁷ The Gaulle-ist German politicians found the nuclear plant being developed a reliable alternative compared to the changing position of the Americans. The other German politicians belonging the governing party were supporting the “Atlanticists”, which did not want give up the close and traditionally good relationship with the leaders of the USA. They did not see alternative in the excessive relation to the French, but the destruction of the Atlantic relations and the danger threatening Germany. Additionally, the “Atlanticists” feared even the fact that in the given situation, while the relationship between the German government and the USA was declining, the USA was turning toward the German opposition, the social democrats and refreshed its relations with the strong person of the SPD, the mayor of Berlin, the German “Kennedy”, Willy Brandt.⁶⁸

While the negotiations started and resulted in quick success, with inner tension, the leaders of the German foreign policy did not think of conducting special bilateral treaty with France. They only visualized one joint declaration intensifying their cooperation. However, elderly Adenauer, encouraged by domestic reasons, turned away from the German politics.⁶⁹ He thought that a constitutional agreement bounding to his successors was essential to continue his heritage. Moreover, he thought that a treaty with foreign political coordinating mechanism could prevent France from establishing eastern policy with the Soviet Union without the FRG.

Thus after the short period of preparation, the treaty was finally concluded ceremonially on 22 January 1963, in the “Salon Murat” of the Élysée Palace. The document was named “Treaty between the French Republic and the Federal Republic of Germany on French-German cooperation”. The core element of the treaty was the agreement that the two countries consult with each other on issues of foreign affairs to form a common point of view. This is facilitated by the meetings of the heads of the states and government leaders, the ministers of foreign affairs and education every half year, as well as the consultation of ministers of defence, and the meetings of the commander-in-chiefs and ministers of youth and sports every two month. Also this agreement included the mutual acceptance of higher education degrees, teaching each other’s languages, the possibility of labour force swap and common policy of aiding developing countries. Additionally a commission between ministers was established in both countries for monitoring the cooperation. The treaty was rather a program than explaining exact tasks: implementing common negotiations, coor-

66 50 Jahre Elysée-Vertrag. „Wie die Schweine“, in: Die Zeit, Online: <http://www.zeit.de/2013/05/Elysee-Vertrag-Deutschland-Frankreich-1963-Geschichte> (Retrieved 21 January 2018).

67 See also: E. CONZE, *Die gaullistische Herausforderung. Deutsch-französische Beziehungen in der amerikanischen Europapolitik*, München 1995.

68 THRÄNHARDT, pp. 148–150.

69 See also about the urgent measures so caused by the so called “Spiegel Scandal”: K. SCHWABE (Ed.), *Konrad Adenauer und Frankreich 1949–1963*, Bonn 2005.



dination of the relations with developing countries, common projects of weapons industry, swapping experience of those serving in the army, student swapping programs, mutual language learning programs, mutual acceptance of degrees and implementation of common scientific projects.⁷⁰ It is worth mentioning that economic issues were not involved in the treaty. On the one hand the cooperation of the two countries was so developed that the parties did not find further regulation of the topic important. On the other hand in terms of the European economic integration the French and the German ideas were quite different (which was later indicated by the “empty chair crisis”). Therefore it was reasonable that they did not intend to make a joint statement.⁷¹ The treaty created a frame and according to the German chancellor’s concepts defined the future of the French-German cooperation. However, the implementation was performed by Adenauer and de Gaulle’s successors. They tried to prevent the treaty from interfering the ongoing European integration and the Euro-Atlantic relations.

In this context the process of the ratification of the treaty is a significant event of diplomacy. While the French National Assembly easily codified the treaty, the Bundestag in Germany — as a result of the political dividedness — attached a preamble by breaching the regulations of the international laws. This indicated serious Atlantic devotion: the foreign policy of the FRG based on the close relationship with the USA, the military integration realized in the NATO, the west European integration developing over the nations and the participation of Great Britain in the Common Market. In other words it is completely the opposite what de Gaulle imagined.⁷² However, it did not generate a dramatic turning point in the relationship of the two countries, rather the Elysée Treaty was a sample for several current initiatives of the European integration. For example, mutual acknowledgement of diplomats or the regular conferences of the heads of government.

5. THE TREATY IN EVERYDAY LIFE — RESULTS OF 55 YEARS

After the treaty the relationship of the two states was tense as the French head of the government did not reach his objectives. He failed to separate German politics from the Anglo-Saxon federal system completely. De Gaulle’s direct environment was aware of his sanguine outbursts during which he was mentioning the termination of the treaty. It did not happen, moreover the document was celebrated as the “the key document of the French-German friendship” and the “fundamental pillar of the integration” at the 10th anniversary in 1973. When signing the treaty, de Gaulle use expressions that have become true: “*there is no living human in the world who does not*

70 A. KIMMEL — P. JARDIN (Eds.), *Die deutsch-französischen Beziehungen seit 1963. Eine Dokumentation*, Opladen 2002, pp. 40–49.

71 See: U. PFEIL, *Zur Bedeutung des Élysée-Vertrags*, in: *Das Parlament*, Nr. 1–3, 2013. Beilage: Deutschland und Frankreich. Online: <http://www.das-parlament.de/2013/01-03/Beilage/001.html> (Retrieved 15 January 2018).

72 R. VON THADDEN, *Privilegierte Partnerschaft: Der Élysée-Vertrag gestern — heute — morgen*, in: *Internationale Politik*, Vol. 58, Nr. 1, 2003, pp. 45–48.

*understand the historical significance of this festive action [...], we open the door of the future Germany, France Europe and even the whole world wide.*⁷³

The great innovation brought about by the treaty, however, was the strong involvement of the civil societies of both countries, particularly in education, research, culture and youth exchanges. One key area of the cooperation was to facilitate the development of the youth; no wonder that one of the first organizations in 1963 was the “*Deutsch-Französisches Jugendwerk*” (*Office franco-allemand pour la Jeunesse*), which was a common swap program for the youth. It has supported 250,000 encounters so far, which have enabled around 7.5 million young people to discover their neighbours.⁷⁴ This success story of the DFJW led to other similar organisations, such as the foundation of the “*Office franco-québécois pour la jeunesse*” on the French side and the “*Deutsch-Polnisches Jugendwerk*” in Germany. Successful actions for mutual acknowledgement of degrees and the educational cooperation resulted in the establishment of a common German-French University of Applied Sciences (*Deutsch-Französische Hochschule*), founded in 1999 at the Weimar Summit and consisting of a network of agreements between German and French universities. The administrative headquarters are located in Saarbrücken.⁷⁵ As a result 70 German and 80 French institutions work and issue common degrees of specific trainings and operate in a truly “bicultural” spirit. But even more significant is that three dozens of bilingual kindergartens were established. Through the collaboration of one German and one French teacher in each group of the kindergarten, the children experience both languages in a natural way. In addition to language skills, intercultural competences are also being expanded, the children gain an insight into the culture of the neighbouring country and are being educated to openness.⁷⁶

On the occasion of the 40th anniversary of the Élysée Treaty, a Franco-German Youth Parliament was held, which in its final communiqué proposed a joint Franco-German history book with identical content for both countries. This should reduce prejudices. The governments of the two countries then set up a binational project group to develop the concept for a three-volume textbook. In July 2006, volume 3 of the book “*Histoire/History*” was published with the title “*Europe and the World since 1945*”. The other two volumes “*Europe and the World from the Congress of Vienna to 1945*” and “*Europe and the World from Antiquity to 1815*” followed in the years thereafter (2008 and 2011). Since then, the Franco-German history book

73 Quotes: R. LEICK, *Die sich trauten*. Online: <http://www.arte.tv/de/7233176.html> (Retrieved 18 January 2018).

74 “*The Youth Work has the task of building closer ties between the youth of the two countries and deepening their understanding of each other; to this end, it shall encourage, promote and, where appropriate, carry out youth encounters and youth exchanges itself.*” KIMMEL — JARDIN, p. 483. For more details: C. DEFRANCE — U. PFEIL, *50 Jahre Deutsch-Französisches Jugendwerk*, Berlin — Paris 2013.

75 Abkommen zwischen der Regierung der Bundesrepublik Deutschland und der Regierung der Französischen Republik über die Gründung einer Deutsch-Französischen Hochschule. Online: <https://www.dfh-ufa.org/ueber-die-dfh/weimarer-abkommen/> (Retrieved 22 January 2018).

76 KIMMEL — JARDIN, pp. 494–499.



has been approved in both countries as a teaching aid for history lessons in the upper secondary school.⁷⁷

Also to emphasize technical cooperation it is worth mentioning that the telecommunication satellite called *Symphonie* was constructed as a common French-German project in 1967 as the benefit of the Élysée Treaty. After years of planning and technical development satellite *Symphonie-A* was successfully launched from the Kennedy Space Center in December 1974. The first action of the satellite was in January 1975 as President Valéry Giscard d'Estaing of France and German Chancellor Helmut Schmidt exchanged their New Year greetings live in a videoconference. The satellite is the first geostationary telecommunications satellite built and operated in Europe with some ground-breaking technologies.⁷⁸ As the resumption the common French-German satellite, the TV/AT-TDF, was constructed in the 70s, which provided the broadcasting of common TV (ARTE) and radio channels. ARTE is one of the most important cultural channels, even outside Europe. The European launcher Ariane had been constructed by the '80s, which transported weather, communication and geological observing satellites to the space.

However, it was not only everyday issues that led to a steady development of relations between the two countries. Good relationship between German chancellors and French heads of government remained outstandingly important to encourage integration. In the '70s Helmut Schmidt and Valéry Giscard d'Estaing made private initiatives to realize the first global economic summit (1975), for the submission by Schmidt and Giscard, the European Council (1974) was realized for the suggestion of Jean Monnet, according to the sample described in the Élysée Treaty, then in 1979 also encouraged by the same players the monetary cooperation was launched (ECU, EMS). The festive commemoration on 22 September 1984 at the military cemetery Douaumont near Verdun was outstanding in the relationship of the two countries. The participants and millions of TV viewers could see the historic holding hands of François Mitterrand and Helmut Kohl. After the passport union was established between the two countries in 1985 (the precursor of the present Schengen zone) in September 1987 the first common French-German military exercise took place near the Bavarian Manching. The Bundeswehr had 55,000 and the *Force d'Action Rapide* had 20,000 soldiers in the action which resulted in extremely important decisions on significant initiatives. For the 25th anniversary of the Treaty, in 1988 a common Council of Defence and Security Policy (*Deutsch-Französischer Verteidigungs- und Sicherheitsrat*, DFVSR) and another common Financial and Economic Council (*Deutsch-Französischer Finanz- und Wirtschaftsrat*) were founded between the two countries, which later made the introduction of the euro much easier. In the city hall of Aachen (the seat of Charlemagne) President François Mitterrand was speaking about the "common well-being" of the French and the German nations. All these were less important compared to the establishment of the French-German military brigade. But it was realized only more than one and a half year later due to the European progress of transformation and the

77 Das Deutsch-Französische Geschichtsbuch. Online: <https://www.france-allemande.fr/Das-deutsch-franzosische,1239.html> (Retrieved 22 January 2018).

78 *Symphonie unter den Sternen*, in: Die Zeit, 3. Jan. 1975.



German unity movement on 17 October 1990.⁷⁹ The common brigade may have been an example for the Eurocorps established in 1992 and the highest level of common conference of defence and security policy led to the development of the French-German security and defensive concept published in 1996. Moreover, in the same year the German-French common brigade absolved the first military mission in Bosnia-Herzegovina. Since that date the brigade is an important element of the EU's and NATO's response capability and has been participating in missions around the world since 2005, including in Afghanistan (ISAF) and Mali (EUTM).⁸⁰

German reunification (1989/1990) has also only been able to afflict bilateral relations for a short time. The intensive talks between Helmut Kohl and François Mitterrand, however, were able to calm the mindset and thus make a decisive contribution to the further development of the internal market, the conclusion of the Maastricht Treaty, the introduction of European monetary union and eastward enlargement. France has demonstrated its special position in the Federal Republic of Germany since 1990 with its extensive economic and cultural investments in the new Länder.⁸¹ The collaboration of Kohl and Mitterrand — after the ones by Adenauer and de Gaulle, and Schmidt and Giscard d'Estaing — seemed historically significant; it was also found by the contemporary publicity as the two statesmen were granted the Charlemagne Prize shared.

In 2003, the 40th anniversary celebrations of the Élysée Treaty offered a very good opportunity for Franco-German cooperation. For this reason, new symbolic steps were taken, including the holding of the first Franco-German Council of Ministers, a joint meeting of the *Assemblée nationale* and the *Bundestag* in Versailles, and a meeting of the Youth Parliament in Berlin. The President of the French Republic, Jacques Chirac and Chancellor Gerhard Schröder adopted a joint statement on this occasion. It praised the achievements of four decades of Franco-German cooperation and promised the continuation of the “Franco-German tandem” with a deepening of bilateral cooperation and an explicit European focus. They sent a message to those having historical affinity: the nations succeeded in getting over the grievance felt by the French in 1871 and by the Germans in 1919. Now together, visualizing a new picture of the future, they are expecting the current challenges of the European Union. Also an example to follow is the creation of dual citizenship not existing before, and the foundation of a common foreign mission in Podgorica in 2003. Gerhard Schröder, German chancellor, could not only inaugurate a common German-French police and border control cooperative centre based in Kehl, but was invited first in the history to

79 About the formation and operation of the common brigade see the detailed documentary of ARTE television: *Unter zwei Flaggen*. Online: <http://www.arte.tv/de/7260748.html> (Retrieved 18 January 2018).

80 V. MARSÁI, *Foreign Military Intervention in Mali — The Background of Opération Serval*, in: SVKK Elemzések — Center For Strategic And Defense Studies Analyses, Vol. 1, 2013; É. REMEK, *The European Union and the Sahel Region: Focus on the Crisis in Mali and the EUTM Mali*, in: B. BILTSIK — A. MARENGO — N. POSTA — P. K. ZACHAR (Eds.), *New Approaches in a Complex World: International Relations, History and Social Sciences*, Budapest 2014, pp. 143–154.

81 BIZEUL — SCHULZ, pp. 36–37.



a central commemoration of World War II, the 50th anniversary of the battle of Normandy.⁸² The friendly hug of Jacques Chirac and Schröder was a worthy continuing of the gestures taken by the ancestors.

The so-called “Blaesheim-initiative” also fits into this series: these are the informal talks between the heads of state and government of France and Germany and their foreign ministers initiated in the Alsatian town of Blaesheim near Strasbourg at the beginning of 2001. President Chirac and Chancellor Schröder had agreed to meet every six to eight weeks in the future. This tradition was also continued by Chancellor Angela Merkel. She made her first trip abroad as German Chancellor to France on 23 November 2005. Chancellor Merkel made it clear that this is not only a traditional ritual of German foreign politics, but rather that the quick inaugural visit underlines her deep conviction that a good Franco-German relationship is important for both countries and equally important for Europe.

Since then, the recurring anniversaries have enabled a steady development. The two states celebrated the 50th anniversary with common initiatives again. The most outstanding is a 2 euro coin, which is issued in the member states. On the back the portraits of Adenauer and de Gaulle and the bilingual texts “50 years — 2013” and “Élysée Treaty” were graved. Also it is a unique stamp, which is going to be issued in Germany with the value of 75 euro cents and (maybe as the symbol of the “unusual marriage”?) on which a man and a woman are watching the future through a common telescope. Its left lens is coloured with the German and its right lens with the French national colours.⁸³ Also the two fast train networks, the French TGV and the German ICE are going to be connected and the cross border medical supply is planned, and a common German-French military training institution has already began operation in the suburb of Kabul for the Afghan non-commissioned officers.⁸⁴

This year, Federal Chancellor Angela Merkel and President Emmanuel Macron issued a joint statement on the occasion of the 55th anniversary of the event. Once again, they noted that Franco-German friendship is a cornerstone of European integration. France and Germany are striving to further expand Franco-German cooperation in order to meet the political, social, economic and technological challenges of the coming decades and to develop common positions on all important European and international issues. In this spirit, the French President and the Chancellor have agreed to vote on a new Élysée Treaty in 2018. The most important issues are the deepening of economic integration, the development of cooperation in civil society, and an expansion of cooperation based on trust in the field of foreign, defense, security and development policy.⁸⁵

82 See more details: <http://www.deutschland-frankreich.diplo.de/Geschichte-der-deutsch,1501.html>

83 See more details: <http://www.ambafrance-de.org/50-Jahre-Elysee-Vertrag-mit-2-Euro>

84 A. HETTYEY, *A vonakodó szövetségés? — Németország külföldi katonai bevetései a viták és a számok tükrében*, in: *Külügyi Szemle*, Nr. 1, 2014, pp. 69–87.

85 Gemeinsame Erklärung von Bundeskanzlerin Angela Merkel und dem französischen Präsidenten Emmanuel Macron anlässlich des 55. Jahrestages der Unterzeichnung des Vertrags über die deutsch-französische Zusammenarbeit vom 22. Januar 1963 („Élysée-Vertrag”). Online: <https://www.bundesregierung.de/Content/DE/Pressemittei->

All this symbolizes well: the two nations are essential players in the formation of the European politics. It is a fact that Germany and France have not been in the same league for years. It is the task of political scientists to analyse whether Germany has become too strong, as France feared in the period immediately after reunification. Or the other way around: perhaps France has become too weak among its last couple of presidents and has left Germany unconsciously in charge of dealing with the countless crises in Europe. Whatever the case, a renewed strengthening of mutual relations is the focus of the current political leadership. Because they know the results of history: Regarding directly measurable results of the German-French cooperation, the first is the positive impacts of the stable political connections on the society and the economy. The common dependence of the two nations is the key and condition of further integration. Today, the network of joint Franco-German structures and institutions is unique. It is also supported by decades of close personal ties between the citizens of both countries, which are reflected in numerous city and regional partnerships. For the past fifty-five years this connection has been indicated by more than 2200 twin city relations, over 350 cooperative actions of research organizations. Today the “motor function” of the two countries cannot be denied. In this process, the historical reconciliation, the special connection that was realized by the Élysée Treaty, were the landmarks of the period. They were able to give an outstanding content to the rigid international law that may be an example for other nations carrying various historical harms. To cut only one segment briefly: In the reorientation of German-Polish relations after the fall of communism, cooperation was not only expanded in the field of foreign policy, but also attempted to transfer it into society: in this way, a common culture of remembrance was sought to profile and expand existing commonalities. Today, Polish and German scientists are more likely to find a common voice in the assessment of historical processes. Working together on both sides’ past has also led to French-style exchange programmes, language courses and joint textbooks. These relations in the societies of the two states are nowadays also emphasized in science by the so-called “*histoire croisée*”.⁸⁶ In our historical account of French-German cooperation, however, we can no longer do justice to this claim because of the diplomatic-historical focus of our study. This remains as a task for a further analysis of the subject area. That is why we can only make a simple statement based on the presented development: “*Erbfeinde*” (hereditary enemies) have become “*Erbfreunde*” (hereditary friends) in the 20th century; the quest for “*grandeur*” that has been felt on both sides time and time again in the past has been replaced by a “special relationship” and this opens up a further deepening cooperation for the future.

lungen/BPA/2018/01/2018-01-21-gemeinsame-erklarung-55-jahre-elysee-vertrag.html (Retrieved 25 January 2018)

⁸⁶ The *histoire croisée* (*Verflechtungsgeschichte*, Intertwining History) was developed by Bénédicte Zimmermann and Michael Werner. It is a new trend for multi-perspective historiography of transnational history, inspired by the French social sciences, and is based on criticism of comparative and transfer-oriented approaches. M. WERNER — B. ZIMMERMANN, *Beyond Comparison. Histoire Croisée and the Challenge of Reflexivity*, in: *History and Theory. Studies in the Philosophy of History*, Vol. 45, 2006, pp. 30–50.