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ON THE MOOD OF THE PARTNERS IN THE FRANCO-GERMAN RELATIONSHIP TWO DECADES AFTER REUNION

Jörg Wolff / Laura-Theresa Jaspers

Germany and France are connected with one another in many ways through close-knit networks. This is just as true for the political, economic and institutional spheres as it is at the levels of culture and civil society. Political cooperation between the two, with its comprehensive array of mechanisms for coordination and collaboration, is of a kind not seen anywhere else in the world. The two neighboring countries are mutually intertwined to a depth unsurpassed by any other states. This intertwining is of a long-term strategic character and has in the past had a decisive influence on the process of European integration. With this in mind it is perfectly comprehensible that the bilateral relations have been described as the 'Franco-German tandem', 'European motor' or the 'flywheel of Europe'. That post-war Franco-German reconciliation should be on the cards was at the end of World War II anything other than self-evident. When all is said and done this represents an outstanding achievement of historic proportions. Particularly in times of confusion or misunderstanding between the two countries it is always worth remembering what it is that lies at the heart of that achievement.

PHASES OF DEVELOPMENT IN FRANCO-GERMAN RELATIONS

Franco-German relations since the end of World War II are generally divided into three phases. The first period was defined by reconciliation and the restoration of equilibrium between the two countries and is associated with the new start for Europe. This is symbolized by the historic signing

in 1963 of the Élysée Treaty. There followed decades of institution building and bilateral cooperation infused with dynamism, along with the further development of the European Community. This second phase continued until the point of German reunification in 1990. The eastward expansion that took its cue from this event, the years between Maastricht and the enactment of the Lisbon Treaty, the introduction of economic and currency union with its stability and growth pact, and European security and defense policy continue to this day to characterize the present third phase of Franco-German cooperation. A fourth phase, which is just getting underway, will in future increasingly have to address the further development of a common shaping of policy at the bilateral level. It will also be essential to aim for robust and durable agreement on the implementation of the Lisbon Treaty, to come up with European options for active participation in the shaping of the international order and, in general, to find a convincing answer to the question of Europe's role in a new multipolar world.

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THE BEGINNING: EUROPE AS MIDWIFE

The first half of the twentieth century with its two world wars saw strong antagonism embed itself deep within the collective consciousness of both peoples; an antagonism that was given expression in the term "hereditary enmity"¹. Thus it was that the view of the crisis-wracked Fourth Republic (1948 to 1956) of its German neighbor was characterized by cautious mistrust, considerations around security, and an intention to exercise control over it. The fear was that a resurgence on the part of the neighbor might lead to a new nationalism. For this reason Paris was initially keen to keep Germany under control by reinforcing federalist structures. However, the victorious western powers, especially the USA, enmeshed in the Korean War and the birth throes of the Cold War, were demanding the swift integration of Germany into the western community of nations. France adopted this as the basis for her Europe policy aspiration to establish her security in respect of

1 | Cf. Wolfram Vogel, "Die deutsch-französischen Beziehungen", *Länderbericht Frankreich. Geschichte, Politik, Wirtschaft, Gesellschaft*, Adolf Kimmel and Henrik Uterwedde (eds.), Wiesbaden: VS Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften, 2005, 419.

Germany by means of control through integration, whilst simultaneously trying to expand her own leadership role in Western Europe. However, nothing short of the solution of problematic issues essential to France, such as the control of the Ruhr region, the Saarland question and fears of German rearmament proved sufficient to pave the way to Franco-German reconciliation². In keeping with this was the formation in 1949 of a federation of European states in the shape of the Council of Europe.

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Further impetus was given by Robert Schuman's May 9 1950 proposal to bring together the coal and steel industries of both France and Germany under the banner of a European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC), thereby placing them under the supervision of a joint authority. This came into being in 1951 as a union of coal and steel industries that also included the Benelux countries and Italy. This allowed France and Germany to "orient their national relationship toward the common reference point of a yet-to-be-created European Community" (Vogel, 2005, 420). France's principal concern in this project was to serve her security-political interests, whereas Germany saw an opportunity on the European plane to gradually regain her sovereignty and to take an important step in the direction of integration with the West. Notwithstanding the failure to establish a European Defense Community, the twin objectives of a united Europe and Franco-German rapprochement continued to be pursued in Germany, above all by Konrad Adenauer.

With the re-accession of the Saarland to the Federal Republic after a 1955 referendum the way was clear for the complete reconciliation of the two states. Even though the last years of the Fourth Republic were mired in crisis it still proved possible both to establish the Euratom authority and to enact the Treaty of Rome, which brought into being the European Economic Community (EEC) as the core the present-day European Union (EU). Franco-German relations were at this time seen on both sides of the Rhine in the first instance as a necessary tool for the shaping of European unity.

2 | Cf. Vogel (2005), 420.

The first eleven years of the Fifth Republic (from 1958) were dominated by the personality of Charles de Gaulle. His foreign policy was characterized by the maintenance of far-reaching French independence. He spoke out against the cession of sovereign rights to the EEC and pursued instead the objective of a "Europe of sovereign states". Consistent with this were his decisions to pull France out of NATO's command structures and to develop an independent nuclear deterrent. As early as 1958 he invited Konrad Adenauer to Colombey-les-Deux-Églises, where the two men laid the foundations of closer bilateral cooperation and reconciliation³. This marked the beginning of an intense period of rapprochement between the two countries, which reached its conclusion in the "Treaty between the Federal Republic of Germany and the French Republic on Franco-German cooperation", subsequently known as the Élysée Treaty after the official residence of the French president. This marked „both the end and the beginning of a development“ (Vogel, 2005, 419) and symbolized the reconciliation of both peoples as a historically significant event. What it did was to codify the understanding of both statesmen that the French and German peoples needed to be bound together in solidarity and that close cooperation was an essential part of the path to a united Europe. As Konrad Adenauer himself put it in his memoirs, this treaty has gone down in history as one of the most important and valuable agreements of the post-war era.

THE ELYSÉE TREATY: THE FOUNDATION OF RECONCILIATION AND FUTURE DIRECTION

Whether or not the Élysée Treaty was seen by Charles de Gaulle as a counterweight to the two superpowers or whether he wanted to use it to bring about a united Europe under French leadership is beside the point. For the treaty has fundamentally defined the relations between the two states to the present day as well as laying the organizational and programmatic foundation for close bilateral cooperation and coordination. Its call for regular consultation and coordination to deal with questions of "common interest" is intended to lead to the establishment "as far

3 | Cf. Ernst Weisenfeld, "Deutsch-Französische Beziehungen 1945-2007", Ingo Kolboom, Thomas Kotschi and Edward Reichel (eds.), (Berlin: Erich Schmidt Verlag, 2008), 680.

as possible [of] an analogous position". In retrospect the true significance of the treaty lies above all in the recognition that differing positions and interests on the part of the two countries, far from precluding joint action, actually make it possible to achieve acceptable consensus and, as a result, to arrive at meaningful policy options. It is in this sense that it expressed then, as it expresses now, the common will of both countries to deepen their mutual understanding, to create cooperative institutions and to expand cooperation wherever possible. This has subsequently proved itself to be a factor of stability and trust in the Franco-German partnership and has been treated as an obligation by all governments irrespective of their political orientation.

The treaty served to define the terms of cooperation in the areas of foreign affairs, defense, education and youth issues. The bilateral meetings between the heads of state and government, which take place at least twice a year and

have assumed a structure-building character for the Franco-German relationship, have proved to be of key importance. They have also given rise to numerous joint projects. In addition, as was rightly concluded in a KAS/Ifri study published last May, the treaty has

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been the basis of development „from summit to summit and anniversary to anniversary [of] a whole raft of cooperative structures between the governments, government bodies, ministries and civil societies, that is without parallel anywhere else in the world." (Stark, 2010, 25)

COOPERATION IN CHANGING TIMES

The development of the treaty subsequently remained central to the relationship, even though in the second half of the 1960s France felt it necessary to issue reminders over the requirement for "joint action". Under the presidency of Georges Pompidou no impetus to speak of was given to Franco-German bilateralism. Willy Brandt's "Ostpolitik" awakened fears that the Federal Republic might redirect its gaze to the East, leaving France out in the cold in this new phase of European politics. In the meantime Germany had gained the economic upper hand, a development that had altered what France saw as the crucial "relative

equilibrium" (Vogel, 2005, 424 et sqq.). Monetary policy and the future of the Common Agricultural Policy were further sources of disagreement. Nonetheless, it proved possible to conclude notable agreements such as the joint production of the Airbus (1969), the founding of Franco-German grammar schools and, in 1972, the introduction of the Franco-German Abitur or school-leaving certificate.

The second significant phase of Franco-German cooperation began in the 1970s against the backdrop of the first post-war economic crisis and the reform of the international monetary system. One favorable factor for the Franco-German relationship was the almost simultaneous rise to power of Valéry Giscard d'Estaing and Helmut Schmidt: two politicians who already knew – and esteemed – one another from their previous function as finance ministers. The full force of this "tandem" was concentrated on notable economic, European and international initiatives of enduring substance: The coordination of the economic development of both countries with a view to a future European Economic and Monetary Union (EMU), creation of the European Council of heads of state and government, establishment of a world economic summit (G7) and the introduction of the European Monetary System (EMS)⁴.

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The Franco-German relationship at the start of the 1980s was defined by the international security-political situation, which was in turn dominated by NATO's double-track decision (1979) which led to the deterioration of East-West relations. The policy of rearmament initially served to complicate the situation, as both countries were operating under different security-political concepts. The 40th round of Franco-German consultations took place in 1982, bringing together for the first time Helmut Kohl and François Mitterrand. They decided to pursue active bilateral cooperation in the fields of security and defense policy. Both sides emphasized their commitment to both elements in the NATO double-track decision, the continuing exclusion of the French nuclear deterrent from arms control negotiations, and the continuation of the CSCE process. On the occasion of the 20th anniversary of the Élysée Treaty the French

4 | Cf. Vogel (2005), 425.

president, in a speech in the lower house of the German parliament that attracted much attention, assured the Federal government of his support for the implementation of the double-track decision. This served to defuse tension in the Franco-German relationship. In a moving ceremony during a 1984 visit to the battlefields of Verdun François Mitterrand and Helmut Kohl declared that “both peoples irreversibly gone the way of peace, rationality and friendly cooperation”. In 1986 both governments agreed to extend cooperation in foreign, security and defense policy areas; an undertaking that was complemented in 1987 by the establishment of a Franco-German brigade and in 1988 by the setting up of the „Franco-German Defense and Security Council“.

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THE EFFECTS OF REUNIFICATION

The upheavals in Europe heralded a further shift in the general balance of power that also applied to the Franco-German relationship. The official French reaction to reunification was initially cool. The French government made a practice of “delaying tactics” (Weisenfeld, 2008, 684) From the German side unambiguous and spontaneous support would no doubt have been welcomed, but, in contrast to the fears still encountered in France to this day, Mitterrand’s hesitancy left no lasting traces in Germany – especially as Paris did in the end lend its complete support to German unity⁵.

A more negative impact was felt as a result of Mitterrand’s European policy with its associated intention of keeping Germany under control. Whereas the Franco-German tandem was still seen as the engine of Europe, both countries now seemed to be distancing themselves from the Europe-building project. In September 1992 the

French referendum on the Maastricht treaty came close to failure, and, in Germany too, a growing chorus was

5 | Cf. Hans Stark, “Rück- und Ausblick: Frankreich – Deutschland, eine komplexe Beziehung”, *Deutschland – Frankreich: Fünf Visionen für Europa / France – Allemagne : Cinq visions pour l’Europe*, Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung Frankreich (ed.), Paris:Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung, 2010, 18.

to be heard criticizing currency union⁶. The introduction of economic and currency union finally had to be driven through by other EU member states. The bitter dispute over the German demand for a stability pact 1996/1997 was additional evidence of deficiencies in the Franco-German partnership.

After the establishment of the Weimar Triangle in 1991 and the 1993 ratification of the Maastricht Treaty, the root of Franco-German disagreement lay in the two countries' different attitudes toward eastward expansion. Whereas for the Germans the Ten Point Plan required the European Community to open itself primarily to former Soviet-bloc states but also to southern Europe, Paris was cool about the prospects of eastward expansion. Diverging views on the part of the two governments made it impossible to clarify the question of EU institutions in the consultations in the run-up to the 1997 Treaty of Amsterdam. After renewed Franco-German disagreement in respect of the 1998 nomination of the first president of the European Central Bank (ECB), the Common Security and Defense Policy (CSDP) finally arose out of an Anglo-French, rather than a Franco-German, initiative.

Against the backdrop of improvements in the bilateral relationship between Jacques Chirac and Gerhard Schröder, a joint consultation mechanism was established that provided for informal coordination in the form of "Blaesheim meetings" to be held at regular intervals of six to eight weeks. This revival of bilateral relations gave rise to joint initiatives within the European Convention on questions of security and defense policy, economic and regulatory policy, the areas of justice and home affairs, and institutional regulation of the EU. The constitutional project was enacted in 2003. Thus it was that Germany and France once again jointly gave important impetus to debates on the EU's constitution.

The eastward expansion of the EU, so nervously awaited by the French, went off without a hitch. The force of the Franco-German tandem made itself felt above all in their common resistance to the American intervention in

6 | Cf. Stark (2010), 18.

Iraq. Germany and France stood alone in Europe – Alfred Grosser characterized the two countries as “locomotives without rolling stock”.

Against this background German chancellor Angela Merkel was keen to re-establish equilibrium, to restore the “traditional equidistance between Berlin, Paris and Washington”. (Stark, 2010) The failed May 2005 EU referendum in France, the lame-duck end to Chirac’s presidency, the early elections in Germany in September 2005 and the Grand Coalition that followed did not provide positive conditions for Franco-German dialog. Until 2007 the two states were hardly able to drive through a single EU agreement worthy of note between them.

THE PRESENT: IS A NEW VISION NEEDED?

The May 2007 election of Nicolas Sarkozy as French president brought about the stabilization of France’s domestic situation and a French proposal for a simplified EU treaty that would nonetheless preserve the substance of the original. This provided a way out of the looming EU crisis⁷, thus saving the Lisbon Treaty.

This did not however give rise to a new dynamic in the Franco-German tandem – the way forward was still too strewn with obstacles. Different styles of government in the Élysée palace and the Federal Chancellery often made dialog more difficult: the French project for a Mediterranean union to be financed by the EU 27 but only open to states bordering the Mediterranean Sea was rejected by Germany in the spring of 2008. Whilst France expressed disquiet over instances of rapprochement between Germany and Russia, such as the cooperation between Siemens and Rosatom or Gerhard Schröder’s appointment to a position at Gazprom, she also seemed to be considering a change of partner, turning to the United Kingdom to work out a joint road map to navigate the crisis. The 20th anniversary of the fall of the Berlin Wall was however celebrated on the Place de la Concorde in Paris

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7 | Cf. Stark (2010), 21.

with unfeigned joy and in a remarkable atmosphere: a fact that gained great attention in Germany. Just as much attention was paid by the French to the presence in Paris of the German chancellor at the Armistice Day celebrations of November 11 2009.

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Another effect however has been to highlight once again Franco-German differences in the approach to diagnosis and therapy that have been the subject of critical reporting in France. Notwithstanding differences in economic structure, both countries depend for their growth on a free but regulated market economy that encourages social cohesion and is founded upon a regulated international system.

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In the last few months both governments have announced significant cost-cutting measures and given voice to their determination to return by 2013 to compliance with the convergence criteria of the European Stability and Growth Pact. In mid-June 2010 Merkel and Sarkozy also managed to find a compromise in respect of the French project for a European economic government, initially greeted with skepticism by the Germans. It is little understood however that Germany pursues a regulatory market-economic approach to economic policy, whereas the French tend towards an interventionist model.

The Franco-German Agenda 2020 presented at the 12th Franco-German council of ministers in Paris on February 4, 2010 has signaled the start of a new cooperative arrangement to last a whole decade. The intention, set out in 80 concrete projects across six significant areas of bilateral cooperation, is to achieve progress in Franco-German, and above all, European, projects.

RETURN TO NORMALITY: EXCURSUS INTO THE FRENCH VIEW OF GERMANY

Looking back at Franco-German relations it becomes clear that the bilateral relationship has at times been subject to severe turbulence. This has understandably had an influence on the way the two countries perceive one another.

To understand the French view of Germany it is necessary to look back in history. The French national consciousness has historically been preoccupied with questions of security. French people tend towards caution. Their need

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for security has its roots in the early history of France when the country, squeezed between two Habsburg powers, was intent on securing its intermediary position. Richelieu, Turenne, Danton, Clemenceau and Poincaré

all tried to protect the French heartlands from attack by extending territorial security boundaries. This was also the aim of political alliances in the 19th century and the first half of the 20th. Both resulted from a historical attitude to security, both individual and political, that had arisen above all out of fear of Germany.

The French view of Germany after World War I was based on this security motivation. This represented a clash between two domestic French ideas: Those on the political right were intent on building on France's supremacy, with its origin in the times of the Treaty of Versailles, and circumscribing the development of her former German enemy. They based their concept on the notion of a pan-Germanistically-minded Germany irredeemably characterized by an aggressive will to conquer and, above all, a "military herd mentality". (Bock, 2008) On the other side the political left espoused a concept of the *deux Allemagne*. According to this the martial and authoritarian wartime Germany stood in contrast to the pre-war Germany with its historical roots in the European Enlightenment and German Classicism. This group accordingly aspired to a political and economic balance of interests to allow Germany to return to its pre-war values. Until 1945 frequent wars meant that each of the neighboring nations served as a kind of "foil for comparison" (Bock, 2008) for the qualities that the other wished to reserve for itself.

After World War II the perception that arose in each of the countries lent itself more to inclusion than rejection. This was encouraged in particular by the East-West conflict that drove both Germany and France into the western camp. However, the French view of Germany in the 1950s was characterized by ambivalence. This found expression in the determination both to control the *danger allemand* – the unpredictable German neighbor – and to tie it into the process of European integration. The latter was close to the then guiding principle of France's policy toward Germany, "control through integration"⁸. Fears around the unpredictability of the neighbor were based on the so-called Rapallo complex and the perceived threat, undoubtedly exaggerated, posed by neo-Nazi tendencies. The population's skeptical attitude was successfully turned around by increasing amounts of contact at the level of civil society and the dialog conducted in the 1970s.

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The 1980s saw a swing away from media fears of an overly strong Germany toward anxieties that the German neighbor might be becoming too weak. Noted with astonishment was what appeared to French eyes to be a latent pacifism, coupled with a declining birth rate. "The 'Romantic' view of Germany was therefore back in fashion, but this time less as an object of longing or pure fascination than as a stumbling block or a source of anxiety." (Kolboom, 1991, 39)

When the Berlin Wall fell on November 9 1989 the French people reacted with sympathetic joy; a response that did not correspond with the ambivalence expressed in the French media. After an initial phase of sympathy, concerned commentaries pointed to a shift in European equilibrium with the possible emergence of a "Greater Germany", an "economic empire" and a "political giant"⁹. It was above all the geographical dimension of the reunification that gave rise to distortions and seemed to awaken historical memories of the Bismarckian Reich. France expressed her desire for a "controlled, long-term transition" (Kolboom, 1991, 45) so that she could avoid finding herself being consigned to the periphery of an as yet incalculable new European order.

8 | Cf. Bock (2008), 727.

9 | Cf. Kolboom (1991), 44

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On the other hand, Paris had a realistic view of the enormous financial difficulties and challenges that reunification entailed for Germany. Significant improvements in the French balance of trade after reunification, thanks to increased exports to the former GDR, gave fresh impetus to the desire for an economically stable Federal Republic¹⁰. At the same time there could be no more doubt about Germany's integration into the west. This all led to a broad normalization of the French view of Germany, now characterized by friendly approval, increased curiosity and the awareness of what the two countries had in common¹¹.

Questions have been raised on the German side as to whether this positive picture has actually led to a deeper understanding of the German neighbor and her culture¹². However, the assessment remains positive: "The fact that most of the fears articulated during reunification and in the subsequent years, first and foremost by the French press, have not been confirmed has changed the picture and will have long-term consequences." (von Buttlar, 2006, 344)

Just how much views on Germany among the French population had changed even before reunification was shown by a February 1989 survey conducted by the *Institut français d'opinion publique* (Ifop). According to the survey only 25 per cent of the French respondents admitted to having spent at least four successive days in Germany on more than one occasion. Of those questioned who had never been to the Federal Republic, only 37 per cent scored such a visit as of interest, against 56 per cent who had no interest whatever. When it came to the question of conventional associations with Germany the hostile views of yesteryear were way down in the rankings, and a comparison of French and German culture revealed a relatively balanced cross-section of opinion; a state of affairs according to Kolboom that takes into account both

10 | Cf. Cary von Buttlar, *Das vereinigte Deutschland in der über-regionalen Presse Frankreichs 1989 bis 1994. Kontinuität und Wandel französischer Deutschlandbilder* (Berlin: Duncker & Humblot, 2006), 211 et seq.

11 | Cf. Kolboom (1991), 62.

12 | Ibid. (1991), 63.

a progressive tendency toward banalization in the way Germany is perceived and a Europeanization of French mentality¹³.

Happily the French people no longer see Germany as a threat or as an undemocratic state to be kept out in the cold: "Nowadays the negative view of the neighbor that used to be widespread in public opinion is so much a thing of the past that the new generation has difficulty grasping why there was ever any rivalry in the first place" (Kolboom, Darmstadt 1991, 219)

POSSIBILITIES FOR EXTENDED COOPERATION

"In a world in which the new global players are acting with increasing self-assurance we are convinced that a Franco-German partnership that is as close as possible is of the greatest importance both for our two countries and for Europe." (unattributed, Franco-German Agenda 2020) Both countries have set their sights in particular on the successful negotiation of the financial and economic crisis and the restoration of sustainable economic growth. The Agenda describes some future measures, some of them in detail, in the areas of

- economy, finance, employment;
- energy, climate, biodiversity;
- growth, innovation, research, education;
- foreign, defense and security policy;
- closer contacts between the citizenry and the institutions.

Particularly striking is the determination to intensify Franco-German cooperation at EU level. At first glance the six fields of action listed above seem to be very wide ranging, but the fact of the matter is that they include all the areas in which Germany and France demonstrate deficits in terms of either communication or cooperation.

13 | For more on the survey results see Ingo Kolboom, "'Ist der Teufel deutsch?' – Sorgen und skeptischer Konsens in Frankreich. Deutschlandbilder der Franzosen: Der Tod des 'Dauerdeutschen'", *Die hässlichen Deutschen? Deutschland im Spiegel der westlichen und östlichen Nachbarn*, Günter Trautmann (ed.), (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1991), 223 et sqq.

The authors of the KAS/Ifri study *Deutschland – Frankreich* view the following as further important fields for Franco-German initiatives: Five visions for Europe economic and financial policy, industrial cooperation, energy policy, inter-parliamentary cooperation within the context of the Lisbon Treaty, and foreign and security policy¹⁴. Authors Jacques Mistral and Henrik Uterwede are of the opinion that, in the case of economic and financial policy, an intensification of Franco-German cooperation suggests itself as a solution to the economic and financial crisis. Coordination of budgetary policy between France and Germany is in their eyes essential. They stress the necessity to synchronize

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budgetary procedure timetables in both countries through joint ministerial and parliamentary meetings and, in the interests of pragmatism, to go back to the Stability and Growth Pact. They further argue that it is essential to develop suitable procedures and instruments to allow for the development and implementation of adaptation measures necessary for the financial restructuring of a member state. Within the G20 Germany and France should commit themselves to finding better ways of dealing with global imbalances and managing exchange rate developments more actively. Finally it would be desirable for Paris and Berlin to tackle the issue of the financial infrastructure that Europe requires.

Improved cooperation in the areas of industrial and technology policy could help optimize Europe's economic position. For this to happen, however, a harmonization of national statutory regulations, including those for investments outside Europe, is necessary. Author Louis-Marie Clouet proposes the establishment of a consultancy staff in the Federal Chancellery and the Élysée palace to be combined with the required Franco-German dialog on industrial and technology matters. A parallel recommendation would be for Germany and France to cooperate closely in the development of new armaments programs that might have a side effect on the structure of European industry and national armed forces. It would thereby be important to jettison the principle of

14 | The following presentation is derived from Stark (2010), 10-16.

juste retour and to push on with a specialization unfettered by national proportionality considerations. Last but not least, Germany and France need a common technology policy.

In the field of energy policy author Susanne Nies suggests a pioneering bilateral 'Renewable Energies' policy. This would require the harmonization of energy taxes to improve price transparency and strengthen competition between the European providers. In respect of the vital question of supply security both countries should see the improvement of the Ukrainian transit route as a priority. In addition the two countries should work towards a revision of the Energy Charter to take into account the positions of both producers and consumers. With regard to energy efficiency cross-border initiatives are required.

European lawmakers need to work more closely with the French and German parliaments. Authors Anne-Lise Barrière and Céline Caro propose the creation of a mechanism for mutual information and coordination between the committees. This would also be in line with the monitoring rights for national parliaments enshrined within the subsidiarity principle as laid down in the Lisbon Treaty. This measure would make it possible to publish joint parliamentary reports. In addition bilateral legal initiatives should be worked out that are associated with the application of EU Directives. Coordinated action at the legislative level between the two parliaments in the areas of budgetary and financial policy would also be a positive signal in respect of the necessity for greater coordination within the EU. Equally desirable would be an exchange between German and French members of parliament on questions of how to inform the EU's citizens about the union in order to strengthen the transparency and democratic legitimacy of European institutions.

In respect of the vital question of supply security both countries should see the improvement of the Ukrainian transit route as a priority. In addition the two countries should work towards a revision of the Energy Charter.

Once the Lisbon Treaty has come into effect Germany and France will need to become pillars of intensified cooperation in the areas of Common Foreign and Security Policy, as well as Common Security and Defense Policy. For this reason the Franco-German Brigade should be seen as

part of the ESDP. Author Stephan Martens recommends the establishment of a standing Franco-German parliamentary working group for foreign and security policy. It is his opinion that France and Germany need to develop a common language when dealing with non-EU states. Forums such as the Weimar Triangle and dialog with Russia must be revived and developed further. Martens maintains that the foreign policy interests of both countries are identical insofar as they have a bearing on EU foreign policy. This would provide all the more justification for the Franco-German partnership to define its priorities in the foreign policy arena.

PROSPECTS: FRANCO-GERMAN COOPERATION AND EUROPE

Since the very start of the European project, Germany and France have in spite of everything always been the engine of Europe. This has been possible because the compromises reached, notwithstanding the occasional difference in ideas, have mostly been acceptable to the remaining member states. In this way both countries have become central founts of ideas for, and providers of impetus to, the cause of European integration. Their ability to find common solutions even in the midst of conflict has paved the way for European integration: "It isn't the divergences as such but the productive handling of them that is important: this means the ability to reconcile opposing positions through patient yet tenacious hard work." (Uterwedde, in Kolboom, Kotschi and Reichel, 2008, 695)

Once the Lisbon Treaty has come into effect Germany and France will need to become pillars of intensified cooperation in the areas of Common Foreign and Security Policy, as well as Common Security and Defense Policy.

Thus it is that a balanced view of their bilateral relations reveals that, although the Franco-German partnership has been through some turbulent and confusing times, it has also scored numerous notable successes. What began so tentatively at the end of World War II and was formalized with such foresight in the Élysée Treaty has developed into an extraordinarily close and trustful partnership. Completely in keeping with the spirit of the great statesmen and founders of reconciliation, Charles de Gaulle and Konrad Adenauer, it rests on a foundation of shared values and a common responsibility. Neither

the current European political scene nor its integration in the realm of civil society in their present form would be thinkable without the Franco-German relationship. Bilateral projects and initiatives have lent dynamism to the cooperation whilst common impulses and interests have had a decisive influence on European integration. In two years, on January 22 2013, the Franco-German "marriage contract" will celebrate its fiftieth anniversary. This will be a fitting occasion to take stock, to examine the future shape of cooperation between Europe's two biggest countries and to find a place within a changed European and geopolitical situation for the original vision enshrined in the treaty – or perhaps even to reformulate it.

As has been shown in this contribution, many bilateral Franco-German and, above all, European policy areas would benefit from additional substance. Most importantly, Europe must speak with one voice if it is to survive to assert its interests and maintain its values in the face of the dramatic paradigm shift in global politics and the global economy. This is no longer an option for individual European nation states in isolation. The emergence of a new multipolar world order is asking ever more questions of Europe's role in the world. This was forcefully pointed out by EU commissioner Günther Oettinger in June 2010 at a joint event of the Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung and the Robert Schuman Stiftung in Paris. It is above all times of upheaval that require states to demonstrate inner resolve, go beyond national interests and accept the existence of a common interest.

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That the Franco-German tandem has a leading role to play here is both accepted and expected by Europe. Both countries have proved in the past that they see this responsibility as a historical task. It is in this spirit, as KAS chairman Hans-Gert Pöttering recently said at a high-ranking forum in the French Parliament, that the responsible politicians in both countries have demonstrated their complete conviction by acting in a way which shows that "only a common path can take us forward".