

THE DE GAULLE – ADENAUER COUPLE AND FRANCO-GERMAN ECONOMIC RELATIONS DURING THEIR TIME

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ABSTRACT. General de Gaulle's accession has marked the beginning of a new era in the Franco-German relationships and both de Gaulle and Adenauer wanted to institutionalise the idea of conciliation by means of a treaty which would be the basis of the politics of European integration. Contrary to the impressions the foreign press created, during his first visit to Colombey - les - deux – Eglises, de Gaulle succeeded to convince Adenauer regarding his devotion in reconciling the two nations, the economic union of the Six, as well as in associating England and other states onto the path of integration. The close collaboration between the two, as well as the mutual affinity did not startle since then, de Gaulle and Adenauer having in common a deep humanity, a natural noblesse of thinking and a great ability in surprising the main ideas and following some clear objectives. The relations between France and Germany shall be set forth from now on based on solid grounds and in an atmosphere which their history has never known. The Common Market was a strong stimulus of economical increase for both France and Germany, as well as for the economical cooperation between them. The period between 1958 – 1962 was marked by the doubling of the exchanges of the two countries with the C.E.E. partners, as well as by the triplication of the Franco-German exchanges.

Key words: *de Gaulle, Adenauer, treaty, cooperation, exchanges.*

ФРЕНСКО-GERMANСКИТЕ ИКОНОМИЧЕСКИ ОТНОШЕНИЯ ПО ВРЕМЕ НА ДЕ ГОЛ И АДЕНАУЕР

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РЕЗЮМЕ: Управлението на ген. Де Гол бележи ново начало във френско-германските отношения, т.к. и двамата изповядват идеята за обединена европейска политика. Противно на създадено от чуждата преса впечатление, в своята среща с Аденауер, Де Гол успява да го убеди в необходимостта от обединяване на двете нации, както и обединявайки се е Англия и другите европейски страни. Тясното сътрудничество между тях не бе изненадващо, т.к., те носеха онова природно благородство и хуманност, което ги караше да следват подобни цели в глобален мащаб. Отношенията между Франция и Германия бяха поставени на твърда основа, непозната до тогава. Общият пазар беше силен стимул за икономически растеж на Франция и Германия, както и за икономическо сътрудничество между тях. Периодът 1958-62 бележи удвояване на обмена на двете страни със страните от Общия пазар, както и утвърдяване на френско-германския обмен.

Ключови думи: Де Гол, Аденауер, договор, сътрудничество, обмен

INTRODUCTION

General de Gaulle's accession has marked the beginning of a new era in the Franco-German relationships and both de Gaulle and Adenauer wanted to institutionalise the idea of conciliation by means of a treaty which would be the basis of the politics of European integration. Contrary to the impressions the foreign press created, during his first visit to Colombey - les - deux – Eglises, de Gaulle succeeded to convince Adenauer regarding his devotion in reconciling the two nations, the economic union of the Six, as well as in associating England and other states onto the path of integration. The close collaboration between the two, as well as the mutual affinity did not startle since then, de Gaulle and Adenauer having in common a deep humanity, a natural noblesse of thinking and a great ability in surprising the main ideas and following some clear objectives. The relations between France and Germany shall be set forth from now on based on solid grounds and in an atmosphere which their history has never known. The Common Market was a strong stimulus of economical increase for both France and Germany, as well as for the economical cooperation between them. The

time period 1958 – 1962 was marked by the doubling of the exchanges of the two countries with the C.E.E. partners, as well as by the triplication of the Franco-German exchanges.

Article in extensis

The European Council, created on 5th May 1949 in London and which initially grouped 10 countries (France, Great Britain, Denmark, Ireland, Italy, Belgium, Holland, Luxembourg, Norway and Sweden) shall not play the political role which the partisans of the European unit desired, this institution consisting of two main bodies, the Council of Ministers (representing the government) and a Consultative Assembly (headquartered in Strasbourg).

In front of the British reticence especially, this institution shall not exceed the phase of European inter-parliamentary tribune, its activity mainly being basically performed in the legal and cultural domains.

The search for a unit of the Western Europe shall take in the '50's a more efficient path, which shall be based on the Franco-German relations, more and more French becoming concerned before the aggravation of the Cold War (which

made the danger of Soviet expansion increase) and of the political and economical rebirth of a new Germany.

Although in March 1950, Chancellor Konrad Adenauer suggested the complete unification of France with Germany (a far too daring idea), Jean Monnet saw in Adenauer's idea the nucleus of the solution. Jean Monnet, a convinced Europeanist, has formed the idea of creating a supranational organisation charged with controlling the Franco-German production of steel and charcoal, a project that was subject to the approval of the French Government.

Prevalently formed for two countries and in a narrow domain, "*The Schuman Plan*", the plan of the Franco-German reconciliation, it formed the first stage of a European Coal and Steel Community that placed the metallurgy of iron and steel and mining industry in the cohesion countries, among which Federal Germany too, under the authority of a supranational Commission, thusly trying to eliminate the risk of returning to the German aggressiveness.

Jean Monnet's proposal in 1950 was extremely interesting and namely that the entire steel and coal production of both France and Germany is to be under the power of the International High Authority, having as support the unification of the production conditions that would lead to the expansion of the cooperation in other domains too.

This project of "*Cartel of coal and steel*" was accepted, besides the Federal Republic of Germany and Italy, Belgium, Holland and Luxembourg, which sign on 18 April 1951 the Treaty of Paris with France, thusly creating the famous European Coal and Steel Community (E.C.S.C.).

Adenauer received the text of Schuman's Declaration of 9 May 1950 on the morning of that exact day, along with the personal letter sent by the French politician, a letter where it was affirmed he only wanted to make the first step to a federation of the European states. Konrad Adenauer's pro-Europeanist attitude was older, even since 1948, when he had spoken in favour of creating an industrial Lotharingen¹, and in an interview given on 3 November 1949, he deemed that the young were more prepared for the Franco-German closeness, declaring himself the adept of a Franco-German cultural cooperation.

On 7 November 1949, in an interview given to the American newspaper "Baltimore Sun", Adenauer invited France to invest up to 40% of the capital, into the German metallurgy of iron and steel.

It was also possible that these pro-Europeanist ideas were not previously promoted between Schuman, Adenauer and Gasperi, who met several times before 9 May 1950.

Besides all these, Adenauer's attitude was however based on a series of strategic aims too, such as: *real fear of the Soviet danger and potential role of France in Europe; federal Europe's independence of the American support in the domain of security and defence; the impossibility of a real economical development in a divided Balkanised Europe.*

The British, who were yet hostile to any supra-nationality, remained outside the organisation in 1952, the E.C.S.C. institutions (*The High Authority, the Council of Ministers, the*

Assembly and Court of Justice) being set aright in their absence and shall even serve as base to the Common market, allowing the effective start of the Europe of the Six, on 10 February 1953.

By founding the E.C.S.C., the pressure onto Western Europe was reduced; the French having the opportunity of developing direct relations with Germany, the application of the Marshall Plan economical aims was accelerated for, even though the Gaullists and communists opposed any time they had the chance, they however remained isolated with their protests.

The Common market of coal and steel, and afterwards of the iron and metal minerals, was a movement through the customs Union, stimulating the world production, so that the six countries of the Treaty of Paris supplied 9% of the world coal and 17% of steel, in 1972.

The measures taken by the High Authority and especially by the offset system for coal were in their turn of good omen, by creating the Common market, stimulating product exchanges between the Six, and free circulation led to the development of the production in the metallurgical sector.

The financial resources obtained (from the European tax and borrows) were dedicated to investments in a ratio of ¾. Since 1953 until 1970, the High Authority assigned 280 borrows for updating mining and metallurgical plants, in an amount of 725 millions of account units (1 = 1\$ USA).

Concomitantly with de Gaulle's accession to the leadership of France, the Franco-German relations have encountered a new stage, both de Gaulle and Adenauer wanting to institutionalise the idea of conciliation by means of a treaty which would be the basis of the politics of European integration.

However, the conflict that burst between de Gaulle's conception about an Europe of the states and the incorporatists' aim of forming the United States of Europe, has led to dividing both France and Germany and as a result, the Franco-German closeness did not occur anymore as a fundament for the European integration, but as a danger.

The consternation reactions occurred in Germany regarding the manner in which de Gaulle returned to power we made public in the press of the time, so that the socialist paper "Vorwärts" would bravely affirm in its pages that "*de Gaulle did not take the power in a legal manner*". *A parliament that is subject to blackmail under the threat of the civil war of factioneer generals and a government providing the same generals of its support instead of immediately eliminating them from control and sending them before the Court Martial cannot be used as an excuse that the de Gaulle government has taken over the power complying with the parliamentary and democratic procedure*".

The German public opinion was however calmed by de Gaulle's insistences of being vested by the National Assembly and by the appointment of Couve de Murville as ambassador of France in Germany.

During the period when he stayed in Bonn, Couve de Murville convinced the Germans of his belief in the European Community and promised on 9 June, at the farewell dinner-party, that he shall continue to stress the importance of the Treaty of Rome onto the Franco-German relations.

Although he had serious doubts once the general Adenauer returned to power, he requested in June great discretion in judging the new government, counting greatly on the role played in the French crisis by Pflimlin, Mollet and Pinay, the European politicians who met their engagements.

By not taking into account and ignoring the impressions the foreign press left behind during those past months, on 14 September, Adenauer declared during his first visit to Colombey-les-deux-Eglises: *“de Gaulle is not a nationalist. He is a man very different than the one described by the press. He knows especially the importance which the Franco-German relations have for the two countries, for Europe and the entire world. Moreover, I have realised that our opinions are perfectly identical regarding the great issues of our times.”*

De Gaulle succeeded to convince Adenauer regarding his devotion in reconciling the two people, the economic union of the Six, as well as in associating England and other states on the path of integration.

The close collaboration between the two was not surprising ever since, de Gaulle and Adenauer were having in common a deep humanity, a natural noblesse of thinking and a great ability in surprising the main ideas and following some clear objectives.

The relations between France and Germany are to be set forth from now on based on solid grounds and in an atmosphere which the history of the two had never known.

The Common Market was a strong stimulus of economical increase for both France and Germany, as well as for the economical cooperation between them. The time period 1958 – 1962 was marked by the doubling of the exchanges of the two countries with the C.E.E. partners, as well as by the triplication of the Franco-German exchanges.

The strength of the Community and implicitly of the Franco-German was put to the test by several conflicts, among which we recall those referring to the acceleration of reducing fees, to the Common Agricultural Policy, to the political union as well as to assigning C.E.E. the member status – to Great Britain.

In Germany, The Chancellor's popular reception had as result the accomplishment of the aim of eliminating the Franco-German cooperation, from the domains of abstract politics to those of popular consciousness, the press of the time deeming Adenauer's tour as a crowning of his work of a lifetime.

In France, there were yet few contradictory voices, the Communist Party sustaining that what Gaullists presented as people's reconciliation was in fact an alliance of the monopolist capitalists Krupp, Schneider, Thyssen etc. The left wing deemed that the march of the Franco-German troupes from Mourmelon, which preceded the religious service in Reims, was nothing but a celebration of the reconciliation of general de Gaulle with Germany, under the sign of national grandeur.

Nevertheless, there were no doubts regarding the French people's approval and, as “Le Monde” highlighted it at the time, *“the crowd's blessing shall make the Franco-German agreement last, to survive the agreement of the two great men and to be left as heritage to future generations”*. The visit general de Gaulle returned to the Chancellor during 4 – 9 September had great popular success, launching a true

campaign of “wooning” the German people, by surprising since his first speech by the familiarity when speaking German.

“Le Monde” noted in its pages that de Gaulle did not want his visit to be deemed just as a symbol of the Franco-German reconciliation, as it Adenauer was apprehended by the French, but to also give this reconciliation a popular base.

Nevertheless, both in France and Germany, some fears were formed that the reconciliation of the two people shall become an alliance between two nationalisms and this would have as final aim the domination of Europe integrate by the axis of Paris-Bonn.

The common notification, published by the French and German socialist parties during Adenauer's visit, signalled that the Franco-German reconciliation could not be accomplished as a pact between the two nationalisms or as a substitute of the European units, but only if it inspired a more comprehensive unit, meaning that of the Common Market.

Adenauer himself tried to calm down the German public opinion on 14 September, by saying that: *“To speak about an axis Paris – Bonn means to use an inappropriate terminology, without support and not lastly, dangerous. To say it is necessary to choose between the tight Franco-German collaboration and Great Britain's acceptance as member of the Common Market proves the poor information on the real and difficult problems we are confronted with. Together with general de Gaulle, the government and I are trying to tightly connect and consolidate the collaboration between France and Germany. But the Germans and French also desire Europe's unity within the Community”*.

On 19 September, the French government proposed Bonn a plan consisting in four points for a closer collaboration in the military and cultural domains, a harmonisation of the economical policies within the European Community and political consultations of the government chiefs, who would meet regularly.

Under the influence of the ministry of Foreign Affairs, Gerhard Schröder, who was a supporter of the tight Atlantic connections, the Germans responded on 12 November, accepting this plan in principle, under the condition that the meetings are not regularly done and institutionalised, and the military cooperation is to be performed within N.A.T.O.

In between 16 – 17 December, Schröder and Murville have decided that, instead of the political secretariat, the inter-ministerial committees from Paris and Bonn to take care of the problems regarding the cooperation; the committee in Paris to be led by the French ambassador at Bonn, François Seydoux, and the one from Bonn by Joseph Jansen, the manager of the European Affairs within German Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The final approval shall be drawn up as a treaty during Adenauer's visit to Paris, in January 1963. In compliance with this treaty, the two Governments shall jointly study the means of consolidating their cooperation in important sectors of the economical politics, such as the agricultural and forestry politics, energetic politics, communication problems, transports and industrial development, within the Common Market, as well as the politics of credits for export.

De Gaulle's decision of opposing his veto to Great Britain one week before Adenauer's arrival in Paris was seen by the

Germans as an insult brought to the Chancellor, who faces an accomplished fact, instead of being consulted as an equal partner. The Franco-German treaty, which is now a subject of suspicion for Adenauer's closest collaborators on the path of integration, the Franco-German treaty was the fruit of a long effort made for getting closer the two states, a fact which determines the chancellor to however sign the document next to the general de Gaulle on 22 January.

The treaty itself set forth a programme of regular meetings between the German and French officials; the state and government leaders at least twice a year, the ministers of external affairs, of defence and of education once every three months and the ministers of family, youth and sport once every two months. An inter-ministerial committee in each country, presided by a high official of the external ministries, shall coordinate the actions of the departments involved and shall periodically report to its own government. Each one of them shall also have the task to make suggestions in order to help in implementing the cooperation programme and eventually extending it into new domains.

In the second section of the treaty, it was requested that the two governments would consult each other on all important problems of external politics before taking any final decision and especially on the problems of common interest, with the aim of reaching a similar positions as much as possible.

The problems that were the objective of the consultations referred to the European Communities and to the European political cooperation, to the Eastern-Western relations, to N.A.T.O. and other international organisations.

Economical cooperation efforts also needed to be done in the domains: agriculture and forests, energy, communications and transportations, as well as industrial development.

According to the treaty on the defence problem, the strategies and tactics shall be coordinated and a permanent exchange of personnel shall be done, as well as the division of the armament programmes, and in education, the neighbouring country's language shall be studied and there shall be performed student exchanges and recognition of diplomas and cooperation in the domain of research.

The ratification of the treaty did not indicate any difficulty for France (de Gaulle enjoying the majority's positive vote), the ratification procedure in Germany, on a date when Bundestag was still evaluating the damage caused to the European Community by de Gaulle's veto, being an occasion of re-evaluating German's desire of having good relations with the French and with de Gaulle.

Adenauer was 73 when he became a chancellor (for 14 years) and, although he was little known to the German and international public opinion, after only four years he shall be eulogised by Churchill as being the wisest German politician since Bismarck till now.

Konrad Adenauer remained in politics until 1966, but as President of the Christian Democratic Union, he continued to sustain the European unification, and shall remain an advocate and close friend of Charles de Gaulle, whom he often consulted with and shall enter in history as one of the founders of "Europe of the Six".

Konrad Adenauer about de Gaulle

In his memoirs, Adenauer confessed the anxiety he felt before meeting general de Gaulle for the first time.

In order to get again respect for his country on the international stage, Adenauer had fought with a special tenacity for rehabilitating Germany and eliminating the moral and political condemnation. However, the situation was unstable, so that any change of the condition could have led to losing all that had been so hard to obtain so far.

What did de Gaulle mean therefore for Adenauer? The image he had in the mass-media of the time was not one to calm him, de Gaulle showing as an ardent nationalist, who only thought about France, its grandeur and glory. Nevertheless, it must have been acknowledged that the general was the only one who could get France out of chaos, and Germany needed a powerful France, prepared for a partnership.

As Adenauer was interested, he got informed to see what kind of man de Gaulle was, how many lies and how much truth was there about him, and hardly accepted a first appointment.

On 13 September 1958, Adenauer arrived in Colombey, visibly worried, only to leave smiling on the next day. Here is what Adenauer said after their first meeting: *"At the beginning, de Gaulle declares that what we must do is to talk openly, from man to man, about our duties regarding the two nations, as well as about the other ones. To him, all that mattered was to know how we would get along, as we would help each other. I was very happy of the turn our meeting took. I was pleasantly surprised by his simplicity and naturalness. I was very pleased about our date. I was happy to find a completely different man than what I expected. I am certain that our collaboration shall be good and full of trust. The most important aspect disclosed by the meeting was that I have discovered our opinions are harmonised, especially those regarding the realities of the moment: we agree on all great problems, and this appreciation cannot be eliminated even in the case of most delicate problems. All this form an excellent starting base for the Franco-German relations"*.

What happened during those two days marked the personal relation between the two for the next nine years, of which Adenauer was a chancellor for five. Although they seem a few, those five years have marked the history of France and Germany, of Europe and even that of the world, including afterwards.

This first meeting consolidated a fundamental arrangement by means of which the Franco-German engine was dedicated to establishing certain organic contacts as organic base of any European project.

Year after year, Adenauer had been searching in France the partner with authority and continuity, prepared for a partnership where the German chancellor did not cease to aspire to. Furthermore, he aimed the creation of a union. At Colombey, he found what he had been searching for so long, exactly from the one he expected less: Charles de Gaulle, the most inflexible adversary of Germany, who was even more proud as he did not have many means and resources.

Here is the common point of the two, as Adenauer, in his turn, had freed his country of the stigma of defeat without having any support.

Therefore, beyond the historical situation and the differences between the two personalities, what united them was the way in which each of them wished for his own country's good. They shared the same ideals, faith and same iron will, what determined their desire for cooperation.

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