

# FRANCO-GERMAN RELATIONSHIP AFTER REUNIFICATION

France and Germany have experienced a tumultuous relationship over the centuries. Three major conflicts broke out between the two neighbors in the 19th and 20th centuries. However, the post-World War II period opened the way to a flourishing cooperation within the European framework. The reunification further strengthened the solidity of the Franco-German couple, transforming their relationship for the better.



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## REUNIFICATION SEEN FROM FRANCE

The German reunification occupied an important place in France for several months following the fall of the Berlin Wall. A major issue in foreign policy, the subject was widely covered by the national press. On the one hand, the French population was generally in favor of the reunification of its neighbor. On the political side, the topic appeared more sensible. Indeed, French elites perceived the reunification as a potential 'danger' for France status in Europe. Reunified, Germany was going to be more powerful than France. President Francois Mitterrand was not opposed to Germans' will of reunification but was cautious in his approach, asking for time and guarantees.

## THE PCITURE

On 26 April 1990, at the 55th Franco-German consultations at the Elysée Palace, French President François Mitterrand and German Chancellor Helmut Kohl expressed their views on political union in Europe and reaffirm the efforts of their two countries in that direction.



## AFTERMATH

Following October 3, 1990, French fears quickly disappeared. France and reunited Germany then engaged in intense cooperation at all levels. Today the Franco-German relationship is generally perceived positively by French people. At the political level, only extremist parties are critical.



## FRANCE AND GERMANY IN EUROPE

The Franco-German couple is often perceived as the engine of the European Union. It is regularly said that no major decision can be taken without the agreement of both powers. The Franco-German relationship is thus present at all levels: political, economic, cultural. The examples of Franco-German success are numerous and diverse: Opposition to the war in Iraq, Airbus, Franco-German Youth Office, etc. And this old couple still works as the last few years have proven...

## 2019-2020

2019 and 2020 were particularly intense for Franco-German cooperation.

In 2019, on the occasion of the 56th anniversary of the Élysée Treaty (signed in 1963), Paris and Berlin signed a new treaty aimed at deepening Franco-German cooperation and integration in Aix-la-Chapelle (Aachen).

In 2020, in the midst of the Covid-19 crisis, French and German authorities were able to agree on the implementation of an exceptional recovery plan at the European level.



## STRASBOURG-KEHL

Strasbourg and Kehl form together an urban area of more than 300,000 inhabitants. For several decades, the cities have been a laboratory for Franco-German cooperation. Today, workers, inhabitants, students and tourists benefit from this cross-border cooperation. The two cities are connected by no less than 4 bridges over the Rhine - a natural symbol of Franco-German relationship. Like the Franco-German relationship, the exchanges between Strasbourg and Kehl are political, economic and cultural.

## YOUTH TOGETHER

Strasbourg and Kehl have developed since 2014 a Franco-German childcare center. It welcomes 60 children, aged from 0 to 4 years old (30 from Kehl and 30 from Strasbourg). The objective is to promote bilingualism and cultural exchanges from an early age. The initiative was born from a common need of the two cities to have additional collective childcare places, in order to meet a growing demand of the population. Financing came additionally from European Union funding schemes.