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A FRANCO-GERMAN EUROPE?

Maastricht as a new power assessment
between France and unified Germany

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To the European Union,
with the hope that it will
hold on and survive forever.

Abstract

Europe is experiencing a deep poly-crisis which is questioning the entire foundation of the European Union. Eurosceptic voices are increasingly calling for the revision of the 1992 Maastricht Treaty, hoping to regain national sovereignty in some areas. The question thus arises of why member states decided to negotiate, sign and ratify the Treaty, conscious that it would create a supranational economic, political and institutional setting. This study argues that at Maastricht the main protagonists were France and Germany, which viewed the Treaty as a means to protect their national interests and react to the new global order brought about by the end of the Cold War and German reunification. Mitterrand and Kohl eventually reached a balanced compromise, showing their bargaining power vis-à-vis other countries and taking the leadership role in the newly-born community. Twenty-five years later and in light of the current critical juncture, French and German leaders, Macron and Merkel, do recognize the need for treaty change. However, to cope with the major challenges of this decade, their push for reforms aims at strengthening European integration, leaving reluctant countries behind if necessary.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

CAP	Common Agricultural Policy
CFSP	Common Foreign and Security Policy
DM, D-mark	Deutsche Mark
EC	European Community
ECB	European Central Bank
ECSC	European Coal and Steel Community
ECOFIN	Economic and Financial Affairs Council
EDC	European Defense Community
EEC	European Economic Community
EMS	European Monetary System
EMU	Economic and Monetary Union
EP	European Parliament
EU	European Union
FRG	Federal Republic of Germany
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GDR	German Democratic Republic
IGC	Intergovernmental Conference
JHA	Justice and Home Affairs
SEA	Single European Act
TEU	Treaty on European Union

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Introduction

The European Union has reached a crucial moment for its survival. The Eurozone and the refugee crisis, the spectre of Brexit and the inevitable rise of Eurosceptic populist parties represent the major challenges that Europe has to face in these times. Specifically, the sovereign debt crisis has put to test the entire structure of the Economic and Monetary Union, questioning its institutions and even some countries' membership. Today it is quite common to read or hear that this critical juncture will eventually be overcome by solving the dilemma of "More or Less Europe". Will national states have to deepen European integration in order to save the supranational structure which ties them together? This question is still debated among heads of state and government, in the European institutions and within public opinion. In particular, revising and reforming the founding treaties of the EU has become a necessity, at least according to anti-European movements which have entered national parliaments and even governments (Italy is the latest example). It seems that the very nature and principles of the European project, enshrined in the 1992 Treaty on the European Union, are being questioned by the member states themselves. Hence, the need to analyse in depth the provisions of the Maastricht Treaty and to finally assess if the benefits of EU membership outweigh its costs. In this respect, there are two states which agree that the further strengthening of integration is the only viable solution for Europe: France and Germany. These countries are showing their commitment to reforms, unity and solidarity, now more than ever. At present, Macron and Merkel's governments are struggling to improve the resilience of the EU, economically and politically, in order to make it less vulnerable to future shocks and to enhance its leadership position in the international arena.

Therefore, the current economic, political and institutional crisis brings the debate back to the very moment in which the EU was created. The Maastricht Treaty marked a new era not only for European member states, which became committed to multilateralism, but also for Franco-German relationship, which crystallized in bilateral intergovernmental relations. The path toward integration did not stop there; on the contrary, it had only just begun. From that moment onwards, almost every initiative to strengthen cooperation between member states at the European level was put forward by France and Germany, which have continued to collaborate also in the reform process of the founding Treaties, adopting joint positions during the negotiations of the treaties of Amsterdam (1997), Nice (2001) and Lisbon (2007). Hence, the renowned expression of France and Germany as 'the engine' of Europe. Are these two countries the real 'motor' of European integration? To what extent do they shape European agenda and keep the Union alive?

Today, the two countries are at the center of the EU political and economic spheres, for several reasons. First, their size and population are of considerable significance in institutional terms, with over 28% of the total EU population and 170 members of the European Parliament; they are also the largest contributors to the EU budget[1]. Secondly, since their economies are the largest of the Eurozone and are extremely intertwined, they have also a great influence on intra-EU trade and growth. Thirdly, their governments and leaders are strongly committed to the idea of a united Europe, especially in critical situations which require careful, balanced and coordinated management and resolution by member states. Despite some divergences on the best method to handle and solve the Eurozone crisis, France and Germany have finally agreed that a reform plan is urgent and necessary; accordingly, they are working on a joint proposal to be presented in late June.

It is therefore evident that France and Germany play a prominent role in addressing EU affairs, as they have always played. Indeed, the cornerstone of this thesis is Franco-German conduct at Maastricht: the two countries decisively shaped the course of the negotiations and sought to take advantage of the Treaty's provisions. Certainly, without France and Germany's ability to reach a compromise and agree on common positions, the European Union would not exist today.

A brief Literature Review

Especially compared to other countries' interaction, Franco-German relationship has often been labelled as 'special' or 'privileged'. The existing literature on this subject generally acknowledges the key role played by the two countries in building the EU. In *Shaping Europe*, Krotz and Schild define their relation as 'embedded bilateralism', capturing the intertwining nature and institutionalization of the relationship. The authors highlight three distinguishing features of the Franco-German couple: the resilient and regularized link between the two countries, the historical and normative character of their connection, and the fact that both states accept the responsibility for providing leadership and orientation in the continent, acting as a glue that ties together the European multilateral structure[2]. Philippe de Schoutheete recognizes the 'unique' relationship between France and Germany and their leadership role, but he also stresses that Franco-German initiatives were

[1] Source: EU website. Available at https://europa.eu/european-union/about-eu/countries_en [Accessed on 10 April 2018]

[2] Ulrich Krotz, and Joachim Schild, *Shaping Europe: France, Germany, and embedded bilateralism from the Elysée Treaty to twenty-first century politics*. Oxford University Press, Oxford 2013, pp. 8-10.

implemented because they were backed by other member states[3]. Importantly, the interdependence of European integration and 'good' Franco-German relations has traditionally been accepted by nearly all scholars. Indeed, past and present literature investigating the field has shown that when the two countries were not able to find an agreement, progress in integration or treaties' negotiations stalled. However, considering the road to Maastricht, the literature offers divergent views. While Michael Baun regards the Treaty as a political response, primarily by France and Germany in the form of a difficult bargain, to German unification and the end of the Cold War[4], Piers Ludlow suggests that the Treaty was not simply the direct consequence of the geopolitical transformations of 1989-91: it had its deepest roots in the 1980s. In this decade, four trends emerged: (i) the pressure for treaty change in order to revive the dynamism of the Community, (ii) the need for institutional innovation and democratization, (iii) the intention to unite all the legislative arrangements under a single framework, and (iv) the effect of the policy spill-over[5]. Paul Poast shares this view and, using the BATNA model (Best Alternative To a Negotiated Agreement), adds other exogenous shocks which had influenced French and German decision to initiate the IGCs on EMU, such as the global financial market instability of the late 1980s, the decline of the US nuclear power and the turmoil in Eastern Europe, which caused large flow of immigrants into West Germany[6]. As stated by Germond and Türk, another important element to be taken into consideration is the crucial involvement of leaders, networks and mediators, who acted according to a European sentiment, paving the way for the drafting of the founding treaties[7]. French and German key figures and personalities of the 1980s and 1990s, from heads of state and governments to national civil servants, are analysed by Colette Mazzucelli in her comprehensive book *France and Germany at Maastricht*. In a thorough analysis of Maastricht's negotiations, she chooses a *sui generis* approach to explain the outcome of the Treaty, rejecting the pure intergovernmental position supported by Andrew Moravcsik. The American professor considers the creation of the European Union as the result of a bargaining process between the two largest states of the continent, namely, France and Germany[8]. His vision points to the importance of national interests in reaching an agreement among the parties and underlines that

[3] De Schoutheete, Philippe. "The European Community and its sub-systems." in *The dynamics of European integration*, 1990, pp. 106-124.
[4] Michael J. Baun, "The Maastricht Treaty as High Politics: Germany, France, and European Integration." *Political Science Quarterly*, Vol. 110 No. 4, The Academy of Political Science, 1995, pp. 605-624.
[5] Piers N. Ludlow, "European Integration in the 1980s: on the Way to Maastricht?." *Journal of European Integration History*, Vol. 19 No. 1, 2013, pp. 11-22.
[6] Paul D. Poast, "The Wall and Maastricht: exogenous shocks and the initiation of the EMU and EPU IGCs." *Journal of European integration*, Vol. 26 No. 3, 2004, pp. 281-307.
[7] Germond, Carine, and Henning Türk, eds. *A History of Franco-German Relations in Europe: From "Hereditary Enemies" to Partners*. Palgrave Macmillan, New York 2008, p. 5.
[8] Andrew Moravcsik, "Negotiating the Single European Act: National Interests and Conventional Statecraft in the European Community", *International Organization*, Vol. 45 No. 1, The MIT Press, 1991.

European integration was seen as a vehicle to pursue national strategies. This view will be adopted in several parts of this dissertation. In Maastricht's aftermath, Franco-German cooperation would still lead Europe, but with an important change in perception: the balance of power was said to tilt toward Germany. Writing in 1996 and answering the question of whether Germany would become an 'emergent leader' or a 'gentle giant', Bulmer and Paterson favoured the second epithet[9]. Ten years later and even today, Germany is more likely to be called a 'reluctant leader'[10]. After Macron's election in France and the subsequent relaunch of Europe, scholars and journalists agree that the Franco-German axis is coming back stronger (also in the wake of Brexit) and will be instrumental to save the European Union and the Euro. However, the most controversial aspect of today's European politics is represented by the prospect of a multi-speed Europe, which is the subject of disagreement and opposition.

Method of analysis: IR theories of European integration

Since the study of contemporary history is deeply intertwined with International Relation (IR) theories, this thesis combines the analysis of Franco-German relations and their influence in the construction of the European Union with IR perspectives. In particular, the early foundational phase of European integration, started in the 1950s, has been subject to a vivid theoretical debate among international relations scholars, whose aim is to explain how and why the process of uniting Europe has moved forward. The leading schools in this domain, the neofunctionalist and intergovernmentalist, have developed different interpretations about the nature of the EC, focusing either on the supranational character of the Community or on the interests of member states' governments.

The European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC), established by the Six founding members[11] in 1951 with the Treaty of Paris, had a dual purpose: on the one hand, it provided a sound basis for economic expansion with the pooling of coal and steel resources; on the other, it made future conflicts between France and Germany impossible. This latter aim resulted directly from the former, as it became evident that economic integration was the only viable way to reach a long-lasting peace and proceed with an eventual political union. According to the neo-functionalist theory of integration, of which Ernst Haas was the most prominent exponent with his book "The Uniting of Europe", the key

[9] Simon Bulmer, and William E. Paterson, "Germany in the European Union: gentle giant or emergent leader?". *International Affairs,* Vol. 72 No.1, Wiley, 1996, p. 32.
[10] Isabell Hoffman, "Europe's Reluctant leader". Bertelsmann Foundation, 2016. Available at http://www.bfna.org/research/europes-reluctant-leader/ [Accessed on 2 June 2018]
[11] France, Germany, Italy, Belgium, the Netherlands and Luxembourg.

concept in this process is the 'sectoral, political and geographical spillover': economic integration, and more generally integration in a specific policy area and among a group of states, puts pressure for further integration in other fields and with other members, leading to the creation of a supranational governance[12]. This would have proven to be true if the French plan by René Pleven to create a European Defense Community (EDC) in 1954 had been immediately approved, or if de Gaulle had not vetoed Britain's membership application or had not left the 'chair empty' in 1965. However, despite the EDC failed attempt and the Empty Chair Crisis, Haas stated that "one obvious demonstration of a spillover effect from sector integration is the successful conclusion of two additional treaties seeking to integrate the European economies further"[13]. He was referring to the 1957 Treaties of Rome, which established the European Atomic Energy Community (Euratom) and the European Economic Community (EEC). Thus, with a 'small steps' strategy, Europe was slowly building itself.

Andrew Moravcsik, in criticizing the neofunctional analysis, takes as the starting point the premise of neofunctionalism, namely, that the EU is destined to continue to integrate[14]. In response, Moravcsik developed the intergovernmental theory, which rests on some fundamental assumptions rooted in realism. Intergovernmentalism, indeed, values the central role of the nation-state and national interests, rejects the importance of non-state actors and contrasts the notion of spillover with that of member states' intentions: integration results from the purposive behaviour of states, which carefully judge the likely outcomes of alternative agreements[15]. Moravcsik's approach focused on the intergovernmental side of the largest member states (France, Germany and Great Britain) claims that when the preferences of these three countries converge in the form of a political bargain, the integration process proceeds. According to Krotz and Schild, however, this view does not include the element of "agency, political strategizing, and leadership which we must consider in order to explain successful agenda setting, coalition building, and compromise."[16]

The pure 'realist' analysis of the early European integration stresses the need for the nation-state to protect its interests. According to this view, the ECSC was the outcome of a "rational" French strategy[17], whose aim was to rebuild French strength and keep Germany weak by directly controlling

[12] See Haas Ernst, *The Uniting of Europe. Political, social and economic forces 1950-1957*, Notre Dame University Press, Notre Dame (Indiana) 1958.
[13] Haas, *The Uniting of Europe*, p. 301.
[14] Andrew Moravcsik, "Sequencing and path dependence in European integration." *Conference on "The Sequencing of Regional Economic Integration: Issues in the Breadth and Depth of Economic Integration in the Americas*," Kellogg Institute for International Studies, University of Notre Dame, Notre Dame (Indiana), 2005, p. 24.
[15] Mette-Eilstrup Sangiovanni ed. *Debates on European integration: A reader*. Palgrave Macmillan, 2006, pp. 97-98.
[16] Krotz and Schild, *Shaping Europe*, p. 13.
[17] Craig Parsons, "Showing ideas as causes: the origins of the European Union." *International organization*, Vol. 56 No. 1, The MIT Press, 2002, pp. 57-59.

its foreign policy and industry. However, if this approach can be accepted for the case of the ECSC, it fails to explain the EEC's birth, which was the result of pro-community ideas and leaders, as advocated by Parsons. Furthermore, the EEC had also institutional consequences, as it set a new context which was perceived as irreversible: "institutions held Europeans to one path once it was chosen"[18]. This argument is clearly the reflection of path-dependent and historical institutionalist theories, which explain integration as an endogenous process caused by the setting up of new institutions[19].

The above-mentioned theories attempt to provide a comprehensive account of the causes underpinning the creation of Europe, but none of these can be said to be exhaustive. For this reason, in order to get a complete framework of the driving forces behind European unification, it is necessary to integrate all IR approaches, which indeed complement each other and are useful to describe situations or events which one single theory cannot fully explain.

Plan of the thesis

This dissertation is divided into three parts, each analysing a specific period of time which characterised the Franco-German relationship. In the first Chapter, the attention is focused on how France and Germany paved the way for European integration before the formal creation of the European Union, that is, before the 1992 Maastricht Treaty. Particular emphasis is given to German reunification, considered as a prelude to the unification of Europe. The second Chapter deals with the crucial moment of the Maastricht negotiations, considered as a compromise package on 'high politics' between France and Germany's political leaders, whose aim was to secure national interests, bargaining both at the domestic and international level, on economic, monetary and political affairs. The third Chapter analyses how the leadership role of the two countries has evolved after Maastricht until today. Macron and Merkel's entente and their idea of a multi-speed Europe are examined in greater detail. The Conclusion will sum up the main points of the dissertation, with a look to the future of the European Union.

[18] *Ibidem*, p. 76
[19] For a comprehensive account, see Steinmo, Sven, et al. *Structuring Politics: Historical Institutionalism in Comparative Analysis.* New York, Cambridge University Press, 1992.

Chapter 1. France and Germany *before* Maastricht: allies or rivals? A 'renewed friendship'

1.1 *France, Germany and the seeds of the EU*

Franco-German relationship has a long history of hate and love dating back to the renowned Franco-Prussian war in 1870-71. The consequent French *revanchism*, primarily caused by the loss of the Alsace-Lorraine territory, contributed to the unstable situation which led to World War I. But it was only at the end of World War II in 1945 that the 'stolen' and beloved region eventually returned to France: from that moment forward, France and Germany embarked on a slow path of reconciliation. This turning point was enshrined in the 1963 Élysée Treaty, signed by French President Charles de Gaulle and West German Chancellor Konrad Adenauer. The Treaty formally ended the long period of enmity between the two countries and ushered in a new phase of Franco-German bilateral relation, which Ulrich Krotz has called "regularized intergovernmentalism"[20]. This type of bilateralism was based on routinized habits and cooperation of French and German institutions and intergovernmental entities (see Table 1[21]). Indeed, in addition to the so-called 'consultation duty' which provided for the two governments to consult each other prior to any decision concerning foreign and security policy, the Élysée Treaty also determined regular meetings between the heads of state and governments, the ministers of Foreign Affairs and the other authorities in the fields of defense, education and youth. All governmental levels maintained routinized communication, which sometimes extended "beyond and below the stipulations of the Élysée Treaty"[22]: informal meetings, telephone calls and joint trips of the heads of government

Table 1

Level/Institution of cooperation	Frequency of meetings
President and Chancellor	1963 to 2000: at least twice a year in the context of the Élysée Treaty consultations; Since 2001: additional irregular and informal, so-called 'Blaesheim meetings', initially together with the foreign ministers; January 2001 to September 2014: 41 informal bilateral meetings
Foreign Ministers	At least 4 annual meetings according to the Élysée Treaty
Political directors in the foreign ministries	Monthly meetings according to the Élysée Treaty
Defence Ministers	At least 4 meetings a year according to the Élysée Treaty
Chiefs of General Staff	Every two months
Franco-German cabinet meetings since 2003	1-2 per year, 19 meetings between January 2003 and July 2017
Intergovernmental consultations between 1963-2003	Twice a year, 80 Franco-German summits in total between 1963 and 2003

[20] Ulrich Krotz, "Structure as Processes: The Regularized Intergovernmentalism of Franco-German Bilateralism". Minda de Gunzburg Center for European Studies, Harvard University, Cambridge 2002.
[21] Source: *Ibidem*, p. 6.
[22] *Ibidem*, p. 10.

and other ministers are just few examples of the high level of interactions between France and Germany throughout the 1960s and 1970s.

In this period, France and (West) Germany were highly participative on the European stage and they were instrumental in reaching the milestones of what was becoming a unified continent. Indeed, across time, French and German interests appeared to converge toward the same project: European integration. In the initial phase of the 1950s, while France adopted a proactive position, Germany assumed a reactive attitude[23]. French initiatives were driven by leaders' commitment to pro-community ideas (Jean Monnet and Robert Schuman are in fact recognized as among the founding fathers of the European Union), and German support was indispensable for their implementation. As Craig Parsons puts it, "French choices were necessary but not sufficient causes of European outcomes. Benelux leadership (from Beyen and Spaak) and German assent (from Adenauer) were also crucial to the European Economic Community."[24] Therefore, gradually, the European Community started to come to life. In 1951 the ECSC placed the common market for steel and coal under the supervision of the supranational High Authority, while the EEC and Euratom in 1957 extended the scope of integration to include general economic cooperation. France and Germany were at the core of the newly-born communities, not only because they acted as 'sponsors', but also because, given the fact that Britain refused to join, their mutual understanding was vital to give Europe a strong leadership.

After the 1963 rapprochement between France and Germany, the next key year was 1969: de Gaulle left office and was replaced by Georges Pompidou, Willy Brandt became Chancellor of West Germany and the Hague Summit conference was held in December. De Gaulle's departure from the scene made it possible for the two countries to revive their relationship, which had experienced a severe crisis due to different views on security and European matters. The new German leader was keen to foster European integration through the 'completion', 'widening' (namely, enlargement) and 'deepening' of the EEC; he was optimistic about the project of a European Economic and Monetary Union and he sought to maintain good relations with France in order to pursue his 'Ostpolitik'. On the other hand, Pompidou was rather sceptic about Brandt's political strategy. In particular, he believed Ostpolitik and closer European integration to be mutually exclusive[25], mainly because he feared that the ultimate goal of Brandt's foreign policy was domestic reunification. However, Brandt was able to readjust the Franco-German axis and pave the way for the Hague conference in 1969. In the words of Claudia Hiepel, "Brandt used a skilful mixture of demands and concessions to help

[23] Ulrich Krotz and Joachim Schild, *France: Germany's indispensable Ally in European Policy-making*, Institut für Europäische Politik, German European Policy Series No. 01/18, p. 7.
[24] Parsons, "Showing ideas as causes.", p. 56.
[25] Ludlow N. Piers, *European Integration and the Cold War: Ostpolitik-Westpolitik, 1965-1973*. Routledge, 2007, p. 26.

persuade Pompidou to yield on all-decisive issue of the enlargement of the EC."[26] When European matters were at stake, Franco-German agreement proved to be decisive, and its importance was not even undermined by the accession of new member states to the EC. Thus, thanks to the determination of the new leaders Brandt and Pompidou, identified as key leaders of both the Cold war and European integration[27], the Hague conference was perceived as a success as it gave momentum to the relaunch of Europe. Indeed, the Werner Report presented in the following year suggested a three-stage process to establish an economic and monetary union, and, despite not successfully implemented, it became a stimulus for later developments and initiatives on such a union.

In the early 1970s, the international financial crisis hit Europe, but did not break it: France and Germany "resisted the natural inclination of states to fall back on national remedies to protect their home economies. They maintained a high degree of cooperation and kept the spirit of Europe alive."[28] From 1974 to 1981 Franco-German relationship was in fact rather dynamic: Helmut Schmidt and Valéry Giscard d'Estaing laid the foundations of what would become the EU, with the establishment of the European Council, the direct elections of the European Parliament and the European Monetary System[29]. But it was only with President François Mitterrand and Chancellor Kohl that the partnership between France and Germany finally consolidated. They further deepened their intergovernmental relation, regularizing meetings of their defense and foreign ministers and creating a Franco-German Council for Defense and Security, Economics and Finance, Culture and Environment (see Figure 2[30]). The couple played a pivotal role also in the evolution of the EC in the 1980s, which was marked by the 1987 Single European Act and culminated in the signing of the Maastricht Treaty in 1992. As Piers Ludlow puts it, the 1980s have been times in which the real directions for Europe emerged[31]. According to him, there exists a longer term trajectory of European integration, dating back to the decade before Maastricht, in which Mitterrand and Kohl pursued successful policies aimed at achieving their ideas of both national and European unity.

[26] Claudia Hiepel, "In Search of the Greatest Common Denominator. Germany and the Hague Summit Conference 1969." *Journal of European Integration History*, Vol. 9 No. 2, 2003, p. 63.
[27] Daniel Mockli, *European foreign policy during the Cold War: Heath, Brandt, Pompidou and the dream of political unity*. IB Tauris, London 2008, p. 17.
[28] William I. Hitchcock, *The Struggle for Europe: The Turbulent History of a Divided Continent, 1945-2002*. Doubleday Books, New York 2003, p. 438.
[29] "The 'Franco-German duo' and Europe as seen in cartoons", CVCE website, Accessed on 7 May 2018. https://www.cvce.eu/en/education/unit-content/-/unit/c3c5e6c5-1241-471d-9e3a-dc6e7202ca16/d562fbb6-a28f-411c-ba95-8a7d743ac70e
[30] Source: Ulrich Krotz, *Structure as Processes*, p. 22.
[31] Ludlow, "European Integration in the 1980s.", p. 11.

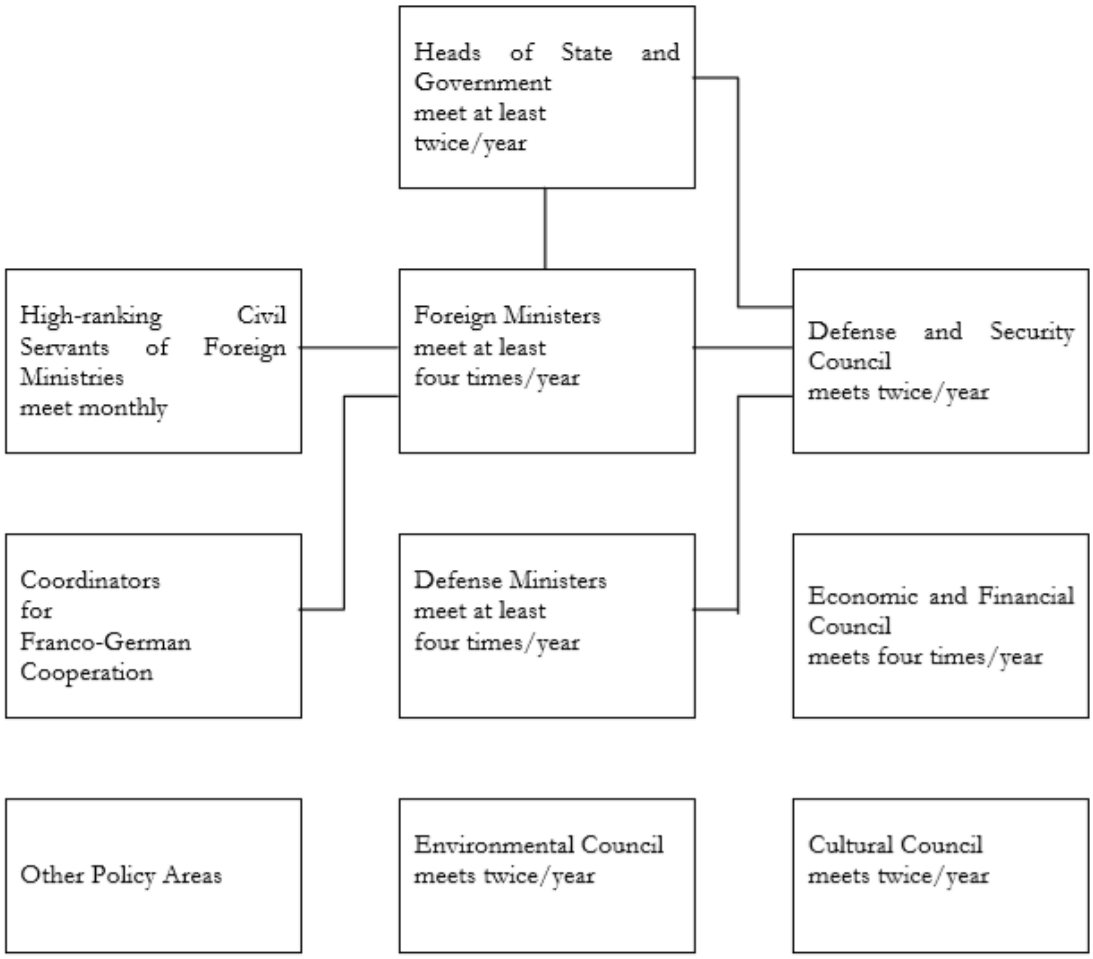

Figure 2: Regularized Bilateral Franco-German Intergovernmentalism

1.2 *French impetus to European integration in the Mitterrand era*

As Frédéric Bozo correctly argued, the prevailing literature on the end of the Cold War has tended to focus on key actors as the United States, the Soviet Union and Germany, neglecting France's role which instead was crucial in the events of 1989-91, especially through the relaunch of European integration by Mitterrand[32]. According to Knapp and Wright, "France's role in the integration process has been one of initiation (from the launch of the ECSC onwards), of acceleration (for example, of the customs union), of co-operation (notably with Germany) but also of obstruction (most obviously over institutional questions during the de Gaulle presidency, and most recently over the constitutional

[32] Frédéric Bozo, "Mitterrand's France, the End of the Cold War, and German Unification: A Reappraisal." *Cold War History*, Vol. 7 No. 4, Routledge, 2007, pp. 455-478.

treaty) and of fairly consistent opposition to a fully federal project"[33]. From 1981 onwards, however, the country eventually adopted a pro-European attitude.

The first socialist leader to become President of France, Mitterrand was eager to reconstruct French national identity in a European framework. He once stated, "France is our fatherland, Europe is our future"[34]. Within French Socialists and public opinion, a vision of a 'European France' started to take shape, and the idea of the French 'mission civilisatrice' was extended to the European continent as a whole[35]. The first term of Mitterrand's presidency (1981-88) was characterised by an intense activity on the European stage, which reached its peak with French accession to the Presidency of the Council of Ministers in January 1984. From that moment on, Mitterrand became the major spokesman of the relaunch of Europe: he began to move towards European federalism and pushed for reforming the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) and fostering political cooperation. However, while France and Germany agreed on the need for procedural reforms (apart from the strengthening of the European Parliament, to which France was opposed), they had divergent positions on liberalization (firmly advocated by Great Britain). Mitterrand was strongly determined not to waste time. He began considering the possibility of a 'Europe à geométrie variable', threatening the British that a 'Europe à deux vitesses' would have left them behind and excluded from the core countries' agreements. Indeed, Mitterrand and Kohl were already committed to internal market reforms and the abolition of customs controls, presenting common positions in several European leaders' meetings.

Another turning point for French European policy came when Jacques Delors was appointed President of the new European Commission in 1985. Former Finance Minister of France, Delors became an important ally for Mitterrand because of "his ability to bend European rules in France's favour on occasion, his skill at reinforcing French networks in the Commission, and the reassurance he offered the public that integration was a French project."[36] He also realized that in order for internal liberalization to be achieved, qualified majority voting had to be introduced[37]. Shortly after in 1985, the intergovernmental conference for negotiating the Single European Act began, and the outcomes were exactly the extension of qualified majority voting in the Council, the creation of the cooperation and assent procedures to give Parliament more influence, and provisions to establish a single market

[33] Andrew Knapp and Vincent Wright. "France and European Integration" in *The government and politics of France*, 5th edition, Routledge, New York 2006, p. 434.
[34] *Le Monde*, 4 September 1992.
[35] Martin Marcussen, et al. "Constructing Europe? The evolution of French, British and German nation state identities." in *The social construction of Europe* ed. by Christiansen, Thomas, Knud Erik Jorgensen, and Antje Wiener, SAGE, London 2001, p. 107.
[36] Knapp and Wright, "France and European Integration", pp. 439-440.
[37] By virtue of the Luxembourg compromise (1966), unanimity was to be reached whenever important national interests were at stake.

by 31 December 1992. During the SEA IGC, Mitterrand's fundamental role was made possible by the high level of intergovernmental decision making: in those years, the EC rested mostly on Council and Summit meetings rather than on supranational and international bodies. The 1987 SEA inaugurated the phase in which intergovernmentalism replaced neofunctionalism. As written by Moravcsik[38], the drivers behind the greater commitment to European unity during the SEA negotiations were the same that had led to the ECSC and EEC in the 1950s, that is, the convergence of national interests (mainly of France and Germany), the pro-European idealism of heads of government (Mitterrand and Kohl) and the crucial role of the large member states (including France). Nearly two years after the SEA entered into force, in April 1989 Delors presented his Report on the study of economic and monetary union, proposing its achievement in three evolutionary stages, whose dates and deadlines were to be set by member states in further negotiations. The Delors Report was welcomed by the European Council, which indeed launched the first stage in July 1990. Soon after, German reunification accelerated the pace: from that point onwards, Mitterrand set a clear objective for his foreign policy, namely the economic and political strengthening of the EC in the background of a closer Franco-German partnership. The reverse was also true: the French President finally embedded German unification in the context of European integration. Hence, the decision to convene an IGC in 1990 to relaunch Europe demonstrated "the strength of the bilateral relationship and of its centrality to the European project, thus allowing Paris and Bonn to overcome their mutual misperceptions."[39] Therefore, Mitterrand's France, backed by the Delors Commission at the EC level, provided the necessary propelling force to proceed with the creation of the EMU.

1.3 *Kohl's strategic leadership and German reunification: a necessary step towards European unification*

The 1989 European revolutions and the fall of the Berlin Wall brought about a radical geo-political transformation of the continent and of the world, and Kohl was one of the European statesmen who contributed to those deep changes. Last Chancellor of the Federal Republic of Germany (FRG) and first Chancellor of the reunited Germany, Kohl was the "incarnation of continuity"[40]. In his 16 years in office (1982-1998), he was able to provide stability to German people, renovate Germany as a peaceful country in the world and include it in the most important Treaty which led to the creation of the EU. To achieve these successes, he has proved to be highly skilled in building alliances and

[38] Moravcsik, "Negotiating the Single European Act", pp. 47-48.
[39] Bozo, "Mitterrand's France, the End of the Cold War, and German Unification.", p. 467.
[40] Michael Mertes, "Helmut Kohl's legacy for Germany." *Washington Quarterly*, Vol. 25 No. 4, The MIT Press, 2002, p. 69.

compromising with his partners and rivals, making it impossible for conflicts to happen. Without Kohl's efforts, German reunification and the creation of the EMU would not have happened[41]. The FRG he inherited from Schmidt was in poor economic conditions, which required fiscal consolidation and domestic reforms to be restored. Indeed, West Germany had to be very solid to financially bear the costs of German unification[42], formally occurred on 3 October 1990. Kohl's two-term chancellorship can therefore be divided in eight pre-unification years (1982-1990), in which the last remnants of the Cold War had to be swept away, and eight post-unification years (1990-98), in which the attention was focused on the integration and construction of the EU. The Chancellor believed that Europe could finally embrace the new and 'normal' Germany, characterised as a cooperative, balanced, reliable and 'human' country (the opposite of the previous conflict-prone, threatening, nationalist and inhuman Nazi German state). To get rid of German historical memory of horrors and fears, Kohl tried to build confidence in the Germans and promote public positivity, rejecting the old idea of 'Mitteleuropa' in favor of the inclusion of Germany into Western and transatlantic institutions. For this reason, Kohl's attempt to secure international acceptance by European neighbours (what Bulmer and Paterson have defined the "Europeanization of Germany"[43]) became the focal point of his foreign policy in the 1980s and 1990s.

"The division of our fatherland is unnatural", Kohl said in 1989 the day before the fall of the Berlin Wall. He also stressed the principles of democracy, freedom and self-determination of GDR peoples, and he recalled Adenauer's words: 'In a free and united Europe, a free and united Germany'[44]. The Two-Plus-Four Treaty on German settlement was signed in September 1990 and marked the transition to a new world order, free from the divisions created by the Cold War. The two Germanys, William Hitchcock metaphorically says, "were like twins separated at birth and reunited as adults: they looked alike, spoke the same language, and sensed an intuitive bond, but they still had to learn to live together."[45] Differently from the 1871 unification orchestrated by Bismarck, which was stained by 'blood and iron' and achieved despite the opposition of its neighbouring states, Kohl's reunification was peaceful and eventually supported by other countries. In his Ten-point plan for unity, proposed in November 1989, Kohl envisaged a confederation to be reached in stages and placed in the

[41] In 1998, Kohl was declared 'Honorary Citizen of Europe' by the European Council, for his "outstanding contribution to the development of the European Union". The same title was conferred only to Jean Monnet in 1976 and Jacques Delors in 2015. Source: European Council Conclusions, available at http://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/european-council/conclusions/ [Accessed on 15 April 2018]
[42] Mertes, "Helmut Kohl's legacy for Germany", p.73.
[43] Bulmer and Paterson, "Germany in the European Union", p. 12.
[44] Kohl speech, Bonn, 8 November 1989. Source: CVCE website. Available at http://www.cvce.eu/obj/address_given_by_helmut_kohl_on_the_state_of_the_nation_in_a_divided_germany_bonn_8_november_1989-en-6b6dd36a-1510-4852-b33f29688069e1d8.html [Accessed on 18 April 2018]
[45] Hitchcock, *The Struggle for Europe*, p. 375.

framework of the European Community. Contrary to what happened in the process of European unification, in which currency union was seen as the final stage, the reunification of Germany started with monetary integration: the substitution of the D-mark for East Germany was the first step to create a single institutional and political system. This 'instant approach', which called for currency union prior to economic integration and was the expression of 'economists', thus prevailed over the 'transitional approach', reflected in the 'monetarist' tradition and indeed implemented with EC integration[46]. The most common interpretation of German reunification process was that it was 'embedded in European integration'[47], and Kohl himself, with a patriotic but non-nationalistic sentiment, repeatedly stated that "German unity and European unity are two sides of the same coin"[48]: they were inextricably linked since the latter could not exist without the former. In particular, as Michael Baun has written in his inspiring article (which will be the cornerstone of Chapter 2 of this dissertation), Kohl's aim was to show that German and European unification were compatible, in fact complementary and mutually reinforcing[49]. Wishing also to preserve the Franco-German partnership, Kohl finally agreed to proceed with further European integration, proving that the parallel realization of the two unifications was possible.

After having reunited Germany, Kohl was concerned to integrate it in the project of the EMU, which was beginning to take a definitive shape. In 1978, under the Schmidt and Giscard d'Estaing governments, the EMS was established, and proved to be rather successful through its Exchange Rate Mechanism. However, due to the perceived asymmetry caused by German Bundesbank's domination in monetary policies, France started pushing towards the creation of a supranational monetary system which would put Germany under control. Hence, the 1989 Delors Plan: a three-stage process whose final objective was a single currency managed by a European Central Bank. In March 1990, Kohl announced his support for monetary and economic union and, together with Mitterrand, called for a parallel IGC to discuss also the prospect of a political union. The result would be the Maastricht negotiation and the Treaty on European Union.

Thus, what is it that ties German reunification with the unification of Europe? It is evident that a European supranational arrangement could not have existed with a divided Germany. How would it

[46] Otto Singer, "Constructing the Economic Spectacle: The Role of Currency Union in the German Unification Process." *Journal of Economic Issues*, Vol. 26 No. 4, 1992, pp. 1095-1115.
Economist and monetarist positions will be analysed in Subsection 2.2.2.1.
[47] Diethelm Prowe, "Kohl and the German Reunification Era." *The Journal of Modern History*, Vol. 74 No. 1, The University of Chicago Press, 2002, p. 129.
[48] Kohl speech, Bonn, 13 December 1991. Source: CVCE website. Available at http://www.cvce.eu/obj/address_given_by_helmut_kohl_on_the_outcome_of_the_maastricht_european_council_bonn_13_december_1991-en-12090399-dc71-42ee-8a3d-daf2420c0a9a.html [Accessed on 18 April 2018]
[49] Baun, "The Maastricht Treaty as High Politics.", p. 611.

have been possible to integrate the two rival Germanys under the same roof? In fact, it was quite the opposite: German unity triggered European unity. According to Banchoff, the Kohl government played an instrumental role in this process, as it set European integration as a top priority in its foreign policy agenda[50]; and it did so for a precise reason. Indeed, since the aftermath of World War II, the FRG started developing a strong sense of supranational European identity, which was reinforced by reunification, and which increased German support for economic and political integration at the European level. Banchoff's constructivist approach can therefore explain the continuity of German policy towards the EU, because it introduces the notion of 'identity', which is much more solid than the influence of international and domestic changes advocated by neorealism and neoliberalism. On the contrary, Baun combines federalist and intergovernmentalist arguments to account for German preference for integration, which rested on "fundamental national economic and political interests, as well as the experiences of history". He argues that since the FRG had benefited from the inclusion into international institutions for a long time, it continued to push in that direction to reach economic prosperity and political security; moreover, in light of the anxieties and suspicions expressed by its neighbours, Germany was willing to dispel all the fears related to its reconstituted power. "For these reasons", Baun adds, "[Kohl] viewed Germany's agreement to further EC integration and in particular monetary union as the price that had to be paid for gaining Europe's acceptance of German unification."[51]

1.3.1 *French reaction to German reunification: the question of German commitment to the EC*

Initially, the idea of a unified Germany alarmed the other European countries. They feared that Germany could again relapse into nationalism, regaining its economic and military power and refraining from the European project of integration. France, clearly, was the most concerned with this scenario. As stated by Kaiser, "French public debate as well as government thinking revealed a certain degree of confusion on how to respond to German developments."[52] The first move that outraged Mitterrand and caused his irritation was Kohl's failure to consult the French government about his intention to unify Germany. Caught by surprise and in response to Kohl's plan, France attempted at least to delay the process, inviting several times the Chancellor not to rush on unification, and insisting that EC deepening should come first. Moreover, France raised the unaddressed question (in fact

[50] Thomas Banchoff, "German identity and European integration." *European Journal of International Relations*, Vol. 5 No. 3, 1999, p. 283.
[51] Baun, "The Maastricht Treaty as High Politics.", 610-611.
[52] Karl Kaiser, "Germany's unification." *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 70 No. 1, Council on Foreign Relations, 1990, p. 193.

absent in Kohl's Ten-point plan) of the Polish border with the GDR, stressing its recognition as a prerequisite for reunification[53]. Contrary to what argued by Baun, Bozo claims that "at no time did France try to impede the process: among the thousands of pages of documents stemming from the hundreds of boxes of archives, not a single one can seriously be interpreted as evidence of an attempt to slow down, let alone to obstruct German unification."[54] In March 1990, after the overwhelming victory of the Christian Democrats who supported unity in GDR's first free elections, all European countries realized that reunification would be imminent, and opposition to it would be unrealistic or even counterproductive. From that point on, after the initial tensions, the Franco-German axis gave a positive turn to the events, which will prove vitally important for the road to Maastricht.

France began to develop a new policy toward the now inevitable German reunification, that is, ensure that Germany would be tied and committed to the EC. The 1989-91 *triennium* was seen as the last chance for Europe to integrate a united Germany within a Community of equals. As Kaiser puts it, the best solution to cope with rising German power was the strengthening of European integration[55]. On the French side, binding Germany to the EC served a dual purpose: containing German nationalist sentiment and preventing France from losing its influence and dominant role in Europe. On the German side, Kohl was determined to show his sincere commitment to integration, to finally reassure Europe that Germany was a reliable partner, able to enter the international arena on an equal footing with other countries. For both countries, the EU represented an opportunity not to be missed. In particular, Kohl believed that the EMU project was "key to prevent a reunited Germany from upsetting the European balance."[56] Additionally, he demanded also new initiatives for a political union, which were finally welcomed by France and launched in the IGC (parallel to the one on EMU) taking place in Rome in 1990. Despite the fierce opposition from monetary and financial authorities in Germany, Kohl and Mitterrand eventually agreed on the tracks for negotiations, and presented numerous statements and joint proposals for the completion of the Union. At least according to Arnold[57], French policy turned out to be successful in linking German unification to EC deepening, as it made possible for the Franco-German relationship to survive and reassert itself as the motor of Europe. The practical outcome of this 'renewed friendship' was the Treaty of Maastricht. As Mertes maintains,

[53] Baun, "The Maastricht Treaty as High Politics.", p. 615.
Indeed, article 1(2) of the Two-Plus-Four Treaty provided that Germany and Poland "shall confirm the existing border between them in a treaty that is binding under international law".
[54] Bozo, "Mitterrand's France, the end of the Cold War and German reunification", p. 463.
[55] Kaiser, "Germany's unification.", pp. 186-187.
[56] Mertes, "Helmut Kohl's legacy for Germany.", p. 69.
[57] Eckart Arnold, "German foreign policy and unification." *International Affairs,* Vol. 67 No. 3, 1991, p. 466.

> the Treaty of Maastricht and its EMU project had been the result of a joint Franco-German initiative in the spring of 1990, aimed at making the imminent German reunification acceptable to Germany's neighbors. […] 'Irreversibility,' as Kohl understood it, meant that Germany had to be put on rails she would be unable to jump[58].

Indeed, the supranational architecture, the rules on budgetary discipline and the coordination of national policies would bind EU member states for years to come. The crucial and truly irreversible decision marking the 'point of no return' in European integration would eventually be the introduction of the euro.

[58] Mertes, "Helmut Kohl's legacy for Germany.", pp. 79-80.

Chapter 2. The Maastricht Treaty: a marriage of convenience between France and Germany

2.1 *How to secure French and German national interests?*

In December 1991, the Maastricht European Council agreed to adopt a Treaty on European Union, eventually signed on 7 February 1992. In "Title I - Common Provisions", Article A states as follows:

> This Treaty marks a new stage in the process of creating an ever closer union among the peoples of Europe, in which decisions are taken as closely as possible to the citizen. The Union shall be founded on the European Communities, supplemented by the policies and forms of cooperation established by this Treaty[59].

The "ever closer union" implied the achievement of a monetary union by 1999, to be accessible only to those countries which satisfy the 'convergence criteria'; the "forms of cooperation" were related to the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP), immigration and social and justice affairs. To reduce the 'democratic deficit' and increase the legitimacy of the Community and the accountability of the decision-makers, the Maastricht Treaty has improved participation at three different levels: community institutions (conferring more power to the EP with the introduction of the co-decision procedure), national states (establishing the principle of subsidiarity) and European citizens (creating the Union citizenship)[60]. Nevertheless, all these changes came at a cost for each member state. In order to be eligible for EMU membership, states had to fulfil the required standards of inflation, interest and exchange rates, budget deficit and government debt. Moreover, a European Central Bank would be responsible for price stability and monetary policies once the single currency was adopted. The Maastricht provisions entailed an inevitable loss of power and control by national governments, shifting the decision-making at the supranational and centralized level. Thus, why did the Twelve signatory member states accept these rules? Why did they support the transfer of national sovereignty to European institutions? Clearly, this was not the case for Thatcher's Britain, which was then granted an opt-out to safeguard the country's national currency and economic policy. Conversely, France and Germany decided exactly to approve the Treaty to protect their national interests. As Baun claims, Mitterrand viewed the Treaty as a means of containing German power and independence by binding it to a European structure; Kohl, on the other hand, wanted to dispel other countries' anxieties about

[59] Treaty on European Union (as signed in Maastricht on 7 February 1992), Luxembourg: Office for Official Publications of the European Communities, 1992. Available at https://europa.eu/european-union/sites/europaeu/files/docs/body/treaty_on_european_union_en.pdf [Accessed on 29 April 2018]
[60] Sari KM Laitinen-Rawana, "Creating a Unified Europe: Maastricht and Beyond." *The International Lawyer*, Vol. 28 No. 4, 1994, pp. 975-976.

a united Germany by showing that his goal was not a German Europe, but a European Germany[61]. For this reason, he stressed the need to proceed with a political union that would include widened powers and authority of European institutions. Therefore, France and Germany were in favor of the Maastricht Treaty because they saw it as "a way to preserve the Franco-German partnership amid the altered geopolitical conditions of the New Europe."[62] In addition, both states started to consider the option of 'flexibility': a multi-speed Europe, with France and Germany at the head of core countries, would have guaranteed them a privileged and leading position.

Thus, French and German choice to sign the Maastricht Treaty has been driven by a cost and benefit analysis. In October 1990, the EC Commission itself presented a study on the costs and benefits of forming an economic and monetary union, identifying three strong points at the European level: microeconomic efficiency, macroeconomic stability and equity between countries and regions. It also admitted that the highest costs of EMU would be felt in the early stages, while the main benefits would arise with the introduction of the single currency[63]. At member states' level, each country had to analyse if the EMU alternative was worth it. Following Hall's approach of preference formation, the actor who wishes to pursue his interests should weigh the net costs and benefits of his multiple preferences, selecting the option which he believes would best serve his interests[64]. In this context, the way in which issues were framed takes on particular importance: the French government embraced a European monetary union because it appeared the right means to reaffirm France's place in the continent and in the world, while Germany viewed it as a form of self-regulation. Basically, when the EMU was presented in public opinion and debate as a threat to national sovereignty, states were reluctant to join it (Great Britain is an example); viceversa, when framed as an enrichment, states were ready to support it. Hall also accuses the materialist explanations of governments' preference for monetary union of being inadequate: governmental preferences were not driven by national interests or pressure groups, but by the interpretation and weighing of several economic and geopolitical factors surrounding each country. To prove his thesis, Hall argues that some economic theories work against the entrance in a monetary union, because they emphasized the inability of member states to control monetary policies and their reduced capacities to react to economic fluctuations. Economically, the EMU did not offer significant advantages; by contrast, it brought some drawbacks and dangers. Similarly, pressure group theories are contradicted by the fact that their

[61] Michael J. Baun, *An imperfect Union: The Maastricht Treaty and the new politics of European integration*. Routledge, New York 2018, p. 5.
[62] *Ibidem*.
[63] EC Commission, "One market, one money." *European Economy,* No. 44, 1990, pp. 9-12.
[64] Peter A. Hall, "Preference formation as a political process. The case of Monetary Union in Europe" in *Preferences and Situations: Points of Intersection between Historical and Rational Choice Institutionalism*, ed. Ira Katznelson, and Barry R. Weingast, Russel Sage Foundation, 2005, p. 132.

predictions do not correspond to the reality: in Germany, some sectors expected to be disadvantaged by monetary union supported it, while in Britain sectors likely to benefit did not endorse it[65]. Therefore, member states' decision to establish and enter the EMU by signing and ratifying the Maastricht Treaty was highly complex, influenced by numerous and sometimes divergent elements. States' preference formation, as Hall maintains, is an 'eventful process', because it is triggered by the unfolding of circumstances. Writing in the summer of 1993, even before the entry into force of the Maastricht Treaty, the American economist Martin Feldstein was sceptic about its consequences, because he maintained that economic benefits would have been small compared to the political sacrifice of national sovereignty. The right balance between economic and political factors represented the decisive point on which the future evolution of Europe would have been dependent. Feldstein also questioned the new European leadership, stating that next generations of European political leaders "will not have the same personal commitment to the Maastricht treaty and to the goal of European monetary and political union as did Mitterrand and Kohl."[66]

The starting point of French and German preferences, dating back to the 1980-86 period, is illustrated in Table 3[67]. The earlier 1970s economic crisis and the spectacular geopolitical developments of the late 1980s (the collapse of communism and German reunification) acted as a catalyst for the shifting of countries' preferences and interpretations of reality. The next subsections will thus explore French and German analysis of the pros and cons of Maastricht's fundamental innovations, and how states' preferences ended up converging.

[65] *Ibidem*, pp. 138-139.
[66] Martin Feldstein, "Why Maastricht will fail." *The National Interest*, No. 32, 1993, p. 14.
[67] Source: Moravcsik, "Negotiating the Single European Act", p. 28.

Table 3

Reform	*Germany*	*France*
Strengthening monetary coordination	Opposed, at least until capital flows are liberalized	In favor; advocates moving toward a European central bank
Strengthening political and defense cooperation	Opposed; advocates codifying current cooperation	In favor of creating the position of Secretariat-General; opposed to extending defense cooperation
Instituting procedural reform in EC decision-making institutions	In favor of revising the treaty to strengthen Parliament's role; opposed to the Luxembourg compromise; in favor of more majority voting	In favor of revising the treaty or drafting a new treaty to allow for "variable geometry" programs; after 1984, opposed to strengthening Parliament's role, opposed to the Luxembourg compromise, and in favor of more majority voting
Liberalizing the internal market	In favor in principle	Opposed at first; after 1983, increasingly in favor

2.1.2 *France and Europe: costs and benefits*

As it has already been noted, Mitterrand's France was convinced that Europe would provide a safe roof for its fears. Again, the national interests behind French devotion to monetary union reflected the goal of offsetting German potential in Europe, both in economic and geopolitical terms. From an economic point of view, French commitment to trade liberalization was combined with the will to put an end to German domination in monetary affairs. Under the EMS, the Deutsche Mark (DM) has always been stronger than the French franc, and the independent Bundesbank played its part in leading the system and maintaining a stable national economy. Therefore, a monetary union was preferable to the DM's domination in the EMS, and a supranational ECB was desirable instead of the German central bank. The EMU convergence criteria, although constraining economic policies far more than the EMS, would legitimize French austerity policies and help the government to reform

the welfare state[68]. In sum, a Single Market and a single currency would have benefited French economy and laid the foundations for the creation of a European superpower able to compete with the United States. Indeed, in the 1980s and 1990s, the French debate on EMU revolved around the belief that the new currency would dismantle American sovereignty of the international monetary system. Moreover, by agreeing to further integration and coordination, France would have continued to profit from the CAP, which had been at the core of French commitment to the EEC since its establishment. Hall highlights also the importance of the timing of the events: "if the French government had not committed itself to a European strategy in the 1980s and deepened it by agreeing to the SEA, its response to subsequent tensions within the EMS might have been to withdraw rather than seek monetary union."[69] What happened in the French case was a 'reconfiguration' of the government's preferences for European integration, stemming from the failed *dirigiste* policy of the Socialist administration from 1980 to 1983[70]. From a geopolitical standpoint, in addition to stabilising Franco-German relations, the creation of the EU was believed to restore French position in the European and international arena. In the past, France's status as a great power was based on its large size and population, its strong army and its colonial empire second only to the British. From the 1950s, France had only a permanent seat on the UN Security Council[71] and a small nuclear arsenal. Knapp and Wright grasped the situation with these words:

> Europe offered France what de Gaulle called a 'lever of Archimedes'. With Britain turned, until the early 1960s, largely towards its Atlantic and Commonwealth relationships, Germany both divided and diplomatically disabled by the legacy of World War II, and Italy too disorganised and the Benelux countries too small to aspire seriously to a leading role, the diplomatic leadership of Europe was France's for the taking[72].

Mitterrand, supporter of the European project for its own sake, seemed to not consider the disadvantages and difficulties of entering such a Union. French economic and institutional traditions were the very opposite of Europeans': a protectionist and dirigiste economy would have to open up to free trade, and the Jacobin model of a hierarchical and unitary state would have to accept a set of interdependent institutions, interest groups' activity and political compromises. Indifferent to these changes, the French President accelerated the pace of the monetary union, backing the committee of central bankers presided over by Delors and, as the prospect of German reunification came closer,

[68] Thomas Risse, "To Euro or Not to Euro? The EMU and Identity Politics in the European Union", *ARENA Working Papers*, 1998/1, European University Institute. Available at http://www.sv.uio.no/arena/english/research/publications/arena-working-papers/1994-2000/1998/wp98_1.htm#Note19 Accessed on May 15, 2018.
[69] Hall, "Preference formation as a political process.", p. 145.
[70] *Ibidem*, p. 153.
[71] Incidentally, in 1992 Germany called for a permanent Security Council seat, along with Japan.
[72] Knapp and Wright, "France and European Integration", p. 435.

pressing Kohl to convene an IGC as soon as possible. The renewed 'German question' translated into the problem of 'taming Germany', which France was now ready to solve[73]. Therefore, France opted for the EU and EMU almost without hesitation and opposition. However, when the Maastricht Treaty was to be ratified with a national referendum in 1992, while some people started to develop a sense of European identity partly instilled in them by Mitterrand, other Eurosceptic voices made themselves heard. This cleavage became evident in the result of the referendum on the Maastricht Treaty, which will be dealt with later in this Chapter.

2.1.3 *Germany and Europe: costs and benefits*

German support for the EMU was so evident just as its fierce opposition. For Germany, EMU membership would have meant the possibility to regain its international influence, rebuild itself politically and economically, and reaffirm Franco-German leadership in Europe. However, the D-mark and Bundesbank's defenders, frightened by the idea of inflation, were reluctant to expose the country to the threat of a supranational institution. If in France the critical moment was the ratification process, in Germany it was the pre-negotiation of the Treaty, in which the different views of the government, monetary and financial institutions, political parties and public opinion collided in order to draw attention to either costs or benefits. The decision about whether or not to join was based on both economic and political concerns. From an economic perspective, Germany was interested in a mechanism providing fixed exchange rates such as EMU, because it would have lowered risks and transaction costs, increasing the competitiveness of the German export-oriented and low-inflation economy. The counterarguments focused on the strength of the DM (the symbol of the post-war German sovereignty) and the vital role of the Bundesbank. As for the DM, Thomas Risse has stated that "Germany has more to lose from monetary union than any other country."[74] According to him, a common currency was not essential for Germany, since the DM was already predominant in the EMS and under Bundesbank's supervision; for the German industry, economic benefits were not very significant. On the contrary, German business groups emphasized the risk of inflation by joining the monetary union. On this point, the Bundesbank began a vigorous campaign against EMU. As early as 1987, when the Franco-German Council for Economics and Finance was instituted, the German central bank had expressed its complete independence from the Council's tasks, stressing the 'consultative', rather than 'decisional', character of the organ. The point was that the Economic and Financial Council could effectively take decisions aimed at coordinating and harmonizing Franco-

[73] See Peter J. Katzenstein, ed. *Tamed Power: Germany in Europe*. Cornell University Press, New York 1997.
[74] Risse, "To Euro or Not to Euro?".

German policies, but for the president of the German Bundesbank, they were not considered as binding. As Krotz specifies, "due to the legal status of the Bundesbank within the German political system, neither the French or German ministers, nor the German chancellor as head of government, has the means to demand the acceptance or implementation of joint decisions or policies, or otherwise to discipline the Bundesbank."[75] Furthermore, before the creation of the EMU, the Bundesbank insisted that greater economic convergence among EC countries should come first. In practice, this meant that states had to align with German standards of interest rates, inflation and budget deficits. Since this process of adjustment would take time, the Bundesbank refused to set a precise timetable for EMU stages, or at least tried to delay the plan. At most, it could accept that, gradually, countries joined the union once they had complied with the convergence criteria, introducing the notion of a multi-speed community. Bulmer and Paterson have underlined that Kohl's project became increasingly difficult: it was unlikely that "he could push EMU through against a lukewarm Bundesbank."[76] Along with the latter's demands, also the German financial elite pressed for strict and binding rules and sanctions in case of violations of the Treaty's budgetary obligations, to ensure that all countries would respect the same economic rules. And finally, even German people were divided between those favouring the EMU and those against it. As James Sloam has shown in his study, "opposition to the single currency rose markedly in Germany between 1990 and 1993, from 27% to 58%. Looking more deeply at public opinion, one can see that opposition was aimed specifically at currency union and rather than the Treaty itself."[77]

When considering political concerns for entering the Union, several arguments were put forward. The hegemonic stability theory provides confusing explanations[78]: the EMU could be seen either as a vehicle for reaching (Franco) German hegemony in Europe, or as a way to dispel the negative image of German hegemonic power in the EMS. For his part, Kohl sought a 'third way' between these two alternatives: he carefully tried to reconcile German interests within the framework of European integration, and specifically of Franco-German relation. Femke Van Esch, in his brilliant article *Why Germany wanted EMU*, describes Kohl's hesitation on the monetary union as a "hard choice between political tactics – maintaining party and electoral support and avoiding a clash with the mighty Bundesbank – and his pro-European convictions."[79] The author then investigates Germany's 'Janus-face', which comes from two opposite strands of German collective history: the ordo-liberal idea of

[75] Krotz, *Structure as Processes*, p. 20.
[76] Bulmer and Paterson. "Germany in the European Union", p. 22.
[77] James Sloam, *The European policy of the German Social Democrats: interpreting a changing world*. Palgrave Macmillan, Basingstoke 2005, p. 132.
[78] Femke Van Esch, "Why Germany Wanted EMU: The Role of Helmut Kohl's Belief System and the Fall of the Berlin Wall." *German Politics*, Vol. 21 No. 1, Routledge, 2012, pp. 35-36.
[79] *Ibidem*, pp. 37-39.

'sound' economics and the image of the country as a 'good European'. The first belief was influenced by the traumatic experience of hyperinflation between the two World Wars, which caused not only widespread poverty, but also the rise of the Nazi party which exploited the critical situation to seize power. Hence, after the Second World War, German obsession with inflation translated in a strong DM and Bundesbank, which together were associated with stability and prosperity. In sum, the 'Deutsche Mark Patriotism' prioritized the economic goals of European integration, and stressed the need for the ECB to be modelled on the example of the Bundesbank. The second element of German collective memory was related to the Nazi regime's isolation and unreliability, which disseminated the image of Germany as a 'bad' country. Conscious that Europe would represent the sole symbol of peace and democracy, Adenauer pursued a policy of reconstruction (of the German country and peoples) and reconciliation (with France). This 'Europatriotism', rooted in the concept of identity politics and opposed to German nationalism and militarism, favoured the political goals of European integration, and began to conflict with DM Patriotism, which instead suggested the strict adherence to the convergence criteria. Van Esch concludes that the critical juncture of 1989 allowed Kohl to fully embrace the Europatriotic vision, agreeing to the EMU and restoring German position in the region. As Kohl himself declared during his address to the Bundestag in 1991,

> There is no going back on the road to European Union. As they face the future, the Member States of the European Community are now bound together in such a way that neither disintegration nor regression into the old nation-state mindset, with all its negative consequences, can be an option. This means that we have realised a core aim of Germany's European policy. Maastricht proves that the united Germany is actively taking responsibility in and for Europe[80].

2.2 *The Treaty as a compromise between the two states: Franco-German cooperation on "high politics"*

At the negotiating table at Maastricht, but also during the pre-negotiation phase, France and Germany engaged in cooperative discussions on EMU and political union. At first, their claims and preferences were conflicting, but they eventually converged resulting in the most important compromise that would change the history of Europe. Indeed, contrary to what other theories maintain, the intergovernmental institutionalist explanation of the Maastricht Treaty stresses the relevance of the largest member states' preferences and the national governments' capacity to amalgamate them through the 'art of bargaining'. Therefore, viewed from this perspective, France and Germany and their political leaders acted as pivotal actors, able to influence the course of the IGCs' decision making

[80] Kohl speech, Bonn, 13 December 1991.

and balance their demands with other concessions[81]. Consequently, while giving birth to a new multilateral structure, Maastricht also crowned Franco-German cooperation in that European context.

At the heart of this argument lies Moravcsik's conception of intergovernmental institutionalism, which justifies the success of the 1992 momentum with the ability of heads of governments to reach interstate bargains. This approach is based on the three principles of intergovernmentalism (by which heads of governments or ministers of the leading states sought to pursue domestic interests through a supranational strategy), lowest-common-denominator bargaining (implying that larger states may veto decisions and buy off smaller states) and protection of sovereignty (exemplified by the slight extension of majority voting due to the permanent concern of sacrificing national sovereignty)[82]. These assumptions reflect the 'modified structural realism' theorized by Kehoane, focused on states' relative power, but with an important addition: states' interests change over time, depending on different factors such as national governments, political parties, economic policies and the rise of new ideologies. According to this standpoint, the SEA and the Maastricht Treaty were the outcome of a bilateral accord between France and Germany, as already happened with the ECSC and EEC. While recognising the effective importance of these two states in the process of European integration, Colette Mazzucelli harshly criticized Moravcsik's intergovernmental perspective and developed her own interpretation of the Treaty process, emphasizing that no traditional approach can account for the extraordinary events of the Maastricht era. In her book *France and Germany at Maastricht*, she shows that the IGC processes which led to the SEA and the TEU were completely different from those which created the ECSC, EEC and EURATOM. If the latter can be explained by intergovernmentalism, the former were the results of a *sui generis* IGC process[83]. The outcomes of the two IGCs were the reflection of the hard work and strong commitment of states' political leaders, ministers, civil servants and bankers, some of which were also key figures in the domestic ratification process of member states. Mazzucelli concludes that all levels of negotiation (and not just ministers and heads of governments) were involved in the process of decision making, which thus became 'collective'; hence, her emphasis on the role of national civil servants and their cooperative attitude.

Furthermore, Douglas Webber questioned why large states (France and Germany) exercised an effective impact in an IGC where each state was formally equal and had the same veto power[84]. A possible answer could be the following: in addition to large states' essential presence for the creation

[81] See Baun, "The Maastricht Treaty as High Politics" and Moravcsik, "Negotiating the SEA".
[82] Moravcsik, "Negotiating the Single European Act", pp. 25-27.
[83] Colette Mazzucelli, *France and Germany at Maastricht: politics and negotiations to create the European Union*. Taylor & Francis e-Library, 2002, p. 5.
[84] Douglas Webber, Introduction to *The Franco-German Relationship in the European Union*. Routledge, London 2005, p. 5.

of successful coalitions, the authority of France and Germany was supported by the fact that there were no significant episodes in which smaller states made or vetoed a proposal. Instead, the Benelux countries, partly dependent on their neighbours' economies, were often seen as allies for boosting European integration, while southern countries were assured side payments to back the project. It is necessary to point out that Britain played an active role during the negotiations, but primarily because it was threatened with exclusion: even if it seems contradictory, France and Germany managed to isolate Britain in order to include it in the European framework. For the purpose of this dissertation, British attitude will not be analysed, and attention will be focused on Franco-German inputs during the IGCs to discuss the EMU. In particular, integrating Mazzucelli and Moravcsik's approaches proves to be extremely useful and exhaustive: while the prenegotiation phase was carried out with the help of civil servants and other officials at a low level of the decisional structure, the negotiation within the European Council was characterized by a great degree of intergovernmental decision making, especially because the issues at stake were part of the so-called "high politics". Indeed, the distinction between 'high politics' (which concerns vital national interests such as security, defense and foreign policy) and 'low politics' (including economic, social and domestic policy in general) developed by Stanley Hoffman suggests that national governments are willing to retain authority and control over decision processes about the essential interests of the state[85]. For this reason, the Maastricht negotiation within the European Council can be basically seen as a political trade-off between the leaders of the two largest states in Europe.

2.2.1 *Prenegotiation and internal bargain*

As recalled by Mazzucelli, the term 'prenegotiation' indicates the situation in which the actors, starting from divergent and unilateral positions, attempt to find a joint solution for a common problem[86]. In the EMU case, the very first prenegotiation phase began with the work of the Delors Committee and intensified in 1989-90 with the launch of the parallel IGC on political union. From the outset, France and Germany understood that compromising would have been the only way not to halt the momentum for European integration. At this stage, bargaining was simultaneously required at two different levels: internally among domestic actors and externally among international actors. Mazzucelli applies Robert Putnam's two-level games approach to Maastricht prenegotiation, arguing

[85] Teodor Lucian, Moga, "The contribution of the neofunctionalist and intergovernmentalist Theories to the evolution of the European integration process." *Journal of alternative perspectives in the social sciences,* Vol. 1 No. 3, 2009, pp. 800-801.
[86] Mazzucelli, *France and Germany at Maastricht*, p. 57.

that the consent of domestic constituents was influential not only for the signing of any international treaty, but also for its ratification at the national level. For instance, while Mitterrand was more autonomous in his decisions, the Kohl government was accountable for its actions to the Bundesrat (dominated by the Social Democratic Party, or SPD), the Bundestag and the powerful Bundesbank, which tried to dictate the rules of the monetary and budgetary policies. In the context of the IGCs on EMU, Putnam's approach proves to be highly relevant because it aims at analysing both the preferences of national actors (and domestic politics in general, in which civil servants play a significant role) and the multilateral negotiations occurring in the international sphere (in particular within the European Council, in which political leaders are the key figures of decision making)[87]. During prenegotiation between France and Germany, much of the work was done by the personal representatives of foreign and finance ministers, who met regularly to discuss the treaty reforms and shape the agenda through the daily preparation of dossiers on both economic and political issues. Importantly, Mazzucelli points out that even if the essential decisions were taken by the European Council, composed of the highest level and democratically elected leaders in member states, the Treaty text debated by these leaders was mostly written by civil servants with limited decision making; this testified that unelected diplomats had a considerable degree of political influence in the entire Treaty-making process[88]. This aspect is also central to the *policy network* approach to EU politics, which distinguishes between the 'high politics' represented by the intergovernmental European Council meetings, and the 'low politics' related to the everyday policy-making activity, whose character is

> functionally segmented, decentralised, bureaucratic and technically rather than politically oriented. At this level, national governments may be far from being unitary actors. Rather, the different parts of national administrations are more like 'quasi autonomous actors with their own goals', which may conflict with those of other actors from the same state[89].

Indeed, French and German civil servants were directly involved in many activities throughout the process, sometimes as mediators and sometimes as independent actors. At the French official level, Pierre de Boissieu (the personal representative of the Foreign Minister Roland Dumas) and Jean-Claude Trichet (the Finance Minister's representative) were responsible for communicating the outcomes of the talks in the European institutions to the French administration, to make sure that the domestic bargaining was in line with what was happening in Brussels. The German counterparts were Horst Köhler (as State secretary, he was the personal representative of Kohl and chief negotiator at Maastricht) and Jürgen Trumpf (as personal representative of the Foreign Minister Genscher, he was

[87] *Ibidem*, p. 16.
[88] *Ibidem*, p. 165.
[89] Webber, *The Franco-German Relationship in the European Union*, pp. 7-8.

the Ambassador at the German Permanent Representation to the European Communities). The relationship between the two representatives of the Foreign Ministers, de Boissieu and Trumpf, was particularly important for the CFSP progress, since their cooperation facilitated compromises both at the internal and external level. With these interlocking European and national decision-making levels, the 'special partnership' between France and Germany was already evident in the prenegotiation. The two countries, however, prioritized different items on their agenda: the former was concerned with the rapid transition to EMU, the strengthening of the powers of the European Council (which would include unanimity on CFSP matters) and the creation of a European social and industrial policy, while the latter emphasized the link between economic and political union (the strategy of *Parallelität*), the extension of EP powers and the need for majority voting on CFSP. Another controversial point concerned the implementation of monetary policy: which institution should be responsible between the ECB and the Economic and Financial Affairs Council (ECOFIN)? An agreement was eventually reached during the actual negotiation at Maastricht. Indeed, while civil servants and central bankers were entrusted with preparing an accurate EMU dossier in the pre-negotiation phase, it was heads of state and government's responsibility to make a final political judgment on the decisive questions. All decisions concerning the most important goals of French and German European policies were discussed by the European Council in the Maastricht negotiation in December 1991. During the prenegotiation, the economic goals of 'low politics' were accomplished, while the political goals comprised in 'high politics' had to be addressed by an intergovernmental structure. This division shows the enormous complexity of the IGC agenda, due to the "tremendous ambition to include EMU as part of a larger whole, European political union, and the reluctance to reconcile state sovereignty with Community interest in the quest for political union."[90]

2.2.2 *Negotiation at the European Council*

On 9-10 December 1991 the negotiation of the Maastricht European Council took place. The subjects under debate fell into the realm of the so-called 'high politics', on which states are less willing to compromise because of the difficulty in identifying a common good from which mutual benefits can be gained[91]. Therefore, 'high politics' areas are less vertically and horizontally integrated than 'low politics' areas, and small and weak countries are more likely to be integrated than large and powerful

[90] *Ibidem*, p. 94.
[91] Sangiovanni, *Debates on European integration*, p. 99.

countries[92]. If this is assumption is true, then, how did the integration process move forward during the Maastricht negotiation? Why did French and German national preferences eventually converge? In addition to the power of national leaders (analysed in sections 1.2 and 1.3) and the relevance of domestic interests (analysed in sections 2.1.2 and 2.1.3), several other explanations are possible in order to justify the exceptional circumstances under which the Treaty was designed:

- the autonomy of political leaders: this argument, advanced by Moravcsik[93], points to the leaders' independence from national bureaucracies, interest groups and political parties. Even if Kohl had some institutional obligations at least toward the Bundestag, he had already announced his political autonomy when he presented his Ten-point plan. Especially on European affairs, he then began to exclude other political actors outside his entourage from the decision making – what Ashoka Mody has defined the 'imperial chancellorship' style[94]. For his part, Mitterrand was free to conduct his diplomacy as he pleased. The French state, as highly centralized and 'hierarchical', allowed him and his closest and loyal associates to control the entire IGC process. The key decisions in France were taken by the same few personalities during general meetings: Mitterrand, the minister of foreign affairs Dumas, the minister for European affairs Elisabeth Guigou, the minister of economy and finance Pierre Bérégovoy (appointed Prime Minister in 1992) at the political level, and Trichet and de Boissieu at the administrative level. However, the French President remained the main protagonist throughout the negotiation, just as the German Chancellor. This characteristic was often regarded as an indicator that the European project was elitist;

- centrist parties' support: traditionally, the parties located at the extremes of the political spectrum were opposed to strengthen EC integration, either because they were anti-liberalization or because they were unwilling to cede sovereignty to supranational institutions. From the mid-1980s, however, the prevalence of centrist coalitions (especially the Christian Democrats) provided a strong impetus to EC reforms, because of their commitment to economic liberalization. Therefore, leaders, backed by parties' favourable position, were able to move forward the integration process;

- national economic failure: the bad performance of national economies and the ineffective economic policies had undoubtedly raised the pressure for economic coordination at the European level[95]. European liberalization can therefore be seen as a reaction to the decline of competitiveness of member states' industries, high unemployment rates and slow growth. This aspect can be connected

[92] Dirk Leuffen, Berthold Rittberger, and Frank Schimmelfennig. *Differentiated integration: Explaining variation in the European Union*. Palgrave Macmillan, 2013, p. 55.
[93] Moravcsik, "Negotiating the SEA", p. 50.
[94] Ashoka Mody, *Eurotragedy: A Drama in Nine Acts*. Oxford University Press, New York 2018, p. 80.
[95] Moravcsik, "Negotiating the SEA", p. 53.

also to an electoral strategy, because politicians, eager to provide stable economic growth in order to be successfully supported and re-elected, promoted investments which in turn would be boosted by the removal of trade barriers. Furthermore, the internal market was perceived as a tool to increase competition vis-à-vis other countries outside the EC, notably the United States and Japan;

- the ineffective role of non-state actors: since the mechanism underpinning the Maastricht process was more political than technical, transnational business groups and lobbies had almost no influence on the choice of policies. Those who were called to actively intervene to shape the course of events were the heads of state and non-technocratic individuals. As Moravcsik claims, "business, at least on the supranational level, was mobilized by the emerging interstate consensus for reform, rather than the reverse"[96]. The author questions also the role of international leaders such as the Commission President Delors, who acted not according to his personal convictions but because he was constrained by intergovernmental pressures. By contrast, Mazzucelli emphasizes the importance of Delors' role, which was the only exception to the rule of politicians' presence at Maastricht. Indeed, he was highly involved in the discussion of public interests' issues, such as EMU and social policy, and of foreign affairs at European Council meetings. Therefore, he showed his commitment to contribute to the bargaining process of both low and high politics, transcending his role as a technocrat and elevating the status of the Commission[97];

Having examined the factors that have led national preferences to converge, it is now possible to investigate how and on what France and Germany had to compromise during the European Council negotiation. The latest decisions to be taken concerned the final transition of EMU, the CFSP, Justice and Home Affairs, the power of the EP and the competences of the Union. On each point, despite the participation of all member states, Kohl and Mitterrand were able to tip the balance in a positive way, avoiding deadlocks in decision-making.

2.2.2.1 *Economic and Monetary Affairs*

On EMU issues, European countries were basically divided in two underlying blocs: 'monetarists' and 'economists'. The first advocated for the immediate creation of institutions capable of enforcing rules and deadlines in order to coordinate economic policies and the pre-existent single currency; the latter claimed that, since economic convergence should come before the setting up of institutions, the single currency would come as the final step of a long process. The monetarist approach was followed

[96] *Ibidem*, p. 48.
[97] Mazzucelli, *France and Germany at Maastricht*, pp. 199-200.

by France, while Germany strongly supported the economist strand. These contrasting lines of thought permeates the EMU debate throughout the Maastricht negotiations, and represented the ground on which countries shifted their positions in order to reformulate their preferences and secure the final agreement. The very first move from the economic to the monetarist bloc was made by Kohl, who abandoned his idea that monetary union should come after political union; instead, he understood that it was necessary to proceed with the former in order to create the momentum for political unity[98].

The cornerstone of the Maastricht Treaty was the achievement of full monetary union by the end of the 1990s. Accordingly, since the first stage involving the abolition of restrictions to capital movements had begun in July 1990, two other stages were envisaged and firmly established: the second stage would begin on 1 January 1994 with the creation of the European Monetary Institute, while the date of the third stage would have to be set depending on the number of member states fulfilling the economic criteria. Article 109j(4) of the Treaty provided that if by the end of 1997 the date for the third stage had not been laid down, this final stage would have started automatically on 1 January 1999. In the beginning, France and Germany did not agree on the specific timeframe for the second stage: France proposed 1 January 1993, while Germany, influenced by Bundesbank's reluctance to set dates, was not in favor of binding deadlines. Eventually, Kohl and Mitterrand reached an agreement and decided that exactly one year after would have been a fair compromise. As noted by Mazzucelli, "the acceptance of 1 January 1994 as the date to start Stage Two was a triumph of politicians over technical experts, a demonstration of the European Council's predominance over the ECOFIN, and a clear indicator of the strength of the Bonn-Paris-Brussels triangle."[99]

Another controversial issue during negotiation was related to economic convergence, in particular budgetary discipline. The Bundesbank's President Karl Otto Pöhl viewed greater convergence as a prerequisite for the introduction of the single currency, and his successor Helmut Schlesinger insisted on strict budget control and sanctions in case of non-compliance. Consequently, the Germans proposed the 'golden rule', according to which governments could run budget deficits only to fund investments which would benefit future generations. This rule appeared too difficult to be implemented and could also be misunderstood. As a response, the French suggested another simpler rule: a public deficit limited to 3% of GDP. Mitterrand had already used this limit in the 1980s for the French national fiscal policy, and was now convinced that it could satisfy all member states' demands. Moreover, the Germans required protection against 'excessive' budget deficits, mainly in two ways. First of all, they demanded the imposition of financial sanctions to countries which did not

[98] Mody, *Eurotragedy*, p. 91.
[99] Mazzucelli, *France and Germany at Maastricht*, p. 80.

respect the rules. However, those fines were perceived as aggravating the situations of poorest member states. Secondly, the Germans were obsessed with the fear of other countries' debts. Kohl, his government and the public opinion made it clear that Germany had no intention to pay the bills of undisciplined member states: German tax revenues would be destined only to German people. Indeed, a confused solution was reached. The Maastricht Treaty provided for a 'no bail-out clause', which laid down that one country could not repay another member state's debt, implying that losses would be shouldered only by creditors[100]. To complement the rule on budget deficits, another provision was added: a debt-to-GDP ratio tending to 60 percent. With the establishment of these constraints, Germany basically obtained what it was fighting for. Mitterrand, then, shifted from the 'monetarist' position to the 'economic' one. If Kohl had won the first 'battle of ideas' by gently forcing the French to compromise on budgetary discipline, he nonetheless had to surrender when it came to setting a definite date for the transition to Stage three (the introduction of the euro). As usual, Germany was against the establishment of a binding timeframe, because it was particularly concerned with the requirements to move to the final stage and the consequent number of countries accessing to the single currency. Mitterrand, sharing Kohl's belief that the transition should be irreversible, proposed to fix the early 1999 as the beginning of the third stage, implying also the idea of a two-speed EMU: as Mazzucelli points out, "this procedure made it easier for Kohl to argue that a key concern of the Bundesbank had been met: namely, that not all states were likely to be ready for EMU at once."[101] Therefore, the German Chancellor eventually agreed to establish 1 January 1999 as the date for Stage three for those countries fulfilling the economic criteria enshrined in the Treaty. Kohl's decision was a big surprise at the negotiation, and as such was met with astonishment by German officials, including Köhler[102]. Hence, the discussion about the EMU was solved by both countries' concessions and successful bargaining, which focused on accepting the lowest common denominator.

2.2.2.2 *Political affairs*

Institutional changes and the development of a CFSP were at the core of the debate on political union. French and German diplomacy had different priorities: the strengthening of either the European Council or the European Parliament, the creation of a Committee of the Region or the greater involvement of national parliaments, the extension of Community competences or the intergovernmental character of judicial and police affairs. The proposal to cooperate in Justice and

[100] Mody, *Eurotragedy*, p. 86.
[101] Mazzucelli, *France and Germany at Maastricht*, p. 177.
[102] Mody, *Eurotragedy*, p. 94.

Home Affairs (JHA) was put forward by Kohl, who was worried about immigration and crime once the internal borders were opened. The discussion on CFSP instead was based on the February 1991 Genscher-Dumas paper, which called for a European foreign and defense policy and the integration of the Western European Union (WEU) into the EU. The two foreign ministers urged for a common security component especially after the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait of the previous year, but reconciling a European defense identity with the Atlantic Alliance proved to be rather difficult[103]. France and Germany even proposed to develop Franco-German corps as the basis for a European army, hoping to strengthen their joint position on CFSP negotiation. This time, the two countries shared the same view, along with Belgium, Luxembourg and Greece, alternative to that of Britain, the Netherlands, Denmark and Portugal: a 'common defense' opposed to a 'common defense policy'. Ultimately, the Maastricht Treaty incorporated both options, as article J. 4(1) stated that the CFSP "shall include all questions related to the security of the Union, including the eventual framing of a common defence policy, which might in time lead to a common defence." Moreover, France and Germany agreed about the intergovernmental character of the CFSP (as well as that of JHA). The second pillar was to be administered by the European Council or the Council of Ministers of Foreign Affairs, which could define 'common positions' and 'joint actions'. The cleavage on the voting procedures of the Council soon became apparent: Britain insisted on unanimity, while France and Germany favoured qualified majority. The 'Declaration on voting in the fields of CFSP' annexed to the Treaty provided that when Council decisions require unanimity, member states will "avoid preventing a unanimous decision where a qualified majority exists in favour of that decision".

In order to increase democratic supranationalism, Kohl pressed for giving the EP more powers with the introduction of the co-decision procedure, supported by a general consensus in the Bundestag. Genscher also demanded a clear definition of the principle of subsidiarity in order to make it acceptable by the Bundesrat, which had threatened to reject any treaty disrespecting the exclusive competences of the national state. Here, Mitterrand demonstrated a clever comprehension of Germany's domestic situation, supporting German demand even if he could have benefited from a vague interpretation of subsidiarity[104]. This Franco-German solidarity was recurring during the Maastricht Council, and was the key to the successful conclusion of the negotiation. Indeed, Kohl and Mitterrand combined their forces and strategies to coordinate a joint action and to accept trade-offs; similarly, they also shoulder the responsibility of the ratification process.

[103] This controversy was addressed in the 'Declaration on the role of the Western European Union and its relations with the European Union and with the Atlantic Alliance', which stated (in para. 2) that "WEU will be developed as the defence component of the European Union and as a means to strengthen the European pillar of the Atlantic Alliance."
[104] The French state was highly centralized and its regions were rather weak, especially compared to German Länder.

On 7 February 1992, French and German representatives signed the Maastricht Treaty, which, in order to enter into force, had to be ratified by all contracting parties in accordance with national constitutional requirements. However, the ratification process turned out to be more difficult than expected, postponing the Treaty's entry into force on 1 November 1993.

2.3 *The challenge of the ratification processes: Maastricht's success or failure?*

A comprehensive historical assessment of the Maastricht Treaty would require an accurate (and lengthy) analysis of the outcomes resulting from its provisions. Since this is not the primary focus of this section, it will be sufficient to admit that the Treaty was not perfect, as showed by the subsequent substantial amendments with the treaties of Amsterdam (1999), Nice (2003) and Lisbon (2009). On the contrary, it contained a number of deficiencies which were undoubtedly taken into considerations by those member states whose ratification process was more complicated. Among the major shortcomings of the Treaty, the lack of political accountability of both the Commission and the Council (whose powers were exacerbated by more majority voting) was particularly important, along with the still limited role of the EP, which was not yet given the authority to actively govern and scrutinize other institutions' work; another weakness can be identified in the absence of a bill of rights[105]. Moreover, according to professor Michael Burgess, the Treaty was "neither coherent nor symmetrical", since the circumstances under which it was agreed were still influenced by the 'old' world order, making it "the last treaty of the Cold war"[106]. The author built on the interpretation of Roy Pryce, who stated that the Treaty was "conceived in a continent still divided into rival political and economic systems, and launched on a wave of great optimism about the European Community"[107]. However, the euphoria associated with the signing of the treaty vanished at the moment of ratification, when some countries, notably Denmark, France and Britain, were the scene of a tumultuous and controversial debate on the TEU. Leaving aside the Danish rejection of the Treaty and the British opt-outs, the ratification processes in France and Germany were completely different. While the French referendum risked a negative result, the German public was divided between pro-European elites and popular scepticism. Before exploring each country's debate, it is worth pointing out that Franco-German cooperation persisted even during the ratification process: showing once again the political and symbolic attachment to the Treaty, both governments collaborated with each

[105] Laitinen-Rawana, "Creating a Unified Europe.", pp. 982, 991.
[106] Michael Burgess, *Federalism and the European Union: the building of Europe, 1950-2000*. Routledge, London 2002, p. 212.
[107] Andrew Duff, John Pinder, and Roy Pryce, eds. *Maastricht and Beyond: Building a European Union*. Routledge, 2002, p. 3.

other in order to assure that the Treaty would survive. A striking example is Kohl's willingness to help Mitterrand during the heated debate in France and to support the French franc during the exchange-rate crises of 1992 and 1993[108].

On 22 September 1992, France expressed its "petit oui" at the referendum for the ratification of the Maastricht Treaty, with 51.05% of the vote in favour and 48.95% against[109]. The result was rather surprising, since polls had displayed a large support by the French electorate and Mitterrand himself was rather confident that the referendum would generate a positive outcome. Before being submitted to the public, the Maastricht Treaty had to be examined by the French Constitutional Council, to verify the compatibility with the 1958 Constitution. The revision questioned three articles (related to the Union's citizenship, the EMU provisions and the visa policy on immigration) which were suspected of infringing national sovereignty and identity; consequently, the Constitution had to be amended. In June 1992, the amendment bill was finally approved by the National Assembly and the Senate convened in Congress. At that point, ratification could have happened with a three-fifth majority of parliamentary vote; Mitterrand, however, announced his decision to hold a popular referendum. The reasons behind this choice were manifold. In the wake of the Danish rejection of the Treaty on 2 June, which could have hindered the process of European integration, the President thought that a French positive outcome would 'relegitimise' Europe domestically and internationally[110], reducing also the 'democratic deficit' by allowing people to express their position on such important changes. In fact, the French electorate had never had the opportunity to give its views on Europe. However, it should be noted that the reason of this 'public silence' lies in the French pyramidal authority structure, which let the politico-administrative elite decide the general interest. Although this system allows to define an effective strategy, it undermines openness: therefore, the French people learnt what Maastricht was only after the Treaty's signature[111]. The other French and European leaders were very anxious about Mitterrand's action, and warned him that his behaviour was too risky, because it would fuel anti-European movements of both political Left and Right. If the slogan of anti-Maastricht voters can be summarised as 'protection against the loss of sovereignty and wealth', pro-European forces stressed the 'protection against globalization and Americanization'[112]. Alternatively, or perhaps additionally, Mitterrand decided to hold the referendum to improve its weak domestic political situation. Indeed, since the legislative elections would take place in 1993, he simply

[108] Baun, "The Maastricht Treaty as High Politics", p. 623.
[109] Michael S. Lewis-Beck, and Daniel S. Morey, "The French 'Petit Oui': The Maastricht Treaty and the French Voting Agenda." *Journal of Interdisciplinary History* ,Vol. 38 No. 1, 2007, pp. 65-87.
[110] Ronald Tiersky, *François Mitterrand: A Very French President*. Rowman & Littlefield, Lanham 2003, p. 195.
[111] Mazzucelli, "France and Germany at Maastricht", p. 85.
[112] *Ibidem*, p. 196.

wanted to ensure a Socialist victory. However, electoral mobilization and campaign started quite late, probably because he expected an easy victory. Political parties of the right and left were split between pro-Europeans, comprising the Socialists, the Union pour la démocratie française (UDF) and some leaders of the Rassemblement du people français (RPR), and anti-Europeans, including the Gaullist Charles Pasqua and Phillipe Séguin of the UDF, the Communists and the National Front. These divisions were reflected in the electorate, who voted 'yes' and 'no' for radically different reasons. Polls in early September revealed that the 'yes' vote was justified on the grounds of economic prosperity, the benefits of opening borders, and the prospect of peace, while the 'no' vote was intended to defend national sovereignty against an uncertain economic situation and to express dissatisfaction with Mitterrand[113], who, however, made clear that he would not resign in case of a negative outcome. The traditional literature identified three variables on which the vote depended: socioeconomic conditions (income, occupation and education), party identification (left-right ideology) and geography (regional characteristics). Lewis-Beck and Morey added the decisive variable of foreign policy, based on nationalistic sentiments and the fear of outsiders, which, according to them, has shaped the Maastricht vote. Indeed, building on the French National Election Study (FNES) of 1995, the authors show that those who were committed to the EU voted for ratifying the Treaty, while those who were not interested in a supranational union voted against (Table 4). Similarly, those who developed an anti-German attitude were more likely to vote for the non-ratification and viceversa (Table 5)[114].

Table 4

		IMPORTANCE OF BUILDING EUROPE		
		LEAST	MODERATE	MOST
Vote on Maastricht Referendum	Yes	132 31.8%	550 56.8%	1,126 76.9%
	No	283 68.2%	418 43.2%	338 23.1%
Total		415 100%	968 100%	1,464 100%

NOTE n = 2847.

[113] *Ibidem*, p. 221.
[114] Lewis-Beck and Morey, "The French 'Petit Oui'", p. 71.

Table 5

		ATTITUDE TOWARD GERMANY			
		VERY NEGATIVE	QUITE NEGATIVE	QUITE POSITIVE	VERY POSITIVE
Vote on Maastricht Referendum	Yes	52	194	1,249	241
		36.6%	45.6%	67.7%	74.6%
	No	90	231	597	82
		63.4%	54.4%	32.3%	25.4%
Total		142	425	1,846	323
		100%	100%	100%	100%

NOTE n = 2736.

The debate within public opinion was highly influenced by the fact that voters were mostly ignorant about the Treaty or ill-informed: differently from the representatives of the politico-administrative elite, French people were not aware of the implications and consequences of the legal provisions of the Treaty. Therefore, even if the French Minister for European Affairs Elisabeth Guigou was in charge of explaining the content of the Treaty to the citizens, they were not able to understand the reasons why the French state should abandon its sovereignty on monetary or CFSP matters to transfer it to Community institutions. This gap in the French public translated into the narrow majority of 51% in favour of ratification. An interesting approach is offered by Moravcsik, who viewed that result as irrelevant: in no way could the French referendum impede the process of EC integration. His reasoning goes as follows: since public opinion has always been superfluous in the building of the EU (this is the well-known 'democratic deficit'), a French 'no' vote would have had no consequences with regard to the evolution of the EC, which would have proceeded anyway. The referendum was thus an example of 'democratic surplus'. This argument was met with criticism: Sophie Meunier and George Ross strongly condemned Moravcsik's analysis and replied that

> One cannot generalize the future of the Community from its past history. It is not because French voters have never influenced European integration in the past that they are not going to do so now. Public opinion is somewhat irrelevant to the making of policy as long as voters are neither informed nor consulted, but public opinion becomes a constraint for policymakers once the population has been asked to express formally its position[115].

Thus, since the referendum opened the first real public debate on the fate of the Union, the authors believed that it represented a turning point in the history of the EC. Accordingly, its rejection could have halted the process of European integration, and led to serious consequences, among which the rise of a new and united Right with nationalist and conservative stances, likely to win at the parliamentary elections the following year. Moreover, other countries could have followed that anti-

[115] Sophie Meunier-Aitsahalia and George Ross, "Democratic Deficit or Democratic Surplus? A Reply to Andrew Moravcsik's Comments on the French Referendum." *French Politics and Society*, Vol. 11 No. 1, France and the European Community, Berghahn Books 1993, p. 65.

European movement, definitely blocking the ratification of the Maastricht Treaty. Fortunately, the referendum was approved and prevented chaos from spreading throughout Europe.

In Germany, Kohl described the Maastricht Treaty as a 'good and sound compromise' reached by the European Council. Even if he had wished to strengthen the political union even further, he was satisfied with the outcomes of the negotiations, because they paved the way for future developments[116]. The German ratification process required a two-thirds parliamentary majority, without the need for a referendum. This aspect highlighted the role of administrative civil servants in the internal bargaining process, with Köhler and Trumpf actively engaged in negotiating and communicating with other domestic institutions, especially on EMU issues. The Bundestag was led by a Christian Democratic majority and was largely in favour of the Treaty, while the Bundesrat was dominated by Social Democrats and represented a major obstacle for ratification. Before the Treaty's submission to the federal legislature, some constitutional changes to amend the German Basic Law were necessary, which, again, had to be approved by a two-thirds majority. The debate in the Bundestag concerned both economic and political union and the perceived 'asymmetry' between the two: Eurosceptic forces (including the SPD) accused Kohl and his government for being too accommodating on EMU and insufficiently persistent on political union[117]. Moreover, there was a large consensus that the federal parliament should be called to vote at the moment of entering the third stage of the EMU. The so-called 'psychology of the Mark' was still relevant in German debate over EMU, and highlighted the fact that the transition to the euro should not be automatic, but instead should be approved by the national parliament. Even German public opinion was not completely convinced that the EU had the capacity to provide stability with a single currency, or that the asylum policy protected political refugees. The situation was complicated by the news of the poor result in the French referendum, which made Kohl determined to conclude the ratification process as soon as possible, in order not to halt the momentum for Europe. Indeed, in early October the Bundestag examined the Treaty and all parties (except for the Party of Democratic Socialism, or PDS, which proposed a referendum on the Treaty) expressed their approval without asking for a renegotiation. On 2 December the final result of the vote was 543 in favor of the Treaty and 17 against[118].

[116] Mazzucelli, *France and Germany at Maastricht*, p. 256.
[117] Jeffrey Anderson, *German unification and the union of Europe: the domestic politics of integration policy*. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 2004, p. 47.
[118] Kinzer, Stephen. "German Parliament ratifies European Union pact", *New York Times*, December 3, 1992. Available at https://www.nytimes.com/1992/12/03/world/german-parliament-ratifies-european-union-pact.html [Accessed on 25 May 2018]

The ratification *iter* in the Bundesrat was much more difficult. The Länder soon expressed dissatisfaction with several provisions of the Treaty, among which the EMU timetable, the cohesion fund and the lack of accountability of the Council of Ministers with regard to the two pillars of CFSP and JHA. Another important doubt concerned the principle of subsidiarity. Kohl finally agreed on amending the Basic Law so as to guarantee the rights of the Länder in the EU, which clearly wanted to have a say in European affairs: according to the new Article 23, the Federation may transfer sovereign powers to the Community by a law which requires the consent of the Bundesrat. Moreover, it was established that in areas of exclusive competence of the Länder or in cases where its interests were affected, the Bundesrat should participate in the decision-making process. In the Edinburgh European Council on 11-12 December 1992, several items on the agenda were related to German interests and the way in which they were handled influenced the Bundesrat's vote. Indeed, Germany obtained additional benefits: an increase in German seats at the EP (from 81 to 99), the possibility that the ECB be seated in Frankfurt (to be decided in the forthcoming summit) and the inclusion of the Länder and East Berlin for the structural fund[119]. Once German domestic amendments and the other proposals of the Council meeting had been agreed upon, the Bundesrat unanimously voted in favor of ratification on 18 December.

However, the Maastricht Treaty did not enter immediately into force. Three days after the Bundesrat's vote, the German Constitutional Court presented constitutional appeals to the federal government, complaining that the Treaty was in violation with the Basic Law, infringing national sovereignty and democratic legitimacy. The judgment of 12 October 1993 emphasized the need for democratic control and parliaments' participation in the integration process. For instance, the ruling subordinated the transfer of monetary sovereignty to the condition that national parliament is involved and that directives on monetary stability are respected.

From all these demands, it is clear that both German negotiation and ratification of the Maastricht Treaty were shaped by the preoccupation of losing the D-mark as a stable currency, symbol of postwar reconstruction. The Court's ruling showed also that Germany was particularly concerned with the interaction between national parliaments and European institutions. Overall, Kohl's great ambitions, focused on the new sense of belonging for people, the harmonization of diversity and the equality of nations that the euro was about to bring, were offset by the strong claims advanced by domestic authorities. The Chancellor's European policy of replacing the unstable balance-of-power system, always threatened by hegemonic aspirations, with stable supranational institutions, was challenged

[119] Conclusions of the Presidency, European Council in Edinburgh, 11-12 December 1992. Available at http://www.consilium.europa.eu/media/20492/1992_december_-_edinburgh__eng_.pdf [Accessed on 26 May 2018]

by individual nations' strategy of retaining as much control as possible over sensitive areas of competence[120].

Despite domestic complications, the Maastricht Treaty was ratified by all member countries and changed the lives of millions of citizens across Europe. If the impact of the Treaty's negotiation on France and Germany is to be examined, it has to be recognized that both countries have gained advantages in some respects, and had to give up claims on others; they have obtained benefits on condition that they made concessions. They understood each other's demands and built a relationship based on mutual trust and respect. Therefore, it became easier to bargain and advance national interests, reaching a satisfactory compromise between the parties and assuring a dominant role in the new European context.

[120] Mertes, "Helmut Kohl's Legacy for Germany", p. 68.

Chapter 3. France and Germany *after* Maastricht, an assessment: cooperation or competition?

After many years of work and dedicated efforts, the Maastricht Treaty eventually entered into force on 1 November 1993. If, on the one hand, it inaugurated a phase of unity which came from the very name of the new economic and political organization – the European *Union*, on the other hand it fuelled Euroscepticism, which grew stronger. In 1992-93, the continent was theatre of an economic downturn, which caused slow growth and high rates of unemployment. According to Hitchcock, this was a "knock-on effect from the costly process of German reunification": interest rates rose sharply because Germany started borrowing large sums of money to reconstruct and integrate East Germany[121]. The crisis situation was in partly attributed to the Maastricht criteria, too difficult to be implemented. At the same time, the CFSP was considered a failure because of its incapacity to bring stability in Yugoslavia. The newly-born EU seemed to collapse economically and politically. And yet, it survived. The exit from the recession was accompanied by the entrance of new member countries in 1995 (Austria, Sweden and Finland) and the establishment of the mechanisms for the single currency. In 1998, eleven member states met the criteria for monetary union and the ECB became operative. Although the euro was virtually introduced a year later, banknotes and coins began circulating from 1 January 2002. The 1990s was therefore a turbulent decade of adjustment, in which Europe reshaped itself and finally struck a balance after a painful and difficult era. In this context, France and Germany maintained a high profile with respect to the consolidation of the EU. The first important aspect to be considered is that although the Union soon became the most developed multilateral institution of the twentieth century, it did not hinder bilateral relations between member states. On the contrary, in the case of Franco-German relationship, bilateralism was complementary to multilateralism, because without Franco-German agreement no progress in European integration was possible. As Krotz puts it, the EU was the proof that multilateralism did not replace bilateralism between France and Germany[122]. Secondly, the post-Maastricht period showed that the Franco-German entente was highly resilient to political transformations: neither changes in governments and ministers nor different partisan configurations had led to a clear break in their mutual relations. Indeed, from the 1990s onwards, France and Germany have taken on the leadership role of the Union, cooperating in the reform process of the founding Treaties and struggling to improve the governance of the Eurozone following the 2008 sovereign debt crisis.

[121] Hitchcock, *The Struggle for Europe*, p. 445.
[122] Krotz, *Structure as process*, pp. 2-3.

3.1 *French and German leadership role in the EU 'in sickness and in health'*

After the historical couple Kohl-Mitterrand, next generations of French and German political leaders did continue to promote European integration, but with a different emotional involvement. In the late 1990s and early 2000s, new divergences and tensions emerged. Kohl's successor, Gerhard Schröder, came from the SPD and led a Red-Green government, while Mitterrand's successor, Jacques Chirac, was a conservative Gaullist. After the entry into force of the Amsterdam Treaty in 1999, negotiations started again to reform the institutions and redefine the voting system of the Council, given that the EU then counted 25 members. In the IGC in 2000, the so-called 'leftovers' of the Amsterdam Treaty were to be addressed and resolved, but the path toward the Nice Treaty was not straightforward. Schröder's desire was to reallocate the weight of the votes in the Council so as to account for the increased German size, population and political influence after reunification. This demand questioned the equal status of the countries, and was firmly opposed by the French, as it could jeopardise also the parity between France and Germany. The crisis between France and Germany was eventually restored with what became known as the 'Blaesheim process': in January 2001, Schröder and Chirac and their foreign ministers met in Blaesheim, a town at the border between the two countries, to exchange views and opinions on European and international affairs and to avoid misunderstandings. From that point onwards, regular informal meetings took place between the countries' governments, showing their will to find a common response to the challenges of the Union. Indeed, France and Germany were able to express joint positions on CAP's reforms, the EU enlargement and the Iraqi war[123]. In December, the Laeken Declaration adopted by the European Council resulted in the Convention on the Future of Europe, with the aim of drafting a constitutional Treaty for the EU. French ideas differed from Germany's: while France wished to diminish the power of the Commission in favour of the Council, Germany, in line with its federalist vocation, sought to create a Commission President. The final text of the Treaty was signed in 2004 and was then subject to national ratification. As in 1992, the spectre of the referendum hovered in Europe again. Indeed, a referendum was held in France in May 2005 and signalled the rejection of the constitution for Europe, with almost 55% negative votes[124]. Since Chirac had strongly campaigned for its ratification, French outcome (along with the Dutch ratification's failure) sparked a moment of reflection throughout the continent. Was the future of the EU in danger?

In addition, also the future of the EMU was uncertain. In 1997, the Stability and Growth Pact (SGP), originally proposed by the German finance minister Theo Waigel, was agreed upon and later

[123] Krotz and Schild, *Shaping Europe*, pp. 58-59.
[124] Source: BBC website. Available at http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/4592243.stm [Accessed on 2 June 2018]

implemented by member countries, whose national policies had to respect the fiscal rules of 3% (of GDP) budget deficit and 60% (of GDP) debt. Besides this 'preventive arm', the pact also provided for an 'excessive deficit procedure', which would sanction those countries violating fiscal discipline. From 2003 to 2005, France and Germany, which were among the strongest advocates of budgetary restraint, exceeded the limits laid down in the SGP, reaching higher level of public debt; in an attempt to defend theirselves, they argued in favour of more flexibility. The Prodi Commission, under the pressure of Eurozone finance ministers, did not enforce the fines provided for by the law and simply gave more time to France and Germany for complying with the rules. This 'failure to act' undermined the credibility of the SGP and fuelled popular dissatisfaction with the unaccountable Commission. Thus, the underlying structure of the EU seemed on the brink of collapse.

A turning point came when Angela Merkel assumed the office of Chancellor of Germany in 2005 and Nicolas Sarkozy the French Presidency in 2007. Both leaders were committed to reforming the EU and they indeed provided the necessary impetus for substantial changes of the founding treaties: thanks to Merkel's presidency of the Council of the EU in the first half of 2007, which placed reforms on top of the agenda, the Lisbon Treaty undertook a series of reforms which modernized the EU and made its institutions more democratic and efficient. Similarly, Sarkozy's Council presidency reacted impressively to the major challenges of 2008. Indeed, although the Franco-German engine restarted working and reenergized European integration, hard times were coming. The financial crisis and the subsequent sovereign debt crisis hit Europe, threatening the stability of the Eurozone and causing high unemployment and poverty. The leadership role in the management of the crisis was clearly played by the Franco-German tandem (called 'Merkozy'), whose leaders, however, had divergent ideas. While Merkel's attitude was soon criticised for being too strict, Sarkozy pressed for urgent action and solidarity. Germany, fiercely opposed to a bail-out for Greece (theoretically denied by the Maastricht Treaty) and to the ECB's plan to buy Greek bonds, eventually reached a deal with France on a bail-out package to reduce the burden of the debt. Van Esch suggests an interesting parallelism between Merkel and Kohl, stating that the reticent attitude of Merkel's government resembled Kohl's struggle between Sound Economics and Europatriotism. The first, advocated by the German financial elite, entails the strict compliance with budgetary rules, the self-control of Southern European states and the possibility of sanctions; the second, supported by weaker countries, implies financial solidarity and joint aid in difficult times[125]. In May 2010, Merkel warned that "if the euro fails, then Europe and the idea of unity will fail"[126], and at the G20 in June, Merkel and Sarkozy defended their

[125] Van Esch, "Why Germany wanted EMU", p. 45.
[126] Source: Spiegel Online. Available at http://www.spiegel.de/international/germany/merkel-warns-of-europe-s-collapse-if-euro-fails-so-will-the-idea-of-european-union-a-694696.html [Accessed on 2 June 2018]

ideas of introducing a bank levy and creating a tax on financial transactions[127]. Both countries then declared their willingness to find a common solution to the Eurozone crisis and proposed several initiatives to address the economic shortcomings of the EU, such as the Euro-Plus Pact and the Fiscal Compact. When Hollande replaced Sarkozy, other challenges to be faced concerned the refugee crisis and terrorism, to which a joint response by the EU members was essential. The key moment will arrive with the election of Emmanuel Macron as President of France in May 2017, which will be the subject of the next section.

Analysing the Franco-German relation in the 1990s and 2000s, Alistair Cole argued that its force moved from proactive to reactive. When the two countries were encouraged by other states, they have played a powerful agenda-setting role, for example with the initiatives on the internal market, CAP reform, the EMU and even the Amsterdam Treaty. Their leadership role then deteriorated from Nice negotiations, when French and German claims clashed and caused a deadlock. Moreover, the increased role of the supranational Commission and of Great Britain, Benelux and Eastern European countries, diminished the blocking capacity of France and Germany. Cole concludes that Franco-German leadership is certainly stronger in some (intergovernmental) areas, but weaker in others, meaning that there are different influential coalitions depending on the sector in question[128]. Another assumption developed in the 2000s has been that the Franco-German balance has increasingly moved in favour of Germany, which came to be seen as the hegemon of Europe. German economy has always been stronger than the French, and stronger than any other European country. Germany has always been also the largest net contributor of the EU budget. Angela Merkel was declared by Forbes the most powerful woman in the world. Conversely, French influence has decreased compared to the 1990s[129]. This change in the French position can be explained by external factors, such as the prevalence of the neoliberal economic model and the Eastern EU enlargement. French weak competitiveness has widened the gap between the countries' economic performance, and this asymmetry was seen as endangering the nature of the bilateral relation. As Pierre Lellouche stated,

> Fifty years after the Élysée Treaty, we are experiencing […] a brutal break of the balance within the Franco-German relationship, a break whose origin lies in the tragic economic, industrial, and financial lagging behind ('décrochage') of France in relation to its principal partner and competitor Germany. A lagging behind which –unless France profoundly reforms its economic and social model– could cause a decoupling of the two

[127] Wolfgang Glomb, "The Franco-German tandem confronts the Euro crisis", *Fondapol*, 2011, p. 18.
[128] Alistair Cole, "Franco-German relations: From active to reactive cooperation." In *Leaderless Europe*, ed. by Jack Hayward, Oxford 2008, pp. 152-155.
[129] Knapp and Wright, "France and European Integration", p. 482.

> nations with potentially fatal political and strategic consequences for the process of European integration.[130]

If France is accused of being averse to domestic reforms, Germany has also been criticised for the conduct of its economy: since it generally produces surplus, the country should instead consume and invest more. When it comes to foreign policy, German strength is no longer measured with military involvement; rather, it assumes the form of 'soft power'[131]. Andrew Denison, indeed, characterizes German attitude as an 'assertive multilateralism'[132], meaning that Germany does not wish to isolate itself or to become an offensive hegemon, neither in the EU nor in the world.

3.2 *Franco-German axis today: Macron and Merkel's partnership*

At the second round of the French Presidential elections on 7 May 2017, Emmanuel Macron defeated the Eurosceptic Marine Le Pen by a large margin. He based his electoral campaign on the need to reform the EU and the Eurozone, highlighting its advantages for French citizens: "L'Europe nous rend plus grands. L'Europe nous fait plus forts", he stated on Twitter on 14 January 2017. A committed pro-European, Macron has often spoken in favour of common policies on defence, tax and asylum, stressing the importance of unity in light of Brexit and the rise of nationalist populist parties across Europe. To fix the Eurozone crisis, he proposed the creation of a true fiscal union, with a Euro budget, a Finance Minister and a separate parliament. Domestically, he understood that in order to rebuild France, he had to profoundly transform its economic and social system, implementing labour, tax and welfare reforms and restoring also French competitiveness and reputation in Europe. The relaunch of France would also elevate the country at the same level of Germany. Angela Merkel commented Macron's election as follows:

> … what happens next in Germany is inextricably linked with the question of what happens next in Europe. […] I would like to say expressly that the election of French President Emmanuel Macron has brought new impetus to the European Union – and that will make us stronger[133].

[130] Krotz and Schild, *France: Germany's indispensable Ally in European Policy-making*, p. 13.
[131] Bernhard Seliger, "German unification after 20 years: Achievements and challenges." *SERI Quarterly*, Vol. 4 No. 1, 2011, p. 33.
[132] Andrew Denison, "German foreign policy and transatlantic relations since unification." *German Politics*, Vol. 10 No. 1, 2001, p. 161.
[133] Speech by Federal Chancellor Angela Merkel at the World Economic Forum Annual Meeting in Davos on 24 January 2018. Available at https://www.bundesregierung.de/Content/EN/Reden/2018/2018-01-24-bk-merkel-davos_en.html [Accessed on 4 June 2018]

The first meeting between Macron and Merkel placed the rebirth of the Community as a top priority of their agenda, and the strengthening of Franco-German leadership as a powerful means to escape the crisis. On 22 January 2018, in occasion of the 55th anniversary of the Élysée Treaty, they agreed to renew their cooperation and to develop common positions on European and international issues. Modifying the EU Treaties became a real possibility, but agreeing on what to change was rather difficult. In autumn 2017, France and Germany made a joint proposal on a European defense alliance, paving the way for the establishment of the Permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO), whose aim is to enhance European security and coordinate member states' action and spending in this field. They have also supported a European Defence Fund and the Common Annual Review on Defense. Recently, Macron has gone one step further: he wished to create a joint defense military force. This project has also been backed by Merkel and has been opened up to Great Britain and other countries. Moreover, the refugee crisis and the terrorist attacks in Europe have prompted France and Germany to demand the right to suspend the Schengen agreement. If the two countries manage to speak with one voice on foreign policy matters, they are still divided on how best to cope with the Eurozone challenge. Macron and Merkel recognize the need to complete the banking union, which currently lacks a common backstop for failing banks and a common deposit insurance scheme. However, the prospect of a fiscal union is still far from being implemented. Indeed, while Macron supports the centralization of the decision-making for Eurozone countries and the replacement of the European Stability Mechanism (ESM) with a European Monetary Fund capable of preventing future crisis, Merkel believes that the ESM should simply monitor member states and enforce budgetary rules, with the possibility to provide short-term and long-term loans in 'external circumstances'[134]. In addition, the Chancellor insisted that the ESM should remain an intergovernmental organ, thereby granting each state a considerable degree of power when deciding future bailouts. A pure fiscal union would be a great leap forward for Germany, to which it is not yet prepared.

A viable solution to avoid deadlocks would be the possibility of differentiated integration, launched by Macron. In recent times, the option of a multi-speed Europe has been seriously taken into consideration, especially by France and Germany, in order not to halt the widening and deepening of the Community, which instead should occur among those members willing to go ahead with further integration at different levels.

[134] Silvia Amaro, "Merkel lays out her vision for the euro — but her ideas are still far from Macron's", CNBC website, 4 June 2018. Available at https://www.cnbc.com/2018/06/04/merkel-lays-out-her-vision-for-the-euro--but-some-see-her-ideas-as-not-going-far-enough.html [Accessed on 5 June 2018]

3.2.1 *A multi-speed Europe?*

The idea of a multi-speed Europe (also called 'variable geometry Europe') is not new and is indeed implemented with the Euro and Schengen area, to which only certain member states participate, either because they have decided to do so or because they have met the membership criteria. The current state of the different levels of European integration is displayed in Figure 6 below[135].

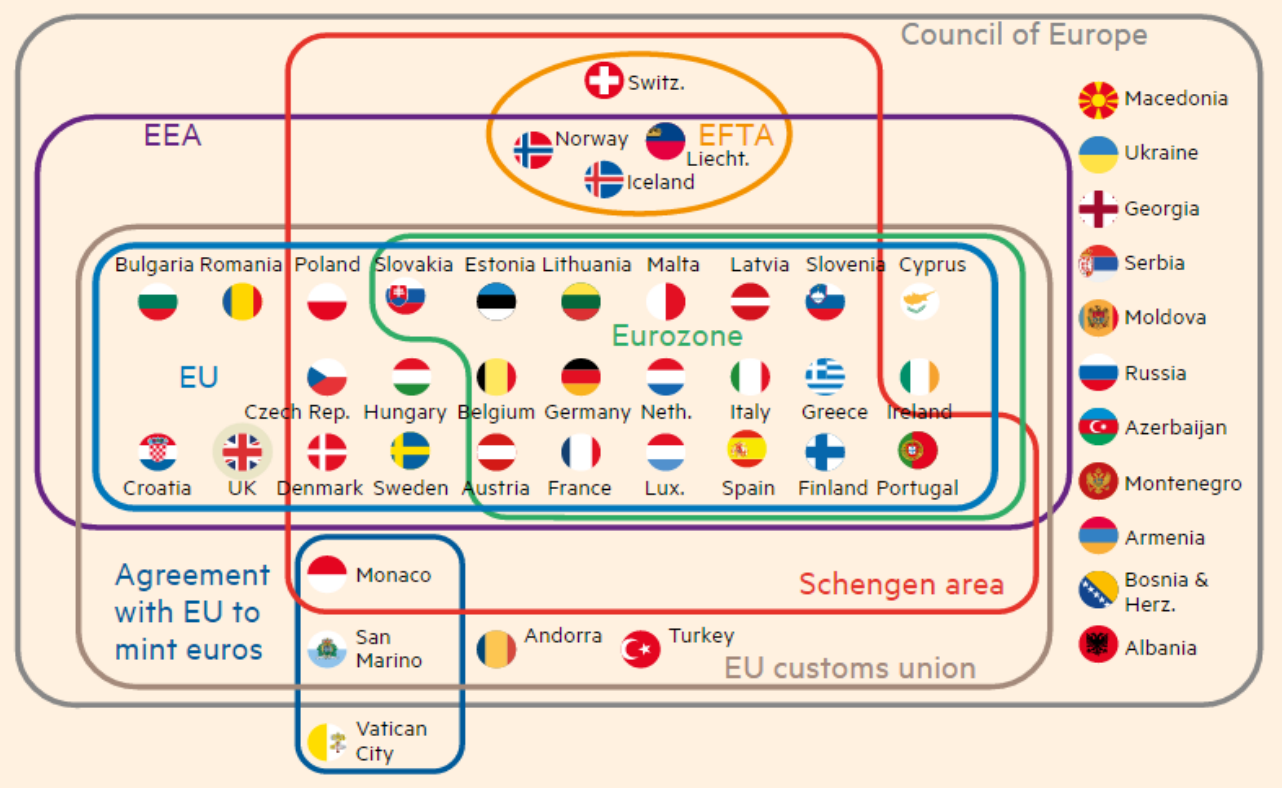

Figure 6. Different 'speeds' of European integration

The notion of a two-speed Europe was first envisaged by Mitterrand and Kohl in the 1980s, when they were eager to cooperate at the European level, threatening Great Britain and other countries with exclusion. In September 1994, Wolfgang Schäuble, Karl Lamers and Theo Waigel published a working paper titled "Reflections on European Policy", proposing the method of multiple speed with the consolidation of a 'Core Europe'. The latter could function as a magnetic force, generating a centripetal effect which would attract new countries. The enhanced cooperation procedure has already made possible for some member states to establish a European Unitary Patent and to adopt a single Divorce law. Dirk Leuffen and his colleagues have developed an explanatory scheme of the factors that influence national preferences for differentiated integration. Their study affirms that

[135] Source: https://www.reddit.com/r/europe/comments/4oeqai/european_integration_in_one_diagram/ [Accessed on 6 June 2018]

The likelihood that a state participates in the integration of a particular policy increases with:

(i) the extent of its interdependence with the other participating states; and
(ii) the proximity of its preferences to those of the other participating states;

and decreases with:

(iii) compliance costs;
(iv) domestic ratification constraints; and
(v) the state's size[136].

Considering points (i) and (ii), it is clear that France and Germany fall into the category of states which favor integration in different policy sectors. Indeed, the two countries have long supported the idea of a multi-speed Europe, and Macron and Merkel have put it on the agenda in this last year. As the Union counts more and more member states, it is getting increasingly difficult to find an agreement in every area. Therefore, differentiated integration would prevent European progress from stalling and would allow more flexibility on key policies. From a realist-intergovernmentalist perspective, this is an effective strategy to advance national interests and accommodating international diversity[137]. Opponents, including also the European Commission President Jean-Claude Juncker, strongly criticize the concept because it risks creating divisions and rival blocs, which is the very opposite of the founding ideals of the EU. Furthermore, some countries fear that a multi-speed Europe would translate into a Franco-German first-class Europe, leaving behind a second-class group of weaker and smaller states. Currently, the PESCO, which counts 25 member states and whose participation is voluntary, represents an expression of differentiated integration in the fields of security and defense policy. The next step would be the strengthening of the Eurozone. Mazier and Valdecantos, admitting that there are structural differences between northern European countries (the 'core') and southern European countries (the 'periphery'), proposed the reintroduction of adjustments of nominal exchange rates, that is, a two-euros Eurozone for the two sub-regions[138]. On the other hand, the French historian and political scientist Jean-Yves Potel has argued that there is "no need to institutionalise the differences and create multi-speed Europe. We need to strive for overcoming the differences but preserving diversity at the same time."[139] These contrasting visions show that the EU still speaks with dissonant voices with regard to differentiated integration. Macron's plan for a multi-speed Europe will thus have to wait, or at least to be fully endorsed by Angela Merkel,

[136] Leuffen, Rittberger, and Schimmelfennig. *Differentiated integration*, p. 60.
[137] *Ibidem*, p. 54.
[138] Jacques Mazier, and Sebastian Valdecantos. "A multi-speed Europe: is it viable? A stock-flow consistent approach." *European Journal of Economics and Economic Policies*, Vol. 12 No. 1, 2015, p. 94.
[139] Sonya Vaseva, "Jean-Yves Potel: institutionalizing multi-speed Europe is dangerous!". Translated by Alexander Markov. Radio Bulgaria website, 27 October 2017. Available at http://bnr.bg/en/post/100889406/jean-yves-potel-institutionalizing-multi-speed-europe-is-dangerous [Accessed on 7 May 2018]

to become reality. The only certainty is that, if a group of states really succeed in deepening integration across sensitive policy areas, it will be led by the Franco-German tandem.

Once again, the European successes after Maastricht were dependent on the good relationship between France and Germany. The countries have actively engaged in collaborative projects and joint initiatives, making possible for the EU to move forward in terms of treaty reforms and management of community challenges. Therefore, cooperation has prevailed over competition. To solve part of today's problems, France and Germany will have to set aside their national concerns and strike a sound compromise to address the sore subject of the Eurozone governance.

Conclusion

The history and analysis of Franco-German relations and European integration proved to be complementary and extremely intertwined. Once France and Germany have reconciled in the 1950s and 1960s, they soon took the lead of the European Community, promoting peace and solidarity after decades of conflicts and rivalry. The founding fathers of the EU include French and German important players who devoted their life to the (re)construction of a united continent: Monnet, Adenauer, Schuman and Hallstein. From the beginning, it appeared clear that the two largest countries in terms of size, population and productivity would take the leadership of the European project. Indeed, the Franco-German couple acted both as promoter and guarantor: every initiative at the European level required the consent of France and Germany to come alive, and their persistent political will to survive. The crucial moment came in the late 1980s, when three geopolitical developments reshaped both the Western and Eastern world: the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989, the reunification of Germany in 1990 and the dissolution of the Soviet Union in 1991. In response to these events, France and Germany had to readjust their positions to create a new balance of power: for completely different reasons, they both reacted committing themselves to the EU. During the IGC process, leaders' ability to push through their political strategies was crucial in advancing vital national interests, while civil servants worked behind the scenes to guarantee the best outcome of the negotiation and the ratification process. Since the themes addressed during the negotiations concerned essentially national security issues, Baun claims that the Maastricht Treaty can be seen as an 'exercise in high politics'[140]. In the preceding thirty years, indeed, EC politics was concerned primarily with economic cooperation, and the EDC failed attempt showed that European states were not yet ready for integrating political affairs. It was only with the dynamic transformations of 1989-91 that new considerations of power and security emerged, making political union a necessity.

As showed, the Maastricht Treaty represented both a constitutional and a political compromise. The former relates to the failed attempt of placing new policy areas under a supranational structure: only economic and monetary affairs were included in the First Pillar. The other two pillars, CFSP and JHA, retained an international character and rested on intergovernmental mechanisms. Politically, the Treaty represented a victory for both France and Germany. Each country got what it wanted, namely, the protection of their national interests. France, wishing to 'tame' unified Germany, obtained its irreversible commitment to monetary union with a fixed calendar; Germany, with the dual objective of *reassuring* its neighbours and *ensuring* that economic convergence criteria would be matched,

[140] Baun, "The Maastricht Treaty as High Politics", p. 624.

gained international acceptance as an independent state and also the certainty that "a future European monetary regime would essentially replicate the German model; as a result, it could claim that EMU entailed little risk of a loss of monetary stability."[141]

Moreover, both countries sought to reinforce Franco-German relationship in the post-Cold war European order, seizing the opportunity to reassert and consolidate their leadership role in the newly-born EU, and opening up the possibility of a two-speed Europe in which they would have been part of the 'core'. Throughout the 1990s and 2000s, the two countries indeed maintained their driving force in the continent, functioning as the engine of growth both in prosperity and in crisis. The recent recession has shocked Europe at its core and created an emergency situation which required a rapid response. European leaders have tried to withstand the economic downturn, but as soon as a slight recovery was on the way, the refugee crisis hit the Mediterranean countries, causing thousands of deaths. France and Germany have consequently understood that the EU has to stick together and stay strong. For this reason, French and German political leaders are calling for greater cooperation in various sectors, from defense and security to the currency area. Since Emmanuel Macron and Angela Merkel are unable to find an agreement to resolve the current crisis, they could just look back at the past history and learn from their predecessors: in the case of the Maastricht Treaty, the countries started with completely different ideas, but in the end, their views on European integration converged and made the European Union a reality. Hopefully, the same may happen today.

What future for the EU?

In the face of the European poly-crisis which includes also Brexit, the events in Catalonia, the Syrian conflict and the large flow of migrants, the terrorist and Islamic threat, the relationship with Russia and Trump's America and the rise of far-right populist parties, the EU has to provide shelter and inspire confidence. The latest elections in Italy have seen the victory of Eurosceptic movements, and an anti-European sentiment is already present in Hungary, Poland and Austria, making the future of the EU uncertain. The rhetoric of Euroscepticism has exploited the widespread insecurity and disillusion of the people, and the economic crisis has fuelled mistrust about the euro. The EU appears disconnected from its citizens, who in turn blame the 'Brussels caste' for not keeping its promises. To get out of these multiple crises, Europe must act together and pursue its long-term project of a free, democratic, peaceful, tolerant and egalitarian union.

[141] *Ibidem*, p. 622.

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Riassunto in italiano

L'Unione Europea sta vivendo una fase critica per la sua sopravvivenza. Il continente è ormai teatro di molteplici crisi: l'economia cresce lentamente, l'Eurozona rischia di disintegrarsi, migliaia di migranti continuano ad arrivare sulle coste dei paesi del sud Europa mentre altrettanti vengono inghiottiti dal Mediterraneo, la Brexit è ancora una questione aperta, il terrorismo è sempre in agguato e la gestione dei rapporti con la Russia e l'America di Trump richiede una certa cautela. La politica, sia a livello nazionale che europeo, sembra incapace di affrontare queste numerose sfide, e la sua immobilità finisce per alimentare la sfiducia dei cittadini nelle istituzioni. Infatti, i partiti e i movimenti populisti euroscettici hanno fatto leva sul malcontento generale dell'opinione pubblica e sono riusciti ad entrare in parlamento e anche nei governi (l'Italia ne è l'ultimo esempio). Tra le tante riforme richieste, molte riguardano la revisione dei trattati fondatori dell'UE. In particolare, i criteri di convergenza di Maastricht sono continuamente accusati di essere troppo rigidi, così come le successive regole imposte dal Patto di Stabilità. Dal momento che l'intera struttura che ha dato vita all'Unione monetaria e politica europea è stata messa in discussione, la domanda che sorge spontanea ormai è: perché gli stati nazionali, nel lontano 1992, hanno accettato di firmare e ratificare il trattato di Maastricht? Soprattutto due paesi hanno spinto per far sì che ciò accadesse: Francia e Germania. Infatti, entrambi sono spesso considerati i grandi promotori dell'integrazione europea, grazie ai loro leader che hanno investito tutte le forze nel progetto di unione sovranazionale. Il momento cruciale che ha cambiato il destino di milioni di cittadini è stato quindi il triennio 1989-91, nel quale tre trasformazioni geopolitiche hanno ridisegnato l'Europa: il crollo del muro di Berlino nel 1989, la riunificazione tedesca nel 1990 e la dissoluzione dell'Unione Sovietica nel 1991. Questi avvenimenti spettacolari hanno poi portato alla creazione dell'UE.

In questo contesto storico altamente ricco di cambiamenti, l'asse Franco-tedesca è sempre stata vista come l'ago della bilancia, in grado di modificare le sorti dell'intero continente. Il filo conduttore di questa tesi è infatti il comportamento di Francia e Germania durante le negoziazioni del trattato di Maastricht, snodatasi in due conferenze intergovernative parallele, una sull'unione monetaria e una sull'unione politica. Sebbene tutti i paesi firmatari parteciparono alla negoziazione, Francia e Germania, guidate rispettivamente da François Mitterrand e da Helmut Kohl, hanno giocato un ruolo fondamentale durante il processo decisionale. La letteratura presente e passata conferma l'importanza di un 'buon' rapporto franco-tedesco per la realizzazione di iniziative europee, ma offre diverse interpretazioni circa le ragioni del loro impegno per la causa europea. Difatti, gli studiosi delle relazioni internazionali hanno sviluppato teorie contrastanti sull'integrazione europea: dal neo-funzionalismo di Ernst Haas all'intergovernamentalismo di Andrew Moravcsik e dal realismo al

costruttivismo, ogni scuola di pensiero ha tentato di spiegare come e perché le preferenze degli stati membri della Comunità Europea, inizialmente divergenti, sono finite per convergere nel 1992. L'approccio seguito in questa dissertazione è quello di Moravcsik e di Colette Mazzucelli, secondo cui il trattato di Maastricht è stato un compromesso politico tra Francia e Germania, i due paesi più forti, più grandi e più produttivi dell'UE. Mitterrand e Kohl hanno dato prova di grande abilità avanzando i loro interessi nazionali e cercando di ottenere quanti più benefici possibili dall'unione economica e monetaria (UEM). Senza questi due leader, e più in generale senza la volontà politica della Francia e della Germania, l'Unione Europea non sarebbe mai stata creata.

Dopo anni di conflitti risalenti alla guerra franco-prussiana del 1870-71 e al conseguente revanscismo francese, la cooperazione franco-tedesca è stata finalmente istituzionalizzata nel 1963 con il trattato dell'Eliseo. Da quel momento in poi, i due paesi si sono impegnati a coordinare le loro azioni ad ogni livello decisionale e in diversi ambiti, dall'economia alla politica estera, dall'educazione alle politiche giovanili. Inoltre, già dagli anni '50, essi hanno assunto un ruolo di leadership nella costruzione della comunità europea, promuovendo la CECA, la CEE e l'Euratom. Adenauer, Monnet, Schuman e Hallstein, annoverati tra i padri fondatori dell'UE, erano convinti che l'unità e la solidarietà (soprattutto tra Francia e Germania) avrebbero salvato il continente dalle guerre future, inaugurando un periodo di pace e prosperità. Ma la spinta decisiva verso una maggiore integrazione si ebbe negli anni '80 con Kohl e Mitterrand, secondo i quali l'adesione francese e tedesca all'UE avrebbe portato molti vantaggi ad entrambi i paesi. Dopo aver siglato l'Atto Unico nel 1986, i paesi europei iniziarono a contemplare seriamente l'idea di un'unione monetaria. Con l'avvento della Commissione Delors, questa prospettiva divenne sempre più realizzabile, ed anzi fu accelerata dagli eventi che segnarono la fine della guerra fredda.

La riunificazione della Germania, avvenuta ufficialmente il 3 ottobre 1990, fu un punto chiave nella storia europea. Kohl aveva affermato più volte che la riunificazione tedesca e l'unificazione europea erano "due facce della stessa medaglia", poiché era impossibile pensare un'Europa unita con due Germanie divise. Nel suo piano di 10 punti, Kohl prevedeva di raggiungere la riunificazione per gradi: contrariamente a quanto succederà per l'UE, la cui unione monetaria era intesa come coronamento di quella economica e di tutto il processo di integrazione, la riunificazione tedesca iniziò con l'adozione di un unico Deutschemark. Una volta crollato il muro di Berlino, la Germania era finalmente pronta a tornare sulla scena internazionale e ridisegnare una sua immagine positiva, libera dalle atrocità naziste, ancora impresse nella memoria collettiva della popolazione tedesca ed europea. Il paese che più di tutti si mostrava preoccupato all'idea di una Germania unita era, naturalmente, la Francia. Mitterrand temeva infatti che se la nazione tedesca avesse ricostruito una forte economia con una

forte moneta, avrebbe reclamato una posizione egemonica nel continente, attuando magari una politica estera aggressiva. Il nazionalismo avrebbe di nuovo invaso gli animi tedeschi, e in poco tempo la Germania sarebbe tornata 'la grande potenza europea', in grado di offuscare il ruolo della Francia. Deciso a mettere dei freni a questo possibile scenario, Mitterrand consigliò spesso a Kohl di non accelerare i tempi dell'unificazione e di preoccuparsi invece di integrare il suo paese nella Comunità Europea. Quando, però, il presidente francese capì che la riunificazione era ormai inevitabile, cambiò strategia: accettando una Germania unita, doveva almeno assicurarsi che fosse legata all'Europa e ai suoi vincoli per sempre. La promessa tedesca di adempiere agli obblighi dell'UE avrebbe garantito l'uguaglianza di tutti gli stati membri e non avrebbe compromesso la posizione dominante della Francia. Anche Kohl, dal canto suo, desiderava placare i dubbi dei suoi 'colleghi', dando prova che si potevano fidare della nuova Germania, da considerarsi un partner stabile e pacifico. Il cancelliere tedesco, insistendo per lanciare la conferenza sull'unione politica e annunciando quindi il suo sincero impegno per il progetto europeo, rese l'unificazione della Germania compatibile con l'unione dell'Europa. Anzi, Kohl dimostrò di avere ragione: le due unioni non erano incompatibili, ma complementari.

Così, dal 1° dicembre 1990 furono inaugurate le conferenze intergovernative (CIG) che diedero vita al trattato di Maastricht. Le CIG possono essere divise in una fase di pre-negoziazione, nella quale i funzionari pubblici gestivano i lavori preparando i dossier sull'UEM e comunicando con gli altri paesi a livello amministrativo, e una fase di vera e propria negoziazione a Maastricht, durante la quale erano i leader nazionali del più alto livello politico a prendere le decisioni in sede di Consiglio Europeo. Nei due momenti venivano poi trattate materie diverse, rispettivamente di 'bassa' e 'alta' politica. Infatti, se i funzionari si occupavano delle questioni economiche e sociali, i capi di stato e di governo discutevano invece di sicurezza, di politica estera comune (PESC) e dei temi più spinosi dell'unione monetaria. Oltre al presidente della Commissione Jacques Delors, i maggiori protagonisti in tutto il processo di negoziazione furono Kohl e Mitterrand, che si distinsero per la loro indipendenza dalle burocrazie nazionali e la loro autonomia rispetto ai partiti politici. In principio, le posizioni di Francia e Germania erano opposte: l'una era determinata a fissare date e scadenze per le tappe dell'UEM, favoriva un aumento dei poteri del Consiglio con il voto a maggioranza e richiedeva l'unanimità per le decisioni della PESC; l'altra era riluttante a stabilire un calendario per l'UEM, chiedeva maggiori poteri per il Parlamento Europeo e una votazione a maggioranza per la PESC. Date queste premesse, Francia e Germania dovettero scendere a compromessi per raggiungere un accordo che soddisfacesse entrambe le parti. Durante la pre-negoziazione, la contrattazione era soprattutto interna ai paesi stessi: l'appoggio delle istituzioni nazionali e dell'opinione pubblica avrebbe poi garantito un risultato positivo al momento della ratificazione. La Germania incontrò più difficolta della Francia, perché le

pretese della potente Bundesbank e le richieste del Bundesrat e del Bundestag non erano facili da accordare. Durante la negoziazione a Maastricht invece, si cercò un compromesso a livello internazionale: per ottenere alcuni benefici, Francia e Germania furono costrette a rinunciare ad altri obiettivi, giocando al "tiro alla fune" più importante del Novecento.

Sulle orme dell'approccio di Michael Baun, il trattato di Maastricht venne così interpretato dalla Francia e dalla Germania come uno strumento tramite cui realizzare gli interessi dei loro governi nazionali, consolidando al tempo stesso la leadership franco-tedesca nella nuova Unione Europea. Una volta analizzati i costi e i benefici della partecipazione nell'UE, i due paesi optarono per esserne tra i fondatori. Negli anni '80, la Francia non poteva più vantarsi né di un vasto impero coloniale, né di un arsenale nucleare. La sua 'risorsa di potenza' era rappresentata da un ruolo dominante in Europa, che doveva perciò tenere stretto. Tuttavia, già con l'entrata in vigore nel 1979 del Sistema Monetario Europeo (SME), la Francia vide diminuire la sua influenza. Lo SME apparve fin da subito dominato dal Deutschemark e dalla Bundesbank. Stanca dell'egemonia tedesca, la Francia era determinata a ristabilire la sua posizione in Europa e nel mondo. Ma un altro ostacolo stava per intralciare questo piano: l'unificazione della Germania. A quel punto, l'interesse della Francia divenne 'domare' la potenziale minaccia tedesca, inserendola nella comunità europea in cui ogni stato ha lo stesso peso. Perciò, Maastricht rappresentava un'occasione unica per la Francia. La Germania, invece, puntava a calmare le paure dei suoi paesi vicini, con l'idea di eliminare una volta per tutte gli epiteti negativi associati al terzo Reich. La battaglia delle idee si concretizzò nell'opposizione tra Europatriottismo e Patriottismo del Deutschemark. L'attaccamento psicologico al marco tedesco, simbolo della stabilità del dopoguerra, e l'ossessione dell'inflazione, evocatrice di ricordi funesti, rappresentarono due scogli che Kohl dovette superare con tanta fatica. Alla fine, la Germania accettò un valido compromesso: abbandonare la sovranità monetaria garantendo però che la Banca Centrale Europea, una volta istituita nella terza fase dell'UEM, avesse il mandato di contenere l'inflazione.

Firmato il 7 febbraio 1992, il trattato di Maastricht fu poi sottoposto alla ratificazione degli stati nazionali. Questo processo si rivelò più complicato del previsto. Dopo il rifiuto dei danesi, a settembre i francesi vennero chiamati a votare in un referendum e solo il 51% si espresse a favore del trattato. Convocando un referendum che non era necessario secondo la Costituzione, e rischiando peraltro di perderlo, Mitterrand non poté di certo proclamare una grande vittoria. In Germania, invece, il trattato fu approvato dal parlamento federale ma venne a lungo esaminato dalla Corte Costituzionale, che nel suo giudizio finale richiese più partecipazione dei parlamenti nazionali e il rispetto del principio di sussidiarietà. In entrambi i paesi, l'opinione pubblica era divisa tra coloro che credevano negli ideali europeisti e coloro che invece avevano sofferto la cessione della sovranità. Nonostante il delicato

processo di ratificazione, nel quale Francia e Germania tentarono comunque di aiutarsi a vicenda, il trattato entrò finalmente in vigore il 1° novembre 1993.

Sebbene Maastricht segnò l'inizio del multilateralismo europeo, tuttavia non sostituì il bilateralismo tra Francia e Germania, che rimase indispensabile per l'ulteriore rafforzamento dell'unione e le riforme dei trattati. Infatti, anche se i leader successivi a Kohl e Mitterrand non avevano lo stesso coinvolgimento emotivo nei confronti dell'UE (quello che Alistair Cole definì 'passaggio da una forza pro-attiva a reattiva'), si impegnarono lo stesso per rendere la struttura europea sempre più democratica ed efficiente. I trattati di Amsterdam (1997), Nizza (2001) e Lisbona (2007) ne sono la prova, mentre la fallita Costituzione europea, bocciata dai francesi nel referendum del 2005, dimostrò che un latente spirito antieuropeo stava aleggiando negli animi dei cittadini. E non solo: nel 2008, lo spettro della crisi raggiunse l'Europa e, di lì a poco, la investì. Si aggiunsero poi la crisi del debito pubblico, che mise in ginocchio i paesi sudeuropei della 'periferia', e quella migratoria, che costò la vita a migliaia di rifugiati. L'UE doveva cercare di rimettersi in piedi, e l'asse franco-tedesco, ancora una volta, si adoperò per cercare una soluzione. La coppia Merkel-Sarkozy era desiderosa di trovare un rimedio alla crisi dell'Eurozona, ma mentre il presidente francese era disposto ad aiutare e salvare i paesi in difficoltà, la cancelliera dava priorità assoluta al rispetto delle regole contenute nel trattato di Maastricht, poi riaffermate nel Patto di Stabilità e Crescità del 1997 e nel Patto di Bilancio europeo del 2012. Tuttavia, bisogna ricordare che dal 2003 al 2005 anche la Francia e la Germania violarono quelle stesse regole fiscali di deficit e debito sovrano (rispettivamente del 3% e del 60% del PIL) che avevano difeso con tanta risolutezza, scampando anche alle sanzioni previste dalla legge in caso di disavanzo eccessivo.

A queste contraddizioni si pose fine con l'ultima elezione presidenziale francese, avvenuta nella primavera del 2017, che ha sancito la vittoria dell'europeista Emmanuel Macron al secondo turno contro l'euroscettica Marine Le Pen. Il nuovo presidente entrò subito in ottimi rapporti con Angela Merkel, ed insieme promisero di rinvigorire la cooperazione franco-tedesca per far fronte alle molteplici sfide odierne. Infatti, dopo gli attacchi terroristi all'Occidente degli ultimi anni, una risposta a livello europeo era necessaria. Così, Francia e Germania proposero agli altri paesi dell'UE di rafforzare la difesa comune e di collaborare militarmente, dando vita alla Cooperazione strutturata permanente (PESCO), la cui partecipazione è volontaria e ad oggi conta 25 stati membri. Questo ultimo aspetto ha messo in luce gli elementi positivi di un'integrazione su più livelli: i paesi volenterosi di approfondire il coordinamento delle loro politiche sono liberi di farlo, mentre i paesi più riluttanti possono rinunciarvi senza essere esclusi da altre iniziative, ma soprattutto senza precludere il processo di integrazione all'intera Unione. L'idea di un'Europa a più velocità è

fortemente sostenuta sia da Macron che dalla Merkel, ma ancora non riesce ad essere implementata per ovviare ai problemi dell'Eurozona. Mentre il completamento dell'unione bancaria è avviato, tra i due leader non c'è ancora un pieno accordo su come riformare la *governance* dell'euro. Le ambiziose proposte avanzate da Macron si spingono fino alla creazione di un'unione fiscale, con un budget comune per l'area euro, un parlamento separato e un ministro a parte. A fine giugno, tuttavia, un piano di riforma comune è atteso sul tavolo delle trattative.

Come dimostrato in questa tesi, la cooperazione franco-tedesca è stata essenziale per la creazione e il rafforzamento dell'Unione Europea. E lo è tuttora. Soprattutto in vista della Brexit e della crescita dei partiti euroscettici, Francia e Germania hanno assunto un ruolo sempre più decisivo nella politica europea. È ormai noto che quando Francia e Germania sono di comune accordo, l'integrazione europea procede a pieno ritmo; quando invece i due paesi non riescono a raggiungere un'intesa, l'integrazione si ferma. Anche se nell'ultimo decennio è stato più volte affermato che l'equilibrio di potere sembra essersi spostato a favore della Germania, oggi possiamo ammettere che Macron ha riportato in asse la bilancia. La svolta cruciale per il futuro dell'Unione sarà determinata dagli accordi sull'euro e sulle politiche di migrazione e asilo. L'UE, infatti, ha bisogno di una nuova spinta propulsiva per sopravvivere alle innumerevoli battaglie che è costretta a combattere. E i migliori soldati che ha sono proprio la Francia e la Germania.