



Degree Program in Politics, Philosophy and Economics

Course of Contemporary History

THE MAKING AND FALL OF THE
FRANCO-ITALIAN NUCLEAR PLATFORM
IN THE YEARS 2002-2012

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Abstract

The aim of this thesis is to reconstruct thoroughly the steps of the negotiations, held between 2003 and 2011, that were supposed -and almost made it- to change the history of energy production in Italy and of the Franco-Italian diplomatic and industrial bonds.

After a brief introduction in §.I, §.II contains an overview of the historical situation of nuclear energy in Italy and the story of the steps that can be considered an indispensable prologue to the most active and relevant years for the events that this thesis analyses.

§.III is devoted to the historical reconstruction of the whole process, including a brief legislative framework in §.3.5; §.IV focuses on the end epilogue of the Franco-Italian nuclear platform, how it happened and the reasons; §.V contains a focus on the actors that characterised this process the most and their different inputs. Finally, §.VI is reserved for conclusive considerations.

§.I Introduction and Methodology

1.1 Introduction

To understand the negotiations between *Ente Nazionale per l'Energia Elettrica* (Enel henceforth) and *Electricité de France* (EDF henceforth) and between the Italian and the French governments for the cooperation on nuclear energy production, it is necessary to outline the legislative and political impediments towards nuclear in Italy after the nuclear-phobia of the late 1980s; the context of energy market in the European Union after the beginning of privatisation in the 1990s; as well as the other issues at stake in the Franco-Italian relationship that influenced and were themselves influenced by the purposes and evolution of the analysed events, such as the EDF-Edison acquisition, the Alitalia-Air France partnership, and other macro-industrial conflicts.

The first of the two focal moments that can be considered the real beginning and end of this story is the period of May-June 2005: on the companies' side, Enel and EDF signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU henceforth) on May the 30th¹, about the entrance of Enel in French energy market as well as in the society for the construction of a new nuclear reactor in the French region of Normandie²; on the governments' side we find the cooperation pact signed by the Italian Minister for entrepreneurship and economic growth Scajola and French minister of industry Loos, with the aim of removing any obstacle to investments and integration for the energy sector³.

The second moment is when in April 2011, Italian President Silvio Berlusconi made a rare admission⁴ for a politician in front of the press, an admission of defeat before even getting to the popular vote. The fight was supposed to be for any single vote in the nuclear energy referendum due in July: polls published in 2006 showed a prevalence of favourability to nuclear with a proportion of 53% v. 47%, in 2009 a substantial parity was registered (49% in favour v. 51% against)⁵; but the black swan event *par excellence* took place on March the 11th in Japan. The fourth strongest ever registered earthquake⁶ caused such a strong Tsunami that it was able to trespass the anti-wave barrier of the Fukushima NPP, causing an arrest of all the energy reserves systems of the facility and therefore the inability of keeping the reactors' cooling systems running⁷. The release of radioactive contaminants didn't have the disastrous effects of Chernobyl, it is actually not possible to reconduct any death at all with a

¹ *Firmato l'accordo di cooperazione tra enel ed edf* [Comunicato stampa]. (2005, 30 maggio). <https://www.enel.com/it/media/esplora/ricerca-comunicati-stampa/press/2005/05/firmato-laccordo-di-cooperazione-tra-enel-ed-edf>

² *Firmato l'accordo di collaborazione enel-edf*. (2007, November 30). Wwww.enel.com. <https://www.enel.com/it/media/esplora/ricerca-comunicati-stampa/press/2007/11/firmato-laccordo-di-collaborazione-enel-edf>

³ Redazione. (2005, 12 giugno). Arriva il patto Italia-Francia sull'energia. E parte dal nucleare. *Corriere della Sera*.

⁴ Pupia News. (2011, 26 aprile). *Berlusconi - Il nucleare è il futuro, stop solo momentaneo* [Video]. YouTube. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QqXEoIjs2-c>

⁵ *Sondaggio SWG: oltre un italiano su due possibilista sui nuovi reattori nucleari*. (2021, 5 luglio). Nucleare e Ragione. <https://nucleareeragione.org/2021/07/05/sondaggio-swg-oltre-un-italiano-su-due-possibilista-sui-nuovi-reattori-nucleari/>

⁶ *20 largest earthquakes in the world since 1900*. (2019). U.S. Geological Survey U.S. Department of the Interior.

⁷ The Editors of Encyclopaedia Britannica. (2011). Fukushima accident | summary, date, effects, & facts. In *Encyclopedia britannica*. <https://www.britannica.com/event/Fukushima-accident>

direct causality to the accident⁸, but this wasn't known in the weeks following it and no reassurances could possibly be effective in the timespan of three months (the referendum was calendarised for 93 days later). Indeed, ten days after the Tōhoku earthquake a poll showed that 66% of Italians were determined to vote against nuclear⁹.

It is in this context that Berlusconi announced the complete arrest to the program that was the result of a ten years long process this thesis is about, even though he cared to state clearly that all the agreements and commercial relations with France in this field that didn't involve Italian territory would certainly have kept their value.

The political developments of the moment in which this thesis is being written are definitely influencing the choice to study that moment of Italian history despite the fact that the subject (the nuclear platform) was fully destroyed before the laying of the foundation stone. Energy production is fundamental for the maintenance of the current model of civilisation as much as water and food supply, the urge for cleaner energy in terms of carbon dioxide emissions was already calling for a reconsideration of the importance of nuclear power, but for a real “nuclear renaissance” something more was needed.

To counteract the fear and the deeply rooted -sometimes wrong or obsolete- beliefs about this topic it proved necessary to discover the fear of an energy shortage, and a sample taste of it, event that occurred in Europe with the Gas Crisis of 2022. The increase in gas and electricity prices -due to the fact that Italy is heavily reliant on natural gas for electricity production, having 40% of its output from this source in 2022¹⁰- put households and businesses in hard times¹¹.

The debate on energy security with respect to supply gained a prominent position among the public opinion that it didn't know for more than a decade. In this context, the need to pick the lesser among the evils triggered the change in the taxonomy for renewable energy sources of

⁸ Did anyone die as a result of the Fukushima accident? (s.d.). In *Encyclopedia britannica*. <https://www.britannica.com/question/Did-anyone-die-as-a-result-of-the-Fukushima-accident>

⁹ *Sondaggio SWG: oltre un italiano su due possibilista sui nuovi reattori nucleari*. (2021, 5 luglio). Nucleare e Ragione. <https://nucleareeragione.org/2021/07/05/sondaggio-swg-oltre-un-italiano-su-due-possibilista-sui-nuovi-reattori-nucleari/>

¹⁰ *Italy - countries & regions - IEA*. (s.d.). IEA. <https://www.iea.org/countries/italy>

¹¹ Arleo, G. (2022, 12 settembre). *Blog | Prezzi del gas e impatto sull'economia. Un monito per il Governo che verrà*. Econopoly. <https://www.econopoly.ilsole24ore.com/2022/09/12/gas-economia-impatto/>

the European Union's Green Deal¹², adding nuclear to the taxonomy of viable options to transit towards a carbon free energy production.

The European Union's decision offered the Italian government the expedient to start the planning of a nuclear comeback, the foundation of the National Platform for Sustainable Nuclear in September 2023¹³ made it clear and all of these events were crowned with the launch by the European Commission of an industrial alliance for small modular reactors¹⁴, on which Italy wants to play a role as Ansaldo Nucleare -another of the players that will be appearing in this thesis- didn't waste time to declare¹⁵.

Despite the planned exit from nuclear of Spain and Germany, it seems that globally there will be more talk about nuclear power in future than what one may have thought a few years ago.

1.2 Methodology

The tools to redact this thesis were: review of eight-hundred related press releases and newspaper articles mainly from January 1st 2000 to December 31st 2012 in French, English and mainly Italian; review of books, academic literature and the public sections of the multiple agreements stipulated¹⁶; reading and summarising of laws and decisions of the Italian and French government and the European Union; interviews.

The review of press releases and articles, mainly via the search engine *Factiva*, was used to reconstruct most of the events, building a map and a timeline of them. This structure was then

¹² European Commission delegated regulation 2022/1214 (2022, March 9) articles (3); (6); (10).

<https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A32022R1214>

¹³ *Piattaforma Nazionale per un Nucleare Sostenibile (PNNS)*. (2023).

https://www.mase.gov.it/sites/default/files/Documento%20Piattaforma%20Nazionale%20per%20un%20Nucleare%20Sostenibile_20_9_2023.pdf

¹⁴ *European Industrial Alliance on Small Modular Reactors - European Commission*. (n.d.).

Single-Market-Economy.ec.europa.eu.

https://single-market-economy.ec.europa.eu/industry/strategy/industrial-alliances/european-industrial-alliance-small-modular-reactors_en

¹⁵ Forcade, R. de. (2024, February 9). *Ansaldo Nucleare in prima linea per lo sviluppo di mini reattori in Ue*. Il Sole 24 ORE.

<https://www.ilsole24ore.com/art/ansaldo-nucleare-prima-linea-lo-sviluppo-mini-reattori-ue-AF3ENieC>

¹⁶ The most useful agreements, if not the most useful written documents for this thesis were the memorandum of understandings signed between Enel and EDF, the content of which was only accessed through the publicly communicated part on Enel's website in the press release section.

studied through the aforementioned documents in order to gather precise data, to distinguish what was said from what was done and what was supposed by analysts from what was actually happening. These last two operations were conducted with the help of another fundamental direct source which was able in some cases to reveal aspects that had not yet been found elsewhere, the interviews kindly allowed by some of the most important players in this ten-years-long game such as Cav. Fulvio Conti (CEO of Enel in the years 2005-2014), Umberto Quadrino (CEO of Edison in the years 2001-2011). The value of the interviews as a refining tool will be evident throughout the thesis.

§.II Relevant events Prior to 2005

2.1 Italian legal and political framework (1987-2005)

The political framework was as -if not more- hostile as the legal one, which will be briefly exposed further ahead in this paragraph. Indeed, the 1987 referendum's provisions¹⁷ contain no specific indication to close any of the then-existing four NPPs in Italy, nor any prohibition to build new ones within national territory even though without the possibility of the central government to overrule local institutions' opinion, therefore seeking an agreement. The reason for the interruption in nuclear energy production, concretised with the shutdown of all the sites between 1987 and 1990, is not to be found in a political project of the majority of parties in those years but rather in their fear of loss of public consent. In fact, exception made for the proponents of the referendum -the Greens and the Radical Party- who represented a minority electorally-wise, most of the political class -Cristian Democrats and Communist Party- declared their position on the topic influenced by the overwhelming majority of the population's absolute fear and intransigent requests¹⁸.

In this context, even without a clear statement through the referendum of the need to shut down the NPPs, the 80% result of the anti-nuclear side left the governments Goria, De Mita and Andreotti VI with no alternative choice. Fifteen years later, when in the early 2000s important public figures such as Enel's CEO Francesco Tatò, his successor in the same role Paolo Scaroni, the minister for economic development Antonio Marzano and others, started to prepare the field for a second nuclear experience in Italy, they were still walking on quicksand as the trauma-related opinions of the 1980s didn't seem to have faded.

¹⁷ Costantino, F. (2010, May 25). *Il ritorno del Nucleare in Italia - Treccani*. Treccani. https://www.treccani.it/magazine/diritto/approfondimenti/diritto_amministrativo/2_Costantino_ritorno_nucleare.html

¹⁸ Sky. (2021, September 16). *La Storia del referendum antinucleare in Italia*. Tg24.Sky.it. <https://tg24.sky.it/ambiente/2021/09/16/referendum-antinucleare-italia->

During the second (2001-2005), third (2005-2006) and fourth (2008-2011) Berlusconi governments multiple legislative steps were necessary to amend or cancel the provisions of the 1987 referenda about nuclear energy, which were¹⁹:

- 1) Abolition of the possibility of state intervention when a municipality refuses to allow a nuclear power plant (NPP henceforth) to be built in its territory
- 2) Abolition of the persuasive measure of state funding for municipalities that accepted the building of NPPs in their territory
- 3) Abolition of the law that permitted Enel to participate in the development of any NPPs abroad

The first significant change happened in 2004, when the third clause mentioned above was removed by Law 239/2004²⁰, known at the time as Legge Marzano. Enel, as I will elaborate in the next chapter, was at that time negotiating with EDF a participation in the new French nuclear programme, but it found itself blocked by the 1987 referendum's effects. Law Marzano aimed at its beginning at introducing the possibility "for national energy producers to carry out, also in *co-partnership with foreign companies*, activities of realisation and running of energy plants, **including nuclear plants** abroad" and even if in its final wording the explicit mention of "nuclear" disappeared from Art. 1.42 -a sign of the perilousness of the topic for Italian politics- the remaining phrasing was enough to give freedom of movement in this field and to open the gates of Flamanville (Normandie) to Italy.

Further legislative actions were fundamental for the events of this thesis, but those will be closely examined in specific chapters responding to a chronological order and disposition. In this paragraph, three will only be mentioned for the reader to have a compendium of the four most relevant laws: Decree-Law n.112 June 25th 2008²¹ (inserting construction of NPPs in Italy in Italian Energy Plan); Law n.99 July 23rd 2009²² (the basis for the government's

¹⁹ *Il referendum sull'energia nucleare* (pp. 125–129). (2011). Ufficio ricerche nel settore delle attività produttive e in quello dell'agricoltura.

²⁰ *Legge 23 agosto 2004, n. 239 "Riordino del settore energetico, nonche' delega al Governo per il riassetto delle disposizioni vigenti in materia di energia,"* (2004) (testimony of Antonio Marzano).

<https://www.senato.it/documenti/repository/eventi/dicembre2004/fscommand/Elenco%20leggi/239.pdf>

²¹ *DECRETO-LEGGE 25 giugno 2008, n. 112*, (2008).

<https://www.gazzettaufficiale.it/eli/id/2008/08/21/08A05897/sg>

²² *Disposizioni per lo sviluppo e l'internazionalizzazione delle imprese, nonche' in materia di energia.*, no. 99 (2009). https://cnaicis.mise.gov.it/images/leggi/Legge_23_luglio_2009.pdf

power to locate and start a nuclear programme); Decree-Law n.31 February 31st 2010²³ (the regulation for the actual building of NPPs).

2.2 The privatisation of energy production in Italy and in France

The two nations under analysis followed a very different path in terms of liberalisation of the energy market, hence it is significant to have a brief recapitulation of these two processes in order to understand the critiques from Italy that France and EDF exposed themselves to; critiques that were an instrument of a dispute at the centre of next paragraph.

Liberalisation of energy market and production encountered a favourable period in Italian 1990s: the shock of the judicial scandals that resettled the political class ending the period called “First Republic” put the public opinion in an attitude leaning for state’s (therefore political) power into enterprises to be reduced^{24,25}; public finances were in such a debt that the income of privatisations was vital²⁶. The so-called “Season of privatisation” involved companies in multiple sectors: food and agriculture, telecommunications, electric energy, gas, transports and finance²⁷. Enel was transformed into a joint-stock company fully owned by the State in 1992 and in 1999²⁸ a share of 31%²⁹ of the stocks was made available for sale. Today

²³ Disciplina della localizzazione, della realizzazione e dell’esercizio nel territorio nazionale di impianti di produzione di energia elettrica nucleare, di impianti di fabbricazione del combustibile nucleare, dei sistemi di stoccaggio del combustibile irraggiato e dei rifiuti radioattivi, nonché misure compensative e campagne informative al pubblico, a norma dell’articolo 25 della legge 23 luglio 2009, n. 99., no. 31 (2010). https://www.mase.gov.it/sites/default/files/dlgs_15_02_2010_31.pdf

²⁴ Nordio, C. (2022). *Giustizia. Ultimo atto. Da Tangentopoli al crollo della magistratura*. Guerini e Associati.

²⁵ Darnis, J.-P. (2021). *LES RELATIONS ENTRE LA FRANCE ET L’ITALIE ET LE RENOUVELLEMENT DU JEU EUROPÉEN*. L’Harmattan.

²⁶ Marro, E. (2018, October 21). *Debito pubblico: come, quando e perché è esploso in Italia*. Il Sole 24 ORE. <https://www.ilsole24ore.com/art/debito-pubblico-come-quando-e-perche-e-esploso-italia-AEMRbSRG>

²⁷ *Privatizzazione nell’Enciclopedia Treccani*. (n.d.). [Www.treccani.it](http://www.treccani.it). Retrieved October 24, 2022, from

<https://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/privatizzazione/>

²⁸ DECRETO LEGISLATIVO Attuazione della direttiva 96/92/CE recante norme comuni per il mercato interno dell’energia elettrica., no. 79 (1999).

<https://www.normattiva.it/uri-res/N2Ls?urn:nir:stato:decreto.legislativo:1999-03-16;79>

²⁹ *ENEL (Ente Nazionale per l’Energia Elettrica) - Treccani*. (n.d.). Treccani. Retrieved May 25, 2024, from [https://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/enel_\(Dizionario-di-Economia-e-Finanza\)/](https://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/enel_(Dizionario-di-Economia-e-Finanza)/)

(2024) the Ministry of economy and finances ownership of Enel amounts to 23,6%³⁰ of the stocks.

The liberalisation of the energy market was coherent with the European integration: starting January 1st 2000, gradually all clients were able to choose their energy supplier, with a widening process of the free market lasting 7 years, culminating in 2007³¹ when both industrial and household clients gained access to the free market offers.

When asked an opinion about the positivity of the effects of the liberalisation of the energy market in Italy, Umberto Quadrino answered that it was difficult to give a certain response given the multiple factors involved in pricing of energy, aspects that suffered multiple changes at an international level that were not definitely dependent on Italian domestic affairs. However, a positive aspect that Quadrino saw clearly in his career in this sector at the top of Edison, was the correlated increase in investment of which Italian energy facilities benefited enormously (F. Conti, personal communication, February 2024).

The French situation was rather different, the first data that can tell us something is the fact that the transformation of the national energy monopolist into a joint-stock company happened in 2004³², twelve years after Enel's. The capital participation was opened one year later, but State ownership never went below 80%, to come back to 100% in 2023³³ for reasons that are beyond the interest of this document.

The French approach was that of keeping as “French” and as public as possible certain commodities, being therefore reluctant to abandon the monopolies, for reasons of public service protection³⁴. In France as well 2007 was the year that marked the possibility for

³⁰ *Azionisti*. (n.d.). Www.enel.com. <https://www.enel.com/it/investitori/investimenti/azionisti>

³¹ DECRETO LEGGE Misure urgenti per la tutela dei consumatori, la promozione della concorrenza, lo sviluppo di attività economiche (, la nascita di nuove imprese, la valorizzazione dell'istruzione tecnico-professionale e la rottamazione di autoveicoli),, no. 7 (2007). <https://www.normattiva.it/uri-res/N2Ls?urn:nir:stato:decreto.legge:2007-01-31;7>

³² Loi relative au service public de l'électricité et du gaz et aux entreprises électriques et gazières, no. 2004-803 (2004).

<https://www.legifrance.gouv.fr/dossierlegislatif/JORFDOLE000017759383/#:~:text=Ce%20projet%20de%20loi%20vise,%25%20au%201er%20juillet%202007>.

³³ *Renationalisation EDF : l'Etat franchit le seuil de 90% du capital*. (2023, January 20). Capital.fr.

<https://www.capital.fr/economie-politique/renationalisation-edf-letat-franchit-le-seuil-de-90-du-capital-1457793>

³⁴ Darnis, J.-P. (2021). *LES RELATIONS ENTRE LA FRANCE ET L'ITALIE ET LE RENOUVELLEMENT DU JEU EUROPÉEN*. L'Harmattan.

clients to choose their supplier³⁵. But for the consumer to choose a different supplier there needs to be a different supplier in the first place.

On this matter, it was interesting to hear what Cav. Fulvio Conti had to say during the interview released for this thesis. When in 2007 Enel was selling in France energy produced by EDF, that was counted as a liberalised quota of the market. However, as Conti pointed out, if the French monopolist could choose which electricity it wanted to sell, to whom and at which price, the possibility of “disturbing” the monopoly and the market in general was rather little if none (F. Conti, personal communication, February 2024).

2.3 The Edison case in the perilous sea of the liberalisation of the energy market

On May 16 2001 Electricité de France communicated to Consob³⁶ the acquisition of 4% of Montedison’s shares³⁷, starting a confrontation with the Italian government that would last for five years and seriously stiffen negotiations on every matter between Italy and France.

This acquisition was presented by the buyer as fully trading-related, however, the figures augmented from 4% to 20% within one week (De Angelis, 2002), with EDF still declaring the operation to be purely financial with the promise of no further raise, but this declaration wasn’t enough to calm the suspicions of the Italian Council of Ministers that quickly approved, on May 23rd, the so-called “Anti EDF Decree”.

The aim at that time was to avoid what was perceived as a serious invasion of Italian sovereignty as the company that was quickly getting into the market was not private but owned by another state. Therefore decree law 192/2001³⁸ was very clear and “tailored” on the EDF-Edison case: within the energy sector, voting power in the company board was blocked

³⁵ Directive 2003/54/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 26 June 2003 concerning common rules for the internal market in electricity and repealing Directive 96/92/EC - Statements made with regard to decommissioning and waste management activities, no. 2003/54 (2003).

<https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=celex%3A32003L0054>

³⁶ The official independent authority that controls the Italian financial market.

³⁷ De Angelis, E. (2002). *L’Opa di Italennergia su Montedison ed Edison*. In *Archivio Ceradi*. CERADI - Centro di ricerca per il diritto d’impresa (Luiss - Libera Università Internazionale degli Studi Sociali Guido Carli).

<https://archivioceradi.luiss.it/documenti/archivioceradi/impresa/banca/opa/Montedison.pdf>

³⁸ LEGGE recante disposizioni urgenti per salvaguardare i processi di liberalizzazione e privatizzazione di specifici settori dei servizi pubblici., no. 192 (2001).

<https://www.normattiva.it/uri-res/N2Ls?urn:nir:stato:legge:2001;301#:~:text=maggio%202001%2C%20n.-,192%2C%20recante%20disposizioni%20urgenti%20per%20salvaguardare%20i%20processi%20di%20liberalizzazi one,sua%20pubblicazione%20nella%20Gazzetta%20Ufficiale.>

to 2% for any foreign state-owned shareholder. With such a response from the Italian government, it was indispensable for EDF to find allies within Italy, an intention which has been concretised on July 1st when Italenergia -a society that included Electricité de France, Fiat, Carlo Tassara, Banca di Roma, Sanpaolo-Imi and Banca Intesa- launched an OPA on Montedison, declaring the following day that already 52,9% of the capital had been acquired. After a couple of increases in the bid for Montedison's stock, the OPA had success: on August 21st 96,7% of Montedison was acquired (De Angelis, 2002). Still, the 2% limit to the voting power remained pending on EDF.

It is easy to imagine that a clash has stemmed from this event, and the French energy market must be considered as well, since the liberalisation of the market EDF advocated for in Italy, was being rather tardive in France itself. European commissioner for competition Mario Monti publicly complained about this in 2002³⁹ in an all but obvious declaration, that was seconded by Enel and Vdew (German federation of electricity producers) on March 18th during a summit on European energy market at the Milano Polytechnic. According to Monti EDF had not opened the market to competitors and kept consumers tied to their contracts, indeed he listed the control activities initiated lately by Antitrust which was mostly focused on the French energy market. Moreover, no criticism was spared for the results of the European Council meeting in Barcelona concluded just the day before⁴⁰.

This Barcelona summit was supposed to be a turning point for the liberalisation of energy market, but despite the various steps ahead and the declaration of intentions for the future steps to be taken, the result of the hard negotiations with French President Chirac and Prime Minister Jospin (both tackled by the upcoming elections in their country) who opposed strongly to a “too fast” deregulation were a postponement of the liberalisation of the energy market which irritated Italy.

The result of the mediations was particularly and cross-wisely unappreciated in Italy by the political parties, as the report of the session of April 18th of the Commission for Business

³⁹ Giliberto, J. (2002, March 19). Monti denuncia - deregulation frenata. *Corriere Della Sera*.

⁴⁰ CONCLUSIONI DELLA PRESIDENZA CONSIGLIO EUROPEO DI BARCELLONA 15 E 16 MARZO 2002 . In *mef.gov.it*. Ministero dell'Economia e delle Finanze. https://www.dt.mef.gov.it/export/sites/sitodt/modules/documenti_it/rapporti_finanziari_internazionali/rapporti_finanziari_internazionali/Conc_della_Pres_Cons_Eur_di_Barcellona_15-16_marzo_2002.pdf

Activities, Trade and Tourism of the Chamber of Deputies attests⁴¹. While discussing on the approval of the document on the “Inquiry on the situation and future of the energy sector” a member of the government coalition declared that the Barcelona decisions only “partially encompassed” the call for liberalisation, while a member of the opposition thought that Italy needed to publicly denounce and intervene on the fact that the whole summit was at mercy of EDF.

2.4 To kill (more than)two birds with a stone: multiple Italo-French issues in one negotiation (2003-2005)

Italian politicians and opinion makers advocating for nuclear and/or for a partnership with France claimed that the cost of energy above the Alps was roughly half that of below the Alps. This was almost true, the price of electricity for Italian households, as of January 1st 2003, was of 198,4 euros per MegaWatt/hour⁴² while in France the same figure amounted to 112 €/MWh. However, without counting VAT and energy-specific taxes the figures became 145 and 89€/MWh. More or less the same proportions were found for energy for industrial usage. Since taxation differences could not possibly be erased with any foreign partnership, the price advantage was not 1 versus 2, but it was still very significant: electricity costed French families on average 62% of what it costed to Italian ones, even excluding taxation peculiarities.

Therefore the Italian government and Enel sought an entrance into the French market and more, the aim was to integrate as much as possible the two national markets and productions in order to lower energy bills for households and to increase the certainty of supply. To complete the framework of Italian fragility in this sector, it is enough to check the declarations of then Enel’s President Pietro Gnudi during the 2003 summit of the heads of energy sector of the G7 countries in Washington: Italy -Gnudi declared- was the G7 nation

⁴¹ X COMMISSIONE ATTIVITÀ PRODUTTIVE, COMMERCIO E TURISMO INDAGINE CONOSCITIVA *Seduta di giovedì 18 aprile 2002*. (2002).

https://documenti.camera.it/_dati/leg14/lavori/stencomm/10/indag/settore_energia/2002/0418/s000r.htm

⁴²*Prix du gaz et de l’électricité en Europe au 1er janvier 2003*. (2003). Ministère de l’économie des Finances et de l’Industrie - Direction Générale de l’Énergie et des Matières Premières Observatoire de l’Économie de l’Énergie et des Matières Premières.

https://inis.iaea.org/collection/NCLCollectionStore/_Public/35/032/35032694.pdf

with the highest imports of electricity (a 17% share of total consumption) and this was related by Gnudi to the fact that it was also the only G7 nation structurally using crude oil as an energy source and to have completely dismantled nuclear⁴³.

There was more, Enel couldn't obviously expand in Italy, as the direction was that of liberalisation of the market in which Enel was once the pure monopolist, both Enel CEO Scaroni and the Italian minister of economy Giulio Tremonti were looking towards France for the expansion of the Italian state-participated giant.

Both the nations had positive prospects in joining such a programme, however it was difficult to progress in a minefield as the Franco-Italian relations of the early 2000s, in fact, as will be reported in this section, it looked like the agreement was completed and about to be signed multiple times before this actually happened, as many times as those in which it seemed that the whole negotiation was about to be closed with no result whatsoever. Firstly, what was put on the plate by EDF was the waiver of the limit to the voting right in Edison, as a condition to any progress in the negotiations that officially began in 2003⁴⁴.

The main actors of this first round of negotiations will be François Roussey (CEO of EDF), Jean-Pierre Raffarin (Prime Minister of France), the formerly mentioned Paolo Scaroni (CEO of Enel) and Antonio Marzano (Italian minister for economic development). All of their four mandates would end between the end of 2004 and the Spring of 2005, but even though passing through multiple incidents and hindrances, some of the architraves of the Italo-French nuclear platform were developed in those years.

Scaroni's plan began with an interest towards Snet⁴⁵, a small French energy producer that used coal combustion as a source. The first critique that came from the press and part of the political arena in Italy was that the 2 gigawatts produced by Snet that would end up in Enel's hands were a little prize for Italy if the government was to give up on Edison's 10 gigawatts of output. Of course, the nuclear participation was already on the plate but the perspective of a participation in the capital of old and close to decommissioning French nuclear plants, with all the costs and waiting that decommissioning and rebuilding presents, certainly didn't make the deal look better. A more convincing development was needed.

⁴³ A Washington un G-7 anti black-out. (2003, October 10). *Il Sole 24 Ore*.

⁴⁴ EDF - ROUSSELY INCONTRA SCARONI (ENEL) E MORCHIO (FIAT). (2003, March 23). *AGI - Agenzia Giornalistica Italia*.

⁴⁵ Lorenzini, E. (2003, April 11). I rischi dell'avventura francese. *Il Sole 24 Ore*.

In April of 2003 the first officially known Scaroni-Roussely meeting on this topic was held, the relevance of the Edison affair is such that the CEO of FIAT -the main stock holder in Italennergia- Giuseppe Morchio was present⁴⁶. The possibility of a participation of Enel, maybe through new joint ventures, in the building of new power plants is discussed. Everything seems to go smoothly, but as mentioned in §2.1, the 1987 referendum made it impossible for Enel, among other things, to participate in the development of nuclear programmes abroad. Law-proposal Marzano⁴⁷ was already in the making to deal exactly with this, it would go under the scrutiny of the Chambers in July and be approved in September of the following year.

An accident worth mentioning is the one of July the 26th 2003, when the Italian electricity supply “semi-collapsed” with hours of recurring massive blackouts, the blame of which was fully given by the public opinion to EDF, who had cut of 800 megawatt the exports towards Italy for that day⁴⁸. Roussely defended himself explaining to the Italian press that the communication of that reduction came forty-eight hours in advance -despite the twenty-four notice that the contracts established- and that the increasing temperatures of the beginning of summer brought electricity demand up and the output down. Still, the day after, the Italian minister of economy refused to meet him in Rome, but while the impact on the negotiations wasn’t actually dramatic it is reasonable to think that the impact on Italian consideration of the importance of the nuclear deal was more important.

The next two Roussely-Scaroni meetings in July 21st and 24th gave bitter-sweet results: the possibility for Enel to get into the French market was delineating as well as a participation in a nuclear programme, or the right of selling EDF-produced energy (right of draught) and the founding of a joint venture to sell energy in other European countries^{49 50 51}. However, the statute of EDF connotated it as a monopoly-operating company and the amending of this was postponed by French Raffarin government, in this context the Italennergia affaire weight became a deal-breaker as Roussely was risking his own position under the accuse of having

⁴⁶ EDF - ROUSSELY INCONTRA SCARONI (ENEL) E MORCHIO (FIAT). (2003, March 23). *AGI - Agenzia Giornalistica Italia*.

⁴⁷ *Legge 23 agosto 2004, n. 239 “Riordino del settore energetico, nonche’ delega al Governo per il riassetto delle disposizioni vigenti in materia di energia,”* (2004) (testimony of Antonio Marzano). <https://www.senato.it/documenti/repository/eventi/dicembre2004/fscommand/Elenco%20leggi/239.pdf>

⁴⁸ Agnoli, S. (2003, June 28). “Legittimo il taglio della fornitura francese L’Italia informata con 48 ore di anticipo.” *Corriere Della Sera*.

⁴⁹ Rizzo, S. (2003, July 22). Enel-Edf, più vicina l’intesa nell’energia. *Corriere Della Sera*.

⁵⁰ Edf e Enel, iniziative oltre Italia e Francia-Roussely a stampa. (2003, July 25). *Reuters - REUTIT*.

⁵¹ Oddo, G. (2003, July 25). Edf apre a Enel le porte di Francia. *Il Sole 24 Ore*.

uselessly spent 4,8 billion euros into a project of which he had no control yet. Therefore the situation froze for some months⁵².

Before the stop, the French press was confident that a Franco-Italian agreement was to come within 2003, this possibility being reinforced after Raffarin and Scaroni had what was communicated to be a positive meeting during the central event for Italo-European politics "The European House Ambrosetti" in Cernobbio⁵³. On the Italian side, after what was defined a "roman marathon" of meetings -with Scaroni, Marzano and the President of the Commission for business activities of the Chamber of Deputies Bruno Tabacchi- of Francois Roussely on October 28th 2003, a wide part of the Italian press declared that the major details of the agreement Enel-EDF were settled and that the signing was to be done before Christmas. Enel was to participate in the Epr nuclear programme in France and it would have had the right to trade 10-12% of the Energy produced in France and the possibility of buying 50% of Snet from Charbonnage de France, while the Italenergia wall had not fallen yet, for such a step from the Italian government steps towards the respect of the EU common standards for energy market, such as the quotation on the stock market of EDF⁵⁴.

Therefore, while the agreement seemed to be ready on the industrial side, there was no solution on the political side yet, and to make matters worse, trade unions led by the Confédération Général du Travail declared clearly their preference for an acquisition of Snet by the French Gaz de France rather than by Enel⁵⁵; a declaration which had a weight on the choices of the Raffarin government, that had already furtherly postponed the reform of EDF and GDF statutes to discuss it thoroughly with trade unions.

On January 8th 2004 delegations with the technical experts from the two companies met to decide the details of the agreement in numerical terms, which included the acquisition for Enel of 5 to 7 thousand megawatts of output and the capital quota of 35% of Snet from EDF, plus a participation in the Epr programme⁵⁶. But the political fog did everything but clear with other issues occupying the table of the two governments such as the funding and start of

⁵² Agnoli, S. (2003). Enel-Edf, Parigi frena sull'intesa. *Corriere Della Sera*.

⁵³ EDF et Enel devraient conclure un accord en 2003. (2003, Septembre 8). *La Tribune*.

⁵⁴ Zoppo, A. (2003, October 29). Enel-Edf, l'accordo entro Natale. *MF - Mercati Finanziari*.

⁵⁵ ENEL - SNET, SINDACATI FRANCESI PREFERISCONO GDF. (2004, January 9). *ANSA*.

⁵⁶ Enel a un passo dall'intesa per l'elettricità francese. (2004, January 8). *Corriere Della Sera*.

the Turin-Lyon railway and the Alitalia-Air France partnership⁵⁷, in which a reciprocal stock exchange of 2% in 2001 had prepared the way.

In this messy context, on May 18th, two days before the self-given deadline for the EDF-Enel memorandum of understanding, EDF finally requested more time before signing anything, and in the following months it was absorbed in the institutional negotiations⁵⁸ that would have been concluded on July 22nd 2004, with the reform of EDF and GDF statutes that transformed them in limited liability companies, with a minimum ownership and voting right for the state of 70%⁵⁹.

Everything will be practically frozen for almost a year, works officially resuming at the beginning of 2005 -with some changes in the apical figures- and the MoU being signed in May, but the building foundations of the agreement that would eventually be finalised were built between 2003 and 2004.

⁵⁷ Calcaterra, M. (2004, January 8). Enel-Edf alla stretta finale. *Il Sole 24 Ore*.

⁵⁸ Agnoli, S. (2004, May 18). Intesa Enel-Edf, Parigi chiede tempo. *Corriere Della Sera*.

⁵⁹ *Legal status | EDF FR*. (2023, September 7). [Www.edf.fr](https://www.edf.fr).

<https://www.edf.fr/en/the-edf-group/dedicated-sections/investors/legal-status>

§.III Concretisation of the negotiations: the Franco-Italian “*Pax energetica*”

3.1 The last plot-twists

After a change of leadership for EDF in September, from Francois Rousseley to Pierre Gadonneix, the situation seemed to have stabilised so negotiations resumed.

On January 24th 2005⁶⁰, the day before the Italo-French bilateral summit of that year, Gadonneix met the minister of economy Domenico Siniscalco and the very influential undersecretary of state Gianni Letta. The first question raised was the need to find a solution for the Edison case, which still constituted a deal-breaker for the French. Besides the issue of the voting right, EDF also opposed the Italian rule that obliged the French company to make an OPA on the whole capital of Edison that it didn't own yet, an operation the cost of which was calculated above twelve billion euros.

In the summit of the following day, rather surprisingly, President Silvio Berlusconi and Prime Minister Jean-Pierre Raffarin declared that a solution for EDF to be operative on the Italian market, therefore a solution to the Edison case would have been found within one month⁶¹. The compensation was identified, by the Italians, as the presence of Enel in the French market through an access to French produced nuclear energy at a price close to that of production, a retake of the idea of *droit de tirage* included in the so-called “Rousseley plan”.

It is in this moment in which anyone would have placed a bet over a quick resolution, that another *coup de théâtre* was about to be enacted by Gadonneix⁶²: no energy exchange EDF-Enel nor a sale of energy at production price were possible, such a privilege would have been too heavy and other international partners would have asked EDF the same. Moreover, this kind of production alliance was also likely to put in motion the European Commission's antitrust authority for the risk to stiffen too much the young free energy market.

The negotiations kept going, however, once again, nothing could be finalised because the Edison case was hindering again, at the point in which Gadonneix, in the early days of May

⁶⁰ EDISON: OGGI GADONNEIX A ROMA, AL VIA TRATTATIVE SU EDF/ANSA 200. (2005). *ANSA*.

⁶¹ PUNTO 1-Edf, Italia-Francia per accordo in un mese. (2005, January 25). *Reuters - REUTERS*.

⁶² Gadonneix chiude la porta a Enel Edf non sarebbe più disposta a uno scambio di energia Italia-Francia. (2005, February 8). *Il Giornale*.

2005, made everyone believe -at least for what concerns the press- that EDF was about to exit completely from Edison, an event which would of course have influenced the course of the Enel deal. The decision was actually postponed by EDF's board of May 5th giving a last chance for the Consob decision on the price imposed for the obligatory OPA -the one expressed before was considered too high to be borne by EDF alone- and for the Italian government decision on the voting right limit^{63 64}.

Finally, within less than a week, three plot-twists put the word end on this quinquennial contest: Consob accepted to lower the price per stock for the OPA on Edison⁶⁵; an agreement was found between EDF and AEM⁶⁶Milan's municipal utility company, to found a joint venture for the OPA and the ownership of Edison; the Italian government announced that the famous 2% limit to the voting right would soon be gone for good⁶⁷.

3.2 The treaties of the *Pax energetica*

On May 30th 2005, Pierre Gadonneix and Fulvio Conti (nominated Scaroni's successor four days before) signed the first memorandum of understanding, resulting from a negotiation lasting more than two years⁶⁸. On July 12th, the institutional counterparts, minister for entrepreneurship and economic growth Scajola and minister for industry Francois Loos met in Genova to sign a cooperation pact⁶⁹. One month later, finally, the Italian parliament confirmed the waiver of the voting right limit for EDF in Edison's board⁷⁰.

⁶³ La Consob accepte de baisser légèrement le prix d'une OPA d'EDF sur Edison. (2005, May 4). *Les Echos*.

⁶⁴ EDF : conseil d'administration décisif pour l'Italie. (2005, May 6). *Les Echos*.

⁶⁵ L'AD DEL COLOSSO FRANCESE: IN UNA SETTIMANA RISOLTE DUE INCERTEZZE, DETERMINANTI I CHIARIMENTI DELLA CONSOB "Edison sarà il polo del gas targato Edf" Gadonneix: intesa equilibrata, sbocco nucleare per l'Enel. (2005, May 8). *La Stampa*.

⁶⁶ EDISON: EDF SCEGLIE AEM, CONTROLLO FIFTY-FIFTY /ANSA. (2005, May 6). *ANSA*.

⁶⁷ ECONOMIA E BILANCIO Pronto il decreto sul 2% in Italenergia Oggi cda di Edf, resta l'ipotesi Endesa. (2005, May 6). *La Stampa*.

⁶⁸ *Firmato l'accordo di cooperazione tra Enel ed Edf*. (2005, May 30). www.enel.com.

<https://www.enel.com/it/media/esplora/ricerca-comunicati-stampa/press/2005/05/firmato-laccordo-di-cooperazione-tra-enel-ed-edf>

⁶⁹ Arriva il patto Italia-Francia sull'energia. E parte dal nucleare. (2005, June 12). *Corriere Della Sera*.

⁷⁰ Dl energia: ok definitivo Senato, stop tetto 2% voti Edf. (2005, July 12). *Il Sole 24 Ore*.

The Enel-EDF MoU envisaged a participation of Enel in the making of the new NPP in Flamanville with a quota of 12,5%, estimated between 375M and 425M euros⁷¹. This agreement represented for Enel the entrance in a very coveted market. Press published rumours also included the possibility for Enel to purchase 35% of Snet, entering immediately the French market.

In this idyllic moment, the cherry on the cake came with the final and peaceful resolution of the Edison case, which had become in the words of Fulvio Conti “a currency in the negotiations”. On July 17th, just five days after the Italian Senate had given the final approval to the waiver of the famous 2% limit, the European Commission’s Antitrust department approved EDF and AEM’s project to jointly acquire Edison⁷². The agreement was set so harmoniously that at the point of nominating the new CEO, on which EDF had the right of choice while the president’s choice was AEM’s competence, the already standing Umberto Quadrino was reconfirmed rather than replaced with a French manager, which would have been perfectly acceptable in the context of an even share of nominations. This was of course interpreted as a positive acknowledgement on the Italian side and by Quadrino himself (U. Quadrino, personal communication, February 2024).

3.2 Enel and EDF reciprocal expansionary attempts in foreign land

In January 2006 the Italian press celebrated triumphantly that on the first day of the year EDF supplied Enel with a tranche of 300 megawatts to be traded in the French market, making the Italian company manage almost 3% of the overall French energy demand⁷³. This was just one step in the scope of the aim to get to 3000 megawatts, making Enel the first foreign energy company in France, an aim that to be reached included the acquisition of part of Snet, an operation which was on hold due to the waiting for the definition of the situation of the

⁷¹ ENEL - 3000 MW IN FRANCIA DA ACCORDO EDF, COSTO ALMENO 800 MLN. (2005, June 2). *AGI - Agenzia Giornalistica Italia*.

⁷² (EU) UE/CONCORRENZA: approvato l’ acquisto della Edison da parte della EDF e AEM. (2005, August 18). *Agence Europe*.

⁷³ Iezzi, L. (2006, January 10). L’Enel dà la luce ai francesi - È il primo operatore straniero con il 3% del mercato - Accordo tra Conti e Gadonneix: il monopolista transalpino Edf gira al colosso italiano 300 Mw da vendere. *La Repubblica*.

ownership of Endesa, Snet's major stockholder that was in that moment under the OPA of another Spanish company.

In February 2006, Enel turned its attention towards the Belgian company Electrabel, owned by Suez (a French utility company). When the OPA was launched on February 25th, an accident happened between Italy and France of the kind that hadn't been seen since 2002⁷⁴. Shortly after the declaration, the French Prime Minister Dominique De Villepin declared that Suez was soon to merge with Gaz de France, making Enel's plans lose any probability of realisation. Italian malcontent was hard and manifested: minister Scajola declared that "neo protectionism jeopardised the future of the European Union" while minister Tremonti got to the point of saying that such barriers risked to obtain a "1914 effect" (*Parigi Annuncia Fusione Suez-Gdf per Fermare Enel*, 2006).

During the interview specifically carried out for this thesis, Cav. Fulvio Conti revealed an interesting underhand work that, if any doubt could be present, proves with certainty the centrality of this story in the agendas of the head of governments and for domestic politics. According to Conti's reconstruction, the talks with Suez were started during Scaroni's mandate, they were therefore lasting some years already and "didn't get too far from a simple *pour parler*", and the aim was at that point to close the deal in collaboration with Veolia⁷⁵ leaving for the French partner the commercial slice of Suez and keeping for Enel the nuclear capacity, the bite that the Italian company was craving for. At that point of stall, admitting to the press the existence of such talks would have either accelerated the process or stopped it. The second option materialised when, shortly after Conti's declaration, De Villepin phone-called Silvio Berlusconi to manifest his anger for what was perceived as an unacceptable and unfriendly intrusion. The Italian President consequently called Enel's CEO and asked him to suspend the operation for the sake of good Italo-French relations.

The public embarrassment provoked by this situation delayed further the signing of the Enel-EDF nuclear agreement, which was expected within July⁷⁶.

⁷⁴ *Parigi annuncia fusione Suez-Gdf per fermare Enel*. (2006, February 25). La Stampa. <https://www.lastampa.it/economia/2006/02/25/news/parigi-annuncia-fusione-suez-gdf-per-fermare-enel-1.37160645/>

⁷⁵ Veolia: French utility company.

⁷⁶ ENEL: EDF RINVIATA ACCORDO SU ENERGIA PER INTERFERENZE SU SUEZ. (2006, June 28). *AGI - Agenzia Giornalistica Italia* .

An additional difficulty was the Edipower case: on September 20th Acea (Rome's utility company, 51% owned by the capital's municipality) sued EDF and AEM for owning -combined- more than 30% of Edipower, a share higher than the limit set for ownership of public enterprises of a prior Genco -Enel's company for management of power plants⁷⁷. The roman company lamented that in order to respect this norm it formerly had to limit its participation in another Genco named Tirreno Power, while through their ownership of Edison the two defendants were bypassing this norm.

Pierre Gadonneix openly stated that any progress in the partnership with Enel was once again blocked by an Italian norm prohibiting the legitimate expansion of EDF⁷⁸, the industrial partnership with Enel was "technically ready" but this time the Italian part had something to recriminate too, the Suez situation.

On May 31st 2007, the 5 year-lasting decree-law that established the 30% limit of ownership on Edipower expired and it wasn't renewed⁷⁹. It was evident at that time that even the Italian centre-left government - between 2006 and 2008 a very narrow majority constituted the only centre-left government in Berlusconi's decade which began in 2001 and ended in 2011- wanted to boost the nuclear comeback process. Vice President of the Council D'Alema (President of the Council between 1998 and 2000, the only one ever who had a past in the Communist Party) was one of the most clear about this, due to the gains expected for household prices⁸⁰.

On the Suez quest as well the Italian part took a step back, the choice wasn't actually in Enel's hands but rather in the French government's, so the process for the merger with Gaz de France proceeded.

Despite these bitter events, the ground was now ready to proceed in the enactment of an actual nuclear deal.

⁷⁷ *Acea contro Edf: non rispetta il tetto del 30% in Edipower.* (2006, April 20). IlGiornale.it.

<https://www.ilgiornale.it/news/acea-contro-edf-non-rispetta-tetto-30-edipower.html>

⁷⁸ ENEL/GADONNEIX: CHIUSURA ACCORDO SE SARA' TOLTO TETTO 30% EDIPOWER; La partnership è tecnicamente a punto. (2006, September 28). *Apcom/TMNews-General News Service.*

⁷⁹ Edison: via il tetto ai soci pubblici. (2007, May 31). *MF-Dow Jones Global.*

⁸⁰ D'Alema: il nucleare non è più un tabù E i francesi si muovono. (2007, November 16). *Corriere Della Sera.*

3.3 The second official milestone of the Franco-Italian energy cooperation (2007)

On November the 30th 2007 in Nice, a grand French-Italian summit saw the presence of Nicolas Sarkozy, Romano Prodi, Pierre Gadonneix and Fulvio Conti. Italian Minister for economic development Pier Luigi Bersani and French Minister of energy and development⁸¹ Jean-Louis Borloo signed the “Agreement in the energy field”⁸².

First of all, an interesting political annotation can be taken by reading article 3 in the words “recognising [...] the contribution of nuclear energy in the contrast to climate change”. The lack of carbon dioxide emissions from NPPs would be more and more emphasised by pro-nuclearists in the following decades.

The most interesting part comes in article 4, where both governments pledge to respect the free choice of EDF and Edison shareholders for the future of the Italian company and give an endorsement, with the words “the two parties rejoice for” to the following three topics: the Enel-EDF partnership for Flamanville; the economic results of the 2005 EDF-AEM partnership for Edison; the new agreement signed by the two former national monopolists to increase the electric capacity exchange to enhance Enel’s development in France.

At this point, we find another MoU communicated on the day of the summit⁸³, the kind of document that was most relevant for this thesis. This time the nuclear deal was not only declared and finalised but publicly defined, confirming the quota of 12,5% of Enel into Flamanville; planning for Enel to double the access to French nuclear capacity from 600 megawatts to 1200 Megawatts and a participation in French new combined cycle power plants between 30% and 40%; this was mirrored by a similar participation envisaged for EDF in some of Enel’s projects in the Mediterranean.

At that moment, the bets for the future of the Franco-Italian nuclear platform were probably 100% for a successful realisation.

⁸¹ Full name of the institution: Ministry of ecology, energy, sustainable development and sea

⁸² *Accordo in campo energetico tra il Governo della Repubblica Italiana e il Governo della Repubblica Francese*, (2007).

⁸³ *FIRMATO L ACCORDO DI COLLABORAZIONE ENEL-EDF*. (2007, November 30). www.enel.com. <https://www.enel.com/it/media/esplora/ricerca-comunicati-stampa/press/2007/11/firmato-laccordo-di-collaborazione-enel-edf>

3.4 New first steps for nuclear in Italian territory and evolution of Italo-French partnerships (2008-2010)

3.4.1 Italian preparations in 2008-2009

At this point nuclear energy had once again all the wind in its sails in Italy with a vigour that was not seen since the National Energy Plan of 1975 -crushed by the 1987 referendum- that established the building of eight NPPs. Minister Scajola was so optimistic that he declared the laying of the foundation stone of the first new generation of Italian nuclear power was to come within five years⁸⁴, with the jubilation of Enel, Edison and Confindustria and the dissent of the whole environmentalist front mounting: the critique of having wiped out the result of a popular vote was very easy to put forward.

The issue was then a question of *how* to realise the project, *who* was supposed to realise it -other actors besides Enel and EDF such as A2A⁸⁵ and Sorgenia⁸⁶ were not willing to sit and watch- and *when*.

Giuliano Zuccoli, A2A's President, stated that the biggest decisions to be made in the process of the nuclear rebuilding were relating to what changes needed to be done to Italian legislation in order to allow it, how many plants we wanted, the characteristics of the sites and the -still not resolved today in 2024, at the time of writing of this thesis- disposal of nuclear waste. In saying so, Zuccoli also announced A2A was ready to participate in the nuclear programme, launching the idea of a consortium of Italian companies⁸⁷.

The idea of a nuclear industry characterised by a consortium was confirmed by the CEOs of Enel and Edison Conti and Quadrino during a visit at the building site of Flamanville in Normandie⁸⁸. However, both of them referred to a collaboration between Enel and Edison, a

⁸⁴ Foresta Martin, F. (2008, May 23). Scajola rilancia il nucleare: centrali in 5 anni. *Corriere Della Sera*.

⁸⁵ Formerly AEM, ASM Brescia and AMSA. This company in 2008 united three municipally participated energy companies in Lombardy.

⁸⁶ Private utility company founded in Milan in 1999.

⁸⁷ Nucleare, serve un consorzio con Enel in primo piano - Zuccoli. (2008). *Reuters - REUTIT*.

⁸⁸ Le due società pronte a collaborare per sviluppare impianti di terza generazione; Enel ed Edison alla guida del consorzio. (2008). *Il Sole 24 Ore*.

straightforward role of A2A was not mentioned and, as will be soon exposed, this aspect was destined to create some friction in Italy.

3.4.2 2009-2010: the “hot years” of transalpine nuclear deals

The following paragraphs are about the most crucial years for the realisation of the platform, these two years wouldn't have kept their primacy if the process went on, but given the abortion of the project that occurred the years 2009-2010 actually were the ones with the most steps accomplished.

2009 began, inaugurating a biennium in which multiple steps ahead were achieved, with great news for Italy: Siemens announced in January the decision to quit its participation of 34% in Areva NP⁸⁹. Areva, formerly up to 2001 Framatome and renamed so since 2018, is a French company specialised in nuclear power owned -then and nowadays- mostly by the French State. The alliance Siemens-Areva was established in 1989 and is at the basis of the development of the European pressurised reactor, therefore a long and important alliance between German and French nuclear industries that was expressed, among other things, with the joint venture Areva NP.

An alliance the end of which could be interpreted as an opportunity for French actors -such as Alstom, the French industry giant at the time still involved in energy generation and distribution- as well as Italian ones, particularly Ansaldo Nucleare, the subsidiary for nuclear of Ansaldo Energia⁹⁰, of which the Italian state is the biggest shareholder, back then through Finmeccanica and nowadays through Cassa Depositi e Prestiti. This was the trigger for an approaching between Areva and Italy that will be analysed shortly, after having exposed the agreements that made it possible.

⁸⁹ Letessier, I. (2009). Siemens cède sa participation dans Areva NP. *Le Figaro*.

⁹⁰ *Ansaldo - Treccani*. (n.d.). Treccani. <https://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/ansaldo/>

On February 24th 2009, the Italo-French bilateral at the presence Presidents Berlusconi and Sarkozy marked the signing of a fundamental MoU⁹¹, the first one explicitly outlining, as the title on Enel's webpage reads "the development of nuclear in Italy".

The plan included the building of four new NPP in Italian territory, a public declaration of marked audacity. This was to be realised through a newco evenly participated by Enel and EDF, keeping for the Italians the majority in ownership and usage of the energy outputs, as well as the leadership in their management. The roadmap included the possibility of opening the ownership of the power plants to other companies, as long as the majority of the shares was kept for the former monopolists.

Moreover, the same MoU envisaged a widening of Enel's participation in French nuclear, with five more NPPs on the way, among which the one recently allowed by the French government in Penly, Normandie.

In August the joint venture Sviluppo Nucleare Italia was founded⁹², with a participation of 50% each for Enel and EDF, with the aim of realising the nuclear plan, a course of events that of course left other actors such as A2A with a bitter taste in their mouth. However, most of the press agreed that the plan was to open to the sale of 49% of the capital of the company, a choice that was close to -even though not fully- forced given the huge amount of investments the programme requested: the plan was to build six Epr reactors in Italy, while just one, the one in Flamanville, was at the time supposed to cost 4,5 billion euros.

In this context of competitiveness, rumours reported by *Il Corriere della Sera* even mentioned a fully Italian alliance proposed to Scaroni (ENI) by Zuccoli (A2A)⁹³, who as mentioned in §3.4.1, would have preferred a more widely participated consortium.

A thing which would explain sidemoves by A2A is the explanation of Conti of the actual intentions with the regards to the opening of SNI's capital to A2A: the intention to let the Lombard company in was not existing at all, as, given its size, it couldn't bring any

⁹¹ The third of the Enel-EDF ones that marked the negotiations
ACCORDO ENEL-EDF PER LO SVILUPPO DEL NUCLEARE IN ITALIA. (2009, February 24).

www.enel.com.

<https://www.enel.com/it/media/esplora/ricerca-comunicati-stampa/press/2009/02/accordo-enel-edf-per-lo-sviluppo-del-nucleare-in-italia>

⁹² Pagni, L. (2009). Avanza il nucleare italiano ecco la joint venture Enel-Edf - La società studierà la realizzazione di 4 centrali. I due colossi alleati per un impianto in Normandia. *La Repubblica*.

⁹³ NUCLEARE: A2A PER ASSE ITALIANO CON ENI E FINMECCANICA. (2009). *ANSA*.

advantage nor on the economical nor on the technological aspect (F. Conti, personal communication, February 2024).

On this matter, the rightfulness of the decision to keep SNI within the exclusive competence of Enel and EDF was confirmed by Umberto Quadrino, at the time CEO of Edison, 50% owned by A2A itself. The reason for this opinion was defined as the high complexity of the mission this new joint venture aimed at, therefore, a mission in which only the two former monopolists could really operate (U. Quadrino, personal communication, February 2024).

Meanwhile, in order to mention another aspect of what was defined in the title of this chapter a hot year for Italian nuclear deals, the German E.on and GDF-Suez -both involved in the construction of new NPPs in British territory for a total of almost 10 Gigawatts and already managing 16 NPPs combined- also declared interest in the new Italian nuclear. Considering that the government aimed at increasing the quota of nuclear power much more than what four power plants could, the pie seemed to be big enough for everyone.

The Franco-German alliance would be officialised in June 2010 and communicated to the undersecretary Letta by delegates of the two companies⁹⁴.

After the foundation of SNI, the second biggest outcome of the February 2009 MoUs was another MoU, this time involving more than two companies. On April 9th 2010, Enel, EDF, Ansaldo Energia (owned by Finmeccanica) signed the memorandum for the development of nuclear energy in Italy. This was the basis for the cooperation on commissioning and licensing of the new NPPs that the two former monopolists planned to build together, a field in which Ansaldo Nucleare, fully owned by Ansaldo Energia, already had experience of participation and management.

As a whole, Italian businesses at the time involved in the new nuclear generation were thirty in the already progressing Flamanville and Olkiluoto(Finland) sites⁹⁵.

Finally, to complete the framework of the agreements, this brief paragraph will cite the institutional side: on the same day as the latter mentioned MoU, April 9th 2010, in Paris

⁹⁴ Energia. Ufficializzata ieri la cordata franco-tedesca per partecipare allo sviluppo del nucleare in Italia; Intesa tra Eon e GdF-Suez. (2010). *Il Sole 24 Ore*.

⁹⁵ Rendina, F. (2019, December 19). Energia. partito il progetto di enel-edf per qualificare le imprese e le unità produttive che realizzeranno le centrali; tecnologia e idee per il nucleare. *Il Sole 24 Ore*.

during the Franco-Italian bilateral with Presidents Sarkozy and Berlusconi, the agreement on realisation of academic, scientific and technical cooperation in the sector of civil nuclear was signed⁹⁶.

Besides matters of cooperation that can be guessed through the title of the document, an interesting comma in article 2 states the will to found a “workgroup on the acceptability of nuclear energy through the exchange of information on activities, policies, practices, laws and regulations on the matter”. The role of France towards Italy, in the nuclear context, was that of mentorship also on the propaganda side of the operation.

The will to make this agreement factual was clear with articles 5 and 6, which gave mandate to specifically founded bodies, supposed to meet once a year, to care for the realisation of the cooperation in each aspect mentioned in the treaty.

At this point, the platform this thesis focuses on was already factually working. Before turning to the abrupt end of this story, the next paragraph will make one further specific analysis.

3.5 The legislative framework

This paragraph is to precisely expose three provisions that constituted the basis of the remaking of nuclear power in Italy and were, for this reason, at the centre of the anti-nuclear referendum called in 2011.

A significant legislative step was done in June 2008. With Law n. 112-⁹⁷ the new National Energy Strategy officially envisaged in article 7.1.d the “construction of nuclear power plants in national territory”. This was just a declaration of will, not a programmatic list of steps, still, such a direct declaration needed to be embedded in an article (7.1) with plenty of reassurances such as diversification of energy sources and of geographical location of the facilities (article 7.1.a), promotion of renewable energy sources (article 7.1.c) and others.

⁹⁶ *ACCORDO TRA IL GOVERNO DELLA REPUBBLICA ITALIANA E GOVERNO DELLA REPUBBLICA FRANCESE RELATIVO ALLA REALIZZAZIONE DI UNA COOPERAZIONE UNIVERSITARIA, SCIENTIFICA E TECNICA NEL SETTORE NUCLEARE CIVILE*, (2010).

⁹⁷ *DECRETO-LEGGE 25 giugno 2008, n. 112*, (2008).
<https://www.gazzettaufficiale.it/eli/id/2008/08/21/08A05897/sg>

The last two legislative tools that will be mentioned are Law on “Provisions for the development and internationalisation of enterprises, as well as on energy”⁹⁸ and the resulting Decree-Law of February 15th 2010 n.31⁹⁹. The former, in its article 25, ratified the proxy to the government for in the field of nuclear, giving mandate to re-establish a legislation for the allocation on national territory of NPPs and of the whole related production chain. In February 2010, the first Decree-Law responding to these needs was approved.

⁹⁸ Disposizioni per lo sviluppo e l'internazionalizzazione delle imprese, nonché in materia di energia., no. 99 (2009). https://cnaicis.mise.gov.it/images/leggi/Legge_23_luglio_2009.pdf

⁹⁹ Disciplina della localizzazione, della realizzazione e dell'esercizio nel territorio nazionale di impianti di produzione di energia elettrica nucleare, di impianti di fabbricazione del combustibile nucleare, dei sistemi di stoccaggio del combustibile irraggiato e dei rifiuti radioattivi, nonché misure compensative e campagne informative al pubblico, a norma dell'articolo 25 della legge 23 luglio 2009, n. 99., no. 31 (2010). https://www.mase.gov.it/sites/default/files/dlgs_15_02_2010_31.pdf

§.IV The fall of the whole project (2011)

On the very same day in which in Paris the Franco-Italian bilateral was being held, April 9th 2010, and the MoU and treaty mentioned in §.3.4.2 were being signed, in Rome party “Italy of Values”¹⁰⁰ presented an official request for a referendum with the aim of abolishing any ground for a new nuclear development. As the last polls’ data on the matter showed, in 2006 and 2009 favourability with respect to a nuclear comeback ranged between 53% and 49%¹⁰¹, therefore at the time of the referendum proposal the result of the campaign wasn’t that obvious.

The biggest government’s party, *Popolo della Libertà*¹⁰², was the only one openly and firmly against the referendum’s proposal, encouraging indeed the electorate to not vote with the aim of keeping participation below the *quorum* of 50%, an event that would have invalidated the referendum as a whole. The no-nuke coalition spanned from autonomist parties to the most relevant post-Christian democratic parties, including the left (Democratic Party) while even a party member of the governmental majority, North League, decided to give to its voters the freedom to choose their own political position.

In this context of weakness for nuclear supporters, the Fukushima accident, as already explained in the introduction in §1.1, left no space for doubts in the result predictions.

On April 21st, the Enel-EDF cooperation pact for Italian nuclear power was frozen, causing not little malcontent from the French side, and the activity of Sviluppo Nucleare Italia, which was already funded and operating studies. Five days later, despite clarifying that Italo-French industrial and nuclear cooperation would have proceeded as fertile as before and that “nuclear

¹⁰⁰ Italia dei Valori (IdV) was a justicialist party founded by Antonio Di Pietro (hugely famous state attorney member of the pool of the “Mani Pulite” trial, the cornerstone of the Tangentopoli scandal that in the early 1990s completely changed the looks of Italian politics and society) in 1998, was politically collocated for the fifteen years in which it was present in the Italian Parliament in the centre-left coalition.

¹⁰¹ *Sondaggio SWG: oltre un italiano su due possibilista sui nuovi reattori nucleari.* (2021, July 5). Nucleare E Ragione.
<https://nucleareeragione.org/2021/07/05/sondaggio-swg-oltre-un-italiano-su-due-possibilista-sui-nuovi-reattori-nucleari/>

¹⁰² (People of Freedom) was founded in 2009 with the aim to federate most of the centre-right political forces. It resulted mainly from the union of Berlusconi’s Forza Italia and Alleanza Nazionale, the party that in 1995 inherited and moderated the political structure of the post-fascist Movimento Sociale Italiano.

energy is the future for the world”, Silvio Berlusconi announced the government's withdrawal on new NPPs in Italy¹⁰³.

In this context, it is useful to remind that the weakness of the fourth and last Berlusconi executive, which ended its life under the hits of political and economic crisis within the same year of these events, definitely played a role in this choice. A choice that was made, as Berlusconi declared, in the scope of avoiding the risk of the results of a referendum, which would have not only abrogated the existing legislation but also precluded the possibility of returning to legislate on that topic in the near future. Instead, avoiding the direct confrontation with the vote, the situation was frozen with the hope to come back on it in the next few years, with a mind freed from Fukushima’s smoke. An intent that couldn’t be concretised in any way given the absence of a similarly shaped government in Italy in the following decade.

The two final blows came in December, when EDF sold to Enel its quota in SNI¹⁰⁴, and one year later in December 2012, when Enel cut the ties completely with the Flamanville project¹⁰⁵. This last choice that was caused by the discouraging events and delays during the building of the NPP, at the time could have been considered pessimistic, but revealed itself as a very oculte one: the Flamanville Epr reactor is not yet operative at the time of writing of this thesis, it should become so this year (2024) with an exorbitant final cost of 19 billion euros, four times the price prognosticated in the projectual phase¹⁰⁶.

With these last two pull-outs, most of the results of a ten-years-long process saw their last lights.

¹⁰³ Pupia News. (2011, April 26). *Berlusconi - Il nucleare è il futuro, stop solo momentaneo*. YouTube. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QqXEoIjs2-c>

¹⁰⁴ Agnoli, S. (2011, December 20). *Addio a Sni, il secondo nucleare è costato 10 milioni*. Energia.corriere.it; Corriere della Sera. <https://energia.corriere.it/2011/12/20/addio-a-sni-il-secondo-nucleare-e-costato-10-milioni/>

¹⁰⁵ *ENEL ED EDF CONCLUDONO LA LORO COLLABORAZIONE PER IL PROGETTO EPR IN FRANCIA*. (2012, December 4). Wwww.enel.com; Enel. <https://www.enel.com/it/media/esplora/ricerca-comunicati-stampa/press/2012/12/enel-ed-edf-concludono-la-loro-collaborazione-per-il-progetto-epr-in-francia>

¹⁰⁶ Bretau, P. (2024, May 9). Les dérapages de l’EPR de Flamanville en graphiques : le coût multiplié par six, la durée du chantier par quatre. *Le Monde*. https://www.lemonde.fr/les-decodeurs/article/2024/05/09/les-derapages-de-l-epr-de-flamanville-en-graphiques-l-e-cout-multiplie-par-six-la-duree-du-chantier-par-quatre_5480745_4355771.html

§.V The actors of the 10 years process of negotiations, the *pars construens* and *par destruens*

It is interesting, given the historical reconstruction operated so far, to have a brief analysis of the actors that characterised this story with their decisional and direct/indirect influencing power. These actors can be broadly organised in categories defined as: managers, politicians, public opinion (including the electorate and opinion makers as journalists, *no-nuke* pressure groups and non-governmental politicians) and diplomacy.

5.1 Company authorities and their role in Italian foreign policy

5.1.1 Managers as principal drivers

In terms of public image, and probably in terms of decisional power and drive to action as well, the managers of Enel, EDF and Edison were the most prominent figures. The bilateral meetings between Scaroni and Roussely or Conti and Gadonneix were dozens. Most of the decisions and of the actual roadmaps were built in the offices of these companies rather than in those of ministries.

It is also worth mentioning that the ones with highest and “clearest” interests in the matter were not governments, but the state’s companies. This means that the need for expansion of the market and diversification -for Enel it was the strive to gain nuclear capacity, for EDF the strive to expand abroad given the certain future of a diminished power in France and the monopolist position jeopardised- is what made them central in this matter, along with the technical competences that made the agreements go ahead.

Most of the technical meetings were between the experts of the two companies rather than between those of governments. A reason for this can be identified in the fact that these two monopolists had been since their foundation state-owned companies, so the very technical competences of the state apparatus were widely residing into EDF and Enel’s apparatus, the state relied on them. It would be rather impossible for the state to hold in the public administration the same technical capacities, and in any case Enel’s privatisation was still

recent and very partial and EDF's one was barely started, therefore at that time the players in terms of knowledge kept being them.

Another aspect that can tell something about the importance of the managerial category in this context is the fact that all of the CEOs mentioned in this paragraph were awarded the title of *Cavaliere del lavoro* by the Italian Republic or of member -in certain cases *Commandeur*- of the *Legion d'honneur*, some were awarded with both this titles and some of these recognitions came during or contextually with the events of this document.

The first period of this story, up to 2005, was characterised by the binomial Scaroni-Roussely. In that moment already was possible to recognise the centrality of top managers in this process, in fact the set of decisions taken in their meetings, that were at the bases of the agreements that should have been signed but were postponed for political-opportunity reasons, were called alternatively by Italian and French press "Scaroni plan" or "Roussely plan". Their action was of course limited and subjugated by the political power, the end of Roussely's role due to the low opinion that many French had about his managerial operations showed it. While Roussely was being substituted, Scaroni, a very known personality in Italy who held multiple relevant roles in public positions including in "AC Milan" soccer team, brought ahead his office until a few days before the official signing of the first analysed MoU in 2005, being rewarded for his job with the role of CEO of ENI¹⁰⁷ and, since 2023 up to current times (2024) President of Enel. The timings of his positions in Enel, the comeback to Italian energy galaxy after almost ten years -he held the CEO position of ENI until 2014- when the new round of nominations was for the first time after more than a decade fully in the hands of a centre-right majority, indicate the familiarity of Scaroni with a certain part of politics, most significantly with Silvio Berlusconi's area of influence. The affiliation of a top manager in the strategic sector has, besides the trivially intuitive importance that it can bear in any nation, a peculiar relevance in Italy that will be explored in §.5.1.2.

I defined the second phase of the process as the one in which cooperation had been actually concretised and started taking various forms, chronologically speaking from 2005 onwards.

In those years, the main managerial actors were again represented by a binomial: Conti and Gadonneix.

¹⁰⁷ "Ente Nazionale Idrocarburi" "National Hydrocarbons Company" founded in 1953

In this phase, it is evident that the contact between the top offices of Enel and EDF was daily, and so it was confirmed in the interview by Conti, who stated that it was usual that on certain matters regarding the negotiations or actions in other fields which were of common interest for the two companies Gadonneix would have called him and vice versa, and very frank and direct conversations took place during those calls (F. Conti, personal communication, February 2024).

Pierre Gadonneix, backed by the French governments Raffarin, De Villepin and Fillon, whose position was the same on these matters, succeeded in accompanying EDF in the first period of the gradual liberalisation, even though the decision to build Flamanville revealed itself as one of the hardest hits to EDF's economical position and prestige, but this couldn't be expected at the time.

The last 2 years of the period taken into exam saw Henri Proglia taking the place formerly held by Gadonneix and Roussely. Besides the declaration of the beginning of partnership with Ansaldo, this period saw little constructive progress given the fact that the stop came gradually and much before Berlusconi's public declaration, as everyone was holding breath for the political situation already in 2010.

Conti's figure was already widely delineated throughout the chapters of this thesis, as the events that can tell something about his management style and his relationship with France were included in interesting steps of the negotiations. A brief consideration may be added about this person: given the material to which it was possible to access for this thesis, he represented perfectly the centrality of the managerial class in this story, building important parts of the platform and being also the one to close it completely, being one of the protagonists of the decision for Enel to exit from the investment in Flamanville.

The story that for most of this thesis constituted some sort of a "subplot" partially influenced and was finally dominated by the main one, the expansion of EDF in Edison, had as its main public image, especially from the Italian point of view, Umberto Quadrino. The aspect that was formerly a reason for rancour, gradually became a *trait d'union* between Italian and French industry, the instrument to allow EDF into the Italian market in a cooperative way, and in this context Umberto Quadrino embodied the figure of a "private sector ambassador", which is not so astonishing for the Italian experience, but it is usually a prerogative of the strategic sector state-owned entities.

5.1.2 The historical matching of the manager-diplomat in the scope of a decentralised foreign policy

The concept of private, decentralised foreign policy actors is typical of Italy since the post-World War II period. In the aftermath of twenty years of fascist dictatorship that dragged Italy down the worst possible epilogue of the second global conflict, to rebuild a democratic identity anything that could be traced back to the regime needed to be kept at bay. Since the fascist rhetoric aimed at making the people identify the nation and the state as the same thing the person of Mussolini and the regime party and institutions, which entailed a strong nationalist and expansionist propaganda which was at the very ideological roots of fascism, the idea of nation and of any state action out of the borders was ostracised. This resulted in a weakening of foreign policy actions for the newborn Italian Republic (Darnis, 2011), as well as in preventing the definition of an actual foreign policy agenda besides the principles of atlantism, peace and fostering European cooperation.

This structural problem still allowed for some peculiar positions to be taken some decades after the war and civil war trauma, especially during Giulio Andreotti's period as Minister for foreign affairs (1983-1989) and Bettino Craxi's presidency (1983-1987), I am referring to what was described by scholars of international relations with the joke of the American wife and the Arab mistress¹⁰⁸. But for decades, and very heavily again after the 1980s, with this tendency enhanced by the political earthquakes of Tangentopoli in the early 1990s, the void left by national politics was filled by multiple sub-state actors, both private and public¹⁰⁹.

The first and most illustrious representative of this tendency was Enrico Mattei, CEO of ENI from its foundation in 1953 to his death in 1963, due to an aircraft disaster that was confirmed forty years later to be not the result of an accident but of planned bombing for

¹⁰⁸ Aliboni, R., Daguzan, J.-F., Dokos, T., Coralluzzo, V., Vaquer i Fanés, J., & Soler i Lecha, E. (2011). SOUTHERN EUROPE AND THE MEDITERRANEAN: NATIONAL APPROACHES AND TRANSATLANTIC PERSPECTIVES. In *IAI - Istituto Affari Internazionali* (p. 60). IAI- Istituto Affari Internazionali. https://www.iai.it/sites/default/files/mediterranean-paper_12.pdf

¹⁰⁹ Darnis, Jean Pierre (2011): *The role of Italy's strategic industries in its foreign policy*. In: Giacomello, Giampiero/Verbeek, Bertjan (Eds.) (2011): *Italy's Foreign Policy in the 21st Century*. Lanham: Lexington Books, pp. 197–214.

unknown reasons^{110 111}. Mattei's agenda for ENI expansion dictated the rules of foreign policy to the Italian government, it went ahead and asked for the backing of Amintore Fanfani's executive in the spirit of a "company-led" diplomacy (Darnis, 2011). A clear example of this is the help given by the government in opening communications with MENA countries to find for ENI a spot in the exploitation of oil and gas fields which were up to that time for the sole enjoyment of the Seven Sisters.

With a spirit this time of "shared leadership" (Darnis, 2011), meaning that the policy making was not thought in the company's office and followed in the Chigi Palace but built coordinatively by the two, the same logic was re-proposed by Berlusconi and Scaroni not only in the French case -in which CEO Conti and President of the Council Prodi were included as well- but, to mention a rather more successful juncture, with Russia. In Scaroni's time at ENI, with the backing of Berlusconi as President of the Council of Ministers, Italy and Russia made significant deals in their exchange of oil and gas. Late Silvio Berlusconi's friendship and reciprocal admiration with Russian President Putin is no secret, it helped and it improved itself in the role the Italian President exercised as business facilitator for ENI. Scaroni was so well inserted in this context that his work resulted in the awarding of the "Order of Friendship" by the Russian Federation¹¹².

5.2 Governmental authorities

The constancy of intentions was the main difference between private managerial actors and the others of highest relevance, those in the governmental side of the negotiations.

Even though, as it will be shown in this paragraph, the political parties governing both nations would maintain an almost complete continuity, they were always subjugated by the blackmailing of trade unions, popular opinion and malcontent.

¹¹⁰ Colaprico, P. (1997, November 21). "MATTEI FU ASSASSINATO" LA VERITA' 35 ANNI DOPO - la Repubblica.it. Archivio - La Repubblica.it.
<https://ricerca.repubblica.it/repubblica/archivio/repubblica/1997/11/21/mattei-fu-assassinato-la-verita-35-anni.html>

¹¹¹ Gagliardi, G. (2023, October 27). *Enrico Mattei, morte di un manager di Stato che voleva cambiare l'Italia*. La Repubblica.
https://www.repubblica.it/spettacoli/tv-radio/2023/10/27/news/enrico_mattei_il_doc_morte_di_un_manager_di_stato_che_voleva_cambiare_litalia-418894088/

¹¹² *La storia dell'amicizia tra Berlusconi e Putin*. (2022, October 20). Il Post.
<https://www.ilpost.it/2022/10/20/berlusconi-putin-amicizia/>

The first heavy footprint left by politics in this story was the widely discussed “Anti-EDF decree” from the Italian government. In that moment, the government was the second Amato presidency, with a coalition of centre-left -post communist and post demochristian- parties, having among his strongest supporters eminent members of the Italian left. To confirm the effectiveness of the law decree, in July the parties that voted in favour of it were those of the centre-right coalition¹¹³, as in the meantime the new parliament and government were settled down, the beginning of the second Berlusconi government.

In this case it was possible to constate the compactness of the political class on this matter, an event that even when talking of strategic industries is quite rare.

Centre-right governments with Berlusconi as President of the Council of Ministers and a coalition of *Forza Italia*¹¹⁴, *Alleanza Nazionale*¹¹⁵ and *Lega Nord*¹¹⁶ kept the power until 2012 with a centre-left parenthesis lasting less than two years in 2006-2008, the second Prodi government shaped similarly as Amato II.

Therefore the political momentum in Italy came mostly from the centre-right of politics, as a matter of fact, especially from *Forza Italia* and later from its majoritarian component in *Popolo della Libertà*. Indeed, the liberal and productivist party cared for holding in its hands twice in a row the nomination of the Minister that was most central for the nuclear matters, the chief of the Ministry of Entrepreneurship.

Personalities such as Antonio Marzano and Claudio Scajola (Ministers of Entrepreneurship) and Berlusconi himself were engaged in first person, providing the political support and legislative tools, campaigning for nuclear, entering the field of action when needed as in all the bilateral meetings that resulted in the officialisation of cooperation on a certain specific issue. The same happened for cases such as the GDF-Suez-Enel accident, where the French government was the actual main character and the official interlocutor had to be for obvious reasons the Italian government.

¹¹³LEGGE recante disposizioni urgenti per salvaguardare i processi di liberalizzazione e privatizzazione di specifici settori dei servizi pubblici., no. 192 (2001).
<https://www.normattiva.it/uri-res/N2Ls?urn:nir:stato:legge:2001;301#:~:text=maggio%202001%2C%20n.-,192%2C%20recante%20disposizioni%20urgenti%20per%20salvaguardare%20i%20processi%20di%20liberalizzazione,sua%20pubblicazione%20nella%20Gazzetta%20Ufficiale.>

¹¹⁴ Berlusconi's party, founded in 1994.

¹¹⁵ the party that in 1995 inherited and moderated the political structure of the post-fascist Movimento Sociale Italiano.

¹¹⁶ Party founded in 1991 as an evolution of *Lega Lombarda*. Its core was the secessionist claim for the Lombardia region first and then for the whole Northern Italy from the central state, then evolved into a federalist agenda.

The French political situation was even more dominated by the same political side for the whole duration of the 10 years taken into exam as both the Presidents of the republic of the period were republicans: Jacques Chirac handed over the presidency to Nicolas Sarkozy in 2007. In those ten years, the centre-right party holding majority changed name from *Union pour la majorité présidentielle*¹¹⁷ to *Union pour un mouvement populaire*¹¹⁸ and three Prime Ministers held office: Jean-Pierre Raffarin (2002-2005), Dominique De Villepin (2005-2007) and François Fillon(2007-2012).

In this constancy of the governmental coalition as well as in the political affinity (among other things, both the french republicans and Berlusconi's party were in the European Popular Party) with the one holding office in Italy in the same period, a reason for the success of the negotiations can be identified.

The statal power was exercised strongly in moments such as in 2004, when the signing of the MoUs that were, at least in theory, ready, was postponed by the French Raffarin government mainly due to domestic political pressures. In the turmoil that was enveloped around EDF's decisions of that period and the change of its statute to start the liberalisation process, the CEO Roussely was deposed. This resulted, in May 2005, in the signing of a MoU that had abandoned the previous direction's plans, but given the lack of public informations about the content of the negotiations prior 2005, it cannot be ascertained to which extent those plans were abandoned or the relative declarations were simply a way to mark a clear-cut.

To conclude the framework of the governmental action, to understand it in the French context it is useful to remember the Suez accident reported in §.3.2. With an operation rather similar, in a specular way, to the one done by the Italian government in 2001 during EDF's stock takeover on Edison, De Villepin executive entered bluntly the market to prevent an acquisition that was felt as an invasion of a space that France was not yet ready to concede. In that moment, the electorate was not only sustaining such an attitude, there was a people's pressure on the government to act in this way, not only for national sovereignty reasons but also for trade union's distrust towards Enel.

¹¹⁷ Union for presidential majority

¹¹⁸ Union for a popular movement

These pressures move the spotlight of this analysis to another actor that may be defined as the public opinion and opposition politics which, having as their champion left-green opposition parties, exercised its power through the electorate influencing the political class in various forms.

5.3 Public opinion's and politics' role

The power of the electorate in this story was, and still is today with nuclear-related matters, enormous, especially in Italy. The power of this actor was evident at the very beginning of this thesis with the historical framework considerations of §. II. A referendum brought Italy to the decisions of 1987, as well as to the end and failure of the Franco-Italian civil nuclear project. Multiple times throughout the thesis the attention to this aspect was mentioned, when writing laws or press releases, when presenting a public speech, the high degree of hostility towards this energy source was always taken into consideration. It will never be possible to know if, even taking Fukushima out of the equation, all that attention and propaganda would have been enough to win the 2011 referendum, but what it is possible to know, is that a decade later little changes have occurred in the Italian people's belligerent attitude against anything containing the word "nuclear"^{119 120}.

Hence, for how trivial it may seem, it is not possible to renounce to highlight the huge deal-breaker power of the Italian electorate.

The topicality of this power in current Italian affairs indirectly manifested itself during the Cop28 conference in Dubai of November-December 2023, when Italian President Meloni, given the talks that were being held among other countries was asked about a position on nuclear power. The diplomatic answer, stating that there is "no strict foreclosure against any

¹¹⁹ *Sondaggio SWG: oltre un italiano su due possibilista sui nuovi reattori nucleari.* (2021, July 5). Nucleare E Ragione.

<https://nucleareeragione.org/2021/07/05/sondaggio-swg-oltre-un-italiano-su-due-possibilista-sui-nuovi-reattori-nucleari/>

¹²⁰ Besides polls, it is also useful to look at the political earthquakes that, up to April 2024, 37 years after the decision to dismiss NPPs, keep the search for a site for the building of a national nuclear waste storing facility going.

Italia, ecco la mappa delle aree idonee per il deposito nazionale delle scorie nucleari: polemiche subito. (2023, December 14). Il Sole 24 ORE.

<https://www.ilsole24ore.com/art/nucleare-arriva-l-elenco-51-aree-idonee-il-deposito-ma-alcuni-territori-gia-dicono-no-AFbO472B>

technology able to be secure and to help us diversifying our energy production”¹²¹ was an attempt to state the intents of the current government without kicking a hornets’ nest. Again, as already mentioned while analysing the role of politics, a demonstration of how that role is characterised almost by a logic of direct democracy rather than by a principle of a representative one.

In this regard Italy and France had a difference that is not to be underestimated, in fact, this paragraph has up to here only described the Italian situation. It is renowned that French people do not share the high level of scepticism that characterises their friends below the Alps, especially with the extension of the years regarding this study. Popular pressure towards Raffarin and De Villepin governments was mentioned more than once, but the objectives were completely different, they were always related to matters of national sovereignty, public spending and investments and workers protection. This is the reason why despite their strong claims that caused some bumps on the path of this dialogue, it was not the French people that were against it *tout court* and it was not their decision to end it.

5.4 Considerations on diplomatic agents and the European Union

It is worth mentioning that diplomacy’s work resulted poorly represented in my thesis due to the lack of sources in this sense. It may be due to the fact that the time passed is too short in order for documents and informations to be disclosed, since some hints of diplomatic actions can be grasped by the fact that there were indeed harsh moments in Italo-French cooperation in the ten years taken into exam and it is reasonable to believe that the resolution of those *dossiers* involved diplomatic agents. Another moment in which diplomats must definitely have played a role is the one of the writing and signing of treaties that characterised the governmental officialisation of Franco-Italian nuclear cooperation.

For what concerns the public sphere, it was noticeable the commitment of the French mission to Italy, for example with the person of Ambassador Jean-Marc De La Sablière who engaged in a public campaign to try and soften Italian people’s no-nuke positions.

¹²¹ AGENZIA ITALIA NEWS, (2023, December 4). *GIORGIA MELONI SULL’ENERGIA NUCLEARE: “SULLA FUSIONE L’ITALIA È PIÙ AVANTI DEGLI ALTRI.”* YouTube. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HmTa3DuJKpw>

Finally, a comparative consideration with the current movements, as of 2024, in the field of nuclear energy can be made in terms of the role of the European Union apparatus now and then, which is deeply different.

As can be noted reading this document, in the decade 2001-2011 the EU appeared on the scene only in terms of its role as guarantor for the industrial competition law to be applied, relatively to French Liberalisation of the energy market and to the Edison case.

In the third decade of this century, the situation is rather different, as one of the Union's areas of competence in which the European Commission increased its action is energy policy, especially relating to environmental concerns. The European Industrial Alliance on Small Modular Reactors (SMRs¹²²) declaration¹²³ state that the aims of this Alliance are -selecting the most relevant among others- to: identify safe and cost-effective SMR projects that the EU may support; act on European position for what concerns the supply chain in atomic matters, including raw materials; help the path of this new technology to be smooth through towards approval from the regulatory agencies and legislative actors in the EU member states; foster research cooperation.

Looking at the picture from a further away, this Alliance puts the EU in a position of centrality in this context, it was not the case neither twenty nor ten years ago.

¹²² Small modular reactors (SMRs) are advanced nuclear reactors that have a power capacity of up to 300 MW(e) per unit, which is about one-third of the generating capacity of traditional nuclear power reactors. SMRs, which can produce a large amount of low-carbon electricity, are: Small – physically a fraction of the size of a conventional nuclear power reactor; and Modular – making it possible for systems and components to be factory-assembled and transported as a unit to a location for installation.

Source: IAEA explanatory material on SMRs

<https://www.iaea.org/newscenter/news/what-are-small-modular-reactors-smrs>

¹²³*European Industrial Alliance on Small Modular Reactors - European Commission.* (n.d.).

[Single-Market-Economy.ec.europa.eu](https://single-market-economy.ec.europa.eu).

https://single-market-economy.ec.europa.eu/industry/strategy/industrial-alliances/european-industrial-alliance-small-modular-reactors_en

§.VI Conclusion

The focal points of this conclusion are those of the whole text that preceded it: what this story has told us about Italian and French bilateral relations; the situation of nuclear energy and its perception in Italy before and after the first decade of this century, which may seem to be untouched at a superficial glance, but was actually mutated consistently, hence, the current interests in reading of these events.

The interest in writing this kind of thesis results evident when looking at four recent events. During the gas and energy price crisis of 2022, following the Russian invasion of Ukraine, the impetus with which Italy was hit made it impossible to not think of the difference it would have made to have nuclear capacity, re-lighting this debate.

In September 2023, as already mentioned in introduction §.1.1, the Italian Ministry for the Environment and Energy Security launched the National Platform for Sustainable Nuclear.

The Cop28 of Dubai in December 2023¹²⁴ marked the signing by 22 countries -among which the United States of America, France and the United Kingdom- of the joint Declaration to triple nuclear capacity by 2050.

Finally, while this thesis was being written, the European alliance on small modular reactors was moving its first steps. SMRs are what the new Italian Platform for Sustainable Nuclear is indeed focusing on the most, with the relative Minister Pichetto Fratin pushing for their realisation in Italy within 2030 and meeting Ansaldo Nucleare, one of the probable protagonists of this new experience, should it ever come to realisation.

It may seem that, occupying the governments' seats after eleven years, the same centre-right coalition¹²⁵ is proposing the same solutions for this topic.

The persuasion game is now being played on the focus on new and safer technologies -see Italian President's declaration during Cop28 in §.V- and the memories of the failure of 2011 are probably very vivid in the memories of the participants in this government, many of

¹²⁴ *The United States Joins Multinational Declaration to Triple Nuclear Energy Capacity by 2050 to Support Global Climate and Energy Security Goals*. (2023, December 2). United States Department of State. <https://www.state.gov/the-united-states-joins-multinational-declaration-to-triple-nuclear-energy-capacity-by-2050-to-support-global-climate-and-energy-security-goals/>

¹²⁵ Even though some of the parties that compose the current Italian government participated in broad coalitions with centre, left and unaffiliated political forces, since Berlusconi IV resignations in 2011 the first governmental coalition with the same parties concretised again only in 2022.

whom already covered prominent roles back then. In 2011 this game was lost, an occurrence which made all the other efforts vane.

The aforementioned European Alliance on SMRs has, from an Italian point of view, a role similar to the French one in 2001-2011, namely to help a nation that has had no constructive projects in this matter for decades rethink an infrastructure and within this alliance, of course, France will be once again Italy's main interlocutor.

The negotiations for the Franco-Italian nuclear platform constitute an interesting study laboratory for the cooperation process between two close nations that share wide parts of their identities, from millennia of history to surnames and almost even the national flag. Two nations that have no choice but to cooperate, now in the framework of the European Union more than ever, even though this message is not always applied to reality: the EDF *attack* on Edison and the Enel *attack* on Suez, with respective *counterattacking actions* of the Italian and French governments are examples of this failure to coordinate. Such conflictual phases happen in moments in which one of the two parts rushes through its route without involving the other in the plans, and the result is that sooner or later not only coordination but cooperation must occur, and the later it happens the more painful the results of its deficiency will be.

Both the aforementioned events constituted at the beginning a setback for the negotiations, and later even a catalyst given the boost they caused in transalpine dialogue. But we also have virtuous examples of this dialogue, such as those of the two CEOs interviewed for this thesis: despite the hinders of the Suez case, the positivity of the dialogue with Fulvio Conti was confirmed by his *Légion d'Honneur* recognition; the reconfirmation of Umberto Quadrino in the leadership of Edison. The quality of their relationship with French counterparts is the reason why the interviews with them were such an important source to reconstruct the shades that could not possibly be on newspapers.

In conclusion, this thesis tells the story of how a years-long conflictual phase in the transalpine industrial relationship firstly mined, then was absorbed and finally partially solved by cooperation on a particularly ambitious project. This project was one that in the long term would have impacted significantly -especially for Italy- on energy security, pollution and people welfare.

The impact and the likeliness of an eventual nuclear comeback in Italy is the object of numerous studies that go beyond this document, but if any further action related to nuclear power wants to take place in Italy, it is useful to read and act in the light of the events of the years 2002-2012.

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