

Foreword

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The subject file ‘The “Franco-German duo” and Europe as seen in cartoons (1945–2013)’ uses French and German press illustrations to explore the joint action of successive French Presidents and German Chancellors as the driving force of European integration. The rapprochement that began in the early years after the Second World War between France and Germany, two countries that had been long-standing enemies, followed a unique path. The image of a ‘Franco-German duo’ and the pair’s actions have proved an unending source of inspiration for French and German cartoonists.

This file has been compiled to mark the 50th anniversary of the signing of the Élysée Treaty on 22 January 1963, which sealed the historic reconciliation between the two countries. It offers a humorous, quirky interpretation of this important historical period in which a united Europe began to take shape, and reflects on more than 50 years of Franco-German cooperation. Although the Franco-German duo and its ability to act for the organisation of Europe have at times proved fragile, with periods of tension but also of continuity, the relationship between the various West German Chancellors and French Presidents has made an often decisive contribution to the pursuit and revival of European integration. Over 400 cartoons published in the French and German press reflect the key moments in Franco-German relations and emphasise how this ‘marriage of convenience’ between two leaders has influenced the European integration process, illustrating both the successes and failures of the duo. For there does indeed appear to be a correlation between this bilateral cooperation, the ‘Franco-German engine’ of Europe, and the real progress of the European Community.

The publication of this file was subject to a peer review procedure by a committee composed of the following experts:

- Dr Ursula E. Koch, Emeritus Professor at the Ludwig Maximilian University of Munich
- Walther Fekl, Lecturer and Researcher (retired) at European University Viadrina, Frankfurt (Oder)
- Jean-Claude Gardes, Professor at the University of Western Brittany

The file was published on 19 December 2013 following the unanimous positive evaluation of the peer review committee. The CVCE would like to thank the committee for its expert advice.

On 24 November 2014, an enhanced version of the file was published following a favourable opinion from the CVCE’s Committee of Experts.