

De Gaulle and Europe

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URL: http://www.cvce.eu/obj/de_gaulle_and_europe-en-93da7de0-9b3c-4910-9eec-3fabfe4b7024.html

Last updated: 08/07/2016



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Charles de Gaulle was very committed to a particular vision of Europe. He played a very positive role by ensuring that France was in a position to join the Common Market and by demanding the establishment of the common agricultural policy (CAP). But he rejected a supranational Europe and wanted a Europe of sovereign states instead. In implementing his European ideal, de Gaulle counted mainly on the support of the Federal Republic of Germany (FRG) and maintained a very close relationship with the German Chancellor, Konrad Adenauer.

His approach was rejected, however, by the other European partners, whose priority was to protect the Community method. De Gaulle's refusal to countenance any structure based on integration and supranational authority was rejected. The tensions between de Gaulle and his partners were aired publicly on 15 May 1962 at what was known as the 'Volapük' press conference, when he rejected the concept of a Europe of stateless persons and integrated languages.

His policies also met with some opposition in France. In 1962, six Ministers of the *Mouvement républicain populaire* (Popular Republican Movement, MRP), opponents of the presidential stance on Europe, immediately resigned from their governmental posts the evening after the press conference.