

Foundation of the FRG

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On 2 December 1946, the British and Americans decided to merge their respective occupation zones. With the addition of the French zone in 1948, West Germany became the Trizone. From 20 April to 2 June 1948, the three powers met in London to discuss the future of the country and decided to call a constituent assembly, the German Parliamentary Council. Its members were appointed by the parliaments of the Federal States, the *Länder*. These federal entities were created by the occupying powers, on more or less historical lines. For example, whilst the State of Prussia was abolished by the Allies, Bavaria was retained. On 1 September 1948, the Parliamentary Council started work in Bonn. It elected a Christian Democrat, Konrad Adenauer, to lead it and formulated the Basic Law which was promulgated on 23 May 1949. This Law became the provisional Constitution of the Federal Republic of Germany. Its adoption after a referendum gave rise to the first legislative elections of the entire Trizone. Bonn was chosen ahead of Frankfurt to be the provisional capital. The city of West Berlin became a Land but remained under Allied control. West Berlin had to be shown to be part of the FRG in spite of its special status. Economic development was encouraged by the granting of subsidies to companies and civil servants who decided to move there.

Even if the right of supervision enjoyed by the Western Allied powers limited German sovereignty, the FRG was seen as the only rightful heir to the German Reich, dissolved in 1945 when Germany unconditionally surrendered. The election of the *Bundestag* in August 1949 confirmed the victory of the Christian Democrats (CDU) over the Socialists (SPD) led by Kurt Schumacher, whose Marxist tendencies scared the Western occupying powers. The Communists and the Liberals made few gains. The CDU, led by Konrad Adenauer, confirmed its role as the champion of a return to a free market economy. Adenauer, who was the preferred partner of the Americans, became the first Chancellor of the Federal Republic of Germany.