

Kornelia Kończal (2020)

An Inspiring and Intimidating Relationship: Franco-German Cooperation from the Polish Perspective

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The unprecedented success of the Franco-German reconciliation after 1945 provoked a great deal of reflection and set the ground for political action. From the Polish perspective, the Franco-German relations played three functions being a source of inspiration, anxiety and hope. First, many aspects of the Polish-German reconciliation after 1989 have been inspired by similar developments that unfolded between France and Germany after 1945. Second, the leading role of France and Germany in the European Union has caused anxiety for both Euro-skeptics and Euro-enthusiasts in Poland. Whereas the former are anxious about Poland's national sovereignty, the latter consider the close cooperation between France and Germany as a threat to the European project as a whole. Third, the Franco-German-Polish cooperation—in the form of the Weimar Triangle, launched in 1991—led many political actors and observers to believe that Poland could have a major impact on the course of European integration. This failed attempt to institutionalize the Franco-German-Polish relationship suggests that the transferability of the Franco-German experience relies upon imitation rather than innovation and that it might be limited to bilateral contexts.

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