

## Vienna Lecture on the European Union

### Back to the Future?

## Franco-German Bilateralism in post-Brexit EU Politics (abstract overleaf)

**15 January 2018, 16:00**

Aula, Campus of the University of Vienna  
Hof 1.11, Spitalgasse 2-4, 1090 Vienna

**Lecture:** **Ulrich Krotz**, Professor of International Relations  
European University Institute, Florence, Italy

**Comments:** **Thomas Angerer**, Professor of Modern History,  
University of Vienna

**Monika Mühlböck**, Postdoctoral Researcher, University of Vienna;  
President of the Austrian Political Science Association

**Claire Thirriot-Kwant**, Economic Counsellor, Head of the  
Economic Service of the French Embassy in Austria

**Moderation:** **Magnus Schoeller**, Postdoctoral Researcher, Institute for  
European Integration Research, University of Vienna

**Welcome:** **Gerda Falkner**, Head of the Institute for European Integration  
Research, University of Vienna

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This lecture will be held in English, questions can also be asked in German. The event  
will be followed by a small reception.

Registered and unregistered participants are welcome but we kindly ask for your  
registration at [eif@univie.ac.at](mailto:eif@univie.ac.at) or +43 1 4277 22401.

## **Abstract**

What are the main consequences and implications of Brexit on the nature and character of Franco-German ‘embedded bilateralism’ in Europe, the relative influence of Berlin and Paris in EU policymaking, and, even more broadly, the trajectory of the Union?

Britain’s exit from the EU brings into sharper relief three basic future scenarios for the EU: (1) German hegemony; (2) the disintegration of the European project of political and economic integration; or (3) a rejuvenated Franco-German tandem at the Union’s center—or what could be called ‘back to the future.’ Which of these post-Brexit scenarios prevails will depend on the development and interaction of a number of factors, most notably: (1) the overall strengthening of Germany’s relative standing and what type of regional leadership role German leaders opt to pursue, and (2) France’s ability to implement the social, economic, and political reforms necessary to overcome its current period of stasis and return to a position of fiscal health, economic expansion, and political dynamism.

Though each of the above three scenarios is possible, the most likely and plausible one is a renewed and rejuvenated Franco-German tandem at the forefront of European integration. Brexit thus might even further accentuate the historically influential Franco-German relationship, not least in Union-level policy domains, such as security and defense, in which Britain has hitherto played a significant role.