

Mr Macron flies to Berlin

Mr Macron promised to rebuild the Franco-German alliance and to seek to strengthen the role of the EU in his country. To do so he has to fly to Berlin to show Mrs Merkel he agrees with her and will be helpful to her prior to the German election.

He will find in Berlin beneath the public courtesy a very different view of what the problems are, let alone what the future answers should be. There will of course be some goodwill born of relief that Mme Le Pen failed, but the reality of German interests will soon reassert.

The main German preoccupations will be to avoid any new spending commitments by the EU that Germany might have to pay for, and to keep the austerity pressure on the heavily borrowed countries of the Union. France will want to speak for a higher spending and borrowing federal EU government which Germany will dislike. Both countries say they want a political union, but France wants that to include sharing the money whilst Berlin wants it to be governed by teutonic controls on spending, borrowing and printing money.

Mrs Merkel may offer her new suitor warm words, but is unlikely to loosen the German or EU purse strings. Germany will be conscious that her 830 bn Euro deposits in the ECB are already lent on at no interest to countries who will struggle to repay.

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