

OLIVIER CADIC - BIOGRAPHY



Olivier Cadic (born 22 April 1962 in Clichy, Hauts-de-Seine, France) is a French politician.

He was elected senator for French citizens living abroad on 20 September 2014.

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BIOGRAPHY (Edit / Edit code)

Origins, education, family Olivier Cadic was born 22 April 1962. In 1980, Cadic obtained his Baccalaureate (end-of-high-school diploma) in computer science – a new course that had only been running for two years. He tried his hand at business law at the University of Paris I for three months but decided to enter working life instead.

An entrepreneur's journey

Company head at 20 with Info Elec (1982) At 19, he was a CAD operator (computer-assisted drawing) in the field of electronics. For several months, he had two jobs, working all day and every other night to save the 20,000 francs needed to build share capital and create his company, Info Elec, in 1982.

Seven years later, Info Elec became a public company with a capital of one million francs and 30 employees. Prestigious clients trusted it with processing their printed boards. It became a registered research centre and its name was associated with the greatest French technological achievements: the *Rafale* fighter, the *Leclerc* main battle tank, the TGV

high-speed train, the *Ariane* rocket, the CNRS Mars probe (National Centre for Scientific Research)... The company was sold in 2005.

Launching the magazine *Tracks and Pads* (1995) In 1995, Cadic realised that the French electronics industry risked crumbling under the effects of globalisation. So, he created *Tracks and Pads* (*Pistes et Pastilles*), a bimonthly magazine focusing on new elements in the world of circuit boards, and wrote its editorials in a critical, idiosyncratic tone. Through this medium, he collected and shared the words of various personalities from the worlds of industry and politics, such as Roland Moreno, Yvon Gattaz, Pierre Gattaz and Jean Arthuis. The magazine became an editorial reference for the electronics sector and established itself as an important player in the defense and promotion of France's industrialists. It was sold in 2006.

Creation of the Internet startup PCB007 (1999) After moving to Ashford in the United Kingdom, Olivier Cadic raised €10 million to create an Internet startup named PCB007.com (PCB as in printed circuit board). It is a global marketplace that brings together buyers and sellers of printed circuits, as well as a daily news source. It was sold at the end of 2004 to a California-based company.

Founding of Cinebook, British publisher of French and Belgian comics (2005) In late 2005, Cadic entered publishing by creating Cinebook, a British company aimed at promoting the most famous Franco-Belgian *bandes dessinées* through English translation. In five years, he became the foremost buyer of foreign rights for French-language comics. In a mere three years, he published twice as many *Lucky Luke* titles in English as had been done in the previous 50 years. Cinebook has published over 50 series (*Lucky Luke*, *XIII*, *Thorgal*, *Largo Winch*, *Blake & Mortimer*, and *Spirou*, as well as *Yakari* and *Boule et Bill* – translated as *Billy and Buddy* – for the younger readers). Cadic appeared in the documentary *XIII, la conspiration dans la peau* (*XIII, When Conspiracy Gets Under Your Skin*), broadcast on channel 13^e rue.

Free France... Free enterprise (1996)

Business relocation under intense media scrutiny In 1996, Olivier Cadic transferred the head office of his company to Ashford, Kent, two hours from Paris by Eurostar. On 17 September 1996, he called a press conference and declared: 'I leave, but against my will, and doing so quietly would make me feel like a deserter.' He denounced the weight of employer social contributions, which ruined the competitiveness of his industrial clients and justified his move as essential to save his company. The British newspaper *The Independent* proclaimed: 'French firm crosses Channel to the "land of opportunity"'. French radio station Europe 1 invited him for a one-hour exchange with listeners. The media frenzy had started, and it would be heard all the way to the United States, Japan and Brazil. Afterward, Cadic would often be found on television sound stages, sitting across from French politicians of all parties, from Jean-François Copé to Arlette Laguillier. When he arrived in Ashford, the British press turned him into a symbol to such an extent that he was once described as 'the best-known Frenchman in southern

England since William the Conqueror'. From then on, Cadic would launch all of his new projects (including PCB007 and Cinebook) from across the Channel.

An association to help French entrepreneurs Olivier Cadic's reputation brought him dozens of calls from established businessmen and aspiring entrepreneurs, all asking for advice. He created the association 'Free France... Free Enterprise', which would provide all manner of information and help solicit support from legal, fiscal, accounting and marketing experts. In 1998, the association was so successful that it rented a Eurostar train to take hundreds of entrepreneurs and representatives from all branches of the French media to Ashford, Kent, for a day of conferences. To put a stop to this enthusiasm, Dominique Strauss-Kahn created an 'exit tax' with the 1999 Finance Act. He demanded a financial guarantee from French businessmen wanting to leave French soil. Newspaper *Le Figaro* dubbed this provision the 'Cadic Law'. The association's activities were put on hold after the European Court found France guilty of breaking EU rules – a sentence that led to the 'exit tax' being cancelled in 2003. An event was organised in Ashford on 20 November 2011 to celebrate the association's 15th anniversary. Its activities have since been transferred to the UFE Corporate (Union des Français de l'étranger – Union of French Citizens Abroad).

Community outreach and artistic life

Amnesty International financial commission (1991) While he was a member of the French branch of the financial commission at Amnesty International, Cadic organised a classical music concert in the Sorbonne to support the universal abolition of the death penalty, and in memory of British journalist Farzad Bazoft, who had been hanged in Baghdad. Before a thousand music lovers, he read a statement denouncing the bloody suppression inflicted on the Kurdish people by Saddam Hussein's regime, long before the invasion of Kuwait.

Management committee of the GFIE (1993) In 1993, Cadic was elected to the management committee of the 'Groupement des Fournisseurs de l'Industrie Electronique' (Electronics Industry Suppliers Association). A year later, he became its vice president. He recognized that the French electronics industry wasn't considered a strategic sector by the government and, at the same time, was ideally placed to witness the considerable amounts of energy French businesses spent trying to comply with the new legal work limit of 35 hours per week, while their Asian competitors were beginning to attract French buyers.

Presidency of the British branch of the UFE (2005) Olivier Cadic is the president of the British Branch of the 'Union des Français de l'étranger' (Union of French Citizens Abroad), an association recognised as promoting the public interest since 1936. (See below: Offices and Duties.)

Writing and publishing 'La Reine Margot' comic (2006) A collector of antique books and a history enthusiast, Cadic was captivated by the memoirs of Marguerite de Valois, the wife of Henry IV of France – popularly known as Queen Margot. He discovered a

scorned but intelligent woman, determined and modern, far from deserving the wanton reputation that Alexandre Dumas gave her—not surprising, as it was the first time in history that a woman had published her memoirs. This document is also the only written eyewitness account of the Saint Bartholomew’s Day massacre—in this case, of the events that took place at the Louvres palace. Cadic penned the story of Margot’s youth as a graphic novel trilogy, in association with artist Juliette Derenne. The trilogy was awarded ‘jury favourite’ at the October 2008 Orthez Book Day.

OFFICES AND DUTIES

Elected representative to the Assembly of French Citizens Abroad (since 2006)

- In 2005, Joëlle Garriaud-Maylam, senator for French citizens living abroad, encouraged Olivier Cadic to go into politics. He became president of the British branch of the Union of French Citizens Abroad (UFE) towards the end of 2005.
- On 18 June 2006, in the election of representatives to the Assembly of French Citizens Abroad (AFE), he led the UFE slate, which won the vote and three of the six seats.
- From 2009 to 2012, he represented the AFE on the board of directors of the Agency for French Education Abroad (AEFE).
- In May 2014, he was elected to the Consular Council in London, then re-elected to the AFE for the Northern Europe constituency in June 2014.

Senator for French citizens living abroad (since 2014)

- UDI (Union of Democrats and Independents – centre-right political party) senator for French citizens living abroad, elected in September 2014
- Member of the Senate’s Social Affairs Committee
- Member of the Senate’s Office for Business

Other executive offices

- In May 2015 he became the president of the UDI-World federation and the UDI national secretary for foreign trade.
- President of the Federation of French Citizens Abroad for the Centrist Alliance, and founding member of the UDI in 2012

NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. Article in *La Croix*, 14 November 2014

EXTERNAL LINKS

- Olivier Cadic’s blog
- *La Croix*: portrait: Olivier Cadic, French citizen abroad (14-11-2014)

- *LePetitJournal.com*: Olivier Cadic – A new senator in ‘participative management’ mode (16-10-2014)
- *Business Week*: French entrepreneurs swim the Channel (06-10-1997)
- *L’Express*: French SMBs seduced by Albion (28-08-1997)
- *L’Expansion*: He crosses the Channel and instantly quadruples his profits (26-09-1996)
- Information page on the Senate’s website