

## **CADIC Olivier**

- UDI senator for French citizens living abroad
- Member of the Social Affairs Commission,
- Vice president of the Business Delegation



### **My journey**

Born in 1962 to a Breton father and a Pied Noir (French national born in a North African colony) mother, Olivier has a fondness for quotes, starting with this one from Victor Hugo: ‘Those who live are those who strive’.

After graduating from high school with a speciality in computer science, he tried his hand at business law at the University of Paris I for three months ... and decided to enter working life instead.

He continued his self-education, however. From 1981 to 1982, as a data inputter in CAD (computer-assisted drawing), he assimilated most of the expertise of two electronics companies.

### **Entrepreneur at 20**

The creation of Info Elec had already taken root in his mind. Where to find the funds, though? For several months he worked two jobs, labouring by day and every other night. Things fell into place quickly after that.

On 1 October 1982, at age 20, Olivier withdrew his entire savings – all of 20,000 francs – from the bank. The banker with whom he deposited the funds for the creation of his limited liability company gave this parting encouragement: ‘I hope you won’t be asking me for money!’

Seven years later, Info Elec had become a public limited company with capital of one million francs. Olivier was its CEO. He spent more than twelve hours a day working and slept five hours per night.

### **Amnesty International**

Above all else, Olivier cherishes the First Amendment of the US Constitution, which guarantees freedom of speech. That principle led him to the French arm of Amnesty International, through which he stood against all forms of totalitarianism. He became a member of the French organisation’s Financial Commission.

Olivier wrote a statement against the bloody suppression inflicted on the Kurdish people, denouncing Saddam Hussein’s regime long before the invasion of Kuwait. He

also personally organised a classical music concert at the Sorbonne in memory of British journalist Farzad Bazoft, who had been hanged in Baghdad. A thousand music lovers attended the concert.

### **In defence of the French electronics industry**

In 1993, his professional success earned him a spot on the management committee of the GFIE (Groupement des Fournisseurs de l'Industrie Electronique – Electronics Industry Suppliers Association). The next year, his peers demonstrated their approval by electing him vice president.

In 1995, Olivier realised that the French electronics industry was heading for disaster. So, he created *Pistes et Pastilles (Tracks and Pads)*, a professional magazine that established itself as an editorial reference and a platform for the defence of the industry's interests.

### **Free France... Free enterprise**

He went even further in 1996 when he transferred his company's head office to Ashford, located two hours from Paris by Eurostar. He then founded 'Free France... Free enterprise', an association aimed at assisting and advising French entrepreneurs wishing to give their business new impetus in England.

He attracted such media enthusiasm that he was nicknamed 'the best-known Frenchman in southern England since William the Conqueror'. Over a thousand entrepreneurs joined his association.

### **From Internet to comics**

In 1999, Olivier raised €10 million from prestigious venture capital firms to create the world's first circuit-board marketplace on the Internet.

In 2003, judging that the electronics industry's best growth opportunities would henceforth be in Asia, Olivier began abandoning all his activities in that sector, selling every business one by one in the space of two years.

Towards the end of 2005, through his publishing company, Olivier decided to promote Franco-Belgian comics (*bande dessinée*) in the United Kingdom and the USA. The challenge was to carve a place for the French Ninth Art in markets dominated by American comics and Japanese manga. At the same time, he wrote the script for a graphic-novel trilogy about the French Queen Margot, for which he received the 'Palme de Phébus' at the 2008 Orthez Book Day

### **Elected representative and senator**

Having become president of the British branch of the UFE (Union des Français de l'étranger – Union of French Citizens Abroad), an association recognised as promoting the public interest since 1936, he was the UFE's chief candidate for the United Kingdom in the election of representatives to the AFE (Assemblée des

Français de l'Étranger – Assembly of French Citizens Abroad), with Nicolas Sarkozy's support.

On 18 June 2006, the UFE won three seats out of six, and Olivier became an elected representative, placing him just after the ambassador and the consul general in order of protocol.

He joined the AFE's Finance Commission and represented the Assembly on the board of directors of the AEFÉ (Agence pour l'Enseignement Français à l'Étranger – Agency for French Education Abroad) from September 2009 to September 2012.

On 3 October 2011, Bernard Emié, French ambassador to the United Kingdom, presented him with Knight of the National Order of Merit.

In the fall of 2012, he joined the Centrist Alliance, presided over by Jean Arthuis, who appointed him head of the Federation of French Citizens Abroad. He then became one of the founding members of the Union of Democrats and Independents (UDI), a party led by Jean-Louis Borloo.

In late 2013, the UDI's executive committee appointed him national delegate for French citizens living abroad. He coordinated creation of the UDI's 'nation clubs' and preparation of the 2014 consular elections. In May 2014, in London, he led the slate of United French Citizens in the United Kingdom, a union of the right and the centre supported by the UMP (Union for a Popular Movement - centre-right political party), UDI and UFE, which won almost 40 percent of the votes and 45 percent of the electoral college. The next month he was reelected to the AFE at the head of a united right, centre and independent slate that obtained five out of the eight AFE representative seats for the Northern Europe constituency.

In September 2014, Olivier became the first **UDI senator for French citizens living abroad**. In the Senate, he is a member of the Social Affairs Commission, vice president of the Business Delegation, and secretary of the Franco-British parliamentary friendship group.

After all of these experiences, Olivier has found his serenity. He keeps the notion of success in perspective by remembering always this piece of advice from Albert Einstein: 'Try not to become a man of success, but rather try to become a man of value'.

Olivier Cadic is the father of Margot, whose beaming smile contains, for him, all the world's joy.