

# 10th Anniversary of German Unity



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## MESSAGE

As a result of World War II, Germany had previously been divided for 40 years by the Berlin Wall and berbed wire only. With the peaceful revolution of November 1989 when the Berlin Wall finally collapsed, the way for German unity was paved. On 3 October 1990 Germany finally regained its unity as a nation. Therefore we are especially proud and glad to celebrate this day, now in its tenth anniversary.

In the years since the end of the East-West confrontation, united Germany has become even more firmly integrated into the global economy as an export nation in the heart of Europe. It finds itself particularly subject to the challenges and opportunities arising from globalization. For this reason, it must secure its position as one of the world's leading export nations and as a location for industries that are able to survive the changes of the future. On the other hand, due to its worldwide trade links, Germany also continues to be dependent on an efficient global economic system. It is consequently in Germany's interest that international institutions in the area of trade and finance be strengthened and a binding, free-market-oriented legal framework be established for the global economy. The Federal Republic of Germany wants to contribute to peaceful progress in the world and to a fair reconciliation of interests.

Germany - with its own potential for future development, its partners in the EU, its multilateral orientation and, in particular, its active participation in the United Nations - will also continue to meet its international responsibilities.

Even before unification the Federal Republic of Germany had developed a reputation as a reliable partner with developing countries. These countries expect united Germany to take on more responsibility. As one of the world's leading industrialized nations, Germany is aware of its special responsibility to advocate and support a regulatory framework for the global economy that gives developing countries a fair chance. This particularly applies to opening markets and integrating developing countries into the global economy.

Germany also supports the economic growth and development process in developing countries by importing goods from them - in volumes that are high by international standards, and growing.

The relationship between Germany and Bangladesh since long has been cordial and most friendly. This is a most important and welcome fact since the global challenges waiting for all of us may only be solved on the basis of co-operative partnerships all around the world. Germany highly appreciates the prominent and constructive role that Bangladesh is playing in the international field, in particular in the United Nations and

among developing countries. Both countries have strong common interests in UN peace keeping and in multilateral organisations such as the International Criminal Court.

Germany and its people always have considered Bangladesh and its very hard working people as their friends. Since the independence of Bangladesh Germany has been a reliable development partner. As a donor, we encourage Bangladesh's structural reforms through which the country may achieve modernisation and economic growth that is needed to provide a better life to all its citizens. We also strongly appreciate the commitment of the country towards ensuring women's and children's rights. Germany is one of the most important bilateral donors of Bangladesh and the German government has committed bilateral assistance for a broad spectrum of projects and programmes since the beginning of the development cooperation in 1971. Germany's assistance contributed significantly towards accelerating the country's economic and social development since independence.

Another strong point in the relations between Germany and Bangladesh is the economic relationship between the two countries. Even though ties already are strong there still are potentials to be explored. Bangladesh goods, especially leather and garment products, are very popular in Germany and may be even more so once the Bangladesh market and investment opportunities are better known to German investors. The German Embassy in Dhaka as well as several trade institutions in Germany are working towards this goal. The ongoing liberalisation and investment policy of the Bangladesh government is a good incentive for further investments and therefore highly appreciated.

Not only development and economic relations tie the two countries. Cultural relations also are very close between Germany and Bangladesh. The German Cultural Institute "Goethe Institute" plays a major role in this respect. In October 2000 in cooperation with the Goethe Institute in a German Filmweek will start in Dhaka and show a variety of modern German movies.

For many years Germany has been giving its assistance to Bangladesh in the fields of soccer, handball and hockey. Soccer and hockey training courses in Bangladesh were organized as well as scholarships for training courses for soccer, handball, volleyball and athletic coaches at the University of Leipzig in Germany.

Students with outstanding degrees are able to receive scholarships for further studies as well as for short-term research projects in Germany through the DAAD (German Academic Exchange Service). Germany is very much interested to strengthen these links,

in particular with regard to the interchange in the university area and the field of sports.

The second German-Bangladesh MELO organized by the German Embassy and Anando, a local development organisation, will be held in January 2001. The "MELO" will take place on the grounds of Anando in Banani with the intention to attract a wide Bangladeshi and international audience. Besides a German-Bangladeshi cultural program, German and Bangladeshi development organisations and enterprises shall have a chance to present their work as well as their products and services.

Looking forward towards the future development of relations between Germany and Bangladesh, it is obvious that politically and economically stable environment is a precondition for increased trade, investment and cultural exchange. A stable environment of this kind is also a prerequisite for the sustained development which Germany wants to support. The respect of democratic principles, safeguarding of human rights and the rule of law are at the basis of stability. They must be supported by common sense, moderation and a strong sense of compromise in daily political life. At the same time, a sound national economy depends on a working infrastructure and efficient services both in the private and the public sectors.

All of this needs constant monitoring and, if necessary, improvement. Germany is looking with interest and high expectations at programmes for improvement and reforms currently carried out or taken into consideration for important sectors of public life in Bangladesh. Successful reforms will bring our two friendly countries even closer together.

I sincerely wish the close co-operation and mutual friendship between Germany and Bangladesh to continue in future as it has done in the past.



Uwe W. Schramm  
Ambassador of the  
Federal Republic of  
Germany to Bangladesh



German President Johannes Rau (left) welcomes Chancellor Gerhard Schröder at Schloss Bellevue, his official residence in Berlin.

## We are One People The Glue that Holds the Germans Together

by Professor Dr. Elisabeth Noelle-Neumann

"We are facing a pile of ruins," Lothar Gall, the historian, said. That was almost at the end of a one-day symposium on the topic "The glue that holds us together in Germany," organised by ZDF television this summer to mark the tenth anniversary of reunification. Professor Dieter Stolte, the head of ZDF, explained the aims of the symposium: the idea was to be in a better position to answer the question "What does the inner cohesion of our nation consist of? How tightly, or how loosely have the stitches of reunification now been sewn by the East and the West? What direction must our society move in?" There was a long series of gloomy statements. Ex-President von Weizsäcker did his best to brighten things up: "It is the past and the future which hold us together - glory and remorse." Right at the end, Marcel Reich-Ranicki applied some discipline to create a certain degree of order: "We are held together by three things: commerce - the past - culture."

Since April 1990s, the Al-

lensbacher Institute has been interviewing 2000 Germans, a representative cross-section of society, and asking this question: "Is German reunification more a reason for you to rejoice?" Continued on page 14

## MESSAGE

On 3 October 2000 we will be celebrating the tenth anniversary of German unity. After forty years of an enforced division Germany was once again united with the agreement of all its neighbours and allies. For the first time in our history Germany is surrounded only by friends and partners. For that we are grateful. And we see it also as an obligation in terms of the future.

At home tackling the task of creating comparable living conditions throughout Germany, reuniting in the social, economic and also psychological sense two societies that for decades had been cast in very different moulds remains an epochal challenge. Impressive progress has been made, for example in building an ultra-modern infrastructure in the five new States. Yet there is still much to be done. Only active solidarity on the part of each and every one will allow the work to go forward. That means, too, that the entire nation has a responsibility to take a clear stand against all forms of xenophobic and racist violence.

The yearning for freedom of the Central and Eastern European nations and the end of the Cold War brought about not only German unity but also profound change in the international arena. Faced with the challenges of globalization and the renewed outbreak of conflict in the Balkans and many other parts of the world, Germany needs like others, too, to redefine its foreign policy role. There are two fundamentals, however, to which we are committed. First, the need for foreign policy continuity. Given Germany's history, we fully recognize the importance of predictability and trust in this area. Secondly, in pursuing our interests we have opted for the "multilateral imperative". Clear Germany's participation in cooperative international institutions has been a key factor in overcoming its historically precarious position in Europe and paving the way to unity.

Also in the future the paramount goal of German foreign policy is to make peace secure and the rule of law prevail. On this basis our priorities are:

- to complete European integration, both by deepening cooperation and by enlarging the Union through the admission of new

members, notably from Central and Eastern Europe. We attach particular importance here to building on the successful cooperation with our closest partner, France:

- to expand and recalibrate the transatlantic partnership, which also has a vital role to play in responding to the new global challenges ahead;
- to bring greater stability to the Balkans and move South-East Europe closer to the Europe of integration;
- to steadily develop our friendly ties with Russia;
- to steadily expand our friendly ties with the countries of Africa, Asia and Latin America. With new approaches and carefully honed strategies, believing solidarity and self-responsibility go hand in hand, we intend to step up our cooperation with these countries;
- to strengthen the United Nations, the indispensable, pivotal institution for addressing the momentous challenges facing humanity, issues such as the maintenance of world peace, securing respect for human rights, conflict prevention and protection of the environment as well as promoting more equitable and sustained social and economic development;
- to foster efforts across the world aimed at a peaceful accommodation of interest and to this end to actively support the many initiatives to develop closer regional cooperation.

The political process that ten years ago enabled Germany to regain its unity was impressive proof that the path of integration and cooperation Germany embarked on following the catastrophe of World War II and the Holocaust, a catastrophe for which Germany was responsible, was indeed the right path. And that is the path we will continue to pursue, conscious of Germany's responsibility for the past and at the same time ready, where we have the capacity to do so, to assume at the international level responsibility for the future.

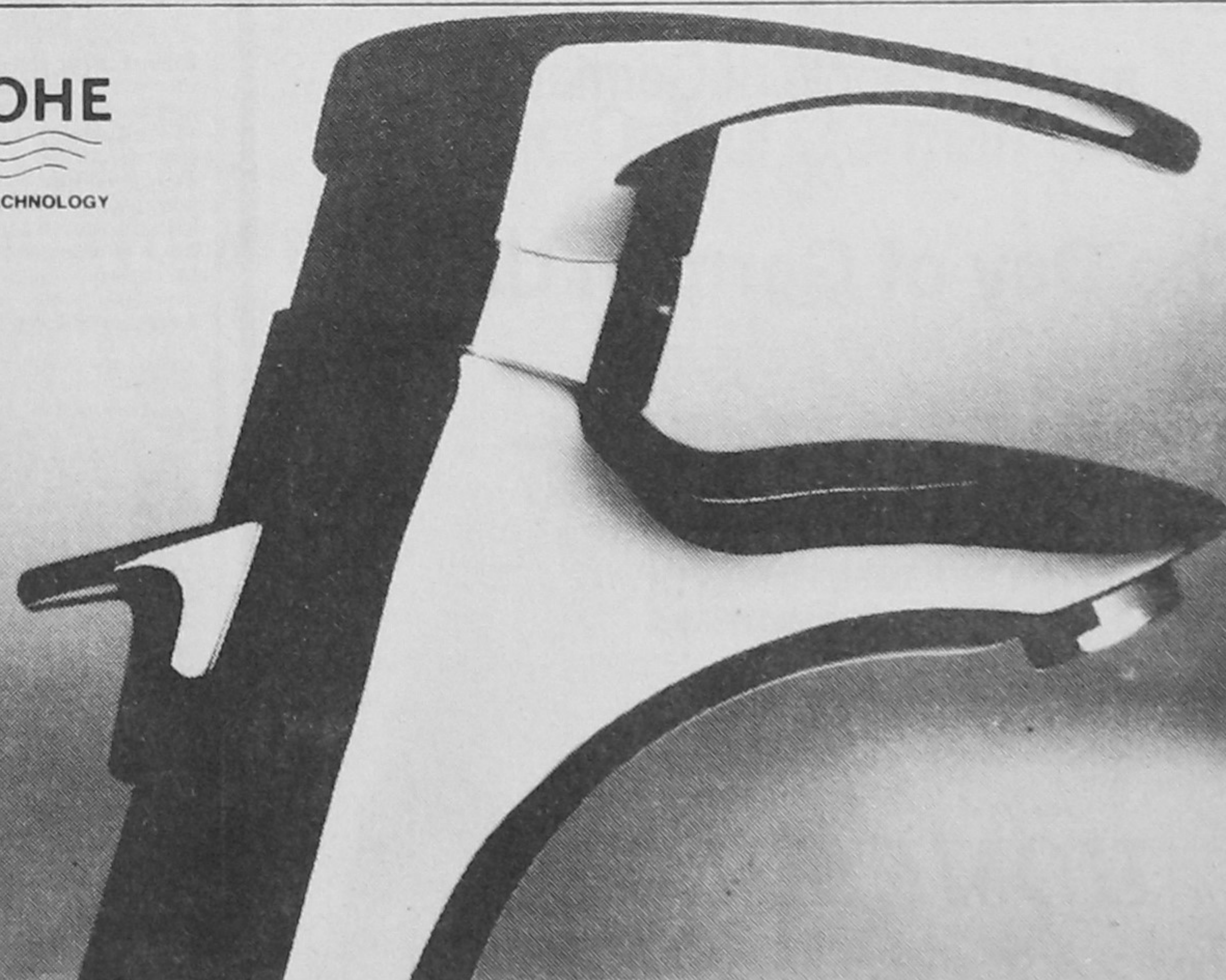
Joschka Fischer

Federal Minister for Foreign Affairs

Heartiest felicitations to  
The friendly people of the  
Federal Republic of Germany  
on  
The Day of German Unity

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## Why do We Need Unity? Vive la Difference!

by Peter Schneider

OBVIOUSLY it was really stupid - and not only from the point of view of the tourism industry - to get rid of virtually the whole Wall. Leaving a bit of the border system in the city would help East and West Germans to communicate today - it would be a tangible reason why the Germans don't get on, after forty years of division and ten years of unity.

As far as I'm concerned, I'm surprised not at the "mental wall" but at the amazement it causes around the world and here in Germany. What did people expect? Is it really sur-

prising that the Germans to the left and right of the Wall, who both grew up as model pupils at two extremely different boarding schools, took a closer look at one another after an initial enthusiastic welcome? People talk about the "wall in people's heads" as though it were something bad, somehow improper. But why? To me, nothing seems as helpless and false as the incessant calls for "internal unity." Ironing out all the differences between East and West is not even desirable. It is

high time to stop all the complaints about the differences of perception and to start an open debate on which differences we should celebrate and which we should try to overcome.

Some differences that I regard as worthy of consideration are for example the strict separation of church and state which the Germans have inherited from the GDR, the economic independence of women and the right to freely decide about pregnancy. But it is also true that not every difference is

equally nice, and not all of them are worth keeping.

People in the eastern part of Germany still regard it as a provocation when they are told that the GDR was an unjust regime. If someone actually uses the technical term and calls it a "dictatorship," he is told that he cannot use a term like that for the socialist regime, when it is reserved for the Nazi tyranny. Why is half a people, which after the Nazi dictatorship ended up under a socialist dictatorship, unable to admit that this was the case? It is a fact that the cards in the intra-German game have been dealt out unequally, and there is no point in the West Germans denying their superior expertise in democracy and the market economy, which they owe to their geographical fortune, just for the sake of some sort of political correctness.

On the contrary, they should pass on this expertise with both determination and modesty - with a modesty deriving from the insight that they themselves needed at least twenty years in order fully to accept the democracy imported by the Western Allies. Since I know how long it took myself and many of my generation to come to terms with the Federal Republic, I would be rather distrustful if this process were to happen overnight in the people of the former GDR. Perhaps they need and ought to go through a new 1968 in order to feel at home in the Federal Republic.

In fact, all this talk about walls in heads often covers up very real and avoidable injustices. One of the central and irreversible failings of reunification is the priority given to restitution over compensation where property had been confiscated by the GDR. In the eyes of the former GDR citizens, the West Germans, who came out

Continued on page 14



With a huge national flag and the flags of the 16 German federal states, young people at Berlin's Brandenburg Gate welcome the Day of German Unity. Ten years ago, on October 3, 1990, hundreds of thousands of people celebrated Germany's unification following the fall of the Berlin Wall in November 1989.