



# DAY OF GERMAN UNITY

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## Ambassador's Message

ON 3 October 2008 we Germans celebrate the 18th anniversary of the reunification of our country. For the first time in history Germany, with its reunification in 1990, has gained unity in freedom and is a stable and prosperous democracy based on the rule of law.

Only 18 years ago, the people of East Germany put their life on the line and took to the streets. In a few dramatic months they peacefully and courageously overcame a dictatorship and wrote one of the most beautiful chapters in German history. These events led to the new, united Federal Republic of Germany. Many friends and partners - new and old - helped us to achieve this.

In 1989, East Germany was in a dismal state, both economically and socially. It was burdened with huge environmental legacies and its industry faced economic collapse. Productivity was only about one third of that in Western Germany.

On this background the achievements of the past 18 years are truly remarkable. Lifestyles and consumer behaviour in the old and in the new states of the Federal Republic of Germany are now more or less on par. In the Eastern states modern infrastructure is in place and environmental hazards have been removed. The region, once so close to collapse, is now a region with a future. Renewable energy has become a core sector for growth in Germany's Eastern states and the prospects for the coming years are promising. This positive trend is fostered by Eastern Germany's excellent high-technology research environment.

As a whole, Germany's economy is maintaining its place as a growth engine for Europe. All our experience shows that lasting economic success needs legal security, social consensus, well-trained and hard-working people as well as good infrastructure. We are convinced that the rule of law, social justice and the respect for human rights are quintessential elements of social and economic development and for success in a globalized world.

We, Germans and the people of Bangladesh, share democracy and human rights as core values, which form the foundation of our bilateral relations. Bangladesh is an important partner for Germany. Our bilateral relations are particularly strong in the field of trade. Bangladesh enjoys a 4 billion Euro trade surplus with the European Union as a whole, 1.3 billion Euro of which account for Germany. Germany is the largest market for Bangladeshi goods in Europe and the second largest export market for Bangladesh worldwide. In the last year two German shipping companies signed agreements with a Bangladeshi shipbuilding company to build 10 ships worth approximately 150 million US-Dollars. In order to create further business links and to showcase the bilateral trade relations between our two countries, the Bangladesh-German Chamber of Commerce and Industry (BGCCI) is presently organising the first German trade fair ever in Bangladesh, the "German Trade Show 2008", which will take place in Dhaka from 6 to 8 November 2008.

Since the founding of Bangladesh, Germany has been a reliable partner supporting the development of this country. More than 2.3 billion Euro of bilateral assistance has been made available for projects in Bangladesh. Over

the years we have also provided another 2 billion Euro for multilateral projects and programmes in Bangladesh through organisations such as the European Commission, the World Bank, the Asian Development Bank and the UN.

We also maintain strong cultural ties. Since 1961 the Goethe-Institut has operated in Dhaka providing information on German culture, society and politics to the public. The Institute conducts a great variety of cultural programmes in the fields of art, theatre and film. Since the beginning of 2008 about 450 Bangladeshis have started German language courses and the number of students of the German language is increasing steadily.

The recently launched initiative of the German government "Schools: Partner for the Future", which has the strong personal support of our Foreign Minister Frank-Walter Steinmeier, aims at developing a worldwide network of partner schools and promotes the introduction of German as a foreign language in their curricula. So far, two schools have been identified in Dhaka which will benefit from student exchange programmes and will also receive teaching materials and technical equipment.

An important objective of the cultural activities of the German Embassy is the support of the national heritage of Bangladesh. We are proud to have financed two large projects in this field in the last year:

In order to ensure that Baul music maintains its important traditional position in Bangladeshi cultural life, the Embassy and the NGO "Pally Baul Samaj Unnayan Sangstha" produced a collection of Baul songs which were published in book and audio format and made available to archives, libraries, universities and various cultural organisations throughout the country.

The catalogue "Sculptures in Bangladesh" was completed and will be launched in the end of October 2008. It is a descriptive inventory of selected Hindu, Buddhist and Jain stone and bronze images from museums and private collections in Bangladesh. This impressive volume is the outcome of a joint effort of German scholars from the Institute for Art History of South Asia of the Free University in Berlin and a scholar from the International Centre for the Study of Bengal Art in Dhaka. This project promotes academic exchange as well as preserves precious historical artifacts of Bangladesh.

In the last months, the dialogue between German and Bangladeshi think-tanks and between civil society members of our two countries has intensified. In January the Goethe-Institut and the German Embassy organised a seminar on "The changing strategic landscape: new challenges and realities" with the distinguished political scientist Prof. Wilfried von Bredow participating. In July Prof. Markus Kaim from the Institute for International and Security Affairs in Berlin, a leading German think-tank, visited Bangladesh having speeches and participating in public discussions on "The External Relations of the EU" and "Governance and Consensus: Transition to Democracy".

Academic exchange between our two countries is also intensive. The information office of the German Academic Exchange Service

(DAAD) at the Goethe-Institut Dhaka provides detailed information on studying in Germany. Top post-graduate students and young scientists benefit from the various scholarship programmes offered by the DAAD.

Currently, about 300 students from Bangladesh are enrolled in German universities.

In view of numerous degree courses at German universities with English as language of instruction there is considerable potential for further increase of the number of Bangladeshi students in Germany.

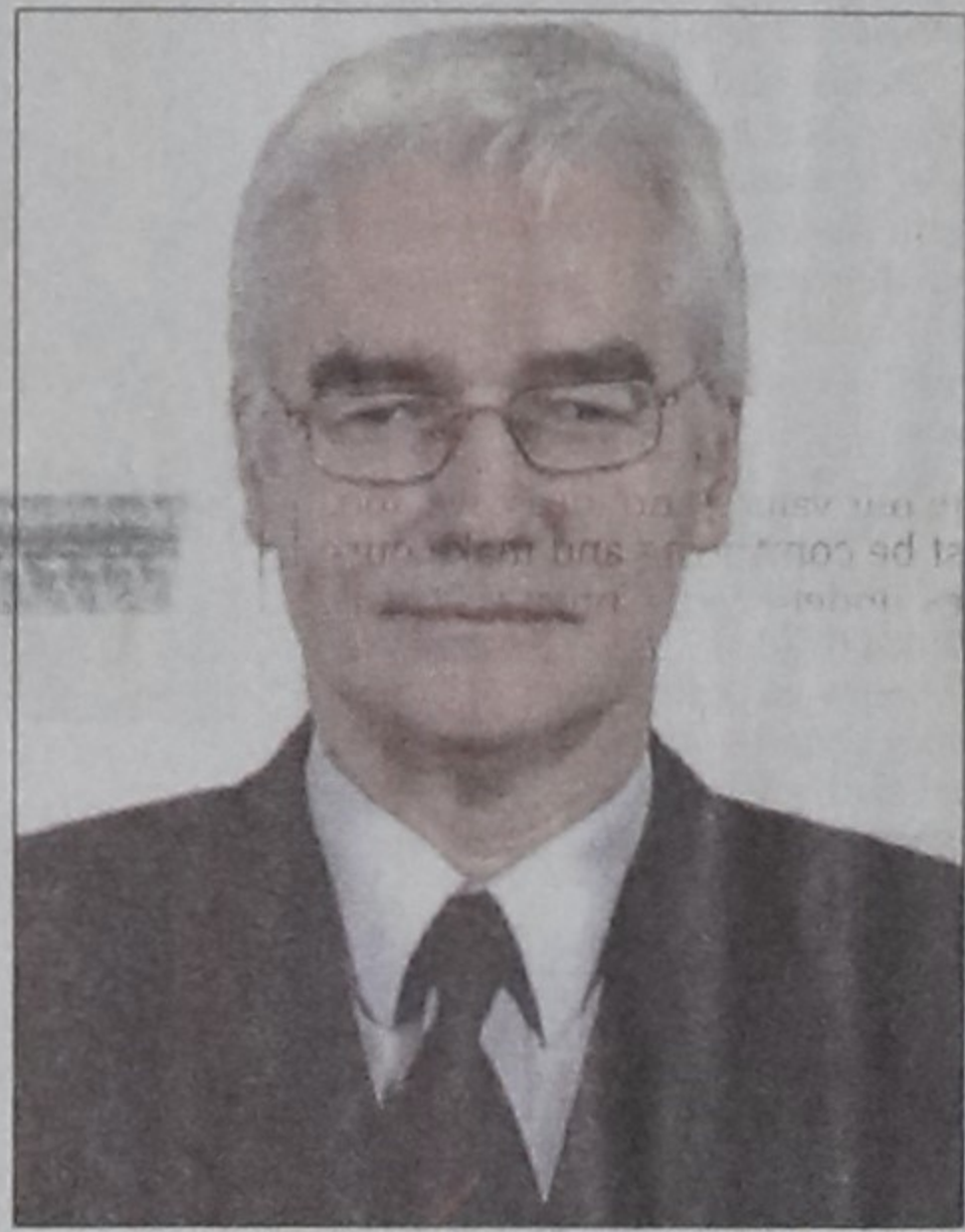
The German TV and radio broadcaster Deutsche Welle (DW) is very popular in Bangladesh, which is the country with the largest number of Deutsche Welle fan clubs worldwide and from which DW receives more fan mail than from any other country. In response to this immense interest Deutsche Welle does not only provide news and programmes in Bangla but has also recently launched its Bangla website, Mr. Grahme Lucas, head of the Deutsche Welle South Asia Department, visited Bangladesh at the end of August to meet listeners of DW programmes at the "DW Listeners' and Viewers' Gathering 2008".

Looking back on the past year we can be pleased with the excellent status of our bilateral relations, indeed.

On this happy occasion of the "Day of German Unity" I extend cordial greetings to the people of Bangladesh as well as to the German residents here.

Germany extends its best wishes for a peaceful and successful transition to parliamentary government in December bringing about sustainable democracy for Bangladesh free from the confrontational politics of the past and with the political parties successfully working for a democratic, peaceful and prosperous Bangladesh.

Germany will continue to be a reliable partner on this way.



Frank Meyke  
Ambassador of Germany to Bangladesh

## 'The world is searching for a new international order'

Interview with Frank-Walter Steinmeier, Federal Foreign Minister

The world is in the midst of a process of rapid change: political discussion is dominated by the challenges of globalization, the consequences of climate change, crises and conflicts in many regions. What answers can a foresighted foreign policy provide? A major "Deutschland" interview with the Federal Minister for Foreign Affairs:

Earlier this year the BBC World Service published the results of an international opinion poll that gave Germany the highest rating. The Federal Republic's impact on global politics was considered more positive than that of any other country. Were you surprised by the results and how do you explain them?

Of course, I was pleased to hear the results of this study. I believe the last two years in particular have been very positive for our image abroad. During the FIFA World Cup in 2006 we presented ourselves to the whole world as a hospitable country that really lived up to the slogan "A Time to Make Friends". That raised our popularity rating a lot as I discover regularly in the talks I have abroad. In 2007 Germany then took over the EU presidency and also chaired the G8. We launched a lot of initiatives in these functions and achieved some progress on them. German foreign policy had a lot of media coverage during these presidencies. I think that also had a positive impact on the study.

What are the hallmarks of modern foreign policy in the 21st century?

Our foreign policy in the 21st century will remain a policy that is in line with our country's interests. That is our aim, and to achieve it we must, of course, closely observe and analyze what is currently happening in the world. At the moment we are experiencing profound change processes: coordinate systems are shifting, new powers are emerging and with them new challenges and a need for new systems of organization and regulation. The Cold War is over. Climate change, scarce resources, international terrorism, a multi-polar world order these are the issues we have to address today. Our aim must be to actively participate in structuring today's world. That means anticipating geopolitical developments and drafting corresponding plans of action. In short, "modern" today primarily means "forward-looking". Especially in foreign policy.

How has the emphasis of German foreign policy changed over the past few years? And in view of Germany's military deployments, is the country now at last regarded as "normal" again?

After the founding of the Federal Republic, German foreign policy rested on a number of pillars which are still relevant today: assimilation and integration in Europe, transatlantic



Dr. Frank-Walter Steinmeier  
has been the German Federal Minister for Foreign Affairs since 2005 and Vice-Chancellor of the Federal Republic of Germany in the cabinet of Federal Chancellor Angela Merkel since 2007. Born in 1956 and a member of the Social Democratic Party, he studied law and political science at the University of Giessen and was Head of the Federal Chancellery from 1999 to 2005.

relations and collective security. Our worldwide advocacy of democracy, the rule of law and human rights is also part of our foreign policy, as is support for states and regions where people are threatened by violence, natural disasters or poverty. Today we must formulate policies under the conditions of globalization, and that means that unstable situations in other regions of the world have a direct effect on us. What happens in Georgia or Afghanistan also impacts on Germany's security. Against this background we have had to learn and this was a difficult process that troop deployments abroad can be necessary to protect not only international security, but also our own. I'm not sure whether "normal" is the right word to use here, but our partners are entirely justified in expecting our solidarity in worldwide missions to promote security and stability.

In what areas has German foreign policy deservedly been praised for making a positive contribution also from an international perspective? What will be the major challenges in the future?

For years German foreign policy was that of Willy Brandt and Egon Bahr, Walter Scheel and Hans-Dietrich Genscher. It was a policy that

emphasized detente under the difficult circumstances of the Cold War also towards our neighbours to the east. Egon Bahr once formulated the central principle of Ostpolitik as "change through rapprochement". It was a policy that contributed more than any other towards tearing down walls on our continent.

Another constant in our foreign policy has most certainly been and still is our advocacy of a united Europe. The image of the "German-French engine" is still sometimes cited today, even in a Europe with 27 member states. And if we Europeans can live together in peace and friendship, without borders to keep us apart with one currency and with a chance to play an important role in the global world, then this is something we can all take credit for, including the Germans. 50 years ago, whoever would have thought that Europe devastated as it was at the time by two world wars would today be regarded as a role model for many regions of the world?

What are the questions we have to ask ourselves today? We have already mentioned them: climate protection, a secure energy supply, detente, security in a multi-polar world, disarmament and the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. We must also consider how a new international order will look, one that reflects changed realities and reliably incorporates the future heavyweights of international politics and economics. I think that is quite a demanding workload for us all...

Germany is involved in Afghanistan as part of the international community's effort for reconstruction and security in Afghanistan. What progress has been made and what will be the main challenges in the future?

The mission in Afghanistan is a major test for the entire international community. Will we succeed in giving a future to a country that was almost completely devastated after 30 years of war, civil war and rule by the Taliban? What I say is, we must do everything possible to make it succeed in the interests of our own security. The starting position is anything but easy, even seven years after the beginning of reconstruction. But I must warn against prophecies of doom and gloom. Anyone travelling through Afghanistan today can see the progress made by reconstruction. Over 13,000 km of new roads and 3,500 schools have been built since the overthrow of the Taliban. 30,000 teachers have been trained. 80 per cent of the population once again have basic medical care at their disposal. Development projects have been carried out in 32,000 Afghan villages. Of course, the security situation remains difficult and still requires our military presence. But precisely for that reason it is important that we also work even harder on reconstruction. And, of course, we must keep asking ourselves whether we are still on the right track. This is one of the reasons why we gathered

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BGCCI

**All our heart-felt felicitation on the occasion of German Unification day**

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**CELEBRATING THE DAY OF GERMAN UNITY**

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