



DAY OF GERMAN UNITY

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Message

THIS year, for the first time, I am addressing you on the occasion of the Day of German Unity in my function as Federal President. It is a day that reminds us Germans what happiness our recent history has brought. In 1989, the courageous population in the East cast off the chains of oppression and fought successfully for freedom, democracy, and, in the end, the reunification of our fatherland. Today, 22 years later, we are



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Joachim Gauck
German Federal President

thankful that our country has come into its own, mindful of what has been accomplished over the past decades: the economic miracle in the West, the establishment of a stable democracy and civil society there after the havoc wrought by National Socialism and the World War, and finally the peaceful revolution that brought freedom to the Germans in the East and the reunification of our country.

Germany is a free country where the rule of law prevails. It is a country both economically strong and at the same time concerned with the welfare of all members of society. We may rightly promote our social market economy as a model for the world. Today we can be proud of our country and the role it is playing in doing good in the world.

Especially in these politically and economically challenging times, we Germans remain committed to Europe. Europe is the joint response of many different countries to the wars of the 20th century, but is also a cultural home to a great variety of people, a stand-out political project and a wonderful cosmopolitan conception of unity in diversity. We want to uphold Europe now and nurture its future progress, especially when, given the current crisis, some are tempted to pull back behind national borders. We want to make Europe a space where peace and freedom are at home. We are also aware that even as a large country within Europe we are too small to mount an adequate response to political upheavals and the rapid rise of new economies around the world. We Germans need Europe. We Germans want Europe.

We want to live up to the role in Europe that our country has gradually acquired, partly on the basis of our economic strength, but above all on the basis of the reliability we have demonstrated over decades. We want to take on responsibility. This is expected of us and that it is expected of us in light of our past history -- a great gift of trust.

Message

ON the 3rd of October 2012 we celebrate the anniversary of Germany's reunification. For more than four decades our country had been divided when, 23 years ago, the people of East Germany took to the streets. Hundreds of thousands of citizens demanded freedom, democracy and national unity. Those who had oppressed them for too long were unable to stop the strong wave of protest. As a result, the Berlin Wall came down in 1989, and the German nation was finally reunited in 1990.

Today, we remember and we honour the people who wrote one of the most beautiful chapters of German history. They did it peacefully and with astonishing courage. For the first time, Germany gained unity in freedom and peace, with her neighbours' full concurrence. My country has since evolved as a stable and prosperous democracy based on the rule of law, and fully aware of her special responsibilities as Europe's centre piece. The political ties between Bangladesh and Germany have been strong from their very beginning. In 1972, Germany was one of the first European countries to officially recognize Bangladesh as an independent country. In turn, the historic event of Germany's reunification was warmly greeted by Bangladesh. Our two countries cooperate fruitfully in finding solutions to global problems such as poverty, population growth, and climate change. On a multilateral level, most notably in the framework of United Nations, we have started common initiatives. Among these is the promotion of access to water as a human right.

On a bilateral level, a string of reciprocal visits gives testimony of

our well established partnership. Last year the Prime Minister and the Foreign Minister of Bangladesh visited Germany, whereas the German Federal President and the Minister of Development Cooperation came to Bangladesh. This year the German Foreign Minister held political talks in Dhaka. In the context of the 40th anniversary of German-Bangladesh diplomatic ties and to further strengthen the excellent bilateral relations, he met with Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, Foreign Minister Dr. Dipu Moni and representatives of Civil Society.

Our bilateral ties are particularly strong in the field of business. With steady growth rates over many years, Bangladesh has achieved impressive progress in its economic development. As a consequence of the expanding economy and the improved investment conditions, and due to the strong entrepreneurial spirit in the country I believe that Bangladesh is well on its way to reaching the status of a middle income country.

Germany is Bangladesh's first trading partner within the European Union, and the second largest market for Bangladesh exports worldwide. In the last three years, trade between Germany and Bangladesh increased by almost 80%. This trend has been supported by the so-called "Everything But Arms" policy of the European Union, granting Bangladesh duty-free access to the EU for all products, except arms and ammunitions, without any quantitative restriction. Credit also goes to the Bangladesh German Chamber of Commerce and Industry (BGCCI), the biggest bilateral chamber in Bangladesh with 370 members, for elevating our economic relationship

to levels hitherto unknown. Looking ahead, some new areas of mutually beneficial business relations such as shipbuilding have already emerged and will gain more importance. German companies stand ready to invest in other areas like the energy sector, with special emphasis on renewable and "green" sources of energy where Germany has high technological competence.

Since Bangladesh's independence, our bilateral development cooperation has played a pivotal role in our relationship. An overall amount of 2.6 billion Euro has been committed so far for technical and financial assistance. It is given exclusively in the form of grants. Furthermore, Germany is a lead contributor to the development cooperation of the European Union, the World Bank, the Asian Development Bank and the UN agencies working in Bangladesh. Germany's own implementation agencies, GIZ and KfW, are trademarks for applied expertise in improving the lives of many people in Bangladesh. The volunteer programme "weltwärts" sends young Germans to Bangladesh every year to assist in development cooperation in various areas. Thereby the sentiment of our close friendship is passed on to the next generation.

Our cultural relations continue to grow as academic and cultural exchange are flourishing through the activities of various organisations. Since 1961 the Goethe Institute is operating 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. Each year, it



Dr. Albrecht Conze
Ambassador designate of the Federal Republic of Germany to Bangladesh

teaches German to over 1000 Bangladeshis. Deutsche Welle, the German international broadcaster, is highly trusted by many Bangladeshis as a reliable source of information. The German Academic Exchange Service and the Alexander von Humboldt Association facilitate the cooperation between German and Bangladesh universities and support academic exchange between our countries.

Looking back on the past four decades, I believe that we can be proud of our common achievements and the strength of our bilateral relations. Germany will continue to be a reliable partner for Bangladesh. I look forward to doing my part in strengthening our ties during the forthcoming years. In celebrating the Day of German Unity and 40 Years of Friendship Between Bangladesh and Germany, I extend my cordial greetings to the people of Bangladesh as well as to my fellow countrymen residing in this country.



Bangladesh German Chamber of Commerce & Industry

More than 370 members of the Bangladesh German Chamber of Commerce & Industry - the biggest bilateral business chamber in Bangladesh - extend their best wishes on the occasion of 22 years of German Unity and the German National Day




Gold Members

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