

## Address on Television by Willy Brandt (Moscow, 12 August 1970)

**Caption:** On 12 August 1970, German Chancellor, Willy Brandt, makes a televised address to the German people in order to draw attention to the historic significance of the German-Soviet Treaty, signed the same day in Moscow.

**Source:** The Treaty of August 12, 1970 between the Federal Republic of Germany and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics. Bonn: Press and Information Office of the Federal Government, 1970. 204 p. p. 24-26.

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**URL:** [http://www.cvce.eu/obj/address\\_on\\_television\\_by\\_willy\\_brandt\\_moscow\\_12\\_august\\_1970-en-b31b114a-049b-45d5-a979-efc78a6a4a8.html](http://www.cvce.eu/obj/address_on_television_by_willy_brandt_moscow_12_august_1970-en-b31b114a-049b-45d5-a979-efc78a6a4a8.html)

**Last updated:** 02/07/2015

## Address on Television by the Federal Chancellor from Moscow (August 12, 1970)

My fellow-citizens:

The signing of the treaty between the Soviet Union and the Federal Republic of Germany is an important moment in our postwar history. Twenty-five years after the capitulation of the German Reich that was destroyed by Hitler, and fifteen years after Konrad Adenauer, here in Moscow, had agreed the establishment of diplomatic relations, it is now time to reconstitute our relationship with the East, and what is more on the basis of the unconditional, reciprocal renunciation of force and taking as a starting-point the existing political situation in Europe.

With the work on this treaty, the Federal Government has fulfilled a task it set itself in its policy declaration, in which it says: "Our national interest does not permit us to stand between East and West. Our country needs cooperation and coordination with the West and understanding with the East. The German people needs peace in the full sense of that word also with the peoples of the Soviet Union and all peoples of the European East."

This was and is our guideline, and the treaty serves this work of peace.

I know I am free from wishful thinking, as most of you are. This century, marked by blood and tears and hard work, has taught us to exercise common sense. This common sense has to stand the test particularly when we are witnesses and partners in historical changes. Nor must we abandon it even when we have occasion for satisfaction and fresh hope, when we - I do not hesitate to use the word - can rightly speak of a success.

And this treaty with the Soviet Union is a success of German postwar policy. It is a decisive step towards improving our relations with the Soviet Union and our Eastern neighbors - a quarter of a century after the catastrophe that claimed untold victims from the nations, in the East more than in the West.

It accords with the interests of the entire German people to improve relations with the Soviet Union in particular. Not only is she one of the major World Powers; she also shares in the special responsibility for Germany as a whole and Berlin.

Tomorrow it will be nine years since the Wall was built. Today we have - I confidently hope - made a start in order to counteract the rift, in order that people will no longer have to die in barbed wire, until the day comes when - so we hope - the division of our people can be overcome.

Europe ends neither at the Elbe nor at the eastern frontier of Poland. Russia is inextricably involved in the history of Europe, not only as an enemy and menace, but also as a partner - historically, politically, culturally and economically. Only if we in Western Europe focus our attention upon this partnership and only if the peoples of Eastern Europe see this as well, can we arrive at a settlement of interests.

My fellow-citizens: Nothing is lost with this treaty that was not gambled away long ago. We have the courage to turn over a new page of history. This should benefit above all the younger generation, which has grown up in peace and without sharing the responsibility for the past, but which must nevertheless share in bearing the consequences of the war, since no one can run away from the history of his people.

The firm embedding of the Federal Republic and her free society in the Western Alliance is in no way vitiated by this treaty. The reliable partnership with America is preserved, just as is the reconciliation with France. Also remaining is the determination to join more and more European States ever more closely together, with the goal of a political community.

The treaty jeopardizes nothing and no one. It is to be instrumental in opening up the way forward. And if it does that, then it will serve peace, Europe and us all.