

Commission statement on German unification (3 October 1990)

Caption: On 3 October 1990, the European Commission comments on the reunification of Germany and expresses the hope that this event might pave the way for the unity of Europe as a whole.

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Today is the day on which the German people has finally become one. The European Commission shares its jubilation. We welcome the entry into the Community family of five new German *Länder*: Brandenburg, Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania, Saxony, Saxony-Anhalt and Thuringia, together with the reunited city of Berlin.

The citizens of East Germany, after decades of oppression, will henceforth be living in a free and democratic society, in prosperity and solidarity. It is worth reflecting here on the prophetic commitment which the authors of the constitution of the Federal Republic of Germany made to the German people in the aftermath of the Second World War - 'to achieve in free self-determination the unity and freedom of Germany' and 'to serve the peace of the world as an equal partner in a united Europe'. This commitment is being honoured today. It has likewise always been the objective of the European Community to bring about German unification as part of the process of European integration.

The Federal Republic's membership of the European Community was an essential asset in the accomplishment of German unification. Yet at the same time the Community would not be what it is today without the Federal Republic. The constructive part played by the Federal Republic over the last 40 years has contributed in no small measure to shaping the Community - making it a Community based on the rule of law, on solidarity and stability. And it is from these very principles that the Community draws its strength and power of attraction, notably in the eyes of the peoples of Eastern, Central and Southern Europe.

German unification has provided new impetus for a stronger and more united Community moving towards economic and monetary union and political union. The solution of the German problem in the Community framework will speed up the Community's own progress towards unity.

The Community institutions have all done their utmost to bring about the integration of what was the German Democratic Republic as smoothly as possible and within the timescale allowed by the unification process. However, we realize full well that the process of adjustment will be a painful one. The Commission intends to do whatever it can to limit the stresses and strains that will inevitably arise.

The divided Germany was part of a divided Europe. German unity opens the way to unity for the whole of Europe. The opening of the Brandenburg Gate is a symbol of this new prospect for our continent. The integration of the former German Democratic Republic enhances the identity of the Community whose boundaries it has extended. Strengthened by a unified Germany, the Community will be in a better position to act as the driving force for a pan-European area of cooperation and stability, consolidate the Atlantic Alliance, establish closer relations with the USSR and strengthen its links with its other partners in the world at large. The Community will discharge to the full its increased responsibilities towards its new neighbours in Central and Eastern Europe: it will support the transformation of their economies and help them to develop and enrich their rediscovered democracies.