

The European Community and East Germany

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German reunification resulted in the enlargement of the European Community to the East. But it did not involve the accession of a new Member State through negotiations and treaties. It was simply the extension of the Federal Republic of Germany. Within the European Economic Community, trade between East and West Germany was already considered inter-German trade and was not subject to the EEC's common external tariff.

The Dublin European Council (28 April 1990) decided that the integration of GDR territory into the Community would be effective as soon as unification had been legally established and would take place without any revision of the Treaties, subject to transitional measures concerning, in particular, foreign trade, agriculture, structural policies and the environment. The *Länder* of the East, the economy of which was in ruins, would receive Community aid in the same way as the other disadvantaged regions in Italy, Greece, Spain, Portugal and Ireland had done. A 'Community aid programme' was implemented, with ECU 3 000 million being entered in the budget over three years, a fifth of the EEC's structural aid budget. But this was very little in comparison with the enormous requirements of the former GDR *Länder*, and the FRG was responsible for meeting these needs: reconstructing infrastructure, restructuring uncompetitive East German industry and providing aid for new construction and for cleaning up the environment. Each year, more than 110 000 million Deutschmarks would be spent, forcing the Federal Government to reduce spending, increase taxes and borrow funds in order to protect the currency.

Reunification brought few changes, however, to the Community institutions. The relative weight of Germany had increased: it now provided 23 % of the population of the Twelve (previously 19 %) and 30 % of GNP (previously 26 %). But German representation in the Commission, the Council of Ministers and the Court of Justice remained constant. Only the number of its MEPs had increased. The new *Länder*, which represented 18 million inhabitants, were entitled, initially, to send 18 observers to the European Parliament and, subsequently, to elect 18 Members, following the decision of the Edinburgh European Council (11–12 December 1992). This increased the number of German Members from 81 to 99. In return, at the 1994 elections, several extra seats were allocated, among others, to France, the United Kingdom and Italy, each of which saw the number of their Members increase from 81 to 87. Thus, from 1994 onwards, the European Parliament of the Twelve comprised 567 Members, instead of the previous 518.