

## Statement by the Federal Minister Egon Bahr (21 December 1972)

**Caption:** On 21 December 1972, Egon Bahr, adviser to Chancellor Willy Brandt, expresses satisfaction at the signature, on that day in East Berlin, of the Fundamental Treaty between the Federal Republic of Germany (FRG) and the German Democratic Republic (GDR).

**Source:** United States-Department of State. Documents on Germany 1944-1985. Washington: Department of State, [s.d.]. 1421 p. (Department of State Publication 9446). p. 1233-1234.

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**URL:** [http://www.cvce.eu/obj/statement\\_by\\_the\\_federal\\_minister\\_egon\\_bahr\\_21\\_december\\_1972-en-c824f4a9-9d93-499b-9928-b9bdb6ccad63.html](http://www.cvce.eu/obj/statement_by_the_federal_minister_egon_bahr_21_december_1972-en-c824f4a9-9d93-499b-9928-b9bdb6ccad63.html)

**Last updated:** 03/07/2015

## Statement by Federal Minister Bahr on the Signing of the Treaty on the Basis of Relations Between the Federal Republic of Germany and the German Democratic Republic, Bonn, December 21, 1972

Herr Kohl, Ladies and Gentlemen,

The Treaty which has been signed today is the basis for the relationship between the two German States. It is the foundation on which their relations are to be developed for the benefit of the people.

It makes allowance for the situation in the centre of Europe, as it exists under international law, where there are two States which call themselves German.

These two German States which have grown from the debris of the Reich belong to different social systems and alliances and hold basically divergent views on many questions. Yet with this Treaty they jointly express the will for peace, renounce the use of force, respect the aims and principles of the United Nations Charter, and affirm the equality of rights of both States and their independence in internal and external affairs. Thus they have created the preconditions for their living peacefully side by side and working together as good neighbours with the aim of achieving co-operation.

These constructive aims for the sake of the people and for the sake of all European countries desiring to safeguard peace are to be given priority over their divergent aims, even in the national question.

The Government of the German Democratic Republic has today made a binding communication that after the entry into force of the Treaty it will take steps to resolve problems resulting from the separation of families, as well as measures to facilitate travel and to improve non-commercial goods traffic. I have acknowledged this communication by a letter.

We were agreed during the negotiations that the proposed improvements would not be a single measure but would be extended in the course of normalization. Connected with this is the exchange of letters on the opening of additional border-crossing points. The exchange of letters on Article 9 of the Treaty, which has likewise been signed today, states that the rights and responsibilities of the Four Powers cannot be affected by the Treaty. This should be seen in connection with the statements made by the representatives of the Four Governments in their Agreement of 3 September 1971, and with the statement they will make on the occasion of the accession of the two German States to the United Nations.

It is agreed that the extension to Berlin (West) of agreements and arrangements envisaged in the Supplementary Protocol to Article 7 may be agreed in each case in accordance with the Quadripartite Agreement of 3 September 1971.

The permanent mission of the Federal Republic of Germany in the German Democratic Republic will represent the interests of Berlin (West) in accordance with the Quadripartite Agreement of 3 September 1971.

Arrangements between the German Democratic Republic and the Senate remain unaffected.

A treaty on the basis of relations would not be worthy of this name if it did not open up the way along which both States can seek common interests in spite of their different fundamental views. For this reason the two Governments have agreed to consult each other in the process of the normalization of relations between the Federal Republic of Germany and the German Democratic Republic on questions of mutual interest, in particular on those which are of importance for the safeguarding of peace in Europe.

The Federal Government will tomorrow submit the Treaty, together with the bill necessary for an application to be made for admission to the United Nations, to the Bundesrat (Federal Council). The full effect of the Treaty will not be seen until it enters into force. Nevertheless, it will in the meantime, we hope, have a favourable effect on relations between the two States. The Border Commission is due to commence

its activities in the second half of January. This also applies to the talks with a view to promoting sports relations. The Arrangement on the Activities of Journalists will become effective today.

No one should believe that after so many years of incrustation, indeed of hostility, the development of relations can be without friction. There will be difficulties and there will be annoyances. Time, patience and goodwill are required on both sides so that the route we have plotted can be taken. The two chief negotiators will remain in contact.

With the signatures effected today, the two Governments commit themselves to the results of the negotiations. The two German States join other European countries in their efforts to achieve détente.