

Address by Charles Haughey on the integration of the GDR into the European Community (Strasbourg, 16 May 1990)

Caption: In a speech to the European Parliament on 16 May 1990, Charles Haughey, President-in-Office of the Council, talks of the main decisions adopted on 28 April 1990 following the Dublin European Council, particularly of those relating to the integration of the German Democratic Republic (GDR) into the European Community.

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Address by Charles Haughey to the European Parliament (16 May 1990)

Mr President, distinguished Members of the European Parliament, I am grateful for your invitation to address Parliament. It gives me the opportunity to speak to the directly elected representatives of over 320 million Europeans and to listen to your views on the great issues that face our Community and our continent. I know that the issues discussed at the special European Council in Dublin on 28 April are the subject of debate and thoughtful consideration in this chamber. For this reason it was important that the Heads of State or Government had the opportunity to hear the views of Parliament from your distinguished President at the beginning of our meeting.

Today, I want to report to you about the outcome of our meeting and about the decisions taken, which I believe are of vital importance to the future of Europe.

The meeting was convened in response to the dramatic unfolding of events in Europe over the past months. I believed, and my fellow Heads of State or Government agreed, that such was the pace of events and the need for a cohesive and considered Community response that we should not wait until the scheduled European Council in June to act.

Our continent is undergoing a profound transformation; a period during which the future of the continent and its people are being shaped for a long time to come. It has demonstrated that the demand of peoples for their basic rights can never be finally subdued.

I need only mention the case of Solidarity in Poland. A major impetus for change was provided by President Gorbachev, but the dramatic revelation of what was really happening came at that moment six months ago when the people of Berlin began to tear down the wall that divided their city. At that moment too, as Vaclav Havel has observed, they began to sweep away the wall that had divided Europe for half a century. After decades of division we had suddenly and unexpectedly arrived at the beginning of the end of the barren post-war years of confrontation. Our ancient continent at last has the opportunity of fully realizing, through peace and cooperation, the enormous potential of its people and resources. The European Community is the anchor of stability for all of Europe at this time, the source of hope and optimism for the future. We must ensure that it provides the leadership and direction that is needed if Europe is to achieve the peace, democratic freedom and economic betterment her people are entitled to.

The most immediate and pressing challenges facing the Community, and those which originally led me to call the special Council were three:

- (i) the prospect of German unification and the consequent integration of the German Democratic Republic into the Community;
- (ii) the need to formulate an adequate and coherent policy towards the re-emerging democracies of Central and Eastern Europe;
- (iii) and the need to accelerate the process of European integration.

I believe that the European Council made substantive and decisive progress in all three areas.

Let me begin with German unification. Germany is a founder member of the Community, and the Federal Republic has, from the beginning, been a central pillar of European construction. The Federal Republic has never allowed its aspiration towards national unification to affect the movement toward European unity. Indeed, successive West German leaders have consistently maintained that German unification could only come about under a European roof.

The warm welcome which Heads of State or Government expressed for the prospect of German unification at the special Council was both unequivocal and important. I am pleased to have the opportunity of conveying this to Parliament in the presence of Chancellor Kohl and Prime Minister de Maizière.

But it is not only Germany which has cause for satisfaction. The incorporation of the territory of the GDR into the Federal Republic under Article 23 of the Basic Law will simultaneously create an additional 16 million Community citizens who will bring the benefit of their inherent skills and enterprise and enlarge the overall size of the single market. Special understanding will be required in the short term to enable this part of Germany to recover from the experience of the last 45 years and to adapt to the standards of the Community, but there can be no doubt of the Community's enrichment.

The special Council expressed its determination that the integration of the territory of the GDR into the Community would be completed with the minimum of disruption.

Fears on this latter aspect underestimate both the momentum which has built up behind the integration process and the reservoir of energy, determination and political skill available within the Community institutions, in Germany, and in the other Member States, which can be mobilized to tackle any difficulties which may arise. We are confident that both the Federal Republic and correspondingly the Community can accommodate, without undue difficulty, the integration of a territory whose population is a quarter of that of the Federal Republic and less than a twentieth of that of the Community.

The Council expressed its view on this point in clear terms. It was satisfied that the integration of the German Democratic Republic will contribute to faster economic growth in the Community and agreed that integration should take place in conditions of economic balance and monetary stability.

I do not seek to diminish the problems involved, simply to stress that they are manageable. There will, of course, be a need for a detailed examination of the transitional arrangements, but the Federal Government has undertaken to keep the Community fully informed of any relevant measures discussed and agreed between the Federal and GDP authorities for the purpose of aligning their policies and their legislation. Furthermore the Commission will be fully involved in the discussions.

The Commission will be bringing forward proposals for transitional arrangements to apply to the present GDP territory on its integration into the Community. These will be kept to the necessary minimum. They will be designed to allow for the quickest possible assumption of the *acquis communautaire* compatible with conditions in the regions involved.

On the basis of discussions at the special Council, I am confident that incorporation of the territory of the GDR into the Community can be completed without detrimental implications for other regions of the Community. The Council heard an emphatic assurance from Chancellor Kohl that the integration of the GDR territory into the Community would not be achieved at the expense of the existing less-developed regions. This commitment, together with the statement in the Council conclusions, offers a timely reassurance to the people of the less-prosperous regions and once again illustrates the Community's determination to ensure that economic development should proceed in a cohesive and integrated manner.

German unification is, of course, only part of a wider scenario which is unfolding in the central and eastern areas of our continent. The great popular uprising which swept away the oppressive regime in the GDR has been repeated to varying extents in Hungary, Czechoslovakia, Poland, Bulgaria and Romania. New ideas and courageous leadership in Moscow are encouraging the rest of Europe to hope that negotiations will lead not only to mutually acceptable arrangements between the peoples who comprise the Soviet Union, but also to the establishment of an entirely new relationship between all the peoples of Europe.

The impact of these changes on the Community and its people has been profound. As the political and physical barriers which have divided the Community from the East are being stripped away so too are the psychological divisions. Great cities like Dresden, Prague, Cracow, and Budapest are taking their place once again in our consciousness as repositories of European culture and history. The special Council, in applauding the process of change in Central and Eastern Europe, specifically acknowledged the common heritage and culture which the countries of this region share with the Community. The emerging democracies of Central and Eastern Europe are returning to the mainstream of European life with

considerable expectations, aroused in large part by the achievements of the European Community. It is vital that the Community continues to provide leadership and inspiration to the rest of the continent and that we respond to the changes in Central and Eastern Europe in a positive and realistic way. This we have been doing, in a flexible approach, tailored to respond to the political and economic situation in each country.

The first stage of the Community's action plan is already under way, in the form of immediate short-term assistance, trade concessions, investment measures, financial stabilization measures and project aid. Programmes on professional training and student exchange will soon be finalized. A second phase — running parallel to the first — has seen the completion of a network of trade and cooperation agreements. The Council decided, on the basis of a communication from the Commission, to move on in the near future to negotiations with the countries of Central and Eastern Europe on Association Agreements which will include an institutional framework for political dialogue. Negotiations on these agreements are to be completed as soon as possible, on the understanding that conditions relating to democratic principles and the transition towards a market economy are fulfilled in these countries.

In addition to launching its own initiatives, the Community has also taken a leading role in the context of cooperation in the Group of 24 countries and in the establishment of a European Bank for Reconstruction and Development. The special Council called for action within the framework of the G-24 to be extended to cover the GDR, Czechoslovakia, Yugoslavia, Bulgaria and Romania. The Council also decided to encourage transfers of private capital and investments towards the countries of Central and Eastern Europe and invited the Commission to study the implementation of the most appropriate accompanying measures.

The Council's determination that the Community should establish a closer relationship with the countries of Central and Eastern Europe is part of a coherent strategy for its external relations.

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