

Address given by Helmut Kohl on the state of the nation in a divided Germany (Bonn, 8 November 1989)

Caption: On 8 November 1989, Helmut Kohl, Chancellor of the Federal Republic of Germany (FRG), delivers an address to the Bundestag on the state of the nation in a divided Germany.

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Dr Kohl, Federal Chancellor: Madam President, Honourable Members, free self-determination for all Germans has been, is and always will be the core of our policy on the German Question. Free self-determination has been, is and will likewise remain the wish, and indeed the ardent desire, of our compatriots in the GDR.

(Applause from the CDU/CSU and the FDP and from some SPD Members)

Who among us is not touched and moved by the pictures of the many hundreds of thousands of people gathered peacefully in Berlin, in Leipzig or in Dresden, in Schwerin, in Plauen and in other cities and towns of the GDR? Their rallying cry is 'We are the people, we are the nation!', and I am sure that their cries will not go unheeded.

Our compatriots, who take to the streets every day to demonstrate for liberty and democracy, are testifying to a deep desire for freedom that has never died, even after 40 years of dictatorship. In this way, they are writing, before the eyes of the world, a new chapter in the history of our fatherland, whose liberal traditions neither war nor brute force and dictatorship have been able to destroy.

In the same way, we are all moved by the mass exodus from the GDR, a depressing phenomenon unparalleled in modern-day Europe. The images that we have seen, and are still seeing, from Hungary, Czechoslovakia and Poland, the images of these people's arrival here in the Federal Republic of Germany, show us what Europe must have been like in the past.

The flight of tens of thousands — mostly young people — from the GDR to the free part of Germany is a demonstration to the world of people 'voting with their feet', a ringing endorsement of freedom and democracy, of the rule of law, of an economic and social order that guarantees people a fair share of the fruits of their labour. At the same time, it is an unmistakable rejection of a political system that infringes the fundamental rights of individuals, curtails their freedom and neglects their personal welfare.

These events showed the whole world that the division of our fatherland is unnatural, that the Wall and the barbed wire cannot last for ever.

(Applause from the CDU/CSU, the FDP and the SPD and from some Green Party Members)

These images have made it clear that the German Question cannot be consigned to the archives, because the people of Germany will not tolerate the present situation.

Our compatriots in the GDR demand respect for their fundamental civil and political liberties. They insist on their right of self-determination. They are no longer prepared to keep quiet about the repressive system of one-party rule.

We, ladies and gentlemen, and all the people of Europe too, are witnesses to a momentous upheaval. In the west of Europe, the Member States of the European Community are preparing for the challenges of the 21st century by means of ever closer integration. Through the European single market, which we intend to complete by 31 December 1992, Western Europe, with its population of more than 320 million, will become the largest economic area in the world. At the same time, our main hope and wish is that this progress will not be confined to the economic sphere but will lend fresh impetus to the political development and unification of Europe.

(Applause from the CDU/CSU and the FDP and from some SPD Members)

In the east of our continent, in central, eastern and south-east Europe, the political system is undergoing radical change in several countries. The policy of *perestroika* introduced by General Secretary Mikhail Gorbachev

offers the first real grounds for hope of resolving the East-West conflict since the end of the Second World War.

Even though this development is still in its infancy, and while none of us must ignore or underestimate the risk factor, there is, nevertheless, the prospect of a real transformation throughout Europe, a real opportunity for a peaceful order in Europe, for a Europe of freedom and self-determination.

We have all watched with great sympathy and empathy how Hungary has become a republic again, and we rejoice that, in only a few months' time, it will hold its first free elections for many decades.

(Applause from all parliamentary groups)

We have seen how Poland was able to elect a non-Communist Prime Minister, who now faces the arduous task of leading his country towards a new and better future.

Tomorrow, I shall be travelling to Poland in order to develop, together with the Prime Minister, Tadeusz Mazowiecki, what we hope will be the foundations of a common future for the German and Polish peoples. We are both eager to grasp firmly the new opportunities for a breakthrough in German-Polish relations. The time is ripe for an understanding and, indeed, for lasting reconciliation between our two peoples. We owe such a peacemaking effort to our young people in particular, who want to live as good neighbours and friends. I have a very personal commitment to the success of this effort. We intend to do everything in our power so that we may advance along this path together.

(Applause from the CDU/CSU and the FDP and from some SPD Members)

Ladies and gentlemen, as part of this effort, both sides must deal honestly with the dark chapters of our history. We do not want to conceal, suppress or forget any of the things that happened.

(Dr Vollmer [Greens]: So what about the forced labourers?)

If we are to build a peaceful future, we must learn the proper lessons from the past.

(Interruption from the SPD: Precisely! Put some real emphasis on that!)

— Ladies and gentlemen, with regard to peace and reconciliation, to our desire for peace and our recognition that we must learn from history,

(Dr Vollmer [Greens]: Remember Annaberg!)

my political friends and I have no need of tutoring from you or anyone else.

(Applause from the CDU/CSU and FDP — Jahn [Marburg, SPD]: Well, well!)

This conviction is one of the reasons why we are both going to Kreisau, a place that was one of the centres of resistance against Hitler.

(Dr Vollmer [Greens]: Are you going to Auschwitz, too?)

It represented, and still represents, that other, better Germany, whose lasting legacy the Federal Republic of Germany seeks to preserve and pass on to future generations.

I am certain that the opportunities for successful reconciliation between our two peoples are far greater today than at any time in these past few decades as a result of the profound political changes that have taken place in Poland.

The foundations of Federal Government policy are clear: in the Europe of the future, the issues on the political agenda must be self-determination, human rights and the sovereignty of the people, not borders or territorial sovereignty — a point I made to the German Bundestag more than four years ago. As I said at that time, the European integration process will one day be completed, not by sovereign States but by sovereign peoples.

It was in the self-same spirit that the German Bundestag stated in its joint resolution of 17 May 1972, and I quote:

‘In calling for the realisation of the right of self-determination, the Federal Republic of Germany is not laying claim to any change in its territory or borders.

We cannot alter any legal position, nor do we wish to do so. The familiar tenets of our policy on the German Question and our policy towards Eastern Europe in terms of constitutional and international law remain unchanged, and it therefore follows that we stand by the letter and the spirit of all parts of the Warsaw Treaty.’

In that Treaty the Federal Republic of Germany and Poland reaffirm, among other things, and I quote, ‘the inviolability of their existing frontiers now and in the future and undertake to respect each other’s territorial integrity without restriction. They declare that they have no territorial claims whatsoever against each other and that they will not assert such claims in the future.’

At the same time, both parties to the Treaty state — and this must not be glossed over either — that, and I quote, ‘the present Treaty shall not affect any bilateral or multilateral international agreements previously concluded by either Contracting Party or concerning them.’ Ladies and gentlemen, every one of us in this House knows what this means; we know that it refers to the continuing absence of a peace treaty.

(Applause from the CDU/CSU and FDP — Dr Vollmer [Greens]: Then make one, if that’s your only excuse!)

Our aim is a peaceful order in Europe, which is not dictated by individual powers but crafted by the European peoples themselves in the free exercise of self-determination. This is nothing new — it was the vision of Konrad Adenauer. The right of all peoples to self-determination is recognised in the Charter of the United Nations. Those who brand our calls for the extension of this right to all Germans as ‘revisionism’ are truly putting themselves at odds with this fundamental law of the international community.

(Applause from the CDU/CSU and FDP — Dr Lippelt [Hanover, Greens]: That is a mental reservation!)

Ladies and gentlemen, it is precisely because we do not dismiss applicable law as a collection of tiresome formulas — we have every reason to remain committed to the rule of law — that we are aware of our responsibility for the peace of Europe and for the well-being of its people and aware of our obligation to seize eagerly every opportunity for reconciliation. This was my point back in 1985, when I declared the following to this House in my report on the state of the nation in divided Germany:

In the areas beyond our border with Poland, there are Polish families living there today for whom these lands have become their native soil over the past two generations. We shall respect that, and we shall not call it into question.

(Applause from the CDU/CSU and FDP)

We want to break the vicious circle of hatred and violence, of injustice and expulsion, and we want to build new bridges of understanding and reconciliation, of neighbourliness and cooperation between Germans and Poles. Such efforts can succeed only if the right of the Germans living in Poland to preserve their linguistic and cultural identity is guaranteed. What we have now agreed with Poland in this domain is a decisive step towards the ending of discrimination against our compatriots who live there.

(Applause from the CDU/CSU and FDP)

Ladies and gentlemen, we aim to take every opportunity to contribute to the success of the reform processes in the eastern part of Europe, and we shall do so. These processes have a direct bearing on our national interest,

namely freedom, human rights and self-determination for all Germans.

In our Joint Declaration of 13 June of this year, Mr Gorbachev and I identified key elements of a Europe of peace and cooperation:

The first of these was total respect for the integrity and security of every State. Every State has the right to choose freely its own political and social system. The second was unconditional adherence to the principles and rules of international law, especially the right of peoples to self-determination.

This must not remain a mere statement of intent. The right of all peoples to choose their own political and social system must apply to all people and nations in central, eastern and south-east Europe — including, of course, the Germans in the GDR.

(Applause from the CDU/CSU and FDP and from some SPD Members)

The appeal of freedom, the attraction of constitutional democracy and the elementary desire of peoples to determine their own destiny generate a dynamism that merits the description ‘historic’, a dynamism that is blazing a trail across the whole of Europe today. The cause of freedom has time on its side, not against it.

Madam President, ladies and gentlemen, we have every reason to remain committed to the freedom-related aims of our policy on the German Question. We have never had fewer grounds for despondency, and we have never had less reason to resign ourselves to the continued division of Germany into two States.

(Applause from the CDU/CSU and FDP)

In particular, the events of the last few days and weeks have confirmed, for all to see, our clear and firm position on the issue of a single German nationality.

(CDU/CSU Members: Hear! Hear!)

The Germans in the GDR are, and will remain, our compatriots, and we certainly have absolutely no wish or right ever to treat them as foreigners.

(Applause from the CDU/CSU and FDP and from SPD Members - Dr Vollmer [Greens]: And how do you treat foreigners?)

All recommendations that the political status quo be recognised as final have proved short-lived and short-sighted,

(Applause from the CDU/CSU and FDP)

because they have ignored a fundamental law of human existence, namely mankind’s instinct to strive for freedom.

Freedom and self-determination are also crucial elements of the CSCE decisions, which became a yardstick of East-West relations. The CSCE process showed the direction in which changes are needed. What has happened, and is still happening, in the Soviet Union, but particularly the changes, some of them dramatic, in Hungary and Poland, cannot and — I firmly believe — will not fail to have an impact on the other countries of the Warsaw Pact.

It goes without saying that they are also having an impact on the GDR. The people there are now asking openly and ever more insistently why long-overdue political, economic and social reforms have not been initiated in their country, too. They are tired of being stifled. They do not want to be excluded any longer from participation in political decision-making and from sharing political responsibility. They resent having personal and economic conditions imposed on them by a political system that they never wanted, a system that

deprives them of both personal freedom and a fair wage for their daily work.

Our compatriots in the GDR want to be free, at long last, to make their own decisions. They want self-determination; in the first instance, that means finally having the right to indicate the path that they wish to follow. It is a matter of allowing a democratic will to develop in the GDR. This necessarily entails freedom of expression, freedom of the press, freedom to form associations, freedom to engage in trade-union activity and political pluralism; lastly, it goes without saying that there must be free and equal elections by secret ballot.

(Applause from the CDU/CSU, the FDP and the SPD and from Mrs Garbe [Greens])

The mass exodus from the GDR, which is stirring the emotions of all of us and claiming the attention of the world, is symptomatic of the fundamental problem for the GDR, namely the fact that its political leaders are not freely elected, which means that many of our compatriots cannot identify with that State.

The Politburo of the SED cannot invoke the consent of the people as expressed in the outcome of free elections. In the light of everything that we are now experiencing on a daily basis, it is clear that the people in the GDR will not tolerate the monopoly of the SED on political power, nor will they be satisfied if some leaders are merely exchanged for others or if some senior functionaries resign. The new General Secretary of the SED will be judged by whether he truly opens the door to radical reforms in government, society and the economy. It is high time that that door was opened!

The images and the comments of the refugees who are arriving here in great numbers have done more than anything else to highlight what is at stake: freedom. These mainly young people are not naïve and mindless individuals following the fatal siren song of capitalism. They are self-assured, hard-working people, and it is with heavy hearts that many of them have left their homes, their families and their friends to begin a new life in a liberal democracy in the free part of Germany. They know that social progress is possible only where freedom prevails.

Madam President, ladies and gentlemen, according to the latest figures, more than 200 000 people to date have left the GDR this year to come and settle here. We welcome them into our midst as Germans among Germans. And I am sure that the moving demonstration of willing helpfulness that we have seen from the citizens of the Federal Republic will continue until these compatriots have found their niche here.

(Applause from the CDU/CSU, the FDP and the SPD)

The same, of course, must apply to those ethnic Germans who are returning from the Soviet Union and other Warsaw Pact countries.

I am also aware that some people here are finding it hard to come to terms with the influx. It certainly cannot be denied that the arrival of so many incomers creates or exacerbates problems in some areas, as is reflected, for example, in the discussion on the allocation of housing. On the other hand, we should keep reminding ourselves that, in far more difficult circumstances in the late 1940s and early 1950s, we were to provide bread, shelter and work for many, many more refugees and expellees who arrived at that time.

A comparison with those times, a comparison between the difficulties confronting our Republic at that time and those that it faces now, shows that we can solve the problem if we want to and if we are prepared to pull together.

(Applause from the CDU/CSU and FDP and from Mr Opel [SPD])

The material conditions are far better today. What we often lack are the optimism and the positive approach to life displayed by the founding generation of our Republic —

(Dr Vollmer [Greens]: Yes, you are unbeatable there!)

that generation to whom we very definitely owe our right to live in peace, freedom and prosperity and to enjoy high standards of social justice.

Ladies and gentlemen, the material issues are not in the foreground today. I am firmly convinced that they can, in principle, be resolved, though not overnight. What is crucial is that all individuals should be prepared, in awareness of their responsibility for their neighbour and for the whole body politic, to lend their minds and their hands to the general effort.

We are speaking of a national task, one about which there should really be no dispute. As Chancellor of the Federal Republic of Germany, it is my privilege to appeal again from this House to everyone who bears responsibility in central, regional and local government, in all areas of our society and our State: let us join forces for the benefit of our compatriots!

(Applause from the CDU/CSU and FDP — heckling from Mr Hüser [Greens])

— As I have said here before, your party took its place in this Chamber under the banner of peace, yet, in this difficult situation for our country, you just sit there making cynical remarks.

(Applause from the CDU/CSU and FDP — protests from the Greens)

I want to thank all those who have shown spontaneous willingness to help, not only for their practical assistance but also because they have given a sign of encouragement.

At this point, let me also express the special thanks of the Federal Government for the stance adopted by the Hungarian Government,

(Loud applause from the CDU/CSU, the FDP and the SPD)

which has helped the refugees from the GDR by its decisions, guided by the principles of humanity and international law.

I also wish to extend this expression of gratitude to the Austrian Government and the Austrian authorities, who have truly made every effort to help our compatriots without any fuss.

(Loud applause from the CDU/CSU, the FDP and the SPD)

I believe that, in addition to the public authorities, we should include in our words of thanks the many, many people in Hungary, in Austria, in Poland and in Czechoslovakia who have selflessly helped our compatriots in the most difficult situations.

(Applause from the CDU/CSU, the FDP and the SPD and from Dr Lippelt [Hanover, Greens])

We all know that a mass exodus from the GDR is not in the interests of the people of Germany, nor can it be the aim of an enlightened policy on the German Question. We equally respect and sympathise with those who remain in the GDR in the hope that conditions there will now improve, as they have in neighbouring countries.

In this context, let me sound a sharp word of warning against any attempt here to set ourselves up as judge and jury over those who have decided to come here from the GDR or over those who have decided to stay there.

(Applause from the CDU/CSU, the FDP and the SPD)

In both cases they deserve our sympathy as well as our understanding. The aim of our policy must be to contribute to a development in the GDR that fulfils the wishes of the people there;

(Interruption from the SPD: Quite right!)

in other words, to help them to achieve freedom and self-determination.

(Applause from the CDU/CSU, the FDP and the SPD)

Ladies and gentlemen, in the light of many of the things that we have seen and heard in recent discussions, I must also say that we cannot and will not try to offer any patent remedies.

(Interruption from the SPD: Good!)

Our compatriots in the GDR know what they want. They want to act on their own responsibility. A new and vigorous self-assurance is there for all to see. They speak openly and clearly about their wishes, their present plight and their demands. What people here always used to say about them — that they preferred to retreat into their own world and had no interest in politics — is no longer true. They have absolutely no need of paternalism. They want to make their own decisions.

(Applause from the CDU/CSU, the SPD and the FDP and from some Green Party Members)

The main thing that we can do is to encourage them and bolster their hope that a process of democratic change will take place in the GDR, too, in the foreseeable future. When such a process is initiated, we should and must lend it our active support. We are standing by to make our own efforts if they are needed.

The Federal Government will do its utmost to support the process of opening up the GDR for the benefit of our compatriots. It therefore remains resolved to continue with its existing policy of practical cooperation with the GDR in the interests of the people on both sides. In our economic cooperation, we are trying to achieve lasting, far-reaching improvements for the people of the GDR.

Environmental protection is a good example. It is of great importance to the people in both States in Germany. Its twofold aim is to improve living conditions today and to create the basis for the well-being of future generations.

This year, we have already agreed specific air and water-purification projects with the GDR.

(Dr Vollmer [Greens]: Have Schöneberg closed! They're very keen on that idea over there!)

The fact is that the financial contributions from the Federal Government are not made to the GDR but only to companies within federal territory that supply plant to East Germany for the implementation of pilot projects.

The money, in other words, benefits our economy, too, and, at the same time, we are helping to solve massive environmental problems in the GDR. For example, the level of mercury pollution of the River Elbe, which has serious repercussions for Hamburg and the North Sea, is now being reduced by about a third.

Negotiations have been opened on measures to reduce air pollutants and measures in the realm of nature conservation. Talks on anti-radiation measures have led to gratifying progress in our practical cooperation. After many years of difficulties, the GDR is now showing willingness to cooperate in the fight against drug abuse.

We shall also resolutely grasp the opportunities offered by the 1986 cultural agreement. When they cross the inner-German border, exhibitions and concerts attract a great deal of attention and arouse great interest in the host country, as do theatrical guest performances and meetings between scientists. They also help to strengthen awareness of our cultural bond and our common history and serve in many different ways to generate discussions about the issues of our time.

The record to date is very good. A particularly gratifying success in the field of intra-German cultural relations was the adoption this summer of an agreement on the return of cultural assets that were put into storage

because of the war. Numerous towns and museums on both sides of the internal border are once more in possession of their original archives, their paintings, their historical and scientific collections and their libraries. This example shows that it is possible, with goodwill and a professional approach, to reconcile our respective interests, even — or perhaps particularly — at a time of impending change such as the GDR is now experiencing.

Enormous importance also attaches to the improvement of contacts between our respective universities and colleges. It is to be hoped and expected that we shall succeed in developing the number of twinning arrangements between institutions of higher education and the number of academic exchanges between individuals and, particularly, in increasing the number of secondments of young scientists.

Needless to say, my progress report must also acknowledge that shortcomings still exist in the cultural sphere, too. This applies especially to the domains of folk and amateur art as well as to encounters between trainees and between school pupils. We shall continue to employ our best efforts to encourage the GDR leaders to give up their perceptible reluctance to allow such contacts.

The same applies to participative sport and youth sport. The GDR still refuses to consider the manifold opportunities that present themselves in this domain. The Federal Government will continue its efforts to extend the intra-German sporting calendar so that it is no longer confined to top-class events in spectator sports.

Human encounters remain one of the key areas of our policy for the cohesion of the German nation. Scope for cross-border travel is the main factor here, and, in 1989, a pleasing trend continued, with one in six adults below pensionable age in the GDR being able to visit the Federal Republic in the course of the past year.

This increase in personal contacts has also been promoted by town-twinning arrangements. More than 60 twinning arrangements between towns in the Federal Republic of Germany and those in the GDR have already been agreed or initiated. They provide a wide variety of vehicles through which people can meet and personal contacts be established.

Last but not least, great importance attaches to youth exchanges, which are continuing to develop gradually in spite of various difficulties.

Let us not forget that more than half of all Germans in East and West were born after the war and have no first-hand knowledge of the other part of Germany. Moreover, since the Wall was built, an entire generation has grown up in the GDR and has been virtually deprived by the stringent travel regulations of any opportunity to visit the Federal Republic of Germany and get to know the country and its people.

One of the unqualified successes of our policy in the realm of intra-German affairs is the fact that an appreciable percentage of the people of the GDR — including younger people — are now coming to visit our country and are able to compare the reality of life in the two States and, not least, to subject the information that they receive from the East German media to critical reappraisal. This all serves to promote the cohesion of our nation.

(Applause from the CDU/CSU and the FDP)

The new GDR leaders are now resolved to enact new rules on foreign travel, which would largely abolish the remaining restrictions. To all appearances, this seems to stem from an awareness that the lack of freedom of movement has been a major cause of popular discontent and has even bred a desire among many people to leave the GDR for good.

Since, the draft of the new regulations was published only recently and is under discussion at the present time, it is too soon for any definitive assessment. In this domain, as in others, the proof of the pudding will be in the eating, in other words in the practical effects of the new rules. The most important question is whether the new rules and the way in which they are applied will actually meet the wishes and expectations of our compatriots.

If the new rules give them genuine freedom to travel, people who have never been able to come here before, because they have no relatives or acquaintances here, will also be able to travel to the Federal Republic. This will give a new dimension to tourist travel and will also confront us with new challenges here in the Federal Republic of Germany.

We cannot carry the whole burden, but we must try, and we shall try, to be good hosts to those who come to visit us.

(Applause from the CDU/CSU and the FDP — Dr Lippelt [Hanover, Greens]: Why not the whole burden?)

— Your sole contribution, apart from the cynicism that I mentioned earlier, is to make exorbitant demands. That has been your contribution ever since you entered this House.

In an initial transitional period, the Federal Government will try, in cooperation with the churches and charities, to make accommodation available for such visitors if they cannot find private accommodation. We shall have to give some thought to the financial aspects of such an arrangement. And we shall also have to discuss it with the GDR Government, of course.

We must also bear in mind, however, that the GDR itself earns substantial amounts of convertible currency through the minimum exchange requirement for Western visitors. No other country of the Warsaw Pact has access to such a steady and substantial flow of convertible currency. It would therefore be only right and proper

(Dr Vollmer [Greens]: To abolish the exchange requirement altogether!)

if the leaders of the GDR were to spend a substantial amount of that revenue for the benefit of our compatriots by providing them with an appropriate sum in our currency for their visit.

(Applause from the CDU/CSU and the FDP and from some SPD Members — Dr Vollmer [Greens]: Abolish it!)

In the long term, ladies and gentlemen, the GDR will certainly have to ensure that people are able to travel with their own money. This would require a substantial increase in the economic output of the GDR. We are prepared to cooperate in strengthening the East German economy.

But the GDR itself must enact the reforms that are needed to enable such cooperation to bear fruit. Foremost among these is the dismantling of numerous mechanisms that obstruct and complicate intra-German trade, the extension of economic cooperation at all levels, the authorisation of direct contacts between companies from both parts of Germany and, above all, the creation of progressive legislation on joint ventures.

I am glad to say that the decline of recent years in intra-German trade seems to have been reversed. Total turnover for 1989 is likely to reach 15 billion units of account once again. However, both sides must remain committed to the development of the structure and level of this trade in a way that befits two highly industrialised trading partners.

Particularly in view of the urgent need for economic reforms in the GDR, I anticipate the emergence of new tasks and new developments in the realm of intra-German trade. Given wide-ranging economic cooperation, trade could provide a vital impetus for the further development of our relations.

Madam President, ladies and gentlemen, the Federal Government remains fully committed to the aims of its policy on the German Question, basing its position — as ever — on the established principles of constitutional and international law. In particular, it upholds the aim, enshrined in the preamble to our Basic Law, of achieving ‘in free self-determination the unity and freedom of Germany’.

(Applause from the CDU/CSU and the FDP)

The sequence in which the aims of our policy are to be pursued is prescribed by the Basic Law. The prerequisite for reunification in freedom is the free exercise of the right of self-determination by all Germans.

Our compatriots need no lecturing by anyone on either side. They themselves know best what they want. And I am sure that, given the opportunity, they will opt for freedom and unity.

(Applause from the CDU/CSU and the FDP — some Green Party Members: And for Socialism!)

It goes without saying that it is our national duty in the Federal Republic of Germany to canvass the support of our neighbours, allies and partners for the Germans' right of self-determination, because no one in the East or in the West can ignore a vote by the entire German people for the unity of their fatherland. All of us owe a great debt of gratitude to the President of the French Republic, François Mitterrand, for his endorsement last Friday of this very principle of the right of self-determination of all Germans.

(Applause from the CDU/CSU and the FDP and from some SPD Members)

In many areas, we have made remarkable progress, especially over the past few years. But we are all aware that these can only be steps along the way to more distant goals.

In virtually every area of intra-German relations, avenues leading to the improvements that people fervently desire remain largely unexplored. Vast areas of cooperation, openness and joint effort still remain untrodden.

If the quality of relations between the two States in Germany is truly to be raised to a new level, the conditions for such progress must now be created in the GDR itself. What we need are genuinely open exchanges of information and opinion, the rapid and comprehensive removal of travel restrictions, the abolition of all censorship, and more exchanges and cooperation in the realms of science, tertiary education and vocational training. Effective, far-reaching joint endeavours are needed in all areas of environmental protection, which people in both parts of Germany regard as one of the main tasks if we are to ensure a safe and healthy future.

For all these tasks, it is fair to say that, just as the GDR is the root of all the current problems, the conditions for their solution can be created only in the GDR. In this situation, it follows that neither comprehensive packages of economic aid nor, indeed, sanctions on our part can help. In the final analysis, it is up to the leaders of the GDR to offer their people the prospect of a decent future. This is the only way in which those who are still agonising over a possible decision to move to the West can be persuaded to stay in their native land.

Ladies and gentlemen, curing symptoms is not enough. Visible, tangible reforms must be carried out so as to give people a say in political decisions, to guarantee respect for human rights and, above all, to give people real hope of better living conditions. Change is overdue. This is what the events of the past days and weeks tell us. They contradict all those voices that have tried to persuade us over the years that greater stability was not to be achieved by change but by enshrinement of the status quo. This view has been utterly refuted once and for all.

(Applause from the CDU/CSU and the FDP)

What we are seeing now is that rapid comprehensive reforms offer the only possible solution. We in the Federal Republic of Germany can only attempt to foster this development. This requires dialogue with all political forces in the GDR, including those who now bear political responsibility. I declare to the new leaders of the GDR that I am willing to support a process of change if they are willing to carry out reforms. Cosmetic adjustments are not enough.

(Applause from the CDU/CSU and the FDP — Dr Dregger [CDU/CSU]: Genuine political reforms!)

Ladies and gentlemen, we have no desire to shore up an untenable structure. But we are prepared to offer

comprehensive assistance if a binding decision is taken for a root-and-branch reform of the political and economic system in the GDR. The SED must give up its monopoly on power, it must legalise independent political parties, and it must give a binding pledge to hold free elections. If it does these things, I shall also be willing to talk about an entirely new dimension to our economic aid.

(Applause from the CDU/CSU and the FDP and from some SPD Members)

I need hardly add that, unless the economic system is radically reformed, unless the bureaucratic planned economy is dismantled and replaced with a market economy, any economic aid we provide will ultimately be in vain.

(Dr Vollmer [Greens]: That means aid on your terms!)

It is our national duty to promote fundamental political and economic change in the GDR.

In addition, all free countries in the West have an interest in the advancement of the process of political, economic and social change in central, eastern and south-east Europe. For this reason, too, all members of the Western community of nations, namely the Member States of the European Community and our NATO allies, are called upon to support this process by demonstrating willingness to cooperate.

It is my conviction that freedom to travel, freedom of movement and cooperation will be the instruments with which the division of Europe will be overcome. If this is the case, then the days of the Berlin Wall are numbered, too. This abhorrent symbol of inhumanity must be removed.

(Applause from the CDU/CSU and the FDP and from some SPD Members)

Ladies and gentlemen, come what may, free Berlin will remain a litmus test of the goodwill and willingness to negotiate of the GDR, of the Soviet Union and of their other allies. The bonds between the city and the Federal Republic of Germany, its representation abroad by the Federal Republic of Germany and the full inclusion of Berlin in all developments and agreements in the field of East-West relations must be unreservedly guaranteed. Until the very recent past, a great deal of energy had to be expended time and again to solve problems connected with Berlin. This energy could be used far more constructively in cooperation for the good of the people of Germany and of Europe.

As far as the Federal Government is concerned, I have repeatedly stated, and I shall reiterate it today, that we cannot have a policy on intra-German affairs that excludes or bypasses Berlin.

(Applause from the CDU/CSU and the FDP and from some SPD Members)

Preserving the freedom and viability of the western part of the city and promoting its attractiveness and charisma remains one of our essential tasks.

We are helped in this task by the commitment of the three Western Allied Powers and also by the dynamic development of ties between Berlin and the Federal Republic. In the interests of the city, these ties must be respected in all contacts between the Berlin Senate and the GDR, too.

(Dr Vollmer [Greens]: In all contacts with the Americans, there should be no negotiating behind the back of the Governing Mayor!)

These ties are the only guarantee that the city will continue, as in previous years, to enjoy the full dividend of developments in the free part of Germany.

(Applause from the CDU/CSU and the FDP)

The Federal Government has emphatically welcomed the recent improvements in the rules governing tourism

and social visits in Berlin; these had long been on the 'wish list' of the Federal Government and the Senate. Not only for Berliners but for all people visiting the GDR, there is, admittedly, still a considerable amount of ground to make up: in particular, the requirement to exchange a fixed amount of currency into East German marks and the refusal of entry visas for certain groups of people are out of tune with this general improvement.

(Applause from the CDU/CSU and the FDP — Dr Lippelt [Hanover, Greens]: As out of tune as the 50-mark flat rate!)

The developments in the GDR also pose a challenge to Berlin. Greater freedom to travel will make the western part of Berlin an attractive destination for many more visitors from the GDR and the eastern part of the city — not only for tourists but also for people seeking assistance. To some degree, the same will apply to areas of the Federal Republic of Germany near the internal border, areas to which the Federal Government has always found it particularly important to lend support, which it will continue to do.

Berlin, however, because of its specific situation and its unique problems, may be confronted with tasks for which it needs our special support. We are prepared to play our part.

(Applause from the CDU/CSU and the FDP and from some SPD Members)

Madam President, ladies and gentlemen, the German Question is a question of freedom and self-determination. However difficult it may be for us, and particularly for our compatriots in the GDR, let us continue to rely with steadfast patience on the process of evolutionary change, which must culminate in full respect for human rights and the free exercise of the right of self-determination for all Germans.

Let us not forget, either, that the resolution of the German Question is not something that concerns only Germans. Let us not overlook the fact that the failure of reforms in Poland and Hungary would also affect the prospects for change in the GDR.

Let us beware of the assumption that we can predetermine the resolution of the German Question with a film script in the one hand and a timetable in the other. History, as these last twelve months have shown with particular clarity, does not adhere to timetables. Historical developments cannot be scripted in advance. The dramatic changes in the eastern part of our continent have furnished spectacular evidence which reaffirms that fact once again.

The crucial requirement now is that we remain true to our principles.

Freedom and democracy, the rule of law and the social market economy remain the cornerstones of our political and social system.

The firm and enduring anchorage of the Federal Republic of Germany in the Atlantic Alliance and in the community of the free peoples of the West, based on commitment to shared values, is irreversible. It is a consequence of the bitter lessons that we have learned from our history and is in tune with the decisions to establish freedom, democracy and the rule of law in our country.

Only on this basis can we be a reliable partner and expect to achieve progress towards the resolution of the German Question for the good of the entire people of Germany.

Ladies and gentlemen, we are not drifters vacillating between East and West,

(Dr Vollmer [Greens]: What a pity! What a great pity!)

and we have learned from the history of this century.

Reunification and integration into the West, our policy on the German Question and our policy on Europe are like two sides of the same coin. Each depends on the other. Without the dynamism of the Western European

unification process, the ossified structures in central, eastern and south-east Europe would not be collapsing today.

(Applause from the CDU/CSU and the FDP — Dr Vollmer [Greens]: That is dreadful arrogance!)

And were we not firmly embedded in the community of free peoples with their shared values, we should not enjoy the confidence of our Western partners and allies, who have constantly supported us in our efforts to resolve the German Question. We owe a debt of gratitude to many people, but, at this time, I should like to single out the President of the French Republic, François Mitterrand, and President George Bush, who have again expressed this support clearly in the last few days.

(Applause from the CDU/CSU and the FDP)

The active participation of the Federal Republic of Germany in the process of European unification remains a key element of our policy. Native soil, fatherland and Europe: this triad encapsulates people's desire to feel at home, to feel secure, their longing for openness, fellowship and friendship, both within their own intimate circle and in dealings with their neighbours.

The future of Germany lies in an overarching peaceful order that brings together the people and nations of our continent in a freedom that all can enjoy. What the European dimension means to us is national unity and European unification. With good reason, the Basic Law, our constitution, commits us to both of these goals.

At the same time, we are very well aware that the European Community is only a start and does not represent the whole of Europe. We must never let it fade from our minds that Warsaw and Budapest, Prague and Rostock, Leipzig and Dresden are naturally part of that common Europe too.

(Applause from the CDU/CSU, the FDP and the SPD)

What we aspire to, the enduring aim of our policy, is what Konrad Adenauer once expressed in the following words: 'In a free and united Europe, a free and united Germany.'

(Loud sustained applause from the CDU/CSU and the FDP)