

Address given by Hans-Dietrich Genscher at the signing of the Two Plus Four Treaty (Moscow, 12 September 1990)

Caption: On 12 September 1990, at the signing, in Moscow, of what is known as the ‘2 + 4 Treaty’ (the two Germanys and the four Allied Powers signatory to the 1945 Potsdam Agreement), which conclusively settles the German question, Hans-Dietrich Genscher, Foreign Minister of the Federal Republic of Germany (FRG), expresses his satisfaction at the reunification of Germany and the restoration of full sovereignty to the country.

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Statement by Foreign Minister Hans-Dietrich Genscher on the occasion of the signing of the Two Plus Four Treaty in Moscow, 12 September 1990

This is a historic moment for the whole of Europe and a happy one for the Germans. Together we have come a long way in a short time.

The goal we set ourselves in Ottawa has been achieved: the external aspects of German unification have been settled. Today we are signing the Treaty on the Final Settlement with Respect to Germany.

On 3 October we Germans will again be living in one democratic state, for the first time in 57 years.

On 30 January 1933 the darkness of fascism descended on Germany. We lost first our freedom, then peace, and then our national unity. The war unleashed by Hitler engulfed the whole of Europe in flames. In his speech on 8 May 1985 President Richard von Weizsäcker confirmed our responsibility.

In this hour we commemorate all the victims of war and tyranny. We commemorate the untold suffering of the nations, not only those whose representatives are sitting at this table. We recall in particular the Jewish people. We want such suffering never to be repeated.

When we began our discussions in Bonn on 5 May the democratically elected parliaments and governments of the two German states had just started their preparations for German unification. Less than 12 months after the peaceful revolution in East Germany, the unification of Germany in peace and freedom will be completed in a Europe which is in the process of regaining its unity.

The final settlement links German unification with the termination of the rights and responsibilities of the Four Powers in relation to Berlin and Germany as a whole. The united Germany will thus obtain full sovereignty over its internal and external affairs.

We will use that sovereignty conscious of our responsibility for peace in Europe.

The final settlement reflects the peaceful wishes of all concerned. It points to a better European future.

I thank my colleagues for making this treaty possible. I thank President Gorbachev, President Bush, President Mitterrand and Prime Minister Thatcher for their contributions.

The goal embodied in the preamble to our Basic Law has come true. The pledges made by France, the United States of America and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland in the 1954 Convention on Relations between the Three Powers and the Federal Republic of Germany have been fulfilled.

The aim of our policy of peace in Europe as reaffirmed in the Letter on German Unity in connection with the Moscow Treaty has become reality.

We are aware that it was not until substantial elements of a peaceful order in Europe had been established that it became possible to achieve the balance of interests reflected in the final settlement. Mindful of the opportunity to overcome the division of our continent, we have, through tremendous joint effort, succeeded within a few months in creating the basis for a framework of new stability in Europe.

The Final Act of Helsinki was signed 15 years ago. In that document all CSCE participating states reaffirmed that they would "ensure conditions in which their people can live in true and lasting peace free from any threat to or attempt against their security".

With the treaty we are signing today we are coming considerably closer to the fulfillment of that vision.

With our regained national unity we Germans want to serve peace and help promote European unity. This

aim is set out in the preamble to our Basic Law. The treaty uniting the Federal Republic of Germany and the German Democratic Republic likewise reaffirms our determination "to contribute through German unification to European unity and to the development of a peaceful order in Europe".

In the treaty we are concluding we Germans reaffirm that only peace will emanate from German soil. The united Germany's policies will be governed by the commitment to seek peace embodied in our Basic Law and in the unification treaty. In this spirit we are rendering our contribution to peace and stability in Europe.

The political unification of Germany places a greater responsibility on us but does not mean we are seeking greater power.

We endorse our undertaking not to manufacture or possess nuclear, biological and chemical weapons, nor to have control over them.

We are limiting the united Germany's armed forces to 370,000.

The task now is to create the new Europe's structures. This includes intensifying and institutionalizing the CSCE process, a matter which will be decided upon at the CSCE summit conference to be held in Paris in November.

The fundamental changes in Europe have already established a basis for a new relationship among the members of the two alliances. Now they no longer regard one another as enemies or as a threat but rather as partners in the construction of a durable peaceful order in Europe.

After his meeting with Chancellor Kohl in Moscow on 10 February, President Gorbachev said that German unification "can and must proceed in such a way that it can make a constructive contribution to European development". The meeting between President Gorbachev and Chancellor Kohl on 16 July paved the way for the attainment of this goal.

It has been shown that German unification does not create any new problems in Europe but rather helps solve existing ones. Now we must all resolutely continue our work of building Europe's peaceful order.

We Germans will help create the political union of the twelve members of the European Community. The whole of Germany will be embedded in the Community which in this hopeful phase in Europe's development is proving to be a reliable guarantor of its members' internal and external stability and also an anchor of stability for the whole of Europe.

The united Germany will remain a member of the Atlantic Alliance which will be one of the cornerstones of peace in Europe.

We regard the intensification and institutionalization of the CSCE process as Europe's great task leading to a peaceful order spanning the whole continent. It is of fundamental importance to us to develop our relations with our neighbors in Central and Eastern Europe and in particular with the Soviet Union. The comprehensive treaty we shall be initialing tomorrow emphasizes the great importance we attach to German-Soviet relations.

One of the basic elements of Europe's peace order is the inviolability of frontiers. The treaty verifies the definitive nature of united Germany's borders. The united Germany will confirm the existing German-Polish frontier in a treaty under international law to be signed as soon as possible after the unification of Germany. This is the intention of both parliaments, as expressed in identical resolutions adopted by the German Bundestag and the East German Volkskammer on 21 June and supported by both German governments.

It is our firm intention to conclude a comprehensive German-Polish treaty as well. Its purpose will be to establish the basis for the relationship of the Poles and the Germans which will open the way to a common

future for our peoples and hence serve the cause of peace in Europe.

We shall present the results of the two-plus-four talks at the conference of CSCE foreign ministers in New York on 1 and 2 October, and then to the CSCE summit meeting in Paris. We have from the very outset considered it essential that the process of German unification should take place within the European framework. Every CSCE participant will recognize that the final settlement is wholly consistent with CSCE principles.

To us Germans today's treaty is an occasion for joy, self-reflection and gratitude. It obliges us to recognize our responsibility to help meet the huge challenges of our time, maintain peace, promote economic development in the Third World, secure social justice everywhere and protect the natural sources of life.

We shall face up and do justice to that responsibility. Our message to the nations of the world is:

We want nothing more than to live in freedom, democracy and peace with all other nations.