

Address given by Helmut Kohl to the CSCE Summit (Paris, 20 November 1990)

Caption: On 20 November 1990, at the Summit Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE) held in Paris, the German Federal Chancellor, Helmut Kohl, outlines the CSCE's new tasks.

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Speech by German Chancellor Helmut Kohl to the Second Summit of CSCE Heads of State or Government Paris, 19-21 November 1990

Mr. Chairman, my dear colleagues, if proof of the CSCE's vitality were ever needed, then it has been provided not least by the propitious turning-point in the history of my country and people. After than more than 40 years of division, we Germans were able at the beginning of October to achieve our unity

- in conformity with the right of nations to self-determination,
- in peace and freedom and in harmony with all our neighbours and partners, and
- in conformity with the Treaty on the Final Settlement with regard to Germany, which we presented at the Meeting of CSCE Foreign Ministers in New York at the beginning of October.

We express our cordial thanks to all our partners and especially to the Heads of State and Government at this table, who made possible and facilitated our path to unity. Thanks are due also to the political leaders who helped the "new thinking" to prevail in international relations, above all in the heart of Europe. We owe special thanks to all people in Central, Eastern and South-Eastern Europe. Placing their faith in the CSCE ideals, they stood up for their rights, for freedom and for self-determination.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The Federal Republic of Germany has always regarded its great goal of eliminating walls and barbed wire from our country forever as a part of the great historical task of overcoming the unnatural division of Europe as a whole. Today, we can note this with gratitude: without the foundation laid 15 years ago for a peaceful order encompassing the whole of Europe, it would not have been possible today to accomplish German unity and to restore the historical unity of our continent, as we are doing here in Paris. As an idea and as a forum for forward-looking policies, the CSCE has stood the test of time. To the message of thanks to all our partners I would like to add the following solemn pledges on behalf of the united Germany:

First: Conscious of German history and the resultant moral and political responsibility, a united Germany will be the cornerstone of the peaceful European order. Our constitution imposes upon us the obligation to serve the peace of the world as an equal partner in a united Europe. Only peace will in future emanate from German soil.

Second: United Germany regards the confirmation of the finality of its borders as an essential element of the peaceful European order. In keeping with our obligation under the Treaty on the Final Settlement with respect to Germany, we signed a treaty with the Republic of Poland in Warsaw on 14 November confirming the existing border in a manner binding under international law.

Third: The united Germany will combine its regained sovereignty with a modern conception of sovereignty: We are willing to transfer Germany's sovereign powers to the European Community.

Fourth: The united Germany wants to set a good example. On the route to German unity we again renounced the production, possession and control of nuclear, biological and chemical weapons. We acknowledged our rights and duties under the Non-Proliferation Treaty. We gave an undertaking to reduce the armed forces of the united Germany to 370,000 and I trust that we thus acted as a pace-maker for the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe that was signed here yesterday. It is our hope that this contribution to stability will be emulated by the other partners in further negotiations.

Fifth: Last but not least, the united Germany remains committed to the CSCE as the engine behind a pan-European peace policy. The CSCE is also the framework in which – in addition to the Atlantic Alliance – the particular responsibility of the United States and Canada in and for Europe is lastingly anchored.

My dear colleagues,

Our Summit Meeting here in Paris, as everyone recognizes, is a milestone, a watershed in the history of

Europe. And it is a good thing that this Meeting in Paris is, as it were, in the middle, in the centre of European history. We are setting the seal on the end of confrontation and of the Cold War. We are continuing the great work started in Helsinki.

- We are giving the CSCE new institutions. In so doing we are equipping the CSCE and ourselves for the great task of making peace in Europe more secure and jointly shaping the future of our continent.
- In the CSCE we are setting new standards in progressing towards the constitutional state based on the rule of law and towards pluralism. We seek to develop human and minority rights further.
- With new confidence- and security-building measures we are proceeding steadfastly along the road to greater openness and trust in the crucial field of security policy.
- The members of NATO and the Warsaw Pact state in a joint declaration that they no longer regard each other as adversaries and that instead they want to establish a new partnership.
- Last but not least, the first treaty on conventional armed forces in Europe is clearing the way for a substantial reduction in the conventional capabilities of both sides. With this treaty, we underscore very conspicuously the fundamental political change that Europe is now undergoing, which we are all now experiencing here in Paris.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Today we are confronted with new challenges in Europe:

- Outmoded hostile stereotypes from the days of confrontation must not be superseded by backward-looking nationalisms.
- The great breakthrough in human and minority rights that we have achieved within the CSCE must not be undermined by new discord between neighbours or nationalities. European human and minority rights must instead become firmly rooted in the lives and consciousness of our people.
- Following the opening of national borders, there must not be new borders which perpetuate the prosperity divide. The ideological gulfs that have been overcome must not be dangerously opened up again by social divisions.

Together we must and will meet the challenges facing us. This calls for action on the basis of pan-European responsibility and solidarity. We can demonstrate this above all by banking on a successful outcome to the far-reaching political, economic and social reforms in the countries of Central, Eastern and South-Eastern Europe and – I want to emphasize – by continuing to support those reforms effectively, both bilaterally and together with our partners.

As the German Federal Chancellor, I should like to add at this point that you are all familiar with the problems of our own country, but we would be betraying the experience of unity and the opportunities of history if we were to focus only on our own problems and, so far as we are able, you can also count on our solidarity.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The CSCE and all other forums and organizations that unite Europe are confronted with new and crucial tests.

- The concept and institutions of the CSCE must be developed further so that in future, too, it can make its decisive contribution to peace and stability.

- The Council of Europe, as we would agree, I am sure, is called upon to play a greater role in strengthening the rule of law and consolidating the pan-European cultural heritage. We are strongly in favour of the reformist countries soon acceding to the Council of Europe.

- The European Community must evolve into a large single market, into an economic and monetary union and into a political union. It must at the same time perform its function as nucleus of a pan-European economic area that is open to the reformist countries, too.

- The CSCE, we believe, must vigorously pursue the path mapped out at the Bonn Economic conference and reinforce its activities in the fields of science and technology as well as environmental protection; we should bear in mind the benefits of working together with proven institutions such as the OECD, the ECE and the European Environmental Agency.

- Last but not least, Ladies and Gentlemen, we, the members of the alliances, must continue to live up to our special responsibility for security and stability, for disarmament and confidence-building. On the basis of proven attainments, we must contribute to a new security architecture that spans the whole of Europe.

Ladies and Gentlemen, my dear colleagues,

In all these endeavours we are looking not only to the future of our continent; we are also looking at the world as a whole and especially at the conflict regions around Europe. With the ideas, common values and successful policies embodied by the CSCE we, in Europe, want to send signals of hope and chart paths of peace.