



German reunification

More than 30 years ago, on 3 October 1990, Germany regained its unity - and to this day, German Unity Day is celebrated as the national holiday of this most economically powerful EU country. On October 3, 1990, not only Germany but the whole of Europe rejoiced - the Germans, because the political division was removed and they again felt masters of their destiny, the Eastern Europeans, because this unification was taken as a first step towards pan-European unity, the Western Europeans in view of the fact that they are the winners of the four-and-a-half-decade-long Cold War. In other words, about a quarter of a century ago, most Europeans were so excited that almost no one wanted to heed the warnings not to rush, but to first consider the consequences of this geopolitical change in central Europe. But let's go back to 1989 - the "year of miracles", which changed Europe and the world and marked the beginning of a new era,

In 23 August 1989, after the opening of the Hungarian-Austrian border, the "escape" of East Germans across Hungary began, which threatened to depopulate the country. At the same time, a new, more radical demand was put on the agenda - unification with the FRG. The response to these demands was the speech of the Chancellor of the Federal Republic of Germany Helmut Kohl in the West German Bundestag with a 10-point program dedicated to the development of relations between the two German states. This program consisted of a list of measures to strengthen cooperation between the two German states, promises of immediate concrete assistance to the GDR in the humanitarian sphere, in particular the creation of a monetary fund to finance the trips of East Germans to the West (Germany, back in 1983-1984, becomes one of the heads of Creditors of the GDR), proposals for the creation of a contractual German community with new joint institutions and the expansion of the functions of the existing ones. Confirming the need to develop and deepen cooperation with the GDR, the Chancellor expressed his intention to create in the future a confessional unification of Germany. The peaceful unification of Germany could only be carried out by negotiation. The first major step on this path was the Treaty on Economic, Monetary and Social Union of May 18, 1990, the entry into force of which led to monetary reform. As a result, the GDR stamps were replaced by Deutsch stamps, which became a single means of payment on the territory of the two German states still existing in parallel. The conditions of the monetary reform were a crushing blow to the already shaken economy of the GDR, led to an increase in the indebtedness of its enterprises, which were extremely low, in comparison with West German, labor productivity. The next important step towards achieving German





unity was the agreement between the GDR and the FRG, signed in August 1990, according to which, in order to achieve legal unification, a "single electoral territory" was created, in which all elections were to pass according to the electoral laws and rules adopted in the Federal Republic of Germany.

The images of the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989 are etched in everyone's mind. The unification of Germany, on the other hand, took place almost quietly a little less than a year later. Then the fate of German unification was decided, and then the first warnings were heard about the undesirable consequences of the complete reorganization of the post-war order. The fears of British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher, who always carries a map of pre-war Germany in her famous bag, and of French President Francois Mitterrand that a united Germany could upset the balance of power in a united Europe. But the strong desire of USSR and US Presidents Mikhail Gorbachev and George W. Bush to end the Cold War, mass enthusiasm and sympathy for divided Germans led European leaders to accept Helmut Kohl's plan for unification.

In 1990 Helmut Kohl met Gorbachev in Moscow. The Soviet leader recognized the Germans' right to reunification.



Mikhail Gorbachev and Helmut Kohl in Moscow (2 October , 1988).

On September 12, 1990, the Treaty on the Final Settlement of the German Question was signed between the victors of World War II - the USSR, the USA, Great Britain and France, and the two German states.





October 3, 1990 was an epochal change: The territories of the German Democratic Republic (East Germany, DDR) were incorporated into the then "West Germany".



1990 Day of German Unity, with flags of German states at the Reichstag building in Berlin
What remains of the East, thirty years later, many urban centers of former Communist Germany have been carefully restored and new factories have sprung up, but many others have not survived the abrupt transition to capitalism. Like the automotive ones. Just think of the famous Trabant and the most exclusive - but still Spartan by Western standards - Wartburg which closed its doors in 1991.





A wrecked and abandoned production building of the former East German VEB car factory where BMW and Wartburg cars were built is seen in Eisenach, eastern Germany, on Sept. 22, 2020. (AP Photo/Michael Probst)

" But the differences are still felt. A country's cultural consciousness cannot change quickly. I was one of the first to describe the so-called 'wall in the head'. That cultural wall between West and East Germany. And it was crazy that politicians don't 'they had seen. But when I wrote' the Jumper of the Wall 'at the time, I thought in my turn that a generation would be enough. But no: at least two, three were needed ". To take stock of German reunification 30 years later is the German writer Peter Schneider, who in an interview with ANSA says: "We all made the mistake of forgetting that children have parents. And that parents influence more than any other factor in children's heads and what they feel and think ". And so, Even in Europe, according to Schneider, the distance between the countries of East and West is still visible: "We see that building a democracy is a long and complicated process and that there are always repercussions. Cultural awareness , cultural habits are something that changes much more slowly than highways or technology.

Useful links:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3Tdw29LduG4> : German Reunification Explained

<https://www.dw.com/en/germany-reunification-2020/a-55131890> : Germany faces old problems 30 years after reunification

<https://www.britannica.com/place/Germany/The-reunification-of-Germany> : The [reunification](#) of [Germany](#)



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