

“Blooming Landscapes” (July 1, 1990)

Abstract

On the day the Deutschmark was introduced in the territory of the GDR, Chancellor Helmut Kohl called upon the citizens of the Federal Republic to show solidarity with their countrymen in the East and promised a smooth unification without financial sacrifices. The anticipated “blooming landscapes” would lead to a rapid improvement of living conditions in East Germany. The expression “blooming landscapes” pointed to a prospering economy, which never materialized in this way, and it was therefore used to criticize the federal government’s unification policies.

Source

Chancellor Kohl’s Television Address on the Day the Currency Union took Effect, July 1, 1990

My dear fellow Germans!

A few weeks ago, the State Treaty on the Monetary, Economic, and Social Union between the FRG and the GDR was signed – here in the Schaumburg Palace, the seat of former chancellors of the FRG.

Today it takes effect.

This is the crucial step on the road to the unity of our Fatherland, a great day in the history of the German nation.

Unity has now become a perceptible reality for the people of Germany in important areas of daily life.

The State Treaty is an expression of solidarity among Germans. Germans in the Federal Republic and in the GDR are once again linked indissolubly. They are linked, first of all, by a common currency, by the common system of the social market economy. Soon they will also be linked in a free and united state.

Germans can now come together unhindered. As of today, free travel prevails at the border. We are glad of it; we have waited more than forty years for it.

At this hour, we also remember, in particular, all those who lost their lives at the Wall and the barbed wire fence.

The state treaty documents the will of all Germans to go forth into a common future: in a united and free Germany.

There will be much hard work before we achieve unity and freedom, prosperity, and social equality for all Germans. Many of our compatriots in the GDR will have to adapt to new and unfamiliar living conditions – and also to a transition period that will certainly not be easy. But no one will be expected to endure undue hardship.

To Germans in the GDR, I can say what Prime Minister de Mazière has already emphasized: No one will be worse off than before – and many will be better off.

Only the monetary, economic, and social union offers the chance, yes, even the guarantee, of improving

living conditions rapidly and thoroughly.

Through our joint efforts, we will soon succeed in transforming Mecklenburg-Vorpommern and Saxony-Anhalt, Brandenburg, Saxony, and Thuringia into blooming landscapes where it is worthwhile to live and work.

Of course, many people ask what this unparalleled process means for them personally – for their jobs, their social welfare, for their families. I take these concerns very seriously.

I ask our compatriots in the GDR: Seize the opportunity; do not let yourselves be put off by the undeniable difficulties of the transition. If you look confidently to the future, and if everyone lends a hand, you and we will make it together.

For the great goal of the unity of our Fatherland, we in the Federal Republic will also have to make sacrifices. A nation unwilling to do so would have lost its moral strength long ago.

I call on Germans in the Federal Republic to continue to stand by our compatriots in the GDR. Remember that the people of the GDR have been cheated of the fruits of their labor for four decades by a socialist dictatorship. They have earned our support.

For the people of the Federal Republic, the following is true: No one will have to do without anything because of German unification. At most, it is a question of making available to our compatriots in the GDR part of any additional revenue earned in coming years, to help them help themselves. For me, this is an obvious imperative of national solidarity.

At the same time, it is an investment in our common future. An economic upswing in the GDR will benefit everyone – Germans in East and West, our allies in Europe and around the world.

When were we ever better equipped for the common tasks of German unity than today? The economy is flourishing; the economic upswing is in its eighth consecutive year, with no end in sight. When was this ever before the case?

We will make it – if we recall the abilities with which we built the FRG forty years ago, in an incomparably difficult situation, out of the ruins of our destroyed cities and countryside. Then, the people erected a stable democracy with their courage and stubborn determination, with industry and imagination, and last but not least, with the consciousness of a common task.

They achieved peace and freedom, prosperity and a high degree of social justice – for part of Germany. We want all this, finally, to become reality for all of Germany.

Today I ask all of you: Let us set to work without hesitation. Our common future is at stake – in a united Germany and a united Europe.

Source: “Kohl’s Celebration of the Currency Union, July 1, 1990,” in Konrad Jarausch and Volker Gransow, eds., *Uniting Germany: Documents and Debates, 1944–1993*. Translated by Allison Brown and Belinda Cooper. Berghahn Books: Providence & Oxford, 1994, pp. 172–74.

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