

Ceremony Celebrating German Unification (October 1990)

Abstract

This excerpt from the *Tagesschau* daily news broadcast of October 3, 1990 reports on the ceremony to mark German unification, which took place at the Berlin Philharmonic. In his speech, Federal President Richard von Weizsäcker praised the peaceful unification of Germany, which had come about in agreement with Germany's neighbors and was embedded in the unification of Europe. Weizsäcker described unification as a gift the Germans had received.

Source

/von Weizsäcker: And so we experience today as a gift. History has been kind to us Germans this time. All the more reason for conscientious self-reflection.

/Newsreader: Good evening, ladies and gentlemen. The Germans are once again living in a sovereign, free and united country. Last night, 45 years after the Second World War, the division of Germany came to an end. The GDR and the Federal Republic of Germany united to form one state. Unity was celebrated in Berlin and other cities with moving ceremonies and joyful public festivals. But the joy was also mixed with thoughtfulness. From abroad, congratulations came from numerous heads of state and government. In addition to approval of German unity, skepticism about Germany's future role in Europe and the world was also noticeable in foreign newspapers.

In a state ceremony on the Day of Unity, Federal President von Weizsäcker called on all Germans to show solidarity. Uniting meant learning to share. At the ceremony in the Berlin Philharmonie, Weizsäcker once again paid tribute to the courage of the people who took to the streets for their freedom a year ago and thus initiated the peaceful revolution.

Like the other speakers, he recalled that unity would not have been possible without the contribution of Poland and Hungary and without the support of the Soviet Union. Weizsäcker added that today the united German nation had found its recognized place in Europe.

/von Weizsäcker: For the first time, we Germans are not a point of contention on the European agenda. Our unity was not forced on anyone, but peacefully agreed. It is part of a larger European historical process aimed at the freedom of the peoples and a new order of peace on our continent. We Germans want to serve this goal and our unity is dedicated to it. [Applause]

I am certain that we will succeed in overcoming old and new divides. We can combine the constitutional patriotism of the one side with the human solidarity experienced by the other to form a strong whole. We have the common will to fulfill the great tasks that our neighbors expect of us. We know how much more difficult it is for other peoples on earth at the moment. History gives us the opportunity, we want to seize it with confidence and trust. And the joy, as we heard last night, the joy we feel, it is a bright spark of divinity.

/Reporter: Strong applause for the first Federal President of a united Germany. He was preceded by the Mayor of Berlin, Momper, the President of the Bundestag, Süßmuth, and the first freely elected President of the Volkskammer, Bergmann-Pohl.

/Bergmann-Pohl: This day means farewell and new beginnings. A farewell to a troubled and troubling past, a departure towards a Germany that is reconciled with itself and that seeks reconciliation with its neighbors. It is the happiest day for the Germans. We must now free ourselves from the concepts of "mine" and "yours", "we" and "they."

/Süßmuth: Sharing is just one aspect. Of course, anyone who wants to build community must also be able to share, but it is now just as important to create community through joint work. If we don't pass the

test of solidarity at home, in our own country, even on a small scale, who is going to believe that we are willing and able to show solidarity throughout Europe and in the North-South conflict?

/Momper: Without politicians who recognized the signs of the times, change would not have happened so quickly. I would mention Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev first and foremost. [Applause] Mikhail Gorbachev paved the way for reforms in Eastern Europe. And I would like to mention the representatives of the Western democracies who helped pave the way for disarmament and the security partnership. [Applause]

Source: *Tagesschau* news broadcast October 3, 1990. tagesschau.de
<https://www.tagesschau.de/multimedia/video/video-ts-50602.html>

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