

Federal President Roman Herzog during his “Berlin Speech” (April 26, 1997)

Abstract

On April 26, 1997, Federal President Roman Herzog delivered a speech entitled “Moving into the Twenty-First Century.” The speech was a response to the challenges of globalization. In it, Herzog outlined the political and social problems that Germany was facing. Germany, as he saw it, was in crisis, and the catchwords he used to describe the situation included “loss of economic dynamism,” “ossification of society,” and “mental depression.” In Herzog's view, “Germany needed a jolt” [“Durch Deutschland muß ein Ruck gehen”] in order to face up to fiercer international competition. He asked political leaders and society to work together to ensure that Germany would remain viable in a globally competitive environment. Herzog's speech established the tradition of the “Berlin Speech” by sitting federal presidents. The tradition was continued by Herzog's successors Johannes Rau and Horst Köhler. This photograph shows Herzog during his “Berlin Speech” at the Hotel Adlon.

Source



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