

Joint Communiqué by Erich Honecker and Helmut Kohl (September 8, 1987)

Abstract

Erich Honecker's planned visit to the Federal Republic—a response to Helmut Schmidt's trip to East Germany in 1981—was delayed by Soviet objections and only became a reality in 1987. The visit represented an additional symbolic step in the *de facto* recognition of East Germany, but its concrete political results, buried in the usual official statements, were confined to cooperative agreements in science, technology, ecology, and radiation protection.

Source

General Secretary Honecker and Chancellor Kohl agreed that the German Democratic Republic and the Federal Republic of Germany, in light of the responsibility arising from their common history, must make a special effort on behalf of a peaceful coexistence in Europe. Never again shall war emanate from German soil; peace must emanate from it.

They emphasized that the relationship between the two states must remain a stabilizing factor for constructive East-West relations. This relationship must provide a positive impetus for peaceful cooperation and dialogue in Europe and beyond.

General Secretary Honecker and Chancellor Kohl paid tribute to the development of the relationship between the two states since the conclusion of the Basic Treaty between the German Democratic Republic and the Federal Republic of December 21, 1972. They emphasized that this treaty, together with previously concluded agreements and regulations, forms the basis and the framework for relations between the two states. They affirmed their Joint Declaration of March 12, 1985.

In consideration of the current circumstances, and irrespective of differences of opinion on fundamental questions, including the national question, it is the intention of both states, in the spirit of the Basic Treaty, to develop normal neighborly relations with each other on the basis of equality, and to continue exhausting the possibilities of the treaty.

It was agreed that what has already been achieved should be preserved and extended, being mindful of the principle that both states respect the independence and autonomy of the other in domestic and foreign matters. A willingness to communicate and realism should be the guiding principles for a constructive, practical-minded cooperation between the two states.

Both sides paid tribute to the ongoing positive effect of the Quadripartite Agreement of September 3, 1971, on the situation in Europe's center and on East-West relations, and [both] affirmed the necessity of adhering to the Agreement and applying it as fully as possible.

General Secretary Honecker and Chancellor Kohl dealt thoroughly with questions regarding holiday travel and visitor traffic, including travel in the event of pressing family matters. They acknowledged the progress made thus far and affirmed their intention to continue working toward improvements and simplifications in the interests of the people. [...] They welcomed the establishment of partnerships between cities in the German Democratic Republic and the Federal Republic of Germany as important contributions to the facilitation of meetings between citizens—including cultural events—and thereby toward the extension of friendly neighborly relations between the two states. In the future, they will

continue to support such efforts. [...]

General Secretary Honecker and Chancellor Kohl discussed humanitarian questions, including reuniting families and solving hardship cases. They paid tribute to positive gains and agreed to resume appropriate efforts in a constructive manner. [...]

General Secretary Honecker and Chancellor Kohl made it clear that they attach great importance to protecting the natural foundations of human life. They assessed the conclusion of the agreement on the future shape of relations in the area of environmental protection as an expression of the will to deepen cooperation in this area. [...]

They welcomed the conclusion of the agreement on cooperation in the fields of science and technology and agreed, on this basis, to intensify relations to their mutual advantage via contacts between scientists and research institutions within the scope of specific projects.

General Secretary Honecker and Chancellor Kohl underlined the great importance of comprehensive, factual reporting by the press, radio, and television for the further development of neighborly relations. Accordingly, both sides are granting journalists the greatest possible support in pursuing their occupation.

General Secretary Honecker and Chancellor Kohl paid tribute to the cultural agreement of May 6, 1986, which serves the development of cultural relations and has led to a clear increase in cultural exchange. They emphasized their intention to continue cooperating determinedly on the basis of this agreement, and to incorporate additional areas. Plans for 1988-89 have been basically approved. [...]

General Secretary Honecker and Chancellor Kohl were pleased to note that, on the whole, economic relations between the two states have developed positively over the last several years. They view trade as the most important stabilizing element in overall relations and declared their interest in the continuous expansion of economic cooperation on the basis of equality and mutual advantage, including small and medium-sized businesses. They affirmed their intention to continue to improve trade structures, and to put more effort into the exchange of capital goods, especially products in the fields of mechanical and electrical engineering, and in energy and environmental technology. Both sides underlined the importance of cooperation with outside markets. [...]

General Secretary Honecker and Chancellor Kohl discussed international developments. Aware that different social systems exist in the two states and that they belong to different alliances, they presented their views on the status and prospects of East-West relations.

They testified to their willingness, within the framework of their alliances, to work toward a policy of détente and peace, to advance the dialogue, and enter into long-term cooperation.

In their joint effort to exhaust every opportunity for an ever wider and more constructive dialogue about peoples' concerns in East and West, and in the conviction that a long-term, stable, and lasting peace in Europe cannot be achieved by military means alone, both sides attach great significance to the CSCE process. Balanced, tangible progress in all areas relating to the Final Act of Helsinki is an important measure of the will for détente and of the readiness to solve security questions by building confidence. Both sides therefore advocate that all principles and regulations of the Final Act of Helsinki, and the concluding documents from Madrid, become fully effective—for the benefit of the people and in the interest of cooperation among states.

In this context, General Secretary Honecker and Chancellor Kohl conducted an open exchange of opinions about the realization of all human rights. [...]

In the context of East-West dialogue, they emphasized the outcome of negotiations on effective measures for arms control and disarmament in all areas. Based on the principles of equality and parity, a stable balance of power must be achieved at the lowest possible level, and any imbalances must be dismantled. This must be effectively verifiable. [...]

General Secretary Honecker and Chancellor Kohl affirmed their willingness to contribute to the success of the Viennese negotiations on mutual reduction of armed forces and armaments and associated measures in central Europe. [...]

General Secretary Honecker and Chancellor Kohl characterized their exchange of opinions as necessary and conducive to the further development of relations. They spoke out in favor of continuing and intensifying contacts at the high political and other levels.

Source: Joint Communiqué by Erich Honecker and Helmut Kohl, 8. September 1987, *Neues Deutschland*, September 9, 1987; reprinted in *Ein Erfolg der Politik der Vernunft und des Realismus: Offizieller Besuch des Generalsekretärs des Zentralkomitees der Sozialistischen Einheitspartei Deutschlands und Vorsitzenden des Staatsrates der Deutschen Demokratischen Republik, Erich Honecker, in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland vom 7. bis 11. September 1987* Berlin, 1987, p. 39 ff.

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