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COLD WAR INTERNATIONAL HISTORY PROJECT

WORKING PAPER # 86

# Austria, German Unification, and European Integration: A Brief Historical Background

By Michael Gehler and Maximilian Graf, March 2018





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This CWIHP Working Paper has been made possible by generous support from the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation, other foundations, and private donations from individuals and corporations.

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# Austria, German Unification, and European Integration: A Brief Historical Background

Michael Gehler and Maximilian Graf

In order to understand Austria's role in the dissolution of the German Democratic Republic (GDR) and the country's position toward German Unification, one needs to analyze the events of 1989-1990 against a broader historical background. On the one hand, this consists of long-term developments, such as Austria's relationship to the two German states prior to 1989 and the increasing permeability of the Austrian-Hungarian border in the 1970s and 1980s. On the other hand, Vienna's integration policy, which changed in 1987, should be taken into account. This *Working Paper* introduces this historical background and is structured into four parts. The first section examines Austria's relations with East Germany from the 1970s and West Germany's reactions to this process. The second section offers a concise overview of Austrian-Hungarian relations in the 1970s and 1980s, focusing on the gradual transformation of the border regime, its significance for the events at the Austrian-Hungarian border in 1989 and their contribution to the collapse of the East German regime. Third, the *Working Paper* then interprets Austrian attitudes and policies towards the GDR and the question of German Unification in the crucial months from November 1989 to January 1990. In the final section, the *Working Paper* highlights how the process of German Unification influenced Austria's ambitions to join the European Communities (EC).<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> This *Working Paper* is one of the results of the project "Edition of Documents: Austria and the German Question 1987-1990," funded by the Austrian Science Fund (FWF), project-no. P 26439-G15. For the edition, see Michael Gehler/ Maximilian Graf (eds.), *Österreich und die deutsche Frage 1987–1990. Vom Honecker-Besuch zur Einheit* (forthcoming Göttingen: Vandenhoeck&Ruprecht, 2018).

For the current state of research on Austria and German Unification, see Michael Gehler, "Eine Außenpolitik der Anpassung an veränderte Verhältnisse: Österreich und die Vereinigung Bundesrepublik Deutschland-DDR 1989/90," in idem/Ingrid Böhler (eds.), *Verschiedene europäische Wege im Vergleich. Österreich und die Bundesrepublik Deutschland 1945/49 bis zur Gegenwart. Festschrift für Rolf Steininger zum 65. Geburtstag* (Innsbruck: StudienVerlag, 2007), p. 493–530; idem, "Österreich, die DDR und die Einheit Deutschlands 1989/1990," in *Zeitschrift für Geschichtswissenschaft* 57 (2009) 5, p. 427–452; Maximilian Graf, "Österreich und das 'Verschwinden' der DDR. Ostdeutsche Perzeptionen im Kontext der Langzeitentwicklungen," in Andrea Brait/Michael Gehler (eds.), *Grenzöffnung 1989: Innen- und Außenperspektiven und die Folgen für Österreich (Schriftenreihe des Forschungsinstitutes für Politisch-Historische Studien der Dr.-Wilfried-Haslauer-Bibliothek 49)* (Vienna: Böhlau, 2014), p. 221–242; idem, "Österreich und die deutsche Einheit," in Wolfgang Mueller (ed.), *1989. Die Samtenen Revolutionen, Österreich und die Transformation in Europa* (Vienna: new academic press, 2017), 131–

## Austrian-East German Relations

The founding document of the West German state, the Basic Law (*Grundgesetz*), made clear that the Bonn government regarded itself as the sole representative of all Germans. This position was later justified by the “Hallstein Doctrine,” which aimed to prevent diplomatic recognition of the GDR by other states. Austria adhered to this West German policy maxim and recognized the GDR only after the settlement of German-German relations in the Basic Treaty (*Grundlagenvertrag*) of 1972.<sup>2</sup> Thereafter, both Vienna and East Berlin sought to improve bilateral relations. Despite the specific situation resulting from the division of Germany, the GDR was incorporated into Austria’s *Ostpolitik* and Vienna started to act as a diplomatic “ice breaker” for the East German regime. In a short time, a good relationship developed that many Austrian politicians would have liked to maintain, even after the fall of the Berlin wall.<sup>3</sup> A first highlight was the signing of a Consular Treaty in 1975, which—to the displeasure of West Germany—explicitly recognized East German citizenship.<sup>4</sup> In 1978, Austrian Chancellor Bruno Kreisky became the first Western head of government to visit East Berlin.<sup>5</sup> In 1980, Erich Honecker paid his first state visit

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159; Andrea Brait, “‘Österreich hat weder gegen die deutsche Wiedervereinigung agitiert, noch haben wir sie besonders begrüßt’. Österreichische Reaktionen auf die Bemühungen um die deutsche Einheit,” in *Deutschland Archiv* 2014, Bonn, p. 82–102; and most recently the chapters by Andrea Brait, Michael Gehler, Maximilian Graf, Philipp Greilinger and Sarah Knoll in Michael Gehler/Maximilian Graf (eds.), *Europa und die deutsche Einheit. Beobachtungen, Entscheidungen und Folgen* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2017).

<sup>2</sup> On Austrian-East German relations 1949–1972, see Maximilian Graf, “Austria and the GDR 1949–1972. Diplomatic and Political Contacts in the Period of Non-recognition,” in *From the Austrian Empire to Communist East Central Europe*, ed. Arnold Suppan and Maximilian Graf (Vienna: Lit, 2010), p. 151–177; Rolf Pfeiffer, *Die DDR und Österreich 1949–1972. Beziehungen in den Jahren offizieller Beziehungslosigkeit* (Aachen: Shaker Verlag, 2015). On Austrian–West German relations, see Matthias Pape, *Ungleiche Brüder. Österreich und Deutschland 1945–1965* (Cologne, Böhlau, 2000); Rolf Pfeiffer, *Eine schwierige und konfliktreiche Nachbarschaft – Österreich und das Deutschland Adenauers 1953–1963* (Munster: Lit 2003); Ingrid Böhler/Michael Gehler (eds.), *Verschiedene europäische Wege im Vergleich. Österreich und die Bundesrepublik Deutschland 1945/49 bis zur Gegenwart* (Innsbruck: StudienVerlag, 2007); Michael Gehler/Rudolf Agstner (eds.), *Einheit und Teilung. Österreich und die Deutschlandfrage 1945–1960. Festgabe für Rolf Steininger zum 70. Geburtstag* (Innsbruck: StudienVerlag, 2013).

<sup>3</sup> On Austrian–East German relations in general, see Maximilian Graf, “Ein verdrängtes bilaterales Verhältnis: Österreich und die DDR 1949–1989/90,” in *Zeitgeschichte* 39 (2012) 2, p. 75–97; idem, *Österreich und die DDR 1949–1990. Politik und Wirtschaft im Schatten der deutschen Teilung* (Vienna: ÖAW, 2016).

<sup>4</sup> Enrico Seewald, “Die Aufnahme der diplomatischen Beziehungen zwischen der DDR und Österreich,” in Jochen Staadt (ed.), *Schwierige Dreierbeziehung. Österreich und die beiden deutschen Staaten (Studien des Forschungsverbundes SED-Staat an der Freien Universität Berlin)* (Frankfurt: Peter Lang, 2013), p. 81–135, here p. 102–118.

<sup>5</sup> Friedrich Bauer/Enrico Seewald, *Bruno Kreisky in Ost-Berlin. Ein Besuch der besonderen Art*, (Innsbruck: StudienVerlag, 2011).

to the West, when he officially visited Vienna. Both visits constituted to the expansion of economic relations. Since Honecker's visit took place at the early stages of the last peak of the Cold War, a time when German-German relations were also extremely tense, Austria's dealings with East Germany caused severe dissatisfaction among West German leaders.

At this point, the development of Austrian-East German economic relations had already overtaken political relations in terms of intensity. The concept of "large-scale orders in return for loans" was the main reason for the expanding economic ties. Austria provided loans to the GDR and, in return, its nationalized industries received large-scale orders from the GDR. Since 20 percent of the GDR's national debt (in convertible currencies) consisted of Austrian loans, one can imagine how important they were for keeping the GDR solvent. In 1982, they were even decisive as East Germany struggled to avoid bankruptcy. One of the results of this Austrian help was the subsequent conclusion of annual economic agreements that fostered Austrian exports and contributed to jobs in Austria's nationalized industries. In economic terms, Vienna and East Berlin became "partners" during the 1980s.<sup>6</sup>

Not least due to the diversification of the international relations of the GDR and the intensification of German-German diplomatic, economic, and political relations in the 1980s, Austria's role gradually waned in importance. Nevertheless, intense reciprocal top-level visits by politicians continued. Economic relations declined in the mid-1980s, but recovered by the end of the decade when the crumbling GDR imported huge amounts of electricity from Austria. However, the overall level of the Austrian-East German relationship failed to reach the quality of Austria's relations to Hungary. Various forms of cooperation and human contacts remained on a very low level, mutual tourism and the possibility to travel abroad hardly existed. Hence, cooperation and exchange going beyond the fields of diplomacy, politics, and economics achieved only modest results. Still, in 1989 the East German regime imported Austrian consumer goods worth a billion Austrian shillings—intended as "election sweeteners" in the run-up to the communal "elections" in May. After public protests against the fraudulent results of the "elections" arose, Austria noticed that the time was ripe for a change in the East German leadership, yet this was only expected to take place at the next SED Party Congress, at that time scheduled for May 1990. For

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<sup>6</sup> Cf. Graf, *Österreich und die DDR 1949–1990*, p. 497–528.

years, Austrian diplomats had claimed that the GDR was stable, but as economic problems became more and more apparent, their assessments changed.<sup>7</sup> As Poland and Hungary began to transform, the Austrian Foreign Ministry concluded: “Generally, the GDR is facing the problem that political reforms tend to jeopardize the nation-state identity.”<sup>8</sup> Further protests followed the regime’s approval of the massacre in Tiananmen Square in Beijing on 4 June 1989. Additionally, the number of people demanding their right to permanently leave the GDR grew constantly, not the least due to the provisions of the final document of the Vienna CSCE follow-up meeting concluded in January 1989.<sup>9</sup> This flow of people from the GDR increased, with more and more individuals heading to the Austrian-Hungarian border. The effects of the dismantling of the “Iron Curtain” in the spring of 1989, and finally the opening of the Austrian-Hungarian border in September 1989 are well known, but hitherto they have been explained imperfectly without taking the long-term developments of the bilateral Austrian-Hungarian theatre into account.

## Austria, the Hungarian Border, and the Dissolution of East Germany

From the mid-1960s onwards, the troubled Austrian-Hungarian Cold War relationship gradually turned into a “masterpiece of European détente.” The main obstacle to this process was the common border at the “Iron Curtain.” Hence, the Hungarian leadership—in its search for a rapprochement with the West in general—decided on a gradual softening of the border regime. Even though the border remained “iron,” the area was demined by 1971. Regional cooperation in the fields of culture, sports, and science grew constantly and Austria continuously strove to make the common border more permeable. By the beginning of the 1970s, mutual visits had increased by leaps and bounds. Austria also acted as a diplomatic “ice breaker” for Hungary. Most strikingly,

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<sup>7</sup> Maximilian Graf, “Österreich und das ‘Verschwinden’ der DDR. Ostdeutsche Perzeptionen im Kontext der Langzeitentwicklungen,” p. 222–223.

<sup>8</sup> See [Document #1](#).

<sup>9</sup> For a contemporaneous analysis, see Stefan Lehne, *The Vienna Meeting of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe, 1986–1989. A Turning Point in East-West Relations*, (Boulder: Westview Press, 1991). For the effects on the GDR, see Walter Süß, “Die Wiener KSZE-Folgekonferenz und der Handlungsspielraum des DDR-Sicherheitsapparates 1989,” in Matthias Peter/Hermann Wentker (eds.), *Die KSZE im Ost-West-Konflikt. Internationale Politik und gesellschaftliche Transformation 1975–1990* (Munich: Oldenbourg, 2012), p. 219–231; Erhard Crome/Jochen Franzke, “Die SED-Führung und die Wiener KSZE-Konferenz 1986 bis 1989. Dokumente aus dem Parteiarchiv,” in *Deutschland Archiv* 26 (1993) 8, p. 905–914.

in 1976 Austria became the first Western country to officially receive the Hungarian party leader, János Kádár. Due to these close relations and new Austrian loans, in 1979 even a treaty on the abolition of mutual visa requirements went into effect. This was an unusual step by neighbors with an immediate border on both sides of the “Iron Curtain” and led to a significant increase in East-West tourism.

Since the early 1970s, the East German Foreign Office was alarmed by the example of the Austrian-Hungarian border, believing it could be held as a role model for the settlement of the German-German border by the West. Not surprisingly East German officials largely ignored any West German mentioning of the Austrian-Hungarian example as an example for German-German relations. When the Austrian-Hungarian treaty on the abolition of visa requirements went into effect in 1979, East Berlin kept a close eye on how travel between Austria and Hungary developed. After some time, the Hungarians frankly informed the East Germans: “In many cases the citizens of the Socialist countries are causing more problems than the Austrians.” Statements like this were everything but appeasing for the distrustful GDR, however it took ten more years for the worst East German nightmares to come true.<sup>10</sup>

The already close relations between Austria and Hungary continued to intensify and diversify in the 1980s. Due to the constant Austrian insistence on local border traffic in 1987, it appeared on the agenda of the Hungarian Politburo. After an intense discussion, the Politburo removed local border traffic from its agenda, but it decided that in the future the frequency of trips to the West should not be regulated by the Hungarian state. The effects of the new travel regime were immense: by 1988, millions of Hungarians crossed the border in order to shop in the West. Now the “Iron Curtain” ultimately was outdated and after the change in the Hungarian leadership in 1988, it quickly disappeared. For his first official visit to a foreign country, the new Hungarian Prime Minister, Miklós Németh, travelled to Austria in February 1989 where he

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<sup>10</sup> Maximilian Graf, “Ein Musterbeispiel der europäischen Entspannung? Die österreichisch-ungarischen Beziehungen von 1964 bis 1989,” in Csaba Szabó (ed.), *Österreich und Ungarn im 20. Jahrhundert* (Vienna: Collegium Hungaricum, 2014), p. 261–280; Tamás Baranyi/Maximilian Graf/Melinda Krajczar/Isabella Lehner, “A Masterpiece of European Détente? Austrian–Hungarian Relations from 1964 until the Peaceful End of the Cold War,” in *Zeitgeschichte* 41 (2014) 5, p. 311–338. For the best accounts on Austrian–Hungarian relations from 1945–1964, see Andreas Gémes, “Austrian–Hungarian Relations, 1945–1989,” in *Peaceful Coexistence or Iron Curtain? Austria, Neutrality, and Eastern Europe in the Cold War and Détente, 1955–1989 (= Europa Orientalis 7)*, ed. by Arnold Suppan and Wolfgang Mueller (Vienna: LIT, 2009), p. 310–336 (with no original research on the period after 1964).



announced that the border security system would be removed. In May of the same year, the dismantling of the “Iron Curtain” began.<sup>11</sup> The staged cutting of the fence by Foreign Minister Alois Mock and his Hungarian counterpart, Gyula Horn on 27 June 1989 (which interestingly enough was Austria’s idea) popularized this process.<sup>12</sup> It immediately encouraged increasing numbers of East Germans to use this apparent gap in the “Iron Curtain” to flee to the West. Without the quality of the Austrian-Hungarian relations, which had been reached in the two decades before, such a situation would have been impossible. Even the Pan-European picnic on 19 August 1989, which saw the mass-flight of more than 600 East Germans, was an initiative that originated from the new border-crossing possibilities between Austria and Hungary.

The rest of the story is well known: throughout the summer months, West German embassies were filled with East Germans not willing to return to the GDR. Since the number of GDR citizens trying to escape via Hungary constantly increased, the Hungarian government decided to open the borders for all East German citizens on 11 September 1989. Budapest’s decision was closely coordinated first with Bonn, and second with Austria. Within the following few weeks, about 50,000 East German citizens used Austria as their transit country on the way to West Germany. The opening of the border significantly contributed to the loss of power of the East German regime.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> Michael Gehler, “Bonn – Budapest – Wien. Das deutsch-österreichisch-ungarische Zusammenspiel als Katalysator für die Erosion des SED-Regimes 1989/90,” in Andrea Brait/Michael Gehler (eds.) *Grenzöffnung 1989: Innen- und Außenperspektiven und die Folgen für Österreich* (Vienna: Böhlau, 2014), p. 135–162; Michael Gehler, “Austria, the Revolutions in Middle and Eastern Europe and German Unification 1989/90,” in Wolfgang Mueller/Michael Gehler/Arnold Suppan (eds.), *The Revolutions of 1989: A Handbook* (Vienna: ÖAW, 2015) p. 437–466; Andreas Oplatka, *Der erste Riß in der Mauer. September 1989 – Ungarn öffnet die Grenze* (Vienna: Zsolnay, 2009), p. 30–37; Maximilian Graf, “Die Welt blickt auf das Burgenland. 1989 – die Grenze wird zum Abbild der Veränderung,” in idem/Alexander Lass/Karlo Ruzicic-Kessler (eds.), *Das Burgenland als internationale Grenzregion im 20. und 21. Jahrhundert* (Vienna: Neue Welt Verlag, 2012), p. 135–179.

<sup>12</sup> See [Document #2](#).

<sup>13</sup> Maximilian Graf, “The opening of the Austrian – Hungarian border revisited: How European détente contributed to overcoming the ‘Iron Curtain’,” in Bernhard Blumenau/Jussi M. Hanhimäki/Barbara Zanchetta (eds.), *New Perspectives on the End of the Cold War. Unexpected Transformations?* (London: Routledge, 2018), p. 138–158; Michael Gehler, *Three Germanies. West Germany, East Germany and the Berlin Republic*, (London: Reaktion Books Ltd., 2011), p. 198–200; Maximilian Graf, “Das Paneuropäische Picknick im Kontext. Wie Österreich zum Tor in die Freiheit werden konnte und welche Folgen dies hatte,” in Stefan Karner and Philipp Lesiak (eds.), *Der erste Stein aus der Berliner Mauer. Das paneuropäische Picknick 1989* (forthcoming Innsbruck: StudienVerlag, 2018). On the refugees in the West German Embassies, see Katarzyna Stokłosa, “Die letzte Fluchtwelle aus der DDR im Jahr 1989. Aus den Berichten der westdeutschen Botschaften in Budapest, Prag und Warschau,” in *Zeitschrift für Ostmitteleuropa-Forschung* 64 (2015) 1, p. 40–80.

## Austria and German Unification (November 1989–October 1990)

In case of Austria, this, however, was an unintended consequence. After the opening of the Austrian-Hungarian border in September 1989 and even after the fall of the Berlin Wall, both Austria and the GDR aimed to keep their good relations alive. Many Austrian politicians, economists, intellectuals, and journalists were highly skeptical of a possible German “reunification;” the latter two not least due to dark chapters of shared Austrian and German history, most notable the “*Anschluss*” in 1938. However, these debates remain subject to future research.<sup>14</sup> Immediately after the opening of the Austrian-Hungarian border, Austrian Chancellor Franz Vranitzky sought to meet privately with Honecker, but due to the accelerating developments, he abstained from doing so.<sup>15</sup> In September 1989, almost all Austrian diplomats failed to predict that German “reunification” would soon be on the agenda.<sup>16</sup> The ousting of Honecker and his old guard in October was perceived as “a step to save the GDR from total decay.” In the same breath, many argued that in the future the East German state could become “an even more important partner for Austria.”

Those hopes did not decline even when it became obvious that demonstrations and popular unrest were on the rise. The new short-lived regime of Egon Krenz and the “*Wende*” he had announced were increasingly named “opportunistic” in the reports by the Austrian embassy in East Berlin. At the same time, Austrian diplomats did not expect that the current opposition would be able to play a lasting political role.<sup>17</sup>

Austrian politicians and media welcomed the fall of the Berlin Wall on 9 November 1989, immediately followed by a sorrowful discussion about a possible German “reunification.” In principle, Austria officially recognized the right of self-determination for the East Germans and the

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<sup>14</sup> Oliver Rathkolb/Georg Schmid/Gernot Heiß (eds.), *Österreich und Deutschlands Größe. Ein schlampiges Verhältnis* (Salzburg: Müller 1990); Gabriele Matzner-Holzner, *Verfreundete Nachbarn. Österreich – Deutschland: ein Verhältnis*, 2nd ed. (Vienna: Edition Atelier, 2005), p. 12, 22–23.

<sup>15</sup> Maximilian Graf, “Österreich und das ‘Verschwinden’ der DDR. Ostdeutsche Perzeptionen im Kontext der Langzeitentwicklungen,” p. 234–235.

<sup>16</sup> See [Document #3](#). For one farsighted exception, see [Document #4](#).

<sup>17</sup> Maximilian Graf, “Österreich und die deutsche Einheit,” in Wolfgang Mueller/Andrea Schnoller/Hannes Stekl (eds.), *1989: Die Samtenen Revolutionen, Österreich und die Transformation Europas* (forthcoming Vienna: New Academic Press 2017).

Austrian Foreign Ministry communicated this stance to the country's diplomatic representations all over the world the day after the wall came down.<sup>18</sup> Foreign Minister Mock confirmed his positive attitude in various public statements.<sup>19</sup> The position of Chancellor Vranitzky was more reluctant. As early as 24 November 1989, he paid an official visit to the GDR, which contributed to the international recognition of the new regime led by Prime Minister Hans Modrow. In the midst of the final days of Cold War Europe, Austria once again had become a diplomatic "ice breaker" for an East German regime. Still, we cannot definitely judge Vranitzky's motivations for this step. Among them—and probably the strongest—was the desired continuation of the profitable economic relations and the conclusion of yet another annual agreement. We now know that the Austrian Chancellor visited the GDR on a short-call request by Modrow, one initiated by the long-term architect of Austrian-East German relations Minister of Foreign Trade Gerhard Beil. Only recently, Vranitzky claimed in an interview that he had agreed on the visit only after a telephone conversation with Helmut Kohl, who encouraged him to travel to East Berlin. Recently, Horst Teltschik remarked that the visit by the Austrian Chancellor was "not very helpful" for the West German plans of dealing with the GDR.<sup>20</sup> Regardless, while preparing for the visit, East German state security analyzed the Austrian position towards the question of "reunification" in every detail and in a razor-sharp manner detected the different attitudes of Mock and Vranitzky.<sup>21</sup> In his conversation with Modrow, the Austrian Chancellor stated that Austria, on one hand, regarded German unification "primarily as a decision that has to be made by the German states and would also respect this decision. On the other hand, one needs to take the pan-European context into consideration, and in this sense, the decisions of the CSCE on the stability of Europe as well."<sup>22</sup> With the future of the GDR being everything but certain Vranitzky moved on in further developing the bilateral relationship.

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<sup>18</sup> See [Document #6](#).

<sup>19</sup> Andrea Brait, "'Österreich hat weder gegen die deutsche Wiedervereinigung agitiert, noch haben wir sie besonders begrüßt'. Österreichische Reaktionen auf die Bemühungen um die deutsche Einheit," p. 88, p. 91–92.

<sup>20</sup> Cf. Graf, *Österreich und die DDR 1949–1990*, 588–590. Interview with Dr. Hans Modrow by Michael Gehler, 21 November 2014, Berlin.

<sup>21</sup> See [Document #7](#).

<sup>22</sup> See [Document #8](#).

Austrian diplomacy perceived the reactions of the victorious powers of World War II and other European states as reluctant and in many cases as opposing unification.<sup>23</sup> With the announcement of the Ten Point Plan by Chancellor Kohl on 28 November and especially during his visit to Dresden on 19 December 1989, it became obvious that German unification was gathering speed. While Mock unconditionally supported the politics of his Christian democrat colleague, statements by the Austrian Socialists remained skeptical or even sorrowful. At that time, the international discussion on the German question was highly controversial and the outcome seemed uncertain. Against this background and in spite of the domestic situation in East Germany, Modrow pressed for a return visit to Austria as soon as possible. Not the least due to several statements by Austrian diplomats and especially representatives of the Austrian economy who claimed to be in favor of the GDR's continued existence, East Berlin was convinced that Austria was "against [a] swift unification." Despite its (sometimes) ambiguous statements about the future of the GDR, Austrian diplomats were aware of the troubled situation the East German state had to face: the people had no confidence in the current leadership, the round-table negotiations seemed to lead nowhere, and an overthrow of the Modrow regime seemed possible.<sup>24</sup>

On 26 January 1990, Modrow was welcomed for his much desired reciprocal visit to Austria. On this occasion, further economic contracts were signed and both sides agreed to suspend travel restrictions. In his conversation with the East German Prime Minister, Vranitzky still stated that Austria aimed to independently develop its relations with the GDR and thereby contribute to the democratization process. On German unification, he said: "If the Germans were to opt for a unification of the two states, one must respect that. Austria is however interested in a general framework, which does not bring Europe into danger and does not destroy the existing balance. A too rapid sequence of events, however, would pose such a risk. Everything must be assessed under European aspects."<sup>25</sup>

The conversation of Foreign Minister Mock with his East German counterpart, Oskar Fischer, on the same day was of remarkably different tone. Some days before travelling to Vienna, Fischer had learned from a conversation with Soviet Foreign Minister Eduard Shevardnadze that

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<sup>23</sup> See [Document #9](#).

<sup>24</sup> Graf, "Österreich und die deutsche Einheit" (forthcoming 2017).

<sup>25</sup> See [Document #11](#).

Mikhail Gorbachev agreed with German unification in principle.<sup>26</sup> Hence, Fischer stated “that it would come to unification; it must be embedded in the overcoming of European division.”<sup>27</sup> Mock was probably the first Western Foreign Minister who was informed about the changing Soviet position in such a straightforward manner. Of further consequence, Moscow’s consent to German unification was primarily dependent on the question of NATO membership for a united Germany and the German (financial) reward. Against the changing international background and with the results of the East German elections in March 1990, understood as a plebiscite for German Unification, the Austrian position became rather obsolete.<sup>28</sup> Hence, discussing the Austrian diplomatic perceptions of the Two Plus Four-process or other matters in detail would not make sense in this context.<sup>29</sup> Nevertheless, the final months of the Austrian-East German relationship consisted of remarkable episodes like the financial relations of the Austrian and East German communists or the visit of yet another East German Prime Minister, Lothar de Maizière, to Austria in July 1990.<sup>30</sup> Instead of discussing this swansong of Austrian-East German relations, it is important to provide some remarks on how German unification affected Austria’s ambitions to join the European Community.

## Conclusion: Austria and European Integration against the background of German Unification

Within the context of the domestic developments in the GDR and the changing international climate, Vranitzky gradually modified his attitude and finally warmly welcomed German unification, since it was obvious that Austria would need the support of united Germany to become a member of the EC.<sup>31</sup> How those processes interacted after 1990 will be subject to

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<sup>26</sup> Conversation Oskar Fischer–E. A. Shevardnadze, Moscow, 20 January 1990 (= Document 33), in Ines Lehmann, *Die Außenpolitik der DDR 1989/90*, (Baden-Baden: Nomos, 2010), p. 441–443.

<sup>27</sup> See [Document #12](#).

<sup>28</sup> Gehler, *Three Germanies*, p. 217–219.

<sup>29</sup> See [Document #13](#), [Document #14](#), [Document #18](#), and [Document #19](#).

<sup>30</sup> Maximilian Graf, “Parteifinanzierung oder Devisenerwirtschaftung? Zu den Wirtschaftsbeziehungen von KPÖ und SED, 1946–1989,” in *Jahrbuch für historische Kommunismusforschung* (2014), 229–247; MMaximilian Graf, “Parteifinanzierung oder Devisenerwirtschaftung? Zu den Wirtschaftsbeziehungen von KPÖ und SED, 1946–1989,” in *Jahrbuch für historische Kommunismusforschung* (2014), 229–247; Anpassung an veränderte Verhältnisse,” p. 525.

further archival research. As our project revealed, the interconnections were manifest right after the fall of the wall.

When the Great Coalition of Conservatives and Socialists returned to power in 1987, Austrian policy shifted again in the direction of greater emphasis on European integration. Austria now sought full membership in the EC. This was as a result of changes in the EC's Single European Act (SEA), its Internal Market program, and the receding Cold War, as well as domestic pressures arising from an escalating crisis in the nationalized industries. What really drove Austria's policy of support for integration in 1989 and the following years was, as before in the 1950s and 1960s, the threat of exclusion. The policy change was not, however, ad hoc, but took place in a period of transition. What followed was a further attempt to "go-it-alone" with the application for accession to the EC on 17 July 1989. The Austrian application was largely met with noncommittal sympathy, but no concrete roadmap existed yet.<sup>32</sup> After having promoted the idea of "*Mittleuropa*" (Central Europe) for years, against the background of the revolutions of 1989 and with regard to European integration, Vienna wished not to be seen as part of East-Central Europe, but—in spite of being neutral—as an integral part of the West.<sup>33</sup>

When a close relationship between the GDR and the EC was discussed after the fall of the Wall, Austrian diplomats followed these developments with suspicion. The events and processes that led to German unification soon overtook any considerations in this direction. By April 1990 in the course of high-level diplomatic negotiations Bonn showed its confidence in Austria's position toward German Unification, assured the Austrians of German support for the country's EC ambitions, but in the same breath suggested that at the moment a pushy attitude would be inappropriate.<sup>34</sup> Unified Germany almost unconditionally supported Austria's sometimes stony negotiations for EC-membership in 1993-1994. One of the staunchest opponents was France. It is reported that Mitterrand accepted in the end what, in his view, was yet another German country

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<sup>32</sup> Michael Gehler, *Österreichs Weg in die Europäische Union* (Innsbruck: StudienVerlag, 2009), 102–106.

<sup>33</sup> On Austria's *Mittleuropa* politics, see Vladislav Marjanović, *Die Mittleuropa-Idee und die Mittleuropapolitik Österreichs 1945–1995* (Frankfurt: Peter Lang, 1998). On the current state of research, see Michael Gehler/Paul Luif/Elisabeth Vyslonzil (eds.), *Die Dimension Mittleuropa in der Europäischen Union. Geschichte und Gegenwart* (Hildesheim: Gregor Olms Verlag, 2015).

<sup>34</sup> See [Document #15](#).

joining the European Union.<sup>35</sup> When Vranitzky visited France, Great Britain and Ireland in May 1990 as part of a promotion tour for the Austrian EC-application, he met first with Mitterrand and the next day with Margaret Thatcher. While French-West German disagreements over German unification had been already overcome and the conversation between Vranitzky and Mitterrand focused solely on European integration, Thatcher touched the German question.<sup>36</sup> The Prime Minister and the Austrian Chancellor agreed that the West German leadership, especially with regard to economics, underestimated the tasks at issue in a unified Germany. Both had kept a certain (in this regard, justified) skepticism.<sup>37</sup>

After 1989-1990, with the end of the East-West conflict and after Mikhail Gorbachev had given up Soviet opposition to Austria's ambitions for EC membership, the opportunity to attain full membership presented itself. From 1991-1994, the Austrian government began to support integration to a far greater degree, playing down the importance of neutrality. An intensified supranational integration policy followed with entry into the EU, with a conscious effective discarding of neutrality after 1995. Participation in the European Economic Area (EEA) during 1992-1994 served as a springboard for raising the quality of integration. From 1989-1995, the way to Brussels was through Paris and Rome, however. After the spectre of the "Anschluss" turned out to no longer be an insurmountable obstacle and the formal declaration by Italy and Austria of the end of the dispute in South Tyrol, the EC door was pushed open and entry became a real possibility. Germany, a traditional promoter of Austrian interests regarding integration, added weight to the application with the support of Chancellor Helmut Kohl—this time successfully, in contrast to the 1950s and 1960s. The Austrian aims were not met with enthusiasm in Brussels,

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<sup>35</sup> Michael Gehler, *Vom Marshall-Plan zur EU. Österreich und die europäische Integration von 1945 bis zur Gegenwart* (Innsbruck: StudienVerlag, 2006), p. 195. On Vranitzky see idem "Paving Austria's Way to Brussels: Chancellor Franz Vranitzky (1986–1997) – A Banker, Social Democrat, and Pragmatic European Leader," in *Journal of European Integration History* 18 (2012) 2, p. 159–182.

<sup>36</sup> See [Document #16](#). On the still disputed French attitude towards German Unification, see Maurice Vaïsse and Christian Wenkel (eds.), *La diplomatie française face à l'unification allemande* (Paris: Éditions Tallandier, 2011); Ulrich Lappenküper, *Mitterrand und Deutschland. Die enträtselte Sphinx* (Munich: Oldebourg, 2011); Frédéric Bozo, *Mitterrand, la diplomatie française et la fin de la guerre froide* (Paris: Jacob, 2005); Tilo Schabert, *Wie Weltgeschichte gemacht wird. Frankreich und die deutsche Einheit*, (Stuttgart: Klett-Cotta, 2002).

<sup>37</sup> See [Document #17](#). On Thatcher's position toward German Unification, see Klaus-Rainer Jackisch, *Eisern gegen die Einheit. Margaret Thatcher und die deutsche Wiedervereinigung* (Frankfurt: Societätsverlag, 2004); *Documents on British Policy Overseas (DBPO), Series III, Vol. VII: German Unification, 1989–1990*, ed. by Keith Hamilton, Patrick Salmon and Stephen Twigge, (London: Routledge, 2010).

however. The EU member states set on deepening integration, as well as Commission President Jacques Delors, had one problem more with Austria, a “special case” and neutral, as they were preparing the massive changes to the Maastricht Treaty including economic and monetary union reforms. In the end, partially due to changes within the EC itself, it took several more years to negotiate the agreement with the EC. After an overwhelmingly positive plebiscite in 1994, Austria finally joined the European Union in 1995.<sup>38</sup>

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<sup>38</sup> For details, see Gehler, *Österreichs Weg in die Europäische Union*, p. 130–142.



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## Document Appendix

The following twenty documents are accessible on the Wilson Center's Digital Archive in the collection "[Austria and German Unification.](#)"

### Document 1: Assessment Paper by the Austrian Foreign Ministry on the Current Situation in Eastern Europe, Vienna, 8 June 1989

Source: Information, Ernst Sucharipa, Vienna, 8 June 1989, Österreichisches Staatsarchiv (ÖStA), Archiv der Republik (AdR), Bundesministerium für Auswärtige Angelegenheiten (BMAA), II-Pol 1989, GZ. 713/6-II.3/89  
This information was sent to the Foreign Minister, the General Secretary of the Foreign Ministry, the heads of sections II, III, IV, V, VI, the group leader I.A, all departments of the Political Section (II) as well as to all Austrian diplomatic representations in states participating in the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE).

*In the spring of 1989, the impact of Gorbachev's Perestroika had become visible, not only in the Soviet Union, but throughout Eastern Europe. Poland and Hungary had taken a reform path, which in addition to politics, also comprised the economy and society, and initiated the transformation towards a pluralistic democracy. But not all Warsaw Pact states followed this path immediately. In particular, the East German regime refused to implement the necessary reforms. In the eyes of the Austrian Foreign Ministry its leadership had good reasons for this.*

#### [Excerpt] Eastern Europe; Current Assessment

In general: the reform process in the USSR has provided new additional impetus (both in the economic, as well as in the socio-political field) for those Eastern European countries where autonomous reform efforts (even before Gorbachev) were also observed (Hungary, Poland). In Czechoslovakia and Bulgaria, economic reforms have been taken on very slowly and carefully (sometimes making the impression of their paying mere lip service). In the GDR<sup>39</sup> and Romania – avowedly – there is no need for reform seen.

The socio-political reforms have led the USSR and Hungary to an impressive revival and enhancement of parliamentary life; in Poland, this is also about to happen.

The greater independence granted by Moscow (ideologically, but also economically and in foreign policy) opens up opportunities for the first time since the Second World War to democratically reshape Europe while taking into account diversity and national interests.

[...] <sup>40</sup>

GDR: Stagnating tendency reinforced by acutely growing problem of overdue generational change; declining economic growth calls into question previous dogma of "Unity of Economic and Social policy." A new course is expected to be set earliest at the party convention in May 1990. Generally, the GDR is facing the problem that political reforms tend to jeopardize the nation-state identity.

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<sup>39</sup> German Democratic Republic.

<sup>40</sup> Omitted were the current assessments of the Soviet Union, Poland, Hungary and Czechoslovakia.

[...] <sup>41</sup>

Vienna, on 8 June 1989  
Sucharipa m.p. <sup>42</sup>

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<sup>41</sup> Omitted were the current assessments of Bulgaria, Romania, Yugoslavia and Albania.

<sup>42</sup> Ernst Sucharipa (1947–2005), Head of the department for Eastern and Southeastern Europe in the Political Section of the Austrian Foreign Ministry (1987–1990); manu propria (signed with his own hand).



## Document 2: Memorandum of Conversation Foreign Ministers Alois Mock (Austria) and Gyula Horn (Hungary), Vienna, 26 June 1989

Source: Official memo, Erich Maximilian Schmid, Vienna, 28 June 1989, ÖStA, AdR, II-Pol 1989, GZ. 222.18.23/35-II.SL/89 This official memo was brought to the attention of the Foreign Minister, the General Secretary, sections III and IV, the group I.A, all departments of the Political Section as well as to all Austrian diplomatic representations in states participating in the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE).

*Austrian-Hungarian relations improved since the 1960s and gradually became the “masterpiece of European détente” in the Cold War. Along with the improvement of relations, the common border at the “Iron Curtain” became more permeable. Visa requirements were abolished in 1979, and since 1988 the Hungarian regime granted its citizens full freedom of travel. This triggered a travel boom and made the “Iron Curtain” definitively superfluous. Prime Minister Miklós Németh announced the removal of technical border barriers during his visit to Austria in February 1989; the dismantling began already in April. This development was popularized by the world-famous photo of foreign ministers Alois Mock and Gyula Horn at the symbolic cutting of the last remnants of the “Iron Curtain” on 27 June 1989. Their political exchange the day before, already contained more far-reaching topics.*

### **Official visit by Foreign Minister Horn; Conversation with Foreign Minister Mock, 26 June 1989; International Issues**

International issues were discussed during the working breakfast and the work meeting on 26.6.1989. The following topics were broached:

#### I. West European Integration:

1.1 Hungarian participation: For Foreign Minister Horn,<sup>43</sup> European integration processes have come about through “objective reasons.” He was concerned about the risk of walling off the outside, above all from the side of the EC.<sup>44</sup> However, within the 12 EC states there is no uniform attitude to non-members, above all to Eastern Europe. Hungary aspires in the short-term for an agreement on tariff preferences with the EC, similar to that of Yugoslavia,<sup>45</sup> and in the medium-term a genuine free trade agreement (This would require a prior liberalization of the Hungarian economic order and the convertibility of the Forint). At the same time Hungary wants to step up its cooperation with the EFTA,<sup>46</sup> in which it could imagine a joint statement as to Yugoslavia. A special fund of the EFTA should be created for Hungary (in the dimension of 80–100 million dollars), which could not realistically result in “a renovation” of the Hungarian economy, but would still provide an impetus for many companies. Concerning the Council of Europe, Hungary is satisfied with the approach that was achieved<sup>47</sup> and “not impatient” regarding full membership.

[Mock]<sup>48</sup> assured political support for Hungarian efforts in approaching the EFTA, briefly reported on our activities regarding Yugoslavia, and raised the question whether a larger fund could be created for all reform-willing Eastern European states.

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<sup>43</sup> Gyula Horn, Foreign Minister of Hungary (1989–1994).

<sup>44</sup> European Communities.

<sup>45</sup> Yugoslavia and the EC had signed an agreement on cooperation on 2 April 1980.

<sup>46</sup> European Free Trade Association.

<sup>47</sup> In June 1989 Hungary had received observer status.

<sup>48</sup> Alois Mock, Austrian Foreign Minister (1987–1995).

1.2 Austria – EC: [Mock] informed Foreign Minister Horn about how to proceed after the agreement between the coalition partners.

Foreign Minister Horn emphasized that Hungary is basically positive towards Austria's desire to join the EC. The concern applies to preserving the special quality of our bilateral relations. [Mock] stressed that Austrian European policy rests upon two pillars: participation in Western European integration (EC/EFTA/CoE)<sup>49</sup> and neighborhood policy (in the broader sense). In view of the situation and foreseeable development of the EC he sees – even if certain problems can not be ruled out – no reason for Hungarian concerns.

## 2. CSCE:<sup>50</sup>

Foreign Minister Horn said that such positive prospects for an agreement on the question of disarmament have never previously existed, "but the devil is in the details." He cited problems with the air forces ("not everything is resolvable in one step"). In any case, a new political impetus is required, which through a joint declaration at a high level, could at best be accomplished already in the autumn of this year.

[Mock] agreed and reminded of the proposal of Foreign Minister Shevardnadze to hold a meeting at the heads of state level. He explained the pragmatic role of N+N countries,<sup>51</sup> which currently preferred to exercise restraint, but despite the difficulties of internal consensus in crisis situations always remained available as mediators. Foreign Minister Horn did not want to dramatize the lack of agreement on a final document at the Paris meeting.<sup>52</sup> One should not give up the principle of consensus, although it also has disadvantages, in which it opens up the possibility of one or two countries preventing decisions from being made (reference to Romania).

He pointed to the importance of the joint statement of the FRG/Soviet Union from 13. 6. this year,<sup>53</sup> in which the obligation to changing internal political conditions in the Soviet Union was stipulated.

[Mock] underlined the "leap forward" that the Vienna final document<sup>54</sup> had brought about, and therefore little new was to be expected from Paris. Probably Copenhagen<sup>55</sup> would not

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<sup>49</sup> CoE = Council of Europe.

<sup>50</sup> Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe.

<sup>51</sup> N+N-countries = Neutral and Non-aligned countries.

<sup>52</sup> The first Meeting of the Conference on the Human Dimension of the CSCE took place from 30 May to 23 June 1989 in Paris, and ended without a final document.

<sup>53</sup> For the joint statement of the Federal Republic of Germany and the Soviet Union signed on the occasion of Gorbachev's visit to West Germany, see *Texte zur Deutschlandpolitik* III-7 – 1989, 148–153. Originally published in the Bulletin des Presse- und Informationsamtes der Bundesregierung vom 13. Juni 1989, 542–544.

<sup>54</sup> The third CSCE follow-up meeting was held in Vienna from 4 November 1986 to 19 January 1989. The final document of the Vienna Follow-up Meeting was signed on 15 January 1989, containing the hitherto most extensive agreements in the humanitarian field. See "'Abschließendes Documents' des III. KSZE-Folgetreffens in Wien vom 15. Jänner 1989 [= 'Final Document' of the III. CSCE Follow-up meeting in Vienna from 15 January 1989]," in *20 Jahre KSZE*, 106–143.

<sup>55</sup> The second meeting of the Conference on the Human Dimension of the CSCE was held in Copenhagen from 5 to 29 June 1990. For the final document see: "Dokument des Treffens der Konferenz über die menschliche Dimension der KSZE in Kopenhagen vom 29. Juni 1990 [= Document of the meeting of the Conference on the

bring about much progress either, as the Soviet Union is probably reserving this for the Moscow meeting in 1991.<sup>56</sup> Until then, the reality in each country should be brought close to the Vienna Document.

[...]<sup>57</sup>

#### 4. Developments in Eastern Europe:

4.1 Warsaw Pact: Foreign Minister Horn qualified the development as a differentiation process. Despite tendencies to that effect, it is not yet a disintegration. The reform-minded members are dependent on each other and need to strengthen their cooperation. The Warsaw Pact policy objectives<sup>58</sup> should therefore be defined, as Hungary aspires to modernize, not disintegrate.

The Warsaw Pact should in future:

- coordinate its defense policies (in which substantial reforms should include a revision of the ratio of the common and national forces),
- define the fundamental position on international issues and
- above and beyond this, preserve the member states' sovereignty (in internal affairs, bilateral issues as well as in protecting national interests towards third countries and integration areas).

These issues will be discussed at the Warsaw Pact meeting in Bucharest<sup>59</sup> at the beginning of July this year. The Warsaw Pact was never monolithic, now the appearance is disappearing as well: the internal situation of individual Warsaw Pact states (for example, Romania) contradicts the general reduction of tensions; the attempts at reform at the national level led to tensions with countries that do not accept pluralism. The problem with this is that conservatives called the legitimacy of the new structures into question (for example, Czechoslovakia with respect to Hungary).

4.2 Hungary-Soviet Union: The development in the Soviet Union is extremely important for Hungary. The Soviet Union maximally supports Hungary. The situation in the Soviet Union is – especially economically – much more difficult than in Hungary. Their relations are currently dominated by their past (not only 1956 but also 1968), which vexed some other allies. This

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Human Dimension of the CSCE in Copenhagen 29 June 1990],” in *Auswärtiges Amt/Referat Öffentlichkeitsarbeit* [= Foreign Office/Public Relations] (ed.), *20 Jahre KSZE 1973–1993. Eine Dokumentation* [= 20 Years of the CSCE 1973–1993. A documentation] (Bonn: Auswärtiges Amt/Referat Öffentlichkeitsarbeit, 1993), 270–289.

<sup>56</sup> The third meeting of the Conference on the Human Dimension of the CSCE took place from 10 September to 4 October 1991 in Moscow. For the final document see “Dokument des Treffens der Konferenz über die menschliche Dimension der KSZE in Moskau vom 3. Oktober 1990 [= Document of the meeting of the Conference on the Human Dimension of the CSCE in Moscow from 3 October 1990],” in *20 Jahre KSZE*, 290–308.

<sup>57</sup> Omitted were passages on the regional conflicts in Namibia/South Africa, the Middle East and Chile.

<sup>58</sup> Warsaw Pact.

<sup>59</sup> The meeting of the Warsaw Pact took place in Bucharest on 7 and 8 July 1989. On the meeting see Records of the Political Consultative Meeting in Bucharest, July 7–8, 1989 (Document 146), in Vojtech Mastny/Malcolm Byrne (eds.), *A Cardboard Castle? An Inside History of the Warsaw Pact 1955–1991* (Budapest: Central European University Press, 2005), 644–654.

process cannot continue infinitely and should be concluded by 1989. The relationship must be “modernized.”

4.3 Hungarian reform policy: Hungary is consciously pushing the change process to exploit the favorable internal and external conditions. Despite all optimism, a step backwards is possible. Hungary should therefore secure as much as possible, in domestic policy (for example with the Political Parties Act to overcome the one-party system) as well as in its international relations.

4.4 Austria’s Position: [Mock] clarified the basic principles of the Austrian position on reform efforts:

- they constitute sovereign decisions of the respective States;
- Austria supports reforms (Poland, Hungary, USSR) within the bounds of its possibilities;
- this support should not confuse matters (in doing so he is always grateful for any hints);
- the opening of Eastern Europe does not devalue Austria’s role, but widens its possibilities;
- this development decreases systemic differences and strengthens peace and stability in Europe by reducing tensions;
- Austrian neutrality makes a qualified contribution to it possible.

Out of this development, opportunities arise to overcome the phase of “peaceful coexistence,” which could be followed by a phase of broad cooperation. In the long term, this could lead to the third stage, a “Common European Home.”

Vienna, 28 June 1989  
Schmid m.p.<sup>60</sup>

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<sup>60</sup> Ambassador Erich Maximilian Schmid, Head of the Political Section of the Austrian Foreign Ministry (1987–1990).



## Document 3: Ambassadors' Conference at the Austrian Foreign Ministry, Vienna, 8 September 1989

Source: Resüméprotokoll, Envoy Johann Plattner, Vienna, 8 September 1989, ÖStA, AdR, BMAA, II-Pol 1989, GZ. 502.00.00/13-II.1/89. The Protocol was distributed to the Foreign Minister, the General Secretary, the Section Head, all departments of the Political Section (Section II) as well as to all Austrian diplomatic representations in accordance with the list "Omnia."

*The East German refugee crisis reached its peak in the summer of 1989. More and more people wanted to leave the GDR for good. The photo of the two foreign ministers Alois Mock and Gyula Horn in June 1989 contributed considerably to this. The West German embassies in Eastern Europe were overcrowded with GDR citizens, who were not willing to return, and the problem awaited a diplomatic solution. This contributed to a further destabilization of the GDR. Meanwhile, a loophole had already opened on the Austrian-Hungarian border through which increasing numbers of East Germans escaped. With the opening of the border by Hungary on 11 September 1989 all barriers broke. The arising of this possibility to leave the GDR contributed significantly to the demise of the East German regime. A few days before, the Austrian ambassadors had met at a conference in Vienna to discuss the rapid developments in Europe and their possible implications. Concerns about Austria's future position between East and West also came up.*

### **Minutes Summary of the Ambassadors' Conference, 1989; Working group East-West**

Section Head: Ambassador Erich Maximilian Schmid, Head of the Political Section of the Austrian Foreign Ministry (1987–1990).<sup>61</sup> summary of the discussion thread (enclosure A).<sup>62</sup>

Ambassador Schallenberg:<sup>63</sup> After initial skepticism towards Perestroika, France shifted in line with the other western states (a positive development, to be supported). Intensification of politics toward the east, also for reasons of competition with the FRG. Strong interest for Poland, Hungary. A certain fear of possible German reunification, therefore endeavoring to involve FRG in the closest possible cooperation.

Ambassador Lennkh:<sup>64</sup> Also the OECD<sup>65</sup> is beginning to deal with these changes in Eastern Europe, with still no official discussion. Skepticism of some countries, for example, Belgium. US suggestion: technical OECD assistance (statistics, etc.) for Eastern countries.

Ambassador Wunderbaldinger: German-German relationship: contractual regulations in many areas, strong contacts at various low levels. Large flow of visitors in both directions.

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<sup>61</sup> Ambassador Erich Maximilian Schmid, Head of the Political Section of the Austrian Foreign Ministry (1987–1990).

<sup>62</sup> Enclosure A is not attached to the original document. Discussion items of the meeting were: 1) attitude of the West to East reforms (reform assessments by the West, possibilities of supporting Eastern reforms, technology transfer, impact, the influence of Eastern reforms on security policy of the West in particular, EC, German-German relationship), 2 ) attitude of the East to European integration (possibilities and limits of participation of the eastern states in European integration), 3) Eastern reforms and Austria (impact on the importance of neutrality, impact on the Austrian EC policies, economic relations with the East).

<sup>63</sup> Wolfgang Schallenberg, Austrian Ambassador to France (1988–1993).

<sup>64</sup> Georg Lennkh, representative of Austria at the OECD (1983–1993).

<sup>65</sup> Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development.

Ambassador Rudofsky:<sup>66</sup> Change in the USSR-Finland relationship: today less ritual than matter-of-fact relationship. Fear of political destabilization of the USSR. Germany Question: reunification would increase timeliness of the Finnish-Soviet Treaty of 1948.<sup>67</sup>

Ambassador Weinberger:<sup>68</sup> Belgian attitude toward Perestroika modified, generally a positive assessment today, less skepticism. Yet, the process is not irreversible.

Ambassador Schmid:<sup>69</sup> Previously, contacts of the HSWP<sup>70</sup> existed only with parties from Austria, Germany, Finland. Today, numerous contacts with parties in the West. Western support for the reform process in Hungary mostly verbal, little concrete assistance.

Ambassador Bauer:<sup>71</sup> The West was not prepared for the so strongly desired reform process in the East, and has no concept. FRG sees the EC as a place to embed itself in Western Europe (leading it out of the status of a defeated country). Bonn wants to include the EC in its own policy on Germany. Relationship FRG-GDR: little information about inner-German trade. Meeting of Bonn-Berlin about adapting German internal trade to internal market rules. FRG seeks osmotic relationship to GDR. Reunification in the Bismarkian sense is not sought.

Ambassador Leifer:<sup>72</sup> Mixed feelings in Yugoslavia about the reform process. Ideologists: skeptical, afraid of development in Hungary, Poland (multiparty system) could be considered by the West as a precedent for Yugoslavia. Fear of parallels between multiethnic states USSR – Yugoslavia. Yugoslavian Politicians: Positive assessment of Gorbachev's reform path. Process is considered to some extent to be irreversible. (Deceleration possible, but no relapse). Albania: no pivoting on reform path (Chinese example!).

Ambassador Ziegler:<sup>73</sup> In Luxembourg, interest for the reform process. Differentiation between individual Eastern countries (particularly positive assessment of Hungary). Movement of the east to the west poses a danger that could optically blur Austria's demarcation from this region.

Ambassador Somogyi:<sup>74</sup> Poland's communist party does not want to abdicate communism but rather eliminate the negative elements. Western aid to Poland has been disappointing. The West is not prepared to solve the crisis of the Polish economy. Certain US fears of destabilization in the region through the appointment of a non-communist prime minister.<sup>75</sup> Revenge against communists would lead to crisis.

Ambassador Mussi:<sup>76</sup>

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<sup>66</sup> Hans Georg Rudofsky, Austrian Ambassador to Finland (1986–1990).

<sup>67</sup> Sealed in 1948, the Agreement of Friendship, Cooperation, and Mutual Assistance obliged Finland to defend against armed attacks on Finnish territory or over its territory on the Soviet Union.

<sup>68</sup> Heinz Weinberger, Austrian Ambassador to Belgium (1988–1993).

<sup>69</sup> Franz Schmid, Austrian Ambassador to Hungary (1988–1992).

<sup>70</sup> Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party.

<sup>71</sup> Friedrich Bauer, Austrian Ambassador to the Federal Republic of Germany (1986–1990).

<sup>72</sup> Paul Leifer, Austrian Ambassador to Yugoslavia (1985–1991).

<sup>73</sup> Klaus Ziegler, Austrian Ambassador to Luxembourg (1988–1992).

<sup>74</sup> Andreas Somogyi, Austrian Ambassador to Poland (1987–1989).

<sup>75</sup> On 12 September 1989, Tadeusz Mazowiecki took over government affairs as the first non-communist Prime Minister of Poland.

<sup>76</sup> Ingo Mussi, Austrian Ambassador to Sweden (1986–1989).

Relationship USSR-Sweden: Historical opposites, but a de facto good relationship. Sweden takes great interest in developments in the USSR (especially the Baltics), Poland.

Ambassador Hoess:<sup>77</sup> Gorbachev's reform path is an ideological success for the USA. Support of Perestroika, but reforms must be carried out by the USSR itself. No direct aid (negative example of Hungary 56). German-German relationship: the USA is quasi the only Western country, which does not fear a reunification.

Section Head: Summary: the transformation process in the East was desired by the West, yet was completely unprepared for this. The reduction of tensions resulted from the economic impossibility of a permanent arms race. This would have been predictable. Processes in the East are to be assessed positively, but there is danger of it spiraling out of control and resulting in destabilization. Austria welcomes upheavals in the East, but these pose a danger that Austria could be associated with a kind of gray zone of Central Europe. German reunification: a theoretical discussion topic indeed, but not currently a reality.

Plattner m.p.<sup>78</sup>

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<sup>77</sup> Friedrich Hoess, Austrian Ambassador to the USA (1987–1992).

<sup>78</sup> Johann Plattner Head of the Department for Western and Northern Europe of the Political Section of the Austrian Foreign Ministry (1987–1993).

## Document 4: “The Specter of German Reunification”. Analysis by Envoy Thomas Nowotny, Vienna, 19 September 1989

Source: ÖStA, AdR, BMAA, II-Pol 1989, GZ. 22.17.01/4-II.6/89. This information was sent to all section leaders, the Cabinet of the Foreign Minister, all departments of Section II as well as to all Austrian diplomatic representations in states participating in the CSCE. On 20 September 1989, Envoy Ernst Sucharipa attached a note to this file entitled “German reunification? On the ghost train ride of Department II.6.” The statement should have been forwarded to the Section Heads, the Cabinet of the Federal Minister, all departments of the Political Section, the General Secretary, the Austrian Embassies in Bonn, Berlin (East) and Moscow, the Austrian delegation in Berlin as well as to all Austrian diplomatic representations in states participating in the CSCE. For unknown reasons, it was not forwarded. The note read:

“1) It is correct that there is again increasing talk everywhere about the question of German reunification (or ‘new unification,’ according to IISS Director Heisbourg). Basic considerations about this, as were made in the essay of department II.6, therefore seem inevitable in Austria. Here are the first brief remarks from the perspective of the Eastern Europe Department;

2) In foreign policy, perception is often more important than reality: Despite the circumstances mentioned by Department II.6., which ‘trivialize’ the dimension of a Germany consisting of the FRG and GDR, the impression (the fear) will persist in Eastern (and also Western) Europe that such a structure can not be integrated into the European Peace Order.

3) Despite the publicity-effective emigration movements from the GDR (Scale in 1989: approx. 100,000 citizens, of which approx. 5/6, ‘legally,’ 1/6 ‘illegal’) there is a ‘GDR national consciousness’ and pride in the benefits of its ‘own,’ ‘other’ German state, which is not to be underestimated. The silent majority is still a majority even in the GDR. The slowly forming opposition groups want to keep their GDR (reformed and completely overhauled, but distinct from the FRG).

4) In spite of Perestroika and Glasnost, the Soviet Union looks everywhere to strictly maintain the territorial status quo. German-political changes that go beyond, ‘change through rapprochement’ are therefore not to be achieved without argument with Moscow.” ÖStA, AdR, BMAA, II-Pol 1989, GZ. 22.17.01/5-II.3/89.

*Despite the rapid developments in Eastern Europe and the opening of the border for GDR citizens, most Austrian diplomats agreed that a “reunification” of Germany is not a current problem – as the Ambassadors’ Conference (see document 3) had shown. However, in the Austrian Foreign Ministry, there were also other voices: envoy Thomas Nowotny therefore wrote an extensive analysis in which he came to the conclusion that the issue of “reunification” would very well be a defining issue in international politics in the coming years. That this was a minority position, is also apparent from the reaction of another Austrian diplomat, documented in Note 1.*

### **The Specter of German Reunification**

A specter is haunting Europe. The specter of German reunification, and it scares the Western Europeans. This fear – rarely acknowledged – is behind many discussions about the future of European security.

The two superpowers are apparently less bound by fear. One sometimes hears from both the US and the USSR that a German “reunification” is not only possible, but perhaps even desirable. The expectations of the US and the USSR, are however, contradictory: The United States expects that a reunified Germany would push against the East, and weaken the USSR. The Soviet Union expects that a reunified Germany would step out of NATO, and thus fatally weaken NATO.

This discussion of German reunification is surprising in some respects. After all, because of its treaties with the East,<sup>79</sup> through its recognition of the GDR, and through its involvement in the CSCE process, the FRG seemed to have finally and irrevocably accepted the status quo in Europe and thus the existence of two German states, and without ulterior motives. Against the backdrop of these hard facts, the question begs to be asked: How serious is this newly flared-up talk of reunification? Is there really nothing more to it than a merely superficial and purely verbal response to the advance of the right-wing nationalist “Republicans”<sup>80</sup> in the FRG? Or is it to be taken more seriously?

The question was broached at the Ambassadors’ Conference in early September.<sup>81</sup> Both, the ambassador in Berlin<sup>82</sup> and Bonn<sup>83</sup> were unanimously convinced that this talk is not to be taken seriously. Nobody in political responsibility, said the Austrian ambassador in Bonn, would really aim for a “reunification” with the GDR. The coexistence of the two states would be accepted by virtually all. The maximum goal supported by almost all political parties would merely be a “Germany policy” that intensifies existing contacts between both States at all levels.

The Austrian Ambassador in Berlin claimed there was no great pressure for radical changes in the GDR. Sudden outbursts and changes of course are not to be expected. Because it works on the whole, the state would also be accepted by the population.

The opinions of the two ambassadors describe – probably accurately – the current state, which is not a given. They assume that this state will essentially remain unchanged. This may, but need not be so. There is some evidence that attitudes toward “reunification” are changing in the two German states. In the two German states, there are signs of a fundamental change in the political climate. In the FRG, for example, the Historians’ Dispute (in which German war-guilt was relativized)<sup>84</sup> changed the emotional-political framework in which postwar international relations were anchored. Three to four years ago it would have been unthinkable that the Polish-German border is called into question again by a high-ranking politician and many years after its recognition by the Warsaw Treaty.<sup>85</sup>

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<sup>79</sup> For the Eastern Treaties mentioned in the document see notes 8 and 9.

<sup>80</sup> The “Republicans” (REP) is a small right-wing conservative party founded in Munich in 1983. During the European elections in June 1989 they managed to gain representation in European Parliament with 7.1 percent of the vote. In the elections to the Berlin House of Representative on 28 January 1989, the party won 7.5 percent of the votes.

<sup>81</sup> See document 3.

<sup>82</sup> Franz Wunderbaldinger, Austrian Ambassador to the GDR (1985–1990).

<sup>83</sup> Friedrich Bauer, Austrian Ambassador to the Federal Republic of Germany (1986–1990).

<sup>84</sup> In the Historians’ Dispute (*Historikerstreit*) there was a debate in 1986 and 1987 among West German researchers of contemporary history. The focus was on the issue of the uniqueness of the Holocaust and its significance for the history of Germany. A chronology of the dispute, including a comparison of the arguments can be found in Rudolf Augstein, „*Historikerstreit*“. *Die Dokumentation der Kontroverse um die Einzigartigkeit der nationalsozialistischen Judenvernichtung* [= “Historians’ Dispute”. The documentation of the controversy about the uniqueness of the Nazi Holocaust] (Munich: Piper, 1987).

<sup>85</sup> Vertrag zwischen der Bundesrepublik Deutschland und der Volksrepublik Polen über die Grundlagen der Normalisierung ihrer gegenseitigen Beziehungen vom 7. Dezember 1970 („Warschauer Vertrag“) [Treaty between the Federal Republic of Germany and the People’s Republic of Poland on the basis for the normalization of their mutual relations on 7 December 1970 (“Warsaw Treaty”)], BGBl. 1972 II, Nr. 27, 361.

Three or four years ago this would have signified the end of every political career. Not so today.<sup>86</sup> A whole new attitude has established itself in relationship to the European East – obviously and gradually and once again the belief in a special “German mission in the East.” This mission goes far beyond the “Ostpolitik” of Willy Brandt. Its essential goal had been only the acceptance of the status quo. The objectives of today’s German Ostpolitik are more ambitious. In their new nationalism, the aggressive advocacy of unification, in their skepticism towards the west and European integration the right-wing “Republicans” are thus a symptom of a political change in mood, which encompasses more than just their voters. The GDR appears to be the most solid communist state – especially in economic terms. Nevertheless, this country has political feet of clay. The binding power of communist ideology has – if it ever was great – anyhow disappeared. This happened also in other communist countries. These other states, however, base their social cohesion and identity on something else than communist ideology – on religion or – mostly – on nationalism. There probably is not a GDR nationalism. At best, a certain feeling of connection with their homeland. One probably got used to some convenient facilities of “real existing socialism” in the GDR – such as secure jobs, cheap food staples and apartments, etc. But that alone does not secure identity, and this comfort will gradually wane in the course of necessary economic reforms, which will come sooner or later, even in the GDR. Likewise, it becomes increasingly difficult to hold the state together with dictatorial measures. Where, if not mainly to the FRG, would the GDR turn to if their economic and political opening can no longer be delayed?

Reunification is therefore very well on the future political agenda of the two German states. Formally, the other – and especially Western European – states cannot object. The principle of self-determination is recognized internationally. This principle will not be questioned by any Western European country and thus not with respect to its application for the two German states. Actually no one wants a real application of this principle by a “reunification.” This fear, however, is not articulated openly. One is too aware of the fact that through taking an open stand against reunification one would only strengthen the extreme and nationalist forces of the Federal Republic. Hence, there is no open political dialogue with the FRG on this issue – only unadmitted silent fear.

If, and in what form, and when there is a merger of the German states, is certainly uncertain. Anyway, you cannot rule out that the desire for “reunification” in both German states, especially in the FRG, ceases to be a merely abstract and distant goal and becomes a specific concern. One should take the possibility of a reunification seriously and really examine what the consequences would be. Would such a reunification actually blow up the entire postwar order?

Reunification would certainly be a huge shock for this order. It is argued below that the European postwar order would not have to fall apart because of this. Even a reunified

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<sup>86</sup> The Warsaw Treaty of 7 December 1970 recognized the Oder-Neisse border. All West German governments had however since then adhered to the legal position that only a freely elected government of Germany as a whole could decide definitively on the eastern border. In the summer of 1989 there was a recurring debate unleashed on this legal standpoint by some CSU politicians. The FDP and SPD stood against it. See: Klaus Ziemer, “Zwischen Misstrauen und Hoffnung: Polen und die deutsche Vereinigung [= Between Mistrust and Hope: Poland and German Unification],” in Klaus-Dietmar Henke (ed.), *Revolution und Vereinigung 1989/90. Als in Deutschland die Realität die Phantasie überholte* [= Revolution and Unification 1989–90. As in Germany, reality overtook imagination] (Munich: Dt. Taschenbuch Verlag, 2009), 509–524, 510, 514.

Germany would not be so strong that it would dominate the European continent economically and militarily. It would just be a very big country among the other major European states.

	Inhabitants 1985	Inhabitants 2025	Surface in km <sup>2</sup>
FRG	61.0	57.2	249.000
GDR	16.6	17.3	108.000
Together	77.6	74.5	357.00
France	55.2	63.7	547.000
Italy	57.1	58.5	301.000
Czechoslovakia	17.5	18.5	127.000
Poland	37.2	48.0	312.000
Together	54.7	66.5	439.000

The surface of a reunified Germany would be 357,000 km<sup>2</sup> and far less than the combined area of Poland and Czechoslovakia (439,000 km<sup>2</sup>).

In the GDR, the population is growing slowly, in West Germany it is dropping sharply. In 2025, a “unified Germany” would have a population of 74.5 million, France would in contrast have a population of 63.7 million, Czechoslovakia and Poland together would have a combined population of 66.5 million.

Not only is the FRG’s population growth low (or even negative), also economically, the FRG is far less dynamic than itself and other European countries assume. The most reliable measure of the development of economic power is the development of productivity. The development of productivity in the Federal Republic of Germany has been slow since 1960 and risen far less than in France and Italy.

Gross domestic product per capita at purchasing power parities  
1960, 1986 and 1987

These trends are likely to continue, and in 10 years at the latest France will have caught up in absolute economic power with the FRG.

One must assume that even with reunification the current GDR could not immediately be brought to the economic level of the FRG. One could therefore assume that the productivity of the area that is the GDR today, even in 2025, would be somewhere – perhaps around 15% – below the productivity of the current FRG. The entire economic potential of the two unified areas would therefore in 2025 approximately match the economic power that France will then have.

The economic power of a “unified Germany” must not just be compared with France, but also with the rest of the Western European states. Above all, the southern EC countries (such as Italy and Spain) will – as in the past, also in the future – more rapidly develop economically; so that the economic and political weight of these EC countries will increase when compared to the FRG or a “reunified Germany.”

A reunified Germany would not be significantly more in population and economic strength than the FRG is today: namely, one among the most powerful nations of Europe.

The consequences of a “reunification” cannot, however, only be illuminated from a purely economic standpoint, they also need to be viewed from a military security perspective. What would be the consequences of “reunification” in this area?

### Military and Security Policy Aspects of a “Reunification”

“Reunification” is sometimes associated with a “neutralization” of the then united Germany. Neutralization would be the condition or result of an association of the two German states. First it must be repeated what Khrushchev<sup>87</sup> said during his time to the then Foreign Minister Kreisky:<sup>88</sup> “Neutrality is a status which is appropriate for a small country located geographically and security-politics-wise between two powers.”<sup>89</sup> Neutrality has no application for a state, which because of its own great influence, whether it wants that or not, becomes a significant factor in international relations. The Ostpolitik of a reunified Germany, even if that state is formally “neutral,” would in its practical effect not be neutral. Whatever a large state undertakes, has far-reaching consequences both in the West and in the East of the continent. For example, whether a small neutral country participates in sanctions, does not significantly increase or reduce the effectiveness of such sanctions. Whether a country of more than 70 million inhabitants participates, determines very well whether such sanctions are effective.

Second, a “neutralization” of the current FRG (as proposed by the neoconservative American intellectual Irving Kristol in the enclosed article)<sup>90</sup> would weaken the Western defense alliance so much to make it insubstantial. “Geopolitically” geography simply privileges the large landmass to the east of the continent. In contrast, NATO-allied Western Europe has less strategic depth. If this depth were further reduced by the “neutralization” of the FRG, a military counterweight to the Soviet Union could in no way be maintained on such shrunken territory. A “balance” (or better: a conflict-hindering balance of power) would no longer exist.

Third, a neutralization of West Germany would naturally bring about the withdrawal of US troops from Europe (which are stationed for the most part in the FRG). Europeans doubt – probably rightly – the ultimate effectiveness of the “nuclear guarantee” granted to them by the US. More important is the guarantee – or “hostage” function of American troops. These troops provide – more effectively than nuclear missiles – for the “coupling” of the European theater of war to the United States. This coupling would be lost with the withdrawal of US troops.

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<sup>87</sup> Nikita Khrushchev, First Secretary of the CPSU Central Committee (1953–1964) and Prime Minister of the USSR 1958–1964).

<sup>88</sup> Bruno Kreisky, Austrian Foreign Minister (1959–1966) and Federal Chancellor (1970–1983).

<sup>89</sup> It is very likely that Nowotny here refers to the first volume of Kreisky’s memoirs where Kreisky reports about Anastas Mikoyan neglecting neutrality as an option for Germany. See Bruno Kreisky, *Zwischen den Zeiten. Erinnerungen aus fünf Jahrzehnten* (Berlin: Siedler, 1986), 461.

<sup>90</sup> Irving Kristol, “Why not Neutralize Eastern Europe?”, in *International Herald Tribune*, 13 September 1989; Irving Kristol, American social scientist, considered to be one of the most important representatives of neoconservatism.



Fourth, there is perhaps a problem of a reunited Germany arming itself with nuclear weapons. Nuclear weapons are today quite “cheap” to produce. The technical know-how is certainly available in the FRG. The incentive to guarantee one’s security in such a “cheap” way through nuclear deterrence is considerable. Speaking against the purchase of national nuclear weapons is certainly the uncertainty that the possession of such weapons would trigger in the European countries in East and West. Speaking for the possession of nuclear weapons is the fact that a reunified and neutral Germany would be surrounded by potential enemies, who could be held at bay best and “cheapest” with nuclear deterrence.

Fifth, one must question if a stepping out of the FRG from the western defense alliance would even be physically possible at all today. The FRG is nowadays very tightly integrated economically and socially with the rest of Western Europe. This Western European integration and cooperation will increasingly extend to security matters and must extend. The condition that European security is provided largely by the United States, can historically not be maintained indefinitely. Western Europe will increasingly have to provide for its own security – sooner rather than later.

Security policy is something very embracing. It also has an especially economic aspect and an economic basis. Would and must a “neutralized” reunified Germany pursue an independent security policy, then the FRG would have to, at least in some important areas (such as in technology), free itself from already existing dependencies and connections with Western European countries. But the integration of Western Europe has already progressed too far. This option of stepping out of Western European cooperation is no longer open to the FRG. For example, the FRG no longer has the option to build its own aviation and aerospace industry separately from the rest of Western Europe.

It is of course the – acknowledged or unacknowledged – objective of the remaining Western European countries to strengthen the integration of the FRG into Western Europe and make it irreversible. Behind the integration-friendly policy of France is not just France’s desire to secure its influence through a united Western Europe, which it otherwise alone can not exercise in today’s world. With this policy, France in addition pursues the objective of strengthening the “Western tying” of the FRG to an extent that makes it inextricably.

Hence, it is both unlikely and undesirable that the FRG withdraws from NATO, and becomes neutral, in order to “unite” with the GDR. This would also not be in the long-term interests of the Warsaw Pact and the USSR. A united Western Europe (also including the FRG) would certainly have a far less ambitious “Ostpolitik” than a reunified, neutral Germany.

What would be the consequences of the more likely solution in which the reunified Germany becomes not “neutral” and the FRG remains in the Western defense alliance? This would certainly result in a military shift at the expense of the East. But this shift is less far-reaching than one would at first assume.

The advantage, which the Warsaw Pact momentarily draws from the fact that the GDR belongs to it, shows itself in the light of the present – still – ruling Soviet military doctrine. This demands that in case of an East-West war, the Warsaw Pact troops advance to the Atlantic Ocean as quickly as possible in order to prevent the arrival of reinforcements from

the US. The “Spore” in the south of the GDR that protrudes into West Germany (“Fulda Gap”)<sup>91</sup> would serve as a springboard for such an offensive.

[...]

However, it is intended and also probable that the military doctrines will be changed. The predominant doctrines in the West (“deep strike,” FOFA)<sup>92</sup> and the East (“forward defense”) assume “attack is the best defense.” These offensive military tactics are contrary to the principally defensive strategic objectives of the two alliances. They just want to maintain the status quo and seek no territorial gains.

If the military alliances and especially the Warsaw Pact convert their “defense” to a purely defensive one, with no attacks against Western Europe, then it is no longer the goal to reach the Atlantic coast as quickly as possible, and that lowers the military value of the East German spore protruding into the FRG. Thus, the military disadvantage of withdrawing the GDR from the Warsaw Pact would be a lesser. The loss of militarily useable terrain is hardly decisive strategically. The GDR is, in its east-west dimensions of 200–300 km, a relatively narrow state. In contrast, the new East-West border, the eastern border of a reunified Germany, would have the advantage of being straighter than the previous military East-West border and therefore easier to defend.

Indeed, Czechoslovakia would be more negatively affected by such a shift in the military dividing line to the east. Its north-west border is currently covered against NATO by the GDR. If the GDR withdraws from the Warsaw Pact this border would be directly exposed to NATO. A solution to this problem could be that the territory of the present GDR is “demilitarized” even after reunification with the FRG, although the reunified Germany would belong to NATO, and this demilitarization could be secured through international guarantees.

## Summary

Despite lip service to the right of “self-determination,” today no European country desires German “reunification.” The fear of such a reunification can, though, become a very destabilizing element of European policy; even without being able to prevent reunification. Whether it actually comes to this reunification is of course uncertain. It cannot be excluded either. In both German states there are developments, which make such a reunification today more probable than it was two to three years ago. A reunified Germany could and should not be neutral or neutralized. If at least the western part of the reunified Germany remains integrated in NATO, and the entire Germany in the EC, then no threat would arise

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<sup>91</sup> The term “Fulda Gap” was used by US forces to describe a region in the area of Fulda in East Hesse (Point Alpha on the border with West Germany on the road between Geisa/Thuringia and Rasdorf/Hessen, the place where both superpowers directly faced each other and could look one another in the eye). Since the Warsaw Pact reached the furthest into the West here, NATO assumed that an attack was most likely to be carried out from this territory; Klaus Hartwig Stoll, *Point Alpha. Brennpunkt der Geschichte* [= Point Alpha. Focal point of History] (Petersberg: Michael Imhof Verlag, 2007); Dieter Krüger (ed.), *Schlachtfeld Fulda Gap – Strategien und Operationspläne der Bündnisse* [= Battlefield Fulda Gap – Strategies and Operational plans of Alliances] (Fulda: Parzeller, 2014).

<sup>92</sup> Follow-on-Forces Attack. This military concept of NATO, envisaged the hold a Warsaw Pact offensive on the ground while attacking the Follow-on forces in the rear with air strikes.

through a newly formed military and economically dominant superstate, which is the general fear.

Vienna, 19 September 1989  
Nowotny m.p.

## Document 5: Assessment Paper by the Austrian Foreign Ministry on the Current Situation in Eastern Europe, Vienna, 12 October 1989

Source: ÖStA, AdR, BMAA, II-Pol 1989, GZ.713/24-II.3/89. The assessment was sent to all Austrian diplomatic representations in states participating in the CSCE: "In the enclosure you receive brief information about the internal situation of the Eastern European countries. This information has been prepared on the occasion of a meeting of the Council of Foreign Affairs and therefore concentrates on those countries whose development is currently the focus of our attention. For the Federal Minister: Sucharipa m.p."

*Viewing Eastern Europe as a whole, at the beginning of October 1989 the consequences of Gorbachev's reform process seemed anything but certain. In the meantime, the GDR had celebrated the fortieth anniversary of its existence. These celebrations were overshadowed by escalating protests. The rule of the East German leadership eroded further and its oust was approaching. The massive exodus was considered a declaration of bankruptcy of the East German regime and the economic outlook seemed dismal to Austrian diplomacy. Nevertheless, to the Austrian Foreign Ministry it was still entirely unclear how the GDR would change and its survival had not yet been questioned.*

### **[Excerpt] Eastern Europe; General Assessment**

The current socio-political process in the reformist Eastern European countries can, without exaggeration, be described as unique: Simultaneously the Soviet Union, the previous communist power center, as well as Hungary and Poland are promoting reform with surprising determination. Thereof arises the first real chance to transform the previously dictatorial government system based on the communist party's sole claim to power, and turn it into a societal system based on democratic rules in which human and fundamental rights are respected.

At the same time in other Eastern European countries, resistance (of various degrees) to this socio-political trend is currently noticeable. These different developments are resulting in a considerable diversification and differentiation within the hitherto largely monolithic "Eastern Bloc."

Considerations about the direction in which Eastern Europe will develop in the coming years are necessarily speculative for the most part:

- Conceivable would be a perceptible and experienceable improvement in the material standard of living for the "average citizen" of Eastern Europe due to the success of the reforms in the Soviet Union, Hungary and Poland accompanied by an extensive safeguarding of the democratic path. In the long run, the other Eastern European countries would not be able to isolate themselves from such success.
- Serious setbacks in these reform efforts cannot be ruled out because of the magnitude of the task of transforming decades old, moribund and inefficient economic processes as well as the possible prevalence of centrifugal, separatist tendencies, etc.

For Austria (and the entire Western world) it is of utmost importance to significantly support the reform processes – wherever they manifest themselves – and at the same time remain aware that, as mentioned before, setbacks – also those of a serious nature – are possible.

[...] <sup>93</sup>

GDR; Assessment of the current political situation

12 October 1989

Since the beginning of the Gorbachev era in the Soviet Union, the state and party leaders of the GDR have denied every need for reform with reference to their own “progressiveness.” In comparison to other Warsaw Pact states they could draw upon their relatively favorable economic situation for support. Added to this was the continuous strengthening of pragmatic cooperation with the FRG that went beyond public rhetoric.

The slowing down of economic growth, increasingly calls the ideological axiom of “unity of economic and social policy” into question, and there is an ever more obvious need for generational change in the party leadership. Already a few months ago, this and the attractiveness of the reform policy in individual [Warsaw] Pact countries (especially Poland and Hungary) which has been broadcast into the homes of most of the population via FRG-Television, has created awareness in the SED<sup>94</sup> that a more flexible response needs to be found. However, they contented themselves with trying to “more pleasingly package” the status quo (“Socialism in the colors of the GDR”).

The publications of the East German media in recent months suggest that the early determination of the date for the SED party convention (May 1990)<sup>95</sup> and the opening of the content discussion (which previously went down the habitual way) was primarily set to gain time for a smooth completion of the 40-year celebrations on 7.10.1989. This calculus bore only limited fruit.

In the wake of the Hungarian decision to allow GDR citizens to emigrate via Austria to West Germany, the exodus gained a strong momentum. The illegal emigration of 50,000 people within five weeks brought the GDR leadership in need of an explanation. The preponderance of young people among them, raised in the GDR, was a declaration of bankruptcy of the system.

The impressive appearance of a probably only loosely organized reformist opposition in all major cities, not opposing an independent and renewed GDR and demonstratively leaning toward Gorbachev’s example has strongly emphasized the need to abandon the denial of need for reform.

Both phenomena (The exodus, and a more active presence of opposition groups than many had expected) have lead remarkably quickly to at least a limited readiness for dialogue at middle-party level.

Currently it cannot be estimated how far the SED leadership’s readiness for dialogue will go. It cannot be excluded that some influential members of the Politburo, who wish to retain

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<sup>93</sup> Omitted were the situational assessments of the Soviet Union, Czechoslovakia, Bulgaria, Romania, Albania, and Poland.

<sup>94</sup> *Sozialistische Einheitspartei Deutschland* (Socialist Unity Party of Germany).

<sup>95</sup> The SED party convention was scheduled for 15 to 19 May 1990.

their positions of power, will deem sufficient the resignation of Honecker, the more flexible handling of travel possibilities, and the possibility of greater freedom of expression. The example of other Warsaw Pact countries (especially Hungary, the rise and fall of General Secretary Károly Grósz of the Hungarian Socialist Worker's Party)<sup>96</sup> shows, however, how partial reforms in the political sphere can relatively easily get "out of control."

Due to the key position of the GDR in the Warsaw Pact also a reform-oriented GDR – even in the case of a not expectable development into a pluralistic constitutional state in the foreseeable future – would not shake the pact membership and will already therefore remain a separate state. However, the protection of state identity depends on whether sufficiently deep reforms come. The attitude of the opposition groups makes it seem that such a development can not necessarily be excluded.

[...] <sup>97</sup>

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<sup>96</sup> Károly Grósz was appointed Prime Minister of the People's Republic of Hungary on 25 June 1987. On 22 May 1988, he succeeded János Kádár to the post of Secretary General of the HSWP. On 24 November 1988 Miklós Németh succeeded him as prime minister. Thus, the offices of the party and government head were separated again. Németh advocated societal change and economic reforms. From November 1988, more and more voices were raised within the HSWP, which considered making a transformation to a multiparty political system. Grósz too considered the possibility of a new party system, but thought only to legalize parties in line with "socialism." Within the HSWP the creation of a reform wing began, which supported the transition to a competitive multiparty system. The development culminated in the overthrow of Grósz and a reform of socialism in Hungary. See Andreas Schmidt-Schweizer, *Politische Geschichte Ungarns von 1985 bis 2002. Von der liberalisierten Einparteiherrschaft zur Demokratie in der Konsolidierungsphase* [= Political History of Hungary from 1985 to 2002. From liberalized party rule to democracy in the consolidation phase] (Munich: Oldenbourg, 2007), 98–107.

<sup>97</sup> Omitted were situational assessments on Hungary and Yugoslavia.

## Document 6: Language Regime. Austria's position on German Reunification, Vienna, 10 November 1989

Source: Envoy Johann Plattner, Vienna, 10 November 1989, ÖStA, AdR, BMAA, II-Pol 1989, GZ. 22.17.01/8-II.1/89. The information was sent to the Foreign Minister, the General Secretary, the Section Heads, the departments II.3 and II.6 as well as the Austrian diplomatic representations according to the distribution list "East + West."

*The increasing protests in East Germany led to the ousting of Erich Honecker on 17 October 1989. His successor Egon Krenz promised a "Wende" ("turn") and the first reforms were initiated. These, however, did not go far enough for the people in the GDR. What especially needed an urgent solution was travel legislation. The East German leadership decided on liberalization and Günter Schabowski announced this ahead of schedule at a press conference in the evening of 9 November. The subsequent accidental opening of the Berlin Wall went down in history as "The Fall of the Wall." Given this development, the Austrian Foreign Ministry saw itself compelled to provide a language regime on Austria's attitude to the issue of "reunification," particularly on the right to self-determination of the Germans in the GDR.*

### **Debate on German Reunification; Information and Language Regime**

Concerning a possible redesigning of the German-German relationship in connection with the current debate on the East-West development, the following information and language regime in agreement with Dep. II.3<sup>98</sup> are being disclosed:

#### 1) Basic documents

The victorious powers had already agreed at the Yalta Conference (in early 1945)<sup>99</sup> about division of Germany ("westward shift" of Poland; breaking up of Germany: "In the exercise of this power, they (the victorious powers) will take such measures... including the complete disarmament ... and dismemberment of Germany ... as they see necessary ... for keeping the future peace").

With the resolutions of the Potsdam Conference (summer 1945)<sup>100</sup> the victors took over authority of Germany and divided the country into occupation zones. Until further notice, no central German Government was to be installed. The final territorial settlement should be reserved for a peace conference. A formulation from the Yalta conference report was included again ("... take measures which are necessary to assure that Germany can never again ... threaten world peace").

In the preamble of the Basic Law, the entire German people is called upon to "in free self-determination, bring about the unity and freedom of Germany in a united Europe."<sup>101</sup>

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<sup>98</sup> The head of the department for Eastern and Southern Europe of the Political Section of the Austrian Foreign Ministry, envoy Ernst Sucharipa, had demanded major changes in the wording.

<sup>99</sup> The meeting of Franklin D. Roosevelt (USA), Winston Churchill (United Kingdom) and Joseph Stalin (USSR) was held in Yalta on the Crimea from 4 to 11 February 1945.

<sup>100</sup> The Potsdam Conference or Tripartite Conference of Berlin was held from 17 July to 3 August 1945 in the Cecilienhof Palace in Potsdam. It involved representatives of the United States, Britain and the USSR.

<sup>101</sup> The original wording of the Preamble to the Basic Law, the founding document of the Federal Republic from 1949 reads: "Conscious of their responsibility before God and man, inspired by the determination to promote world peace as an equal partner in a united Europe, the German people, in the exercise of their constituent power, have adopted this Basic Law. Germans in the Länder of Baden-Württemberg, Bavaria, Berlin,

The “Convention on relations between the Three Powers and the FRG” (1952),<sup>102</sup> by which the occupation regime was ended and the FRG gained full sovereignty [sic!], states: “In view of the international situation, which until now has prevented the reunification of Germany and the conclusion of a peace treaty, the Three Powers retain their heretofore exercised or held rights and responsibilities with respect to Berlin and Germany as a whole, including the reunification of Germany and a peace settlement.”<sup>103</sup>

In the “Treaty on the basis of relations between the Federal Republic of Germany and the German Democratic Republic” (1972)<sup>104</sup> both countries argue for the development of normal good-neighborly relations on the basis of equality and reaffirm the inviolability of the existing borders. In the preamble, however, the differing views of the FRG and the GDR on fundamental questions, including the national question, are determined.

In “Letter on German Unity” (1970),<sup>105</sup> the FRG affirmed its claim to reunification (“... to work for a state of peace in Europe in which the German nation will regain its unity through free self-determination”).

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Brandenburg, Bremen, Hamburg, Hesse, Lower Saxony, Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania, North Rhine-Westphalia, Rhineland-Palatinate, Saarland, Saxony, Saxony-Anhalt, Schleswig-Holstein and Thuringia have achieved the unity and freedom of Germany in free self-determination. This Basic Law thus applies to the entire German people.”

<sup>102</sup> The “Convention on relations between the Three Powers and the Federal Republic of Germany” signed on 26 May 1952 by the FRG and the Western Allies (France, the United Kingdom and the United States) replaced the previous occupation statute and obliged the signatories to the goal of unification of Germany and a peace settlement (for the whole of Germany). The treaty is also known under the names “General Agreement” and “Germany Treaty.” See printed in Auswärtiges Amt (ed.), *Die Auswärtige Politik der Bundesrepublik Deutschland* [= The Foreign Policy of the Federal Republic of Germany] (Cologne: Verlag Wissenschaft und Politik, 1972), 208–212. The treaty underwent several changes (for example the Protocol on the termination of the occupation regime of 23 October 1954) and went into effect in its final version after the NATO accession of the FRG on 5 May 1955. See Gesetz betreffend das Protokoll vom 23. Oktober 1954 über die Beendigung des Besatzungsregimes in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland vom 24. März 1955, BGBl. 1955 II, 213–214; Protokoll über die Beendigung des Besatzungsregimes in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland unterzeichnet in Paris am 23. Oktober 1954, BGBl. 1955 II, 215–252 und Bekanntmachung über das Inkrafttreten des Protokolls vom 23. Oktober 1954 über die Beendigung des Besatzungsregimes in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland, BGBl. 1955 II, 628.

<sup>103</sup> The original reads “The Three Powers retain, in view of the international situation, the rights, heretofore exercised or held by them, relating to (a) the stationing of armed forces in Germany and the protection of their security, (b) Berlin, and (c) Germany as a whole, including the unification of Germany and a peace settlement.”

<sup>104</sup> The “Treaty on the Basis of Relations between the Federal Republic of Germany and the German Democratic Republic,” also known as the “Basic Treaty,” was signed on 21 December 1972. See Vertrag über die Grundlagen der Beziehung zwischen der Bundesrepublik Deutschland und der Deutschen Demokratischen Republik vom 21. Dezember 1972 (= Dokument 53), in Bundesministerium für innerdeutsche Beziehungen [= The Federal Ministry of Intra-German Relations] (ed.), *Zehn Jahre Deutschlandpolitik. Die Entwicklung der Beziehungen zwischen der Bundesrepublik Deutschland und der Deutschen Demokratischen Republik 1969–1979. Bericht und Dokumentation* [= Ten Years of Germany Policy. The development of relations between the Federal Republic of Germany and the German Democratic Republic from 1969 to 1979. Report and documentation] (Bonn: Bundesministerium für innerdeutsche Beziehungen, 1980), 205–211.

<sup>105</sup> The *Brief zur deutschen Einheit*, “Letter on German Unity” (1970), which held open the option to restore German unity within a European Peace Order, originated at least in part from pressure by the opposition and was handed over to the Soviet Foreign Ministry at the signing of the Moscow Treaty on 12 August 1970, see BGBl. 1972 II, 356.



Retention of the reunification claim is also put down in Additional Clarifications of the FRG on the Treaty of Rome<sup>106</sup> (non-recognition of East German citizenship; protocol on inter-German trade; reservation concerning a possible future EC membership of the GDR). The Federal Constitutional Court asserted in its judgments on the Eastern Treaties (1973<sup>107</sup> and 1975)<sup>108</sup> that the German Reich continues to exist under international law, and the restoration of national unity may not be given up by any constitutional body as a political goal.

The Constitution of the GDR (1974)<sup>109</sup> does not contain any intention to reunify.

## 2) The Policy of the Bonn Government

Despite their retention of the claim to reunification, the government in Bonn operates under the current reality of the existence of two German States, respects the inviolability of existing borders and maintains a “Permanent Representation” in (East)-Berlin. This representation is, however, not under the control of the Foreign Office, but by the Federal Chancellery and is headed by a Secretary of State. A GDR citizenship has, however, never been recognized. The government in Bonn has tried in recent years to work through a policy of small steps to improve the status quo in relations with the GDR (improving the human rights situation, more freedom and democracy in the GDR, more freedom to travel through a “permeable” border).

In his previous statements on German-German relations, Foreign Minister Genscher<sup>110</sup> has pointed out in light of recent developments that the FRG also sees the framework for the goal, which was formulated in the Letter on German Unity, in the European Peace Order. This goal can only be achieved in full respect of the concluded treaties and only with all countries in Europe, not against them. In accordance with the thought expressed in the Basic

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<sup>106</sup> The Treaty of Rome establishing the European Economic Community (EEC) and European Atomic Energy Community (Euratom) were signed by representatives of the governments of Belgium, the Netherlands, Luxembourg, the Federal Republic of Germany, France and Italy on 25 March 1957. See BGBl. 1957 II, 753–1224. For the additional protocol on intra-German trade and connected problems see BGBl. 1957 II, 984–986.

<sup>107</sup> For the judgment of the Federal Constitutional Court on the Treaty on the Basis of Relations between the FRG and the GDR, see “Urteil des Bundesverfassungsgerichtes zum Vertrag über die Grundlagen der Beziehungen zwischen der Bundesrepublik Deutschland und der Deutschen Demokratischen Republik vom 31.7.1973” (= Document 68), in *Zehn Jahre Deutschlandpolitik*, 232–243.

<sup>108</sup> The Federal Constitutional Court determined on 7 July 1975 that the Moscow Treaty just like the Warsaw Treaty did not preclude a peace settlement and provides no legal basis for the existing borders. With regard to the general responsibility of the Four Powers for Germany as a whole, the Federal Government could make no claims to the territorial status of Germany, precluding a peace settlement.

<sup>109</sup> On 7 October 1974, the Constitution of the GDR was changed. In the version from 1968 Article 1 still read “the German Democratic Republic is a socialist state of the German nation,” in 1974 it had changed to: “The German Democratic Republic is a socialist state of workers and farmers.” Additionally, Article 8 was shortened. The phrase “the German Democratic Republic and its citizens strive to overcome the division of Germany imposed on it by imperialism of the German nation and for the gradual convergence of the two German states until their unification on the basis of democracy and socialism” was deleted. Thus, the SED abandoned the German nation and reunification. See the Constitution of the German Democratic Republic of 6 April 1968 (in the version of 7 October 1974) <http://www.documentarchiv.de/ddr/verfddr.html> (last accessed 18 August 2015).

<sup>110</sup> Hans-Dietrich Genscher (1927–2016), Minister of Foreign Affairs and Vice-Chancellor of the Federal Republic of Germany (1974–1992)

Law (“... in a united Europe ...”), Genscher wants changes in the German-German relationship to be embedded in a pan-European development. With regard to statements made by West German politicians, in which the existing borders of Poland are questioned, Chancellor Kohl<sup>111</sup> and Foreign Minister Genscher have since clarified that the FRG makes no territorial claims toward Poland.<sup>112</sup>

### 3) The Attitude of the GDR

The government of the GDR without change emphasizes – not least in the context of citizenship – the existence and international recognition of two German states.

It appears worth noticing that the reform groups have not in any way called the independent existence of the GDR into question so far: the right to reunification is not raised in opposition circles.

### 4) The Attitude of the European States

From Gorbachev’s statements (the current European order is not being idealized, but recognition of the post-war reality has so far secured peace on the continent) and Foreign Minister Shevardnadze’s<sup>113</sup> statements (rejection of revanchist forces that tried to revise postwar realities in Europe) it is clear that the Moscow leadership still holds on to the “status quo ante” and will not allow any change of this order.

In the relevant parts of the joint statement signed by Gorbachev and Kohl on 13 June 1989,<sup>114</sup> formulations are used which are compatible with the position of the Soviet Union (namely the right to freely choose one’s system, but respect for the integrity of each State; participation of Berlin (West) in the developing cooperation under strict observation of the

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<sup>111</sup> Helmut Kohl, (1930–2017), Chancellor of the Federal Republic of Germany (1982–1998).

<sup>112</sup> Through the Warsaw Treaty of 7 December 1970, the FRG recognized the Oder-Neisse line. All West German governments have since then adhered to the legal position that only a freely elected government of Germany as a whole could definitively decide on the eastern border. Right in the summer of 1989 a discussion broke out referring to the legal standpoint on this issue. Foreign Minister Genscher assured in his speech to the UN General Assembly in New York on 27 September 1989 and addressed his Polish counterpart Krzysztof Skubiszewski: “The Polish people [...] should know that its right to live within secure borders, will not be called into question by territorial claims from us Germans, neither now nor in the future.” He refrained from the usual reference to the reservation of rights. The day before Kohl left on his visit to Warsaw, the Bundestag passed a resolution on November 8, which took up Genscher’s formulation, but combined it with the “peace treaty reservation.” See Klaus Ziemer, “Zwischen Misstrauen und Hoffnung: Polen und die deutsche Vereinigung [= Between Mistrust and Hope: Poland and German Unification],” in Klaus-Dietmar Henke (ed.), *Revolution und Vereinigung 1989/90. Als in Deutschland die Realität die Phantasie überholte* [= Revolution and Unification 1989/90. As in Germany, Reality overtook Imagination] (Munich: Dt. Taschenbuch Verlag, 2009), 509–524, 510, 514; “Rede anlässlich der 44. Generalversammlung der Vereinten Nationen am 27. September 1989 in New York [= Speech at the 44th General Assembly of the United Nations on 27 September 1989 in New York],” in Hans-Dietrich Genscher, *Zukunftsverantwortung. Reden* [= Future Responsibility. Speeches] (Berlin: Buchverlag Der Morgen, 1990), 79–93, for the quote see 80; also see Deutscher Bundestag. Stenografischer Bericht 173. Sitzung, Bonn, 8. November 1989, 13058–13060.

<sup>113</sup> Eduard A. Shevardnadze (1928–2014), member of the Politburo of the CPSU Central Committee (1985–1990), Minister of Foreign Affairs of the USSR (1985–1991).

<sup>114</sup> For the text of the joint statement, see Bundesministerium für innerdeutsche Beziehungen [= Federal Ministry of Intra-German Relations] (ed.), *Texte zur Deutschlandpolitik* [= Texts on Germany policy] III-7–1989, 148–153. First published in Bulletin des Presse- und Informationsamtes der Bundesregierung vom 13. Juni 1989 [= Bulletin of the Press and Information Office of the Federal German government of 13 June 1989], 542–544.

Four Power Agreement of 1971).<sup>115</sup> A rethinking in Moscow of the Berlin question or even the Germany question has not yet come about.

Of the Western European countries only statements by France and Belgium on the German-German question have become known. President Mitterrand noted that the reunification of the two German states is a legitimate concern of the German people,<sup>116</sup> but that this issue also concerns the four victorious powers and that European stability must be given priority. Foreign Minister Eyskens<sup>117</sup> declared in the Belgian senate that there is sympathy for the German people's desire for reunification, but that a solution to this problem must be integrated into the pan-European development.

The overall conclusion is that the Western European countries assess the opportunity of German reunification with great reserve.

The United States is much more positive towards a reunification of the two German states. What solutions are to be found for the German-German question (the continuation of a second German state but with democratic structures, a federal solution, reunification) are not foreseeable. It is highly probable that the topic of reunification will occupy and influence European policy in the coming years.

Only in the case that the embassy is addressed in this regard, it should state that the right to self-determination, which Austria supports without restriction, must of course also apply to the population of the GDR. Any change in the German-German relationship, however, should be such that the process détente and peace in Europe is not endangered.

Vienna, 10 November 1989  
Plattner m.p.<sup>118</sup>

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<sup>115</sup> See Four Power Agreement on Berlin (with Annexes I, II, III and V) of 3 September 1971 (= Document 24), in: *Zehn Jahre Deutschlandpolitik*, 158–162.

<sup>116</sup> He expressed this view also on a joint press conference with Chancellor Helmut Kohl on 3 November 1989.

<sup>117</sup> Mark Eyskens, Belgian Foreign Minister (1989–1992).

<sup>118</sup> Johann Plattner Head of the Department for Western and Northern Europe of the Political Section of the Austrian Foreign Ministry (1987–1993).

## Document 7: Information by the East German Office of National Security on the Austrian Assessment of the Situation in the GDR and the Development of Austrian–East German Relations, Berlin (East), 24 November 1989

Source: Amt für Nationale Sicherheit, Nr. 508/89, Information über aktuelle österreichische Einschätzungen zur Lage der DDR und zur Entwicklung der bilateralen Beziehungen Österreich-DDR [= Office for National Security, No. 508/89, Information about current Austrian assessments on the situation of the GDR and the development of bilateral relations Austria–GDR], Berlin, 24 November 1989, BStU, MfS, ZAIG No. 5759, fol. 1–4 and 5–8; as well as BStU, MfS, ZAIG No. 8420. The information was forwarded to SED party leader Egon Krenz, the Head of Security issues of the SED central committee Wolfgang Herger, Hans-Joachim Willerding, Prime Minister Hans Modrow, Foreign Trade Minister Gerhard Beil and Foreign Minister Oskar Fischer.

*Despite Austrian involvement in the mass exodus of East Germans via Hungary, both Vienna and East Berlin wanted to continue their bilateral relations as usual. Not even the fall of the wall changed this. Nevertheless, it also triggered a discussion in Austria about the attitude toward the issue of “reunification” in which the different positions of the two ruling parties rapidly revealed themselves. While Vice Chancellor and Foreign Minister Alois Mock (Austrian People’s Party) was open to German unity, the representatives of the Austrian Socialist Party and Chancellor Franz Vranitzky were more reserved. Already on 24 November 1989 Vranitzky paid a visit to the GDR (for more details on the visit see document 8). On the occasion of this visit, the Stasi successor authority, the successor of the Ministry of State Security, the Amt für Nationale Sicherheit (Office of National Security), composed an assessment of the Austria attitude, which served as information for the new East German leadership.*

### **Information on the current Austrian assessments of the GDR situation and the development of bilateral relations Austria-GDR**

The two governing parties – The Austrian People’s Party (ÖVP) and The Socialist Party of Austria (SPÖ) – discussed at their recent board meetings the development of the situation in the GDR and their policy towards it. They agreed on essential points, even when there were differences of opinion on some issues.

The SPÖ leadership assumes like the ÖVP that it was not the activities of the FRG government, but the policy of the former GDR leadership that led to the situation which came about in the country in October 1989. Only through fundamental reforms in the GDR can their internal stability and thus the stability of Europe be guaranteed. For political, historical and economic reasons, Austria is against a “reforming away” of the GDR and the creation of a “Greater Germany” whose potential dominance could have incalculable consequences for the balance of power in Europe. The SPÖ Executive Board considers it currently necessary that both the FRG and the GDR act responsibly. The political leadership of the GDR must develop domestically the ability to overcome the sudden crisis in the political system by carrying out reforms and dialogue with all interested forces, including the social democratic oriented ones. All citizens should be granted the rights and freedoms enshrined in the GDR constitution. It will depend on the success of dialogue and reforms whether the GDR can live up to its claim to build and maintain a second state and societal model on German soil.

The SPÖ, which follows the current development in the GDR and other socialist reform countries with great hope, sees however, no reason therefore to revise the Eisenstadt

Decision on contact with communist parties,<sup>119</sup> at most it will handle it pragmatically. The previous discussions with SED representatives were conducted on the basis of parliamentary relations. No official relations will be established with the SED as long as it holds its monopoly on power. The SPÖ would never recognize such claims and therefore maintains and expands relations with oppositional forces. Preferred partners for the SPÖ are the reemerging social democratic movements in the socialist countries. This would also apply to the new Social Democratic Party in the GDR (SDP),<sup>120</sup> which will be invited to the next SPÖ party congress.<sup>121</sup> The support for the SDP and social democratic forces in other socialist countries, who still have no politically relevant influence, will move strictly in accordance with the law. For the SPÖ, financial support for such forces does not come into question. It can only be about the procurement of “know-how.” In its attitude towards the SED and the GDR, the SPÖ would continue to lean on the policies of the SPD. As to international activities related to the GDR it would preserve equivalency or consult with the SPD.

From the SPÖ perspective in this context, one should gain greater influence on certain leading forces in the ÖVP, whose internal attitude towards the GDR are based on the line of the CDU/CSU and support the positions of the FRG government. Agreement exists between the SPÖ and ÖVP that stability in the GDR is necessary due to its role in the overall structure of European relations, but from the ÖVP view towards Austria’s relations with socialist states, the GDR is no priority.

The events in the GDR have developed so rapidly that the ÖVP leadership currently still has no concept about how to react to it and what consequences should be drawn from this for Austrian foreign policy. Party executives and members of the ÖVP are currently going through a process of differentiation on these questions. The ideas of Foreign Minister Mock, who generally leans heavily on the views of Chancellor Kohl, are not shared by other ÖVP politicians and leadership circles of the ÖVP Business Union.<sup>122</sup> These forces fear that supporting FRG policy towards reunification will ultimately weaken Austrian positions in Europe and have negative consequences for the Austria economy – due to the shift of economic interests of the FRG from Austria to the GDR.

The ÖVP leadership responded positively to the government declaration of the new GDR Prime Minister Modrow.<sup>5</sup> Modrow is obviously striving for a break with the political and economic system that hitherto existed in the GDR, and enjoys appreciation by the population. With the newly enacted travel regulations from 9.11.1989<sup>123</sup> and the current

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<sup>119</sup> In 1967, the SPÖ under newly elected party leader Bruno Kreisky adopted the “Eisenstadt Declaration” ruling out any cooperation with communist parties and distanced itself from the Communist Party of Austria.

<sup>120</sup> The East German SDP was founded on 7 October 1989 in Schwante.

<sup>121</sup> The thirty-first party congress of the SPÖ had taken place roughly a month earlier from 19 to 21 October 1989. The next national convention of the SPÖ was held on 15–16 June 1991 in Linz.

<sup>122</sup> The *Wirtschaftsbund* is part of the ÖVP’s party structure.

<sup>5</sup> For Modrow’s government declaration at the twelfth session of the People’s Chamber on 17 November 1989, see “Diese Regierung wird eine Regierung des Volkes und der Arbeit sein. Erklärung des Ministerpräsidenten Hans Modrow [This government will be a government of the people and labor. Statement by the Prime Minister Hans Modrow],” in *Neues Deutschland* [= *New Germany*], 18 November 1989, 3–5. The foreign policy relevant part of Modrow’s government statement is reprinted as document 5 in Ines Lehmann, *Die Außenpolitik der DDR 1989/1990* [= *The Foreign Policy of the GDR 1989/1990*] (Baden-Baden: Nomos, 2010), 398–399.

<sup>123</sup> These included initially: “1. Private trips abroad can be applied for without proof of eligibility (travel occasions and family relationships). The permits will be issued at short notice by the relevant departments of passport and registration at the district offices of the People’s Police. Reasons for failure will only be provided

domestic political disputes in the GDR there are signs of a serious commitment to reform and the irreversibility of the processes is recognizable.

An increasing number of politicians in the ÖVP steering committee have been advocating an arrangement of, also political, contacts to the new GDR government and the SED leadership. Simultaneously the ÖVP wants to expand its contacts with oppositional groups and intends to integrate them into the existing system of discussion contacts with oppositional forces, in particular in Hungary, Poland and Yugoslavia, which includes support for the development of organizational structures. Overall, the ÖVP assumes there are now better conditions for an intensification of contacts with the GDR given the changes the GDR has already made. Representing Austrian business interests, the ÖVP primarily strives for an improvement of economic relations with the GDR. Necessary from their point of view are clear rules for investment protection, joint ventures, etc., to achieve a new quality of relations. In leading ÖVP, SPÖ, and business circles of Austria, increasing fears have recently been expressed that the opening of the East German borders might result in stronger economic links between East and West Germany. It is not in Austria's interest, also not in the context of a later possible Austrian accession to the EC, that West Germany gains even greater influence in the EC and in Europe. In the opinion of the leading circles of both the SPÖ and the ÖVP, the GDR must not only draw near to Germany, but to the entire West. At the exploratory talks with the European Commission in Brussels on 13/14 November 1989 the Austrian representatives acted accordingly.<sup>124</sup> In these talks, differences in attitude became visible between the FRG and the rest of the EC Commissioners about the arrangement of the future relationship EC – GDR. The attitude of the FRG representatives, who tried to present the development in the GDR and the discussion about it as an internal matter of the Federal Republic of Germany, as well as the non-coordination of the visit of the Vice President of the EC Commission Bangemann to the GDR in early November 1989<sup>125</sup> with other EC partners triggered deep anger in them.

Concerning further development of its relationship with the GDR, the Austrian government as a whole is interested in unencumbered and continuous relations. The GDR is not just an economic factor for Austria; even more important is the development of political contacts, which are for Austria a kind of counterbalance to the relationship with the FRG. Chancellor Vranitzky presented his views on this issue with a clarity that was missing in the stance of Foreign Minister Mock. Among all parliamentary parties, including the Austrian Freedom

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in exceptional cases. 2. The responsible departments of passport and registration at the district offices of the People's Police in the GDR are instructed to issue visas for permanent exit without delay; without the requirements for a permanent exit being fulfilled. The application for permanent exit is possible as before with the Departments of Internal Affairs. 3. Permanent exit can be made at all border crossing points of the GDR to the FRG and Berlin (West). 4. This eliminates the temporary granting of permits for foreign missions of the GDR or permanent exit with the identity card of the GDR via third countries". See: *Neues Deutschland*, 10 November 1989, 1.

<sup>124</sup> The Austrian exploratory talks in Brussels were held by Ambassador Manfred Scheich and other diplomats of the Austrian representation in Brussels.

<sup>125</sup> The Vice President of the EC Commission and Commissioner for the internal market, industrial policy and relations with the European Parliament Martin Bangemann visited the GDR at the invitation of Gerhard Beil on 1 and 2 November 1989. Bangemann's visit was not without controversy within the Commission and the Federal Republic, especially since the Dutchman Frans Andriessen was responsible for external relations. Bangemann justified the visit with his expertise for the internal market and thus also for intra-German trade. Later that month Andriessen himself suggested, to establish direct contacts of the EC with East Berlin and also to extend the aid, which was already agreed upon for Poland and Hungary, to the GDR.

Party (FPÖ) and despite their “German-national” tendencies, there is a consensus that the existence of the FRG and the GDR is vital to Austria.

Due to source endangerment, this information is only for personal use.

## Document 8: Memorandum of Conversation Austrian Chancellor Franz Vranitzky and East German Prime Minister Hans Modrow, East-Berlin, 24 November 1989

Source: Memorandum, Vienna, 24 November 1989, Kreisky Archives, Depositum Franz Vranitzky, AP, box "BK – Luxemburg; BK – DDR, 14.–16.6.88; BK – Portugal".

*After the fall of the Berlin Wall, the new East German regime under the leadership of Prime Minister Hans Modrow was eager to gain international recognition. Due to the good relations between Austria and the GDR, and the assumption that Austria was interested in the further existence of the GDR, East Berlin had the hope that Vienna was willing to take such a step. The visit was contrived by Gerhard Beil (the chief architect of economic relations between Austria and the GDR) and Chancellor Franz Vranitzky took up Hans Modrow's invitation on short notice. Foreign Minister Alois Mock was only informed about the visit on short notice. There is no final clarity about the motives for Vranitzky's visit. Supposedly it had been discussed and agreed with French President François Mitterrand and West German Chancellor Helmut Kohl. Anyway, Vranitzky must have been concerned with wrapping up the usual annual bilateral economic agreements, which accommodated Austrian export interests.*

### **Conversation of the Chancellor with Prime Minister Modrow**

Prime Minister Modrow thanks at the outset for this visit, which is particularly important in the current situation of the GDR and highly appreciated.

First, the following has to be said concerning the GDR's internal situation:

The resignation of the old government<sup>126</sup> and the beginning of reform measures were delayed beyond any comprehensible extent. This caused the population, but especially the "youth fraction" to become active, and the resignation of the old and the formation of the new government have taken place against the backdrop of massive demonstrations and rallies. There has been little time for him to form a government and create a work program. As a first step, he decided to reduce the government (coalition distribution 28:11). That was a good decision, which also found public approval. The debate on the election of the new executive committee<sup>127</sup> and the questioning of the old government in the People's Chamber were also good because a lot of steam was discharged this way. He is aware that he was being given great trust, which could be taken away at any time. Now it is necessary to turn this leap of faith into real trust.

The political situation in the country is very complicated. The established political influence is no longer significant. In rallies and demonstrations, new political movements and forces that now must be included have articulated. He had made the offer for a round table, which was more or less accepted.<sup>128</sup> He considers this an important part of his political work. On the one hand, you must respond to the mood of the country, on the other hand you need all political forces to be involved in a role of responsibility. It is not acceptable that a large group be content with only questioning those responsible.

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<sup>126</sup> The government resigned on 7 November 1989.

<sup>127</sup> Of the East German government.

<sup>128</sup> The round table was constituted on 7 December 1989.



For all reform measures, economic stability is the prerequisite and given the economic situation of the GDR, foreign economic relations are especially meaningful. Austria has always been an important partner for the GDR. The relations have been sustained with continuity and trust and must further develop on this basis.

Among the socialist countries, the overall economic development of the GDR offers the most favorable conditions for a process of renewal, but with regard to contents a new mobilization must take place. Some instruments of the modern economy, which had been rejected by the former government, now have to be implemented – especially terms like joint ventures, transfer of capital, etc.

It is of utmost importance to gradually change the bureaucratically encrusted centralized management of the economy, however, in a step-by-step process to avoid instability. Moreover, it is necessary to renew the societal system as a socialist one, therefore a program of legal decisions, and a list of the enactment of legislation were created. The parliament will have a lot of work to do in the next few weeks. The People's Chamber has already appointed two commissions, one has been assigned with the amendments to the constitution (for example, rephrase the leadership role of the working class, creation of a constitutional court), the other was instructed to draw up a new electoral law.

In foreign policy, he attaches great importance to European policy. This particular priority for European initiatives is new in the overall design of foreign policy. Also in this sense, the visit of the Chancellor is especially important. Of course, all alliance relations will be maintained, and relations with the USSR will remain especially important because of mutual economic interdependence.

Regarding relations with the FRG, it was felt in the exploratory talks with Seiters<sup>129</sup> that an important stage of work is still necessary. The constant meddling from the FRG showed that there was little trust in and respect for the sovereignty of the GDR.

Of course, the decision for the open border has qualitatively changed the situation. The offer of the GDR has been put forth, and it has coined the term "treaty community" – how broad and how versatile this treaty community might be, must now be explored.

Trade and economic relations with Austria have developed well, and we are very interested in its continuation. This is underscored by Austria's high level of participation at the Autumn Fair<sup>130</sup> and the interest of Austrian entrepreneurs. We now shall to go on working in continuity and stability.

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<sup>129</sup> Rudolf Seiters, Federal Minister for Special Affairs and the Head of the Office of the German Chancellery (1989–1991) visited East Berlin on 20 November 1989 for exploratory discussions with Egon Krenz and Hans Modrow. See Gespräch des Bundesministers Seiters mit dem Staatsratsvorsitzenden Krenz und Ministerpräsident Modrow in Berlin (Ost), 20. November 1989 (= Document 96), in Hanns Jürgen Küsters/Daniel Hofmann (Bearb.), *Deutsche Einheit. Sonderedition aus den Akten des Bundeskanzleramtes 1989/90* (München: Oldenbourg, 1998), 550–559.

<sup>130</sup> The Leipzig Trade Fair of September 1989.

With the annual frame contract, we have gone the farthest with Austria in the development of economic relations.<sup>131</sup>

The Chancellor expressed his thanks for the comprehensive and frank presentation. Relations between Austria and the GDR are excellent in all areas, even in culture and tourism, and the framework agreement is a good signal that this should continue in the future. In the economic sphere Austria attaches great importance to cooperation in environmental technology, and it would like to develop some such initiatives. The Chancellor then gave a short overview of the outstanding Austrian economic development, as well as Austrian integration policy, and referred in this context to Austrian adherence to neutrality and neutrality policy, which is very important right now given the transformation in the Eastern European neighboring countries.

The Chancellor mentioned that he had heard an ORF<sup>132</sup> interview with Mr. Krenz<sup>133</sup> upon his departure, where he was confronted with the question of German reunification. Krenz expressed that it was not an urgent interest of the people of the GDR. Austria sees this primarily as a decision that has to be made by the German states and would also respect this decision. On the other hand, one needs to take the pan-European context into consideration, and in this sense, the decisions of the CSCE on the stability of Europe as well.

The transition to a plurality of the political spectrum and its constitutional anchoring has triggered much active interest and sympathy in Austria, which would also have an impact on cooperation and support. With the “East-West Fund”<sup>134</sup> a new structure for financial cooperation has been found offering a sound basis for joint investment projects and joint ventures, etc. Austria would also actively engage in international forums in favor of Eastern European countries. Unfortunately, recently some economic projects in the GDR were lost for Austria (for example, BUNA, Leuna), and especially because of this he wants to place Austrian interest in strengthening economic cooperation.

Prime Minister Modrow then briefly took a position on the issue of reunification. This has various aspects: on the one hand, it corresponds with a natural human need, but on the other hand has some chauvinistic aspects (restoration of Germany’s 1937 borders). The situation in today’s Europe is linked to the existence of two German states, and that is the understanding, from which one starts. Of course, one must look at history as a process that does not stand still, but every change in this regard will take a long time and international thinking over long periods. He could imagine a solution to this problem only within the “federal structures of a wider Europe.” For him it is particularly important in this context to connect the process of inner renewal with everything that shows European responsibility.

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<sup>131</sup> Such framework contracts have been concluded each year since 1982 and went on to become a mainstay of bilateral economic relations. For details see Maximilian Graf, *Österreich und die DDR 1949–1990. Politik und Wirtschaft im Schatten der deutschen Teilung* [= Austria and the GDR 1949–1990. Politics and Business in the Shadow of German Division] (Vienna: Austrian Academy of Sciences, 2016), 476–507, 514–526, 540–547.

<sup>132</sup> *Österreichischer Rundfunk*, Austria’s national public service broadcaster.

<sup>133</sup> Egon Krenz, General Secretary of the SED and East German head of state (October–December 1989).

<sup>134</sup> In the run-up to Vranitzky’s visit in the GDR, Austrian Minister of Finance Ferdinand Lacina held a press conference in Vienna in which he brought up the idea of an East-West fund and talked of loans for Eastern Europe roughly amounting to 5 billion Austrian Schilling. The Austrian initiative aimed at contributing to a smooth transition from a planned to a market economy in the sector of small and medium-sized enterprises as well as securing and raising Austrian competitiveness.

In the afternoon of 24.11., the Chancellor held meetings with Mr. de Maizière (CDU),<sup>135</sup> Mr. Steffen Reiche (SPD),<sup>136</sup> and Professor Jens Reich (Forum)<sup>137</sup> as well as with Mayor Momper.<sup>138</sup>

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<sup>135</sup> Lothar de Maizière, Chairman of the CDU in the GDR (1989–90) who became the first freely elected Prime Minister of the GDR (April–October 1990).

<sup>136</sup> Steffen Reiche, co-founder of the Social Democratic Party in the GDR.

<sup>137</sup> Jens Reich, co-author of the appeal “Aufbruch 89 – Neues Forum”.

<sup>138</sup> Walter Momper, SPD, Governing Mayor of Berlin (1989–1991).

## Document 9: Assessment by the Austrian Foreign Ministry of the International Reactions to Helmut Kohls “Ten-Point Plan”

Source: Information for the Federal Minister, Envoy Johann Plattner, Vienna, 7 December 1989, ÖStA, AdR, II-Pol 1989, GZ. 22.17.01/41-II.1/89. The information was sent to the Foreign Minister, the General Secretary, the Section Heads, all departments of the Political Section II and the Austrian diplomatic representations in signatory states of the CSCE.

*Not only Austria’s stance on the issue of “reunification” was at least ambivalent, the same holds true for other European states. This became evident especially after Helmut Kohl released his ten-point plan on 28 November 1989, a vague program for German unity in the long term. As Kohl had not coordinated his step with the Western allies of the Federal Republic, some were alienated and worried about the unilateralism of the Chancellor. Austrian diplomacy had reported in detail and matter-of-factly about the actually expressed Western reactions, the Foreign Ministry in Vienna came to the following conclusions:*

### **Program of Chancellor Kohl on German unification; Reaction of the Western states**

The character of the reactions of Western countries to Kohl’s program is marked by restraint, a certain skepticism, and an occasional undercurrent of unease.

The reactions generally include the following main elements:

- Recognition of the right of Germans to self-determination
- Issue of unification is primarily the concern of Germans
- Regulation must be embedded within the CSCE (existing borders) and pan-European development
- Stability and balance in Europe may not be jeopardized
- Development should not be rushed

In comments from EC countries sporadically fears concerning the development of integration in the Community are expressed (France, Netherlands).

A certain fear of a united Germany can be sounded out from those states, which were attacked or occupied by Hitler’s Germany (Netherlands, Luxembourg).

Switzerland and Sweden refer to the responsibilities of the four victorious powers of World War II for the future development.

Attitude of the Western Allies:

USA: self-determination for Germans without a priori fixation on the goal, Germany remains in the Western alliance system, gradual approach, consideration of the CSCE Final Act (originally positive attitude has been modified).

Great Britain: PM Thatcher: skeptical attitude, question not current for the coming years.

France: stresses that the question of German unification may be considered only in the context of European integration. The FRG must prove that reunification is no alternative to the EC.

Vienna, 7 December 1989  
Plattner m.p.<sup>139</sup>

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<sup>139</sup> Johann Plattner Head of the Department for Western and Northern Europe of the Political Section of the Austrian Foreign Ministry (1987–1993).

## Document 10: Memorandum of Conversation Johann Plattner – Hilary Synnott, London, 21 December 1989

Source: Information, Envoy Johann Plattner, Vienna, 22 December 1989, BMEIA, Austrian Embassy Bonn RES-1990 (1–2), box 63, GZ. 518.02.25/11-II.1/89. The information was issued to Department II.3, the Section Head, and the Austrian Embassies in London, Bonn and Berlin.

*In the West, British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher was definitely the sharpest opponent of rapid “reunification.” When Foreign Minister Alois Mock visited Great Britain from 19 to 21 December 1989 he had a meeting with the “Iron Lady” on which there is unfortunately no record. However, the question of “reunification” played a role in the course of the meetings that took place between the top diplomats of both foreign ministries. British concerns were openly expressed, but it was also evident that the basic attitude of the Foreign Office was far more nuanced than that of the Prime Minister.*

### **Visit of [Mock] to Great Britain (19–21 December 1989); Meeting between Envoy Plattner with Department Head Synnott<sup>140</sup>**

#### German Reunification

Mr. Synnott mentioned at the beginning that for weeks the majority of his time has been dedicated to the question of German reunification.

After the undersigned<sup>141</sup> had explained the Austrian position on this issue (self-determination for the Germans, unification would have to take place within the European peace process) Mr. Synnott expressed himself as follows:

The British stance corresponds broadly with the Austrian. The British side is worried that reunification could be carried out emotionally by the pressure from the street, without the West or the East being able to do anything about it and that and that, above all, the security interests of the Soviet Union are not being taken into consideration by means of an act. This could compromise the position of Gorbachev and the European peace process. The British are of the opinion that guarantees for the Oder-Neisse line should be made. The British government is holding itself back with criticism of Chancellor Kohl out of solidarity with the CDU, and leaves the criticism up to France and Holland.

[...] <sup>142</sup>

Vienna, on 22 December 1989  
Plattner m.p.

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<sup>140</sup> Hilary Synnott, Head of Western Europe Department at the Foreign Office (1989–1991).

<sup>141</sup> Johann Plattner Head of the Department for Western and Northern Europe of the Political Section of the Austrian Foreign Ministry (1987–1993).

<sup>142</sup> Omitted were summaries on the CSCE, the European Political Cooperation and bilateral issues.

## Document 11: Conversation Vranitzky – Modrow, Vienna, 26 January 1990

Source: 12. Sitzung des Ministerrates vom 1. Februar 1990, Bericht über den Arbeitsbesuch des Vorsitzenden des Ministerrates der DDR, Hans Modrow, am 26. 1. 1990 in der Rep[ublik] Österreich, Bundesarchiv, Berlin, Abteilung DDR, DC/20/I/3/2904, fol. 51–66, excerpt from fol. 57–60.

*At the turn of the year from 1989/90, the GDR pushed for a rapid realization of the return visit of Prime Minister Hans Modrow in Austria. The East German leadership was concerned with emphasizing the statehood of the GDR. Both the long-term development of relations, as well as the Austrian position after the Fall of the Wall made Austria appear particularly suited to assist the GDR in this regard. Vienna was finally ready to welcome Modrow and sought further deepening of economic cooperation. In particular, the private sector should benefit from the new situation in the GDR. In the meeting between the two heads of government, the question of German unification naturally came up.*

### **[Excerpt] East German Report on Modrow's visit to Vienna on 26 January 1990**

I. [...]

The Chairman of the GDR Council of Ministers<sup>143</sup> was received by the Federal President of the Republic of Austria for a courtesy visit. Dr. Kurt Waldheim acknowledged the democratic transformation processes in the GDR and the historical dimension of the significant changes unfolding. He stressed that the rapprochement between the two German states should take place in parallel with the process of European unification. The Austrian Federal President advocated discussing all questions of future developments in the pan-European framework. This would also ensure a constructive continuation of the CSCE process. Austria is particularly interested in the continued peaceful and stable development in the GDR and will assist in this process as much as possible. This also concerns economic cooperation.

Detailed discussions were held by the Chairman of the Council of Ministers, the Minister of Foreign Affairs,<sup>144</sup> the Minister for Foreign Trade<sup>145</sup> and the Minister of Tourism of the GDR<sup>146</sup> with the Austrian Chancellor, Dr. Franz Vranitzky, the Federal Minister of Foreign Affairs, Dr. Alois Mock, the Federal Minister of Public Economy and Transport, Dr. Rudolf Streicher, the Federal Minister for Economic Affairs, Dr. Wolfgang Schüssel, and the President of the Federal Chamber of Commerce, Rudolf Sallinger.

Chancellor Dr. Vranitzky gave a dinner in honor of the Chairman of the Council of Ministers of the GDR, Hans Modrow, at which toasts were exchanged.

Both sides agreed, effective 1 February 1990 to waive visa requirements between the GDR and the Republic of Austria until an agreement on visa-free travel goes into effect. It was agreed to conduct and complete such negotiations in February 1990.<sup>147</sup>

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<sup>143</sup> Prime Minister Hans Modrow.

<sup>144</sup> Oskar Fischer, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the GDR (1975–April 1990).

<sup>145</sup> Gerhard Beil, Minister of Foreign Trade and Foreign Trade of the GDR (March 1986–April 1990).

<sup>146</sup> Bruno Benthien, Minister of Tourism (November 1989–April 1990).

<sup>147</sup> The visa requirements were lifted unilaterally by both Austria and the GDR on 1 February. A related agreement was signed on 13 February 1990 and came into effect on 1 March 1990. See Abkommen zwischen der Österreichischen Bundesregierung und der Regierung der Deutschen Demokratischen Republik über die Aufhebung der Sichtvermerkspflicht [= Agreement between the Austrian Federal Government and the Government of the German Democratic Republic on the lifting of visa requirements], BGBl. Nr. 111/1990.

The Austrian Minister of Foreign Affairs was provided a note with the proposal to waive the levying of car taxes when entering the other country. The Austrian side expressed its willingness in principle and agreed to a short-term consideration.

Between the GDR and the Republic of Austria were signed:

- Agreement on cooperation between state combines, enterprises and foreign trade companies of the GDR with Austrian commercial companies
- Treaty on the protection of indications of origin and other geographical designations.<sup>148</sup>

II.

In the conversations, the Chairman of the Council of Ministers, Hans Modrow, acknowledged the progress made in the traditionally good bilateral relations between the GDR and Austria since his meeting with Federal Chancellor Franz Vranitzky in November 1989 in Berlin.<sup>149</sup> This bears importance beyond the borders of both countries for overcoming the division of Europe. He informed the hosts about the progress and content of the profound societal and economic reforms in the GDR, about problems coming up, and highlighting the contiguous responsibility of the GDR for European development. Hans Modrow explained to the Austrian interlocutors the by the GDR aspired treaty community with the FRG, which integrates into the pan-European process, and reported on his recent meeting with Chancellery Minister Seiters<sup>150</sup> and his upcoming visit to Bonn.<sup>151</sup> The GDR stands by their shared responsibility for the preservation of peace and for disarmament. It aims for a soon agreement on the reduction of conventional armed forces and armaments, and supports the proposal of the USSR to convene a summit of the participating CSCE states in 1990 in the interest of strengthening European security and stability as well as cross-bloc cooperation in all fields.

Chancellor Dr. Vranitzky stressed the particular importance of the working visit by Hans Modrow at this very moment. He signaled that the Austrian government and the country's economy would be interested to a great extent to cooperate independently with the GDR and to make a constructive contribution to the democratic transformation. At the same time, one has an opportunity to take short stock of what has been achieved since the Berlin meeting in November 1989 and could trigger a new impetus for bilateral cooperation, as the comprehensive reforms in the GDR open favorable conditions for mutually beneficial cooperation.

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<sup>148</sup> After lengthy negotiations, some progress was achieved in July 1989. The treaty was signed on 26 January 1990, but did not go into effect until the end of the GDR.

<sup>149</sup> See document 8.

<sup>150</sup> Rudolf Seiters, Federal Minister for Special Tasks, Head of the Federal Chancellery of West Germany (1989–1991) had met with Modrow in East Berlin on 25 January 1990. For the record of their conversation, see document 145, in Hanns Jürgen Küsters/Daniel Hofmann (Bearb.), *Deutsche Einheit. Sonderedition aus den Akten des Bundeskanzleramtes 1989/90* [= German Unity. Special Edition from the files of the Federal Chancellery 1989/90] (Munich: Oldenbourg, 1998), 707–713.

<sup>151</sup> Modrow and Kohl met for talks already on 3 February 1990 in Davos, see Conversation of Chancellor Kohl with Prime Minister Modrow in Davos, 3. February 1990 (Document 158), in: *Deutsche Einheit*, 753–756. The visit to Bonn took place on 13 February 1990, see Conversation of Chancellor Kohl with Prime Minister Modrow in Bonn, 13. February 1990 (Document 177), in *Deutsche Einheit*, 814–819.



The Austrian Chancellor appreciated the internal political developments in East Germany and spoke in favor of doing everything possible to make the process peaceful and stable. Austria regards the partnership relations with its European neighbors, the GDR counts as one in the broader sense, currently particularly important and will be ready to support if desired.

If the Germans were to opt for a unification of the two states, one must respect that. Austria is however interested in a general framework, which does not bring Europe into danger and does not destroy the existing balance. A too rapid sequence of events, however, would pose such a risk. Everything must be assessed under European aspects.

The Austrian side called for a summit of the CSCE States in 1990, and expressed its interest that Vienna could act as host. The objective of the meeting should be the signing of an agreement for conventional disarmament and the initiation of a second phase of disarmament negotiations.<sup>152</sup> At the same time the discussions should serve to shape future Europe, where the security of everyone must be guaranteed.

Both sides acknowledged the progress made in bilateral relations and agreed on the next steps for their further development and the promotion of even closer cooperation in the fields of industry and finance.

The Austrian interlocutors emphasized that everything, which was agreed with the GDR will also be adhered to. The GDR is considered a reliable and predictable partner and it is expected that it will stay this way.

With this visit the conditions for a qualitatively new level of cooperation and exchange of experience in the field of tourism have been created. This amounts to something special in light of the visa-free travel agreed to between the two countries.

In general, it is apparent that:

- Austria sees a rapprochement of both German states only in accordance with the pan-European process;
- the host therefore wants to all-around strengthen the bilateral cooperation between the GDR and Austria and
- the willingness of Austria to support the reform processes in the GDR without delay through concrete economic projects has been encouraged. [...]

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<sup>152</sup> The Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe (CFE) was signed on 19 November 1990 at the Paris CSCE Summit.

## Document 12: Memorandum of Conversation Foreign Ministers Alois Mock (Austria) and Oskar Fischer (GDR), Vienna, 26 January 1990

Source: Memorandum, Envoy Ernst Sucharipa, Vienna, 30 January 1990, ÖStA, AdR, BMAA, II-Pol 1990, GZ. 43.18.01/11-II.3/90. The memorandum was sent to the Cabinet of the Foreign Minister, the General Secretariat, the Section Heads II, III, IV, the departments II.1, II.7, III.7, IV.2, the Austrian embassies in Berlin (East) and Bonn and the Austrian delegation in Berlin (West).

*Contrary to the meeting of the Austria and East German heads of government (document 11), the conversation of the two foreign ministers Alois Mock and Oskar Fischer was occupied with bilateral issues and the CSCE. The East German foreign minister had learned a few days earlier in Moscow from his Soviet counterpart Eduard Shevardnadze that Mikhail Gorbachev in principle agrees to German reunification. In their meeting, Fischer passed this knowledge directly on to Mock, whereby the Austrian foreign minister became one of the first Western politicians to be informed about the Soviet change of mind.*

### **Visit of Prime Minister Modrow in Austria; Conversation Federal Minister [Mock] – Foreign Minister Fischer**

During the work meeting of the Federal Minister with GDR Foreign Minister Fischer on 26 January 1990 the following issues were broached:

#### **1. Bilateral Issues**

1.1. Repealing Visa Requirements: The foreign ministers agreed to tentatively repeal the visa requirements from 1 February 1990, 0:00 until 28 February 1990, 24:00. Until then, negotiations on a corresponding agreement shall be completed, which should come into force on 1 March 1990.<sup>153</sup>

1.2. Repealing Car Tax Liability: Foreign Minister Fischer handed over a note in which the request was put forward again. The note will be transferred to Department III.7 under a separate reference number.<sup>154</sup>

#### **2. International Questions**

2.1. Unification of the German States: Foreign Minister Fischer emphasized that it would come to unification; it must be embedded in the overcoming of European division.

2.2. CSCE process: According to Foreign Minister Fischer the negotiations in Vienna are going too slow (The usual conference mechanism runs rampant). He therefore welcomes the

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<sup>153</sup> The visa requirements were lifted unilaterally by both Austria and the GDR on 1 February. A related agreement was signed on 13 February 1990 and came into effect on 1 March 1990. See Abkommen zwischen der Österreichischen Bundesregierung und der Regierung der Deutschen Demokratischen Republik über die Aufhebung der Sichtvermerkspflicht [= Agreement between the Austrian Federal Government and the Government of the German Democratic Republic on the lifting of visa requirements], BGBl. Nr. 111/1990.

<sup>154</sup> The further course of the matter could not be ascertained.

initiative<sup>155</sup> of Genscher,<sup>156</sup> Dumas<sup>157</sup> and de Michelis.<sup>158</sup> Given the time and effort for a summit of 35, and pressing international issues, to the GDR it seems worth considering, to directly follow up with “Helsinki II”<sup>159</sup> in Vienna. The holding of two separate summits in the current year (Signing of the agreements/European discussion) would, anyway, not be advantageous. The Federal Minister emphasized the Austrian interest, but referred to the still upcoming interim conference before Helsinki 1991.

2.3. Foreign Minister Fischer spoke positively of Mitterrand’s idea of a European confederation.<sup>160</sup>

2.4. The Federal Minister pointed out that Austrian neutrality policy is still part of the credibility of Austrian foreign policy, even if in the light of the international development it no longer has the same weight it once had.

Vienna, 30 January 1990  
Sucharipa m.p.

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<sup>155</sup> Prior to the negotiations on a treaty on “Conventional Armed Forces in Europe” commencing in Vienna on 9 March 1989, the governments in Bonn, Paris and Rome pushed for the early conclusion of an agreement and in the face of the dramatically changing political situation in Europe called for a summit meeting of the 35 signatory states of the Final Helsinki Act already in the fall of 1990.

<sup>156</sup> Hans-Dietrich Genscher, German Foreign Minister and Vice Chancellor of the Federal Republic of Germany (1974–1992).

<sup>157</sup> Roland Dumas, French Foreign Minister (1984–1986 & 1988–1993).

<sup>158</sup> Gianni De Michelis, Italian Foreign Minister (1989–1992).

<sup>159</sup> What was expected to become “Helsinki II” materialized as the Paris CSCE summit 19–21 November 1990.

<sup>160</sup> Mitterrand announced the idea of a European confederation in his New Year speech on December 31, 1989. Cf. Frédéric Bozo, “The Failure of a Grand Design. Mitterrand’s European Confederation, 1989–1991,” in *Contemporary European History*, 17 (August 2008), 391–412.

## Document 13: Assessment by the Austrian Foreign Ministry on the Question of German Unity, 21 February 1990

Source: Information, Envoy Johann Plattner, Vienna, 21. February 1990, ÖStA, AdR, BMAA, II-Pol 1990, GZ. 22.17.01/35-II.1/90. The information was sent to the Foreign Minister, the Secretary-General, the Section Heads, all departments of the Political Section of the Foreign Ministry and the Austrian diplomatic representations in the states participating in the CSCE.

*Even if the definite path to German unity was not yet in sight in February 1990, a lot had nevertheless changed. The position of the Soviet Union on "reunification" had started to soften, but still Moscow definitely opposed a NATO membership of the unified Germany. Even among the Western victorious powers of World War II several reservations had persisted. However, on 13 February in Ottawa the Foreign Ministers of both German states and the victorious powers had agreed on the two-plus-four format on the external aspects of establishing German unity. Therefore, the inner and the international negotiation process gained momentum. Against this background, the Austrian Foreign Ministry started to regularly summarize the state of affairs in the unification process.*

### **Question of German Unity (State of affairs, February 1990)**

The establishment of German unity has become one of the most important themes of international politics. The German question could affect the progress of East-West relations and the dynamics of European integration. Whether, or to what extent it will affect the mentioned developments is not foreseeable at present.

#### 1) The Responsibility of the 4 Powers:

While the former victorious powers, until the end of the 40s, held on to the idea of never letting Germany gain strength again (The protocols of the Yalta and Potsdam conferences speak of the "dismemberment of Germany"!), after the breakup of the victor coalition the "Convention on relations between the FRG and the three powers" (1952) stated that the three Western powers "retain their heretofore exercised or held rights and responsibilities with respect to Berlin and Germany as a whole, including the reunification of Germany and a peace settlement."<sup>161</sup> The signatories will cooperate to realize their common goal of "a unified Germany enjoying a liberal-democratic constitution, like that of the Federal Republic, and integrated within the European Community."

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<sup>161</sup> The "Convention on relations between the Three Powers and the Federal Republic of Germany" signed on 26 May 1952 by the FRG and the Western Allies (France, the United Kingdom and the United States) replaced the previous occupation statute and obliged the signatories to the goal of unification of Germany and a peace settlement (for the whole of Germany). The treaty is also known under the names "General Agreement" and "Germany Treaty." See printed in Auswärtiges Amt (ed.), *Die Auswärtige Politik der Bundesrepublik Deutschland* [= The Foreign Policy of the Federal Republic of Germany] (Cologne: Verlag Wissenschaft und Politik, 1972), 208–212. The treaty underwent several changes (for example the Protocol on the termination of the occupation regime of 23 October 1954) and went into effect in its final version after the NATO accession of the FRG on 5 May 1955. See Gesetz betreffend das Protokoll vom 23. Oktober 1954 über die Beendigung des Besatzungsregimes in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland vom 24. März 1955, BGBl. 1955 II, 213-214; Protokoll über die Beendigung des Besatzungsregimes in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland unterzeichnet in Paris am 23. Oktober 1954, BGBl. 1955 II, 215-252 und Bekanntmachung über das Inkrafttreten des Protokolls vom 23. Oktober 1954 über die Beendigung des Besatzungsregimes in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland, BGBl. 1955 II, 628.

On the occasion of the FRG's accession to NATO, the three Western powers issued a statement that a "peace settlement for the whole of Germany, which is the basis for a lasting peace, remains a key policy objective." This declaration was recognized by all NATO countries.

In the Four Powers Agreement on Berlin (1971)<sup>162</sup> the shared rights and obligations of the former victorious powers are set with respect to Berlin. The four powers have stationed forces in Berlin.

## 2) The FRG and German Unity:

In the preamble of the Basic Law the entire German people is called upon to accomplish "in free self-determination, the unification and freedom of Germany, in a united Europe."<sup>163</sup>

In The Letter on German Unity (1970) the FRG affirmed its claim for reunification ("... to work for a state of peace in Europe, in which the German people regains its unity in free self-determination").<sup>164</sup> Every FRG government must therefore feel obliged to work for the attainment of German unity.

Maintaining the claim for reunification is also found in additional clarifications of the FRG to the Treaty of Rome. (Reserve of possible GDR membership in the EC; intra-German trade; non-recognition of an East German citizenship).<sup>165</sup>

## 3) Border Issue and Safety Aspects:

The 3 Western powers have never considered definitive the Oder-Neisse border which resulted from Poland's "westward shift," they reserved the final determination of the geographical boundaries of a future unified Germany to be concluded by a peace treaty.

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<sup>162</sup> The Quadripartite Agreement was signed by the four victorious powers (France, Great Britain, USSR, USA) on 3 September 1971, and went into effect on 3 June 1972, see Viermächte-Abkommen (mit den Anlagen I, II, III und V) vom 3. September 1971 (= Document 24), in Bundesministerium für innerdeutsche Beziehungen [= the Federal Ministry of Intra-German Relations] (ed.), *Zehn Jahre Deutschlandpolitik. Die Entwicklung der Beziehungen zwischen der Bundesrepublik Deutschland und der Deutschen Demokratischen Republik 1969–1979. Bericht und Dokumentation* [= Ten Years of Germany Policy. The development of relations between the Federal Republic of Germany and the German Democratic Republic from 1969 to 1979. Report and documentation] (Bonn: Bundesministerium für innerdeutsche Beziehungen, 1980), 158–162.

<sup>163</sup> The original English wording of the Preamble to the Basic Law, the founding document of the Federal Republic from 1949 reads: "Conscious of their responsibility before God and man, inspired by the determination to promote world peace as an equal partner in a united Europe, the German people, in the exercise of their constituent power, have adopted this Basic Law. Germans in the Länder of Baden-Württemberg, Bavaria, Berlin, Brandenburg, Bremen, Hamburg, Hesse, Lower Saxony, Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania, North Rhine-Westphalia, Rhineland-Palatinate, Saarland, Saxony, Saxony-Anhalt, Schleswig-Holstein and Thuringia have achieved the unity and freedom of Germany in free self-determination. This Basic Law thus applies to the entire German people." The German version leaves room for various translations.

<sup>164</sup> The "Letter on German Unity" (1970), which held open the option to restore German unity within a European Peace Order, originated at least in part from pressure by the opposition and was handed over to the Soviet Foreign Ministry at the signing of the Moscow Treaty of August 12, 1970, see BGBl. 1972 II, 356.

<sup>165</sup> The Treaty of Rome establishing the European Economic Community (EEC) and the European Atomic Energy Community (Euratom) was signed by representatives of the governments of Belgium, the Netherlands, Luxembourg, the Federal Republic of Germany, France and Italy on 25 March 1957. See BGBl. 1957 II, 753–1224. For the additional protocol on intra-German trade and connected problems see BGBl. 1957 II, 984–986.

In the so-called Eastern Treaties,<sup>166</sup> the inviolability of the existing borders and renunciation of territorial claims is stipulated; at the same time, it was stated that the treaties reserving the final validation of these borders to a future peace treaty are still valid.

Uncertainty in the border issue is also triggered by the fact that the West German Federal Constitutional Court assumes in its judgment of 31.7.1973<sup>167</sup> the continuation of Germany

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<sup>166</sup> These include in particular the “Moscow Treaty” with the “Letter on German Unity” (1970), the “Warsaw Treaty” (1970), the Quadripartite Agreement on Berlin (1971), the *Transitabkommen* [Transit Agreement] (1971), the *Verkehrsvertrag* [Transit Treaty] (1972), the Basic Treaty (1972) and finally the “Prague Treaty” (1973). In the “Moscow Treaty” of 12 August 1970 the Federal Republic of Germany and the Soviet Union committed themselves to the easing of tensions and furthering of peace in Europe, to renounce the use of violence in disputes, and to recognize the existing European borders (Article 3). See Treaty between the Federal Republic of Germany and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, August 12, 1970 (Document 19), in: Bundesministerium für innerdeutsche Beziehungen [= Federal Ministry of Intra-German Relations] (ed.), *Zehn Jahre Deutschlandpolitik* [= Ten Years of Germany Policy], 156. Originally published in: BGBl. II, 1972, 354–355. Due to the wording of Article 3 of the Moscow Treaty, the Federal Republic of Germany handed over the “Letter on German Unity” at the signing, which held that “this treaty is not in conflict with the political objective of the Federal Republic of Germany to work toward a state of peace in Europe in which the German people in free self-determination regains its unity.” See: Letter on German Unity, 12 August 1970 (= Document 20), in: Bundesministerium für innerdeutsche Beziehungen [= Federal Ministry of Intra-German Relations] (ed.), *Zehn Jahre Deutschlandpolitik* [= Ten Years of Germany Policy], 156–157. Originally published in: BGBl. II 1972, 356. The next step was the “Warsaw Pact” in which the Federal Republic de facto recognized the Oder-Neisse border. See: Treaty between the Federal Republic of Germany and the People’s Republic of Poland on the basis for normalization of their mutual relations of 7 December 1970 (“Warsaw Treaty”), BGBl. 1972 II, Nr. 27, 361. On September 3, 1971, after lengthy negotiations the Four Power Agreement on Berlin was signed. This stated that West Berlin is not part of the Federal Republic, but at the same time the Soviet Union recognized the close relationship between the Federal Republic and West Berlin and guaranteed not to interfere with these connections in the future.

The negotiation of the modalities was left to the two German states, see: Four Power Agreement (with the annexes I, II, III, IV), September 3, 1971 (Document 24), in: Bundesministerium für innerdeutsche Beziehungen [= the Federal Ministry of Intra-German Relations] (ed.), *Zehn Jahre Deutschlandpolitik* [= Ten Years of Germany policy], 158–162. After the Soviet Union had promised the unimpeded transit through the GDR to West Berlin in the Quadripartite Agreement, the negotiations on the transit agreement with the GDR were rapidly completed. See: Agreement between the Government of the Federal Republic of Germany and the Government of the German Democratic Republic concerning transit of civilian persons and goods between the Federal Republic of Germany and Berlin (West) 17 December 1971 (= Document 31) in: Bundesministerium für innerdeutsche Beziehungen [= Federal Ministry of Intra-German relations] (ed.), *Zehn Jahre Deutschlandpolitik* [= Ten Years of Germany Policy], 169–174. The so-called “Eastern treaties” were ratified by the Bundestag on 17 May 1972. The Quadripartite Agreement and the Transit Agreement entered into effect on 3 June 1972. On 26 May 1972 came already the signing of the “Transit Agreement”: agreement between the Federal Republic of Germany and the German Democratic Republic on questions of traffic (with protocol notes and correspondence and statements of the Secretary Bahr and Kohl) of 26 May 1972 (= Document 38), in: Bundesministerium für innerdeutsche Beziehungen [= Federal Ministry of Intra-German relations] (ed.), *Zehn Jahre Deutschlandpolitik* [= Ten years of Germany Policy], 183–188. On 8 November 1972, the “Basic Treaty” between the Federal Republic and the GDR, which regulated the future relationship of the two German states while maintaining the mutual positions in matters of principle, was initialed and signed on 21 December 1972. See: Treaty on basis of relations between the Federal Republic of Germany and the German Democratic Republic, 21 December 1972 See Vertrag über die Grundlagen der Beziehungen zwischen der Bundesrepublik Deutschland und der Deutschen Demokratischen Republik, 21. Dezember 1972 (= Dokument 53), in: Bundesministerium für innerdeutsche Beziehungen (ed.), *Zehn Jahre Deutschlandpolitik*, 205–208 (Erstveröffentlicht in: BGBl. II, 1973, 423–427), für die Briefwechsel, Erläuterungen und Erklärungen im Zusammenhang mit dem Vertrag siehe 208–213. With the “Prague Treaty” concluded on 11 December 1973 after tough negotiations, the relationship to Czechoslovakia was finally normalized.

<sup>167</sup> For the judgment of the Federal Constitutional Court on the Treaty on the Basis of Relations between the FRG and the GDR, see “Urteil des Bundesverfassungsgerichtes zum Vertrag über die Grundlagen der Beziehungen zwischen der Bundesrepublik Deutschland und der Deutschen Demokratischen Republik vom 31.7.1973” (= Document 68), in *Zehn Jahre Deutschlandpolitik*, 232–243.

within its borders of 31 December 1937 (thus including the former German Eastern territories).

Although the inviolability of borders is stipulated in the CSCE Final Act, the peaceful change of borders is not excluded.

For this reason, above all, the Soviet Union and Poland require border guarantees. The Western powers have a say due to the above-mentioned treaties.

The FRG accelerates the establishment of German Unity by recognizing that the historic opportunity may not be missed, as well as being under the pressure of the strong current of immigrants (1989 in total 340,000; Since the beginning of the current year 85,000). The Bonn government recognizes the Soviet Union's security interests, and wants German unification to be embedded in the overall European development, but rejects a neutralization as proposed by the Soviet Union. Chancellor Kohl rejects a definitive recognition of the Oder-Neisse border for domestic political reasons (loss of voters to the Republicans, accusations of "selling off German soil"), and also out of consideration that declarations of borders could only be made by an all-German government.

There is general agreement that in the case of establishing German Unity and Germany remaining in the NATO alliance, the effective range of the Western alliance is not to be extended into the present-day territory of the GDR (i.e. no stationing of NATO-integrated units). It has not yet been clarified whether – at least for a transitional period – a part of the Soviet troops stationed in the GDR should remain there. Foreign minister Genscher indicated that the FRG would generally not be averse to accepting such Soviet security demands for a certain time.

Through the emerging German unity and the anticipated withdrawal of a large part of the Soviet units from the present GDR (approx. 365,000 men) the recently agreed maximum number of 195,000 troops stationed in Central Europe, for each the US and Soviet Union seems problematic (especially since Soviet units will also be withdrawn from Czechoslovakia). In the case of German unification this number must be revised.

Soviet Union: The Kremlin's stance – probably due to awareness that the development towards German unity cannot be stopped – and is marked by major concessions in this question. The Soviet demands that the establishing of German Unity has to be embedded in the pan-European process and the desire for border guarantees remain in place.

Although, the original demand of neutralizing the whole of Germany was formally not entirely dropped (recent statements of Foreign Minister Shevardnadze),<sup>168</sup> the Kohl visit to Moscow<sup>169</sup> gives, however, the impression that the Soviet Union de facto does not intend to maintain this *conditio sine qua non*.

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<sup>168</sup> See Shevardnadze's speech at the European Parliament in Brussels on 19 December 1989, in: Auswärtiges Amt der Bundesrepublik Deutschland (ed.), *Umbruch in Europa. Die Ereignisse im 2. Halbjahr 1989. Eine Dokumentation* [= Change in Europe. The Events in the Second Half of 1989. A Documentation], (Bonn: 1990), 146–153.

<sup>169</sup> Kohl met with Gorbachev in Moscow on 10 February 1990. Gorbachev at least did not contradict the rejection of neutrality for a unified Germany. See document 174, in *Deutsche Einheit*, 795–807, and documents 72 and 73, in Aleksandr Galkin/Anatolij Tschernjajew (eds.), *Michail Gorbatschow und die deutsche Frage*.

(Incidentally, in this context the question arises whether the Soviet security interests are not better accommodated in case of a strong anchoring of Germany in the Western alliance system (control function!) than in the case of a neutralization of Germany.)

Constantly new suggestions from Moscow (last: Only a peace treaty can determine the state of Germany in Europe) allow the conclusion that the Soviet leadership has yet to arrive at a definitive stance.

The stance of the western powers can be characterized as follows:

USA: Among the 3 Western powers, the most positive attitude towards German unity. Their main interest is the firm embedding of a united Germany in NATO. In contrast to Great Britain and France, fears about a future predominance of Germany in Europe or of negative consequences for the EC integration process recede.

Great Britain: A remarkable change of attitude in the face of this inevitable development. Yet warnings of Prime Minister Thatcher against proceeding too rapidly. British interest to have a say in the unification process as a victor of World War II. Unuttered fears of a German predominance in Europe; demand for recognition of Poland's western border; rejection of a neutralization of Germany.

France: Fears that the unification process could slow the EC integration process and that the FRG now gives the former too much priority. Therefore, Mitterrand proposed to coordinate the creation of an EC monetary union with the creation of the German-German economic and monetary union. Insisting on a say in the German unification process. Discomfort about German predominance in Europe; demand for recognition of Poland's western border. rejection of a neutralization of Germany.

#### 4) The Economic aspects:

In his government declaration of 15. February 1990<sup>170</sup> Chancellor Kohl pointed out that the economic power of the GDR (approx. one fourth the population and about one third of the geographic extent of the FRG) corresponds approximately to the mid-sized Federal state Hesse; the newly created financial assets of the FRG in a single year correspond approximately with the entire savings portfolio of the GDR. If it were possible, to channel only a part of the annual West German capital exports (100 billion DM) into the GDR, this could already create strong economic impulses.

Despite the immense need of the GDR to catch up (in comparison to the West German standard they are lacking for example 3.6 million cars, 8 million telephone connections and

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*Sowjetische Dokumente 1986–1991* (Munich: Oldenbourg, 2011), 317–337. The non-uniformity of the Soviet position becomes obvious in the remarks by Shevardnadze to Genscher. See Aufzeichnung des Dg 21, Höynck, vom 11. Februar 1990 über das Gespräch von Bundesaußenminister Genscher mit dem sowjetischen Außenminister Šewardnadze am 10. Februar 1990 in Moskau [Auszug] (= Dokument 20), in: Andreas Hilger (ed.), *Diplomatie für die deutsche Einheit. Dokumente des Auswärtigen Amtes zu den deutsch-sowjetischen Beziehungen 1989/90* [= Diplomacy for German Unity. Documents of the Foreign Office on German–Soviet relations in 1989–90] (Munich: Oldenbourg, 2011), 98–105, especially 102.

<sup>170</sup> Deutscher Bundestag. Stenografischer Bericht 197. Sitzung, Bonn, 15. Februar 1990, 15102–15110.



600 billion DM for housing space) the restoration of the GDR economy could be mastered in the medium term, particularly as the gross national product is 10 times that of the GDR and also other foreign investment would flow into an economic space that is to be reshaped according to market principles. For the sake of completeness, it should be noted that according to FRG think tanks, the combination of FRG capital and FRG know-how with the high educational standards of the GDR workforce could lead to a second German economic miracle.

The delivery obligations of the GDR (consumer goods) to the Soviet Union constitute a special problem. The FRG insinuated to be prepared to meet these obligations in case of Germany unification.

5) Possible Future Development:

The creation of Economic and Monetary Union should be speedily pushed forward after the GDR elections on 18 March 1990 (existing commissions already get to grips with certain groundwork).

In April 1990, a summit on the issue of German unification should take place, which will deal with the consequences for the Communities.<sup>171</sup>

The 4 victorious powers of World War II and both German states (formula “2 + 4”) have agreed at the “Open Skies” conference in Ottawa on 14 February 1990<sup>172</sup> to hold a conference (expected already in spring 1990)<sup>173</sup> to discuss the external aspects of establishing German unity, including questions of the security of neighboring states. Preparatory contacts at the level of government officials should be initiated shortly. At this juncture, it was simultaneously expressed implicitly that the arrangement of the inner aspects of Unity should be agreed by both German states themselves.

The result of the “2+4” conference could then be submitted to and sanctioned by a CSCE summit.

Plattner m.p.<sup>174</sup>

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<sup>171</sup> The EC special summit was held in Dublin on 28 April 1990.

<sup>172</sup> The “Open Skies” conference of the NATO and Warsaw Pact foreign ministers was held in Ottawa from 12 to 14 February 1990. For the record on the NATO ministerial meeting on 13 February, see NATO-Ministerratstagung in Ottawa, 13. Februar 1990 (= Document 50), in Heike Amos/Tim Geiger (Bearb.), *Die Einheit. Das Auswärtige Amt, das DDR-Außenministerium und der Zwei-plus-Vier-Prozess* [= The Unity. The Foreign Office, the East German Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Two-Plus-Four process], ed. by Horst Möller/Ilse Dorothee Pautsch/Gregor Schöllgen/Hermann Wentker/Andreas Wirsching (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2015), 260–263.

<sup>173</sup> The meeting took place in Bonn on 5 May 1990 in Bonn, see document 268 in *Deutsche Einheit*, 1090–1094.

<sup>174</sup> Johann Plattner Head of the Department for Western and Northern Europe of the Political Section of the Austrian Foreign Ministry (1987–1993).

## Document 14: Assessment by the Austrian Foreign Ministry on the Question of German Unity, 2 April 1990

Source: Information, Envoy Johann Plattner, Vienna, 2 April 1990, ÖStA, AdR, BMAA, II-Pol 1990, GZ. 22.17.01/97-II.1/90. The information was sent to the Foreign Minister, the Secretary-General, the Section Heads, all departments of the Section II and the and the Austrian diplomatic representations in the states participating in the CSCE.

*The result of the elections in the GDR on 18 March 1990 was a distinct vote for rapid German unification. With the first freely elected East German government, the Federal Republic of Germany now had a new negotiating partner. Reservations towards "reunification" in the West had decreased significantly and misunderstandings smoothed. Still, the Soviet Union opposed NATO membership of a unified Germany. In addition, the question of Poland's western border was discussed intensively. Nevertheless, a conclusion of the unification process seemed possible and probable already in 1990.*

### German Unity, State of affairs in April 1990

#### I. Inner-German aspects

##### 1) Economic and Monetary Union

The result of the GDR elections on 18 March<sup>175</sup> can be seen as an endorsement of a quick German unification. Talks about establishing economic and monetary union have started. (A first FRG proposal: Currency Exchange 1 DM (West) = 2 DM (East) is momentarily facing rejection in the GDR.)<sup>176</sup> The first legal steps should be taken in May on and Monetary union should into effect in August if procurable.

In the face of this imminent connection of the two German states, individual EC countries, in particular France, are pushing for an acceleration of European economic and monetary union. For the Federal Republic of Germany, the question arises to what extent the simultaneous realization of these goals is possible.

##### 2) Legal Aspects of German Unity

In accordance with Bonn's Basic Law there are two possible ways: Art. 23 (accession of the GDR or the restored former countries whose territory becomes part of the scope of Basic Law) or Article 146 (the coming into effect of a new constitution for all of Germany, that would mean the creation of a new subject in international law). In the latter variant, however, there would be the problem that all the international treaties of the Federal Republic of Germany would have to be renegotiated, or at least re-enacted.

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<sup>175</sup> With a turnout of 93.38%, 48% of the votes went to the *Allianz für Deutschland* [Alliance for Germany] (DA, DSU, CDU), 21.8% to the SPD, 16.4% to the PDS, 5.3% to the Confederation of Free Democrats (LDO, FDP, DFP), 2.9% to the *Bündnis 90*, 2.2% to the DBD, 1.9% to the Grüne-UFV, 0.4% to the NDPD and 0.3% to the *Demokratischen Frauenbund* [Democratic Women's Federation].

<sup>176</sup> On the discussions and negotiations about the Monetary, Economic, and Social Union, see Dieter Grosser, *Das Wagnis der Währungs-, Wirtschafts- und Sozialunion. Politische Zwänge im Konflikt mit ökonomischen Regeln* [= The Venture of Monetary, Economic and Social Union. Political Constraints in Conflict with Economic Rules] (Stuttgart: Dt. Verlags-Anstalt, 1998), 209–276, in particular 245–252.

Still unclear is the international legal framework for German unification. The FRG rejects the conclusion of a formal peace treaty (almost 5 decades after the end of the war Germany would be tainted with the stigma of the defeated; theoretical problem of reparations). The discussion at this time concerns a declaration of the 4 Allies on the termination of their rights in relation to the whole of Germany, or a solution within the CSCE framework.

### 3) Flow of Migrants

The election results in the GDR and the prospects of a speedy economic union with the FRG has sharply reduced the flow of migrants from the GDR (from 2000 daily to approx. 1000 now).

## II. External Aspects

### 1) Responsibility of the Four Powers

The “2+4” negotiations on “external aspects” of German Unity, which were agreed upon in Ottawa on 13 February, started on 14 March 1990 in Bonn at the level of officials.<sup>177</sup> Procedural issues were discussed and the following list of topics was set (subsequent extension possible): border issues, political-military affairs, Berlin Question, rights and responsibilities of the 4 Allies. The next meeting at the level of officials is to be held in East Berlin after the forming of a new government.<sup>178</sup> The first meeting at foreign minister level is scheduled for the second half of April.<sup>179</sup>

The “2+4” negotiations should as possible be completed by autumn at the latest in order to submit their results to the planned CSCE Summit.

### 2) Political-Military Affairs

In the West, there is general agreement that NATO jurisdiction should not be extended into GDR territory (for example: no deployment of NATO units). The FRG has agreed to a temporary stationing of Soviet units on GDR territory.

In the West, there is also agreement that a transformation of NATO’s current role in disarmament, verification and stabilization tasks, seems necessary (introduction of first steps at the upcoming NATO Council?)<sup>180</sup> The membership of Germany in the EC is not to be questioned. It remains to be seen whether the realization of German unification will inhibit the momentum in deepening integration.

### 3) The Question of the Polish Western Border

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<sup>177</sup> The first Two Plus Four meeting at the level of officials convened in Bonn on 14 March 1990, see document 220 in *Deutsche Einheit*, 950–952.

<sup>178</sup> The second Two Plus Four meeting at the level of officials took place in East Berlin on 30 April 1990, see document 264, in *Deutsche Einheit*, 1074–1076.

<sup>179</sup> The meeting finally took place in Bonn on 5 May 1990, see document 268 in *Deutsche Einheit*, 1090–1094.

<sup>180</sup> The Ministerial Meeting of the North Atlantic Council was held in 7/8 June 1990 in Turnberry, United Kingdom.

Poland demands a definitive recognition of the Oder-Neisse border. Given the distinct support of the Polish position by the 4 Allies (especially France) and domestic pressure, Chancellor Kohl has modified his previous position (recognition only by a united Germany). The Bonn Bundestag adopted a resolution on 8 March 1990,<sup>181</sup> whereby the FRG and the GDR parliaments (after formation of the GDR government) should issue identical statements regarding a guarantee of the Polish western border.<sup>182</sup> The border guarantee should then be confirmed by a contract between the united Germany and Poland. Poland qualified the text of this statement as unsatisfactory, because it does not geographically define Poland's western border. Poland wants to draft and initial a border guarantee treaty with the two German states and its ratification by a united Germany.

Concerning border issues, Poland will be involved in the "2+4" negotiations.

#### 4) The Berlin Question

The cancelation of the Four Power Agreement could result from a joint political declaration of the Four Powers.

#### 5) Position of the West European countries

By modifying their original position (flexibility in the border issue, the involvement of Poland in "2+4" on this issue) and intensive information activities of the FRG government (more than 20 contacts at the highest level by Chancellor Kohl since the beginning of the year) the temporary irritation, especially in France and Britain, has been overcome.<sup>183</sup>

### III. Statements of the FRG government on a possible Time Frame

Monetary union until mid-1990. Completion of the "2+4" meetings until autumn 1990. Presentation of the results at the CSCE summit around November 1990. All-German elections in the second half of 1991. Legal integration of unified Germany in the EC until the end of 1992. Relocation to Berlin in stages (first the Federal President; initially only occasional government meetings in Berlin).

Plattner m.p.<sup>184</sup>

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<sup>181</sup> Deutscher Bundestag. Stenografischer Bericht 200. Sitzung, Bonn, 8 March 1990, 15405–15429.

<sup>182</sup> For the joint declaration of 21 June 1990, see Bundesministerium für innerdeutsche Beziehungen [= Federal Ministry of Intra-German Relations] (ed.), *Texte zur Deutschlandpolitik* [= Texts on Germany policy], Series III/Bd. 8a, 411–412. On the German-Polish "border dispute," see Andreas Rödder, *Deutschland einig Vaterland. Die Geschichte der Wiedervereinigung* [= Germany united Fatherland. The history of reunification] (Munich: Beck, 2009), 235–244.

<sup>183</sup> Handwritten marginalia on the document, "meanwhile also a Franco-German initiative: Political Union + EMU-Union parallel." On 18 April 1990, in a common letter, Mitterrand and Kohl addressed the current president of the European Council, the Irish Prime Minister Charles Haughey, requesting in addition to the Dublin Council meeting on Economic and Monetary Union (EMU) to convene a further summit concerning "Political Union," see Europa-Archiv 1990, D 283.

<sup>184</sup> Johann Plattner Head of the Department for Western and Northern Europe of the Political Section of the Austrian Foreign Ministry (1987–1993).

## Document 15: Visit by the General Secretary of the Austrian Foreign Ministry Thomas Klestil to Bonn, 24 April 1990

Source: Résuméprotokoll, Envoy Johann Plattner, Vienna, 26 April 1990, Confidential!, ÖStA, AdR, BMAA, II-Pol 1990, GZ. 22.17.1/119-II.1/90. The protocol was distributed to the Foreign Minister, the General Secretary, the Section Heads, the departments II.2, II.3, II.6, II.7, II.8 of the Political Section, Section III, and the Austrian diplomatic representations in the states participating in the CSCE.

*As the German-German negotiations and the Two-Plus-Four process was under way, the General Secretary of the Austrian Foreign Ministry Thomas Klestil traveled to Bonn for a political exchange of opinions. Naturally, the German unification process was at the center of all discussions and the West German interlocutors informed with great openness about the progress of the negotiations and existing problems. The rapid pace Bonn was pushing the negotiations forward became obvious. The Federal Republic expressed its satisfaction with Austria's now entirely positive attitude to German unity. Austria, however, was not only interested in the progress of German unification, but in the West German attitude to Austria's EU membership application.*

### **The General Secretary's<sup>185</sup> Political Exchange of Views in Bonn (24 April 1990)**

- 1) Conversation with State Minister Adam-Schwätzer<sup>186</sup> (responsible for European policy)

#### State Minister Schwätzer:

The version of the monetary, economic and social union with the GDR, that was announced by Federal Chancellor Kohl, can only be modified very slightly in the negotiations with the GDR because the financial burden on the FRG budget leaves only little leeway. Costs for the environment, infrastructure, etc. have not even been calculated yet. Additionally, the extent of the GDR delivery obligations, on whose observation the USSR insists, is not yet known and constitutes another big problem. A psychological problem is the discrepancy between the high expectations in the GDR and the fact that 50% of FRG's population have little "relation to the GDR" and ask themselves why the FRG should "pay so much." This hesitation could turn into a bad mood if German unification takes too long in coming. The monetary union must be completed by 8 July, so that East German citizens can go on vacation using the Westmark.

On the General Secretary's question, what impact German unification would have on Europe and Austria, from FRG's point of view, State Minister Schwätzer pointed out that in relation to the EC no new treaties are necessary. After completion of the 2+4 talks (the first meeting of the foreign ministers on 5 May in Bonn)<sup>187</sup> unification will take place in accordance with § 23 of the Basic Law. Prior to EC law going into effect in the GDR, one must find temporary solutions, otherwise one would have to "close" the current GDR (reference to the state of companies, environment, etc.). Also, inspection of goods at the internal border must be maintained for a long time. Yet before 1993 a maximum of EC standards must be aspired on

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<sup>185</sup> Thomas Klestil, General Secretary of the Foreign Ministry (1987–1992).

<sup>186</sup> Irmgard Adam-Schwätzer, Minister of State in the Foreign Office (1987–1991).

<sup>187</sup> On the first meeting of Foreign Ministers of the Two Plus Four in Bonn on 5 May 1990, see document 268, in *Deutsche Einheit*, 1090–1094.

GDR territory. The current economic strength of the GDR amounts to 10% of FRG-capacity. On the General Secretary's question, how Austrian business opportunities in unified Germany and particularly in the GDR territory can be assessed, state minister Schwätzer stated that especially private investment from all industrialized countries would develop the GDR economy. Of course, Austria should participate.

By now a common position of the two German states in international organizations, especially in the CSCE, is being prepared with GDR foreign minister Meckel.<sup>188</sup> The 2+4 talks should be completed as early as possible, the topic of "security" causes the greatest problems, especially because the Soviet Union has not yet determined its stance on this complex issue. In any case, Germany has to remain in NATO.

The General Secretary pointed to the fact that the in Soviet foreign ministry's department responsible for the FRG and Austria has not undergone any change in personnel for many years. Bondarenko's<sup>189</sup> influence on Shevardnadze certainly is a given.

The General Secretary then repeated Austria's interest in hosting the CSCE Summit in Vienna. The host would be Chancellor Vranitzky, the necessary apparatus is ready. Unfortunately, the US subjected the start of preparatory measures to conditions (completion of CFE).<sup>190</sup> On the question of EC accession the General Secretary stated that Austria is sticking to the chosen path and would not accept being lumped together with Eastern European countries, which have already expressed their interest in joining the EC, but lag far behind in their economic development. Austria indeed supports the Delors process,<sup>191</sup> however, it is skeptical; this path cannot be a substitute for accession.

## 2) Conversation with State Secretary Sudhoff<sup>192</sup>

The General Secretary inquired State Secretary Sudhoff to share the German assessments regarding:

- The new political structures to be established in Europe (CSCE in particular) and
- the future development of the EC (Austria does not want to be put in the waiting room, the role of neutrality is changing, question about the European Political Union).<sup>193</sup>

### Sudhoff:

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<sup>188</sup> Markus Meckel, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the GDR (April to August 1990).

<sup>189</sup> Alexander Bondarenko, Head of the 3rd European Department at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the USSR (1971–1991).

<sup>190</sup> The Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe (CFE) was signed on 19 November 1990 at the CSCE Summit in Paris.

<sup>191</sup> The process of creating a European Economic Area (EEA) in negotiations between the EC and EFTA, named after the driving personality EC Commission President Jacques Delors.

<sup>192</sup> Jürgen Sudhoff, State Secretary in the Foreign Office of the Federal Republic of Germany (1985–1991).

<sup>193</sup> On 18 April 1990, in a common letter, Mitterrand and Kohl addressed the current president of the European Council, the Irish Prime Minister Charles Haughey, requesting in addition to the Dublin Council meeting on Economic and Monetary Union (EMU) to convene a further summit concerning "Political Union," see Europa-Archiv 1990, D 283.

If the Monetary, Economic and Social union with the GDR (GDR must start from now on with the introduction of the free market, the policy of the German Central Bank must from now on also apply to East German territory) is certain, the largest part of the problem has already been solved. Then the secondary legislation of the EC in accordance with Delors' the three phases (1. Monetary Union, 2. Transition to political union, 3. Introduction of EC law) must be introduced in the GDR. (In this context, high praise for Delors!) The People's Chamber must now quickly adopt the necessary legislation. With regard to the necessary investments in the GDR, great opportunities for the industrialized countries would arise – of course also for Austria – with corresponding economic emanation to the East. The economic importance of GDR integration is already seen from the fact that 1% additional economic growth in Germany as a whole, results in an EC growth of ½%. The West German economy is already standing at attention. Everything will develop very quickly.

On the interposed question by the General Secretary, which "contact points" could advise the Austrian economy in terms of GDR investments, Sudhoff answered that the FRG Chamber of Trade and business associations are already planning to open offices in the GDR.

The external aspects of unification are proving difficult. On 5 May, the first 2+4-meeting on the level of foreign ministers will take place in Bonn<sup>194</sup> (before this the ambassadors will meet in East Berlin).<sup>195</sup> The FRG sets high value on treating the dialog partners with absolute equality (this is also recognized by all dialog partners). The topics are: border issues, the security question, and Berlin.

#### Border Issue:

This issue has been hyped as a sham topic. The GDR has its Treaty of Zgorzelec<sup>196</sup> (GDR renouncement on all territorial claims against Poland) and the FRG its Warsaw Treaty.<sup>197</sup> The Republican Party was not able to benefit from the border issue in the favor of the voters (currently only 2% in surveys). The border issue will be settled by a resolution of both parliaments, Poland will be informed at 2 + 4 about this issue, but not be involved in talks.<sup>198</sup>

#### Security Question:

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<sup>194</sup> On the first meeting of Foreign Ministers of the Two Plus Four in Bonn on 5 May 1990, see document 268, in *Deutsche Einheit*, 1090–1094.

<sup>195</sup> The second Two Plus Four meeting at the level of officials took place in East Berlin on 30 April 1990, see document 264, in *Deutsche Einheit*, 1074–1076.

<sup>196</sup> The "Agreement Concerning the Demarcation of the Established and the Existing Polish-German State Frontier," also known as the "Treaty of Görlitz" and "Treaty of Zgorzelec" between the GDR and Poland recognizing the Oder-Neisse border was signed on 6 June 1950. See *Dokumente zur Deutschlandpolitik II/3*, 249–252.

<sup>197</sup> The Warsaw Treaty of 7 December 1970 recognized the Oder-Neisse border. All West German governments had however since then adhered to the legal position that only a freely elected all-German government could decide definitively on the eastern border. See Vertrag zwischen der Bundesrepublik Deutschland und der Volksrepublik Polen über die Grundlagen der Normalisierung ihrer gegenseitigen Beziehungen vom 7. Dezember 1970 („Warschauer Vertrag“) [Treaty between the Federal Republic of Germany and the People's Republic of Poland on the basis for the normalization of their mutual relations on 7 December 1970 ("Warsaw Treaty")], BGBl. 1972 II, Nr. 27, 361.

<sup>198</sup> The 2+4 talks in Paris on 17 July 1990, concerning the Oder-Neisse border, were however held with representatives from Poland.

This is an especially “tricky” issue because the Soviet need for security is linked to it. The Gorbachev opponents would argue with the blood toll of the Soviet Army during World War II. The answer to the question what the Soviet Union “gets” for the German unification proved to be difficult because the Soviet position is not clear (first a neutral Germany, then not a member of NATO, etc.). From a German perspective, neutrality is out of question, NATO membership is not “negotiable” because peace is not yet assured (ethnic issues, etc.), the new structures are still missing and because the FRG wants to see the USA and Canada militarily and politically integrated into Europe.

The CSCE needs new structures, Foreign Minister Genscher therefore made proposals.<sup>199</sup> In the end a sort of “European Security Council” must be created. Foreign Minister Dumas<sup>200</sup> will address an invitation letter for a CSCE summit in Paris to the CSCE states. NATO must be preserved, but the strategy changed. In the end, the Russians will also see it this way. Germany urges NATO to change its strategy; pointing to the reciprocity effect between NATO change and Gorbachev’s internal difficulties. Soviet soldiers could easily remain in the GDR without an immediate time limit (SIC!).<sup>201</sup> On reducing the number of FRG soldiers, he did not want to mention any figures. The future troop levels could, however, be closer to 300,000 than 400,000. But this question belongs in the CFE<sup>202</sup> (no singularization of Germany!). NATO troops should not be deployed on what is now GDR territory, one will speak about this at 2+4. There are no plans for the New People’s Army,<sup>203</sup> it is currently immobile, perhaps even faces liquidation and could possibly be used as border guards in the future.

#### The Four Powers Agreement:

In what form the renouncement of the responsibility of the Four Powers will be carried out, is not clear. It is certain that there will be no peace treaty. (“We are no longer the vanquished!”)

#### Time Frame:

The result of the 2+4 talks has to be submitted to the CSCE Summit already in the course of 1990. This [summit] is no decision-making authority, it just takes cognizance of it. Moreover, the friends of the FRG are being informed in ongoing consultations. The FRG also understands a certain reluctance of neighboring countries, considering the events of the first half of the century. The positive Austrian attitude towards German unification has been very well received in the FRG. (“A marvelous piece of the partnership.”) The stance of the United States has been particularly important. The French are also very helpful now, but still must

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<sup>199</sup> On 31 January 1990 Genscher had given a widely noted speech on German unity within the European framework at the Evangelical Academy in Tutzing. There he explained that in a united Germany, neither the continuing membership in the EC, nor the membership in the Western alliance, is subject to debate. Genscher rejected the option of a neutralist unified Germany as well as an eastwards expansion of NATO jurisdiction, i.e. not closer to the border of the Soviet Union. By arguing that such safeguards are important for the Soviet Union and its behavior, he warned that the idea to include the territory of the GDR in the military structures of NATO, would block the German-German rapprochement. See Der Bundesminister des Auswärtigen informiert. Mitteilung für die Presse Nr. 1026, 31. 1. 1990.

<sup>200</sup> Roland Dumas, French Foreign Minister (1984–1986 & 1988–1993).

<sup>201</sup> SIC! as in the original.

<sup>202</sup> The negotiations on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe.

<sup>203</sup> The reforming East Germany National People’s Army.



get used to the idea of “Germany.” There are certain problems with Mrs. Thatcher. With regard to the 2+4 talks the British were very reserved (the Foreign Office partially did not solidarize with the Prime Minister).<sup>204</sup>

The General Secretary asked about the re-updated idea of achieving the European Political Union, possibly with defense components.

Sudhoff:

The German-German development helps Austria. Certain “pointed remarks” against EC membership will be eliminated. If the USSR “swallows” German unification and this Germany is under a CSCE roof, then Austrian neutrality has also to be seen in a new light. The installation of security or even defense components in the EC is not possible that fast. First one needs political structures and this is already very much. Defense elements in the EC would call the existence of NATO into question. Austria does not need to worry about being put off by the EC.

The political fate of Gorbachev is uncertain, and will also be determined by economic issues. Currently he is not in danger. The French are more optimistic now than before.

The General Secretary explained the Austrian assessment of the situation in Yugoslavia (which creates great worry in West Germany too; 2,800 asylum seekers from Kosovo in Germany!).

State Secretary Sudhoff finally pointed to the increased importance of the consular services (increasing personnel requirements!) and stated that the introduction of visa-free travel for Hungary<sup>205</sup> had required a lot of persuasion in the EC. Refugees would be a “topic of the future.”

3) Conversation with State Secretary Lautenschlager<sup>206</sup>

The General Secretary refers to the Kohl-Mitterrand initiative towards completion of European Political Union (military component of the EC?) and asks the FRG to share its perspective on the Austrian EC application.

Lautenschlager:

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<sup>204</sup> Both Thatcher and the Foreign Office were skeptical of German unification, however, in December 1989/January 1990, the differing attitudes of the Prime Minister and her more flexible Foreign Office became gradually apparent. See Klaus Larres, Margaret Thatcher and German Unification Revisited, in: Wolfgang Mueller/Michael Gehler/Arnold Suppan (eds.), *The Revolutions of 1989. A Handbook* (Vienna: Austrian Academy of Sciences, 2015), 355–384, here 377–383; as well as the documents 142–144, 180–182, 185–186, 190, 192–195 in: Keith Hamilton/Patrick Salmon/Stephen Twigge (eds.), *Documents on British Policy Overseas (DBPO), Series III, Vol. VII: German Unification, 1989–1990* (London/New York: Routledge, 2010).

<sup>205</sup> The mutual visa requirement was lifted on 1 May 1990.

<sup>206</sup> Hans-Werner Lautenschlager, State Secretary at the West German Foreign Office (1987–1992).

The Aide-Mémoire<sup>207</sup> was a good thing. Thereby, the “neutrality aspect so strongly marked” in the application for membership (why did that happen?) was relativized. The European Political Union has not yet been defined and for good reason. Something must be done here to enhance the European Parliament and to make the next European Parliament elections more attractive for the voters. Bonn has certain ideas about it, but this question is not a priority (SIC!).<sup>208</sup>

Bonn is fully aware of the difference between the economic standard of Austria and the Eastern European countries. The development in Europe could – if all goes well in the USSR – reveal neutrality in a different light. The Franco-German campaign results in greater coherency between politics and business in the EC. This coherency is in need of improvement. The decision-making structures must be more efficient. The political and economic structures of the EC must be merged together more intensively. The European Parliament needs more rights. The British are not as negative about this as is generally assumed. On the issue of monetary union, economic but not political sovereignty is what must be given up. The creation of the European Political Union (which will not reach to the Urals) could be important for Austria (no doubt, what is meant is that Austria should join this development!) It is hard to imagine that the Soviet Union would create problems as Austria’s neutrality loses significance in this overall development. The Austrian desire for EC membership is well known to all, Austria has acted well so far, but should not press too hard. The EC Commission is completely independent and has its own rhythm. Whether the notification is completed a little earlier or later, is not so crucial. Austria must have some patience. The internal market still presents a major problem (tax harmonization!): The work that is approaching the EC also in connection with the GDR is enormous. Maybe Austria could “fetch something out” for the EFTA in the Delors process. The Swiss attitude of so-called “pure culture” (Putting it bluntly: no surrendering of sovereignty, but full membership!) is not effective.

On the General Secretary’s allusion about transit problems<sup>209</sup> and the impact of German unification on Austria, Lautenschlager said: The transit problems should be dealt with in technical discussions. If the free market is introduced into the GDR, great opportunities would be provided for all countries, Austria of course as well, and especially for private capital (investments!). The GDR corresponds population-wise with North Rhine-Westphalia and economically with the German state of Hesse. The development of the GDR economy is bearable for the FRG and will create strong economic impulses in a few years.

4) Conversation with the Foreign Affairs Advisor of Chancellor Kohl, Ministerialdirektor Teltschik<sup>210</sup>

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<sup>207</sup> In its application Austria had pointed out that it would remain neutral when entering into the EC. The aide memoire of February 1990 relativized this stance to a certain degree and instead highlighted Austrian neutrality as a contribution to peace and security in Europe. See *Die Presse*, 17/18 February 1990.

<sup>208</sup> SIC! on the original.

<sup>209</sup> The steadily increasing burden of transalpine traffic in the 1980s, especially of heavy goods vehicles, led in 1990 to a “Transit War” between the affected west-Austrian provinces of Tyrol, Salzburg and Vorarlberg and the Free State of Bavaria on the other side.

<sup>210</sup> Horst Teltschik, CDU, Head of the Department of Foreign and Inner-German Relations, Development Policy and External Security at the Federal Chancellery (1982–1990).

The General Secretary asked about the decision on where the CSCE Summit will take place, and the FRG's view of the prospects for Austrian accession to the EC.

### Teltschik:

The Monetary, Economic and Social union with the GDR has absolute priority. The 2+4 process must be rapidly brought to an end. The USSR has not yet understood that this is a question of time. Also de Maizière<sup>211</sup> has pointed out the time pressure to Kohl (the number of emigrants is rising again).

Kohl is not a "steamroller," the population of the GDR is impatient! A request will soon be submitted in the People's Chamber to suspend the liability to military service. The USSR will be surprised how quickly everything goes. The FRG has no time to lose!

The CFE<sup>212</sup> must soon bring about a result also concerning the GDR. Even for the 2+4 process one must know what will come out at CFE. CFE II<sup>213</sup> must follow up and with the confidence-building measures a result is also needed soon.

Kohl (10-point program)<sup>214</sup> and Genscher have already made proposals for the institutionalization of the CSCE. The key is the security structure. Here one could take what has already been achieved (CDE<sup>215</sup> and expected results at the Vienna conferences) and add new ideas, i.e. regular biannual meetings of the chiefs of staff, and from these tie together a substantial "package of security." [...] <sup>216</sup> Particularly important for Europe's growing together is the economy (reference to the positive CSCE Economic Conference in Bonn).<sup>217</sup>

Lithuania creates great concern in Bonn. It raises the question of whether Bush should react already now.

Germany urgently needs answers to four questions:

- Result in 2+4;
- New security structure;
- Disarmament process;
- Economic development.

France is a difficult partner. (But "without France nothing works!") Bonn has repeatedly asked the French to take care of Poland, without there ever being a French reaction. But when it came to the Oder/Neisse border, Mitterrand became active. One wonders in Bonn

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<sup>211</sup> Lothar de Maizière, Prime Minister of the GDR (April–October 1990).

<sup>212</sup> Negotiations on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe.

<sup>213</sup> The planned follow-up to the CFE negotiations never materialized.

<sup>214</sup> Speech by Chancellor Helmut Kohl in the German Bundestag on 28 November 1989, see Deutscher Bundestag, Stenografische Protokolle, 177. Sitzung, Bonn, 28. November 1989, 13502–13514, particularly 13510–13513.

<sup>215</sup> Conference on Confidence and Security Building Measures and Disarmament in Europe. The negotiations took place in Stockholm (1984–1986) and in Vienna (1989–1992).

<sup>216</sup> Omitted was the remark that Klestil in an internal meeting on 26 April requested his diplomats to make considerations about this.

<sup>217</sup> The CSCE Conference on Economic Cooperation in Europe was held from 19 March to 11 April 1990 in Bonn.

what Mitterrand wants. France is informed about everything (80 Kohl-Mitterrand meetings since 1982!).

#### CSCE Summit:

If France wants to have the summit in Paris, the FRG cannot oppose it. The same applies to the other EC members. (On the letter by foreign minister Dumas,<sup>218</sup> one of Teltschik's staff members said the French "would try," but there is no advance obligation of the EC countries.) According to Teltschik, Vienna however has real chances to host the signing of the two agreements negotiated there.

The General Secretary then explained, on Teltschik's request, the Austrian assessment on the Eastern countries, especially Yugoslavia.

(Teltschik will travel to Vienna in June of this year to the Institute of Human Sciences conference "Central Europe on the Way to Democracy," 28.6.–1.7.1990.)

#### Assessment:

Great determination and haste on the part of the Bonn government in the implementation of German unification, yet with consideration for Soviet security needs.

The European political union is not really a major concern of Bonn, hardly any chance is given to the military component in the EC. (NATO must – although modified – remain!) The joint initiative of Kohl and Mitterrand towards European Political Union is less a German priority, but rather a gesture to France, which is facing German unification reservedly.

#### Austria:

Wholehearted support in the EC question; too strong of an urge for shortening the time of the accession process is considered inopportune by the German side. It is expected that Austria will obtain good opportunities for participation in GDR-economic development. The Austrian attitude on the German question was registered very positively.

Vienna, on 26 April 1990

Plattner m.p.<sup>219</sup>

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<sup>218</sup> In his letter, Dumas had promoted Paris as the venue of the summit.

<sup>219</sup> Johann Plattner Head of the Department for Western and Northern Europe of the Political Section of the Austrian Foreign Ministry (1987–1993).

## Document 16: Memorandum of Conversation Chancellor Franz Vranitzky – President François Mitterrand, Bordeaux, 7 May 1990

Source: Memorandum. Meeting of the Federal Chancellor with President Mitterrand, Bordeaux, May 7, 1990, Kreisky Archives, Depositum Franz Vranitzky, AP, box "BK Bayern 1991 BK USA 1990; BK Liechtenstein; BK Bulgarien; BK Bordeaux, London, Dublin; BK Düsseldorf; BK Schweden; BK Rumänien". The preparatory information for Vranitzky stated with regard to German unification: "France. [...]. German unity: Temporary irritation France – FRG (disappointment in Paris on Chancellor Kohl's going it alone and worry concerning Bonn's future European commitment, strong support of France for Poland on the issue of its western border) has been overcome in the meantime."

*Vranitzky's meeting with the French head of state was part of a promotional tour for the Austrian EC accession. By April at the latest, Mitterrand had overcome his doubts about whether German unification and the deepening of European integration were compatible, and the Austrian chancellor did not believe in the further existence of the GDR anymore. Therefore, his encounter with the French President focused on the future of European integration and Austrian participation in it. The German issue played no role in the conversation, however, it should be noted that the French stance on the Austrian application for membership had changed significantly since the "Fall of the Wall." Voices warning against a further increase of "German" influence in the EC had increased. It took years until France welcomed the Austrian accession and even then, Mitterrand was still of the opinion that yet another "German" state would join the European Union.*

### **Meeting of the Chancellor with President Mitterrand**

The meeting of the Chancellor with President Mitterrand took place alongside the annual meeting of the International Press Institute, which was opened by President Mitterrand. The Chancellor was invited to give a position paper on "The Dawn of Democracy in Eastern Europe."

The Chancellor opened the conversation by stating that he would like to take this opportunity to set out the guidelines for Austrian integration policy and especially the Austrian efforts regarding accession with President Mitterrand personally. The Austrian government and public are determined by the awareness that integration is necessary not only for economic-political considerations, but also with regard to the reorganization of cooperation in Europe. Austria is convinced that it can make a significant contribution to the development of integration, not only in economic but also in political terms. Likewise, it is aware that integration includes not just opportunities, but also the assumption of obligations. Recently, speculation and newspaper articles had increased concerning France's reservations about the accession of Austria. After his conversations with French politicians, he did not really gain that impression, and was therefore interested in political clarification. Austria is bracing itself well for the negotiations and possible membership. Of course, it understands that there are EC projects, which first still have to be clarified. Austria is interested in an individualized treatment of its application, and should not be thrown in one basket with other countries that would not reach a membership level for a long time. Although one speaks German in Austria, no speculations should be attached to Austria joining the EC as anything other than the Republic of Austria.

President Mitterrand explained, that also in the case of the [EC] accession of Spain and Portugal, the concerns raised by the government of Giscard d'Estaing, had been construed

as a negative French attitude although his government had already taken a positive position to enlargement. Those are only pretexts and excuses, in which France is used. There is a “volonté générale” to not open the EC now, or at least not until the various projects are completed by 1993. Also, all “new Europeans” would push to join the EC, which would make the situation more difficult for candidate countries. Additionally, the members must consider how they can solve all the other issues at stake when they open now. Certainly, there were different tendencies within the EC. He has the impression that, for example, the UK aspires to a dissolution of the EC in a large free-trade area. This is unacceptable for France. France and the FRG will work toward a thoroughly organized Europe. Austria would have to be patient at least until 1993.

The Chancellor replied that he especially seeks the understanding that Austria might also be a partner for the goals of a united Europe. It is understandable that the EC sets its own timetable, which would also give Austria a clear picture. Currently important for Austria is the basic willingness to negotiate with Austria after the existing projects are completed. President Mitterrand explained that there is no question that Austria is the first candidate and also fulfills all the conditions. Lastly, there is only a short amount of time until the end of 1992, and if Austria wants to join, France does not mind. Negotiations with EFTA<sup>220</sup> have however identified a number of difficulties, and above all made it clear “that one cannot keep everything.” The EC will bring a lot of stipulations with it, and integration also means renouncing sovereignty and engaging in pan-European structures. Another German-speaking country surely adds a certain imbalance to the EC, this must be compensated by political accordance.

The Chancellor tied to this a few comments on the history of the German-Austrian relationship in this century and the development of an Austrian national consciousness. President Mitterrand contrasted this with the development of Franco-German relations, and stated that certain reflexes of the past must be overcome. Integration contributed to this and the Franco-German friendship has become a reality today.

Foreign Minister Dumas<sup>221</sup> took part in the conversation and expressed the opinion that Austria must distinguish itself in all areas and concrete activities as an EC country, and particularly emphasized the active participation in television and media programs of the EC which has been offered to Austria. He then summarized for the Chancellor his talk with Foreign Minister Mock concerning the CSCE.<sup>222</sup>

The Chancellor underlined that Austria as host of the CSCE proceedings is very committed and involved of course, to find a reasonable way for the future of the CSCE. President Mitterrand reiterated the great interest of France to hold the planned CSCE summit conference,<sup>223</sup> but said that Vienna had the best conditions to become the permanent location for CSCE institutions.<sup>224</sup>

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<sup>220</sup> On the initiative of the European Commission President Jacques Delors from 17 January 1989, the creation of the “European Economic Area” (EEA) should be promoted between the EC and the EFTA States. An agreement on the EEA was signed in Porto on 2 May 1992 and went into effect in 1994.

<sup>221</sup> Roland Dumas, Foreign Minister of France (1984–1986 & 1988–1993).

<sup>222</sup> Unfortunately, no record of conversation has yet been discovered.

<sup>223</sup> The CSCE summit was finally held in Paris from 19 to 21 November 1990.

<sup>224</sup> The secretariat of the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe is based in Vienna.

## Document 17: Memorandum of Conversation Chancellor Franz Vranitzky – Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher, London, 8 May 1990

Source Memorandum, London, May 8, 1990, GZ. 706.02/119-II.1/90, Kreisky Archives, Depositum Franz Vranitzky, AP, box "BK Bayern 1991; BK USA 1990; BK Liechtenstein; BK Bulgarien; BK Bordeaux, London, Dublin; BK Düsseldorf; BK Schweden; BK Rumänien". The memorandum was submitted to the Austrian diplomatic missions in the EC countries.

*Just a day after his conversation with the French President in Bordeaux (see document 16) the Austrian Chancellor met with the British Prime Minister in London as part of his European promotional tour. Unlike Mitterrand, Thatcher had even in the spring of 1990 not yet changed her personal attitude to German unification although she knew it was coming. The conversation between the two heads of government initially touched the question of German unity, on which both retained a certain degree of skepticism, and then turned to European integration and the Austrian EC membership application.*

### **Meeting of the Chancellor with Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher**

Prime Minister Thatcher opened the conversation with a brief presentation of the economic and financial situation of Great Britain, and then addressed British problems with the concept of a European monetary union as well as the financial impact of German unification on this project. Although she expects from German unification a big modernization effect, and impulses for economic growth and technological development in Germany, which would only come to fruition in the medium to long term. In the assessment of these consequences even opinions from various German differ. While Chancellor Kohl assessed the further development very optimistically and confidently, she also received more reserved reactions from Minister President Späth.<sup>225</sup> The Chancellor commented that his own assessment is more oriented to the cautious line of Minister President Späth. Although he is not pessimistic, the tasks ahead, are occasionally rather being underestimated than overestimated.

Prime Minister Thatcher said that one would of course have to reckon with an increase in interest rates and an inflationary push, which could not fail to affect the currencies of other European countries. This also influences the British position towards European Monetary Union. Although she insistently supports reducing controls and restrictions as far as possible, she has reservations about absolute freedom of capital movements. The British Parliament would certainly not be prepared to cede control of the budget and financial autonomy to a group of European bankers who would not be subject to democratic checks or democratic election. The other problems within the EU are also considerable: the single market is still far from completion, and on top of that one was forced to deal with the German unification process. Strict control is also necessary for further action by the EC towards the GDR, it is especially important that no communist structures are maintained. The EC has too many problems in its program, so many that it dares not take on any additional issues. She is aware that this is a certain disappointment for Austria, but nonetheless Austria would indeed move closer to the EC via the negotiations between the EC and EFTA.<sup>226</sup>

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<sup>225</sup> Lothar Späth, Minister President of Baden-Württemberg (1978–1991) whom she had met recently.

<sup>226</sup> On the initiative of the European Commission President Jacques Delors from 17 January 1989, the creation of the "European Economic Area" (EEA) should be promoted between the EC and the EFTA States. An agreement on the EEA was signed in Porto on 2 May 1992 and went into effect in 1994.

The Chancellor pointed out the fact that Austria is seriously involved in the EC and EFTA process, but that this process could hardly replace membership. Austria is making good strides in its preparation for EC membership, and has already made a lot of internal changes. Austria is willing and prepared to take on the obligations arising from EC membership. Austria would contribute in various ways to the further development of integration: geographically as well as economically and financially. Prime Minister Thatcher pointed out the fact that no one in the EC has said no to Austrian membership, "It is just that we can not digest it." She then mentioned that she is following the developments in Eastern Europe with a certain uneasiness. National tensions, religious problems, problems between individual countries, questionable borders, and the general uncertainty of politically, economically and ideologically uprooted people are cause for this concern. In this situation, the CSCE is of great importance, offering the instruments for the peaceful settlement of these problems.

The Chancellor commented that he also follows certain developments in Eastern Europe with concern. Although he is not pessimistic concerning the solution of the problems at issue, yet, it is dangerous not to see clearly the problems and not to articulate them. Much of this is an inevitable reaction due to the new freedom after years of suppression. Austria is following with particular attention the developments in Yugoslavia. An escalation of the internal problems of Yugoslavia, possibly to the point of dissolving the state union, would have serious consequences and add many more problems. In addition to the international measures Austria is also bilaterally very involved in the in all Eastern European states, concerning economic cooperation, as well as cultural and social issues, and Austria renders a number of small and quiet mediation tasks.

Prime Minister Thatcher mentioned her opinion that when Eastern Europe turns away from central steering and statism, Western Europe could not enter into a counter-movement. She would therefore not be able to agree to a greater centralization of the EC and especially not to the concept of political union, as long as it is not defined completely clearly what this political union should consist of. She is especially worried that no democratic control and no democratic accountability is provided. She sees the EC primarily as a co-operation in the economic and financial area. All further measures must be clearly defined first. Concerning the CSCE, Prime Minister Thatcher stressed that the CSCE would need structures for their cooperation. In her opinion, NATO must remain the center of Western defense. NATO is the active instrument of defense, and NATO is also the political structure, which guarantees cooperation across the Atlantic with the US and Canada, to which she attaches the greatest importance. In a European security system that should find its anchoring in the CSCE, she mainly sees the political role to consult and cooperate with the Soviet Union. In her opinion, it would be necessary for the CSCE to meet at least twice a year.



## Document 18: Assessment by the Austrian Foreign Ministry on the Question of German Unity, 18 July 1990

Source: Information, Envoy Johann Plattner, Vienna, 18 July 1990, ÖStA, AdR, BMAA, II-Pol 1990, GZ. 22.17.01/173-II.1/90. The information was distributed to the Federal Minister, the General Secretary, the Section Heads, all departments of the Political Section, and the Austrian diplomatic representations in member states of the CSCE. The information was also part of the preparation file for Federal Chancellor Vranitzky on the occasion of the visit by Lothar de Maizière to Austria scheduled for 25 and 26 July 1990. See Arbeitsbesuch von MP Lothar de Maizière 25./26. Juli 1990, Kreisky Archives, Depositum Franz Vranitzky, AP, box "BM Choonhavan Chatichai (Thailand), MP Calfa CSFR 1990 PM Silva (Portugal), MP Singh (Indien), Pres. Dubcek (CSFR), PM Kang Young-Hoon (Korea), PM Bhutto (Pakistan), Pres. George Vassiliou (Zypern), MP Maiziere Lothar (DDR) 25.7.90).

*The "inner" unification process had made great progress in the spring of 1990 with the signing of the Treaty on Monetary, Economic and Social Union on 18 May. The Treaty went into effect on 1 July. The international breakthrough on the way to German unification followed in mid-July 1990 when Mikhail Gorbachev finally gave Helmut Kohl his consent to a unified Germany in NATO. Naturally, the Soviet Union had aimed at counterbalancing its consent with receiving economic and financial compensations in return. Now it was finally clear that German unity would become reality before the end of the year, and the question for Austria was how this would affect its intentions to accede EC*

### **German Unity; State of Affairs in mid-July 1990**

#### I. Inner-German Aspects

The Economic, Monetary and Social union of the two German states entered into effect on 1 July 1990. The most essential measure was the introduction of the Deutschmark in the GDR. An agreement on the legal and constitutional unification of the two parts of Germany is in preparation and should be signed by autumn of this year.

#### All-German Elections

The next Bundestag election was scheduled for 2 December 1990. In its place, all-German elections should now take place on that day. The mode of election is still at issue.<sup>227</sup> The GDR-CDU advocates for carrying out voting separately in the FRG and the GDR (electoral threshold 5%) and the accession of the GDR to the Bonn Basic Law only afterwards. The SPD and FDP of both parts of the country are for a unitary election in all of Germany (electoral threshold for the whole territory 5%) and the accession of the GDR before the election. (This proposal i. a. would mean that the PDS, the successor party to the SED in the GDR, may fail to reach the 5% threshold in unified Germany.) The West German CDU is divided on the issue.

#### II. External Aspects

Upon the occasion of the recent visit of Chancellor Kohl in Moscow,<sup>228</sup> President Gorbachev gave de facto a green light to German unity. This achieved agreement includes the following main points:

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<sup>227</sup> Handwritten marginalia: Everything obsolete!

<sup>228</sup> Chancellor Helmut Kohl visited the Soviet Union from 14 to 16 July 1990.

- Unified Germany consists of the FRG, GDR and Berlin
- Full sovereignty of Germany, after unification
- Soviet consent to NATO membership of unified Germany
- Soviet troop withdrawal from the territory of the GDR in 3–4 years (a treaty will be concluded on this)
- During which time no extension of NATO structures on GDR territory, however, validity of the NATO alliance obligation<sup>229</sup> for this [territory] (commitment from Kohl that, also later, there will be no non-German troops east of the Elbe)
- Western Allies military presence in Berlin until completion of the Soviet troop withdrawal
- Reduction of total German forces to 370,000 (Compromise Genscher-Stoltenberg)<sup>230</sup>
- Renunciation of ABC weapons by unified Germany

Gorbachev expressly pointed out that his change of attitude on the issue of German NATO membership was made possible by the Moscow-positive result of the recent summit of the Alliance in London.<sup>231</sup>

Chancellor Kohl has also assured massive economic aid to the Soviet Union and promised also to advocate for such assistance from other Western states.

By summer of 1991 a German-Soviet agreement is to be completed, which according to Chancellor Kohl will contain co-operation in various fields and regular political consultations.<sup>232</sup>

Reactions to the German-Soviet agreement are unanimously positive worldwide (the case of Ridley in Great Britain<sup>233</sup> shows however the existence of subliminal reservations in individual Western European countries towards the weight of the future unified Germany).

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<sup>229</sup> This means article 5 of the NATO treaty: “The Parties agree that an armed attack against one or more of them in Europe or North America shall be considered an attack against them all and consequently they agree that, if such an armed attack occurs, each of them, in exercise of the right of individual or collective self-defence recognised by Article 51 of the Charter of the United Nations, will assist the Party or Parties so attacked by taking forthwith, individually and in concert with the other Parties, such action as it deems necessary, including the use of armed force, to restore and maintain the security of the North Atlantic area. Any such armed attack and all measures taken as a result thereof shall immediately be reported to the Security Council. Such measures shall be terminated when the Security Council has taken the measures necessary to restore and maintain international peace and security.”

<sup>230</sup> Gerhard Stoltenberg, Defence Minister of the Federal Republic of Germany (1989–1992). The 2+4 Treaty concluded in Moscow on 12 September 1990 stipulated that a unified Germany, which is a member of NATO, could have an army strength of 370,000. This number has been hotly debated in advance by Stoltenberg and Genscher – Genscher argued for a strength of no more than 350,000 men, while Stoltenberg argued for a stronger army (up to 395,000 men).

<sup>231</sup> At the meeting of the North Atlantic Council London on 5/6 July 1990 in the Heads of State and Government of the NATO members issued the “Declaration on a Transformed North Atlantic Alliance” (“The London Declaration”) announcing the transformation of the Alliance against the background of recent changes in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe.

<sup>232</sup> The Soviet-German Treaty on good-neighborship, partnership and cooperation was already signed on 9 November 1990 and went into effect in June 1991. For the text of the treaty see the appendix to the corresponding law [http://www.bgbl.de/xaver/bgbl/start.xav?startbk=Bundesanzeiger\\_BGBI&jumpTo=bgbl291s0702.pdf](http://www.bgbl.de/xaver/bgbl/start.xav?startbk=Bundesanzeiger_BGBI&jumpTo=bgbl291s0702.pdf), last accessed 25 August 2016.

<sup>233</sup> On 14 July 1990, the British Secretary of State for Trade and Industry, Nicholas Ridley was forced to resign because of an interview in the magazine *The Spectator*. In this interview, he had expressed the view that European economic and monetary union is a German feint with the aim of achieving the domination of Europe (“a German racket designed to take over the whole of Europe”), which is why the transfer of sovereign rights

Given the agreement reached in Moscow, the “2+4” talks in Paris on 17 July<sup>234</sup> went without controversy. The foreign ministers decided to work out a declaration on Germany, in which the external aspects of German unity should be regulated. The declaration will be discussed at the next “2+4” round on 12 September in Moscow.

### Polish Western Border

At the recent “2+4” Talks at which the Polish Foreign Minister also participated, the question of the Polish western border was at center (the Bonn Bundestag and the GDR People’s Chamber on 21 June adopted a statement on the inviolability of the Oder-Neisse line and a border treaty to be concluded between Germany and Poland).<sup>235</sup> At this point Poland dropped its final demand, whereupon the full sovereignty of Germany should only be restored after ratification of this border treaty. Agreement has now been reached that the treaty will be signed in the shortest possible time after the realization of German unity and submitted to the parliament of unified Germany for ratification. (The FRG has promised Poland economic aid too.)

### III. Assessment

It can now be expected that the unification of the two German states will become reality before the end of the year.

By the agreement in Moscow or Paris respectively the following has been reached:

The FRG: the realization of German unity

The West: NATO membership of unified Germany

The USSR: satisfaction of its security interests (German troop strength, German renunciation of ABC weapons, first steps to change NATO as a condition for the reached agreement, beyond this the bargaining chip of a troop presence east of the Elbe for 3–4 years.) and economic assistance by the FRG or the West.

From a pan-European perspective, the agreement paves the way for a rapid continuation of military negotiations in Vienna<sup>236</sup> and for the objective of setting up a new political architecture in Europe.

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to the European Community was as bad as if you transferred these rights to Adolf Hitler. See Klaus-Rainer Jackisch, *Eisern gegen die Einheit – Margaret Thatcher und die deutsche Wiedervereinigung* [= Iron against Unity – Margaret Thatcher and German reunification] (Frankfurt/Main: Societäts-Verlag, 2004), 205–211.

<sup>234</sup> On the third 2+4 Foreign Ministers’ Meeting on 17 July 1990 in Paris, see document 130, in *Die Einheit* 615–620, see also the references to other records in note 1.

<sup>235</sup> For the joint resolution of the German Bundestag and the East German People’s Chamber on the German-Polish border from 21 June 1990, see *Gemeinsame EntschlieÙung des Deutschen Bundestages und der Volkskammer der Deutschen Demokratischen Republik zur deutsch-polnischen Grenze vom 21. Juni 1990*, in: *Texte zur Deutschlandpolitik*, Reihe III/Bd. 8a, S. 411–412.

<sup>236</sup> This means the negotiations on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe (CFE), which took place in Vienna from 9 March 1989 to 19 November 1990.

For Austria i. a. it will be of interest which impact the efforts of the Western European states to firmly “bind Germany to the West” will have on the development of the EC (deepening [of integration], European Union!).

Vienna, on 18 July 1990

Plattner m.p.<sup>237</sup>

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<sup>237</sup> Johann Plattner Head of the Department for Western and Northern Europe of the Political Section of the Austrian Foreign Ministry (1987–1993).

## Document 19: Assessment by the Austrian Foreign Ministry on the Soviet Position on German Unity, 19 July 1990

Source: Information, Envoy Johann Plattner, Vienna, 18 July 1990, ÖStA, AdR, BMAA, II-Pol 1990, GZ. 22.17.01/176-II.3/90. The information was distributed to the Federal Minister, the General Secretary, the Section Heads, all departments of the Political Section, and the Austrian diplomatic representations in member states of the CSCE. The information was also part of the preparatory file for Federal Chancellor Vranitzky on the occasion of the visit by Lothar de Maizière to Austria scheduled for 25 and 26 July 1990. See Arbeitsbesuch von MP Lothar de Maizière 25./26. Juli 1990, Kreisky Archives, Depositum Franz Vranitzky, AP, box "BM Choonhavan Chatichai (Thailand), MP Calfa CSFR 1990 PM Silva (Portugal), MP Singh (Indien), Pres. Dubcek (CSFR), PM Kang Young-Hoon (Korea), PM Bhutto (Pakistan), Pres. George Vassiliou (Zypern), MP Maiziere Lothar (DDR) 25.7.90".

*In a supplementary assessment of the Soviet attitude to German unification (for the general assessment, see document 18) it became clear that on the one hand the Austrian Foreign Ministry was in fact surprised by the extent of the Soviet concessions. On the other hand, it seemed that Moscow, faced with the scarcely preventable German unification, made the best out of the situation.*

### German Unification, Soviet Position

In addition to the information of Dep[artment] II.1. (GZ. 22.17.01/173)<sup>238</sup> the following should be noted about the current Soviet position on the German question:

1) The concessions made by President Gorbachev to Chancellor Kohl on 16 July<sup>239</sup> go far beyond the expectations of those who ultimately considered possible: Soviet consent to the NATO solution for a unified Germany under the prerequisite of a special solution for "Ostelbien."<sup>240</sup> The solution agreed to by Kohl and Gorbachev in the Caucasus provides for the future, that is the period after the withdrawal of Soviet troops, to a limited extent only, a special military status for the territory of the present GDR: cf. the not entirely clear commitment of Kohl that no foreign troops will be stationed in this area. In contrast, all other areas of Germany as a whole will engage in a complete security policy integration. (The last three issues of the prestigious American magazine "Foreign Affairs" include a series of articles from known American specialist authors – Kirkpatrick,<sup>241</sup> Mc Bundy,<sup>242</sup> etc. – who all indicated that they did not expect a consensual NATO solution.)<sup>243</sup> It therefore seems legitimate to question the reasons why the attitude of the Soviet Union, or – better said – Gorbachev, went beyond all positive expectations:<sup>244</sup>

2) The position taken by Gorbachev can on the one hand be explained as the result of a combination of newly confirmed domestic policy strengths of the Soviet President having

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<sup>238</sup> See [Document #18](#).

<sup>239</sup> On the meeting of Chancellor Kohl with President Gorbachev in Archys on 16 July 1990, see document 353, in *Deutsche Einheit*, 1355–1367.

<sup>240</sup> A term subsuming all former Prussian territories East of the Elbe.

<sup>241</sup> Jeane Kirkpatrick, a political scientist, member of the Cabinet under President Ronald Reagan and Ambassador to the UN (1981–1985).

<sup>242</sup> McGeorge Bundy, taught from 1990 to 1996 at the Carnegie Corporation.

<sup>243</sup> Jeane J. Kirkpatrick, Beyond the Cold War, in: *Foreign Affairs* 69 (1990) 1: America and the World 1989, 1–16; McGeorge Bundy, From Cold War Toward Trusting Peace, in: *Foreign Affairs* 69 (1990) 1: America and the World 1989, 197–212.

<sup>244</sup> Punctuation as in original.

“won” his party congress,<sup>245</sup> and on the other hand the recognition of foreign policy weaknesses in his country: Fully aware that the confirmation of his (currently) unchallengeable role had increased his foreign policy scope, Gorbachev – apparently without further coordination with other still relevant forces (military, etc.) – perhaps at the last possible moment successfully attempted to gain as much capital (figuratively as well as in the true sense of the word) as possible out of the Soviet withdrawal from East Germany and the renunciation of older positions of the Soviet Union’s policy on Germany (insisting on the neutrality of a unified Germany).

3) Gorbachev secured at least the following advantages for his country:

- The reduction of the total German force level to 370,000 men and thus after all (including the manning level of NVA)<sup>246</sup> by 45%;
- The obvious assumption of the – substantial – costs of Soviet troop withdrawal by unified Germany (see letter of intent concerning agreement on effects of DM-conversion);
- Further active efforts of the FRG to gain Western aid for the Soviet Union;
- Commitment to complete a bilateral comprehensive treaty (probably political consultations and economic assistance);

4) The agreement between Kohl-Gorbachev has been completed without the prior information of the Western partners, signaling also a future autonomy of German foreign policy.

5) President Gorbachev could speculate with the idea that after Soviet troop withdrawal the negative sentiment towards foreign military presence could generally grow further in the FRG and thus perhaps a traditional goal of Soviet policy could still be achieved in the longer term.

6) In total, the agreements of 16 July are – as Gorbachev himself says – a matter of successful “Realpolitik.” Whether the Soviet President will succeed to domestically secure this result, will also depend on the further reaction in the West: too loud of triumph can be harmful, but on the other hand, in light of the Germans “going it alone” (see above) it is not to be expected.

Vienna, 19.7.1990  
SUCHARIPA m.p.

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<sup>245</sup> On XXVIII Congress of the CPSU (2 to 13 July 1990) Gorbachev was re-elected as general secretary. His position within the party was nevertheless weakened because the opponents of his reforms already had a majority in the Central Committee.

<sup>246</sup> NVA = National People’s Army.

## Document 20: Final Report by Ambassador Bauer, Bonn, 20 September 1990

Source: Ambassador Bauer to BMAA, Bonn, 20 September 1990, ZI. 438-RES/90, ÖStA, AdR, BMAA, II-Pol 1990, GZ. 502.01.19/10-II.1/90.

*After German unification was wrapped up and before taking over his new position in Moscow, Ambassador Friedrich Bauer filed a final report on his mission in Bonn in which he analyzed the Austrian–German relationship against the background of German Unity and European integration. In particular, he focused on the financial challenges of German unification, the future role of united Germany in Europe and pleaded for Austrian EC membership as soon as possible. In this context, Bauer reminded Austrian politicians to pursue an active European policy in order to participate in shaping European integration.*

### **4 ½ Years in Bonn; Attempt on Prospects**

The essential basics of Austrian and German *Ostpolitik*, especially within the framework of the CSCE, are almost congruent. One might find many explanations for this. The main reason seems to be that both the partners of the grand coalition in Austria as well as ruling parties and SPD opposition [in Germany] agree on the elementary requirements of foreign policy objectives. There are repeated clashes between Austria and Germany “merely” with an economic background: nuclear reprocessing plant in Wackersdorf,<sup>247</sup> toxic waste ship Petersberg,<sup>248</sup> night driving ban and heavy truck transit.<sup>249</sup>

Common to all conflict issues is that after the snowballing of potential conflict via print media, the situation among the public calms down again and no resentment remains (except for the heavy truck transit topic and tunneling under the Alps). The FRG pursues its economic interests with a vengeance. The intensity of the conflicts increases prior to Bavarian elections or Austrian ballots and then ebbs rapidly again.

United Germany will around the turn of the millennium become the first European economic power, which will pursue its economic interests as strongheaded as before – if not even more so.

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<sup>247</sup> The Wackersdorf nuclear reprocessing plant, which has been under construction since 1985 brought about not only extensive protests from the anti-nuclear movement in the Federal Republic of Germany, but also led to bilateral resentment with its neighbor states.

<sup>248</sup> In mid-May 1988, the motor ship “Petersberg” loaded with polluted soil from an Austrian company had travelled under the Federal German flag in the direction of Turkey. After the refusal of Turkish authorities to remove the cargo and the Romanians preventing the ship travelling further to Vienna, a dispute erupted between the Federal Republic and Austria about the jurisdiction and responsibility for Austrian toxic waste travelling on a ship under the Federal German flag.

<sup>249</sup> The steadily increasing burden of transalpine traffic in the 1980s, especially of heavy goods vehicles, led in 1990 to a “Transit War” between the affected west-Austrian provinces of Tyrol, Salzburg and Vorarlberg and the Free State of Bavaria on the other side. The escalation of the conflict was triggered by the necessary blocking, in early July 1990, of the Kufsteiner highway bridge that was in danger of collapsing, whereby the traffic shifted to the Inn Valley route towards Brenner. Italy followed by blocking all transit crossings with Austria for heavy goods vehicles. A tentative solution to the transit problem was made with the signing of the Transit Agreement in 1992 between Austria and the EC.

In the EC, almost nothing will work without Germany, and nothing will work against Germany. How economic power will be converted into political power is still to be assessed.

Until then, there is still a long way. Not only must the former GDR be refloated. Additionally, the former communist states will have to be co-financed by Germany. The extent of all these benefits, plus assistance to the Soviet Union as the price of German unity is not even approximately numerically calculable. But it will involve huge sums.

Inevitably, German fiscal policy will have to be geared to Keynes:<sup>250</sup> high borrowing with repeatedly emerging inflationary tendencies. Even tax increases, especially consumer taxes, will change nothing. All countries in and around the EC will have to necessarily join; in particular Austria, which is already connected to the German mark via the hard currency association.<sup>251</sup> It is even possible that the German motor leads the Europeans to a boom, which for the first time after the Second World War rises above the ailing economic development of the United States without being completely decoupled. Euro-dollars and other floating capital will find their way into lucrative Europe mainly via German banks. Today one can already reflect upon the political consequences of this possible development.

Austria will have to carry all the economic risks and rewards of this development. Personally, I see more advantages than disadvantages.

After the turn of the millennium Germany will be richer, more economically powerful, more confident, and some Germans will even be more arrogant.

Conclusion: We now should do everything we can to enter into the EC as an equal member as soon as possible. In the slipstream of the difficult and costly German unification and the growing together of Europe under German financial leadership we should learn as soon as possible, how a small European country can assert itself in the committees of the EC with changing majorities against the big European countries. Our perseverance against the mighty Germans in case of the night driving ban and other restrictions on transalpine heavy truck traffic – that is how it is seen by the small European states – is the first part of the litmus test.

We should not be an onlooker at the designing of Europe in the third millennium, which begins today, but rather participate as a full player in the EC. Austria's national consciousness and a European sentiment are not mutually exclusive. On the contrary: if we do it reasonably clever, they become a qualified unit, resulting in a new Austrian self-esteem, which differentiates us as much from our neighbors with the same tongue as it connects us with them.

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<sup>250</sup> "Keynesianism" is an approach in economics which goes back to John Maynard Keynes, who recommended an interventionist economic policy aimed at securing full employment. In times of crisis the state is encouraged to compensate for the lack of private demand and to revive the economy with investment.

<sup>251</sup> Since 1970 Austria pursued a hard currency policy. The Austrian Schilling became closely tied to the German mark as of 1976 at a fixed exchange rate. This resulted in a de facto informal monetary union with Germany which – despite inner-Austrian controversies about this issue – remained in place until the introduction of the European currency union.



## The Ambassador

