

GERMAN UNITY FROM 1990 TO 2022

Perspectives from the Czech Republic

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RELATIONS BETWEEN WEST GERMANY AND FORMER CZECHOSLOVAKIA BEFORE 1989

Pragmatic relations between West Germany and former Czechoslovakia had begun to change before 1989. In 1966 Chancellor Kiesinger announced the normalisation of mutual relations as a priority, followed by the establishment of the commercial representations with consular powers in Prague and Frankfurt in 1967, leading to a reconsideration of the Hallstein Doctrine. Furthermore, the western government pursued the aim of eliminating the effects of the Munich Agreement. In reaction, the Czechoslovak government stressed the need for the official declaration, repealing the Munich Agreement, and imposing visas for the free movement of persons to Germany. The Treaty of Prague annulated the Munich Agreement and brought formal diplomatic recognition between both states. Since the WW2, it was for the first time that both countries normalised mutual relations.

THE SETTLEMENT OF CZECH-GERMAN RELATIONS

The new government headed by President Václav Havel, established in November 1989, started to build a completely new relationship between the Czechoslovak Republic and the Federal Republic of Germany. The so-called Treaty on Good Neighbourliness and Mutual Cooperation, signed in 1992, was the basis for starting a new relationship and to overcome the problems of the past. Germany also expressed support for the Czech Republic's admission to the European Union and the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation, believing that this is in the common interest.

In 1997, the two countries signed the German-Czech Declaration on Mutual Relations and their Future Development. In this Declaration, Germany and Czech Republic were able to place their relations on a new footing while promising that their relations will not be burdened by political and legal questions of the past.

CULTURAL ASPECT OF MUTUAL RELATIONS

After November 1989, cultural relations expanded significantly. As a result of the 1992 agreement, cultural exchanges and cooperation took place through the organisation of several meetings, discussions, exhibitions and conferences. The initiative for such events often came from the Prague branches of German foundations such as Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung, Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung, Friedrich-Naumann-Stiftung, Hanns-Seidel-Stiftung, Heinrich-Böll-Stiftung, but also from a number of associations such as the Adalbert Stifter Association from Munich, the German Writers' Association and the Czech Writers' Association. After the signing of the Czech-German Declaration in 1997, the Czech-German Future Fund and the Czech-German Discussion Forum established in 1998, as well as the previously established Czech-German Commission of Historians, served to promote mutual dialogue.



(Source: Deutsche Welle)

THE CHANGE OF NARRATIVE IN THE CZECH MEDIA DURING GERMAN REUNIFICATION

Although in the autumn of 1989 the communist regime in Czechoslovakia was on the verge of collapse, the party press Rudé právo still kept pace with the Communist Party. In October 1989, the editors of the Rudé právo pretended that the status quo on the issue of geopolitical division by the Iron Curtain was still in place. On October 7th one of the headlines was the celebration of the anniversary of the founding of the German Democratic Republic. On the front page, Rudé právo assured of the strength of the ties between the communist states. Just six months later, after the fall of the regime during the Velvet revolution, everything was different. The media was no longer subject to the Communist Party and Czechoslovak television could report on the reunification of Germany in factual manner.



(Source: ČT24)

ECONOMIC ASPECTS OF GERMAN REUNIFICATION

The unification of Germany in 1990 is a success story, especially from an economic point of view. After the fall of the Berlin Wall, a rapid resumption of trade relations began. For example, Bavaria benefited massively from the opening of the borders, because for many tourists from neighbouring Czechoslovakia, the first experience with the West was a visit to shops in Bavaria.

Now, more and more Czechs work in Germany. Since 2011, when the rules for the movement of workers from the EU countries were relaxed, their number has tripled. Strong economic ties between Germany and the Czech Republic were of great importance for the favourable development of relations. Germany being, on the one hand, the Czech Republic's first destination for exports, and the Czech Republic on the other hand, a vital member in the supply chain for the German automobile industry, economic ties bound the two countries together and helped deepen the exchanges.

COOPERATION BETWEEN LIBEREC AND GERMANY

Euroregion Neisse - Nisa - Nysa

An organization operating in the border area of the Czech Republic, Germany and Poland. Founded on 21 December 1991, it is the first cross-border Euroregion in Central and Eastern Europe. The aim of the Euroregion is to bring together municipalities from the Liberec Region, Saxony and the Lower Silesian Voivodeship and to promote cooperation in areas of spatial planning, building cross-border infrastructure, cultural exchange and care of common cultural heritage, development of tourism, and cooperation in the humanitarian and social fields.

Twin Towns of Liberec - Augsburg and Zittau

A large number of "Liberec Germans" left after the WWII, when the German population was expelled from Czechoslovakia, for the Augsburg area. The two cities are thus intertwined by history and in 2001 decided to sign a partnership agreement. Within this partnership, the DIALOG Cultural Days have been held every two years since 2005. The aim of this event is to establish and deepen cooperation in the field of culture and education between both cities. The partnership between Liberec and Zittau has lasted since 2004. Both cities have been working closely together, for example, on the project European Heritage Days. In the future, the two cities would like to deepen cooperation in the areas of transport or language.

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