



**DEPUTY COMMISSIONER FOR FUNDAMENTAL RIGHTS
OMBUDSMAN FOR THE RIGHTS OF NATIONAL MINORITIES
NATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS INSTITUTION**

Communication

on the occasion of the Day of German Unity

It has been almost three decades since, due to the pressure of mass demonstrations for freedom and democracy in East Germany, and as the result of the change of world politics, the Berlin wall, separating the eastern and western parts of Berlin for 28 years, has fallen. It symbolized the fact that not only the artificial dividedness of Germany, but also the division of Europe along an ideological iron curtain was destined to end soon. The process of accelerated historical events resulted in changes hoped for by many, but not expected to take place so rapidly – in just a few months. On 31 August 1990 the German Reunification Treaty was signed, and on 3 October Germany became a single country again.

This day is an important event not only for the citizens of Germany but also for the German minority communities living in other European countries. Thus it is a significant memorial day for the Germans living in Hungary, too. Although they have always been able to count on the support of their motherland in the preservation of their national identity, language and culture, after the unification of Germany and the democratization of Hungary, the political, economic, and cultural ties between our countries have become much more intensive. The German minority in Hungary has played and continues to fulfil a major role in the development of these links.

Today, we must also remember those German people displaced from Hungary after the Second World War, who had to settle down in the Soviet occupation zone of Germany and became citizens of the GDR. History has deprived them not only of their chosen Hungarian home, but turned them into citizens of a communist country, where they were treated as second-degree citizens because of their origin. For them the German unity meant that a long-awaited dream came true, as after being refugees deprived of their rights and after many decades of repression, they became citizens of a free Germany firmly and undeniably committed to democracy, human rights and European values.

On the Day of the German Unity, therefore, I welcome all the citizens of Germany, including those who have ever been expelled from Hungary – and their descendants – who continue to cultivate the friendship of our nations and I also greet our compatriots in Hungary who preserve their German and Hungarian identity.

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