

Speech of HE Stefan Krawielicki, Ambassador of the Federal Republic of Germany
to New Zealand, in the Parliament building in Wellington on the German National Day
on 3rd of October 2019

Tena koutou, tena koutou, tena koutou katoa.

Excellencies,
distinguished guests,
ladies and gentlemen,
dear friends,

Good evening and welcome to the celebration of the Day of German Unity, with a special welcome to our guest of honour, the Vice President of the German Parliament – the Deputy Speaker:

Guten Abend und herzlich willkommen, sehr geehrter Herr Vize-Präsident Oppermann!

First of all I would like to thank the New Zealand Parliament for making it possible for us to host our National Day festivities here in Parliament House. It is a great honour for us to be celebrating in this beautiful venue.

We would also like to invite you to visit the exhibition in the Legislative Council Chamber next door where you can see some of the most impressive images about the fall of the Berlin Wall.

Ladies and gentlemen, dear friends,

My wife Isabelle and I, together with my whole Embassy team, would like to thank you very much for coming tonight - some of you from the four corners of the world - to celebrate with us the Day of German Unity.

It was *a long way* to go for the two separate Germanys until reunification, exactly today 29 years ago. I think many Germans remember where he - or she - was, 29 years ago.

And probably many of you who are about my age still remember where you were when you heard, 30 years ago, in November 1989 that - unbelievable - news about the fall of the Berlin Wall – which all of a sudden had opened the Iron Curtain, and had opened the door for the reunification of Germany, a year later, on the 3rd of October 1990.

The happy end of this *long way* of Germany being separated into two countries was a very emotional moment for all Germans. How did we express this emotion we felt when the Berlin wall came down?

So many said, “I never imagined a day like this would come during my lifetime!”
In German, very short: “Dass ich das noch erleben darf!”

Ladies and gentlemen, dear friends,

New Zealand is a very popular country for Germans who admire it as one of the most beautiful countries of the world. Each year many Germans come to visit, work and travel, or even to live here permanently.

Having said this, I would like to share with you that *another long way* has just recently come to its peak. When Isabelle and I arrived in Wellington in August this year I said, and I still keep saying:

“I never imagined a *posting* like this would come during my lifetime” – dass ich das noch erleben darf! We are very happy to be here in Aotearoa, New Zealand.

To conclude, I am so glad to be able to say that New Zealand and Germany have been enjoying a close, friendly, and trusting cooperation for a long time. As like-minded countries, we share the same values and cooperate on a broad array of issues, ranging from climate change to questions of peace and security. No nation can face challenges like this alone. Both our countries firmly believe that only together with our partners, allies, and friends will we be able to master them successfully.

The presence of the Vice-President of the German Parliament tonight is a true sign and confirmation of this close cooperation and friendship between New Zealand and Germany. I would therefore now like to give the floor to H.E. Vice-President Thomas Oppermann who came *a long way* from Berlin via Christchurch and Auckland to be with us today, on the very day of German Unity.

Kia ora, thank you very much!