

Address of the German Ambassador  
At the Reception on the occasion of the Day of German Unity 2011  
04. oktober Podgorica

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentleman,

Today we are celebrating the Day of German Unity. Germany was reunited on October 3, 1990 and with German Reunification the division of Europe in two hostile ideological and political camps eventually was overcome. What belonged together, but had been divided since decades, grew together again. Many of the countries of Middle and Eastern Europe which once were behind the Iron Curtain are now Members of the European Union and share the same values and principles such as freedom, democracy, respect for human rights, the rule of law and market economy.

Europe is the foundation of Germany's foreign policy. Today we are not only marking the Day of German Unity but also celebrating the reunification of Europe. Germany remains a driving force in European integration. If we did not already have the EU, we would have to invent it now as our continent's response to globalization. Europe is not only about reckoning with our past – it is about winning our future – as Foreign Minister Guido Westerwelle said on this occasion.

Germany supports the European perspective and the integration into the European Union of the countries of the Western Balkans in accordance with the conditions and procedures set out to them in the framework of the EU enlargement process. With this objective in mind we support the reform drive in the candidate countries and those countries who want to become candidates for EU accession. The speed of this integration process is however in the hands of the candidate countries themselves. Montenegro initiated important legislative reforms and it will be now up to the EU Commission and to the European Council to decide whether sufficient progress has been made to start accession talks.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen, Germany is a Federal Republic with considerable cultural and linguistic diversity even though at our schools only one language, German, is taught. Bavaria, Germany's biggest Federal State, arguably speaking such a language or dialect different from ordinary German is closest to the Balkans and always entertained special relations with the region in general and Montenegro in particular.

This German National Day reception will have a distinct Bavarian touch because of the presence of a Delegation of Members of the Bavarian Parliament. The delegation is headed by Mrs. Professor Ursula Männle, a former Minister of European Affairs in the Bavarian State Government. This delegation came on a fact finding mission regarding the ongoing reform process in Montenegro and to foster personal contacts with the Montenegrin Parliament, Government, Media and Civil Society. Let us all welcome Mrs Männle and her delegation because they brought us after all also Bavarian sausages, Bavarian Bretzels and Lebkuchen hearts from the Oktoberfest in Munich ! We will serve you also Fischer's Beer brewed in Bavaria.

I wish you a pleasant evening and raise the glass on the good relations between our two countries.