

“Bei uns ist immer was los!”

OCTOBER 3—DAY OF GERMAN UNITY

30 years on: German government hails success of reunification

The income gap has also narrowed: In 2018, average income in the east was 88.3 percent of that in the west -- partly thanks to a growing network of small and medium-sized tech companies, the report said.

But the gap still exists, partly because of lower population density in the east, which has more rural areas and whose urban areas are not as well developed.

'Small-scale economy'

"Another important reason is the so-called 'small-scale nature' of the economy, ie the lack of corporate headquarters and of large medium-sized companies," the report notes.

The unemployment rate in the former GDR was more than 15 percent in 2005, but has now fallen below 10 percent and as low as 6 percent in some areas -- close to the 4 percent recorded in some areas of southern Germany.

This development is partly due to the retirement of previous generations, the report suggests.

In some areas, the east is doing better than the west. Women in the former GDR are more likely to be in full-time work (74 percent compared to 68 percent), largely due to better childcare facilities.

Despite these improvements, some indicators remain less favourable, the report says.

Support for democracy as the best political system for Germany stands at 91 percent in the former West Germany, but just 78 percent in the east.

There are also "differences" between east and west when it comes to attitudes towards foreigners, Wanderwitz noted.

Other than Berlin, Germany's eastern states have the highest rates of support for the far right -- running at 20 percent in some areas.