

an diesem Tag in der Geschichte (This Week in History)

Was ist am 15. März 1991 geschehen? (What happened on ... ?)

Two Plus Four Treaty Entered into Force 20 Years Ago

Mar 15, 2011



Signing the Two Plus Four Treaty

Two Plus Four Treaty



Twenty years ago, the Two Plus Four Treaty, the international agreement integral to German unification, entered into force on March 15, 1991. After an intense six months of negotiations between the governments of West Germany and East Germany and the former Allied powers of the United States, Great Britain, France and the Soviet Union, the Treaty on the Final Settlement with Respect to Germany was signed in Moscow on September 12, 1990.

Also known as the Two Plus Four Treaty, it returned full sovereignty to a reunited Germany, confirmed its borders and terminated any remaining Four Power rights. The treaty also provided for the withdrawal of all Soviet troops from East Germany over the next four years.

The path to unity

After the fall of the Berlin Wall on November 9, 1989 German unity was finally within grasp, but at international level it could become reality only with the consent of the victorious allies of World War II. The domestic aspects of German unity were a matter for negotiation between the government of the

Federal Republic of Germany and the first democratically elected government of the German Democratic Republic (GDR).

The Treaty on the Establishment of German Unity was signed on August 31, 1990. However, the international dimension of the unification process was a more complicated matter. In the so-called Two plus Four Talks the foreign ministers of the Soviet Union, the United States, France and Great Britain discussed with their two German colleagues the modalities and consequences of uniting the two German states.

Should the Federal Republic's NATO membership be extended to include the whole territory of a united Germany? How could this be reconciled with the presence of Soviet troops in the territory of the GDR? Under what conditions would the Soviet Union withdraw its troops from the GDR