



Titel: Interview Joschka Fischer
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Text:
Interview Joschka Fischer

Mr. Secretary of State, give me a concrete reason why people should be glad about to May 1st, the eastern extension of the EU?

It is the fact that we overcame the division of Europe and it will be of crucial importance for peace in Europe but also for the development of the European economy as well as for the future of the coming generation. Our continent leaves its past, a past marked by wars and division, permanently behind.

Yet many people have fears, not just here in Germany but also in the newly joining countries. How do you explain that?

It's something new. We had the same experience for instance in the Southwest of France when Spain joined. I tend to think that's only natural. One just needs to remind the people that the decisive changes happened in 1989/90. The fear of cheap competition, the question of for instance on the Polish side of the purchase of land and property, all these fears have to be taken seriously, but the decisive change was the end of the Soviet Union, the downfall of communism and the end of the Wall and of barbed wire, a very, very important development that we all welcomed and the European Union will contribute to the development of these countries. Which will create jobs here. Which will raise their standard of living and I think that's in the interest of all concerned.

You're not saying, though, that all these fears are totally unfounded?



Fears are never unfounded. One tends to be skeptical but I believe experience with the southern extension of the European Union has shown that. At that time there was great anxiety concerning, for instance, expanding employment migration or the like. Luxemburg insisted on a several year long exclusion concerning Portuguese workers. After only three years, I believe, they no longer made use of this proviso because more went back than came. When Spain joined there was this fear in the Southwest of France in agriculture, in small businesses, in trades, that's exactly what we're experiencing now.

In the minds of people, Europe has a terrible reputation. Bureaucratic Moloch. How did that come about?

I see that as only one part; the other is what I experience time and again, if anything happens, if our security is at risk, then people say: Europe must act. Europe must do this, Europe must do that. My question is: can Europe care for our security, can it advance our economic development. For this we need to reestablish the European mandate. We all enjoy not needing a passport when we cross a border. We enjoy paying with the same money. Every fifth job in Germany – I suppose in Frankfurt the ratio is even higher – depends on Europe. People take that for granted and if something doesn't suit them then they complain about it; by the way, they do that with the national government, too, and that's o.k.

What can politicians do to get people up for Europe?

Up for Europe is I think the wrong phrase. That's not the question; after all, who is up for Federal democracy? Democratization is vital, that means more transparency, so it is absolutely clear who decides what. We got used to Wiesbaden making decisions or the Frankfurt Roemer making decisions or the federal government in Berlin making decisions, people can sort that out and one doesn't need an exam in public law for that. In Brussels this is very unclear, in Brussels and in Strasburg. I think that the Constitution will clear things up. So it's clear that this is being decided in Europe and there we need to rely on the European responsibility.

Thank you very much.