

## **ELEVEN YEARS OF GERMAN UNITY .... GIVING AN ACCOUNT**

This month, eleven years would have lapsed since the German unity. This might not seem long in the history of humanity, but it is long enough to assess achievements of this unity. This comes in answer to the incessant question posed since the unity: What are the achievements of the unity?

The German unity is a unique process, occurring at a time when the unity of other countries is breaking down, either peacefully or through military combats, within the Eastern Camp. Such confrontations have started but have not yet ended.

In Autumn 1989, through an initiative taken by citizens of East Germany, which has caused a radical political change, the "Wall" separating the two halves of Germany fell down, a wall that was meant to stand for ever.

Thus, the two halves of Germany started coming back together to their joint history, thanks to their common language, background and culture.

Once more, they became one country, with the cultural and social heritage restored to the unified Germany. This step is by far more significant than the unity of the German soil.

Some described this unity as a miracle joyfully received by the German people, who witnessed the peaceful fall of the wall separating them, away from any violence.

It is a white revolution on behalf of the German people, without any external interference, in response to political accords, which provided the necessary international covering and European blessing.

Naturally, the path to unity was not covered with roses. This unity comes after forty years, during which the German people lived under two different and clashing political regimes.

When the unity started, East Germany was in a lamentable state, economically, industrially and environmentally. Hence, the German government focused on reforming the damages of the East, through great sacrifices and huge budgets that surpassed all expectations in one of its aspects.

Now, after the lapse of eleven years since the unity, it deems appropriate to review the account. In this, we depend on official German publications and releases, as a source, together with figures and statistics, all giving an optimistic image of conditions in Germany, today.

According to statistics, the new manpower entering the labour market, annually, amounts to an average of 584,000.

This brings the total labour force up to 38.53 million. As for the current economic growth rate, it is 3.1%, which is double the rate in 1999. Germany remains the highest exporting country among European states, with exports amounting to \$ 541 billion. In the year 2000, the value of assets rose up to DM 18 trillion.

Germany occupies the eighth ranking on the World Bank list of distinguished countries, where an average annual per capita income of \$ 25,350.

The new nationality law opens up the door in front of applicants for the German nationality, where 200,000 foreigners have relinquished the German nationality, while 143,000 acquired it.

Furthermore, Germany is considered the most organizing country, worldwide, of world trade markets, amounting to hundreds.

Among the most important fairs are those of Leipzig, Hanover, Cologne, etc. Leipzig is the most famous ex-East German city. At present, both Leipzig and Dresden are the most flourishing cities.

Germany plays a significant role in the European Union. It occupies the biggest number of seats in the European parliament, amounting to 99, followed by UK and France that occupy only 72 seats. In the international realm, Germany plays a vital role and holds a special concept for globalization.

According to the Federal Foreign Affairs Minister Günter Bleiberg, globalization offers challenges, as well as great opportunities. However, Germany believes that the process of globalization is unbalanced and that the Group of States should exert the utmost efforts to render globalization a positive growing process for all peoples.

He also believes that the UN should seek to overcome the great gap between the rich of the world and the poor, in order to attain global peace and continuous growth.

The first duty is to combat poverty. Thus, Germany proposed launching an initiative to confront debts. This would alleviate the burden of debts on Third World countries within a developmental strategy for eliminating poverty.

At present, this initiative is assisting 22 countries, through a budget of \$ 42 billion, expected to rise to \$ 70 billion, of which Germany's share is DM 10 billion.

Also, Germany plays an important role in the environmental field. In addition to its endeavours to reform the industrially polluted environment of East Germany, it is exerting strenuous efforts to face the global phenomenon of desertification, through projects amounting to DM 2.8 billion in Africa, Asia and Latin America.

As for German relations with Egypt, long years of cooperation exist between the two countries through four establishments that have been operating in Egypt for years, within the framework of media, agriculture, economy and industry.

Among the most important German projects in Egypt is the generation of power from solar energy to be used in lifting subterranean water.

At present, there are one hundred projects in the Egyptian Desert and along the Red Sea for the cultivation of oranges, bananas and grapes, in addition to building hotel resorts on the Red Sea.

Today, Germany occupies a prominent position, in its capacity as a major influential party in the economic and financial life, not only within the European Economic Group, but also worldwide.

Within this framework, Germany has succeeded in achieving a new miracle, represented in re-constructing its Eastern part, where for the past three years, East Germany stands as a model case study of development.

What East Germany has achieved over forty years corresponds to what the unified Germany has achieved within this short period.

Estimates indicate that growth rates in living standards within the Eastern part of Germany is about to exceed growth rates in Western European countries.

Reports reveal that nearly 14,000 projects and 16,000 buildings have been sold to German and foreign purchasers, amounting to DM 40 billion.

Also, 30,000 acres of agricultural land were sold, while another one million acres were leased. Around 1.5 million contracts of employment have been concluded, as well as investments amounting to DM 180 billion.

The beginning of 1994 has witnessed the greatest unilateral investment project, concerning the construction of a modern petroleum refinery at a cost of DM 4.3 billion. This is considered the biggest project witnessed by Europe throughout the past twenty years.

Furthermore, to help medium- and small projects with the necessary capital upon their conception, German banks have authorized granting huge credits, within the framework of an accord signed between the Federal government and the socio-economic establishments in various countries.

Alone, the institution providing reconstruction loans has provided, up till 1994, the sum of DM 30 billion in the form of loans enough for 60,000 medium- and small investment projects.

The high demand for manpower in the Eastern part of Germany tempts nearly 400,000 workers of the Eastern part to become involved in works along the border, in addition to another 50,000 workers in training courses at the Western part.

Moreover, nearly 100,000 individuals of the Western part have shifted to the Eastern part for the sake of work and investment.

However, life is not all economy or politics. The cultural life is the more enlightening element in the life of people. Hence, the Federal Republic of Germany has been keen to pay great attention to cultural activities.

In fact, it considers external cultural relations as “the third pillar of foreign policy”. To this, it has allocated DM 1.2 billion in 1992, a sum that exceeds what has been spent by USA, UK and France in this domain.

Most recent statistics reveal that around 17 million inhabitants of the world are seeking to learn the German language, with 11 million of them living in Middle and Eastern Europe.

This part of Europe is overwhelmed with a “state of enthusiasm for the German experience”. This state extends to many other countries of the Third World, including Egypt.

In this context, we can only acknowledge that the Germany that was conquered in the War some fifty years ago has been victorious, ever since, in the battle of peace.

Probably, this is the most important item in the account of our friendly and great state of Germany, after eleven years of a splendid German unity.

While joining the unified and friendly Germany in its celebrations, we hope the best for this great country and the friendly German people, in contributing to

create a democratic global entity built on free economy and aimed at justice and equality among interests of all peoples.

We welcome Baron von Multsin, Ambassador of Federal Germany in Egypt, and Mr. Mohamed al-Orabi, new Ambassador of Egypt in Germany, who is to assume his tasks in Berlin within a couple of days, such tasks that entail bolstering the ties between Egypt and Germany, given the long history of friendship and warm feelings between our peoples over the ages.