Press Information

Peaceful Revolution and The Fall of the Berlin Wall

Events in Leipzig & Berlin in 2014

New York, June 3, 2014 - The year 2014 has a special meaning for Germany. It marks the 25th anniversary of the Fall of the Berlin Wall on November 9, 1989, one of the most important and memorable events in the country’s history.

And now, 25 years later, a unified Germany invites visitors to numerous events, exhibitions and historic celebrations in Dresden, Leipzig and Berlin, many of which already start well before November.

Leipzig celebrates the 25th anniversary of the Peaceful Revolution from October 9 – 12, 2014, highlighted by the ‘Festival of Lights’ festivities on October 9. Audio, video and light installations along the demonstration route will recall and remember the events that took place 25 years ago. Another important event will be the peace prayer in St. Nicholas Church, also on October 9. Many more cultural institutions dedicate events, readings, discussions, exhibitions and concerts to the occurrences of 1989 – a year that changed Germany for the better. Tens of thousands of guests from all over the world are expected to join in for the celebrations.

In Berlin many special events, exhibitions, and festivities about the division, the Cold War, and the events leading up to the peaceful reunification are planned throughout the city. The highlight will be the weekend of November 9. A special installation made out of thousands of illuminated, helium-filled balloons will be set up along the former border of the Wall. However, this border made of light, stands as a "symbol of hope for a world without walls", and will be 7 miles long and will run across the city center for the entire weekend. Residents and visitors can walk along the course of the Wall and visualize the
extent of the former division. At five spots the white balloons will be released into the air as a remembrance of the opening of the wall 25 years ago.

For those yearning for more, the Berlin Wall Memorial is a central place for commemoration of the Berlin Wall and features a last piece of the wall, as well as emotional displays and information. A new permanent exhibition, “25 Years Fall of the Wall” will be opened in a festive ceremony on November 9, 2014.

Background
One of the most important events in German history took place in Leipzig on Monday, October 9, 1989. After prayers for peace in St. Nicholas Church, for the first time in history, about 70,000 people peacefully demonstrated, calling out “Wir sind das Volk” (“We are the People”) and “Keine Gewalt” (“No violence”). The Monday demonstrations remained peaceful and set the course for a fundamental change with worldwide consequences.

The Fall of the Wall came all of a sudden. On the evening of November 9, 1989, Günter Schabowski, an East German government official announced that “Permanent relocations can be done through all border checkpoints between the GDR (East Germany) into the FRG (West Germany) or West Berlin.” People hesitantly approached the border – and crossed it!

About the GNTB
The German National Tourist Board (GNTB) has its headquarters in Frankfurt am Main, Germany. It works on behalf of the Federal Ministry of Economic Affairs and Energy (BMWi) to represent Germany as a tourist destination and is funded by the Ministry in accordance with a decision taken by the German Bundestag. The GNTB develops and communicates strategies and products to promote Germany’s positive image abroad as a tourist destination and to encourage tourists to visit the country. It has 30 agencies around the world to support its activities. More information can be found in our online press centre at www.germany.travel/presse.