

Document 28.

November 9, 1989, Prague – Information summary from the CPCz Central Committee to the various branches of the CPCz apparatus about the emigration of GDR citizens to the Federal Republic through the territory of the CSSR on November 1– 8, 1989.

National Archive, Prague. Record Group ÚV KSČ (CPCz CC), Documentation 1989 (unsorted). Teletext messages and letters of the CPCz Central Committee. Translation (extract) by Todd Hammond.

[...]

In view of the situation and repeated complications in the center of Prague, on November 3, 1989, the GDR was urgently requested to adopt measures to effectively address the current situation. At the same time it was informed of the negative stance of the CSSR towards repeated requests by the FRG to provide lodging to GDR citizens traveling to the FRG. The Czechoslovak side has no intention of opening refugee camps on its territory (with rights of extraterritoriality).

In this context the Party and state leadership of the GDR decided to allow GDR citizens presently traveling in the CSSR for the purposes of emigration, to travel to the FRG without being released from GDR citizenship. The agencies of the CSSR have acknowledged this decision. Measures have been taken to allow the movement of citizens of the GDR to the FRG without any further formalities.

As of November 6, 1989 (at 07:00), some 13 thousand citizens of the GDR had traveled from the CSSR to the FRG, by November 7 (07:00) 33 thousand, by November 8 (07:00) some 42 thousand.

In an effort to prevent the flight of GDR citizens through the territory of the CSSR to the FRG, and allow them to travel to the FRG directly, the Politburo of the SED Central Committee will recommend that the Council of Ministers submit a proposal for a statute on emigration to be handled under an accelerated approval process. The GDR People's Assembly GDR will approve this statute at their meeting during the week of November 13–17, 1989.

In addressing the problem of emigration by GDR citizens through the FRG embassy in Prague, the CSSR has based its measures on generally applicable international commitments and mutual treaties with the GDR. It did not resort to unilateral steps as in the case of the Hungarian People's Republic. It respected and fully supported this position despite constant pressure from the FRG both through the mass media and by diplomatic channels. Measures for the transfer of GDR citizens from the FRG embassy in Prague were always taken after agreement with the GDR. Of course at the same time its actions were thoroughly based on defending Czechoslovak interests.