

Document 29.

November 10, 1989, Berlin (West) – Chief of the CSSR Military Mission in West Berlin Sochor to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Prague on the situation after the opening of the Berlin Wall in the night of November 9–10, 1989.

Ministry of Foreign Affairs Archive, Prague. Telegrams received, 1989, vol. 40.
Translation by Todd Hammond.

Unbelievable scenes of German unity and fellowship took place during the night at the border crossings into West Berlin and in its center after the surprise decision of the GDR Government to open the border and allow its citizens to travel without any formalities whatsoever, on their personal identification cards only. Crossing the border in the center of town with no problem, tens of thousands of GDR citizens together with residents of West Berlin transformed the area around the crossing into a festival of “national reunion”. The nighttime street scene was characterized by lines of automobiles from the GDR including taxis. Atop the Berlin Wall stood hundreds of people from both sides, and celebrated its uselessness. It was evident that some people were using the opportunity to leave the GDR, others merely to visit to the other part of Berlin after 28 years. The above decision is being commented upon as a kind of attempt by the SED to get off the overall defensive, and at the same time eliminate emigration from the GDR through the CSSR.

Sochor 0454