



## Traffic projects 'German unity' – a success story on the fast development of infrastructure in the newly-formed German states

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## 1. Introduction

After 45 years during which Germany was divided into East and West by a heavily guarded and almost impassable border running through the middle of the country, it became apparent in 1989, for the first time, that Germany was to be reunified, something which many people no longer expected to see. As a result of the changes in Eastern Europe, especially the rise of citizens' movements, and favourable international developments, it was suddenly possible for the Great Powers to engage in negotiations that hardly anyone would have expected only a short time earlier. The joy of people on both sides of the border was thus all the greater when the barriers were actually torn down and political unity was achieved in a process that was tense but peaceful. On 3 October 1990, German unity became a reality, and people's urge to travel was scarcely manageable (**Fig. 1 and Fig. 2**).



**Fig. 1**  
Traffic jam after the border was opened in 1989



**Fig. 2**  
Traffic jam