** **

Berlin – A Political Center

German Assignment

By -

Kamaljeet Singh

14103160

B5

**About Berlin**

**Berlin** is the [capital](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Capital_city) and the largest city of [Germany](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Germany) as well as one of its 16 [states](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/States_of_Germany). With a population of approximately 3.6 million people, Berlin is the second [most populous city proper](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_largest_cities_in_the_European_Union_by_population_within_city_limits) and the seventh [most populous urban area](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_urban_areas_in_the_European_Union) in the [European Union](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/European_Union).[[5]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Berlin#cite_note-Insee_-_--5) Located in north eastern Germany on the banks of Rivers [Spree](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Spree) and [Havel](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Havel), it is the centre of the [Berlin-Brandenburg Metropolitan Region](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Berlin/Brandenburg_Metropolitan_Region), which has about 6 million residents from more than 180 nations. Due to its location in the [European Plain](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/European_Plain), Berlin is influenced by a [temperate](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Temperate) seasonal climate. Around one-third of the city's area is composed of forests, parks, gardens, rivers and lakes.

**Since reunification, Berlin has no longer been divided, and has long since grown out of the east and west question.**

Even in the Unification Treaty it was determined that Berlin be the capital. On June 20, 1991 the Deutsche Bundestag passed a resolution to also move the seat of government and Parliament from Bonn – since 1949 the capital of the Federal Republic – to Berlin. Since the move in 1999, Germany once again has in Berlin a pulsating political center that bears comparison with the major cities of the big European neighboring states. In addition to the newly designed Reichstag building, symbols of this are the Chancellery and the open Brandenburg Gate, which re­presents the overcoming of the country’s division. For a while there had been fears that the government’s move to Berlin could become an expression of a new German megalomania, with which the country’s economic and political weight would upset the status quo in Europe again. These fears proved to be wrong. Rather, German Unity was to be the initial spark that led to the overcoming of the division of Europe into east and west.

As such, Germany actually played a pioneering role in the political and economic integration of the con­tinent. In addition it gave up one of the most important instruments and symbols in the unification process, the Deutschmark, to create a European Monetary Union, the Eurozone, which would not exist without Germany. Nor, despite their being heavily involved in the unification process, have the various federal governments since 1990 ever lost sight of European integration, but have played an active role in its development, which culminated in the Lisbon process.

Ultimately, in the course of the 1990s Germany’s role in world politics also changed. The participation of German troops in international peace-keeping and stabilization missions makes this increased responsibility visible to the outside world. In domestic political discussion, however, the foreign missions are in some cases the subject of controversial discussion. In the NATO allies’ expectation that the Federal Republic of Germany take on a share of the common obligations commensurate with its size and political weight, it becomes clear in retrospect that as a divided country Germany enjoyed a political status that no longer existed when the bipolar world order came to an end. Since there is no longer a risk of confrontation between Bundeswehr troops in the west and those of the Nationale Volksarmee in the GDR, there has been continually growing international expectation for Germany to assume corresponding responsibility.

**Government**

**City state**

Since [the reunification](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/German_reunification) on 3 October 1990, Berlin has been one of the three [city states in Germany](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/States_of_Germany#Subdivisions) among the present 16 states of Germany. The city and state parliament is the [House of Representatives](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Abgeordnetenhaus_von_Berlin) (*Abgeordnetenhaus*), which currently has 141 seats. Berlin's executive body is the [Senate of Berlin](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Senate_of_Berlin) (*Senat von Berlin*). The Senate of Berlin consists of the [Governing Mayor](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_mayors_of_Berlin) (*Regierender Bürgermeister*) and up to eight senators holding ministerial positions, one of them holding the official title "Mayor" (*Bürgermeister*) as deputy to the Governing Mayor. The total annual state budget of Berlin in 2015 exceeded €24.5 ($30.0) billion including a budget surplus of €205 ($240) million.

The [Social Democratic Party](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Social_Democratic_Party_of_Germany) (SPD) and [The Left](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Left_(Germany)) (Die Linke) took control of the city government after the [2001 state election](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Berlin_state_election,_2001)and won another term in the [2006 state election](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Berlin_state_election,_2006).Since the [2011 state election](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Berlin_state_election,_2011), there has been a coalition of the Social Democratic Party with the [Christian Democratic Union](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Christian_Democratic_Union_(Germany)).

The Governing Mayor is simultaneously Lord Mayor of the city (*Oberbürgermeister der Stadt*) and Prime Minister of the Federal State (*Ministerpräsident des Bundeslandes*). The office of Berlin's Governing Mayor is in the [Rotes Rathaus (Red City Hall)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rotes_Rathaus). Since 2014 this office has been held by [Michael Müller](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Michael_M%C3%BCller_(politician)) of the SPD.

**Twin towns – sister cities**

Berlin maintains official partnerships with 17 cities. [Town twinning](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Twin_towns_and_sister_cities) between Berlin and other cities began with sister city Los Angeles in 1967. East Berlin's partnerships were cancelled at the time of German reunification and later partially re-established. West Berlin's partnerships had previously been restricted to the borough level. During the Cold War era, the partnerships had reflected the different power blocs, with West Berlin partnering with capitals in the West, and East Berlin mostly partnering with cities from the [Warsaw Pact](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Warsaw_Pact) and its allies.

**Capital city**[[edit](https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Berlin&action=edit&section=19)]

Berlin is the capital of the Federal Republic of Germany. The [President of Germany](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/President_of_Germany), whose functions are mainly ceremonial under the [German constitution](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Grundgesetz), has his official residence in [Schloss Bellevue](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Schloss_Bellevue" \o "Schloss Bellevue). Berlin is the seat of the [German executive](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chancellor_of_Germany_(Federal_Republic_of_Germany)), housed in the [Chancellery](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/German_Chancellery), the *Bundeskanzleramt*. Facing the Chancellery is the [Bundestag](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bundestag), the German Parliament, housed in the renovated [Reichstag building](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Reichstag_building) since the government moved back to Berlin in 1998. The [Bundesrat](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bundesrat_of_Germany" \o "Bundesrat of Germany) ("federal council", performing the function of an upper house) is the representation of the Federal States (*Bundesländer*) of Germany and has its seat at the former [Prussian House of Lords](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Prussian_House_of_Lords). The total annual federal budget managed by the German government exceeded €310 ($375) billion in 2013.

The relocation of the federal [government](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cabinet_of_Germany) and Bundestag to Berlin was completed in 1999, however with some ministries as well as some minor departments retained in the [federal city](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Federal_city) [Bonn](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bonn), the former capital of West Germany. [Discussions to move](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Berlin-Bonn_Act) the remaining branches continue. The ministries and departments of [Defence](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Federal_Ministry_of_Defence_(Germany)), [Justice and Consumer Protection](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Federal_Ministry_of_Justice_and_Consumer_Protection), [Finance](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Federal_Ministry_of_Finance_(Germany)), [Interior](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Federal_Ministry_of_the_Interior_(Germany)), [Foreign](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Foreign_Office_(Germany)), [Economic Affairs and Energy](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Federal_Ministry_for_Economic_Affairs_and_Energy_(Germany)), [Labour and Social Affairs](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Federal_Ministry_of_Labour_and_Social_Affairs) , [Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Federal_Ministry_of_Family_Affairs,_Senior_Citizens,_Women_and_Youth), [Environment, Nature Conservation, Building and Nuclear Safety](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Federal_Ministry_for_the_Environment,_Nature_Conservation,_Building_and_Nuclear_Safety), [Food and Agriculture](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Federal_Ministry_of_Food_and_Agriculture), [Economic Cooperation and Development](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Federal_Ministry_for_Economic_Cooperation_and_Development), [Health](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Federal_Ministry_of_Health_(Germany)), [Transport and Digital Infrastructure](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Federal_Ministry_of_Transport_and_Digital_Infrastructure) and [Education and Research](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Federal_Ministry_of_Education_and_Research_(Germany)) are based in the capital.

Berlin hosts 158 foreign embassies as well as the headquarters of many think tanks, trade unions, non-profit organizations, lobbying groups, and professional associations. Due to the influence and international partnerships of the Federal Republic of Germany as a state, the capital city has become a venue for German and European affairs. Frequent official visits, and diplomatic consultations among governmental representatives and national leaders are common in contemporary Berlin.