



Helmut Josef Michael Kohl; 3 April 1930 – 16 June 2017) was a German statesman who served as Chancellor of Germany from 1982 to 1998 (of West Germany 1982–1990 and of the reunited Germany 1990–1998) and as the chairman of the Christian Democratic Union (CDU) from 1973 to 1998. From 1969 to 1976, Kohl was minister president of the state Rhineland-Palatinate. Kohl chaired the Group of Seven in 1985 and 1992.

Born in 1930 in Ludwigshafen to a Roman Catholic family, Kohl joined the Christian Democratic Union in 1946 at the age of 16. He earned a PhD in history at Heidelberg University in 1958 and worked as a business executive before becoming a full-time politician. He was elected as the youngest member of the Parliament of Rhineland-Palatinate in 1959 and became Minister-President of his home state in 1969. Viewed during the 1960s and the early 1970s as a progressive within the CDU, he was elected national chairman of the party in 1973. In the 1976 federal election his party performed well, but the government of social democrat Helmut Schmidt was able to remain in power. In 1982 Kohl was elected Chancellor after the liberal Free Democratic Party had switched sides to support the CDU. After he became party leader, Kohl was increasingly seen as a more conservative figure.

As Chancellor Kohl was strongly committed to European integration and French–German cooperation in particular; he was also a steadfast ally of the United States and supported Reagan's more aggressive policies in order to weaken the Soviet

Union. Kohl's 16-year tenure was the longest of any German Chancellor since Otto von Bismarck. He oversaw the end of the Cold War and is widely regarded as the mastermind of German reunification. Together with French President François Mitterrand, Kohl was the architect of the Maastricht Treaty, which established the European Union (EU) and the euro currency.^[1] Kohl was also a central figure in the eastern enlargement of the European Union, and his government led the effort to push for international recognition of Croatia, Slovenia and Bosnia and Herzegovina when the states declared independence. He played an instrumental role in solving the Bosnian War. Domestically, Kohl's policies focused on economic reforms and later also on the process of integrating the former East Germany into the reunited Germany, and he moved the federal capital from the "provisional capital" Bonn back to Berlin. Kohl also greatly increased federal spending on arts and culture. After his chancellorship, Kohl's reputation suffered domestically because of his role in the CDU donations scandal, but it was largely rehabilitated in later years. The later Chancellor Angela Merkel started her political career as Kohl's protégée. Kohl died on 16 June 2017, age 87; he was honored with a state funeral following his death. Kohl was described as "the greatest European leader of the second half of the 20th century" by U.S. Presidents George H. W. Bush^[2] and Bill Clinton.^[3] Kohl received the Charlemagne Prize in 1988 with François Mitterrand; in 1998 Kohl became the second person to be named Honorary Citizen of Europe by the European heads of state or government. Following his death, Kohl was honored with the first ever European Act of State in Strasbourg.^[4] Kohl was married to Hannelore Kohl during his entire political career, and they had two sons, Walter Kohl and Peter Kohl.

Source: Wikipedia

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