

Wortlaut der Video-Botschaft von Bundeskanzlerin Merkel zur Föderalismusreform (Englische Fassung)

Sa, 01.07.2006

Last Friday, after long and often very difficult negotiations, the Bundestag passed the federal reform bill, which brings many completely new elements to Germany's constitution, the Basic Law. We will succeed in reallocating and clarifying the competencies of the Federation and the Länder, with the result that the Länder will be given some new tasks to enable them to be closer to the citizen and to decide on matters such as pub, restaurant and shop opening hours, freedom of assembly, as well as on prisons and residential accommodation.

In return the Federation will get new or sole powers, for example the Federal Criminal Police Office will in future coordinate anti-terrorism measures when the terrorist threat extends beyond the borders of a single Land. This is extremely important in view of the international situation. It also means that we as a Federation can finally draw up an environmental code, because the Federation now has sole responsibility for this field.

Taken as a whole I feel that by passing this reform we have achieved something of major significance. The citizens will be able to see more clearly who is responsible for a political decision, whether it be the German Bundestag or the Länder. There will be fewer cases before the Bundestag's Mediation Committee in which it is unclear at the end who pushed through what compromise. And the fact that it is now clear who is responsible for what means that it is easier to discuss problems over political decisions.

I think the day we passed this federal reform bill was a good day for Germany. The Bundesrat will also vote on it in a few days' time and also pass it. In my opinion we have demonstrated that we have the courage to make changes and at the same time we have provided greater clarity regarding political decisions for citizens.