



**Press statement on 20 December 2016
in Schloss Bellevue
on the attack on the Christmas market in Berlin**

We are united in sorrow today, inextricably united, with the families of the victims of the attack in Berlin. We mourn for those who were killed. We fear for the fate of those injured. And we share in the pain of their families and friends. We will not leave them to suffer this pain alone.

And at this time, we also think about the many victims that terror against freedom has claimed all over the world.

This murderous attack, like those that preceded it, was an attack against unsuspecting people. Like many other people all over Germany at the time, they were at a Christmas market. The arbitrary nature of how perpetrators choose a particular location and particular victims is a fundamental feature of terror. However, we know that this attack, like those before it, was directed against us all.

It was an attack on the heart of our society and our way of life. What happened at the Christmas market in Berlin wrenched people from our families and circle of friends. Many people are not just shocked personally – they also perceive this act as an attack on our life in our country.

We are shocked now, but these acts do not undermine our convictions. We stand on firm ground and we stand together – in Germany, in Europe and everywhere that people live and want to live in freedom. The perpetrators' hatred will not mislead us into feeling hatred ourselves. It will not divide us.

Today, we in Germany remind ourselves that we live in a strong community in which the law and humanity count. They are the foundation of our state and society. They are the ground on which we stand. And we know that this community extends far beyond our national borders.

Our solidarity does not become weaker when we are attacked – it becomes stronger. We look to one another, talk with one another and look after one another.

I am thinking in particular today of the people who helped, of the police officers, fire fighters and security staff, of all the helpers on the ground and all the doctors and paramedics who are still fighting now to save the lives of the victims.

The people can trust that the state will take resolute action to ensure security. And above all, let us remember one thing: our Germany remains a country of freedom, solidarity and internal peace.