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14.03.2003

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The award to Foreign Minister Fischer was presented on March 9, 2003, at ceremonies in Münster marking the opening of this year's *Woche der Brüderlichkeit* (Brotherhood Week), which is sponsored by the 79 member societies of the Coordinating Council. The citation was presented by Paul Spiegel, President of the Central Council of Jews in Germany. "Joschka Fischer," he said, "is a German who has convincingly succeeded in drawing lessons from the terrible past of this country." In acting to further the peaceful coexistence of religions, Fischer "sets standards for relations between Jewish and non-Jewish Germans, between Germans and Israelis," said Spiegel.

In his acceptance speech, Fischer reviewed the troubled history of Christian-Jewish relations in Germany and paid tribute to the contributions of Jewish intellectuals like Martin Buber and Franz Rosenzweig to German culture. "Today," he said, "despite all its shortcomings that it must put right, Germany is an open country, a democracy integrated into Europe. . . . Having said that, what a wonderful country our Germany would be, how much richer and more impressive, had Albert Einstein and Martin Buber been respected and able to carry on their research at German universities."

Touching on the situation in the Middle East, Fischer pledged that "I will continue to make every effort to prevent terror and violence from prevailing, to ensure Israel's lasting security and also that the suffering of the Palestinians will be ended and that they will be able to realize their legitimate demand for their own state, peacefully coexisting with Israel."

[Text of Fischer acceptance speech](#)