

# cartographic perspectives

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cartographic perspectives  
on the news

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**THE CHANGING POLITICAL MAP OF EUROPE**  
As syndicated columnist Ellen Goodman recently observed, "This is the year that making history finally became a daily event." The political map of Europe in particular is changing at a dizzying pace. Boundaries that only last year seemed as permanent as an 'iron curtain' now appear as ephemeral as faded ink lines on yellowed paper.

The most impressive symbol of the Eastern European revolution has been the precipitous collapse of the Berlin wall and the impending reunification of the two Germanies. Cracks in the wall began to appear in May 1989 as Hungary opened its barbed wire border with Austria. By the fortieth anniversary of the German Democratic Republic in October, 20,000 East Germans had passed through Hungary on their way to West Germany, and thousands more loudly demanded democratic reform in the streets of East Berlin. On hand for the anniversary, Soviet President Gorbachev commented that the fate of reform in East Germany would be decided "not in Moscow, but in Berlin." East German President Erich