

Beat: Politics

## **JEAN MARC AYRAULT GIVES TRIBUTE TO FORMER GERMAN PRESIDENT WALTER SCHEEL**

### **A LEADING FIGURE DIED AT 97**

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**USPA NEWS** - It is with great sadness that I learned of the death of former President of the Federal Republic Walter Scheel. I offer my condolences to his family. I express to the authorities and the German people my sympathy. Vice Chancellor and Foreign Minister in the government led by Willy Brandt.

It is with great sadness that I learned of the death of former President of the Federal Republic Walter Scheel. I offer my condolences to his family. I express to the authorities and the German people my sympathy. Vice Chancellor and Foreign Minister in the government led by Willy Brandt from 1969 to 1974 and President of the Federal Republic from 1974 to 1979, Walter Scheel will have played a key role in a period of great change for contemporary Germany. " Foreign Affairs Minister Jean Marc Ayrault Said. Alongside the Chancellor Willy Brandt, he launched Ostpolitik to the German Democratic Republic and laid the groundwork for a process that would take a few years later, the reunification of Germany. He was able to embody and defend with conviction the values "of freedom and rule of law. I pay tribute to the action of this great defender of European construction. His vision of Europe and its European commitment should continue to inspire us." Foreign Affairs Minister Jean Marc Ayrault Said.

**WALTER SCHEEL WAS A LEADING FIGURE IN WEST GERMANY**-----

Walter Scheel, who as foreign minister and deputy chancellor of West Germany under Chancellor Willy Brandt from 1969 to 1974 helped foster détente with the Soviet bloc and rapprochement with Communist East Germany, died on Wednesday in Bad Krozingen, in southwest Germany. He was 97. The death was confirmed by his political party, the Free Democratic Party, and by the office of Germany's president, Joachim Gauck. Mr. Scheel served in the largely ceremonial role of president of West Germany until his retirement from politics in 1979. He lived in Bad Krozingen.

Although he was one of Bonn's most durable postwar leaders, Mr. Scheel was overshadowed by the far more dynamic and popular Mr. Brandt, the architect of Ostpolitik, the West German initiatives that led to improved relations with Moscow and its East European allies, and to a Berlin agreement that eased Cold War tensions in 1972 by establishing diplomatic ties between the two Germanys. The reunification of Germany in 1990, the collapse of the Soviet Union and the end of the Cold War followed a long process of Soviet political and economic stagnation and corresponding declines in Soviet influence over European satellites it acquired at the end of World War II. But historians say Ostpolitik played a crucial role as an early catalyst, letting West and East step back from destructive confrontations.

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