



“The Hamburg Summit: China meets Europe”

Words of Welcome

by

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Your Excellency
Deputy Prime Minister Zeng Peiyan,
Cpt. Wei Jiafu,
Excellencies,
Minister Schily,
First Mayor von Beust,
dear speakers of this conference,
distinguished guests,
Ladies and Gentlemen!

I should like to extend a very cordial welcome to all of you on the occasion of the official opening of our conference “The Hamburg Summit: China meets Europe” here at the Hamburg Chamber of Commerce.

It is an honour and a great pleasure for me to greet such a highly distinguished group of international corporate, political, academic and media leaders here in our ancient halls.

We are particularly honoured that the Deputy Prime Minister of the State Council of the People’s Republic of China is our very special guest today.

Excellency, Mr. Zeng Peiyan, I should like to thank you once again for participating in our Hamburg Summit and for being with us today.

Furthermore, I extend my sincere gratitude and my appreciation to our close cooperation partner, the China Federation of

Industrial Economics, represented by the honourable Captain Wei Jiafu, President of the COSCO Group, and his delegation. A hearty welcome to you, Cpt. Wei, and to all members of your delegation!

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

our city is the most important centre for China-related businesses all over Europe.

Europewide, Hamburg boasts the highest number of Chinese companies.

For them and for thousands of companies in China, our city is the preferred gateway to the European market.

More than 700 Hamburg-based companies obtain permanent business relations with partners in China, and nearly 20 percent of the entire European-Chinese foreign trade passes through our city.

With more than 120.000 member companies our Chamber of Commerce is one of the most influential Chambers in Europe. We have an outstanding expertise in all China-related questions and permanently try to further improve the conditions for doing business with China.

For this reason, we recently prepared a concept for a so-called China Cluster in the HafenCity, our huge urban development project right in the city centre.

The China Cluster will include a variety of China-related services like Chinese restaurants, shops, a centre for traditional Chinese medicine and a Chinese tea house.

According to our ideas, all these services will ideally be concentrated in a spacious Chinese garden located in the HafenCity.

The China Cluster is about to become the most important focus point for all kinds of businesses related with China, for Chinese people living in Hamburg, for locals who are interested in Chinese culture and last but not least for tourists from all over the world.

We are confident that our idea of establishing a China Cluster in the HafenCity area will become reality within the next two to five years at the latest.

China is more and more moving closer to the European Union for much more than just business.

Because of this very positive development it has been our dream to give Hamburg the chance not only being the commercial bridge between China and Europe but the platform for international leaders focusing on the future of the Sino-European relationship.

That is why we are so happy that all of you made our dream come true by taking part in our Hamburg Summit that not by chance carries the subtitle “The power of partnership”.

A partnership without a future, even if it is sweet and wonderful, is not more than just a love affair.

What we need in business is more than love affairs.

We are in need of a good marriage, long lasting and dependable.

People say that the most lucky and successful marriages are those in which the married couple never stops talking about the important things in life.

That’s why this year’s Hamburg Summit, Ladies and Gentlemen, will only be the first of a hopefully long series of premier economic events of this kind.

It is in forums like this that we can increase our understanding of how the so called “China factor” in global affairs will affect our future world.

Please let me conclude by expressing my hope and my confidence that this meeting will produce significant achievements thanks to the knowledge, the wisdom and the spirit of cooperation of all the speakers taking part in this summit.

And, Ladies and Gentlemen, for those of you being in Hamburg for the first time, I hope that you will find some time despite our busy working schedule to enjoy the sights and the sounds of our city and see for yourselves that the vibrancy, dynamism and vigour of Germany’s gateway to the world are as obvious as ever.

Ladies and Gentlemen,
distinguished guests,
once again a very warm welcome to all of you here at the “Hamburg Summit: China meets Europe” in our Hamburg Chamber of Commerce.

Now I have the pleasure to let you know that I am not the only one who would like to welcome you.

I will be joined by the Conference Chairman Mr. Nikolaus W. Schües, Vice President and former President of the Hamburg Chamber of Commerce, shipowner, admirer, connoisseur and business partner of China.

I gladly take the opportunity to thank Mr. Schües and Prof. Teltschik for having accepted to lead us through the conference programme this morning.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I herewith declare the Hamburg Summit open.

Mr. Schües, the floor is yours.