"The Hamburg Summit: China meets Europe"

Speech at the Opening Dinner

by

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On behalf of the Hamburg Chamber of Commerce, I should like to extend a very warm welcome to all of you.

It is a special honour and at the same time a great pleasure for our Chamber of Commerce to welcome you, Honourable Prime Minister Wen, as the guest of honour at the Opening Dinner of the “Hamburg Summit: China meets Europe” 2006.

Thank you and your accompanying Ministers very much for being with us tonight!
I would also like to express a very special welcome to Prof. Xu Kuangdi and everyone in his high calibre delegation from the China Federation of Industrial Economics, our partner organisation without whom the “Hamburg Summit” would not be what it is today.

Ladies and Gentlemen, Never before in the history of our Free and Hanseatic City of Hamburg, we welcomed so many high ranking Chinese politicians and businessmen. This clearly is a sign of trust in our city as the premier China business location in Europe. For Hamburg and its business community, the relationship to China plays a predominant role: More than 2 million containers coming from or going to China are handled in the port of Hamburg every year. This adds up to a total of 20 percent of all containers being shipped between China and the EU.

By placing all these containers in one row, we can cover the whole long distance between Hamburg and Shanghai!

Ladies and Gentlemen, China is no longer only a sourcing and production place, but has become one of the world’s largest consumer markets. In short: China has emerged into one of the global economic players. It is now entering a decisive phase of economic and political development. The European business

community will continue to support you, Prime Minister Wen, and your country in its future development. In this respect, we should put our focus on the abolishment of trade barriers for more liberalized markets. In addition to this, dialogues on strengthening the legal security must be pushed in order to create a stable basis for private investment in China.

Both, Europe and China, have a lot of experiences to share. I am very much looking forward to a fruitful and inspiring exchange of views during our conference.

Prime Minister Wen Jiabao,
Honourable Prof. Xu Kuangdi, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen, I herewith declare the second “Hamburg Summit: China meets Europe” open.