



“The Hamburg Summit: China meets Europe”

Words of Welcome at the Official Opening of the Conference

by

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Check against delivery!

Mr. Jiang Yiren,
Your Excellency Madame Idrac,
Your Excellency Sheikha Lubna,
Former Prime Minister Rocard,
Former Chancellor Schmidt,
Vice President Papademos,
Members of the Diplomatic and Consular Corps,
First Mayor von Beust,
dear Dr. Sommer,
dear speakers of this conference,
distinguished guests,
Ladies and Gentlemen!

Real optimists are enviable people:

They enter a restaurant and order oysters
hoping to find a pearl inside that helps to pay the bill.

I think it could be a good idea to adopt this refreshing kind of optimism for the next fourteen hours hoping to get through our program in due time that is indeed “full to the brim” and that is – I promise – full of pearls.

With each new topic we open, beautiful pearls are to be discovered!

And with these good news in mind let me extend a very cordial welcome to all of you on the occasion of the official opening of the conference part of our third “Hamburg Summit: China meets Europe” here at the Hamburg Chamber of Commerce.

It is good to see you again in the best of health after last night’s dinner and from here it is quite obvious for me that you are bent on working again.

Ladies and gentlemen,

when my predecessor, the former President of our Chamber, Dr. Dreyer, declared open the first Hamburg Summit in 2004 he said:

“What we need in business as well as in politics are good marriages, long lasting and dependable.

No one in this field can be interested in short love affairs.

And 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.”

When he stated this in November 2004 we could never have imagined how important a constant dialogue between China and Europe would be only four years later.

Because meanwhile the married couple had to face difficult conditions and some marriage counselors obviously gave the advice: “Stop talking!”.

We, the Hamburg Chamber of Commerce, never stopped pointing out that separation would never help to get back to harmony.

And today we are more than glad that we arranged this third Hamburg Summit against great odds caused by the difficult general political climate.

Our constant dialogue with the economic and political leaders in China, in order to make sure that the third Hamburg Summit can take place, has now been rewarded:

Our “Hamburg Summit: China meets Europe” has been the reason for the first visit of a high-ranking Chinese politician in Europe after the marriage crisis or turbulences of the last twelve months and - may be – up to a certain extend will have a share in getting back to harmony.

This goes beyond all the expectations we had when we planned our first Hamburg Summit in 2004 that carried the subtitle “The power of partnership”.

In the next two days, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen, we will focus on ambitious questions: Market access problems on both sides will be discussed, China’s further integration into the global trading system has to be secured, and increasing environmental, infrastructural and social problems have to be solved.

It is in forums like this where we can increase our understanding of how cooperation can look like in these fields that affect both China and Europe.

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.

Ladies and Gentlemen,
distinguished guests,
once again a very warm welcome to all of you!

Now I have the pleasure to lead over to a very prominent German journalist, who will be our moderator, our link-man and who will escort us through our program: Dr. Theo Sommer, Editor-at-large of the weekly DIE ZEIT.

But before he takes the micro, Ladies and Gentlemen, I have got the privilege to formulate the very special words:

I declare open the conference “The Hamburg Summit: China meets Europe”.

Dear Dr. Sommer, the floor is yours.