



“The Hamburg Summit: China meets Europe”

Words of Welcome

by

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- Check Against Delivery -

Hamburg Chamber of Commerce

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Hamburg
Chamber of Commerce

Your Excellency Minister Wan Gang,
First Mayor Scholz,
Ambassador Shi Mingde,
Chairman Brok,
Mr. Lu,
Mr. Yao,
Mr. Fitschen,
Dr. Brudermüller,
Excellencies,
Members of the Diplomatic and Consular Corps,
Members of the European Parliament,
dear speakers of this conference,
Ladies and Gentlemen!

It is my greatest honour to welcome you on behalf of the Hamburg Chamber of Commerce to the “Hamburg Summit: China meets Europe” 2012!

As this is already the fifth “Hamburg Summit” we are celebrating a kind of a “little birthday” of our conference today.

And on birthday occasions – little and big ones – one is always honoured by the visit of good friends and special guests.

This is the case here today, and first of all I would like to extend a special welcome to our Chinese guest of honour who was with us already yesterday night and who gives us the pleasure to be with us also this morning.

Your Excellency Mr. Wan Gang,

A very special welcome to you and thank you for being back to the “Hamburg Summit” this morning, fresh and after a good rest, as I do hope.

It indeed is a great honour for us to again having a Chinese guest at the level of a deputy prime minister as one of the “Hamburg Summit”’s main speakers.

You explicitly came over from China to attend our conference: You flew in yesterday afternoon, attended our Opening Dinner, you are here with us now during the conference opening, and you will fly back to China tomorrow after some more appointments here in Hamburg.

We highly value your commitment to the “Hamburg Summit”, especially in light of the fact that the Communist Party National Congress ended only two weeks ago.

On behalf of all participants of the “Hamburg Summit”, I extend my greatest appreciation to you, Mr. Wan.

We take your presence here as another sign of China’s deep friendship with Europe, Germany and with Hamburg.

I would also like to extend a very warm welcome to our two delegations from the Chinese industry association CFIE and Chinese services association CATIS.

Mr. Lu is with us this year in his role as head of the CFIE delegation and has been our co-host since the “Hamburg Summit” started eight years ago.

Thank you for having assembled and brought to Hamburg an almost 50 persons-strong and very high-ranking business delegation once again this year!

Mr. Yao, your association CATIS was only founded in 2008 and already brought a large delegation to us in 2010.

We are delighted that you are accompanied by numerous service providers from China also this year and have now created a solid link to the “Hamburg Summit”.

Thank you so much, Mr. Lu and Mr. Yao, for all your support during the last months.

You and your delegation’s valuable contributions to our “Hamburg Summit” are highly appreciated!

Ladies and Gentlemen,

This year’s “Hamburg Summit: China meets Europe” is a very special one.

It is special because of its timing.

After the US presidential elections confirmed President Obama’s re-election on 6 November, the National Congress of the Chinese Communist Party started just two days later in Beijing.

This very important National Congress has set the course for the new Chinese leadership which will govern the country for the next 10 years.

And the “Hamburg Summit” is the first Sino-European conference following these developments.

Our participants from 17 different countries and the numerous media representatives present are very excited to see how these decisions will influence the economies not only in China, but also here in Europe.

European companies’ representatives have numerous questions in relation to the economic policy that will be taken by the new Chinese leadership.

One of the key points will be how the new Chinese leadership will deal with the slowdown in growth and its economic and social consequences.

On the other hand, Chinese companies are telling us of their concerns and questions in relation to the stability of the euro and European growth.

We hope to get answers to these questions at the “Hamburg Summit” over the coming two days.

„China meets Europe“ is the subtitle of the “Hamburg Summit”.

We consciously avoid giving our conference a “China meets Germany” focus.

In spite of this, please allow me to slightly digress at this point:

I know very well that our Chinese guest of honour, Mr. Wan Gang, would have loved to speak to us in German language, as he has more than 10 years of working experience in our country.

In fact, as people from Hamburg, Germany’s gateway to the world, are real cosmopolitan and international people, we insisted that Minister Wan Gang should speak in English.

Nevertheless, I like to stress that this year’s celebrations of the 40th anniversary of Chinese-German bilateral relations were an expression of the close and friendly relations between both countries.

The second German-Chinese intergovernmental consultations also demonstrated the special importance placed on the bilateral relationship by both sides.

At a European level, the EU-China Summit was held in Brussels in September.

These forms of cooperation and dialogue at the highest level are only to be welcomed.

We believe that dialogue and cooperation, not conflict and argument, should become the key words of Sino-European economic relations.

It has always been the goal of the “Hamburg Summit” to serve as a platform for such an open dialogue between Europe and China.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

You all have come for dialogue - for Sino-European dialogue.

It is my personal wish to thank our some 50 speakers who have come to Hamburg from China, the US, the Middle East and Europe.

Their experiences, evaluations and comments are the essence and the spirit of this conference.

You embody “China meets Europe”!

I would also like to thank all participants who have gathered here today.

And, last but not least, I would also like to thank our more than 30 sponsors and more than 15 partners, for their endeavors and support of this conference.

Many thanks to all those who actively contributed to the success of our fifth "Hamburg Summit"!

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I now have the pleasure to give the floor to our First Mayor Olaf Scholz who will welcome you on behalf of the Free and Hanseatic City of Hamburg.

Afterwards, our Conference Chairman Mr. Schües, will give some introductory remarks referring to our Keynote Session this morning.

First Mayor Scholz, the floor is yours.