



“The Hamburg Summit: China meets Europe”

Words of Welcome

by

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Hamburg Chamber of Commerce

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Ladies and Gentlemen,

In the name of the Senate of the Free and Hanseatic City of Hamburg, I would like to welcome you most cordially to the “Hamburg Summit: China meets Europe 2010.”

This is the fourth time that the “Hamburg Summit” has extended an invitation for you to discuss the political, politico-economic and cultural questions that are currently significant in connection with the cooperation between China and Europe, and to strengthen and further expand the numerous relationships that already exist among the stakeholders that are involved.

Hamburg, with its world port, has been China’s hub for all of Western Europe since the middle of the 1970s.

Since that time, Hamburg has replaced London in regard to this function and has taken over the traditional role of the English capital.

Hamburg’s contacts with China have always had European dimensions. By now, in fact, the European component in the relationship between Hamburg and China has become the driver of European-Chinese relationships.

Hamburg is China’s gate to Europe!

And this is why it was definitely the right decision to establish an internationally relevant Chinese-European economic conference in Hamburg in 2004.

The “Hamburg Summit” has developed into a meeting of European and Chinese partners at the highest level. As a dialogue forum, it is now absolutely essential for both sides.

I am more than pleased that you have accepted this invitation, and I welcome you to Hamburg.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Since the first ship from China entered the Port of Hamburg in 1731, a network of expertise in regard to China has developed here which is more comprehensive than that of any other city in Germany.

700 Hamburg companies are currently engaged in trade with China, and more than 400 Chinese companies successfully conduct their business in Germany and throughout Europe from Hamburg.

This has resulted in intensive reciprocal contacts and cooperations in business, science and culture.

As has been the case for years, China is Hamburg's Number One trade partner in container traffic. And, conversely, Hamburg is China's most important trading port in Europe.

So it is not surprising that, next year, Shanghai and Hamburg will be celebrating a quarter of a century of successful partnership as twin cities.

In the course of time, this partnership has developed into friendship, one marked by mutual trust and real substance, on all levels of society.

But a partnership between cities can only really function if their harmonious communication goes beyond the governmental level and trade partners. For it is essential for the people themselves to participate in a direct exchange with one another.

Hamburg and Shanghai are true models in this regard. Both sides are deeply interested in intercultural understanding. In everything they do jointly, they try to increase their understanding for each other's needs and decision-making processes.

After all, being twin cities means always learning from one another.

The best example of this took place when Hamburg was represented at EXPO 2010 in Shanghai and presented the first certified, energy-efficient passive house in China. This participation in the world exhibition was very much in line with China's growing interest in climate and environmental protection. Our exhibit made it easier to understand such answers to the ecological challenges of the 21st century.

The efforts already shown by China to combat environmental pollution and damaging CO₂ emissions are extremely significant today, in connection with worldwide efforts to curb climate change.

I am especially pleased that one of the key questions being dealt with at this year's "Hamburg Summit" is that of sustainable development in our conditions of life and ecologically compatible urbanization.

As the European Green Capital of 2011, Hamburg will continue to conduct its "green dialogue" with China.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The close and trusting relationship between China and Hamburg, which has existed for centuries, as well as our cooperation for mutual benefit, will offer considerable growth potential in the future.

Both Hamburg and Shanghai see themselves as a bridge between Europe and Asia.

It is for just this reason that Hamburg also plays a key role in encouraging a continuous and innovative further development in the relationship between Europe and China.

What would be the appropriate permanent location for the "Hamburg Summit: China meets Europe" – if not in Hamburg?

This year's "Hamburg Summit" will again play a major role in helping Europe and China to become even closer.

Many thanks to the Hamburg Chamber of Commerce, which has again made this exchange possible. I hope that you will find the conference today and tomorrow, here in Hamburg, to be an interesting one.

I hope that you will enjoy yourselves, have interesting discussions, and make contacts that will be useful to you.

And I wish you the greatest of success!