



“The Hamburg Summit: China meets Europe”

Welcome remarks at the Closing Lunch

by

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- Check Against Delivery -

Hamburg Chamber of Commerce

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Hamburg
Chamber of Commerce

President Melsheimer,
Prime Minister,
President of the European Parliament,
Minister Steinmeier,
Chairman of the Conference Schües,
Dr. Lienhard,
Ladies and Gentlemen!

“When a friend visits you from afar, isn’t that a cause for joy?”

Kung-Tse asked that question 2,500 years ago. To speak with China’s great philosopher

I would say: It’s a great joy when friends come from afar to the “Hamburg Summit” – and for the sixth time this year, too.

My thanks go to the Hamburg Chamber of Commerce that has made this conference an outstanding platform for the dialogue between Europe and China over the past ten years; also to Prime Minister Li Keqiang for his visit to Hamburg and speaking to us.

Hamburg’s economy comprises activities in many fields, both national and international. In our growing metropolis, traditional sectors like the aeronautical industry exist side by side with environmental and wind power technology, which is rapidly gaining importance; modern IT companies in the software and games sector have sprung up beside leading media enterprises, banks and insurance firms; and both the old-established industry of logistics and young, creative businesses are expanding vigorously.

Europa und China, Hamburg and China, are linked by numerous issues we shall all have to face in the future: How to organize communal life in our ever-growing cities? How to achieve sustainable economic development? How to use renewable energy sources in a reliable and efficient mode? How to solve the problem of an aging population?

Hamburg is a workshop and a shop window for all these matters. We invite you to look over our shoulder as we work, and to share the results.

But before that we will look over China’s shoulder. The fifth “China Time” is due to start in November. Then everything in the metropolitan region of Hamburg will revolve around the dragon for a good two weeks. This year’s motto will be “China ganz nah – China close by”, and we are already looking forward to over 200 events in the fields of art and culture, exhibitions and concerts, workshops, discussions and lectures. And we are especially looking forward to the many guests from China who will visit Hamburg on this occasion – many of them for the first time.

Prime Minister,

I was intrigued by your recent guest commentary in a major German newspaper about Chinese/German cooperation. Many of the areas of reform that you mention – such as downsizing administration and delegation of responsibilities – are important topics in the inner-European discussion as well.

I was very glad indeed to read about your intention to make every effort to facilitate easier access to Chinese markets and strengthen the protection of intellectual property.

Like you, I feel that these are important issues – especially for German companies.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I thank you all for taking part in this conference, and I'm looking forward to meeting you again in two years' time, here in the Free and Hanseatic City of Hamburg, for another "Hamburg Summit".