



“The Hamburg Summit: China meets Europe”

Welcome address

by

Olaf Scholz

**First Mayor and President of the Senate
of the Free and Hanseatic City of Hamburg**

- Check Against Delivery –

Hamburg Chamber of Commerce

November 24, 2016

President Melsheimer,
Your Excellency Deputy Prime Minister Liu,
Vice President Katainen,
Chairman of the Conference Mr Schües,
Ladies and gentlemen,

I am very pleased that we have had with you, Deputy Prime Minister Liu Yandong, and your high-ranking delegation, with the Vice President of The European Commission Juri Katainen, and with our Foreign Minister Frank-Walter Steinmeier, who will be joining us shortly, such good discussion partners at this year's Hamburg Summit: China meets Europe.

Because the Hamburg Summit, which is organised by the Chamber of Commerce, thrives on personal talks – between companies from China and Europe, but also amongst politicians.

And I am very pleased that Gerhard Schröder has now agreed to become Honorary Chairman of the Summit, following in the footsteps of Helmut Schmidt.

This summit is taking place in turbulent times. There are more than enough topics for China and Europe to be discussed at the moment. Some were discussed by participants yesterday, some others we will come back to in a few moments.

And it is good that next July, here in Hamburg, the heads of state and government of the twenty most important industrial and emerging countries will likewise be meeting to discuss the most pressing global issues. By the way, this is also a sign of the good relationship between Hamburg and China, as the last G20 summit took place at the beginning of September in Hangzhou.

Every day we experience that the world is coming closer together. Globalisation is a reality. China and the member states of the European Union have, on the whole, benefited greatly from it. But for our citizens, not everyone has seen a personal benefit. Therefore, we have a common interest in shaping globalisation to ensure that all our citizens are able to cope.

We know: we cannot live without trade cooperation. We need investments in order to safeguard jobs, and especially in the harbour city of Hamburg one sees how important global trade is for our common well-being.

Nonetheless, one cannot overlook the fact that globalisation has also given rise to a number of concerns. There are two responses to these: some wish for a return to closed borders and separate nation states.

This is not the way forward. The answer for Europe's citizens lies within the European Union.

It gives us the weight and significance we need to jointly enforce new rules. In Europe we must ensure that our welfare state continues to support those who are not among the winners of globalisation.

But it is not only a question of globalisation and trade. Because our joint interests go beyond this issue.

China and Europe are striving to achieve peaceful settlements to armed conflicts throughout the world. Wars such as the one in Syria are a source of deep concern in our countries – and so it is good and important that both China and Germany are active in the institutions of the United Nations and international cooperation in this respect.

In the past few days we have heard a lot about another global challenge. It is good that both Germany and China showed their support to slow down the pace of climate change in

Marrakech. Global warming is a truly global problem that can only be resolved by wise policies and cooperation.

Cooperation rather than confrontation is a useful concept in international relations. The European Union will continue to expand its role in greater cooperation with the other world powers. We have a stable relationship with the USA. And especially here in Hamburg, we are highly aware of the importance of China's role in the global economy.

At the summit there were many discussions relating to the Chinese initiative on a new Silk Road. As Hamburg's Mayor, I am delighted that one end of this road is located in our city. This applies both to the sea-routes via ship and to the trans-continental routes via rail. But I would also like to take the opportunity of your presence here, Deputy Prime Minister Liu, to point out the importance of air transport.

We are working hard to finally open a direct flight connection between the "Hamburg Airport Helmut Schmidt", as Germany's oldest airport has been called for the last few weeks, and the airports in Beijing or Shanghai. I would really appreciate it if you could help support our plans.

Because in less than two months from now, there will be yet another very good reason for a visit from China to Hamburg. On 11 and 12 January 2017 we will finally be able to listen to the first concerts in the Elbphilharmonie, the new concert hall in Hamburg.

Deputy Prime Minister Liu, yesterday together with your delegation you were able to get a feel of the building and its impressive architecture. I look forward to your next visit when you can also enjoy its wonderful acoustics, and I would like to take this opportunity to invite you, to honour us soon with your presence again.

And of course this invitation also extends to all of the other international guests at this closing lunch.

At the latest, at the next Hamburg Summit: China meets Europe, as I am sure the Chamber of Commerce will be scheduling a concert in our new landmark.

I look forward to your visit!

I am very pleased that the visit by our friends from China, and the discussions which have taken place here, have helped strengthen our relations.

Thank you!