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**The fall of the wall and what it meant for International Education
in general and for the DAAD in particular**

Minister, Ambassadors,

Ladies and Gentlemen, dear alumni, partners and friends,

I welcome you as secretary General of DAAD and since I have been doing this job for almost twenty years I am happy to see quite a number of well known faces here. Thank you all for coming and I am sure you will not regret to have done so.

(Please forgive the impoliteness with which our football girls treated yours yesterday evening – remember what your gentlemen did when they beat ours 5:1 at home. O.K., we are quits now and we can relax until we meet again in South Africa.

Now allow me to say a few words in German which I would like to do for three reasons:

Erstens habe ich in diesem Jahr schon so viele Veranstaltungen in Deutschland in englischer Sprache begrüßt, dass ich es jetzt unbedingt einmal genießen möchte, eine Veranstaltung in England auf Deutsch zu eröffnen.

Zweitens möchte ich damit alle denen unter Ihnen danken, die viele Jahre lang mit der deutschen Sprache gerungen haben und sie nun endlich beherrschen. Sie werden inzwischen die Schönheiten dieser Sprache entdeckt und lieben gelernt haben. Und diese Vorzüge wollen wir dann hier auch nicht gänzlich verstecken.

Und schließlich möchte ich wenigstens kurz beweisen, dass ich durchaus eine Sprache auch fehlerfrei benutzen kann, bevor ich dann vor den unregelmäßigen Verben und Präpositionen Ihrer Sprache kapituliere. Ich erhoffe mir auf diese Weise von Ihnen, den englischen Muttersprachlern, ein wenig mehr Verständnis und Nachsicht...

Having said that I shall try to continue in English and to draw a picture of the past twenty years since the wall came down – not as a historian or political scientist, which I am not, but from my very **personal point of view**, specially from my **professional experiences** as Secretary General of the Rectors Conference till 1990 and then of the German Academic Exchange Service DAAD, which, as you know, is Germany's largest agency for international cooperation and exchange in Higher Education (and in all modesty also the world's biggest organisation of this kind).

This year 2009 is indeed **a commemorative year**. Obviously the "nine" at the end has a specific German connotation:

20 years since the fall of the wall and subsequently of the iron curtain

60 years (1949) ago : the founding date of the Federal Republic of Germany and of the German Democratic Republic

70 (1939) years, 1st of September, the beginning of World War two,

80 years (1929) ago Black Friday, the World Financial break down which had a disastrous impact on the future of the young Weimar Republic

90 years (1919) the Weimar Republic was founded - which finally

surrendered under the joint attacks of the extreme right and left ideologies

160 years (1849) the 1st democratic Constitution of the Frankfurter Paulskirche was drafted which was suppressed one year later by the antidemocratic restoration

200 years (1809) ago, after the disastrous defeat by Napoleon, Humboldt wrote his famous Memorandum on the New University of Berlin with the aim of restoring to Prussia its standing in the intellectual field, which it had lost on the battlefield.

You can see from this enumeration that we finally benefited a lot more from the wars that we lost than from the rather fewer that we won. There are many interactions between these dates and events which would deserve commenting on, but we will concentrate today on the last one, the fall of the wall in 1989.

The wall, as you know, had been constructed 27 years earlier, on the **13th of august 1961**.

I was a young soldier at that time, it was a beautiful Sunday in Munich, where I spent the weekend und suddenly saw the terrifying pictures in a TV displayed in a shop-window. During the following weeks we didn't get a free weekend any more while we seriously prepared ourselves for the next war. After some relaxation in the course of the year the next crisis occurred one year later and this time the cold war was even closer to a hot one, when soviet ships loaded with missiles for atomic weapons approached Cuba.

The next stage of deterioration in the situation came in 1968 in Czechoslovakia which we now know was the last time the USSR defended its achievements of WW2 with weapons. This did not happen again in Poland at the start of the 80ies with the Solidarnosz uprising and the same goes for June 1989 when brave Hungarian politicians ripped open the iron curtain. Then came the famous day of 9 November when the Wall fell.

I think it makes sense to show you a short **clip** of these historical moments which at the same time seem to have happened yesterday or hundred years ago.

SPIEGEL-TV Ausschnitt

At that time I was Secretary General of the WRK, the **West German Rectors Conference**

We immediately understood that a new chapter of German-German Relations and beyond had begun but we did not imagine at all that one year later Germany would be peacefully re-united in one state...

The West German rectors Conference invited a **GDR rectors' delegation in January 1990** to meet and after difficult and delicate talks in a rather stiff atmosphere (all of these rectors were still traditional "Kader" of the Communist Party) we agreed to establish a similar Rectors Conference in the GDR as a partner institution for intensified cooperation.

I attended as the only guest and observer the **founding ceremony of this rectors Conference** which took place some months later in the Humboldt University, which in spite of its legacy had compromised with totalitarian ideologies twice within twenty years from 1933 to 1949.

On my way to the meeting room I passed the large inscription on the wall with the famous Karl Marx Quotation: Die Philosophen haben die Welt nur verschieden interpretiert. Es kommt aber darauf an, sie zu verändern...("The philosophers have only interpreted the world in different ways; but what matters is to change it..."). The text is still there and every time I pass I still ask myself whether Marx was right or wrong...

Again a very strange atmosphere, almost no discussions about the draft of the statutes which had more or less copied the West German Rectors Conference Model. But there was one single and significant difference: instead of having a **Secretary General** the new Organisation had to content itself with a simple Secretary. Obviously the connotations with the title Secretary General in a still Communist State where not appropriate for a newly founded academic institution. I preferred not to comment on that.

But I had to raise my voice at the very end when the paragraph about the eventual **liquidation** of the organisation came to a vote. The text declared that in this case all assets and liabilities should pass over to the state. I disagreed because the only assets that the new institution possessed were donations from my own institution (an electric typewriter, a fax machine, a wireless phone – the

mobile of today was not yet invented and the telephone network in the GDR and between the two German States was rotten and insufficient).

I didn't want to leave these assets to any state authority and proposed to address a suitable charity organisation instead. The audience looked perplexed and helpless.

Then, finally, somebody answered that it was inappropriate to discuss the death of an organisation in the very hour of its birth. I replied that none of us could foresee whether this organisation would live for a whole generation or just for three months.

This remark, from a west German observer, caused a massive disturbance and a controversial debate among the audience which, until then, had followed the chair with discipline, patience and resignation.

And indeed, three months later during the next meeting of new East German rectors conference - it was a meeting in the former Stasi training camp of Gosen, now a recreation resort – a substantial fraction of the university rectors decided to leave the conference and accept the offer to join the West German Rectors Conference. The WRK had invited the East German Universities to attend its plenary meeting in June and a dozen of them accepted.

The then newly appointed GDR Minister for Higher Education, **Professor Meyer**, former dissident and member of the first freely elected GDR Government, also attended the meeting and he was not at all amused about the tendencies of disintegration among his constituency. He as many other former dissidents still believed that there was a future of a new GDR, **a socialism with a human face**, as they called it. Some months later, after unification, he became minister for Education and Science of the newly re-established Free State of Saxony...

I tell these little anecdotes in order to remind us of the speed and surprising outcome of the developments towards German unification. Even our friends in France and the UK, who were not all equally happy about this development, hardly found time to formulate their own thoughts and conditions. Once the gates were opened, there was no holding back.

Two months before the formal unification **I joined the DAAD**, the German Academic Exchange Service as its Secretary General.

The DAAD had been founded some years after World War I by a number of students from Freiburg and Heidelberg and had been re-established after World War II by the Rectors Conference, by the way, with active support from the British Military Government. Until German unification it had played a well esteemed role as a scholarship organisation which awarded grants for study abroad to talented German students and young researchers and invited carefully selected foreigners for study or research in Germany.

With the unification of Germany this role did not only expand geographically but changed its character, mission and political importance in an increasingly globalizing world.

From 1990 to the mid-nineties, German unification was, of course, the number one challenge for all German institutions including the DAAD. Other challenges were soon to follow.

During the period 1989/1990 the DAAD had already started some student exchange programmes between East and West Germany and had launched a guest lecturers programme that sent hundreds of Westerners into East German Universities specially in the sensitive fields like Economics, Humanities, Political Sciences and so on.

I remember a report by an economist who had tried to introduce East German students to the market Economy. Do you guess, he asked the audience, who my best students in market economy are? Exactly those who had formerly been the best in centrally planned economy. Why? Because the best are the best anyway...

Actually, we had no idea about the functioning of the East German universities. We knew Oxford, Birmingham and Harvard far better than Dresden or Leipzig University. Indeed it was only in 1987 that I first visited the GDR after our flight from my birthplace Cottbus in 1950.

Then, with **the 3rd of October 1990** the DAAD all of a sudden had to take over the responsibility for roughly 10.000 GDR fellowship holders, 3000 Germans who mainly studied in Russia and 7000 foreigners in East German Universities. All these students were grantees; there was practically not a single free mover who had come on his/her own.

In the Unification Treaty between the Federal Republic and the German Democratic Republic, which was negotiated in summer 1990, it was laid down that all these students should be given the chance to successfully complete their studies. **Nobody should have to leave Germany** only because the two parts had reunited. That had been a postulation of the DAAD which was anything but easy to communicate: its implications were expensive (50 million Deutschmark per year) and politically controversial, because there was a widespread prejudice that the international students in the GDR were only children of the big party bosses of socialist brother states. There were indeed some of them but the vast majority was academically qualified and studied sciences, technology and medicine.

I am not forgetting 4. Oct 1990. We opened an **office in Berlin** in order to bring the DDR Programmes to an orderly end. The office had 30 employees from East German universities and ministries, whose personal history, feelings, fears and hopes we were unaware of.

The small ceremony took place on the top floor of the DDR-Foreign Office in the board room of Margot Honecker, the Minister for Education and wife of the last DDR General Secretary. The huge white building on Schlossplatz has since been torn down.

The view was over the Square to the so-called people's palace, the seat of the DDR Parliament; this too has gone through a painful process of destruction. The People's Palace in turn was built in place of the Palace of the Hohenzollern Emperors, which was demolished on the orders of Ulbricht in 1950 as a symbol of Prussian absolutism. During the years of the Weimar Republic it had become a museum, and more important still, it was the home of the DAAD until, in November 1943, an allied bomb ended the first chapter of the history of the DAAD.

If ever I had the feeling of being a witness to a real historical event, then it was at that place and at that time.

To cut a long story short; the office did a very good job! It managed a **90% success rate of the scholarship-holders** in achieving their desired outcome. This was all the more surprising as the East German universities had to go through a fundamental change at this time. New universities were founded, old institutions closed or merged and their educational profile changed; for example the West German system of Fachhochschulen was introduced, which was unknown in the DDR.

The five **Akademien der Wissenschaften** (Academies of Science), which in the Soviet system dominated research, were closed. Some academy institutes were integrated into the university system but the majority of them continued their work outside the university system, now jointly run as the Leibnitz Society. The reason for this was mainly financial. In this way the Federal Minister for Research was able to part fund them, whereas they would have otherwise been a burden to the five newly founded Länder. It is obvious that this is an understandable but certainly not always good reason.

Besides this institutional restructuring there were of course individual changes; ca 30 % of the staff were dismissed during this phase, ca 10% of these for political reasons, and the other two thirds for reasons of a lack of qualifications and need. Compared to West Germany, the East German universities enjoyed an extraordinarily good staff-student ratio: the DDR kept the student numbers artificially low and at the same was generous in creating staff positions as in all public services sectors. However the new Bundesländer did not want to and could not afford to keep these in their narrow budget which anyway was paid for mainly by western transfer money (a transfer which still continues but is increasingly controversial.)

Parallel to these duties we developed **new programmes** for the East German universities, which were all members of the DAAD within a year. English-language courses and partnerships with West universities belonged to these Special programmes. **In separate statistics** we recorded how much and how successful the East German universities and their members participated in all

DAAD-programmes. This participation and success rate developed amazingly fast. In the second half of the 90ies we stopped the separate statistics because it showed no significant difference between East and West any more.

With this the chapter on German Unity has, to a large extent, closed. It was soon overtaken by other issues, such as -

Disintegration of the Soviet Union and the Emergence of the Wild East

The Asiatic Tigers, Dragons and Elephants

The development of the global educational market

Europe's development from a common market to a wider political Union

The Miracle of Bologna

9/11 and "the clash of civilizations"

The world credit crunch.....

Each of these subjects could easily feed a whole series of conferences and seminars (and indeed they do), I shall try to cover them in ten minutes

1. First of all, the **disintegration of the Soviet Union.**

With the Fall of the Wall, the power of the Soviet Union fell apart. In 1990/91 the Baltic States made themselves independent, other former soviet republics followed, and by the end of 1991 the Soviet Union was formally dissolved. Instead of one partner, we now had 15 independent states and much had to be built up from scratch.

In the 90ies the DAAD increased its exchange student numbers with Eastern Europe and the States of the former Soviet Union from 2000 to 18000 per year and still today most of our fellowship holders and most of the so-called free movers to Germany come from this region. The long-standing traditional connections from pre-war times played a role, as well as the inheritance of the DDR and not least the strong position the German language had in the region.

While over the years, contacts with the former Soviet Republics normalised and improved, the new problem zone of the **Balkans** appeared on the agenda. You are all aware of the history which will keep us occupied for a long time yet. The DAAD is involved in this with a complex programme within the framework of the Balkans Stability Pact.

Such missions, which one can also include within the phrase "**public diplomacy**", have increased with the number of enforced conflicts. So the DAAD is for example deeply involved with the redevelopment of academic structures in Afghanistan and latterly also in Iraq, in both cases under very difficult conditions, however with some success. It seems that this new type of work will continue, if not expand, in size and significance.

2. **Asiatic Tigers, Dragons and Elephants**

The terms speak for themselves; especially China's meteoric rise from a developing country to a leading player on the political and economic world stage, found its academic expression in a peaceful invasion of western know-how centres by hundreds of thousands of education-hungry young Chinese, who now return to their home country in great numbers and continue to further improve developments there.

While we in the DAAD initially concentrated on helping German universities recruiting as many well qualified Chinese, we are becoming ever more aware of the imbalance of the exchange. For the 27.000 Chinese students in Germany, only a few hundred German students are currently in China. It is a clear priority for us now to increase this number.

So it is a good sign, that now China, as earlier Japan, has drawn up an exchange strategy, which demands equal mobility in both directions. Thus in the coming years the number of foreign students in both countries, China and Japan, is planned to be doubled to 300.000.

3. This leads me to the third phenomenon which has occupied us increasingly since the middle of the 90ies; the **development of a much fought-over Global education market**.

This market is about internationally mobile students who want to either complete a full degree abroad or do part of their studies or research work or internship abroad. Their figure currently stands at 2.8 million, and is constantly growing, probably reaching 5 million in 15 years' time. They often belong to the academic elite and partly to the solvent customers and for both reasons are popular with host universities.

I do not need to explain this to you further as your own universities have become market leaders in this competition since the introduction of full-cost fees by your "Iron Lady" and the initiatives of Prime Minister, Tony Blair. I just want to mention here that German universities which for a long time had been busy with their internal problems, have become increasingly more active and professional in this market since the middle of the 90's. As a consequence they have since then emerged as the third biggest hosts for international students.

The DAAD has played a leading role in this achievement, first of all by political lobbying (through the campaign called "Studienstandort Deutschland"), through the founding of a marketing consortium ("GATE") which we partly copied from the British example and finally by a state subsidized recruitment campaign. Indeed, although our universities still demand no or only low fees, we believe, the campaign is worth it for two reasons:

First, in higher education and research "bright brains" are even more important than "hard cash".

And secondly, the world-wide competition for talent implies a systematic evaluation of your own and your rivals' strengths and weaknesses and is therefore an ideal motor for constant reforms and improvements. **In short, internationalization has become a driver of change.**

Consequently the DAAD (whose slogan is **Change by Exchange** long before Obama discovered it) has developed a number of programmes to support this reform process. These new programmes reached from the development of courses taught in English, via the standardisation of language and aptitude tests to the professionalization of the academic and social support for international students and the establishment of alumni programs.

4. This process of reform through internationalisation has at the same time received an extra impetus from what was at the time a totally unexpected side: I'm referring to the development of the European Community from purely an internal market to a wider **European Union** expanding both its territory and its competencies. Since the treaty of Maastricht Treaty the EU was playing an ever more important role in education and research and with the famous Lisbon Agenda to develop Europe to the "most competitive knowledge based economy in the world" it was more than logic that investment and political engagement in both education and research would climb to the top of the EU Agenda.

Based on the scholarship programmes like the ERASMUS programme which has since then mobilised over 1.5 million young Europeans across its own borders, the EU has also taken on a leading role in the structural questions of our higher education, which - 20 years - would have encountered furious resistance from most of the member states ago. This surprising new role of the EU was then strongly intensified by the so called Bologna Process.

5. This **Bologna Process** is a political phenomenon of the first order which is probably not perceived so in the UK as many in this country see it as a long overdue change of the continental European higher education systems to the Anglo-American university model. At closer scrutiny it differs in many ways from the British as well as from the US higher education systems – but that would be another speech.

As for the German universities this process, this is little less than the third great revolution after the Humboldt reform and the uncontrolled educational expansion in the post-war era,- and like all revolutions it is also connected to controversies, confusion and wastage. That's why at the moment in Germany the terms course correction and re-adjustment are much debated.

One thing is clear: there can be no return. And once again the DAAD who supported the process from the very beginning is heavily involved. Not only because we are by definition in favour of international cooperation, but also because mobility is a core aim of the Bologna process. Unfortunately some evidence suggests, that the introduction of the shorter 3-years Bachelor degree courses endangers the free movement of students instead of enhancing it. So we are trying hard with our information and advisory campaigns as well as with our targeted scholarship programmes to counteract this danger.

6. Whilst these comparatively positive developments have reflected in a strongly political function of the DAAD and a threefold increase in its budget, at the end there are two counter-productive phenomena worth mentioning which could jeopardize our work:

Firstly, I refer to the growing fear of terror since **September eleven 2001**, which incidentally I experienced in London, and which was followed by a militarization of foreign policy and a fundamentalisation of dialogue between the Islamic and Christian world.

This could also be a subject in itself and may well be looked at more closely later. Here I would just like to say that after all the experiences of the last years the discussion about Huntington's "Clash of civilisations" cannot simply be trivialized by a wave of the hand.

We at the DAAD have concluded that we must deal with the Islamic and more especially the Arabic world in much stronger measures than before, in dialogues and in concrete exchange programmes. In the DAAD statistics, no other region has seen such growth over the last few years as the Middle East and Gulf States, which for a part of the previous century were still "unknown territory".

7. The second critical point and my very last one, is the actual **financial and economic crisis**. Since the DAAD is financed by up to 85% by federal government taxes, the massive increase in the public budget deficit is a threat of the worst kind. Capital is harder to come by, the struggle for allocation even harder. Despite this we are still optimistic because we have good arguments that our expenditure in effect is good investment in the future of our country. For the global finance and economic crisis have above all two or three key messages which all apply to our work:

Firstly, the crisis has opened our eyes to the extent to which we are already globalized, interconnected, interdependent and jointly vulnerable. And the public increasingly understands that this also applies to other global risks like climate change, energy supply, water resources, poverty, migration etc. We hopefully also learn that these problems because they are global can only be solved through global collaboration. But that needs responsible people who have learnt to think and to act in a global context. That's something that isn't learned sitting at home but with exchange with the rest of the world when young. For us Europeans this is all the more important since in the forthcoming multipolar world the patterns of thinking, the models for solutions and the guiding rules and values will no longer be dominated by Western traditions.

Secondly the crisis has made clear that affluence based on speculation rather than concrete, **tangible work** cannot be sustainable for ever, is even dangerous in the long run. That should give a new impetus for serious educational efforts, for individuals as well as countries. In reality we can see to our satisfaction that the large economic rescue programmes in the USA and Germany have supported strong investments in education.

Finally there is perhaps a third conclusion to draw from this crisis. To some extent this crisis, whose name is greed, has revealed a moral vacuum in our modern societies – and that is not only a problem of Wall Street or the City of London or the Banking Quarter of Frankfurt.

Morality has a connection to education or vice versa: education should have a moral dimension, especially if its about future elites and leaders. So maybe the crisis unintentionally helps to re-introduce a necessary debate on virtues and values into the Bologna process which until now has been predominantly technocratic.

200 years ago, Wilhelm von Humboldt wrote in his Memorandum, - I quote in German- "dass es dem Staat nicht zuerst um Wissen und Koennen, sondern um Pers;nlichkeiten zu tun ist" –

that personality and character are more important than skills and competencies. He was right and he is even more right in a complex global world of today.

I am convinced that in this personality building process international mobility and cooperation can play a decisive role. So let me finish by encouraging your students as I do with ours: Yes, of course, your Island is wonderful, the sky in Manchester is always blue, your universities are excellent – but there is also a world outside which is worth visiting. Come and see and enjoy yourselves – maybe one day even in Germany.

Competition is fine, but cooperation is as badly needed.

Thank you for your patience.