

Good morning,  
dear colleagues, friends, ladies and gentlemen

Our ACA-President, **Sir Peter**, has graciously granted me the privilege of welcoming you – as ACA-Vice-President and on behalf of the German Academic Exchange Service, **DAAD**, and the German-American **Fulbright Commission**, both co-organizers of this conference.

I would first like to thank all of you for coming and specially thank our speakers and panellists and all those who have helped to make this event happen.

A special thank goes to our **musicians** who stand for internationalisation themselves:

**Wu Wei**, whom we have just heard, was born in China. After graduating at the internationally renowned Music Conservatory of Shanghai, he came to Germany in 1995 on a DAAD-scholarship to the Academy of Music Hans Eisler here in Berlin. Meanwhile he is the leading Sheng soloist worldwide, has been touring Europe, Asia, and America and is equally at home in classical Chinese music, as well as in modern jazz and in contemporary music.

The next artist – some speakers later - will be the percussionist **Murat Coskun** - a German of Turkish decent. He studied Oriental Studies and Ethno-musicology, and his repertoire ranges from traditional oriental music to classical music as well as jazz, Pop and World Music. He is the founder and music director of the international frame drum festival *Tamburi Mundi*, which is one of the biggest events for frame drums in Europe.

At the end of our opening ceremony the two of them will play together an improvisation piece, fusing their two cultures and backgrounds, which will make this performance especially unique. So thanks a lot to them.

Ladies and gentlemen,

**We have met in Berlin**, a city with many faces and a history that has been shaped by internationalisation – in the worst and in the best sense of the word. Let me highlight that with a couple of pictures and remarks:

Berlin, although more than 750 years old, entered the European stage only in the late 17th century, and did so with the support of foreign immigrants: With the “Edict of Potsdam”, proclaimed in 1685, Friedrich Wilhelm, "**The Große Kurfürst**" invited French refugees, the **Huguenots**, to develop the city of Berlin and the emerging state of Prussia - and that was a very successful concept indeed.

Only fifteen years later the **French Dome Church**, located on the famous Gendarmenmarkt, was built to accommodate the ever growing Huguenot community in Berlin. It was modelled after the former main church of the Huguenots in Charenton, near Paris, which had been destroyed in 1688.

About a hundred years later, our French neighbours helped us again:

**Napoleon** defeated Prussia, and that opened the doors for reform politicians (actually Germany also later in its history has profited much more from the wars we lost than from the few ones which we won).

One of these reformers was **Wilhelm von Humboldt**, who convinced the king that Prussia should regain on the field of education and science the power and reputation that it had lost on the battlefield. A wise idea indeed.

So the king allowed the foundation of three new Universities in Prussia, namely in **Berlin, in Breslau** (now Wroclaw) and in **Bonn** with the revolutionary concept of the Unity of Teaching and Research that in the course of time spread all over the world.

The new concept was so successful that German Universities for decades played a role similar to that of the leading US Universities today. The University of Berlin alone "produced" 29 **Nobel-Prize Winners**, 24 of them between 1901 and 1939.

In **1925 the DAAD** was formally established in Berlin, located in the castle next to the University, which was later blown down by the GDR authorities as a symbol of Prussian militarism. It was replaced by a so called "**Volkspalast**"- People`s Palace which is currently demolished to give way for a new "Humboldt Forum" with the old façade of the Prussian Castle. Maybe that the DAAD, which has its headquarter still in Bonn, might move in there again in the years to come.

The DAAD owed its foundation in the early twenties very much to the generous support by the then recently created **IIE** in New York – The Institute of International Education – and therefore it is an extraordinary pleasure for me to welcome among us the IIE President, my colleague and friend Allan Goodman. Allan has without any hesitation agreed to take over the part of the keynote speaker after the sudden cancellation of EU-Commissioner Jan Figel. I am sure you will not regret this change in our program.

The glorious period of German Universities ended with the **Nazi terror**, the expulsion of Jewish scientists and the burning of thousands of the finest books ever written in German – just in the square where we met yesterday, opposite of the Humboldt University, on the Bebelplatz.

It was by the way a DAAD-Grant-Holder, the Israeli artist **Micha Ullmann**, who designed the impressive memorial of an emptied library in the centre of that square.

What followed was a disaster that you all know too well. Germany as a whole and Berlin in particular had to pay a high price. The country and the city were **destroyed** and divided by an iron curtain and, since 1961, by a **deathly wall**.

The City and the new University survived only thanks to the strong **support of the United States** and the solidarity of the Western World. Willy Brandt and **John F. Kennedy** were the heroes of those days and will never be forgotten.

The famous Humboldt University was now cut off from international exchanges and cooperation and fell back into academic mediocrity. Already during the blockade of Berlin some professors and students had left the University and founded the **Free University of Berlin** in December 1948.

A generation later, **Gorbatschew** came to East Berlin to celebrate the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the GDR, actually its last one, and formulated that famous sentence, which, in my view, is still valid for the challenges of globalisation: “Wer zu spät kommt, den straft das Leben.” – “Life will punish those who come too late.”

The GDR citizens remonstrated in the streets and shouted “Wir sind das Volk” – “We are the people”..

**Brave Hungarian Politicians** understood the message their way and cut the iron curtain to release German refugees.

The wall fell and the iron curtain came down.

Since then, the **European map** has peacefully changed, and these changes were more substantial than anything ever brought about by any of the bloody wars before.

Berlin today is again an open city with international flair: Almost **500.000** foreigners live here, among them nearly 17.000 international students. And there is, surprisingly or not, again a strong **Jewish community** and a growing Russian colony.

**Three universities** and 15 other Higher Education Institutions, a large number of research institutes, three operas and 175 museums are a heavy burden on the Treasurer, but also the greatest wealth of the city.

**So “Ende gut – alles gut “ ...**  
Has history come to a Happy End ?

We indeed thought so for a while after the end of the cold war between East and West. Meanwhile we have learned that the **old evils of mankind** have not disappeared. We have witnessed many hot wars, growing intolerance and new dimensions of terror and many urgent problems like poverty and environmental pollution are far from being solved.

On the other hand, **the globalisation** which is increasingly shaping our daily life, new methods of world-wide communication and affordable transportation to any place in the world have opened new dimensions of global dialogue, cooperation and networks which we would even not have dreamed of some decades ago.

**There is a lot to be done. Let`s do it !**

It is in this sense that I wish all of us a fruitful conference and that I pass the word to an important actor in this field, namely to **Professor Dr. Friedhelm Meyer-Krahmer**, Secretary of State in our Federal Ministry for Education and Research, who might also address you as

representative of the German Presidency of the European Union.

Thank you for your attention,  
The floor is yours, Professor Meyer-Krahmer.