

Speech by FS at Day of German Unity and Triple Anniversary Celebration of German Institutions in Hong Kong (English only)

Following is the speech by the Financial Secretary, Mr Paul Chan, at the Day of German Unity and the Triple Anniversary Celebration of German Institutions in Hong Kong today (October 9):

Consul General Bredohl (Consul General of Germany to Hong Kong and Macau, Mr Stefan Bredohl), Commissioner Li (Acting Commissioner of the Office of the Commissioner of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China in the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region, Mr Li Yongsheng), Deputy Director-General Lu Feng (Deputy Director-General of the Economic Affairs Department of the Liaison Office of the Central People's Government in the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region Mr Lu Feng), Johannes (President of the German Chamber of Commerce, Hong Kong, Mr Johannes Hack), Dr Meyer-Zollitsch (Director of Goethe-Institut Hongkong, Dr Almuth Meyer-Zollitsch), distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen,

Guten Abend. Good evening. It gives me great pleasure to join you tonight in honour of the Day of German Unity and, in a remarkable show of that unity, a Triple Anniversary Celebration of German Institutions in Hong Kong.

I am delighted to offer my best anniversary wishes to three of Hong Kong's most valued international institutions:

First, the Consulate General of the Federal Republic of Germany in Hong Kong, now 70 years here – seven decades of building bonds between our two governments, businesses and peoples;

Second, the Goethe-Institut Hongkong, which is celebrating its 60th year here. And it's doing so in quintessential style. This Thursday, Goethe Institut will raise the curtain on its annual KINO German Film Festival – the 25th edition, no less; and

Third, the German Chamber of Commerce, now 40 years young in Hong Kong, is an essential bilateral channel, promoting business and investment ties between our two economies.

Those connections, of course, are strong and sure, a proud illustration of the close partnership at the government, businesses and cultural level. And, with a collective 170 years, I think we can call our ties longstanding and long-rewarding.

The presence this evening of so many of you from our German community, and from so many sectors and institutions, underlines that welcome reality.

Germany remains Hong Kong's largest trading partner among the European Union member states. Hong Kong is also home to more than 420 German companies. We truly value our close trade and investment relations with Germany and are keen to further strengthen our ties.

It's why I travelled to Germany, to Berlin and Frankfurt, last month.

During my visit to Berlin, I had the opportunity to see for myself the profound respect and dignity with which the German people reflect upon their nation's history, particularly the events in the recent century.

I was also able to witness your energy, vibrancy and friendliness, most vividly demonstrated in the Berlin Marathon, one of the six World Marathon Majors. We saw crowds gathering and cheering for participants along the route and at the finish line at Brandenburg Gate -even for those arriving close to the evening.

Berlin is really the compelling illustration of the remarkable qualities that characterise the German people and their unwavering spirit. Seeing is believing.

My trip was a full-on, fully embraced few days. I got up to speed on the latest developments and business prospects in Germany. I also noted that as the prevailing geopolitical challenges continue to cast a shadow over the European continent and its economy, German businesses are increasingly interested in seeking opportunities in this part of the world.

I shared with them that in seeking to expand their presence in Asia, German businesses can confidently consider Hong Kong as the landing platform and regional hub. Hong Kong remains steadfastly committed to the "one country, two systems" principle, distinguishing us as the only city in the world that benefits from exceptional connectivity to the Mainland and Asia, while retaining all the advantages of a capitalist international city. We remain committed to upholding the common law system, the rule of law, the free flow of goods, capital, talent and information, and all the principles that underpin our success. Hong Kong is determined to preserve its uniqueness and international character.

I believe those who are in Hong Kong like you all can readily tell this, because these are what we have been practicing day in and day out. These qualities are very much in our DNA.

And there will only be more opportunities for German businesses. As Hong Kong, an international trade, shipping, financial and aviation centre, continues to emerge as an innovation and technology hub, leveraging the synergy with our sister cities in the Greater Bay Area. This development is strongly supported by the Central Government, and we are rolling out pro-innovation, pro-business policies,

including attracting strategic enterprises to settle in Hong Kong.

Those "more opportunities", let me add, include green and advanced manufacturing.

And, under manufacturing, we must not forget Germany's enviable, centuries-old craft heritage, classically illustrated by the making, and drinking, of the world's best beer. Something I came to appreciate, and more than once – just to be sure – in Berlin and Frankfurt.

Once again, my congratulations on your proud 70-60-40 anniversaries. And my thanks for the continuing industry, creativity and culture you bring, day after day, night after night, to Asia's world city, our Hong Kong.

On this note, may I invite you to join me now in a toast:

To the people of the Federal Republic of Germany.

Prost! Cheers!