Rede von Herrn Oberbürgermeister Jürgen Roters anlässlich der 40. ISM-Ausstellerparty am 31. Januar 2010, 18:30 Uhr, Koelnmesse, Kristallsaal

Es gilt das gesprochene Wort!

Ladies and gentlemen,
I am very pleased to welcome you here this evening in my capacity as Chairman of the Supervisory Board of Koelnmesse and Mayor of the City of Cologne.

It’s been 40 years since the world’s first international sweets and biscuits fair opened its doors here in Cologne. Back then - in 1971 - a total of 351 companies were on hand to exhibit their products. They came from 18 countries and occupied 16,500 square meters of space at the Exhibition Centre. The black-and-white photos that you can see on the monitors in the foyer give us a good idea of what that first event was like. Everything was rather modest - the furniture was quite plain, as were the stands. ISM was meant to be a show where products were to be sold, and sold directly to buyers from the trade and specialised shops, without any detours and in a targeted manner. A total of 5,800 trade representatives showed up in 1971, and thus was born the world’s first trade fair for the confectionery industry.

ISM has developed rapidly since its establishment. It has grown in every possible way throughout the years, whether in terms of exhibitor and visitor numbers, exhibition space, or international scope. ISM has itself thus become a well-known brand in the international trade fair sector over the years.

Many of you have experienced for yourselves how this fair has evolved — its move from the Eastern Halls to the Rhineside Halls, then from the Rhineside Halls back to the Eastern Halls; the change of its logo colour from orange to pink; the shortening of its duration to four days; and the establishment of the successful parallel event ProSweets Cologne and sister fairs in Asia and the Middle East.

Today, ISM brings together nearly 1,500 companies under one roof, whereby more than 80 per cent of its exhibitors come from abroad - from a total of 68 countries, to be exact. The fair now occupies some 110,000 square meters in five halls, and this
year it’s expected to once again attract around 33,000 trade visitors from all over the world.

The event design has also been changed dramatically. The enjoyment of life and its pleasures, which many of us associate with confectionery as well, is now reflected in the design of the stands and the presentation of the products on display.

That said, the fair is and will remain a place for business, as nothing has changed over the years in terms of its original mission of bringing together supply and demand in the most precise manner possible.

Even in a globally networked world, successful business requires personal relationships and internal networking opportunities.

To ensure ISM remains the most important trade fair for the confectionery industry in the future, the organisers of the event have set a new tone this year with features such as the Displays special show, the CEO Lunch today, and the Convenience Summit, which will take place tomorrow afternoon.

The outstanding and trustful cooperation between Koelnmesse and the International Sweets and Biscuits Fair Working Group has served as a foundation of success over the last 40 years, and this will certainly remain the case for the coming 40 years.

This evening, we therefore celebrate the anniversary of ISM and its accomplishments to date with a 70s-style party - one that will be loud, colourful, and festive.

There are also 41 companies present tonight whose history is closely linked with that of ISM. These companies have been an uninterrupted fixture at ISM since 1971, and they are here to participate this year as well, which is why I would like to express my deep thanks to them on behalf of Koelnmesse.

On a personal note, I would like to express the great respect I have for anyone who can keep a company successfully on course for 40 years in a highly competitive market, which they have helped to shape.
Ladies and gentlemen,
this evening is a time for celebration; tomorrow we get back to business, back to ISM.

I hope you all have a great time tonight, much success at the trade fair over the next few days, and an enjoyable stay here in our city.

I am now pleased to hand you over to Tobias Bachmüller, the Chairman of the International Sweets and Biscuits Fair Working Group.