Speech by Lord Mayor Jürgen Roters on the Occasion of the Opening Ceremony of the Japanese-German Symposium "Japan and Germany – 150 years of cooperation" on 8 September 2011, 17 hrs, Japan Cultural Institute

Excellency,

sehr geehrter Herr Botschafter Dr. Stanzel,
dear Professor Tezuka,

sehr geehrter Herr Rektor Professor Freimuth,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

following the previous speakers, I would also like to welcome to you to the Japanese-German Symposium.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

within the cultural life of the City of Cologne the foreign cultural institutes play an important role. The individual institutes fulfil a large variety of tasks. Apart from events for their fellow citizens living in and around Cologne, their first and foremost task is to present to the German public a comprehensive picture of the cultural diversity of their own country.

The Japan Cultural Institute was founded by the Japanese government in 1969. Since then Japanese personalities who have comprehensive knowledge of both Japanese and German culture have been appointed to the position of Director. Under the management of these highly qualified Directors the institute has developed a unique profile and has done excellent work with a resonance far beyond the city borders of Cologne. Numerous outstanding events and programme series have provided an insight into both traditional and contemporary Japanese art.

In this context I would particularly like to mention the intensive and fruitful cooperation with the different municipal institutions, for example the Cultural Office of the City of Cologne and the Museum for East Asian Art. But there are also successful cooperations with further public and private institutions in Cologne and other cities, such as numerous German universities and the German-Japanese Societies.
The Japan Cultural Institute also plays an important role in our carefully nurtured city twinning with Kyoto, which will celebrate its fiftieth anniversary in 2013.

Ladies and Gentlemen,
in recent years the traditional understanding of culture has been widely extended. Besides events in the fields of classical art and culture, there is an increasing focus on programmes which, quite naturally, deal with the diverse contemporary problems of our industrial societies as well as the many-faceted reflections of social life.

International forms of cooperation are also being extended, as you will see within the next few days, ladies and gentlemen. One of the reasons for this are the increasingly global challenges in international work. The cooperations between different players aim at making activities at all levels more and more effective and productive.

Ladies and Gentlemen,
on the occasion of the anniversary "Japan and Germany – 150 Years of Cooperation" the Japan Cultural Institute of Cologne and the University of Cologne have organised a high-calibre symposium bearing the title "Dynamics of Traditional Research Societies in a Rapidly Changing World". It is being opened tonight. The three-day symposium comprises discussions about scientific cooperation and the shaping of international relations as well as workshops from different faculties of the university.

At this point I would like to thank all those who have contributed to making this ambitious event possible and who will be part of it in the next few days with their scientific contributions.

In particular I would like to thank the Japan Cultural Institute of Cologne, whose activities have intensified and deepened the traditionally good relations and friendship between Japan and Germany for many years. Ladies and gentlemen, your important contributions have given fresh impetus and ideas to the dialogue between people from both nations and have strengthened the bonds which link us even more.

Ladies and Gentlemen,
I wish you a pleasant evening and interesting discussions and an inspiring interdisciplinary exchange within the next few days.