Speech by Lord Mayor Jürgen Roters at the reception on the occasion of the 19th Humans in Space Congress on 8 July 2013, 6.30 p.m., Hansasaal

Es gilt das gesprochene Wort!

Dr. Contant,
Professor Gerzer,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am pleased to welcome you to the 19th Humans in Space Congress here in the Historical City Hall.

After meeting in Houston in 2011 and in Moscow in 2009, it is a special pleasure that the congress is taking place again in Cologne after more than 20 years. Cologne is an important location for aeronautics and astronautics and it is also known for its hospitality. So once more: A warm welcome to you!

Ladies and Gentlemen,
As the famous Frank Sinatra song says: “Fly me to the moon and let me swing among the stars! Let me see what spring is like on Jupiter and Mars.” The dream of flying and the idea that humans can travel to other planets is very old and at the same time very new and innovative. And the same is true for our city. Cologne has a long history and tradition and yet at the same time Cologne is open for new and innovative issues – like the issues you are going to discuss in the next few days.

Science and research have a long tradition here in the Rhineland. The University of Cologne is one of the oldest and largest scientific institutions in Germany. It was founded by our citizens in the 14th century. Around this beacon excellent scientific institutions have developed over the course of time. With numerous universities and excellent research institutes Cologne is one of the largest and most innovative science regions in Europe.

Among them are the German Aerospace Center and the European Astronaut Centre
of the European Space Agency. Last week we inaugurated a special research institution. :envihab is short for Environmental Habitat. The :envihab building offers the most up-to-date opportunities for your field of research, for the preparation of persons for space travel, for medical care during such a stay and for support upon the return and re-adaptation to Earth.

:envihab is an institution for international research. Ladies and gentlemen, your global cooperation and your exemplary objectives are important to the advancement of space exploration. In the last few days we have had the honour and pleasure of welcoming the Association of Space Explorers to their annual meeting here in Cologne. The team spirit of these international personalities was very impressive, as was their openness and desire to communicate the joint research objectives to the public.

evihab fits well in our city because Cologne is known for being international and cosmopolitan. I hope to welcome many of you back for another stay.

A few days ago a new research institution was inaugurated in Cologne. The „Cologne Cluster of Excellence in Cellular Stress Responses in Aging-associated Diseases“ is developing into one of the most significant international groups in age research. This is another great challenge for civilisation, which we are tackling together globally. Many of the discussions you’ve had about humans in space are also of great importance for age research. These two fields of research are well represented here in Cologne. I hope you will have many opportunities for joint projects and the exchange of results.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

there are numerous institutions here in Cologne which are linked to aeronautics and astronautics, for example, the Centre for Integrative Physiology in Space at the German Sports University. For this reason, we are carrying out a joint Theme Year of Aeronautics and Astronautics in 2013. With many events and lectures we will show the citizens of Cologne professionals working in the fields of aeronautics and astronautics here in our city.

If your are travelling around the city in the next few days do not be surprised if you
are asked friendly questions about your work. Cologne is not only a very cosmopolitan city, but also a tolerant and lively place in which people from more than 180 nations live. I am sure that you will feel welcome here during your conference.

I hope that despite your very full congress schedule you will find some time to get to know our beautiful city a little. Visit the unique Cathedral, the landmark of our city and UNESCO world heritage, or one of the Romanesque churches. Be inspired by the colourful life in our city and enjoy your stay!

To quote another famous American song: "When you wish upon a star, makes no difference who you are. Anything your heart desires will come to you . . .”

May your dreams, desires, and research carry you as far as you can travel. We hope to see you all again in Cologne some day soon.

I would like to thank the organisers of this congress for their hard work and dedication and wish all of you a successful conference with inspiring presentations and interesting talks.