

**Rede von Herrn Oberbürgermeister Jürgen Roters anlässlich der
Veranstaltung „Make in India: Opportunities for German Industry“
am 26. März 2015, 16 Uhr, Historisches Rathaus, Hotel Marriot**

Es gilt das gesprochene Wort!

Mrs. Shubra Singh,
Mr. Vijay Gokhale,
Mr. Raveesh Kumar,
ladies and Gentlemen,

I am delighted to cordially welcome you to today's event „Make in India: Opportunities for German Industry“.

I regard the fact that so many of you are present here today as evidence of the how great the interest in a bilateral exchange between India and Germany is and how close our two countries are linked in the meantime.

A traditional friendship which has already lasted for many years binds India and Germany. Economic and commercial relations between our two countries date back to early 16th century when German trading companies developed new sea routes around Africa, as they sailed in search of precious stones and spices. Thereafter, a number of German companies were established with the express purpose of trading with India and other Asian countries in the 16th and 18th centuries.

These links have meanwhile developed into a strategic partnership between our two countries. The foundations for it were laid down by our two governments in the "Agenda for the German-Indian partnership in the 21st century" and the "Joint declaration about the further development of the strategic and global partnership".

Today Germany is one of India's largest trading partners in the world and the 8th largest foreign direct investor.

It fills me with pride that the City of Cologne has also made its contribution to breathing life into German-Indian relations. The Cologne India Initiative, which started with a first journey to the subcontinent at the end of 2006, found its first points of contact in an economic exchange. It has meanwhile led to the settlement of well-known Indian companies in Cologne. "Wipro Technologies", "MindTree" and "Defiance Technologies" are prominent representatives for others which meanwhile manage their German and European activities from Cologne. And I am firmly convinced that soon others will be following these companies.

This is not surprising because Cologne is a powerful brand that is internationally known. Our city is not only well-known for its world famous landmark the Cathedral, but with a strongly internationally-oriented economy and outstanding exhibition and conference facilities. In addition, our metropolis with its over 1 million inhabitants, impresses with a high quality of life, with openness and tolerance. About 180,000 people from over 180 countries all over the world are at home in Cologne. Many of these people are involved in business in Cologne and make an active contribution to growth and jobs. Cologne plays in the Champions League of European cities. As a major location for business and research, it develops an incredible dynamism. Innovations are created and supported at all levels. As a city that is a pleasure to live in, with excellent art and cultural activities, the location has a powerful appeal.

Ladies and Gentlemen, many of you, especially our foreign guests, possibly don't know very much about Cologne. Therefore, perhaps you will allow me to take a look back into its history.

Cologne - this is the city of the Romans, the medieval trading centre on the Rhine, the city of the Three Wise Men, the traditionally Catholic city, the city of the French and the Prussians, the Cathedral city, the stronghold of the typical Rhenish sense of fun, the tourist city. The city, that was destroyed in the Second World War and rebuilt once again, the exhibition centre, the automobile city, the multi-cultural city. Cologne, that is a city of tolerance, the city of Carnival and of Christopher Street Day, the arts and media city, the metropolis which, however, with its "Veedeln" ("Quarters") offers a feeling of homeliness and family atmosphere – and much more.

Cologne is a city that is both old and young, rich in contrast, wild yet down to earth, urbane, multi-cultural and cosy. That is its charm, that is what its inhabitants are like. I hope that you will also give us the opportunity to show you just how cosmopolitan our city is, and how hospitable we are!

And last but not least, Cologne has always brought people, companies and networks together – an important factor which helps fast and efficient making of contacts. And that is precisely the aim with today`s conference.

Here in Cologne networks, such as the Cologne / Bonn-India Business Club, the German-Indian Round Table and regular binational conferences, as BITKOM / NASSCOM and also the Cologne India Week, additionally promote the cooperation between German and Indian business people.

However, India's economic power also manifests itself in Cologne in many other ways. In the meantime, hundreds of companies are registered with the IHK Köln with import and export relations to India, especially for machinery / plants, motor vehicles, IT and aerospace technology. And numerous companies from the IHK district have founded branch offices in India. The potential here is undoubtedly not yet fully exploited.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

in the age of globalization it is absolutely essential to work together across national boundaries and thus to pursue joint objectives. As a result, far-reaching opportunities open up for our two countries and for Cologne. In this connection, it is not only the internationally and globally-operating companies which benefit from the contacts. Also cultural facilities, such as the education sector, as well as science and research derive lasting benefits from the mutual exchange and simultaneously promote it.

You are taking part today at an networking session and panel discussion on „Make in India: Opportunities for German Industry”, because you know: A way arises, in that you take it.

I would like to thank the organizers for the organisation of this outstanding conference. I wish all of you a stimulating event and every success with all your future business ventures on the subcontinent and here in Cologne! Have a pleasant stay in our city!