

Rede von Herrn Oberbürgermeister Jürgen Roters anlässlich des Indo-German Business Forum im Rahmen der siebten Kölner Indienwoche am 19. Juni 2015, 15 Uhr, Universität zu Köln, Albertus-Magnus-Platz, Seminargebäude 106

Es gilt das gesprochene Wort!

Consul General Kumar,
Mr. Malhotra,
Dr. Schramma,
Deputy Mayor Berg,
Mr. Matter,
ladies and gentlemen,

I am very pleased to welcome you to today's event, the General Meeting of the Indo-German Business Forum, taking place within this year's India Week.

Mr. Malhotra created this conference format in 2008 and has thus initiated an important platform. Here, companies interested in business relations with India can network. But also others interested in the Indian subcontinent can meet and talk. We all know how important such links are for our work.

I would like to express my sincere thanks to you, Mr. Malhotra, for your tireless commitment within the India Initiative of the City of Cologne. Moreover, as business ambassador of the City you are an indispensable pillar of our India activities.

These were initiated by my predecessor, Dr. Fritz Schramma, back as early as 2006. Dr. Schramma, I would like to thank you for taking on the patronage for this event.

Since the start of our India Initiative, Cologne has developed into a popular location for Indian IT companies. The renowned companies Cades, MindTree, HCL and

Wipro enrich the media and ITC city Cologne. They speak for the success of our India Initiative. As a one-stop agency, the India Desk of the Department for Economic Development of the City of Cologne continues to be available to Indian investors for advice. This special service package and our business-friendly administration are two of the crucial factors for the interest in the business location Cologne.

Many further players in Cologne are also dedicated to the Indian subcontinent. I'd like to mention the University of Cologne, the University of Performing Arts and the Deutsche Asia Pacific Gesellschaft as examples. There are also many companies from Cologne that are already successfully in business in India as well as those who guide and advise other companies in their attempts to set up business.

Moreover, our two countries have maintained diplomatic relations for more than 60 years. Traditionally, a special friendship links Germany and India. German poets, writers and philosophers such as Herder, Hegel, Schopenhauer and Hesse wrote about the faraway India of their times. India's first Nobel Prize winner, Rabindranath Tagore, was enthusiastically welcomed in Germany in the 1920s. Since then the mutual fascination has continued. Customs and traditions and elements of each other's cultures have spread both in Germany and in India.

In addition, the India Week, which takes place in Cologne every year, emphasises how important and significant the good relations between the City of Cologne and India are. Apart from business events, once more there are a lot of things to discover this year in the fields of science and culture.

Just a few days ago, Consul General Kumar and I opened the India Week in the Rautenstrauch-Joest Museum. Consul General, I would like to thank you sincerely for your support. We really appreciate it and hope to continue this cooperation.

Ladies and gentlemen,
maybe you have already had the opportunity to visit the one or the other event during the India Week. Another important part of the programme is the Sourcing Day on 24

June. It provides an ideal platform to obtain information about India and network with experienced India experts. I would be pleased to meet you there again.

Ladies and gentlemen,

it is only together and through continuous dialogue that we can master the great challenges of a globalised world. Areas in which we will benefit from a balanced cooperation are the fields of education, science, research and business. Cologne provides the best conditions for that. Our Deputy Mayor for Economic Development, Ms. Berg, will present the advantages of Cologne as a business location in detail afterwards.

But let me say this much: Besides a continuously developing service sector, the key to success for Cologne as a business location and a thriving economy is still the strong industrial sector. I would like to highlight the automotive and mechanical engineering industry as well as the chemical industry. In addition, the high export turnover of local companies plays a significant role.

International trade of Cologne companies with India is also an important factor in this context. The Cologne Chamber of Commerce and Industry has registered many companies in the Cologne region that maintain import and export relations with the subcontinent or even have their own business premises in India.

Among them are large and well-known global players as well as numerous small and medium-sized companies, some of whom are even among the “hidden champions” in their segment. They form the backbone of the local economy and contribute in many diverse ways to the strength and attractiveness of the Cologne economic area.

Ladies and gentlemen,

I would like to invite you to go on a discovery tour of Cologne in the next few days. Get your own idea of the vitality, open-mindedness and hospitality of our city. Be inspired by all the things the business location Cologne has on offer. I'm sure that you will want to return to Cologne!

I wish you an interesting conference today and a successful 7th Cologne India Week.