

# German unity day

# Seeing the power of unity in today's networked world

Volker Stanzel  
AMBASSADOR OF GERMANY

Dear readers of The Japan Times,

The rapid sequence of seemingly momentous events in today's world often leads us to assume that even decisive developments can hardly be controlled and that "global governance" suffers from globalization. Reality does not completely correspond to such a perception. On Oct. 3 we celebrate the 22nd anniversary of German Unity. It may be the right moment to look back, at least briefly, and contemplate how much indeed we can achieve if we try to tackle challenges together.



The culmination of various developments in Central and Eastern Europe in the late 1980s culminated in the fall of the Berlin Wall — and here things really seemed to get out of control. Yet, not even one year later, Germany was unified in peace and on the basis of a consensus reached with both the former occupying powers and Germany's neighbors in Europe. Since then, the German people have again become one, in their consciousness as well as in political and economic reality.

German unification was only the beginning of an even more momentous development encompassing the whole of Europe. The Iron Curtain came down all across our continent, democratic revolutions succeeded in all countries of the former so-called Eastern Bloc, in some cases leading to a new independence for some of the countries in the region. Since then, the countries of Central Europe have joined the European Union, and some of them NATO, too — incredible only two decades ago. Again, a success achieved upon a consensus with all neighboring countries involved. The re-

sult: Today, we may have problems with managing the euro, but how far a cry is that from the existential threat under which all Europeans lived throughout the whole period of the Cold War!

As we celebrate our Day of Unity in Japan, it is an occasion to think of another success in international relations, reached over a longer period in time. German-Japanese relations have gone through a long period of friendship, but also times when both our countries caused suffering to our neighbors. It is, again, a success to be able to say in the year 2012 that since the end of World War II our two countries have developed into democratic, prosperous nations living in peace with our neighbors and contributing to global development in many significant ways. Together with our Japanese partners in 2011 and the first half of 2012, we celebrated 150 years of German-Japanese relations with more than 1,000 events. A joyous occasion, and at the same time for those among us who like to contemplate the winds of historic change, a moment to consider how many positive things people can achieve together if they really make it their purpose.

We live in a networked world and developments in one part of it influence others. When Lehman Brothers collapsed in 2008 a chain of events was triggered, subsequently exposing economic imbalances in many parts of the world. In Europe, the imperfect architecture of the euro, the large gaps in competitiveness of the national economies and weaknesses of excessive private and public debt became apparent. Since 2009 we have addressed these problems. A collapse of the euro would lead to serious economic repercussions all over the world. Germany and the other countries of the euro-zone are aware of their responsibility to avoid negative consequences for world prosperity. Also, the euro has been a step on the road to "ever closer



**Overcoming difficulties:**The accession of Poland to the European Union, which was one of the 10 new member states to join the EU in 2004, is celebrated near the German-Polish border. The euro, coins of which are shown below, has been a step to the "ever closer union" envisioned in the European treaties. Germany, with other eurozone nations, is determined to find solutions to the current crisis. ZB-FOTOREPORT, DPA



union," as stipulated in the European treaties. We will not go backwards on this road, instead we have shown that we are determined to find a solution to the current crisis in cooperation and mutual respect and not by excluding some members from the common currency.

All of these reform steps cannot but require long and intense discussions. The discussions and negotiations therefore are not over, but we have shown

readiness to compromise when needed and a determination to reform where required. History cannot be planned, but we can react swiftly and adapt to new realities.

As one of our principal non-European partners, Japan can rest assured that we are taking its demands into account. I also thank Japan for its willingness to support our efforts at crisis solution through the International Monetary Fund and the



**Momentous event:** Refugees of the German Democratic Republic occupy the Federal German Embassy in Prague on Oct. 4, 1989. On Nov. 3, Czechoslovakia authorities permitted the unrestricted departure of GDR citizens, which was one of the incidents that led to the fall of the Berlin Wall on Nov. 9, 1989. DPA-BILDARCHIV

## Festival celebrating all things German returns to Tokyo

### German Festival 2012 in Aoyama Park

• Oct. 19-21, 11 a.m.-8 p.m. (from 4 p.m. on Oct. 19)  
Aoyama Park; Roppongi 7-dome, Minato-ku, Tokyo; access via Tokyo Metro Roppongi Station or Nogizaka Station

Organized by the Embassy of Germany, the German Festival showcases German culture through culinary specialties and regional beverages such as beer as well as groceries

and kitchenware. There will also be various workshops, stage performances and many other attractions. Entrance is free.

For further details, please contact [germanfestival@gmail.com](mailto:germanfestival@gmail.com) or visit [www.facebook.com/Deutschlandfest2012](http://www.facebook.com/Deutschlandfest2012).



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# German unity day

## Building global mind-set a matter of survival

Manfred Hoffmann  
DELEGATE OF GERMAN INDUSTRY  
AND TRADE IN JAPAN

The global economy is currently facing fundamental changes. While linkages between the United States, Europe and Japan remain strong, the influence of emerging markets is growing rapidly. Markets, commodity flows and investment environments are changing, especially in Asia, at a tremendous pace forcing companies to adjust their strategies.



When it comes to their new economic role in today's globalized world, Japan and Germany share many common characteristics. Both countries are investing heavily in emerging markets. At the same time, they are threatened by new competitors. Developing their respective positions overseas, and especially in the BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China, South Africa) and other emerging markets, has become a key factor for their future growth. Furthermore, rising energy costs and global resource scarcity are particularly challenging issues.

For Japan these topics have been even more pressing since the triple disaster of March last year. "Fukushima" has initiated a discussion in Japan about the direction of the country's energy policy. The appreciation of the yen is hurting its industry's competitiveness, forcing companies to relocate factories overseas to an even higher extent than before.

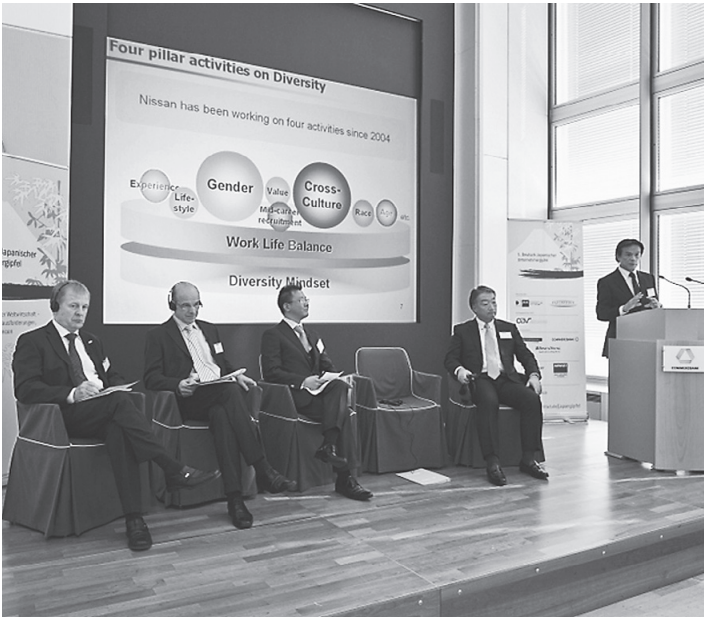
Faced with these unprec-

edented challenges, a look at Germany's recent experience might give hints at which areas to tackle. Only a decade ago, the country faced a difficult period as well, some economists even labeled it the "sick man of Europe." With anemic growth and record-high unemployment, 10 years after the unification of East and West, Germany was falling behind its European peers. Rigid labor laws and political gridlock were choking investment and innovation. Companies shuttered factories and looked for opportunities elsewhere.

Today, the picture is totally different. Boasting healthy public and private sector finances, a growing trade surplus and the lowest unemployment levels since its reunification, Germany is once again the engine of European growth. Global demand for cars, chemicals and machinery "made in Germany" is undiminished. Exports topped €1 trillion in 2011, trailing only China's. As a result Germany's competitiveness, as measured by the World Economic Forum, is among the leading countries in the world. This year, it has even overtaken that of the U.S. for the first time.

In the midst of the European sovereign debt crisis, international economists stand in awe at how Germany has succeeded to overcome its reform deadlock and re-emerge as a "strong man." What brought about this significant change?

In September, a high-ranking business delegation of the Japan Association of Corporate Executives went to Frankfurt to take part in the first German-Japanese Enterprise Summit, organized by the German Chamber



**Exchanges: The first German-Japanese Enterprise Summit is held in Frankfurt in September with the participation of members of the Japan Association of Corporate Executives.**  
GERMAN CHAMBER OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY

of Commerce and Industry in cooperation with several globally operating companies such as Baker & McKenzie, Commerzbank, Ernst & Young and Lufthansa. One of the mission's main goals was to study how German companies kept their competitive edge. Partly, they learned, it is due to structural reforms at home: The German government has eased rules and regulations for employment and brought corporate taxes to a level that is attractive by international comparison. Besides, unions have been modest in their demand for wage increases, meaning that unit labor costs remained relatively stable.

A major part, however, is due to significant change inside the companies. The German ex-

ecutives they met reiterated four simple factors that contribute most to their companies' success: research and development, closeness to customers, focus on high quality and decentralized global production. At first, the Japanese executives were not impressed. They were missing the magic formula.

In fact, Japanese companies for years have set up production facilities overseas and strived for innovation, customer orientation and total quality management. So what exactly is the decisive factor behind German companies' global success? One German executive simply put it like this: It is the way, the "how," we do it.

What he meant in particular is how overseas staff are involved

in the headquarters' decision-making process, how collaboration between people from all parts of the global organization helps speed up the innovation cycle, and how merit and talent, instead of seniority, nationality or gender, decide who will rise to the top ranks of the company. In other words, more and more German companies foster global communication and global human resource management in order to unleash their organizations' full potential. With overseas sales often contributing two thirds or more to their revenue, for many companies, building a global mind-set is a matter of survival.

Japanese companies going overseas face even greater challenges. Language and cultural barriers cannot be overcome overnight. One way to turn adversity into opportunity could be to team up with a German company. Combining both countries' technological expertise with one partner's multicultural experience would be of mutual benefit.

As for the implications on future German-Japan cooperation with regard to energy policies and renewable energy, a look at the work of the German Chamber of Commerce and Industry



**Presence: Japanese companies present their technological innovations for the rail sector at InnoTrans 2012 in Berlin from Sept. 18 to 21. For the first time in the history of this trade show for transport technology, an entire exhibition hall was occupied by a single country.** INNOTRANS

in Japan (GCCII) is worthwhile. In the past 12 months the GCCII has organized several business trips and delegations from Japan to Germany and vice versa, bringing together industry experts and policymakers from both countries. From both sides, requests fly in on a regular basis. Especially with regard to

wind energy, mutual interest is tremendously high. However, as long as there is still political uncertainty, actual cooperation will develop only slowly.

For Japan, after two "lost decades," many Japanese companies are initiating significant reforms. The transformation, of course, will not be an easy one,

but the outcome will certainly draw international attention.

At the end of a recent study tour to Germany, a Japanese businessman who used to work in Frankfurt in the early 1990s said: "I am amazed how Germany has changed in the past 20 years. I wish Japan could do the same."

## Translators can help unite people

Raimund Wördemann  
DIRECTOR GENERAL, GOETHE-  
INSTITUT JAPAN

Not many people have the opportunity to learn a number of different languages and moreover are able to speak them fluently at any one moment. That's why the professions of an interpreter for spoken and a translator for written language are such indispensable jobs in the modern world today. Both professions are invaluable. Characteristically, the work of an interpreter includes not only the ability to grasp the meaning of the words and to correctly reflect them, but they also need to know and recognize the context of what is being said. To do so, they must be able to reflect all those moods and signals between people, even particular body language and peculiarities due to nationality and/or the ethnic background of a person.

If we have a look at the differences just within one country, one people, or one language community — some countries boast a colorful variety of different dialects — one might wish for a translator, or at least a person to mediate among them. As for Germany, the differences between Prussia and Bavaria, which are popular to be joked



about, would probably be less significant if at the moments of decisive historical clashes, language mediators and people who understood the mentality of each culture would have been present.

A professional field that has become more and more important during the recent decades is the profession of a mediator. A mediator is mainly called for when people or parties do not understand each other. This is because, even within the same language community, different backgrounds and tempers use different languages and dialects. Skilled communicators meanwhile earn money by establishing mutual understanding between people who speak the same (but obviously not an equal) language.

Such mutual understanding is particularly necessary for the exchange between nations. When Germany was divided, there was the Federal Republic in the west and the Democratic Republic in the east, but even so nobody spoke of two separate peoples. Nevertheless, different political and social cultures developed. Let's recall the first few months and years after 1989, when people from the eastern part of Germany went to the west, and from west to east. We had gained the freedom to travel: the long-divided country was united once again. And still, at least two different cultures were meeting, all of which had their own

vocabulary and parlance grown from different political and cultural backgrounds. People were speaking West-German and East-German, but they wanted then and still want today a universal All-German language. In most cases they end up with the preferred solution of cultural "plurality in unity."

The same applies for the political dream-continent "Europe," which is presently troubling many politicians because of the debt crisis in some countries. The 1989 revolution did not only lead the East Germans to freedom, but it also led the countries of Eastern Europe back to national independence. Since then, much has happened that brought Europe together, but also that let it drift apart again. Today, some people believe that it has never been less homogeneous than it is now.

As this European crisis is frequently being discussed in an ideological sense, we need translators who can help us understand the complexity of the events as seen through their background, their development, their history and their culture. This is the only way for us to correctly evaluate facts without being caught up emotionally in the differences among nationalities.

Translators have the gift to understand things and to clarify any differences in cultures that can lead to future problems. Translators can even recognize these problems before they be-

come openly visible. They are pioneers who are laying the bases for communication between the foreign and the unknown. Today we know better than ever how important it is to keep amicable relations between the countries of our world, which exceed the purpose of just business relations or monetary union. Friendship can only continue if both parties are ready to nurture it in good times and assist each other when needed. At this point, cultural mediation becomes important — as the Goethe-Institut is offering cooperation with reunited Germany to countries all over the world, and has been working with Japan for 50 years.

I would like to mention one great artist who contributed a lot to the mutual understanding between Germany and Japan. He had promoted the academic-scientific exchange between Japan and Germany so much that his name has become a symbol for the cultural relations of both countries: Ogai Mori, whose 150th birthday is being celebrated this year. Both in Germany and in Japan, a number of commemorative events will be held for this great writer, critic, military physician and translator of German classics, for example E.T.A. Hoffmann, Gotthold Lessing and Friedrich von Schiller. The climax of his art is his translation of Johann Goethe's Faust 1 and 2 in 1913, which was the first translation into Japanese  
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**the Day of German Unity**



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In Alphabetical Order



# German unity day

## Friendship takes time

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and is still considered the standard today. Using language, he managed to connect the two souls of each country. In Germany, where Mori broadened his horizon in Leipzig, Munich and Berlin, he gained numerous inspirations for his own literary works. His novels, which he based on his experience during his studies in Germany since 1884, had a major influence on modern Japanese literature. He became the highest-ranking medical officer of the Imperial Japanese Army, the director of the Imperial Museum, and president of the Imperial Fine Arts Academy in Tokyo. During his whole life he enjoyed going back and forth between the two poles of natural science and poetry. Mori gained lasting merits for introducing German science and culture to Japan. In allusion to Goethe's "Maxims and Reflections," Mori repeatedly spoke of the importance to fulfill "whatever the day calls for." Goethe asks: "How can you come to know yourself?" and answers: "Never by thinking, always by doing. Try to do your duty, and you'll know right away what you amount to. — And what is your duty? Whatever the

day calls for."

One always present political and social "call of the day" in the process of worldwide international understanding is to approach each other without claiming any predominance or notion about the other party. As is well known, friendship will not arise on the basis of treaties or decisions. Friendship needs time, it needs traditions and courage, and it needs to be open to being different and open to completely new things.

In communicating all these virtues, the work of cultural mediation plays an important role. It helps with any translation. And it is the base to again and again overcome borders and to build bridges. Cultural understanding keeps friendship alive and puts challenging questions forward, so it may not collect dust while we are nursing nostalgic memories, but that we may learn from the past to build our future together.

This applies for the erstwhile two "Germanys" as well as to the manifold peoples of political Europe and also to the friendly nurturing of the relations between Germany and Japan, which now have been continuing for more than 150 years.



**Commemoration: Ogai Mori (1862-1922), a Japanese physician, translator, novelist and poet, contributed to the mutual understanding between Germany and Japan.** KYODO

### A selection of German cultural events in October 2012

**"Fifty Years of the Goethe-Institut Japan,"** from Oct. 4 to Dec. 14, commemorates the 50th year since the establishment of the German cultural institute in Japan. The exhibition looks back at the history of the institute, which has contributed to promoting the German language in Japan and expanding bilateral cultural exchanges, through a display of books, posters and videos in the institute's Tokyo facilities.

The first concert within the **genePro doitsu** series that aims to introduce German bands takes place on Oct. 4 at the institute's Europasaal, featuring pop artist [interference.here.de](http://interference.here.de) from Bavaria.

The second session of the book reading of Martin Heidegger's **"The Origin of the Work of Art"** takes place on Oct. 4. The final session of the book reading of Friedrich Durrenmatt's **"A Dangerous Game"** and **"The Coup"** takes place on Oct. 5. Both readings take place at the institute's library.

The **Design in Wood Symposium** will be held on Oct. 6 at Wakita Museum in Karuizawa, Nagano Prefecture, focusing on the practical and artistic uses of wood.

**"Urheben Aufheben,"** a contemporary dance performance by Martin Nachbar, can be seen on Oct. 11 at 7 p.m. and Oct. 12 at 4

p.m. at the Europasaal as part of the Dance Triennale Tokyo 2012.

A concert by pianist **Ulrike Haage** and percussionist-composer **Eric Schaefer** will be performed at Shinjuku Pit Inn in Tokyo on Oct. 20, featuring experimental sounds inspired by haiku.

A new production of the opera **"Orpheus"** as translated by Ogai Mori will be staged at the Bunyko Civic Hall in Bunkyo Ward, Tokyo, on Oct. 28 at 3 p.m.

A master class on German vocal music of the 20th and 21st centuries with German composer **Aribert Reimann** will be held at the Europasaal on Oct. 31.

For more information, call the Goethe-Institut in Tokyo at (03) 3584-3201, or visit [www.goethe.de/tokyo](http://www.goethe.de/tokyo).



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