

Day of German Unity

Standing together in seeking peaceful solutions

Hans Carl von Werthern
GERMAN AMBASSADOR TO JAPAN

Last year was a significant one for Germany, as we celebrated the 25th anniversary of German reunification. Our partners from all across the world took delight in the festivities with us, including our friends here in Japan. Today, one year later, the message of unification still bears a remarkable significance.



The celebration of German unity symbolizes the impor-

tance of freedom, democracy and security around the world. When the Berlin Wall fell in 1989, the people of Germany proved that a common desire for freedom and cooperation is stronger than any opposing force. Their fight to be heard and their yearning for liberty and democracy could not be ignored. Only one year after the events in Berlin, Germany was officially reunited.

The European Union was tremendously important for the reintegration of Germany into Europe after World War II. It also facilitated the acceptance of Germany being reunited. At the same time, German unification marked the beginning of the integration of Eastern European countries into the EU.

Unfortunately, today a considerable number of people in Germany and other European countries no longer appear to pursue this general idea of unity and cooperation, they rather follow a path of separation and isolation.

In these challenging times, Germany has committed itself even more strongly both in the U.N. and in the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe. In contrast to the Brexit decision, we are confident that moving closer with our partners is the answer to securing the future of the European Union and the world as a whole.

The German approach to the recent rise in the number of

refugees entering our country can be seen as a result of this special obligation that we feel toward peaceful solutions in Europe and the world.

Germany admitted roughly 1 million refugees last year and has worked hard to integrate them into the German society. But just like many people voiced doubts about the integration of the former German Democratic Republic 26 years ago, many think today that the integration of refugees is hardly attainable. The success of reunification, however, was primarily made possible by the active commitment of the German people. And I am certain that we can make such a success possible again.

Japan has always been an important partner for Germany. We share the same values, especially with regard to our unconditional support for freedom and peaceful cooperation. We have enjoyed these ties and this reciprocal support for more than 150 years. Japan has long been actively involved in the U.N. Refugee Agency (UNHCR) and has worked hard to prevent refugees from having to leave their home countries in the first place.

I believe that Japan's and Germany's mutual trust and our joint commitment to peaceful solutions to the world's conflicts will be the key to tackling the challenges that both Europe and the world are currently facing.

This year's festivities in Germany will take place predominantly in the state of Saxony, a state in former East Germany. "Brücken bauen – Building Bridges" was chosen as a motto for this event. These bridges are to connect people and countries across all borders and barriers. Let us build bridges together — bridges of exchange, travel, study and work — in order to deepen our mutual understanding, promote our shared values and take a stand against the rising tide of populism.

As for today, let us celebrate this anniversary of one of the happiest days in German history. I extend my very best wishes to all readers of The Japan Times.

Amid competition, numerous opportunities for cooperation

Marcus Schuermann
DELEGATE OF GERMAN INDUSTRY AND COMMERCE IN JAPAN

Japan is too complex to be valued or its significance to be understood just on the basis of general growth indicators. It deserves a closer look: Japan's foreign direct investments, for example, have been at the top of the G-7 rankings in recent years, surpassing even the combined investments of China and South Korea.



Particularly in Asia, Japan is substantially building up its position as a key player and helping to shape the framework of economic conditions to ensure growth and competitiveness. This is providing lucrative opportunities for German companies in third-market businesses, as the German Chamber of Commerce and Industry in Japan discovered in a business climate survey. Approximately 53 percent of German companies in Japan cited the growing potential of business with Japanese partners in third countries as one of the most important reasons for their Japan operations.

Yes, German and Japanese companies face each other as competitors in numerous technology sectors. In fields such as renewable energy and mobility Germany and Japan regularly switch places as technology leaders. Yet, next to healthy competition, there are

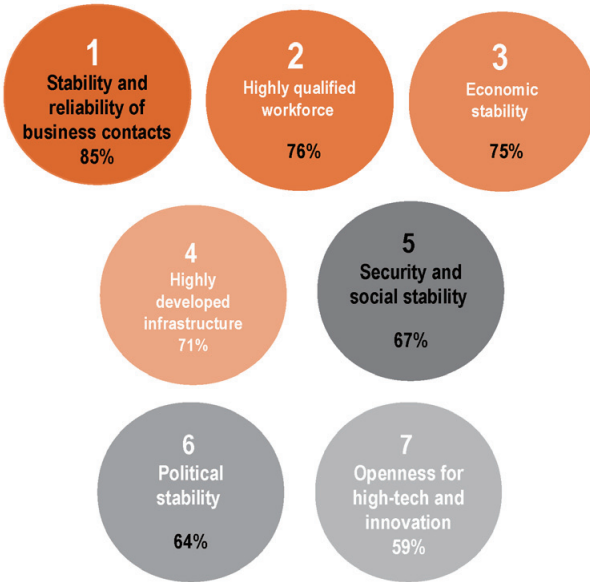
numerous opportunities for cooperation, as the economic ministers of both countries expressed in a memorandum of understanding on closer cooperation on Industry 4.0. In times when industrial value chains do no longer end at national borders, central challenges such as unified standards or data security can only be met by closely working together. The German "Plattform Industrie 4.0" and its Japanese counterpart, the "Robot Revolution Initiative," are making important contributions in this way.

The potential for cooperation is not limited to governments. There are unique opportunities as well for medium-sized German compa-

nies. Over the course of the past years it has become more and more apparent that Japanese companies have a strong interest in globalizing their business relations. As formerly tight structures in supplier relations have loosened, many Japanese companies are seeking new markets for distribution and procurement. German businesses with international experience are looked upon favorably as business partners, as can be seen from a variety of success stories in different sectors.

Whoever takes a close look can see that Germany and Japan are strong partners, whose cooperation also shows plenty of future potential.

Top seven advantages of doing business in Japan



"GERMAN BUSINESS IN JAPAN 2016" SURVEY



The popular MAVOTEK (left), based in both Berlin and Tokyo, and the Big Band of Ostseegymnasium at Jazztreffen 2016, with special guests Nils Landgren and Hosei University's New Orange Swing Orchestra (right), perform at the Goethe-Institut Tokyo. TOMOYUKI KAYA, GOETHE-INSTITUT TOKYO



Approaching global crises with respect and culture

Peter Anders
DIRECTOR GENERAL, GOETHE-INSTITUT TOKYO

The actual burden of permanent global crises and the rise of ideological mindsets demand instruments of de-escalation. Can cultural dialogue prevent a hardening of the situation?

Yes, if you respect your counterpart. Being on par with them means first and foremost to be interested in the cultural context of society, to understand the past with all the crises and traumas and to follow the dreams and utopias not least objectified in the art pieces created by the artists of the country.

No, if you neglect the historical disparities that have ruled the world for centuries. Bearing this in mind, it is necessary to emphasize that the development of values is inherent of dynamics and that it is essential for our times that there is societal opening-up and change. And this is not a one-way street.

Sure, that cultural dialogue is too precious for just being an instrument for political representation. Otherwise we would disregard culture, and even more the arts,

from their intrinsic value. We believe in the impact of new ideas and innovative creations, which are drafted together in partnership.

We must establish spaces in which different contexts and comprehensive knowledge are not only enriching us, but are indicating the potentialities for common ground; therefore working in the cultural field and in the arts means constantly being open to new experiences and new things.

We work hand-in-hand with prominent German art and culture advisory boards when putting together our cultural activities, while further fostering cooperation with relevant artists. We keep pace with the latest trends and make new topics and content available for our partners and public — whether in the form of festival appearances, coproduction, organizing our cultural events or running our residency program and supporting upcoming artists.

Together with our Japanese partners the Goethe-Institut enables people to move beyond cultural borders. It's an offer to take another glance at today's world — not just through showcasing, but also through a collectively shared process of discovering the diversity of cultural and artistic production.



The 10th German-Japanese Economic Forum was held at the Hannover Messe in April. The forum and the signing of an memorandum of understanding marked the start of a joint pathway toward the realization of an Industry 4.0 future. AHK JAPAN

Congratulations
to the People of Germany
on the Occasion of
the 26th Anniversary of
the Day of German Unity

Mitsubishi Corporation

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