

# German President's Visit

## A proven and reliable partnership built on common values

Hans Carl von Werthern  
GERMAN AMBASSADOR TO JAPAN



It is a great honor for my colleagues at the German Embassy and for me personally to welcome the President of the Federal Republic of Germany, Joachim Gauck, to Japan. Receiving the German head of state during my time as ambassador is certainly a personal highlight. The president will spend almost an entire week in Japan. In Tokyo he will meet Prime Minister Shinzo Abe, and he will enjoy the great privilege of being received by both Emperor Akihito and

Crown Prince Naruhito. Besides Tokyo, the president will visit Kyoto and Nagasaki.

The last two years have seen a significant stepping-up in German-Japanese relations. In March 2015 Chancellor Angela Merkel visited Japan to deepen German-Japanese cooperation, not only politically, but also in ecological and technological matters. These vital topics were further discussed in depth during this year's G-7 summit in Ise-Shima. In the framework of Japan's highly effective presidency of the G-7, an impressive number of conferences and bilateral meetings between German and Japanese ministers were arranged. 2017 CeBIT, the world-renowned fair and trade show for information and communications technology in Ha-



German President Joachim Gauck

nover, welcomes Japan as the official partner country. Our president's visit undoubtedly marks the political pinnacle of these mutually excellent relations between Germany and

Japan.

Having lived in East Germany until the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989, Gauck participated in the people's protests that eventually caused the collapse

of East German communism and led to German reunification. From 1990 to 2000, as federal commissioner for the "Stasi Records" (secret police) he earned broad recognition for his tireless commitment toward transparency and reconciliation. In Germany and all over the world, as federal president he has always stood for freedom and human rights, democracy and the rule of law, representative government and responsive politics, values he is deeply convinced of against the background of his own personal history.

Japan is Germany's closest "Wertepartner" — partner in values — in East Asia. Our two nations' close friendship rests on these very values that our president holds so dearly. During his visit to Japan, the president will highlight our proven and reliable partnership, so important in these turbulent times. We share the same philosophy when we support an international order based on the rule of law, when we join forces to fight terrorism, when we strive to slow down global warming,

when we want to reform the U.N. Security Council and when we try to improve the global management of flight and migration. Germany and Japan are countries that take responsibilities beyond their own borders.

As our president has the highest respect for citizens' personal commitment and the role of civil society, he looks forward to meeting Japanese intellectuals, civic leaders, members of think tanks and leading academics to get a deeper insight into current developments and social challenges in this country.

Only last month the president invited 100 young people from all over Germany to his residence, Schloss Bellevue, to discuss Germany's future aspirations. In his welcoming speech he emphasized that "our society needs people having ideas and acting on them, people who take risks so they win something and people who think anew about old questions." And while many challenges will lie ahead of the young people of Germany, just as those of Japan, our president showed his unshakable optimism for their fu-

ture as they are, as he said, "willing to tackle challenges, are actively looking for their opportunities and demanding them."

It is his determination to support young people of both our countries that has led to the president's decision to address the students of Waseda University during his visit, and he is looking forward to the discussion afterward.

Japan and Germany are facing similar challenges. In some cases we have found rather different answers to address them.

Therefore both our countries enormously profit from exchanging respective perspectives, arguments and possible solutions. We can learn a lot from each other and with each other.

I am convinced that besides his numerous official missions, the president will equally enjoy Japan as the country that has so much to offer, regarding its rich culture and impressive landscape, the country that I have come to love and cherish in the two and a half years of my stay.

### Background of President Joachim Gauck

Joachim Gauck was born in Rostock in 1940. After gaining his Abitur, the higher education entrance qualification, he studied theology. From 1965 to 1990 he was in the service of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Mecklenburg, working as a pastor for many years.

Gauck became involved in the opposition in the German Democratic Republic (GDR) at an early age. In 1989 he was one of the founders of the New Forum and became its spokesperson in Rostock. He was among the initiators of the church and popular resistance to the communist regime in the GDR and led the weekly prayers for peace, which gave rise to the protest demonstrations.

In March 1990, Gauck entered the first freely elected GDR parliament as a

member of the Alliance 90 — an amalgamation of several grass-roots movements — and was elected chairman of the special committee overseeing the dissolution of the Ministry of State Security. On Oct. 3, 1990, he was appointed special commissioner of the federal government for the files of the State Security Service relating to individuals by the federal president on the recommendation of the federal government. From 1991 to 2000 he was the federal commissioner for the Files of the State Security Service of the former German Democratic Republic.

From 2001 to 2004, Gauck was the German member of the management board of the European Monitoring Centre on Racism and Xenophobia in Vienna.

In 2003, he became the chairman of

the association "Gegen Vergessen — Fur Demokratie" (Against Oblivion — For Democracy).

On March 18, 2012, Gauck was elected by the federal convention and became the 11th president of the Federal Republic of Germany.

He has been awarded numerous honors and prizes for his work, including the Theodor Heuss Medal, the Geschwister Scholl Prize, the European Human Rights Prize and the Ludwig Borne Prize. He has honorary doctorates from the universities of Rostock, Jena and Augsburg.

Gauck has lived together with Daniela Schadt since 2000. He has four children, 12 grandchildren and four great-grandchildren.

Taken from <http://www.bundespraesident.de/EN/>



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Federal Republic of Germany on His Official Working Visit to Japan*

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