

Speech by the German Ambassador, Ms. Helga Margarete Barth at the German Unity Day reception

Hanoi, 01st Oktober 2024

Dear Mr Assistant Minister for Foreign Affairs, Mr Nguyễn Minh Vũ,

Excellencies,

Thưa Quý vị và các Bạn,

Ladies and Gentlemen

Liebe Landsleute!

Herzlich willkommen! It is my great pleasure to extend a heartfelt welcome to all of you at today's celebration of the Day of German Unity. This year we are commemorating it already for the 34th time.

German reunification on October 3rd, 1990 was truly one of the happiest moments in German history. It remains a source of joy for all Germans back home and, of course, in Vietnam as well.

I would like to express my gratitude to our sponsors, namely Alexander Group, gmp, Pushing Performance, Paulaner München und Schmidt Vinothek, who have contributed substantially to this reception.

Ladies and gentlemen,

"Einigkeit und Recht und Freiheit" - „Unity and Justice and Freedom“ reads the first line of the German National Anthem. These are three noble goals that are everything but easy to achieve. Some recent political developments in Germany are a testament to the challenges they present and to the fact how difficult and yet important it is to strive for them every single day.

May I invite you to have a look at this year's backdrop. All fellow Germans and those of you who have been to Berlin already, have, of course, immediately recognized the Reichstag building that is the seat of the German Federal Parliament. The Bundestag is the heart of our democracy and one of the central venues to strive for unity, justice and freedom.

I would like to draw your attention to the flags on the four towers of the building where you can spot three German and one European flag. The blue flag with the twelve stars symbolizes our steadfast commitment to the European Union.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Only a few days ago the UN “Summit for the Future” has taken place in New York City. Many world leaders including the General Secretary of the Communist Party of Vietnam and State President, Mr To Lam, as well as the German Federal Chancellor, Olaf Scholz, have underlined in their respective speeches how deeply our fates are linked by the global challenges we are facing:

- Ongoing wars and armed conflicts continue to cause the death of a shocking number of civilians. They are causing the destruction of civilian housing and infrastructure; they arrest economic development and have a devastating impact on children's access to education. They have grave consequences also for the prosperity of nations and people everywhere in the world.
- We have to mention Russia’s aggressive war on Ukraine that has been going on for now almost 950 days.
- We have to mention the dramatic crisis in the Middle East that was triggered by Hamas’s murderous attack on Israel almost a year ago. The crisis now threatens to engulf the whole region.
- And we should also not forget about the horrors of civil war in Sudan and Myanmar, and in so many more armed conflicts.
- Other challenges include climate change and its consequences that are also increasing the likelihood of devastating typhoons, massive floodings and landslides as in the aftermath of Typhoon Yagi. It has tragically resulted in the loss of several hundred lives both in Vietnam and neighbouring countries. With the people of Vietnam, we mourn the tragic loss of so many lives.
- Further global challenges include poverty and hunger as well as transnational health threats like Covid19, not so long ago.

The new “Pact for the Future” adopted by consensus only a few days ago in New York City, does not just acknowledge these challenges. It expresses our joint commitment to confronting them together, East and West, North and South.

The “Pact for the Future” can serve as a compass for us pointing towards more cooperation and partnership, instead of towards more conflict and fragmentations. It is a compass guiding us to a more cooperative world. To promote more co-operation and equity my government is presenting its candidature for a non-permanent on the UN Security Council for the term 2027/2028. Germany is also campaigning for reform of the UN Security Council.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Cooperation is also the keyword in our bilateral relations between Germany and Vietnam. We have defined our relationship since 2011 as a strategic one. Our areas of cooperation are so numerous that I am listing only the most important ones here:

- Our joint support for the rules-based international order.
- Our vibrant economic relations with a bilateral trade volume totalling more than 17 billion EUR in 2023 and a steadily growing number of German investment projects and about 50.000 Vietnamese

employees.

- Our wide-ranging partnerships in science and culture, between a huge number of organizations
- The remarkable number of young Vietnamese women and men studying the German language for example at the two Goethe-Institutes in Vietnam. Many of the students are planning to work in Germany as professionals, get more training or attend university.
- And, of course, our close cooperation to mitigate climate change and on energy issues.

Ladies and gentlemen,

We are celebrating what unites us tonight but also during the following year here in Hanoi, in Ho Chi Minh City but also in other regions and cities of Vietnam. This is because in 2025 Germany and Vietnam will be celebrating the 50th anniversary of taking up diplomatic relations. This will also include appreciating the partnerships in both countries that are older than 50 years.

In closing, and on a more personal note, I would like to mention that I have the honour of having served as German Ambassador to Vietnam so far for about 10 weeks.

I have met with some of you already in person and I am very much looking forward to meeting others present tonight and at different opportunities in the weeks and months to come.

My husband Gerd Wädow and I are moved by the hospitality of the Vietnamese people and their government as well as by the friendliness of the diplomatic community and my own staff at the Embassy.

I wish you all a pleasant and spirited evening!

Xin cảm ơn Quý vị đã chú ý lắng nghe. Thank you very much for your attention. Vielen Dank für Ihre Aufmerksamkeit.

Now I would like to ask our guest of honour, Assistant Minister Nguyễn Minh Vũ to say a few words.

Sau đây, tôi xin nhường lời cho vị khách mời danh dự của chúng tôi, ông Nguyễn Minh Vũ.