

Dear Mr Aboussouan,

Ladies and gentleman,

In my capacity of Chairmen of the “Hochschulforum der Wirtschaft” – Higher Education Forum of Business – and former Vice-President of the Hamburg Chamber of Commerce, it is my pleasure to address you as our guests at the Welcome Reception of the World PM2016 Congress here in Hamburg.

I am particularly pleased to be able to do so here in our Chamber’s “BörsenSaal”, considered by many to be one of Hamburg’s most beautiful public rooms in the classicistic style.

This internationally renowned conference takes place every two years at alternate venues in Europe, Asia and the US. I am told that the last conference on German soil was held 30 years ago, so I am especially delighted that is taking place in Hamburg this year. Without doubt, an excellent choice!

I would like to say a special thank you to the organisers, the European Powder Metallurgy Association EPMA, for making this possible.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Hamburg is a metropolitan city with Hanseatic tradition. It dates back to 1189, when Emperor Frederick Barbarossa granted it the privilege of duty-free trade on the Elbe and Lower Elbe rivers to the North Sea.

Hamburg concluded its first trade agreement with Lübeck in 1251.

Hamburg became a member of the Hanseatic League in 1321, mainly because of the so-called Salt Road, which was vital for transporting the salt used for the preservation of herring caught in the Baltic.

Hamburg was also a trading hub for grain, cloth, fur, herring, spices, wood and precious metals. But Hamburg’s most important product and export good was – You may have guessed it – it was beer!

In those days, Hamburg was often a target of pirate attacks, a particularly common phenomenon in the North Sea and the Baltic.

In 1400, the Hanseatic League used the “Bunte Kuh”, or in the English the “Speckled Cow”, one of the most modern warships of that time to combat the pirates among them the notorious captains Klaus Störtebeker and Gödeke Michels.

The Bunte Kuh’s mission was a full success. It defeated Störtebeker off the coast of Helgoland, took him prisoner and brought him back to Hamburg. There – as legend has it – he was beheaded on Grasbrook Island on 20th October 1401.

Ladies and Gentleman, did you know that piracy also led to the founding of our Chamber of Commerce? At the beginning of the 17th Century, predominantly Algerian corsairs were seriously disrupting the city’s trade with Spain, Portugal and the west coast of Africa. At the time, the city was unable to take effective measures against piracy. So in 1665, the Hamburg merchants took charge of their own affairs by founding the so-called Commercial Deputation, equipped two warships to guarantee safe passage for the Hamburg trading fleet. These warships, which proved to be highly effective, can be admired to this day – at least in model form, in the hall next door!

Having successfully fought off attacks by pirates, Hamburg is now one of the most important metropolitan commercial centres in the world. Around 9,000 wholesalers and exporters, some 4,00 trade brokerage companies, about 20,000 retailers and approximately 600 mail-order businesses contribute to the city's growing success.

Hamburg is Germany's most important foreign trade hub and the Port of Hamburg, nicknames "Gateway to the World", is Germany's largest seaport. This highlights the key role that trade and logistics play in Hamburg.

But besides the port and long trading tradition, industrial activity has been characteristic of Hamburg's development in recent years. Hamburg ranks third in the world behind Seattle and Toulouse as a production location for civil aircraft manufacturing. I imagine that many of you travelled to this conference on an Airbus "made in Hamburg".

Other focal points of our city's industry are Life Sciences and the IT Business. In addition, Hamburg won the European Green Capital Award in 2011. The head offices or central departments of nearly all major companies in the wind power industry are now located in Hamburg.

All the industries I have mentioned are known for their high innovation strength. However, Hamburg is more than just a trading centre and major industrial location. Hamburg is also an excellent science location.

Hamburg boasts no fewer than 19 state and state-recognised colleges and universities – the greatest density of higher education institutions can also be found here. One such prominent example is DESY, the world's leading accelerator centre.

Hamburg is also known as a high-competence, practice-oriented location for future technologies. The city is – for example – home to the Centre for Applied Nanotechnology, the Laser Centre North and the Centre of Applied Aeronautical Research. These scientist institutions and facilities employ more than 7,500 scientists and around 100,00 students.

Ladies and gentleman,

As you can see, you couldn't have picked a better place than Hamburg for this year's Congress. Not only because business and science have such an excellent reputation and are internationally so well-positioned. But also because Hamburg is the most beautiful – or as I might say with typical Hanseatic understatement – because Hamburg is one of the most beautiful cities in the world.

I hope you will have the opportunity to discover Hamburg if your Congress engagements allow.

But now it's time for me to wish you an entertaining evening and fruitful discussions in our Chamber of Commerce.

Thank you very much!