

**Speech of Ambassador Nikolaus Graf Lambsdorff
on the occasion of the Day of German Unity,
October 4th, 2018, Hotel Mandarin Oriental, Kuala Lumpur**

The Honorable Dr. Ong Kian Ming,
Deputy Minister of International Trade and Industry,
(our guest of honor, thank you for celebrating with us tonight!)
Excellencies, colleagues,
Ladies and Gentlemen, liebe Landsleute,

Selamat malam, good evening, guten Abend!

My wife and I warmly welcome you to this year's celebration of the Day of German Unity.

As you all know such an evening as this one needs a lot of preparation and support. Sinfonietta's musical contribution has already become a tradition, thank you very much. I would like to thank our many sponsors (you see them represented in this room as well as on video) for helping us to celebrate our National Day.

Now, ladies and gentlemen,

Did you know that this year Germany has been re-united longer than the Berlin wall stood? A little over 28 years.

So the division of Germany and Europe is fading into history – just ask your children.

The lessons learned, however, remain valid and important, maybe more than ever.

Here in Malaysia, we are now experiencing major, unexpected, systematic –and sometimes not so systematic - changes.

May I remind us all that there is hardly another country like Germany having experienced drastic changes over the past 100 years.

From monarchy to a failed democracy in the Weimar Republic to an occupied, divided country after World War II to a free, peacefully united, democratic nation respected by our neighbors, living in peace for more than 60 years, for the first time in our long history.

Parallel to our own development we saw the implosion of the Soviet Union and the explosion of Yugoslavia.

At some point we had more than 400 000 refugees only from Bosnia in Germany.

So we know a bit about the challenges, the sometimes exaggerated hopes leading to unavoidable disappointments that come with change.

Most importantly, we know of the importance of democracy, free speech and human rights as prescribed in our constitution, the German basic law, the Grundgesetz.

This is why we enjoyed the 9th of May so much.

But before commenting on these elections allow me a few words in German.

Meine Damen und Herren,

Liebe Landsleute,

noch einmal herzlich willkommen zum diesjährigen Tag der Deutschen Einheit. Ohne unsere großzügigen Sponsoren wäre dieser Abend nicht möglich, vielen Dank!

Ebenso bedanke ich mich bei den Kolleginnen und Kollegen der Botschaft. Einen solchen Abend zu organisieren bedarf eines team efforts – das hat auch in diesem Jahr wieder vorzüglich geklappt!

Nur ein Wort zum Ausgang der Wahlen im Mai: Wir möchten dieser Regierung – und damit diesem Land – helfen, den mit der Wahl erzielten Demokratiefortschritt nachhaltig, am besten unumkehrbar zu gestalten.

Wir treten also möglichst nicht mit Forderungen an die Regierung heran, sondern bieten unsere Unterstützung an.

Wenn Sie dazu Vorschläge haben, würde sich die Botschaft freuen!

Ladies and Gentlemen,

here are some election results you might have missed.

The newly elected Prime Minister publicly states that Malaysia should have a look at the German system of financing of political parties.

Simply astounding. And I am sure we can help.

The same Prime Minister declares that the Anti-Corruption-Commission should no longer report to the Prime Minister but should answer to Parliament.

Again, sensationell. And again, we can help when it comes to the strengthening and empowerment of parliament, after all, we have 17 well-functioning parliaments in our Federal Republic of Germany.

But, Ladies and Gentlemen,

who brought all this about?

They say it were lots of young voters, even more smart phones and one very experienced man.

Well, that neglects one important group – women!

The simple fact is that there are more female than male voters in Malaysia. And it seems that female voter participation was considerably higher than in the past.

I remember before the elections golfing friends of mine telling me that they couldn't raise politics at home any more.

They were afraid that they would be kicked out of the house by their own wife if they ever doubted Tun Mahathir's election victory.

Obviously, many women knew more. Definitely more than I did!

So, may I ask all gentlemen here tonight to raise their glas for a toast to women and democracy!

Thank you, enjoy the evening.