

## **CNY Reception in Berlin (26 February 2026)**

### **Welcome Remarks by DBL**

Dear Envoy Zeng, Mr Trempel, Chris, Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Good evening! It is a great pleasure to welcome you all to our Chinese New Year reception. This is my first time joining this annual event, and I am delighted to celebrating the Year of the Horse in Berlin.

2. In Chinese culture, horse is a symbol of vitality, strength, and perseverance. This year is particularly special as it is the Year of the “Fire Horse”, which occurs once every sixty years and symbolises a time of great momentum and breakthroughs.

3. The past year has not been without challenges. Global tensions and lingering trade barriers have created uncertainty across economies. Yet, I am proud to share that Hong Kong has shown remarkable resilience.

4. In 2025, Hong Kong’s economy grew by a robust 3.5%. Our stock market returned as the world’s leading IPO fundraising hub, raising more than EUR 30 billion (HK\$285.8 billion) from over 110 new listings, a testament to the strength of our financial sector and investor confidence. A record-high number of 11 000 foreign and Chinese Mainland companies were located in Hong Kong in 2025, 11 per cent more than the year before. Building on this success, I am confident that Hong Kong will continue to advance with vitality and strength in the year ahead.

5. For decades, Germany has been China's largest trading partner in Europe, and vice versa. Hong Kong's roles as "Super Connector" and "Super Value-Adder" are becoming increasingly important in a changing global landscape. Hong Kong's common law system, free flow of capital, and simple and low tax regime, make us an indispensable hub for global trade and finance. As a Special Administrative Region of China, Hong Kong stands at the intersection and serves as the bridge — connecting China with the world, and the world with China. We facilitate the dual flow of trade and investment, bringing companies from Europe to Hong Kong and the greater China and Asia markets on one hand, and helping Chinese Mainland and Hong Kong enterprises to "Go Global" as a launchpad.

6. Looking ahead, I would like to highlight three significant opportunities for enhanced cooperation between Hong Kong and Germany.

7. First, innovation and technology. Germany is renowned for its engineering excellence, advanced manufacturing, and leadership in Industry 4.0. Meanwhile, Hong Kong is investing heavily in innovation and technology, from artificial intelligence and life sciences to green tech and fintech. Hong Kong is the only city in the world to host five universities in the top 100, and our research capabilities are expanding rapidly. Earlier this month, a delegation of 17 senior leaders and presidents from elite German tertiary institutions, comprising TU9 and German U15 alliances, visited Hong Kong for strategic research and development and academic exchange. I am confident that by combining Germany's industrial strength with Hong Kong's research ecosystem and access to the Chinese Mainland innovation market, we can create powerful synergies.

8. Second, people-to-people exchanges. Hong Kong has always been a unique place where East meets West, which is renowned for its vibrant multi-cultural scene. Students and scholars from around the world have been choosing Hong Kong as their academic home, with around one out of five of our students come outside Hong Kong. Under the “Study in HK” initiative, we are committed to developing Hong Kong into an international education hub for high-calibre talents to pursue further studies and career development. International students and talents can expect excellent higher education, internationally recognised qualifications, and enormous employment opportunities.

9. Third, financial services and capital markets. Hong Kong’s capital markets can provide German companies with access to Asian investors, while German institutional investors can leverage Hong Kong as a base to explore opportunities in Chinese Mainland as well as other ASEAN countries. Family offices and cross-border wealth management and asset allocation will remain areas of strong growth. On trade and supply chain resilience, in a changing global landscape, businesses seek reliable partners and diversified networks. Hong Kong’s free port status, world-class logistics infrastructure, and strong legal framework make us a trusted partner for international trade. Our connectivity—by air, sea, and digital networks—links Europe efficiently with Asian markets.

10. Hong Kong has weathered challenges and grew stronger. I invite all of you to work with Hong Kong and seize the new opportunities – be it in the world of business or education or culture.

11. So let us make today an opportunity to reach out, exchange ideas, and build new friendships. May the Year of the Horse brings us prosperity, stability and many more opportunities to collaborate. Thank you.

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