

***Opening Remarks and Speech
On the occasion of the
Conferment Ceremony of the decoration on Dr. Horzetzky
Ryuta Mizuuchi, Consulate General of Japan
(English)***

9.4.2018 18:00-
Residence

Dear Ms. Freimuth,
Dear Mr. Eiskirch,
Dear Mr. Horzetzky,
Dear distinguished guests,
Ladies and Gentleman,

(Introduction)

It is a great honor to have you all here in my residence on the auspicious occasion of the conferment ceremony of the "Order of the Rising Sun, Gold Rays with Neck Ribbon" on Dr. Horzetzky, former State Secretary of Ministry of Economic Affairs, Energy and Industry of the State of NRW. I thank so many distinguished guests from all walks of life in NRW – the state parliament, state government, major cities and Japanese business community to be present here despite busy schedule. Never did I have so many VIPs get together at my residence before, and it makes me feel really honored.

What connected Dr. Horzetzky with Japan and how he received this decoration will be introduced in detail later by Mr. Yamaguchi, President of Japan Club, in his laudation. Let me first express my congratulation to him as well and talk about my personal ties with Dr. Horzetzky. Further, I wish to provide to you some food for thought for the future relations between Japan and NRW.

(Contribution to Dr. Horzetzky)

I met with Dr. Horzetzky for the first time two years ago at the New Year's reception co-hosted by the German-Japanese Association and the Japan Club. Then, I worked with him at the Steering Committee of "Japan Tag". When I entered the conference room I found the documents on the table, which I saw for the first time. The participants started to read the documents verbatim (word by word). Dr. Horzetzky asked them not to speak like that, mentioned that the reading materials should have been delivered in advance, and that people should discuss the substance during the meeting. He tried to moderate the meeting just

like that.

This year, the Japanese Community was responsible for coordination. Mr. Yamaguchi and I co-hosted this year's Steering Committee. The meeting documents had been distributed already two weeks before. I asked each member to refer to the most important points. Just one hour and five minutes later, the meeting was over.

Dr. Horzetzky offered me further suggestions and ideas, such as city-to-city partnerships and B2B connections. In summer two years ago, on the occasion of the ground-breaking of Nisshinbo's factory in Essen I attended the ceremony with Dr. Horzetzky. There, I expressed my hope that a partnership might be established between Essen and a Japanese city. After that, a dialogue started to take place, in order to bring Essen and Koriyama, a city in the Fukushima Prefecture, closer together. In December last year an agreement was reached on the city cooperation between the two.

(Japan in Dusseldorf)

Now, when it comes to the economic relations between our two countries, I am pleased to note that the Japanese business seems to be re-appreciating the value of Dusseldorf recently. In the last two and a half years since I came here as Consul-General, the Japanese population in NRW has grown by 3 thousand; in Dusseldorf by almost 2 thousand. According to the latest survey by JETRO, Germany is the most favorite place for relocation of Japanese companies from UK in case it is needed as a result of BREXIT. In fact, NRW is competing with Bavaria or Baden-Wuerttemberg in this regard. I hope very much that State government or NRW cities try very hard to invite as many Japanese companies as possible to NRW.

Another trend that I see is the "Germanization" of prominent Japanese companies. Last year, Toyota did it. This year, Mitsubishi Electric Germany handed over the leadership to the new president, a German. Japanese business model is getting increasingly globalized and diversified.

It is in this context that I want to focus on one thing. That is the importance of establishing a link between "hidden champions" of Germany and Japan. Today we have Mr. Nispel of AirMed Plus. He has been cooperating with companies in Fukushima. This relationship has proved to be a Win-Win situation for both sides and a very good model case. There are many hidden champions in NRW. A high-ranking official from Kyushu Bureau of METI visited me during the "ProWein". He

said many small and medium sized companies in Kyushu are facing challenges as to how to transfer long-kept traditional technologies to the next generation. He showed a great interest in cooperation between small and medium size companies of Kyushu and NRW. Germans and Japanese, in my view, are “manufacturing folks”, and thus have much in common as to the philosophy of craftsmanship and technical expertise. If German and Japanese technologies can be successfully brought together, this would mean a great deal of potential for the future of mankind.

(Conclusion)

Last, but not least, Dr. Horzetzky played an important role in forging the cooperation between Fukushima and NRW. Dr. Horzetzky visited Japan privately last September, but Governor Uchibori wanted to meet with him nevertheless. This shows how thankful Fukushima prefecture was to his continuous support and contributions for Fukushima.

I sincerely hope many others will follow Dr. Horzetzky on his path to deepen understanding between our two countries and thus strengthen economic relations even further. In concluding, let me once again express my heartfelt congratulations on his decoration. May Dr. Horzetzky be a true friend of Japan for good.

Thank you for your attention.