



Speech of the ISHC-14 Chairman
Professor Wolfgang A. Herrmann
at the Bavaria State Reception Dinner
on July 7, 2004
in the Munich Residence



Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is my pleasure and privilege to welcome you in one of Europe's prettiest residence halls, the Munich Kaisersaal. As the Chairman of the present International Symposium on Homogeneous Catalysis, I feel honored by your presence. A number of people consider Munich the "Florence of the North". And Bavaria is the new heart of Europe, ever since a number of Eastern countries joined the European Union earlier this year. Over ninehundred scientists, originating from 44 countries, participate in our conference, which is dedicated to the progress of catalysis as the most promising technology of the future.

Note that there is no technical principle to match economic and ecological benefits better than catalysis. This cross-border scientific task has been fascinating to all of us over the years.

With great respect, I welcome the Bavarian State Minister of Science, Research and the Arts, Dr. Thomas Goppel, along with the executive administration head, Mr. Wilhelm. Our minister has recently come into office, where he set out for an era of refreshing science politics in Bavaria. The difficult task is to scope scientific competition which dramatically increases in the context of the globalization process. Novori (Nobelpreis, Honorary PhD 2 years in advance of Nobel prize).

A special welcome also goes to our colleague Prof. Henri Brunner. He is going to be awarded the Honorary Ph. D. of Technische Universität Munich tonight. Prof. Reiser, Chemistry Dean at Regensburg University, is particularly proud of that, so he is present, as well as his Munich Dean colleague, Prof. Buchner.

Everyone who is familiar with Bavaria knows about our hospitality. As we Bavarians are hard working people, we also love happy events.

It can easily be seen tonight that we have rescued

some of the Bavarian "baroque way of life"

in the new days of HighTech Bavaria.

We are known in the world for the technically most fancy cars, for biomedicine, biotechnology, environmental technologies, general engineering, and an innovative chemical industry. However, we also continue to cultivate **traditional** biotechnologies, so we still make the best beer in the world. You did already have plenty of opportunities in testing it.

Respected minister of state, we all feel honored that you appreciate this international conference by granting an official state reception tonight.

This keeps well with the observation, that science and technology are at the top position of Bavaria's political agenda.

Science **is** not consumption or even waste of money, it rather is the smartest investment into the future of our country.

Once again, catalysis crucially contributes to the development of mankind, be it in the production of pharmaceutical products and intelligent materials, in the production, storage and transformation of energy, and in the employment of regrowable bio-ressources towards a new, nature-based chemistry.

Catalysis is always and everywhere.

In daily life, we often hear that something is catalyzed or that someone acts as a catalyst.

Even sustainable catalysis is mentioned when a complex process must be kept in motion.

It is always people, individuals with specific talents, who bring others together and ensure that things go on.

And we know, how important the results of such an activity can be. Although the major company mergers of today require analysts, they do not succeed without catalysts, even at the start or during creation of the new company philosophy.

The same is true for politics. Nothing happens without catalysts, whereas with catalysts the chemistry works, “die Chemie stimmt”, as we say in German.

Any successful national economy of tomorrow will depend on high-value added products, typically tailor-made catalysts.

Successful science depends on a network of friends. One of these friends is Professor Heindirk tom Dieck, chief executive of the German Chemical Society until recently. He deserves a specific welcome, since he has suggested the GMELIN Gala Dinner to be combined with today’s State Reception. That is, why we could invite you free of charge – isn’t that something? And the same number of conference participants just arrived in the nearby Augustiner Keller, yet another charming festive hall in Munich. Thank you, literally a thousand times, dear Heindirk. On behalf of the President of the German Chemical Society, Professor Koch will take the opportunity to explain the GMELIN Gala Dinner’s background.

The Munich Residence is a particular treasure among the magnificent Bavarian buildings. Constructed between 1610 and 1620, it was the seat of the governing Bavarian dukes, electors, and kings. Artists from many countries painstakingly carried out their work during the construction and the interior decoration - early examples of European cooperation!

You just came via the „Imperial staircase“ („Kaisertreppe“) to the Emperor‘ hall. This hall is not only the outstanding feature of the Residence. It is also one of Europe’s most significant festive halls as regards size and decoration. Since the Residence, and also the Kaisersaal, were more or less completely destroyed during World War-II, we are now in a building which has been restored in conformity with the original dimensions, and which again houses a large part of the furnishings that had been brought to a safe place in due time.

The Imperial Hall itself was built between 1611 and 1616 for Maximilian I of Bavaria as a Banqueting Hall. Together with the Imperial Staircase, which is the earliest monumental staircase north of the Alps, it embodies a unique blend of festive representation from the Bavarian renaissance period.

In 1799, the „Kaisersaal“ had to make way for the apartments of the later Bavarian King Max I Joseph, which were built in two storeys. These apartments were destroyed in 1944. From 1985 onwards, their place has been taken by the reconstruction of the original „Kaisersaal“ with its paintings. Most of them are still intact, in particular the unique Gobelin tapestries designed by the Munich court painter, Peter Candid. Above the fireplace, the bronze statue of “Tellus Bavarica” stands in the place of the former porphyry statue of Virtus (*virtue*).

There is no time to explain all of the paintings, tapestries and other objects of interest in this room. Let me thus concentrate on the statue “Tellus Bavarica” above the fireplace: It is the work of Hubert Gerhard from 1590. It shows a beautiful young woman wearing a helmet. She personifies the State of Bavaria, and she was symbolically adorned with all the treasures Bavaria could bring forth at that time:

- A pot of salt for the wealth in salt;
- a stag’s hide representing the inexhaustible quantities of game;
- a fish trap for the abundant fishing in our many lakes;
- a bundle of wheat-ears symbolizing the fruitful cultivation of land.

The bundle of wheat-ears was lost from the original, you see standing there, during World War-II. Tellus Bavarica now has hands free for the new symbols of the modern Bavaria. That could be a model of a car (because we are the smartest car-builders in the world – greetings from BMW and AUDI, two Bavarian companies); it also could be a laptop, or a mobile phone, or a new catalyst. Let me specifically welcome the representatives of our homebased yet international chemical industries: Professor Felcht, CEO of Degussa AG, the world’s number-one speciality chemicals producer, and Dr. von Au, the new CEO of Süd-Chemie AG. They have engaged in numerous catalysis joint ventures with the academia.

Future has tradition here in Bavaria, and this is where tradition also has a future. With this play of words I now come to a close. I hope you enjoy your stay in Munich. I wish you all a very pleasant evening, stimulating conversations and (further on) a good appetite.