



**Dr. Klaus Engel**

Klaus Engel was appointed Chairman of the Executive Board of Evonik Industries AG, Essen, Germany in 2009 and he has been Member of the Executive Board since 2007. Klaus Engel studied chemistry at the Ruhr University in Bochum and received a doctorate there in 1984. He then worked for Chemische Werke Hüls AG in Marl and Veba AG, Düsseldorf. In 1998 Engel became Managing Director of Creanova Spezialchemie GmbH, Marl and thereafter joined Stinnes AG in Mülheim an der Ruhr. Since 1999 he has been Member of various Executive Boards: Degussa AG, RAG Aktiengesellschaft and Brenntag AG.

## United in Diversity Defining Integration for the 21st Century

**Globalization has broken down barriers and enabled greater personal mobility. Germany must learn to embrace the growing riches of cultural diversity and harness it to drive innovation**

Three Latin words appear on the seal of the United States of America. The same words are emblazoned on the crest of Benfica soccer club: “E pluribus unum”, or “one out of many”. The official motto of the European Union has the same idea translated into 24 different languages – the English version being “united in diversity”. There is another term that expresses this idea in a more abstract fashion: integration. How we define this word is crucially important – not just for a soccer team or for Europe, but for the entire globalized world.

New information technologies and the ever-expanding trade in goods and services between continents have transformed our world. Relaxed border controls make it easier to import different products, but also new ideas and lifestyles. This is a good thing, because we will need

all kinds of innovations and fresh ideas if we are to solve the challenges of the future: How are we going to feed the planet’s growing population? How are we going to ensure adequate healthcare for all? And how can we conserve our limited resources?

The search for workable answers to these questions is fueling global demand for much-sought-after German products, allowing us to achieve sustainable growth and secure jobs. The rich diversity of cultures, mindsets and ideas that have come to Germany through immigration give us an advantage here. We need our immigrant population all the more in light of a recent study by the Bertelsmann Foundation, which estimated that, without this group, our population would shrink by 20 million by the year 2050, with the number in gainful employment falling by as much as 40 percent.

According to a recent opinion poll by broadcaster ARD, 68 percent of Germans believe that the domestic economy needs to import skilled workers. And 46 percent think that immigration provides more positives than negatives for the country as a whole. Most knowledgeable public commentators agree with these views: the jobs market, and above all the social security system, benefit considerably from the influx of new citizens.

In reality, most German companies have been “united in diversity” for some time now. For Evonik too, it is no longer a question of assimilating “foreign” employees into the workings of a German company. It is more about building understanding and grasping the opportunities presented by diversity. A strong mutual understanding leads to better cooperation, more creative teams and more innovative products. That, to me, is the current meaning of integration.

This perception of integration is also shared by leading universities and academic institutions. Back in 2007, TUM signed the German “Diversity Charter,” documenting its commitment to equal appreciation and acknowledgement of the world’s many individual talents. We also see diversity as a key driver of growth and prosperity. Reaching across cultural and geographic borders, it truly has the “power to create” a forward-looking, open-minded future for all of us. □