



**Translation of advance
text**

**The speech on the
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**Federal President Joachim Gauck
at the presentation of the Transatlantic Partnership Award
of the American Chamber of Commerce in Germany to the
Berlin and New York Philharmonic Orchestras
in Berlin
on 28 January 2014**

This is an important evening, and it comes at the right time. The transatlantic partnership, the partnership between the United States of America and the Federal Republic of Germany, needs revitalising impetus. What's more, its identity has to be reasserted and it requires strengthening. Today's award ceremony is taking place in a festive setting. That's good, we can well use it.

For more than a century, the American Chamber of Commerce in Germany has been one of the key institutions and one of the reliable fixtures of our close bilateral relations. This year, it is conferring its Transatlantic Partnership Award on two cultural beacons from our countries.

I believe that has profound symbolic significance. The New York Philharmonic Orchestra on the one hand and the Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra on the other have their own very special place at the heart of their cultures. And the fact that the Transatlantic Partnership Award is going to these two institutions says more about the transatlantic partnership than any long speech could do.

For it says no more and no less than that the transatlantic partnership, indeed the friendship between our two countries, is not a matter for marginal groups or minorities. Rather, it lies at the heart of our cultures.

If we know that then we can also endure and even overcome the tensions which have surfaced recently. Our countries have proven

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repeatedly that they are able to learn from their mistakes. I'm confident that we can do that again in the current climate. If one side cannot understand what the other is saying or doing in any given circumstances, we know thanks to trust which has grown over so many years that we will continue our dialogue and that we will find our way back to one another.

Sometimes we talk of a "culture of trust": one of the best ways to foster mutual understanding is to engage more intensively with each other's culture. Ties between our civil societies help here. Every year, five million people from Germany travel to the United States. They go as business people, tourists, relatives and friends. Young Americans regard Berlin as one of the "coolest" cities in Europe. And they all mirror the close and long-standing relations which link our nations. For example, the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership we are seeking to conclude can boost prosperity on both sides of the Atlantic.

We have every reason to cultivate and expand our friendship and to grasp the opportunities of the future together. If we engage more intensively with each other's culture, we will see much which we regard as familiar and plausible, as well as things which seem peculiar and even a bit alien to us. But we can take pleasure in that, too. I'm quite certain that in all of this we will recognise that what we have in common is far greater. The values we both cherish, preserve and defend are far greater. Our understanding for each other is far greater, as are our shared world-views.

It's especially important that some aspect about the other side fascinates us or kindles our enthusiasm. And the Chamber of Commerce has scored a bull's-eye with its choice of awardees this year.

What applies to the two orchestras honoured today and the high regard in which they are held, also applies to many other cultural spheres: we value, indeed we admire, each other's great cultural feats. By honouring two of the most famous orchestras, and by showing our esteem for the transatlantic partnership in this happy and festive setting, we have demonstrated yet again the strong ties we share thanks to our cultures. If such festive occasions are possible and successful, then we will also manage to master day-to-day life with its tasks and challenges in such a way that our partnership and our friendship can grow and flourish.