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**Toast
by Federal President Joachim Gauck
at a luncheon hosted by Speaker
of the Senate Noël A. Kinsella
on 25 September 2014
in Ottawa**

Germany meets Canada, and business meets politics. That is definitely a winning combination! There are many aspects here that interest me. I would like to look at three points and briefly outline them, in the hope that I will be able to talk about them in greater length with you later.

Top of my list is federalism. Germany and Canada are similar in this respect, however with one remarkable difference: in your country a single constituency can be larger than the whole of Germany. How do you manage to nevertheless make good and efficient political decisions in this multi-level system? How do you enable citizens to take part in this process? I would be very interested to hear about your experiences.

The second point on my list is a very topical one. Just a few kilometres away from here, the political leaders of Canada and the European Union will be meeting tomorrow to mark the Strategic Partnership Agreement and to formally conclude the negotiations on the trade and economic agreement CETA.

As we all know, the efforts to bring about far-reaching agreements of this kind do not come out of thin air. Many of you experience first-hand in your day-to-day work that the world of business is becoming ever more complex as globalisation advances. It is therefore all the more important that we understand this development in order to differentiate between what is desirable and what is dangerous. This is about increasing our prosperity in an intelligent fashion with the help of joint standards which are binding for both sides. Together we have an opportunity to create a fair social

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market economy which has rules and in which those rules are respected. Especially when large democratic entities such as Canada and the European Union open up to each other, this generates concrete opportunities to shape the globalisation process – in the shared interest of a free world trade and economic order.

The ever more intensive international cooperation in industry, science and research needs viable agreements. Take, for example, issues relating to competition and the market order, industrial norms and production safety, consumer protection or employees' rights. That is why I welcome the efforts by Canada and the European Union to conclude a comprehensive economic and trade agreement. It can create the basis for placing our economic relations on a new footing and increasing prosperity and employment on both sides of the Atlantic.

Freedom needs a framework. This is the major task we have to address together and – if you ask me – it is also an obligation which Canada and Germany, as leading economic powers, have to live up to.

CETA can lend our relations a new quality. It is now up to legislators in the parliaments [on this side of the Atlantic], that is to say, also our hosts today, distinguished members of the Canadian House of Commons and Senate, to scrutinise the agreement. We cannot pre-empt the outcome of your debates, nor would we wish to. However, we know that transparency, information and facts are key to building trust. Only then can the desired agreement between Canada and the European Union hold up in our democracies, only then will it be accepted by the public and given substance. That requires an open debate in which the public's concerns are addressed, for instance when they ask what CETA means for consumer, social and environmental rights.

During my years of political engagement, I have always lived by the maxim: debate is not the problem, it is part of the solution. That applies to trade policy just as much as it does to the third point I want to bring up today, energy policy. Just like here in Canada, it tends to be a controversial subject in Germany. Many issues have to be taken into consideration: environmental protection and costs, as well as security of supply. This is about the wishes of the voters of today and about our shared responsibility for the generation of tomorrow.

If my trip helps to revitalise this discourse across the Atlantic, then it would have achieved one of its aims. I hope that we will not only spur on the exchange of products and goods but also ideas and concepts. It is good that today we are hearing more voices on the Canadian and German sides, especially on future projects.

Please join me now in a toast to our partnership, to the drive and enterprise of our experts, to the great potential among our nations and

to a relationship in which there is also room for complex issues – and ultimately a solution!