



BUNDESPRÄSIDIALAMT

**Subject to change.
Translation of advance
text.**

**The speech online:
www.bundespraesident.de**

Berlin, 01/12/2014
page 1 to 3

**Speech by Federal President Joachim Gauck
at a luncheon in honour of the King of Spain's first
official visit to Germany
on 1 December 2014
in Berlin**

Four months ago we sat together in Liège with representatives of many other countries to jointly commemorate the outbreak of the First World War. Now, just a few months after your inauguration, it is my pleasure to welcome Your Majesty to Schloss Bellevue. This visit is a delightful reflection of the good relations existing between Spain and Germany.

We know that you yourself have long felt a personal connection with Germany. When my predecessor Richard von Weizsäcker first welcomed you to Germany, when you were still Crown Prince, united Germany was only nine months old. A few weeks ago we celebrated the 25th anniversary of the peaceful revolution. We will never forget how quickly and wholeheartedly the Spanish Government of the day signalled, immediately after the fall of the Wall, "You can count on us!" Spain was entirely confident in saying "yes" to German unity. This is one of the many things that bind us.

Our two countries share the knowledge that freedom and democracy do not simply fall into our laps, but are the result of people's struggles. We know that it takes great effort to find inner unity and reconciliation, as well as determination to consolidate all that has been achieved. Our countries have both experienced support from the European community of nations in stabilising democracy. [In your country your father made an invaluable contribution in this regard.] It is these historical experiences which have taught Spain and Germany to engage for democracy and human rights across the world. Your

MEMBER OF STAFF RESPONSIBLE
ADDRESS
TEL / FAX
E-MAIL
WEBSITE

Ferdos Forudastan
Bundespräsidialamt
11010 Berlin
+49 30 2000-2021/-1926
presse@bpra.bund.de
www.bundespraesident.de

Majesty, in your recent speech to the United Nations General Assembly, you reaffirmed your commitment to these values in a most impressive manner.

A common commitment to shared values and goals is of great importance in this day and age. There are many trouble spots in the world around us. The violence in Syria and Iraq, the crisis in eastern Europe and the deadly epidemic raging in some countries of west Africa are piling tremendous suffering on many people. In a few weeks' time, Spain will take up a seat on the United Nations Security Council. We share your pleasure at this, knowing at the same time how great a responsibility it is.

You can count – continue to count – on Germany's support. Because only if we combine our energies and efforts can we advance an international order of justice, respect and peaceful progress. Helping to build up such an order is a question of credibility – and it is in our own vested interest. These crises seem to be unfolding a long way off. But they affect us very directly. Epidemics like Ebola do not stop at borders, a painful realisation Spain has been forced to make. Neither do the refugees fleeing to Europe to escape violence and a sense of hopelessness.

These are not easy times, and I hope you will forgive me for drawing attention to the fact in my words of welcome. There is one thing I want to say quite clearly: It is encouraging to know that Spain has a Head of State who is aware of the value of diversity. "Unity does not mean uniformity." This sentence, which you applied to Spain in your inaugural speech, is also the essence of Europe's strength. It is becoming ever more important in the age of globalisation.

My country too is characterised – more than ever before – by diversity. Anyone walking through the streets here in Berlin or in other cities in Germany will hear a lot of Spanish and meet many young Spaniards who are gathering experience here and at the same time enriching cultural, scientific and academic life in Germany with their creativity and engagement. They will make the bonds between our countries even closer. Some of them have come to Germany for economic reasons. We know that your country is making huge efforts to overcome the crisis.

The economic data give grounds to hope that you will soon be reaping the rewards for these endeavours. Notwithstanding the successes, much remains to be done, not least in view of the many individual destinies, particularly of young people, hidden behind the high unemployment figures. As a friend and partner of Spain, Germany is happy to provide advice and help as you seek to offer the young generation the opportunities they deserve.

Your Majesty, there is much to talk about. Unfortunately, however, there is not enough time to address everything. So before our food gets cold or time runs out for conversation, let me conclude with a request: please come to Germany often!

And now may I ask you to raise your glasses and join me in a toast to the shared future of Spain and Germany.