



**Speech by Federal President Joachim Gauck
on the occasion of his state visit to Ireland at a reception
hosted by the Lord Mayor of Dublin, Críona Ní Dhálaigh,
in Dublin, Ireland,
on 13 July 2015**

Lord Mayor, thank you very much indeed for this lovely reception. I would like to congratulate you on your election and to wish you a sure hand in all decisions during your term of office.

Before I begin with my text I want to thank you for remembering my role in Germany in 1989. You touched my heart, thank you.

The city you now govern became a UNESCO City of Literature several years ago – one of eleven such cities worldwide. And what an astonishing literary heritage is celebrated in that title! It is impossible to imagine Dublin now without its writers, poets and playwrights. Their works reflect the eventful history of the city, indeed of the entire country.

In Germany, too, we revere our writers, and sometimes also the places they describe and the cities where they lived, such as Lübeck and Heidelberg. But a city that, like Dublin, has produced three Nobel Literature laureates is truly a rarity. And all three – George Bernard Shaw, William Butler Yeats and Seamus Heaney – are also highly respected and widely read in my country.

Hardly any other city in the world can claim to be the subject of such an important single work as Dublin in James Joyce's "Ulysses". I have to admit that I would also welcome the opportunity to walk through the city's beautiful streets and to follow the path taken by Joyce's protagonist Leopold Bloom, as so many fans of Joyce do with great enthusiasm every year on Bloomsday on 16 June, thus answering the question that Joyce once asked himself: "Will anyone remember this date?"

This short speech does not allow me to describe the city's enormous economic development.

Dublin also has an impressive musical heritage. Several bands from your city are legendary in Germany. The Chieftains, Thin Lizzy and U2 are just a few of them. And Germany has also left its mark musically on Dublin. One example was the singer Agnes Bernelle, who was born in Berlin and followed her father into exile in London in the 1930s, before later moving here. But looking further back in time, I would like to draw your attention in particular to Georg Friedrich Händel. His oratorio, "Messiah", was first performed in the New Music Hall in Fishamble Street in Dublin on 13 April 1742. There is a lovely tradition of holding an open-air concert in this street every year on 13 April to mark this important date.

I am happy that many Germans research, teach and study at Dublin's renowned universities, which are steeped in tradition. Johann Wolfgang von Goethe was an honorary member of the Royal Irish Academy, which was founded in 1785.

These days, visitors experience a compact version of Europe here. Young people from many European Union countries work here for international companies. And this is why Dublin is not only a particularly young, but also a particularly world-minded city.

It is also a popular destination for huge numbers of Germans, thanks to its fascinating atmosphere and outstanding culinary and cultural range. It is not for me to say whether they are happier about the art, the fantastic food or the quality of the beer! My hope is that many, many more of my fellow Germans will visit your wonderful city.

Heinrich Böll's "Irish Journal" made me long to visit your country – but I lived behind the Wall and had to wait for the Peaceful Revolution.

Now I am here as President and have very little time. What can I do? Well, I will simply have to come back when I have more time.

For now, thank you very much for the warm welcome!