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**Speech by Federal President Joachim Gauck  
on being presented with the key to the city  
by Mayor Daniel Martínez  
Montevideo, Uruguay  
15 July 2016**

In presenting me with the key to your city, you have given me a truly wonderful gift, a gift which I regard as a sign that the gates of your city are open not only to me, but to all my fellow Germans.

I am particularly delighted to be receiving this great honour here in Montevideo, in this unique city. The great Uruguayan writer Mario Benedetti said that this was a city to which one would return again and again, and in my case that is true: I visited your city once before, a few years before assuming office.

And so I am very happy to be back, to be caught up once more in that joie de vivre which pervades the streets and squares of Montevideo.

So it is no surprise that it was here, on the banks of the Río de la Plata, that Gerardo Matos Rodríguez once composed what may be the most famous tango – La Cumparsita – which has many fans both in my country and throughout Europe. And if we look to the present, Montevideo, as a port, as a city of international cultural centres and of course as headquarters of the South-American free-trade zone MERCOSUR, stands for internationalism, modernity and a high quality of life.

I have been told of a particularly lovely image the inhabitants of Montevideo have of their city: it is, they say, like a hand, with the old city as the thumb and the four very wide roads the fingers. This very vivid image of Montevideo will stay with me.

Relations between Uruguay and Germany stretch back over 160 years. 160 years ago there was as yet no Germany. But there were Germans. This reminds me that it is usually individuals who forge the way before states build up relations; politics follows on. These relations are visible here in Montevideo in a very practical way. I have

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heard that your city's port has a partnership with the port in Hamburg, both of them playing an extremely important role in their region. Now I sincerely hope that many more links will be established between our countries, that many more doors will be opened. And I am confident that the numerous encounters over these few days will help towards this goal.

So thank you very much for your warm hospitality!