



**Federal President Frank-Walter Steinmeier
at the opening of Germany's National Day at EXPO 2017
in Astana, Kazakhstan,
on 12 July 2017**

As I crossed the grounds just now, and saw the Kazakh Pavilion from afar, I thought this is what the future could look like. I am delighted to be here on Germany's National Day at the world exhibition EXPO 2017, set amidst Astana's impressive futuristic architecture.

And appearances here are not deceptive – this EXPO is all about the future, about the energy supply of the future. For us in Germany, the energy transition is *the* project for the future. The German Pavilion is showcasing this vision under the slogan "Energy on Track". Germany wants to present its project not just to Kazakhstan, but to the whole world.

Its goal is no more and no less than the complete transformation of the way in which we produce, distribute and store energy, and ways in which we can save and conserve energy. Renewable energy generation, energy efficiency, decentralised energy supply and the modernisation of the electricity grid are important economic growth sectors in Germany, especially for innovative SMEs. Germany already has some major successes to show in this regard. A third of our electricity is now produced from renewable sources. Our technological expertise is a strength we are proud to display here at the EXPO.

Germany is aware of how important this EXPO is for Kazakhstan. It is the first time ever that the EXPO has been hosted by a Central Asian country – and that's a great success. I have spoken to your President at length today about Kazakhstan's economic significance for Germany and Europe.

German companies are already well established in the fields of infrastructure, cement, gypsum and other raw materials. Germany is also increasingly active with respect to climate projects in Kazakhstan. We have supported the Central Asia Water Initiative for almost a

decade now. This is Germany's contribution to the EU's Central Asia Strategy.

We are also working together on viable solutions to global environmental problems. For example, German expertise flowed into the construction of the Yerementau I wind farm here in Kazakhstan. We would be glad to expand such collaboration. That is why we are taking part in the German Energy Dialogue organised by DENA today and yesterday here in Astana, at which topics including greater German private sector involvement in Central Asia are being discussed.

However, a rethink in the energy sector requires not only new technologies, but also and above all a rethink and new approaches in the education sector. On my many visits to Kazakhstan, I always felt that the country had a marked interest in education.

This is evinced, for example, in the successful Bolashak International Scholarship programme. Make use of your country's resources – not just its energy reserves, but above all the know-how and skills of its people!

This is exactly what the German Pavilion at the EXPO seeks to do: it seeks to arouse interest in an energy policy for the 21st century, in technology and in business. The fact that it has succeeded so well in doing this, and is attracting so many curious visitors, is due first and foremost to you, Ms Bochynek and you, Mr Schmitz. Thank you so much for your hard work!

I hope that the EXPO grounds here in Astana will become a location of the future, a forum for debate and discussion, where competition for the best solutions abounds, where joint ventures are established – in short, a place where the future is forged!

We want to be involved in this – together with our Kazakh friends and with all others who want to help build this future, during the EXPO and after the EXPO as well. We are considering how Germany, too, can contribute to our dialogue on the energy supplies of the future.

And now I'm keen to set off on my own journey to the future – as I in my turn visit the German and Kazakh Pavilions. I wish you all a successful EXPO!

Thank you very much.