

**Grußwort für
Herrn Staatssekretär
Dr. Knut Nevermann
zur
„29. Internationalen Ingenieurskonferenz“
der HRK
am 29. Oktober 2012**

Ladies and Gentlemen,

in the name of the Senate of Berlin, I would like to welcome you to our city, and wish you a very successful conference! Your desire to improve the education of engineers is extremely important for our whole society and particularly for Berlin. We have numerous engineering courses in Berlin: at Technical University, at Beuth University of Applied Sciences and at the HTW University of Applied Sciences — all in all, we have 33.000 engineering students in Berlin. So you have chosen your conference location wisely — even though I would also like to invite you to take a look at all the other good reasons for coming to Berlin this evening!

As the dimension of power is energy divided by time, I will only steal as little as possible of the latter and will restrict myself to two points:

Firstly, the fact that the Federal Republic is once more one of the world's leading export nations is to a very large extent due to its engineers. Or rather: its engineering expertise and a generally engineering-friendly culture in our society and business world. So one could be led to assume that we regard the problems that do exist in engineering studies as a question that has to be solved to defend our prime position. But this approach is too narrow. I am not generally against competition but engineering sciences form the central technical approach to solutions for most of our planet's environmental problems. That means that engineering sciences do not exist only to create better, faster and more beautiful cars — they are primarily about adequate supply in the energy sector, resource-saving measures and global parameters to secure humane living conditions. In short, engineering crowd-sourcing is indispensable for our planet. The whole world needs good engineers!

Secondly, the variety of topics to be discussed at your conference shows me that engineering studies are a specific area with its own problems and conditions. You know - catchphrases like „the question of mathematical basic knowledge“. But right now, I am talking about a specific development in this country's academic culture that I am not quite sure about. Demographic trends and a beginning skills shortage have led to a rising number of subjects strengthening their efforts to acquire students. You may be familiar with the formats „Girls' Days“, „Laboratories for Schoolchildren“ etc — I do not want to criticize these, but I would like to point out that the egoism of individual subjects can lead to even more misallocations. If a blanket is too short, there is no point in everybody pulling at its four different corners — what I mean to say is that young people should not be persuaded to take up a certain subject but advised as to which subject is best suited to their abilities. Nor should educational standards be lowered so that we can educate as many engineers as possible. The answer can only be to create more openness between educational pathways, so as to reach as many potential candidates as possible.

That said, it is of course sensible to think about raising affinity to technology among school-children or about better ways of imparting certain types of knowledge to students. And of course we must develop a more technology-friendly culture in our society.

I am very glad that you are prepared to discuss these important questions during the next few days. In all our interests, I hope you will be very successful!

Thank you for your attention.