

Welcome Address

Dr. Hannemor Keidel
Vice-President, TU Munich

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am delighted to welcome you at our University. It is a pleasure for us to host this international conference on “Land fragmentation and land consolidation in Central and Eastern European Countries”, a conference that may become a gate towards sustainable rural development in the new millennium.

Much too fast, we have already forgotten the many difficulties we encountered in Eastern Germany after the reunification of the two German countries. As in other countries in transition, questions of land ownership had to be clarified, land had to be redistributed, plots registered, the agrarian structure had to be reorganised etc.

Some of these challenges have been met, others we still face. The Eastern German Federal States were in the preferable position to receive technical support and financial aid from the reunified Germany as well as from the EU. Universities, too, contributed to the rapid changes in the East, offering know-how and building co-operations and partnerships. Despite a lot of common efforts, the results are far from attaining the objectives our former chancellor Kohl put into the phrasing of the blooming landscapes in the new Federal States. Spring is in the air, but the blossoms can only be seen in some warmer regions – so to speak. Nevertheless, compared to other countries in transition, the achievements in Germany are above average. The situation in the former GDR cannot be compared in all parts with other Central European countries, as they differ from each other in many aspects.

But it will be definitely of some use to exchange experiences and to offer Central and Eastern European Countries similar support in knowledge transfer, but also material support as the new Federal States in Germany received and still receive.

I hope that this conference will contribute to the emergence of new partnerships allowing all parties to benefit from the experiences of the others.

I would like to thank GTZ and FAO that they have chosen us as a partner for the organisation of this conference, giving us the opportunity to support this vivid exchange between academics as well as practionners.

TUM already has a long tradition of international partnerships all over the world, covering among a great variety of areas also the field of land tenure.

Last year, with the introduction of the Master's Program on Land Management and Land Tenure, this internationality reached a new dimension. For the first time a Master's Program was started, addressing explicitly land issues in countries in transition as well as in developing countries. The participants of this program come from Eastern Europe, the Middle East, Asia and Africa. This is one more example of a successful cooperation between GTZ and TU München, the Chair of Land Tenure and Land Development being in charge of the program. As you can see: Our university develops an extensive interest in this subject.

I wish you a successful conference with good discussions and useful results and a pleasant stay at our University.