

TUM-Masterkurseröffnung 10.10.2003

Good morning to everyone - to the students as well as to the most honourable establishment who is assembled here today and to all those who consider themselves to be in between!

It is a pleasure for me to also speak some words of welcome. Words of welcome more from the position of a lecturer - what actually I am not. I'm only the person in charge of your field trips. However, being aware of the fact that there are a lot of lectures but only very few field trips gives me a somewhat unique position which perhaps entitles me to speaking these words.

I have been doing this job from the very beginning of the master course on; that means it is for the third time now - by the way, a situation you can profit from because the problems of the run-in period (if there were any) certainly are solved now - or at least, they should be.

It gives me a great pleasure and I have always liked meeting young people from different countries - even from different continents. I admire their will to go abroad for more than a year. I also admire their courage to expose themselves voluntarily to a foreign culture, to a foreign social fabric and to working conditions which are hardly to bear even for a neighbouring European country. I learnt this from a French trainee who stayed for the last few weeks in my office. Starting to work early and having lunch within 30 minutes - the way to the canteen and back included - was quite a challenge for her.

Nevertheless I can assure you that in spite of these trifling disturbances she passed quite happy a time here.

However, I admire the students not only because of their courage but also because of their competence. I give you an example which actually occurred during last year's master course.

It was on the occasion of one of our excursions when, giving an introduction to our Service's tasks, I tried to explain in many words the unique position of our Service being the ideal partner for the local government for all kind of local development. As I did not know the exact term for the feature I wanted to express, it took me quite a while before I could get the message across.

After I finished my long explanation one of the students remarked in a matter-of-fact way: "so, your Service is a one-stop-shop or a warehouse". Well, said I, if that is the word, it is.

Thus the matter was settled. I learnt a new word and everything was fine.

But the story had a continuation only some weeks ago: It was then that the high-level independent commission which was asked by our Minister-President himself to look out for ways to reduce the damaging influence of red tape on economy presented its

final report. Red tape, as you certainly know, is a rather sympathetic way of expressing the quite unsympathetic feature of too much bureaucracy.

When I started reading this report, I was struck when I saw that one of the six main propositions was titled "One Stop Agency". What a surprise! - There the expression was again! In this context it meant that the government should be a One-Stop-Shop or more precisely that if a person wanted to set up private enterprise there should be only one administrative body to be addressed to in order to get all the assistance which is needed. That is actually the same as our Service does but only for other persons and for another purpose.

Anyway, the experience recalled what I had learnt months before from our students and increased the respect which I had already cherished.

What I wanted to express is that the benefit of working together is mutual. Of course, if one has a closer look, there are differences and, frankly speaking, I hope that you accept that the bulk of the advantage is on your side; that is why you are here; nevertheless the principle remains.

This should be the basis for co-operation also for this year's course. I already have quite a definite idea for the two field trips we are going to have together. I also hope that the mayors of the respective municipalities and my colleague from the Survey Office will join in once again.

There are also experiences where mutual learning is hampered by one reason or another. An interesting solution may be presented by one party but the other one unfortunately can not take advantage of it. I give you an example: It was in the late 80s when we had a strong co-operation with the PRC.

It was on the occasion of a visit to Tianjin, one of the major cities, when we were shown the recently completed outer ring road. The most impressive aspect of the project was that it had taken only one year to build it. When we asked the Chinese colleagues how they had managed acquisition of land and construction in such a short time, we were told that this was easy: the project was officially declared to be in the public and national interest. Thus all contradiction was ruled out and the construction could go ahead without any delay.

You should know that things are run differently here; we normally have to consider a period of several years of judicial dispute before even the acquisition of land can start.

Well, it was quite obvious that in spite of all its attraction the solution could not profit us because its implementation here in Bavaria was quite unthinkable. It is very convenient that among the students there are also 2 persons from China. For them it would be an interesting experience to see, if at the end of their studies they clearly would see why we cannot copy this promising, efficient and economic approach from their country.

So far for examples.

Considering the whole master course with its quite ambitious programme one must admit that the two field trips certainly contribute only to a small extent to the seminar's success. I certainly do hope, of course, that the whole master course meets your demands.

I wish you all the best, first of all for your studies, of course, but then also for the lot of other things like the many details of daily life you will have to cope with.

By the way, if you succeeded in understanding what I told you, you already mastered one of the preliminary obstacles. It is the way how the English language is pronounced by the native population here around to whom I belong. If you managed to understand me, you probably will understand others who are to follow as well.

Good luck to all of you!