



Speech of the President of the Max Planck Society

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On the Occasion of the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration of the Cooperation between Max Planck Society  
and Chinese Academy of Sciences

28.10.2024

Harnack House, Berlin

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The year 1974 was special in many ways. In China, a large number of terracotta warriors from the Qin dynasty was discovered near Xi'an. In the UK, Agatha Christie's novel "Murder on the Orient Express" was made into a film starring Ingrid Bergman. And in Germany, we hosted the world championship in football. And we even won. In 1974, the world was at a turning point – also politically. The new US-President Ford sent a letter to Chairman Mao Ze Dong pledging to continue towards stronger relations with the People's Republic. And in Germany, a new chancellor took office, Helmut Schmidt. He became the first chancellor to visit China only one year later.

Dear President Hou, dear former President Bai Chunli, dear Ambassador Deng,

Dear members of the delegation of the Chinese Academy of Science,

Most importantly, of course, the year 1974 marks the beginning of our collaboration! I would like to welcome you here in Berlin. Thank you for making the journey. I would also like to welcome Dame Julie Maxton, Executive Director of the Royal Society, which has been collaborating with the Chinese Academy since 1978.

Dear Martin Stratmann, dear colleagues and friends,

What a pleasure to celebrate the 50th anniversary of our cooperation. Today, we have continued our tradition, crossing borders between countries and disciplines, connecting scientists, and developing research projects together. Fifty years ago, my predecessor Reimar Lüst visited Beijing. Together with



Vice President Wu Youxun of the Chinese Academy, the exchange of researchers from both countries was established – a significant step after the Cultural Revolution.

By today, China has become a global superpower in science. Based on the number of joint publications, the Chinese Academy of Sciences is our second most important international partner, following the CNRS in France, and ahead of Harvard University. We are collaborating in many research fields. In the future, topics such as climate mitigation, sustainable ecosystems or tissue regeneration will come into focus, in addition to areas of physics. Today we hosted five workshops to explore these fields.

However, despite all successes, our collaboration has become more challenging due to geopolitical restraints. We are concerned about several issues that we raised earlier today. It is testimony to our trustful partnership that we can openly address our concerns and seek solutions together. For example, we see that only a small number of German researchers visits China to carry out research projects. To address this, we will together offer summer schools for Max Planck researchers in China. Indeed, President Hou and I will sign a Memorandum of Understanding tonight as we wish to ensure that future generations of scientists in our two countries can continue to work together.

Dear colleagues,

In these challenging times, we as scientists must stand united, maintain bridges, and continue to collaborate while avoiding risks. After all, many of the global challenges we face, we can only address by working together.

Dear friends,

I am looking forward to many more years of collaboration. Let us never forget that we are united by a common goal: to generate new knowledge for the benefit of humankind. Please enjoy this very special evening!