

Dear Prof. Dr. med. Birgit Mazurek,

Dear Mr. Dr. Anschütz,

Other distinguished guests,

Ladies and gentlemen,

On behalf of the Berlin Government, I am very pleased to welcome you to the eleventh International Tinnitus Seminar in Berlin.

With more than five hundred scientists from all over the world, this congress will be a unique international discussion forum.

In the next few days, you will have the opportunity to gather in various symposia and workshops to exchange experience, debate current challenges of tinnitus research and therapy, develop recommendations and, hopefully, also offer some solutions to the world's most pressing problems in finding a cure for this disease.

It was the right decision to organise this most important event in Berlin, since our city is ideally suited to host such international congresses due to its broad experience in the field of science and research, in particular in the health sector.

Let me give you three reasons for this statement:

1. Berlin is open minded and international, and it is a leading exhibition and congress location, including, and in particular in the health sector;
2. Secondly, Berlin has a huge experience in looking for strategies combining health and social issues. Medical advances have already been discussed in the context of social and socio-political issues in Berlin for the last few centuries;
3. Berlin has world renowned health care facilities and is a leading location for science and research.

To give you some details:

The concentration of 24 major research institutions and universities focusing their research on life science themes is unique in Europe. Furthermore Berlin's pharmaceutical, Biotech and medical device industries are among the most successful on the market.

We currently have

- 23 pharmaceutical companies with around 10,000 employees,
- 200 biotech companies with about 4,000 and almost 300 medical device companies with approximately 12,000 employees;

- famous names include Bayer HealthCare Pharmaceuticals, Sanofi-Aventis Germany, Pfizer, Berlin Chemical, Otto Bock HealthCare and Biotronic Germany

As you can see, Berlin is one of the most important life science locations in Europe.

The university hospital Charité with its excellence in health care as well as in research and education has a worldwide reputation, and it is one of the landmarks of the whole health region.

Europe's largest university hospital was founded more than 300 years ago. Numerous Nobel Prize laureates have worked there.

Renowned personalities, physicians and researchers such as Paul Ehrlich, Rudolf Virchow and Emil von Behring worked in this university hospital and have changed the world with their findings.

This Tinnitus Seminar is being held in a very special venue: in the Langenbeck-Virchow-Haus which is a building in the middle of the Charité ensemble. This building was erected by the Berlin Medical Society in 1913 "to promote scientific efforts in the whole field of medicine, to facilitate personal contacts through the exchange of ideas, and to foster collaborative work." This is also the target of this seminar.

Tinnitus is a widespread disease and yet one of the least known ones. It is estimated that, currently, in Germany alone there are more than eleven million people suffering from tinnitus.

Indeed, more and more people suffer from tinnitus - worldwide. That is why tinnitus research and therapy is becoming increasingly important for the societies.

This congress represents a unique forum for an international academic exchange offering the opportunity to draw public attention to tinnitus, and presenting possibilities of prevention as well as new targeted approaches towards tinnitus treatment.

The need for the just mentioned integrated tinnitus research has also been the reason for a number of Berlin companies and personalities to found the German Tinnitus Foundation Charité which focuses on supporting research in Germany and raising awareness of the issue. The foundation is also based here in this area.

The Foundation's targets are defined as follows:

- Financial support for research;
- Information of the public on tinnitus and hearing impairment;
- Prevention, mainly for young people through target group specific intervention.

I would like to thank you, Ladies and Gentlemen of the German Tinnitus Foundation Charité, for organising this important congress here in Berlin; but most of all, I would like to thank you for your commitment to promote actively knowledge transfer towards the population through the Open Day you will hold as well as for your efforts in the field of prevention.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I hope you will have a pleasant and exciting stay in our vibrant city, and I wish all of us a very successful International Tinnitus Seminar 2014.

Thank you for your kind attention.