

## 2. MdL Ernst Pfister, Economics Minister of Baden-Wuerttemberg

Dear Dr. Braeuning,  
dear Mr. Meier,  
dear Member of Parliament (German Bundestag) Kauder,  
dear Member of Parliament (German Bundestag) Burgbacher,  
dear county commissioner Wolf,  
dear Mayor Dr. Maier,  
dear Ladies and Gentlemen,

I have come here today with pleasure to celebrate together with you the 150th anniversary of the Matthias Hohner AG.

150 years of Hohner is a proud jubilee and above all a proof for the manufacturing of musical instruments on the highest level.

For this is the only way that a name such as Hohner can hold up.

This is something that you, Dr. Braeuning, and your team can rightly be very proud of.

I would like to express my best wishes not only as minister for economic affairs for the country of Baden-Wuerttemberg but also in the name of the whole government.

Of course, I talk to you especially as a citizen of Trossingen, president of the Deutscher Harmonikaverband (German harmonica association) and as enthusiastic harmonica player.

On a Hohner harmonica – as a matter of course!

Ladies and gentlemen,  
let me take a look back to the time of the foundation of the Hohner AG.

Thus, the dimension of this 159<sup>th</sup> anniversary will become much more illustrative.

I would like to start in a time in which today's "Musterlaendle" (model country – nickname for Baden-Wuerttemberg) was rather a poor region.

In 1857, when the company Matthias Hohner was founded, there were few ways of working for the citizens.

A large number of citizens emigrated to America, often with quite excessively optimistic hopes.

Matthias Hohner took advantage of this movement, however, he himself did not think of emigration.

As almost all big and successful family businesses he put his stakes on export.

Already eleven years after the company foundation in 1857, Matthias Hohner exported a first large consignment of his harmonicas to the USA, at the end of the 70ies of the 19th century Hohner sold around 60 per cent of its "Blues harps" in the United States.

He circumvented language barriers by initially availing himself only of German or German-speaking agents.

Especially emigrants from Trossingen and the region were his first "agents" in the new world.

At the turn of the century Matthias Hohner already employed 1000 people!

Even though the Hohner AG today is no longer family owned, Hohner is nevertheless a typical model company of Baden-Wuerttemberg.

Hohner today is the synonym for musical instruments of the highest quality.

Ladies and gentlemen,  
we are especially proud of companies such as the Matthias Hohner AG here in Baden-Wuerttemberg.

For, Baden-Wuerttemberg still is the classical country for middle-sized companies. There are 480,000 small and medium enterprises in Baden-Wuerttemberg. Particularly these companies provide with 2.5 million around two thirds of all jobs and around 80% of all apprenticeship places.

The economy of Baden-Wuerttemberg is among the most efficient ones in the EU and numerous enterprises in our country are world-market leaders in their industry. So, you are in a leading position with your harmonicas and accordions and you are known worldwide. This superior position cannot be taken for granted; it has to be worked and claimed for again and again.

In this fight for superior positions we need strong enterprises with the courage for innovations.

The opportunities of our country lie in being a leader, which is enabled by products that require extensive knowledge.

It is my conviction that this lead can be kept.

However, it has to be conquered time and again in a globalized economy.

In this course it is only man who can design the success factors machines, methods and markets with creativity, diligence and strength in implementation in a way that brings about profits. This holds especially true for your industry.

By developing modern Hohner musical instruments you champion for people to discover their musical creativity and to feel the communicative and spiritual power of music.

Thus, you not only have to be innovative all the time as a company, but you also inspire your customers with your instruments to be innovative themselves.

I wish the company Matthias Hohner AG lots of luck and success for this.

The future comes by itself. Progress does not.

You have always considered this with your company.

After 150 years of big tradition here in Trossingen and worldwide I wish you today a lot of economic fortunes and the best harmonies in your company and with your fantastic instruments.

As you know, with me you not only have an “advertising medium” as minister for economic affairs for your company, but also a musician with quite some of your instruments at his side!

Thank you very much and have a wonderful jubilee day.

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