



dbb
akademie

**Preventing and Combating Corruption
in Public Administration in Europe**

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President of the dbb academy**

**Opening
of the International Conference
of the dbb academy
on February 20, 2006
in the Maternushaus in Cologne**

Ladies and gentlemen,

It is my pleasure to warmly welcome you today to the first ***international*** conference of the dbb academy in the Maternushaus in Cologne on the topic of

Preventing and Combating Corruption in Public Administration in Europe.

The National President of the dbb, Mr. Peter Heesen, was unfortunately obliged to cancel his participation in this opening ceremony of our conference at short notice because of current political developments. He has asked me to convey to you his sincere apologies.

I am very happy to take over the responsibility of speaking to you today. I'm delighted that so many participants from Germany and abroad have responded to our invitation.

The dbb academy has addressed the topic of corruption for a number of years now, in large-scale public events and projects as well as in training programs specially designed for workers in the field of public administration.

But today's conference marks a premiere for us in terms of the *international* scope of this event. It's a great pleasure for me to welcome the speakers and participants from Albania, Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, the Czech Republic, England, Estonia, Finland, France, Georgia, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, the Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Russia, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, the Ukraine and even the USA.

I'm sure you've noticed from my breathlessness how impressed I am by this broad array of countries!

We have been able to implement the idea of exchanging international experiences on a large scale and learning from one another thanks to the European Anti-Fraud Office of the European Commission (OLAF for short), which is providing our conference with both staffing and financial support.

I would therefore like to take this opportunity to express our sincere gratitude to the Director General of OLAF, **Mr. Franz-Herrmann Brüner**, and to the other representatives of OLAF who are with us here today.

But even in the midst of all this international flair, I don't intend to overlook the German speakers and participants, and I would like to extend a warm welcome to them as well. In terms of sheer numbers, you are still in the majority. However, we hope that there will be a lively exchange of views among participants from all countries during the workshops and the breaks!

During the conference itself – in the plenary session and the workshops – you can count on perfect simultaneous interpretation, but during the breaks you will have to either agree on a common language or limit yourself to sign language. But one way or another, I'm sure you'll find a way to communicate successfully.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Some of our guests from abroad may be wondering why the dbb beamtenbund und tarifunion – a labor-union umbrella organization that represents the interests of tenured civil servants, employees and workers in the field of public administration – is addressing this particular topic and communicating it to the general public through the dbb academy. You may be asking yourself the following question:

Aren't we discrediting the whole field of public administration in Germany and Europe by addressing this issue in the first place?

I must admit that this question has been put to me even by members of our own ranks.

My answer to this question is a very clear "No".

On the contrary, according to the reports of the Federal Criminal Police Office of Germany in recent years, public administration in Germany remains the main target of corrupt activities, and in my opinion our organization has a solemn obligation to provide the public with information and transparency.

We have a fundamental interest in maintaining the high quality and credibility of our public administration, and we wish to protect those public servants who have a sense of integrity and intend to maintain it, even if unethical or criminal activities are taking place around them.

Public administration in Germany is truly not a hotbed of criminal activity. Statistically, only a tiny minority of employees in the area of public administration are involved in corrupt activities.

If we think for just a minute of the numerous current cases of corruption in German businesses, for example, German public administration as a whole looks very good by comparison.

Nonetheless, the exposure of spectacular cases of corruption in politics, in municipal administration or in other public institutions often creates the opposite impression.

And there is reason to fear that the cases that have become public knowledge are only the tip of the iceberg, and that a large number of cases remain undetected.

In other words, there's no reason to slacken our struggle against corruption.

I think that the other European countries also have an interest in opposing the destructive effects of corruption within their societies.

Our conference therefore aims at enabling you to exchange experiences at an international level and to discuss worse-case scenarios as well as examples of best practice.

What I consider most important is to arrive at conclusions based on these good or bad experiences, and to identify conflicting aims and negative developments related to our efforts to prevent and combat corruption.

During the next two days, we will be offering you presentations and discussions with renowned experts and in-depth workshops with inspiring professionals and presenters who have specialized knowledge of this field.

And now, please allow me to greet by name only the speakers who will be making presentations this *morning*, because if I were to introduce all 23 of the speakers and presenters at our two-day conference by name, giving you their titles and functions and indicating the titles of their presentations, I would take up far more time than I've been allowed!

I would like to extend a friendly greeting to our first speaker, the Director General of OLAF, Mr. **Franz-Hermann Brüner**. Mr. Brüner will report to us about the initiatives taken by the EU to prevent and combat corruption, with particular attention to the activities and experiences of OLAF.

As I mentioned at the outset of my remarks, we have OLAF's support to thank for the international composition of our speakers and participants. If it were not for this support, many of our guests from abroad would not have been able to

participate in this conference for financial reasons, in spite of their tremendous interest in the subject.

Insiders know that this funding is not a mere coincidence. Rather, it was based on an outstanding concept of the subject matter of the conference, which included a future-oriented perspective, as well as a clear and transparent grant application and a balanced budget.

I would therefore like to take this opportunity to express my appreciation to the dbb academy team for accomplishing this truly *Herculean feat!*

(Note: This is a pun: the grant application was made to the Hercules program.)

The second speaker I would like to warmly welcome is the Federal Deputy Chairman of Transparency Germany, **Dr. Justus Woydt**.

Dr. Woydt has kindly agreed to speak to us in place of Peter Eigen, who is unfortunately unable to join us because of a long-term commitment abroad.

Dr. Woydt will give us a brief overview of the instruments used by Transparency International and the areas in which Transparency Germany operates. As a former judge and Police Chief of Hamburg, he also has a rich store of experience in public administration.

I would also like to extend a friendly greeting to our last speaker before our midday break, **Dr. Stuart Gilman**, Head of the Anti-corruption Unit and Program Manager of the Global Program Against Corruption of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime in Vienna.

Dr. Gilman will focus his presentation on the prevention of corruption in public administration. We look forward to hearing his ideas on this subject.

After the midday break, we will continue with selected country reports – which, by the way, with one exception will be presented by *women* who are experts in this field – and with workshops on particular issues.

It is my pleasure to warmly welcome all of the speakers and presenters. I'm sure you will have a series of extremely interesting and fruitful discussions.

You'll find out about all the organizational details and special features of this event from **Ms. Anke Weigend**, Deputy Manager of the dbb academy, who will host the event and safely guide you through the next two days.

Ladies and gentlemen,

The success of this event lies in your hands.

I urge you to take advantage of this opportunity to engage in dialogue and cooperative activities, and to share your experiences, plans and ideas.

The simultaneous interpreters are prepared to handle heated discussions and controversies, so we ask you to challenge their linguistic expertise! Talk to one another, exchange experiences, and don't be reluctant to approach one another even if your regional backgrounds are very different!

For the next two days we are offering you a forum for fruitful encounters.

I hereby officially open the first international conference of the dbb academy on Preventing and Combating Corruption in Public Administration in Europe.