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**Dr. Rainer Hecker,
Chairman of the Board of Directors of
Gesellschaft für Unterhaltungs- und Kommunikationselektronik
mbH (gfu).
On the occasion of IFA Opening Gala
On September, 2, 2010 in Berlin**

Dear Federal Chancellor Dr. Angela Merkel

Dear governing mayor

Ladies and Gentlemen

A hearty welcome to the IFA jubilee 2010 in Berlin

It is IFA's 50th anniversary today. It has started off in 1924 as the „Große Deutsche Funk-Ausstellung“ („Grand German Broadcast Fair“). Since then the fair has developed into an international success story.

Today IFA is the globally leading fair for consumer electronics and home appliances. The IFA reflects trends and it does actually initiate them. And still most of the innovations of our branches are premiering here at the IFA. Beyond that IFA has quite an importance as t h e ordering fair.

At its fiftieth anniversary the IFA looks younger and better than ever.

Special thanks go to the Messe Berlin, our partner, who has delivered a decisive share of support to IFA. Thank you again for the continuous, encouraging and successful teamwork.

On the other hand I would like to express my gratitude to the exhibitors, the retailers and the media alike. It is due to you cooperation that this fair is so splendidly animated and endowed with special charisma.

I dare ask though what makes IFA the success story that it is?

In my opinion it is the one characteristic trait that has been the essence of IFA ever since: groundbreaking novelties and innovations have always been presented on the stage called IFA. Among them were revolutionary ideas and concepts that have created an impulse in economic growth and mass markets alike.

I would like to point out just a few highlights of 50 years of IFA:

In 1931 the first electronic television was presented

In 1967 colour television for Germany was started here. The PAL standard has since developed into a globally leading standard

In 1981 the Compact Disc premiered in Berlin

In 1991 the MP3 codec was presented to the public for the first time

And in 2005 the digital HDTV started at the IFA

Innovative in a special kind of way was the year 2008 when we introduced the home appliances – i.e. electrical household appliances in addition to the consumer electronics. That actually reflected the realities at the retailers shops and was accepted enthusiastically by the visitors and the media alike.

Without doubt: Innovations are the key to success. Just one figure to demonstrate this: in 2009 there were 68.000 products on the global market of consumer electronics. And more than 60 percent of these were less than one year old.

This is one of the most important reasons why our lines of business – and I mean both – have resisted the economic crisis so efficiently. At the end of the day it is the innovative abilities of the corporations that make up for progress, employment, purchasing power and wealth.

And of course in the year of the 50th anniversary it is again a display of innovative fireworks that counts. To mention but a few of the trends:

3-D-TV – television in a new dimension

HDTV with ever increasing picture and sound quality

The increasing interconnectedness at home

And last but not least the important issue of energy efficiency

In addition to all that this IFA is highlighted by a very special topic: the mergence of television and internet with the tv set as the central and

interactive gateway: hybrid television. In other words: broadcast goes broadband. And the world wide web moves into the living-room. The tv set turns into a interactive, web-based information and entertainment platform with a wide variety of options.

For this reason the two mass-media start into a new dimension. It is this enormous transfer of innovation that you can eye-witness here on this 50th IFA. I do invite you to convince yourself of how impressive the solutions are by visiting the fair yourself.

However there is a development in this that is typical for the IFA. At this fair there is more at stake than just innovations and technical novelties. It is the IFA where a rapidly changing media reality is reflected. A media reality that has become more and more pluralistic over the years. And this development will continue with an ever increasing vitality.

This includes an enormous amount of options but it includes quite a few challenges. Because now we are heading for a real quantum jump.

The central question will be: how do we go on with the digitalization of society in the 21st century? What will the framework conditions have to look like if we consider the enormous increase in data storage and the proceeding change of technologies? And of even bigger importance: How can we avoid a two-tier society that privileges certain providers and users while others are left behind?

The equal and democratic access to the knowledge of the global society is the great ideal of the internet-age. In the last one and a half decades we have moved in on the ideal with giant steps. It is now our common duty to ensure this for the coming decades.

The coming months and years will see us all in intensive argument about the safeguarding of net-neutrality and the avoidance of exclusive rights to certain structures of the internet. Or the other consequential question about the necessary financing of the network expansion. And how to guarantee a certain return on investment for those who pay for it.

I can only call on the persons involved in industry, media and politics to join in the discussion on a constructive level and thus promote solutions that cover the needs of everybody involved. Let us try to find solutions. Let us try to join forces in the persecution of progress through innovation in a web-based society. A society that can flourish in the future in a wide scale!

During this 50th IFA we will offer some solution statements. Furthermore we will discuss the pending challenges in a broad variety of fora with top-class participants. For instance our international congress „medienwoche@IFA“ is headed by the slogan: Underway in digital media society. The emphasis is set on industrial and economic aspects. And hence the question: How do business plans of the future internet influence the future of radio broadcasting?

I am pretty certain that this IFA will offer impulses to the posed questions. We are looking forward at six days of chances for discussing the most challenging future questions during the largest global branch of trade meeting. I am looking forward to it.

I do hope that all exhibitors and retailers will have a successful business fair here in Berlin. And all the visitors should have lots of fun, entertainment and new impression here at the fair.

Thank you very much for your kind attention.