

**- check against delivery -**

**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, 1, 2011 in Berlin**

Dear Minister Rösler,  
Mayor Wowereit,  
my dear ladies and gentlemen.

Permit me to welcome you to the opening gala of this – the 51st IFA – which is the largest ever. This fair exercises a magnetic effect upon exhibitors, trade and media, as well as the wider public and I would like to express my thanks to Messe Berlin, that repeatedly shows great commitment and creativity every year, performing a noteworthy organisational achievement to make the impossible possible.

The growth of the IFA also reflects the positive mood prevailing in our sectors internationally. The first half of the year was still somewhat restrained, but nevertheless we are aiming at a global growth rate of some six percent for consumer electronics and home appliances. We are equally optimistic for the first half of 2012, where we can look to the European Football Championship, to name but one event.

With the IFA, we are starting the second half of the fiscal year which is so important because of the Christmas business and every year, the IFA is a central source of inspiration for our markets. It's here that the future course of the sector is mapped and billions in turnover are generated.

Consumer electronics and home appliances together represent one of the most important consumer sectors in the world, which means that the IFA – as the largest fair of its kind in the world – is a decisive economic factor for our markets on a worldwide basis.

For this reason, the IFA has also become the most important presentational venue for innovation in our sectors and even major international groups agree upon the presentation of their innovations to tie in with the IFA date.

The vital power of innovation is the driving force of our sectors and technical novelties are sold ever more quickly, in the form of attractive products with high customer benefits. I would just like to mention a few trends that are also characterising the IFA 2011. These include for instance:

- The increasing fusion of TV and Internet, media and devices and resultant networking both on the go and at home.
- In the case of tablet PCs, smart phones and apps, we are experiencing an impressive boom at the moment. The new mobile devices can be seamlessly integrated into our networked living environments: thus extremely complex and demanding functions can now be operated intuitively and simply.
- But the responsible handling of resources is also a vital theme in our sectors.

Current sector trends reflect social development in that we are taking large steps along the path to being an e-society: a networked world. Internet and digital mobile communication have become the central technologies of the 21st century.

After the PC and mobile telephones, more and more devices from other sectors are being linked with the Internet. This too can be seen at the IFA: televisions, home cinema, sound systems and more are becoming more intelligent because of Internet connection.

The Internet will conquer more and more areas of our lives, so that 'Internet services' will become 'Internet entities', so to speak. This refers to the communication between devices and machines via the Internet.

Here we can also see the next major jump in development at this IFA. Intelligent, Internet-capable and networked household appliances which can be controlled by WLAN or mobile telephony, which offer more security and user convenience, which adapt to their current task, or automatically select the most favourable power tariff.

This will lead not just to important additional inspiration for the industry and the trade, but also to more resource conservation for a sustainable world.

Ladies and gentlemen, this decade will be fully characterised by the e-society, which means that the IFA will more and more become a venue where people can be fascinated by experiencing the new facilities that are available to people in a digital networked society, so I cordially invite you to let yourself be fascinated by the IFA 2011.

Get in touch!

I wish our exhibitors and members of the trade every success with their business and that is absolutely not just in our own interest. Private consumption development was negative in recent times and was braked by the negative recessionary trend in the Eurozone during the first half of the year. Fear of recession is however poison for the climate of consumption and we have to reverse this development so that private consumption once more provides positive impulses to the national and global economies.

With its attractive products and prices, our industry makes an important contribution towards a more consumer-friendly society and I am therefore sure that powerful signals will emanate from the IFA as the world's largest consumer fair.

Politicians also have their role to play in improving the general conditions of the consumer climate. Here, clear signs must be provided for greater consumer confidence – in the direction of greater transparency, a straight line ahead and convincing perspectives. I am confident that these issues are being addressed as a matter of urgency within your Ministry, Dr. Rösler.

This can only be in the interests of all – and it is certain that we would all be happy if economic activity, expected growth and development on the world stock markets were again to become stable.

Many thanks for your attention.