

**Speech given  
by the Lord Mayor of Düsseldorf  
at the presentation of the  
Tour de France 2017  
on 18 October 2016 in Paris**

**GRAND  
DÉPART  
:DÜSSELDORF  
2017**

- Check against delivery -

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a great honour for me to present Düsseldorf to you today as the host city of the Grand Départ of the Tour de France. The start of the largest bicycle race in the world has come back to Germany 30 years since the Tour started in divided Berlin in 1987.

And the Tour de France organisers couldn't have found a better place than Düsseldorf.

Düsseldorf is a sporty city. You will not find as many people doing sports in almost any other German city. And in 2017, the sporting world will look to Düsseldorf because as well as the Grand Départ, the triathlon European championships and the table tennis world championships are being held in Düsseldorf!

Düsseldorf is a bike friendly city. More and more people are switching to bicycles as their preferred mode of transport for daily life. As a city, we are doing everything to provide an attractive infrastructure. And the Tour de France participants will also get a sense of how beautiful cycling is in Düsseldorf when they do their time trials along the bank of the Rhine and at the start of the second stage.

Düsseldorf is a welcoming city. Düsseldorf airport is the gateway to the world of the most populous German federal state, North Rhine-Westphalia.

Our trade fair welcomes several million visitors per year. And millions of visitors come every year to the large traditional events in Düsseldorf like the carnival parade on Rosenmontag, Japan day or Frankreichfest.

Düsseldorf is a successful commercial city. We have everything here: from traditional pipe mills to innovative start-ups. Düsseldorf is Germany's number one fashion location. And our Königsallee is the most beautiful – and an especially exclusive – shopping street in Germany.

Düsseldorf is a city of art and culture. Robert Schumann and Felix Mendelssohn Bartholdy operated here, and today the Toten Hosen are making a name for themselves. The famous Düsseldorf art academy stands for the Düsseldorf school of painters from the 19th century as well as for Zero, Beuys and Becher. Welcome to the museums and cultural institutions of our city!

Düsseldorf is a city of Francophiles. Düsseldorf's most famous son, the world renowned poet Heinrich Heine spent most of his life in Paris; Napoleon was welcomed warmly in Düsseldorf. And more than 3000 French citizens as well as 257 French businesses add to Düsseldorf's unmistakable sense of life and savoir-vivre to which the city owes its nickname "little Paris".

Düsseldorf is looking forward to the Grand Départ. On 28. Juni 2017, the

media centre here in Düsseldorf will already open. Following this, from 29. June to 2. July, our city will be completely dominated by cycling for four days.

Even today we can sense the excitement. The first "bike race for everyone" in Düsseldorf a month ago had almost 4000 participants who were able to test out the route of the second stage. The cityscape is changing: soon a Café Velo will grace our historical market place and the Rheinbahn busses and trams will make the Grand Départ Logo visible all across the city. When the count-down "100 days until the Tour" starts on 23rd March next year, the whole city will be decked out for the Tour.

I am particularly glad that so many artists are taking part in the Grand Départ Düsseldorf 2017. Leading the way is the world renowned Düsseldorf photo artist, Andreas Gursky, who has made a photo about the Tour de France available to us and will take part in a photography exhibition in honour of the start of the Tour. And the pioneers of electronic music, the legendary Düsseldorf band "Kraftwerk" will also be making an appearance at the Grand Départ.

I would like to take this opportunity to say a big thank you to all the partners and supporters from the spheres of business, culture and the community.

Look forward to the Grand Départ of Tour de France 2017!

Look forward to Düsseldorf.

The following video will give you a little taste of what's to come.

Bonjour le tour. Bienvenue à Düsseldorf.