



Landeshauptstadt  
Düsseldorf

**Oberbürgermeister Dr. Stephan Keller**

**Rede anlässlich des Empfangs der G7-Digitalminister anlässlich der G7-Digitalminister-Konferenz / G7 Digital Ministerial Meeting**

gehalten am 10. Mai 2022 um 18 Uhr im Rathaus, Jan-Wellem-Saal

**- Es gilt das gesprochene Wort! -**

[ Begrüßung / Einleitung ]

Your Excellencies!

Dear Minister Wissing!

Dear Minister Pinkwart!

Dear Guests!

I am very pleased that the Meeting of the G7 Digital Affairs Ministers is being held in Düsseldorf.

It is a great honor to welcome you to Düsseldorf on this special occasion - and I am particularly happy to have you here at the Jan-Wellem Saal of City Hall – a place where we greet our city's most esteemed guests.

I would like to extend my gratitude to the German Federal Government for again selecting Düsseldorf as the venue for this conference. The first meeting of the G20 Digital Affairs Ministers was also held here in 2017.

Düsseldorf enjoys a stellar reputation as a thriving international business location, and I am excited that it is once again the place where a roadmap to the future of digitalization in the most important industrial nations is discussed.

It is a common occurrence at City Hall to receive high-ranking guests. And with it comes the beloved tradition of toasting with a glass of Altbier.

It is an essential part of our Rheinisch way of life, which is characterized by hospitality, tolerance and a cosmopolitan outlook.

Düsseldorf brings together people from all walks of life and all corners of the earth. The city is home to people from 184 nations.

The vibrant communities of your home countries also contribute to Düsseldorf's 'international flair'. You could say that Düsseldorf represents the G7 states 'in a nutshell' and we are proud to maintain good connections to your countries through sister city partnerships, cultural festivals or visits of dignitaries. For example, just a few days ago we received the U.S. Ambassador to Germany in this very hall.

In June we are going to celebrate 75 years of friendship with our longest standing sister city partnership in Reading, England which will be accompanied by a whole weekend of festivities.

Of course, we share a strong bond with our French neighbors and we celebrate this every year with our "Frankreichfest", our 'French Festival'.

We are also particularly proud of our nickname "Little Tokyo on the Rhine". With one of the largest Japanese communities on the European continent, along with a corresponding infrastructure, we have earned that title over the last 70 years.

Your fellow compatriots as well as people from around 180 other nations are attracted by the high quality of life found in Düsseldorf, which is confirmed again and again by expat surveys and corresponding rankings. They appreciate the various cultural activities, the parks and forests, the proximity to the Rhine River as well as the excellent infrastructure and good public transport, and further aspects such as safety and cleanliness.

But above all, they appreciate Düsseldorf's innovative strength and the city's importance as a location for business. They themselves contribute to this and to the prosperity of the region: as specialists and executive managers in around 5000 international companies.

Many of those companies are the European or German headquarters of international corporations. Düsseldorf is without a doubt one of Germany's most international business locations.

This is also reflected in foreign direct investment. Düsseldorf has a strong appeal in this regard: around 40% of all FDI going to North Rhine-Westphalia flows into our city.

For several years now, Düsseldorf has also been a leading location for mobile communication. Network operators, IT equipment suppliers as well software companies are located here and form an impressive 'mobile ecosystem'.

Based on this, Düsseldorf has developed in a unique way as a digital location. Important technology and innovation drivers of digitalization operate in Düsseldorf. The city, in contrast to almost any other German or European city, also has a large pool of companies and professionals who are leaders in digital transformation.

In Düsseldorf, the digital transformation is also strongly intertwined with the green transformation. Digitalization is a cross-sectional technology to achieve the goals of the European Green Deal. As a municipality, we feel very committed to these goals.

In total, more than 1,700 ICT companies with over 30,000 employees are based here, such as global network operators, network equipment suppliers and the manufacturers of mobile devices. All steps of the value chain are found here.

Therefore, Düsseldorf's unique selling point as a hotspot for digitalization is an unrivaled combination of two factors:

- Düsseldorf is home to the drivers in the mobile and digital economy.
- There is a large potential B2B user base as we find ourselves in one of the most important and densely populated economic areas in Europe.

The research work of large companies contributes just as much to the innovation culture of the city as the lively and creative start-up scene.

We should also not forget the range of talents that can be found here locally. Düsseldorf is the center of one of the densest science regions in Europe. 64 universities with 10 excellence clusters and more than 340,000 students make the region the think tank of Europe.

As a little side note - some of the projects that make Düsseldorf stand out as a digital location are displayed in a small exhibition right behind you. Please feel free to have a look.

As you spend some more time here, I hope you will get a first impression of the diversity of the digital location, and of the qualities that make Düsseldorf such a livable city. I am sure you will come to find that 'Altbier' and 'Artificial Intelligence' are not mutually exclusive and that you leave our city with the sense that 'Düsseldorf and digitalization' belong together.

Let me assure you that we will strive to continue our pioneering role in the future.

Again, I would like to extend a warm welcome to you and a heartfelt 'Thank you' that you dedicate yourself to this important cause.

I would now like to invite Minister Pinkwart and Minister Wissing to address a few words to you.