

Ladies and Gentlemen,

First, I would like to thank Claus Müller for giving me the opportunity to say a few words and of course I would also like to welcome Mrs and her husband.

“A person is forgotten, when his or her name has been forgotten” („Ein Mensch ist erst vergessen, wenn sein Name vergessen ist“.)

With these words a German artist Gunter Demnig started in 1995 the project Stolpersteine. The project of the Cologne artist has the intention to remind of individuals who were victims of the National Socialist regime.

The project Stolpersteine does not intend people to stumble on them in the literal sense. Stolpersteine are more than mere memorials of the atrocities of the Nazi Regime.

What makes us stumble on a Stolperstein are not the words written on it, because the inscription cannot conjure a person.

The message of Stolpersteine is to remind us of the fate of individuals who lost their lives during the Holocaust. Stolpersteine give back the victims their names and prevent them from falling into oblivion.

The project finds steadily growing resonance not only in Germany, but also in other European countries, for example, in Netherlands, Italy, Norway, Austria, Poland, Czech Republic, Ukraine and Hungary and here in Belgium.

There is also a wide spread support for the project in Hamburg. Not only historians and municipal authorities are involved in the project “Stolpersteine”. Many young people in our city are concerned with the fate of the victims. Various student groups and schools also contribute to the success of the project. Some schools started exploring the life of Jewish people during the Holocaust in their districts. Their findings at times initiated the installation of further Stolpersteine in Hamburg. And vice versa: Stolpersteine also inspired students to learn more about the people who formerly lived in their neighborhood. This resulted in great initiatives of which a few outstanding projects received awards such as the Bertini Preis. I am proud to be a member

of Bertini association that rewards the enthusiasm and commitment of young people. Young people should be encouraged to feel the responsibility and moral courage to stand up against violations of human dignity and social exclusion.

Gunter Demnig himself, received numerous awards for his commitment, for example:

Max-Brauer-Preis der Alfred Toepfer Stiftung FVS, Hamburg 2004

2004 Herbert-Wehner-Medaille der Gewerkschaft ver.di 2005

2006 German Jewish History Award Berlin 2006

And will receive the 2012 Marion Dönhoff Award for International Understanding and Reconciliation in on the 2nd of December in Hamburg.

Thanks to the Stolpersteine a reflection on the past is encouraged. Oblivion is prevented and this is why the project is a success story.

Today, it is an honour for me to introduce a very special guest - Mr. Jens Peter Burmester. The Nazi regime has caused much suffering on his family, which is today witnessed by a Stolperstein. The Father of Mr. Burmester - Carl Burmester - was an active Hamburg resistance fighter against National Socialism. He was tortured and killed by Gestapo in Hamburg. After the war, numerous famous Hamburg Social democrats emerged from Mr. Burmester's circle of Friends. The widow of Carl Burmester married later the social democrat Herbert Wehner.

In memory of Carl Burmester, the City of Hamburg installed in 2009, a Stolperstein in front of the former Gestapo building. Mr. Burmester, I am delighted to welcome you to this great evening.

I wish you and all guests here an interesting evening and good conversations.

Thank you!