

Spectabilis,  
ladies and gentlemen,  
dear students,

it is a pleasure to attend today this special event at the “Mathematische Fakultät” and to represent the Rektorat. Personally I am closely related to your faculty through the Graduate College *Nonlinear Differential Equations: Modelling, Theory, Numerics, Visualisation*. It is through this link that I am aware of the research activities in the departments in Mathematics and in particular in Mathematical Stochastics, the area where our laureate is working.

This ceremony where the doctor honoris causa degree will be given to a Russian scientist of high international reputation gives me the opportunity to recall that the free exchange of ideas is and has always been one of the fundamental principles of academic research and academic teaching. This principle applies in particular to the exchange with Universities and Learned Societies in **foreign** countries.

I am proud to say that Freiburg and its university are considered to be among the most attractive ones the visitors from foreign countries choose. We are one of the top ten in Germany if one considers the number of scientists who are invited through the Humboldt Foundation. Here I consider both, the Postdoc Research Fellowships and the highly prestigious Humboldt Awards. The laureate, Prof. Albert Shiryaev was one of the award winners, who due to this support recently spent twelve months at the Institute for Mathematical Stochastics.

The International Office registers every year between 200 and 300 foreign visitors, which we host in our Alma Mater. These visitors are invited through a number of different programs. Statistically the distribution of

guests is concentrated in the Natural Sciences and the Medical School. The international scientific community is traditionally very mobile in these areas. We thank the various organizations to provide the means for this important part of our activity, in particular I have to thank here the Humboldt Foundation and the German Science Foundation DFG. In recent years support by the offices of the European Union plays an increasing role.

In this context let me also mention that the number of foreign students in Freiburg has reached a record height this academic year. More than 3 000, which represents 16 % of our students, have a foreign passport

The Rektorat encourages the faculty members to strengthen further their links to Colleagues abroad. The exchange of ideas on a high scientific level is the most efficient way to progress in research. We make strong efforts to develop international relations. *Universitas 21* is such a prestigious project: a network of top universities in the United States, Europe, Asia, and Australia. Freiburg is at present the only academic institution in Central Europe which has been invited to join this club.

My best wishes for a successful Colloquium.