

## Transcript | Speech by Helmut K. Anheier

Inauguration of President Henrik Enderlein | 6 September 2018

Hertie School of Governance

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In the Talmud and in Jewish mysticism, the kabbalah, it is said that at all times there are 36 special people in the world, and that were it not for them, the world would come to an end. They are called the Lamed Vav Tzadikim, or the 36 righteous ones. They, of course, do not know that they are one of them. I mention this because I often had the feeling that Lisa must be one of the 36 righteous ones. If not her, who?

Today we celebrate the opening of our 15<sup>th</sup> academic year. I had the privilege to spend nearly a decade as Dean and then President of the School. After all this time, when all that had to be said and done has been said and done, it remains for me to say thank you. You will forgive me if I don't mention people individually. There would be too many to thank individually. So allow me to be somewhat categorical and express my sincere thanks to

- The Hertie Foundation for supporting the School over all these years, and for putting their trust in us
- The colleagues in the President's Office who ran an impeccable and efficient ship – and who in many ways have become more friends than staff over the years
- The four managing directors I had the pleasure of working with closely and productively
- The faculty for their commitment to the School, and most emphatically to
- The staff – and the many unsung heroes in the administration that make the School function, who work long hours, all well beyond the call of duty.

And above all: I wish to thank the students: alumni, current and incoming students. You are a very special people, you combine intellectual curiosity and commitment to the public good; you are eager to learn but also eager to move forward trying to make the world a better place. So, thank you Hertie students. You are the reason the School exists, and you make it all worthwhile.

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However, allow me to address briefly one aspect that has always puzzled me about public policy schools. As social scientists and policy analysts, we get ever better at collecting and analyzing data, developing models, proposing solutions, evaluating programs, charting trends. Yet we often, perhaps too often, seem to miss out when it comes to fundamental changes, to crises of many kinds, to upheavals that change the course of history. What good are we in the end, and as Queen Elizabeth once asked a group of social scientists in London after the global financial crisis: why did no one see it coming?

The social sciences are about 120 years old, and School of Public Policy perhaps 60-70. How good are we then at understanding how the present shapes the future? In a way, all we do is about the future: policy briefs are about things to happen; we are not historians; and we are

forward looking people. Understand today, shape tomorrow. However, here we have a problem.

Let's go back 70 years to September 1948, when Europe lay in ruins and its people defenseless, poor and hungry. Who would have predicted that some 10 years later, an economic miracle would have taken place, and poverty given way to affluence?

And those who felt well-fed and materially content in 1958 had probably little sense that "1968" was in the offing, challenging the normative order, triggering many changes that we are still grappling with...

And the 68ers certainly did not anticipate the oil crisis of 1973...

And few people in the 1970s thought that the Berlin Wall would begin to crumble just ten years later,

And when we celebrated the end of the Cold War, few imagined that the next decade would be Europe's bloodiest since WWII, with the Balkan Wars and the Caucasus conflicts,

And few in 1998 saw the Global Financial crisis of 2008 coming...

And not many in the 2000s anticipated that by 2018 social media would be increasingly seen as a threat to democracy.

So, what do we learn from this? Why do we keep missing significant events, the historical turns? Why do we keep getting surprised?

One answer is that we need to get better data, improve our analyses, and to think more outside the box. That is the easy one.

Matters become more complex when we consider that in most of the cases just mentioned, there were indeed voices warning us, pointing to certain dangers as well as to positive developments. But they were not heard, and had no audience ready to listen to them. So, we must conclude that in addition to getting ever better with our data, models and theories, we must also get better at making sure we communicate, debate and engage in greater numbers than in the past and such that we will not be overlooked and pushed aside.

Yet it becomes not only complex but also truly wicked when we ask: what if? Would people in the 1980s have acted differently knowing that in all likelihood the Berlin Wall will come down? Would we have changed our behaviors in the 1960s knowing that an energy crisis looms come 1973? Or how about today: we know that climate change is happening and that serious implications are just around the corner - yet what do we do?

So, knowing that something is likely to happen, brings with it challenges, as does not knowing what the future likely holds. Perhaps it is better not to know, to bask, as sociologists would have it, under the protective shield of ignorance, and be happy-go-lucky.

However, this goes against our grain, and is the opposite of our calling. Therefore, I think that public policy schools, and we as a profession, must develop greater awareness of what could be called the challenge of future proofing or informed governance readiness. For this, we must develop not only the tools and analytic capacities but perhaps even more so, we need to nurture the necessary sensibilities involved and the stewardship required – among the student body and faculty.

If we do so, and perhaps at some point, and against all odds in these uncertain times, we will have a situation where, in the words of poet laureate Seamus Heaney, we can see, and I quote:

*hope and history rhyme.*

*Let hope and history rhyme.*

...

Which brings me, of course, to Henrik Enderlein.

As you may not know, a few months ago, Henrik as the incoming president graciously organized a roast and toast in my honour as the outgoing president. In his speech, he listed three allegedly outstanding things about me, which I won't repeat here, but only to say that I now feel compelled to say 3 outstanding things about him. However, his list of three made my task today considerably easier, for I had started to compile a 'best of Henrik' list already last May and soon arrived at 36 (you remember that number, Lisa).

So, here are three outstanding features of our new President

1. Henrik *is* Hertie. The H in his first name actually stands for Hertie and his real name is Hertie Enderlein.

He was at the School from the beginning. He was actually part of my transition team in the winter of 2008-9 when I prepared for the School's leadership. He was instrumental in all the major developments and achievements at the School over all these years. So, Hertie Enderlein is a natural for president. It's like Xerox and copy machines or Google and search engines.

2. Henrik is a rare species – not endangered, but rare. He embodies the extraordinary combination of a top academic who is a devoted teacher and who understands and loves politics.

How many academics have the ear of a Habermas and the attention of a Macron? How many economists would even bother to develop - let alone teach - a course for and to non-economists? And how many academics are as comfortable in the seminar room as they are in the Chancellery, the Finance Ministry or the ECB offices?

3. Henrik has momentous oomph. Henrik has vision and is a gifted entrepreneur

He has the courage and energy to take on tasks most would shy away from. The Jacques Delors Institute is the best example. Realising that Berlin needed a think tank on and for Europe, he

set about creating an institution that in just a few years has become a leading address for policy debates, ranked among the top in the world. And just imagine what he can do here at the Hertie School!

You will recall that Barack Obama wrote a book with the title, *The Audacity of Hope*.

When I think of Henrik, and referring back to Seamus Heaney, we have here a colleague and a friend with the audacity to make sure that under his presidency hope and history will rhyme at the Hertie School.

So, allow me to ask Henrik to come on stage to share with us his vision for the School.

Thank you very much.