



Berlin, 5 July 2017

**Press release**

## **Panda Garden grand opening!**

### **Chancellor Merkel and President Xi visit Berlin's new bears**

A convoy of black cars proceeds along the avenue from Zoo Berlin's Elephant Gate to the new Chinese Pavilion. The roadway has been decorated with red lanterns for this very special occasion – the official opening of Zoo Berlin's Panda Garden. The zoo, the city, and the whole nation have been looking forward to Wednesday, 5 July for weeks. Now the day has finally arrived for German Chancellor Angela Merkel and her state guest Chinese President Xi Jinping to personally welcome panda pair Meng Meng and Jiao Qing to their new home.

At a press conference in Beijing back in 2015, Chancellor Merkel described pandas as “a very special part of China” and said that many people in Germany would be delighted to welcome them. And she was certainly right about that! In recent months, Germany's excitement about the new arrivals has reached fever pitch. President Xi has stressed the two pandas' important role in cementing Chinese-German friendship: “The joint Chinese-German efforts to protect giant pandas are extremely important. I very much hope that Meng Meng and Jiao Qing will function as ambassadors, promoting friendly relations between our two countries.”

Numerous guests of honour attended the Panda Garden's grand opening, which featured several short speeches and a cultural programme. From 6 July, visitors to Zoo Berlin will be able to admire Meng Meng and Jiao Qing in their 5,000 m<sup>2</sup> habitat, complete with climbing apparatus, a swing, and a rocky water course.

“We are delighted that Berlin has gained another fantastic attraction,” said Berlin's Mayor Michael Müller. “Pandas are simply a great fit for Berlin.” Zoo Berlin's Supervisory Board Chairman Frank Bruckmann added: “We are proud that we are able to welcome Germany's only pandas to their new habitat in Berlin after a construction period of just eight months.”

Zoo Director Dr Andreas Knieriem is delighted about this international cooperation on species conservation: “For me, the giant panda is a symbol of successful species conservation efforts. If the political will is there, animal species can be protected from extinction. I am pleased that we are able to make an important contribution by taking in these two bears.”



The arrival of Meng Meng and Jiao Qing has brought a dash of Chinese flair to the German capital. In order to celebrate that, Zoo Berlin has been working with the China Cultural Centre to organise a traditional festival featuring Qingcheng martial arts displays, the soft music of bamboo flutes, the glorious scents of a Chinese tea ceremony, and much more.

At the festival, Zoo visitors can sample delicious Asian specialities, enjoy traditional Chinese folk music, and admire traditional handicrafts such as mystical masks, thousand-year-old brocades, silk embroidery and paper-cuttings, as well as baskets, fans and sleeping mats woven from the pandas' favourite food – bamboo.

The Chinese festival takes place around Zoo Berlin's Panda Garden from Thursday, 6 July to Sunday, 9 July 2017, with a programme of events from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Hourly musical performances and art demonstrations will take place from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Admission to the Panda Garden and the Chinese festival is free. Visitors simply pay the regular Zoo Berlin ticket price at the entrance.

### **Panda Garden facts & figures**

- The Panda Garden has a total surface area of 5,480 m<sup>2</sup>.
- Each indoor area is 80 m<sup>2</sup>, while the outdoor areas are around 1,000 m<sup>2</sup>.
- The Panda Garden has 815 bamboo plants, 45 trees, and 90 different bushes.
- The site features 20 tonnes of natural stone.
- The Panda Plaza façade is decorated with 160 m<sup>2</sup> of artificial rock.
- Windows totalling 180 m<sup>2</sup> allow visitors to see into the pandas' home.
- The concrete roof is supported by 46 bamboo-style pillars.
- Around 180 metres of fencing surround the panda habitat – 50 metres of that is made from imitation bamboo.
- The Chinese Pavilion is 16.5 metres high and has an indoor surface area of around 89 m<sup>2</sup>.
- The panes of glass that form part of the indoor habitats are 3.5 metres tall and 3.3 cm thick.
- The male Jiao Qing was born on 15 July 2010 in Chengdu and weighs 110 kg.
- The female panda Meng Meng was born 10 July 2013 in Chengdu and weighs 83 kg.