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## Press release

### 100 days of our panda twins

#### Official naming ceremony for Zoo Berlin's panda boys

One cub raises its head slightly, while the other merely blinks sleepily: the panda twins appear only mildly impressed by their naming ceremony and first little outing at Zoo Berlin this morning, when, in accordance with Chinese tradition, the 100th day of their lives is celebrated with an official naming ceremony.

Together with Mayor of Berlin Michael Müller and Chinese Ambassador Wu Ken, Zoo and Tierpark Director Dr Andreas Knieriem and Supervisory Board Chairman Frank Bruckmann revealed Zoo Berlin's best-kept secret: the panda twins are both male and have officially been given the names **Meng Xiang** and **Meng Yuan**. The two names complement one another well in Chinese and roughly translate as "desired dream" (Meng Xiang) and "fulfilled dream" (Meng Yuan). "We've waited a long time for this joyful occasion," said Zoo and Tierpark Director Dr Andreas Knieriem. "Our two panda boys keep making us smile – despite the gloomy December weather." The twins will spend the next two to four years in Berlin, after which time they will move to China. "As in Germany, too, the giving of names is very important in Chinese tradition, because names carry blessings and hope," explained Ambassador Wu Ken. "By naming these young pandas Meng Xiang and Meng Yuan, which mean 'dreams coming true' in Chinese, we want to convey our best wishes for the friendship between our two countries and our people." After spending about ten minutes on display in their pre-warmed panda bed, the cubs were taken back to the comfort of their mother Meng Meng, who was waiting behind the scenes, calmly munching on bamboo. Mayor Michael Müller said: "All animal and zoo fans in Berlin have been following the development of our two Berlin pandas with great excitement. They are a wonderful gift for our city and, in the year of its 175th jubilee celebrations, for Zoo Berlin in particular. I am delighted that I was able to take part in this next step in the lives of our two new Berliners, and to meet them personally on the 100th day after their birth when, in accordance with Chinese tradition, their official names are bestowed. Just like the rest of Berlin, I have enjoyed the exciting wait to find out their names." At three and a half months, the twins weigh around six kilograms each and are already making their first attempts at walking. Once the cubs are mobile enough to



follow their mother – probably early in the new year – the panda family will be on view to zoo visitors.

**Background:**

Since 2017, Zoo Berlin has been home to Germany's only giant pandas. On 31 August 2019, female panda Meng Meng (6) gave birth to two cubs weighing 186 and 136 grams. Father Jiao Qing (9) is not involved in the rearing of the cubs – as is normal for giant pandas. Most recent estimates suggest that there are only 1,864 adult giant pandas living in their natural habitat worldwide. Giant pandas are therefore classified as "Vulnerable" on the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species. Zoo Berlin pays an annual loan fee to keep these rare animals, and 100 percent of that sum is channelled into conservation work such as the breeding, protection and reintroduction into the wild of the bamboo-eating bears. Panda pair Meng Meng and Jiao Qing are sponsored by cooperative banking association Berliner Volksbank.