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Inauguration ceremony
of the University Clinic
for Psychosomatics and Psychotherapy

Riga, 7th October 2011

I am very pleased to be invited to participate in this really historic event.

It is not only the inauguration of the clinic, which is important enough, but the installation of a new and modern structure of university care and research. Similar and comparable structures have been achieved in only few countries. That is to say that medical psychotherapy is not the same as psychiatry. Both disciplines are very important for the medical faculty and for care, but they are effective, if they complement, not substitute one another. The traditional error of psychiatry was and is in most countries and universities, to feel competent for psychosomatics and psychotherapy. But under these circumstances psychosomatics and psychotherapy rarely or never succeed. From this point of view the psychiatric chair in Riga seems to be wise.

It is Gunta Ancānes inestimable merit to have understood this mission from the beginning and to have drawn the consequences, which allow us to celebrate the success today.

It was a historic chance after the liberation from 50 years of foreign rule, to initiate new models in medicine. But this chance had to be seized. As far as I can see, nobody in my field grasped it so consistently as Gunta Ancāne and her colleagues did.

I became acquainted with Gunta Ancāne in 1992. She was a serious and ambitious young woman, and I was sure, that she would be on the right track. In the following years I admired her pertinacity in the course of developing medical psychotherapy in Latvia. The faculty should be indebted to her.

Psychotherapy is one of the most effective and successful medical procedures. And medical psychotherapy is because of its psychosomatic competence a winning for the other disciplines like surgery, internal medicine, gynecology, neurology et cetera. Furthermore it is a chance for interdisciplinary research.

Finally, the Clinic of Psychosomatics and Psychotherapy will be or become a center of education for psychotherapists in Latvia.

For this all we should praise Gunta Ancāne and her colleagues, and for the future I wish you, in the pursuit of your success, support and subsidy from your faculty. Good luck for all parties concerned!

Prof. Dr. med. Hubert Speidel, Kiel, Germany