

Museum Folkwang

Statement by Dr. Bernhard Reutersberg, CEO of E.ON Ruhrgas AG, at the press conference on 18 March 2010 at 11 a.m.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

On behalf of E.ON Ruhrgas, I would like to warmly welcome you to this press conference. You have already heard a lot of important things to know about the current exhibition from eminently learned people. Therefore, I would like to concentrate on what our role in this project is and what is dear to our hearts as a company: making a diverse culture in our region possible.

Culture needs stimulus to produce something new. And it needs allies who nurture it. The history of Museum Folkwang is exemplary in this respect. It owes its very foundation in Hagen in 1902 to a private initiative, namely that of Karl Ernst Osthaus. When the collection was merged with the Essen Art Museum and became Museum Folkwang in 1922, this was again an initiative of private persons and companies. And finally the present new building was also made possible by the Alfred Krupp von Bohlen und Halbach-Foundation. E.ON Ruhrgas supplements this series of benefactors as a long-standing partner of Museum Folkwang.

Capital of Culture Year, new building – there could not have been a better time to honour the history and work of the museum with a major special exhibition. We are especially delighted to sponsor particularly this project. For it is not only the first major special exhibition in the new building, it also shows the direction for the future development of the museum.

A further fortunate coincidence is the fact that this exhibition marks 25 years of cooperation between E.ON Ruhrgas and Museum Folkwang. In 1985 we began preparations for the first project we sponsored. It was an Edvard Munch exhibition, which was shown two years later on the tenth anniversary of the start of Norwegian gas deliveries to Germany. Since then we have put a series of major international painting exhibitions together. Initially they were held to mark anniversaries with our most important gas supply countries, and very soon they became independent projects. They have strengthened the relations with Russia, Norway and the Netherlands, enriched cultural life in the Ruhr area and helped to make the reputation of Museum Folkwang. We are proud today to be able to call ourselves a "partner of Museum Folkwang".

For us as a company there are good reasons for cultural involvement. Culture is a business-location and economic factor. Culture creates social life, it determines the character of a metropolis, forges bonds between people. This in turn gives rise to economic activity. The interplay between culture and industry has developed a special momentum, particularly in the Ruhr area. Consequently, RUHR.2010

chose the motto: "Change through Culture, Culture through Change" – words used by Karl Ernst Osthaus.

We at E.ON also build on this principle with wide-ranging social involvement. Apart from the 25 years of cooperation with Museum Folkwang, we have been supporting other art, cultural and scientific projects for many years. We do this with the same consistency and dependability with which we run our gas business. Therefore, we were also the first company in the region to decide to become a major sponsor of the Culture of Capital Year. Let me take this opportunity to express my great admiration to those responsible for RUHR.2010 for the diverse programme they have put together for the Capital of Culture Year – not always under easy conditions. We are making our contribution with two major exhibitions: In addition to this one, we are also sponsoring a major exhibition on Paris between 1865 and 1900 at Museum Folkwang in the autumn. Under the title *"Images of a Capital – The Impressionists in Paris"*, it picks up the idea of the "Ruhr metropolis". Overall, we hope that the Capital of Culture Year will have a lasting effect for our home region and its people.

"The Most Beautiful Museum in the World" – Museum Folkwang until 1933 marks a first highlight on the road. I would like to take this opportunity to thank all those who were involved in setting up this exhibition – in particular Dr Hartwig Fischer and his team as well as the generous lenders of the exhibits from all over the world. Finally, I would warmly recommend you as journalists: Encourage the people in your region to discover "your most beautiful museum in the world"! Thank you very much.