

Welcoming Speech
by the Governing Mayor of Berlin, Klaus Wowereit,
for the website of the EGPA Congress 2014

It is my pleasure to welcome all participants to the European Gay Police Association Congress in the German capital.

Through the Berlin Congress, the EGPA is sending out an important signal condemning homophobic discrimination and violence and endorsing legal equality and general social acceptance of different lifestyles. Above all it offers policemen and women from all over Europe and the USA a platform for networking and exchanging experiences. Such a meeting is an encouragement to all those who strive for a police force that does not sit back and watch homosexual, lesbian, bisexual and transgender people being attacked. It is a police force that provides information on risks and therefore pursues prevention and, above all, a police force that is an advocate of equal rights and that opposes discrimination based on sexual orientation.

In 2013, in all manner of ways, we in Berlin drew attention to the transfer of power to the Nazis and the destruction of diversity 80 years ago. This included the remembrance of homosexuals who were persecuted during the Nazi era.

Today, almost 25 years since the Berlin Wall came down, Berlin is connected with its reputation as a cosmopolitan and tolerant capital. But one must not forget: even here it took decades until homosexuals were no longer criminally prosecuted or excluded. And discrimination and hostility still exist. The road to complete equality is long and stony. What matters is support for those, no matter where they are, who fly the flag with self-confidence and stand up for a free and tolerant society as well as state institutions that protect freedom.

Bearing this in mind, I wish the EGPA Congress every success and an encouraging conference from which an unmistakable message in support of equality and acceptance of different lifestyles radiates. I wish all participants a pleasant stay in Berlin.

Klaus Wowereit
Governing Mayor of Berlin