



REPUBLIK ÖSTERREICH
Parlament

Mag.^a Barbara Prammer
Präsidentin des Nationalrates
President of the National Council

MESSAGE OF GREETING

Dear Minister,
dear representatives of ILGA-Europe,
dear guests of honour,
dear participants in the 12th ILGA-Europe Conference,
and, most specifically,
dear organisational team headed by Secretary General Kurt Krickler and
Chairman Christian Högl!

I would have liked very much to be present here today to inaugurate the 30th European Conference of the International Lesbian and Gay Association together with you.

As you may know, however, negotiations on the next federal government of Austria are currently underway. As a member of the negotiating team, I am engaged in a meeting at the moment of inauguration of your conference and thus unfortunately cannot be with you.

Yet it is very important to me to address your conference. It is of special pleasure to me that this 12th Conference of ILGA-Europe is taking place here in Vienna.

The struggle for the legal, economic and social equality of homosexual persons has been ongoing for many years. Respect for same-sex lifestyles is not yet a matter of universal consensus.

Various forms of discrimination are not only reflected in laws – lesbians and gays are still put at a disadvantage because of their sexual orientation, must cope with open hostility and, in the worst case, are subject to physical assaults. To

this day, part of the Austrian population maintains attitudes of intolerance and prejudice.

We must thank NGOs and their efforts to raise awareness for the fact that at least some parts of society have broken with old taboos and put the equal treatment of homosexual partnerships on the political agenda.

But many issues remain unresolved in Austria, above all with respect to equality before the law.

Ultimately, this concerns the goal of eliminating all forms of discrimination to finally close the gap between laws on the one hand and existing, firmly established social realities on the other hand.

Throughout my entire political career, I have been a champion of equal treatment: thus one of the first conferences I attended in my capacity as Second President of the Provincial Diet of Upper Austria 17 years ago was a congress on homosexuality in Linz.

I am particularly interested in maintaining close contacts with the NGOs and citizens that contribute so much to defending the rights of lesbians and gays day after day, promote networking and raise awareness of the issue in general.

For this reason, I am very happy that HOSI has been successful in bringing the ILGA-Europe Conference to Vienna.

On the occasion of the ILGA World Conference, which will be held in Vienna during the coming week, an evening reception will take place at the Austrian Parliament. I am looking forward to meeting some of today's participants there!

I wish you all a productive and interesting conference as well as all the best and a lot of success in your important work.