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1,000 day countdown begins until Gay Games VIII

Preparations are on schedule

Sparda Bank West eG contributes €2 per day

Cologne – Just under three years from now, Cologne will play host to athletes and artists from all over the world. Some 12,000 participants from more than 70 countries are expected to attend the Gay Games VIII in Cologne in 2010. Preparations are well under way, and several crucial milestones have already been achieved.

“We’ve been busy preparing for the Gay Games in Cologne for more than three years now,” said managing director Annette Wachter. “We are on schedule, and I can promise you that the Games will be a fantastic week-long event.” The Games will feature four major cultural events as well as competition in 31 athletic disciplines. On Saturday, November 3, 2007, it will be exactly 1,000 days until the opening ceremony at the RheinEnergieStadion on July 31, 2010. “I am thrilled that our team has grown to include some 130 volunteers,” Wachter continued, “and we expect to hire our first full-time employee very soon.”

The Gay Games promote respect and understanding for all of its participants. The purpose of the Gay Games is to foster and augment the self-respect of lesbians and gay men throughout the world and to engender respect and understanding from the non-gay world. The participants prove that heterosexuals and homosexuals can play sports and enjoy cultural events together in an atmosphere of harmony and acceptance - free from prejudice and discrimination of all kinds.

Sparda Bank West eG of Cologne is supporting the organizational team in Cologne as it prepares for the Games. Each day, the co-operative bank donates 2 Euro. At the press conference announcing the sponsorship, Monika Dahmen, managing director of the Cologne office of Sparda Bank West eG said, “The Gay Games are tremendously important -

not only for gays and lesbians the world over, but also for Cologne. We’re looking forward to a very successful event. As a modern and flexible banking institution, we are pleased to lend a hand in the early stages of the preparation, and have pledged 2000 Euro in support of this important endeavor.”



Monika Dahmen (2nd from left), managing director of the Cologne office of Sparda Bank West eG, and Thorsten Schuld (right), assistant managing director, present the check to Annette Wachter (2nd from right), managing director of games cologne GmbH, and Ingo Schneider (left), spokesman for the Gay Games VIII / Picture: Jochen Faerber

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http://www.games-cologne.com/images/epi_3953_e_gross.jpg

When the pre-registration phase for the 2010 games recently began, more than 250 athletes, fans and cultural participants signed up within just a few days. “The Games are open to everyone who wants to participate – even those who aren’t very athletic,” said press spokesman Ingo Schneider. “The Gay Games are about inclusiveness and togetherness. There are no qualification criteria.” Early registration has its rewards: By registering now, participants ensure themselves a slot in their desired discipline, be it a sporting or a cultural event. Basic registration costs 100 Euro, plus an additional fee of 40 Euro to 100 Euro, depending on the desired event.

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games cologne gGmbH
host of the
Gay Games VIII Cologne 2010
Mittelstrasse 52-54
D-50672 Cologne

fon: +49 – 2 21 – 9 25 26 07
fax: +49 – 2 21 – 9 25 59 31

office@games-cologne.de
www.games-cologne.de

Your contact person:

Ingo Schneider
Head of Media, Spokesperson
Postbox 250 210
D-51324 Leverkusen

i.schneider@games-cologne.de

fon: +49 – 214 – 500 6 100
fax: +49 – 214 – 500 6 109
cell: +49 – 177 – 762 6 068

CEO:
Annette Wachter

Registergericht Köln
HRB 57485



31 different sports

The athletic disciplines range from soccer, handball, and volleyball to body-building, figure skating, golf, and even synchronized swimming. The Cologne Gay Games team has recruited experts to organize each individual competition. "We have set up a network of indispensable specialists," said Karl-Heinz Schmitz, sports director. "Most of the sports experts are from Cologne, but our team also includes specialists from Karlsruhe and Frankfurt." Of particular importance are the numerous contacts the team has established to the German Sports University of Cologne, as well as with various sports organizations and associations (e.G. StadtSportBund and Sportamt Cologne). "Our ultimate goal is to deliver a successful sporting event that appeals to everybody," Schmitz continued. Each of the athletic competitions will fulfill the requirements of the respective international association, which means that any world records achieved will be official.

4 cultural event

The four cultural events are an essential part of the Gay Games VIII in Cologne in 2010. They too aim to promote more tolerance and acceptance for all lifestyles. An art exhibition held simultaneously with the Games in Cologne will examine the history of homosexuality. International chorus and band festivals are also planned, with participants expected to total 2,000. The "International Rainbow Memorial Run" in commemoration of AIDS and breast cancer victims is an international event in which a rainbow flag is carried through the streets of numerous cities around the world.

The culture and event committee of the Cologne organizational team is also busy planning the biggest event of the Gay Games – the opening ceremony at the RheinEnergieStadion, Cologne, on July 31, 2010, with 12,000 athletes and 35,000 spectators. Several agencies have submitted bids to carry out the spectacular show, and a decision will be made soon.

International Rainbow Symphony Cologne

With 1,000 days to go before the Gay Games VIII begin in Cologne in 2010, a series of activities are focusing attention on the Games. One of them is the newly founded "Rainbow Symphony Cologne" that currently comprises around 40 musicians with the goal of celebrating the Games through music. "The orchestra will be one of the highlights of the opening ceremony," said cultural director Werner Schramm, "and there will be concerts both large and small in the lead-up to the Games." The first of them will take place in November 2007, with Wolfgang Roese conducting.

Newsletter

There is enormous interest in the 2010 Cologne Gay Games. Subscribers to the online newsletter come from all over the world. Published regularly by the organizational team, the newsletter provides information about the latest developments in the lead-up to the VIII Gay Games. The address list now includes nearly 3,000 recipients. It's easy to subscribe by visiting the website of the Gay Games VIII, www.games-cologne.com. There's also a contact form for submitting questions about the Gay Games.