

Karl Heinrich Ulrichs Award
of the
International Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Intersex Law Association
(ILGLaw)

Laudation for
Dr. Peter SCHIEDER
Honorary President of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe
by
Dr. Helmut Graupner
ILGLaw-Director for Europe

Ladies and Gentlemen!

President Dr. Peter Schieder is one of the most influential parliamentarians in Austria, and in Europe. When he became a young MP Austria still had, what you would call here, sodomy-laws: a criminal total ban on homosexual contacts. Mr. Schieder played an essential role in the debate on the repeal of this ban. He was member of the respective sub-committee of the Justice Committee of Austria's federal parliament. And he vehemently supported legalisation of same-sex relations. Quite successful in the end: homosexuality has been decriminalized in 1971.

In 2002 Mr. Schieder has been elected president of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe. An assembly which is the biggest parliament of the world, given the population it represents and given the geographical area it covers: over 800 millions people from Reykjavik in the west to Vladivostok in the east.

This biggest parliament of the world repeatedly has condemned discrimination based on sexual orientation as "one of the most odious forms of discrimination". And it is the competent body for the election of the judges of the European Court of Human Rights, the most powerful and most effective international human rights body, which declared discrimination on the ground of sexual orientation plain as "unacceptable".

In his inauguration speech Mr. Schieder made LGBTI-issues one of his priorities in his work as a president of the Assembly.

President Schieder's support for LGBTI's is too manifold to list them all here and now. I am just mentioning that he attended the ILGA-conference in Lisbon and took over honorary patronage over our ILGLaw-conference 2002 in Turin. And after this conference he held a joint press-conference with us at the Council of Europe building in Strasbourg, passionately speaking out for the rights of LGBTI's and against their discrimination. And when an initiative emerged in the Russian parliament to recriminalize homosexuality Mr. Schieder immediately voiced his strong opposition and raised international awareness.

Finally today, Mr. Schieder, the honorary president of the biggest parliament of the world, is attending our ILGLaw's conference here in Los Angeles and thereby expresses his continued solidarity.

President Schieder: persons like you are exactly the kind of people we LGBTI's are in need of for securing our human rights and for living our lives in dignity and equality.

For your life-time support and solidarity we are awarding you today the Karl Heinrich Ulrichs Award of the International Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Intersex Law Association (ILGLaw).

Thank you for being our friend!

Los Angeles, 14 March 2009