

**Speech of Thanks**  
**By**  
**Peter Schieder**  
**On the occasion of the**  
**ILGA Law**  
**Karl Heinrich Ulrichs Award**  
**Los Angeles, March 2009**

Mr. President,  
Dr. Graupner,  
Distinguished audience,  
Dear Friends,

I am honoured and moved.

Respectfully I thank you Mr. President and the International Lesbian and Gay Law Association for the Karl Heinrich Ulrichs Award.

Gratefully I thank you Dr. Graupner and ILGA Law Austria for proposing me. And I have to thank you Mister Graupner for the extremely kind words in your laudatio.

Compared with your dedicated and hard daily work for LGBT rights my modest activities as a Member of the Austrian Parliament and my efforts as a Member of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe since 1971 and as its President from 2002 to 2005 are not comparable. I mentioned it already in my speech at the Conference that it was obvious at national and European level: In their struggle to defend and expand their rights, gays and lesbians have had to rely almost exclusively on themselves. There has been a persistent, and almost generalised, lack of commitment, to recognise and defend their rights as an integral part of human rights. Others and I therefore believed it was high time that Europe's lesbians and gays receive greater support from institutions mandated to protect equality and human rights at national and European level.

Karl Heinrich Ulrichs was in his struggle for gay rights – I think he spoke about “Uranian happiness” as he called it – an outstanding European personality. The words on his tombstone in Aquila in Italy “Exul et pauper” – exiled and poor – are admonition and reminder for all of us.

No gay, no lesbian, no bisexual, no transgender should be “excul et pauper” in our society because he or she (or undecided if he or she) is gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender or undecided.

And this is not their task – it is the task of everybody dedicated to equality, law and human rights.

There is a legacy of Karl Heinrich Ulrichs. We should act in law and politics and in daily life according to it.

Thank you again for this high distinction.