

Message

from the Governing Mayor of Berlin, Klaus Wowereit, for the brochure on the presentation of the “United Buddy Bears” in Warsaw
from 10 May to 22 June 2008

The United Buddy Bears are making a trip around the world and have now arrived in our partner city of Warsaw. Berlin sends its best regards to the Polish capital.

The 138 colorful bears painted by artists from all over the world are more than a tangible piece of Berlin. They also express humanity’s longing for freedom and international understanding and promote peace and tolerance.

The stop the bears are making in Warsaw holds a special significance for both cities. Poland was the first victim of the criminal war of aggression launched by Germany in 1939. The war and the years of occupation inflicted immeasurable suffering on Warsaw. Now that we are shaping the future of the European Union together, as good neighbors, after the end of the Cold War and in peace and freedom, the joy we feel is all the greater.

The people of Berlin know that they owe the end of division and the gift of their city’s reunification in good part to the citizens’ movements in Central and Eastern Europe, including Poland’s Solidarnosc. Even today – almost two decades after the fall of the Wall – we are deeply grateful to the people of Poland, and we want to keep expanding on the multilevel ties built on trust and cooperation between our two cities. We are especially interested in continuing the tradition of the “Weimar Triangle” with Warsaw and Paris. The fact that the Buddy Bears will be shown in Paris after leaving Warsaw underscores the bond between our three cities in a symbolic way.

I am delighted that the Buddy Bears will be presenting the city of Berlin in Warsaw as an open, cosmopolitan metropolis. My thanks go to the artists who created these bears and to the many people in Warsaw and Berlin who are committed to our city partnership. And I would especially like to thank the initiators of the project. Not only have they made the Buddy Bears into friendly, likeable ambassadors for our city, they have also made a substantial contribution to helping children everywhere: whenever someone succumbs to the charm of these creative bears and makes a donation, that money goes to support UNICEF and other children's aid organizations.

I would like to wish the people of Warsaw a few hours of fun and reflection with the United Buddy Bears.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Klaus Wowernitz". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.