

Message

from the Governing Mayor of Berlin, Klaus Wowereit,
for the United Buddy Bears exhibition being held in Astana
on the occasion of “Germany in Kazakhstan 2010”

Twenty years after Berlin’s reunification, the 140 fiberglass bears painted by artists from all over the world are continuing their travels around the globe. I am delighted that the United Buddy Bears project, which is designed to bring nations together, will be visiting Kazakhstan’s capital city as part of “Germany in Kazakhstan 2010,” and I would like to convey Berlin’s very best regards to the city of Astana and its people, as well as to everyone coming to see this exhibition.

Each Buddy Bear is a work of art – a colorful, tangible piece of Berlin. Together, these bears send an important message: that the people of the world long for freedom and international understanding.

Along with guests from all over the world, we in Berlin recently celebrated the 20th anniversary of the “Peaceful Revolution” and the fall of the Wall. Today the memory of the joy of reunification obligates us to work to bring down the walls of the 21st century – poverty, hunger, climate change, and the destruction of natural habitats. We will succeed only if the international community realizes it must work together to achieve these goals.

Our Buddy Bears have already traveled thousands of miles, visited many different countries, and delighted countless people at their exhibitions. In the course of their journey around the world, they have become “Berlin ambassadors” of sorts, ambassadors of global understanding beyond national and cultural borders, and ambassadors of a world that appreciates the value and opportunity of cultural diversity.

I would like to thank the artists who painted these bears and all those in Kazakhstan who are working to strengthen the bond between our people. My special thanks, however, go to the initiators of this project – not only have they made these Buddy Bears into friendly, likeable ambassadors of Germany’s capital city, they have also made a substantial contribution to helping children all over the world: whenever

someone succumbs to the charm of these works of art and buys a Buddy Bear at an auction, the proceeds go to benefit UNICEF and other children's relief organizations.

In this spirit, I would like to wish all of the people of Astana and their many visitors many hours of fun and reflection with Berlin's Buddy Bears.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Klaus Wowereit'.

Klaus Wowereit
Governing Mayor of Berlin