Speech by Lord Mayor Jürgen Roters on the occasion of the welcome of a delegation for the Eurovision Young Musicians Contest on 24 May 2014, 6.00 p.m., Historical City Hall, Piazzetta / Atrium

Es gilt das gesprochene Wort!

Prof. Mattner,
Mr. Kremin,
dear organisers of the contest,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Welcome to Cologne! I would especially like to welcome the young musicians from all over Europe. They have come to our cathedral city to prove their talent within the Eurovision Young Musicians Contest.

In the national selections they already had to assert themselves against many competitors in their home countries, ladies and gentlemen. With hard work they have made it to the final round of the Eurovision Young Musicians Contest. I am very pleased that they are now our guests in Cologne – as the best young musicians from 14 European countries.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

the European Broadcasting Union is the globally leading union of public broadcasting corporations with members in 56 European countries. Its goal is to safeguard and promote the tasks of public service broadcasting across borders. The European Young Musicians Contest was launched by the European Broadcasting Union in 1982. At that time it was not known yet that it would play such an outstanding role in the promotion of musical excellence in Europe. Today it offers young soloists of classical music a highly regarded panel. The Europe-wide television broadcasting makes them known to an international audience.

For the music city Cologne, hosting this international TV contest will be a very enriching cultural experience. I am delighted that the Eurovision Young Musicians Contest is taking place for the first time in Cologne this year. This has been made
possible by the European Broadcasting Union and Westdeutscher Rundfunk as the hosting broadcaster. I would like to express my special thanks to all those who have contributed to hosting the 17th contest here in Cologne.

As you can see when you look around the Piazzetta here, everything has already been prepared for the presentation of the results of tomorrow's elections. There are not only local elections here in North Rhine-Westphalia. We will also be voting for the members of the European Parliament tomorrow. You have come here to Cologne from 14 European countries – this is a clear sign that Europe is growing together, ladies and gentlemen. We need to progress in this way! So I'm hoping for a high election turnout tomorrow. And I also hope that young people like you, my dear musicians, will use their voice to actively shape Europe.

Ladies and Gentlemen,
like all music contests the Eurovision Young Musicians Contest also plays an important role in promoting new talent: It inspires and supports an international career. On this note I wish all participants and above all the future music stars good luck and every success.