

Rede von Henriette Reker, Oberbürgermeisterin der Stadt Köln, anlässlich des Besuchs der US-Schauspielerin Patricia Arquette und der britischen Filmproduzentin Kiera Chaplin am 3. Februar 2020

Es gilt das gesprochene Wort

Distinguished guests,

Welcome to Cologne,

My dear Patricia Arquette (ARKETT), Kiera (KIRA) Chaplin, and Matt (MÄTT) Dillon, it is a great honour to have you here in Cologne. I am always delighted to have American guests visiting us.

You have made a wise choice by coming to Cologne as it is a bit like Los Angeles. Not the official Capital. But the Capital of hearts.

President Kennedy came to visit us in 1963. Bill Clinton came to visit in 1999 and had dinner at a local brewery (BRUERIE). And last year it was a great pleasure to meet Barack Obama at an international speakers conference here in Cologne.

May I congratulate you on having such a wise and humble man as part of your country's history? There is a bond of friendship connecting Cologne with America for many decades. We are friendly to everyone visiting us – not only presidents. It's in our nature. We are open-minded and soulful people.

Cologne is also known for being Germany's Media Boom Town. Our media industry with national TV stations, film, theatre and art productions is quite famous. Would it be over the top, to call it: The „Hollywood“ of this country? What do you think? Ben Kingsley called us the Hollywood of Europe. And I hope that by the end of today, you have gathered enough insight to speak for yourselves.

I am biased as I was born and raised here in Cologne and I love this city with all its beautiful and its edgy parts. As I know every corner of this city, let me give you some handy hints: Besides breweries for culinary stops with presidential touch, I recommend you climb up the tower of our infamous Cathedral: The Kölner Dom. The view is amazing. Please enjoy your stay. And feel free to come back to Cologne anytime.