

## International



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### **Welcome:**

Dear Mr. Herr Jarzombek,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,  
Dear Friends of eSports,

I would like to cordially welcome you all on behalf of the Mayor of Cologne, Fritz Schramma, and am delighted that you have decided once again this year to make Cologne the venue of the international eSports Conference. ESports is a theme that is very welcome in Cologne.

The fact that in 2008 Cologne will host the World Cyber Games, and that in 2009 Games Com will be held for the first time at Koelnmesse, is not least due to the fact that for 4 years now we have communicated AND acted in a spirit of open fair play with the games industry.

The form of this fair play in Cologne is essentially based on three factors:

Firstly, the open discussion about the themes of Games and eSports. The Conference 2007, with the participation of Cologne's municipal sports federation clearly showed that there are several parallels between classic organisations of mass sport and those of eSports. This form of open discussion between eSports and club sports, is of much greater help than acting as if eSports were nothing more than a temporary phenomenon.

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Secondly, there is the social responsibility. What has promoted the themes of Games and eSports in Cologne so strongly, are the companies and the Gamers themselves. Within the context of their social responsibility, they have produced results like "Clash of Realities", "kids and games", school championships, "Köln kickt" for the redevelopment of playing fields in deprived areas and projects, which will be launched before the end of this year. These examples show that the companies and associations involved here are fully aware of their social responsibility, have accepted the social challenge and are making lasting contributions to shaping the image of eSports.

Ladies and Gentlemen, besides the possibilities for economic development offered by the location, the City of Cologne will continue, together with you, to show what further social contributions eSport can make.

And thirdly, there is the position of the state government. I would like to take this opportunity, as a representative of the City of Cologne, to express my sincere thanks for the continuing efforts and the support of the state government which has supported the theme and the related projects in various ways.

One only needs to think of the evaluation of the legislation protecting children and young people which, thanks to the circumspect approach of the Minister for Youth Affairs has replaced demands for new bans.

And then there is the adherence to the principle of the self-regulation of the USK (Home Entertainment Software Control).

And not least, I would also like to mention the open political and active support of Cologne in its bid to host Games Com.

During all the openly communicated location discussions which are currently focusing on further events and projects, I would like to emphasize one thing: no other state government has orientated itself so closely on the factual debate like that of North Rhine-Westphalia, and thus regularly supported the games sector and eSports.

Within this context, Cologne continues to be exciting and we will undoubtedly create the foundations for a new point on the agenda of the eSports Conference 2009.

I can promise you that.

I would like to wish your conference an exciting course. Let your discussions be fair, open, to the point and marked by social responsibility.

Thank you very much.

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