

## Press Release

### 50th Anniversary of Kennedy's Berlin Speech: Berlin Meets Washington

Germany's capital on the road to the U.S. to introduce itself as a tourism and convention hub and a European center of innovation

**Berlin/Washington, June 25, 2013.** "Ich bin ein Berliner". These are the words most remembered from the famous speech given by President John F. Kennedy in Berlin 50 years ago on June 26, 1963. To commemorate this important anniversary, the German capital will be in Washington on June 26–27, 2013 to reintroduce itself to the people of America. President Barack Obama gave a speech at the Brandenburg Gate a week ago on June 19 during his visit to Berlin, citing Kennedy's significant words. The focus of the Washington trip is not only to commemorate Kennedy, but also to present Berlin as a hub for tourism and conventions in the heart of Europe, and as Europe's center of innovation. The delegation representing the city of Berlin on the Washington trip includes the Senator for the Interior Affairs and Mayor Frank Henkel and the CEO of *visitBerlin*, Burkhard Kieker.

Frank Henkel, Senator for the Interior Affairs, Sports and Mayor, remarks: "For me, an important aim of this trip to Washington is to honor the great President John F. Kennedy and to remember his legendary speech in Berlin 50 years ago. With his visit to our divided city and his commitment, Kennedy was making much more than just a polite gesture. His words demonstrated an unprecedented level of respect for the people of West and East Berlin's unflinching desire to be free. We Berliners in particular have a lot to thank the Americans for. The foundations of our nations' deep and steadfast friendship can be found in Berlin and were laid by President Kennedy."

"Berlin owes many thanks to John F. Kennedy, and we would like to remember everything he did for us by coming to his homeland, to Washington D.C., and meet with journalists, politicians and our economic partners" says Burkhard Kieker, CEO of *visitBerlin*. "For many Americans, Berlin is not just any major city; instead, it is an emotionally charged destination, the freedom of which has been ensured by the Americans for many years. It is exactly in the sense of this firm commitment that we are approaching our event in the American capital."

#### Berlin Meets Washington: the Program

The program on June 26 will be kicked off with a festive start in Washington's Newseum, accompanied by informative events about Berlin as a travel destination. Amongst those attending will also be Richard Smyser, contemporary witness to Kennedys visit to Berlin, and Marvin Kalb, CBS correspondent, along with the mayors of towns named Berlin across the U.S. As part of this event, the mayors of the 29 American Berlins will deliver greetings to the German capital (<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XeFQD50tUJc>).

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The schedule for June 27 includes a wreath-laying ceremony at Kennedy's grave at Arlington National Cemetery, along with a press conference. The "Berlin – Made in the USA" exhibition will then be unveiled in the German-American Heritage Museum. The focus of the exhibition is on the history of Berlin, addressing themes such as the Berlin Airlift, the Cold War and German reunification, as well as the future of Berlin.

The night is dedicated to film lovers: Each of the two days will finish with a Berlin Movie Night at the Goethe-Institute in Washington, which will be showing Berlin documentaries and famous feature films including Billy Wilder's "One, Two, Three" and Wim Wenders' "Wings of Desire".

There is also a campaign on [facebook.com/Berlin](https://facebook.com/Berlin) to celebrate the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Kennedy's speech: Berlin gives freedom a face. Anyone can upload a portrait and become part of a JFK mosaic.

### German capital proves a popular choice for Americans

The U.S. is the fourth most significant home market for Berlin tourism. Berlin is the most important city travel destination for Americans in Germany and is becoming more popular. The number of American visitors to Berlin was up 17.5 per cent (313,791) last year, with the number of overnight stays increasing by 16.4 per cent (758,168).

And not only is Berlin attracting America's attention for tourism; it is also considered to be the most relevant metropolis for start-up businesses and the most important internet center in Europe. Home to some 2,500 start-up companies, the force of innovation continues unabated in Berlin as new companies form almost every day. Flagship events such as re:publica and NEXT, being part of the Berlin Web Week, as well as hy!Berlin and TechCrunchDisrupt take place regularly in the German capital. *visitBerlin* is happy to have submitted a successful bid to host the European première of the TEDxSummit in Berlin from June 23–27, 2014, showcasing all the best new ideas and innovative approaches in the fields of technology, entertainment and design (in short: TED) with a number of short presentations.

### Berlin events

To commemorate the anniversary of the former U.S. President John F. Kennedy's visit, a number of events are being held throughout Berlin. Various institutions and partners invite you to attend exhibition openings, discussions, film events and other festivities. Information is available at [kennedy.visitBerlin.com](http://kennedy.visitBerlin.com).

#### *visitBerlin*

"We know Berlin". This is the slogan that Berlin Tourismus & Kongress GmbH, operating under the trade name *visitBerlin*, has been using since 1993 to globally advertise for Berlin as a travel destination. *visitBerlin's* Berlin Convention Office markets the German capital as a congress metropolis. As a tour operator, the company offers a wide range of travel packages and also issues the official tourist ticket, the Berlin WelcomeCard. *visitBerlin* operates four Berlin Tourist Infos. The Berlin Service Center (Tel. 030-25 00 25) provides information on the complete spectrum of tourist services in Berlin. Information on the German capital are available in 13 languages at [visitBerlin.com](http://visitBerlin.com).

#### Press Contact USA

Kirsten Schmidt, [kschmidt@kmscommunications.com](mailto:kschmidt@kmscommunications.com), p/ 818-385-0631, c/ 323-440-2608

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#### *visitBerlin* / Berlin Tourismus & Kongress GmbH

Press and Public Relations  
Am Karlsbad 11  
D-10785 Berlin  
Fax: +49 (0)30 26 47 48 – 983

[visitBerlin.de](http://visitBerlin.de)  
[facebook.com/visitBerlin](https://facebook.com/visitBerlin)

#### Press Contact:

Kirsten Schmidt  
+1 818-385-0631  
[kschmidt@kmscommunications.com](mailto:kschmidt@kmscommunications.com)

Christian Tänzler  
Tel.: +49 (0)30 26 47 48 – 912  
[christian.taenzler@visitBerlin.de](mailto:christian.taenzler@visitBerlin.de)