

The Hague, 17 February 2012

Mr. Klaus Wowereit
The Ruling Mayor of Berlin
Senate of Berlin
Rotes Rathaus
Jüdenstraße 1
D - 10178 Berlin

Re: Appeal to preserve gas lighting in Berlin

Dear Mr. Mayor,

We have been informed by the non-governmental organization Denk-mal-an-Berlin e.V. acting together with the initiative group *Gaslichtkultur* that gas lighting in Berlin is to be abolished.

We are aware that Berlin, with its 44,000 gas lights has by far the greatest concentration of gas lights in the world - a representative portrayal of the development of gas lighting from the 19th century until the second half of the 20th century. The survival of these lights is therefore of world-wide cultural and historic significance.

We are particularly concerned that the proposals to be implemented by the districts (*Bezirke*) of Berlin are not just to replace gas as the form of energy but also that the gas lanterns themselves will be and are being replaced, beginning with those of the period after 1945. The use of gas for street lighting in this period is in itself unusual and therefore has historic significance.

We remain to be convinced by the arguments so far put forward, such as danger to persons, flora and fauna, climate policy, costs of maintenance etc., given for the replacement, and feel that these arguments need more public discussion than has hitherto taken place. Gas is primary energy readily available, whereas electricity is produced, in part at least, from energy sources which in themselves contribute to global warming.

We understand that there is considerable interest and potential in preserving gas lighting not only from citizens in the areas affected but also by tourists. It seems that bus tours to areas with gas lighting and historic lanterns organised by the group *Gaslichtkultur* together with Denk-mal-an-Berlin have been very successful and well attended. During their meeting on 10th - 11th December 2011 in Berlin members of the Council and Board of Europa Nostra were able to take part in such a bus tour and were highly impressed by what they saw and regretted to hear that the Senate proposes to replace gas by electric lighting.

In light of the information we have been given, we strongly urge the Senate of Berlin to review its proposals, to initiate a wide public debate and discussion and in particular call a moratorium on the dismantling of gas lanterns and engage with the *Berliner Landesamt für Denkmalpflege* in preparing a Masterplan as part of the strategy for lighting (*Lichtkonzept*), developed by the Senate's own Department of Urban Development. Such a plan should determine what precisely is considered historic gas lighting, should assess the



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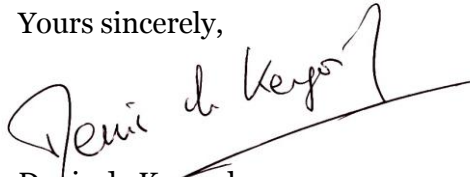


significance of these gas lights and propose ways in which the lights can be preserved and/or adapted.

If you have further queries, we recommend to contact Mrs Agnete von Specht from Denk-mal-an-Berlin, telephone: +49 30 7843 562, mobile: +49 157 5467 8721, email: info@denk-mal-an-berlin.de, specht@denk-mal-an-berlin.de.

Thanking you in advance for taking our recommendation into due consideration,

Yours sincerely,



Denis de Kergorlay
Executive President

This letter is being sent by Europa Nostra as information to:

- The Federal Government, attn. the Federal Chancellor, Dr. Angela Merkel,
- The Minister of Transport, Building and Urban Development, Dr. Peter Ramsauer,
- State Minister for Culture and the Media, Dr. Bernd Neumann,
- Mrs Doris Pack, MEP, Chair of the Committee on Culture and Education, European Parliament,
- Mr Gustavo Araoz, President of ICOMOS,
- Mr Francesco Bandarin, Deputy Director-General of UNESCO,
- The Landesdenkmalamt (Berlin), attn. Landeskonservator Prof. Dr. Jörg Haspel.

