



Main Points
by
the President of Iceland
Ólafur Ragnar Grímsson
at the
opening of
the World Championships of the Icelandic horse
Berlin
4 August 2013

It is indeed a great pleasure and honour for Dorrit and me to join you all at these great World Championships, to salute your admiration of the Icelandic horse, to share in this extraordinary multinational festival where the horse provides both the heart and the soul.

In recent decades the people of Iceland have rejoiced in your devotion to the horse, celebrated how thousands of admirers from Germany, Austria, the Nordic nations and others have repeatedly come together to compete and demonstrate the extraordinary qualities, the beautiful features of an animal which for us was for centuries the means of survival and transport.

Brought by the Vikings to a mysterious island out in the Atlantic, allowing farmers and fishermen throughout the centuries to cross rivers and mountains, go close to the glaciers and along the volcanoes, ride through black deserts and green valleys; inspiration by poets and painters

have woven the reality and the myth of the Icelandic horse into a never-ending adventure.

And earlier this morning after serving the people of Iceland for more than a thousand years, the strong, colorful, energetic, high-spirited Icelandic horse came to the Brandenburg Gate, saluted this famous monument at the heart of Europe, the symbol to all of unity, freedom and democracy; and thus marking a unique event in the old tale of the marvelous Icelandic horse.

I thank the City of Berlin, the organisers in Germany, the delegations from other countries for creating these extraordinary World Championships.

For Dorrit and me it is a great pleasure to join you all and to return to Berlin in the company of great Icelandic horses and riders so soon after our recent State Visit. Thus, we demonstrate the close friendship between our countries and of course give Dorrit the opportunity to ride with you to the most famous gate in Europe and into the arena here today.

These World Championships bring us all together in a celebration of how the Icelandic horse has enriched our lives, our enjoyment, our understanding of life and nature, how it has inspired writers, artists and designers.

These are not only World Championships but also much more; a festival of culture and adventure where friendships are woven into treasures of memories.

I wish you all great days ahead and thank again all those who have made these great Championships a profound display of honour to the Icelandic horse.