



Zurich Pride: Europe's gay revolution starts here

GSN was there in Switzerland's largest city to talk to lesbian mayor Corine Mauch and many others about the 'unstoppable' march to equality

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Europe is a continent divided. With the west and north generally in support of gays, and the south and the east mostly not, countries in the middle like Switzerland are a battleground for civil rights.

Fighting for equal marriage, and for gay couples to adopt children, the LGBTI Swiss are hoping to sway public opinion to their side.

And if events like Zurich Pride continue to be held, then equality cannot be too far away.

Last night's event saw Eurovision Song Contest winner Conchita Wurst receive a special award, the Unstoppable Award, for her work in promoting equality and tolerance.

After she received the award, which was modelled on her own hand, she sang four songs 'Believe', 'I Am What I Am', 'Rise Like A Phoenix' and 'My Heart Will Go On'.

She tweeted: 'wow #zurichpride what a night! Thank you so much for the #unstoppableaward. All my love to #theunstoppables.'

Today, it was clear thousands of people had taken Wurst's win to mean far more than a drag queen winning a song contest.

It was a sign, a symbol of the unstoppable march to equality in Europe.

Many women wore fake beards, and many already bearded men dressed up in a wig, heels and a dress to hear important political speeches about the state of Switzerland.

Mario Fehr, a lawmaker who was one of several figures to speak, told GSN: 'Everybody should be the same, everybody should have the same rights. It's simple.

'You can only look to places like Russia and in African countries where gays and lesbians are heavily discriminated against, tortured and punished to death. We do not want that for our country.'

And Bastian Baumann, the director of gay rights charity Pink Cross, said he hopes Switzerland will be able to achieve equality in a few years.

'Hopefully, we can begin to inspire others. Our neighbors. It's not the people that are weird about gay people,' he told me. 'It's a political thing. It needs to be changed.'

Vanessa Cardozo, who leads lesbian group Lilith, said: 'We fight for many things, but today we do it with a smile.'

Newly appointed US ambassador to Switzerland Suzi LeVine and Zurich Mayor Corine Mauch were also there to show their support at Pride.

Mauch is the city's first female, and first openly gay, mayor.

In her speech, she referred to the comments of Swiss lawmaker Toni Bortoluzzi who said this week that gay people are not normal, and are sick in the head.

'This is dumb, saying such a thing,' Mauch told GSN. 'All civilization needs is tolerance for different ways of living.'

'It's not about the sex of the two involved it's about being committed and giving each other security. That is what is important.'

She added: 'Just like Conchita said, equality is unstoppable.'

Take a look at some pictures taken by GSN below: - See more at:
<http://www.gaystarnews.com/article/zurich-pride-europes-gay-revolution-starts-here140614#sthash.FrCEYoCx.dpuf>