



Press release

7th Conference on Authors' Rights in Berlin: What is the future of the EU Copyright Directive?



Picture shows (left to right): Minister of State for Culture and the Media Prof Monika Grütters MP, singer-songwriter and Vice President of CISAC Angelique Kidjo, Initiative Urheberrecht spokesperson Prof Dr Gerhard Pfennig, President of the Academy of arts Prof Jeanine Meerapfel, and author and President of the European Writers Council Nina George.

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Berlin, 11 November 2019: The 7th Initiative Urheberrecht Conference on Authors' Rights in Berlin started today, Monday, at the Academy of Arts at Pariser Platz with a song, performed impressively by internationally successful Beninese-French singer-songwriter and Vice President of the International Confederation of Societies of Authors and Composers (CISAC), the world's leading network of authors

societies, **Angélique Kidjo**. In the keynote speech she delivered following her performance, she called on politicians to "preserve the rights of creators, because a society without culture, music and art is not a society". She also made the following appeal to the more than 300 conference participants: "Put legislation in place to protect you, your children and the next generation of artists. Authors rights and copyright are a human right and if you don't believe that, we are all in trouble."

Nina George, author and President of the European Writers Council, then gave a keynote speech addressing the core issue of the conference. She described the European and worldwide impact of the much-discussed EU Copyright Directive (DSM Directive) adopted in April: "The questions of how to deal with intellectual property, with authors and with cultural services have long since gone beyond their national frameworks as a result of the digital evolution. This is why national, European and international federations of authors from all sectors have joined forces to establish a consensus and speak with one voice. If the consensus is now implemented nationally and across the board, Europe will also be a point of reference for authors in Malawi, Canada or the USA, for example. Douglas Preston, President of the American Authors' Guild, wrote the following to me after the ratification of the DSM Directive: 'Europe is ahead of us in important protections for authors.' Don't water that down in the national details."

In her keynote speech, **Prof Monika Grütters** MP, Minister of State for Culture and the Media, also praised the DSM Directive as a "milestone in the history of European democracy". The legislative update of copyright law at the European level has been successful overall. "This shows that we are not leaving it to the IT companies to establish the frameworks and rules of democratic discourse but are protecting rights and enforcing obligations that are indispensable for the continuation of a free and democratic basic order."

Additional contributions to the discussion were made by authors, artists and representatives of the cultural industry, including award-winning jazz musician and composer Pat Appleton, actor and board member of the German Federal Association of Actors (BFFS) **Hans-Werner Meyer**, game author and Federal Chairperson of the Association of German Writers, **Lena Falkenhagen**, screenwriter, director and current President of the Federation of Screenwriters of Europe (FSE), **Dr Carolin Otto**, Sylvia Willkomm representing the German Museums Association, publisher **Dr Susanne Schüssler** and musician and composer Dr Ralf Weigand, who currently holds the office of Chairman of the Supervisory Board of Initiative Musik among other positions.

Leading scientists and legal experts, including **Prof Dr Bernd Holznagel**, University of Münster, **Prof Dr Karl-Nikolaus Peifer**, University of Cologne, and lawyer **Ralf Bolwin** as well as **Dr Robert Staats** from the VG Wort (collecting society) and **Dr Urban Pappi** from the VG Bild-Kunst (collecting society), explained their perspectives on the implementation of the EU Copyright Directive within German law.

In his contribution, **Dr Carsten Brosda**, Senator for Culture and Media in Hamburg, expressed regret that it has not been possible to find a balance between the different interests in the discussion so far. He called for intensive talks between the groups involved with regard to the implementation of the DSM Directive in order to achieve a consensus and overcome contentious positions held by users, authors and rights holders.

The conference, now in its seventh year, was hosted by Initiative Urheberrecht, which comprises more than 35 German organizations and unions, representing the interests of about 140,000 German authors and performing artists. In his summary at the end of the conference, spokesperson **Prof Dr Gerhard**

Pfennig emphasized the interest of authors and performers in filling the Directive with life as part of the implementation process. Authors and performers are aware that there are various licensing problems that need to be solved. As a result, they have sought to collaborate with the existing exploiters and new payment debtors, for example the relevant platforms, and will exhaust all options to ensure that licenses can be granted. However, they expect fair remuneration of and fair allocation between the different beneficiaries. With regard to copyright contract law, they are interested in achieving more collective agreements with the cultural industries and thus also in facilitating licensing.

The full conference schedule and information about all speakers is available at

<https://2019.konferenz-urheberrecht.de/en/start>

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We would still be happy to arrange interviews with the speakers.

About Initiative Urheberrecht:

Initiative Urheberrecht (Authors' Rights Initiative) comprises more than 35 German organizations and unions, representing the interests of about 140,000 German authors and performing artists.