



## Press release

### **6th Conference on Authors' Rights in Berlin: Focus on Europe**

Berlin, 19 November 2018. More than 300 participants from the fields of politics, science, art, and culture met today at the Academy of Arts in the spirit of Minister of State Prof. Monika Grütters, who said in her opening keynote: "professional exchange is the basis for balancing different interests."

The purpose of this meeting was to talk about current developments and perspectives of authors' rights in the information age. In various lectures and panels, the authors present discussed urgent copyright issues, in particular the EU Copyright Directive, with lawyers and German federal and European politicians. The conference was organized by Initiative Urheberrecht.

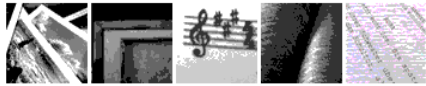
Christiane Wirtz, State Secretary at the Federal Ministry of Justice, and Minister of State for Culture and the Media, Prof. Dr. Monika Grütters, opened the conference, each delivering a political keynote address. In her speech, the Minister of State for Culture summarized the Federal Government's guideline on copyright protection: "Art and culture need space; they need freedom to develop - fertile ground in which creative achievements can flourish, even in the digital age. And this includes a copyright law that enables artists and creative people to make a living from their intellectual work."

State Secretary Wirtz once again pointed out the possible options for resolving the difficult discussion about Art. 13 of the Brussels Copyright Directive: The need for platforms to conclude contracts for the acquisition of rights and the obligation of rights holders to offer contracts, possibly in the form of "extended collective licenses" or even a barrier, for example for works uploaded by users.

The strong feelings and opinions of many with regard to this issue quickly became clear in the lectures that followed: "The author's moral right is a human right!", composer Matthias Hornschuh, founder and chairman of the mediamusic e.V. professional association, shouted into the audience during his speech. Film maker David Bernet followed suit, declaring: "Copyright protection is a fundamental right."

Almost all participants, be they authors, politicians, or lawyers, agreed that the Copyright Directive currently under discussion among the European Commission, the EU Parliament and the European Council should be adopted during the present legislative period. This was the case despite manipulation by stakeholders, some of them from the U.S. and Canada, during decision-making processes in Brussels, which copyright expert Volker Rieck presented after intensive research on the subject: "These methods are undemocratic."

Participants discussing the EU Copyright Directive also called - almost unanimously - for obligations to be imposed on the big tech giants. For example, author Ingo Schulze, whose keynote speech was read by Kathrin Röggl, author and Vice



President of the Academy of Arts, in his absence which was due to an urgent personal commitment:

"The tech giants must be brought to heel by the authors - that is every bit as overdue as the appropriate taxation of these companies. For it is they – the authors - who contribute significantly to the attractiveness of the platforms, which in turn helps them to attract advertisers and users. So we bake a part of the cake that is sold at a profit."

Prof. Gerhard Pfennig, Initiative Urheberrecht spokesperson, added: "It is about defending democracy against the claims to power of Internet corporations with regard to the digital dissemination of artistic and cultural works and services as well as of information and data. The rules are determined by the parliaments and governments elected by the people in Europe and not by tech giants."

The full conference schedule and information about all speakers who attended it is available at <https://2018.konferenz-urheberrecht.de/de/start>. Many of the presentations will be published on the conference website over the next few days and will also appear in the next issue of ZUM (Zeitschrift für Urheber- und Medienrecht) magazine.

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