

INTERNATIONAL CLASSIFIERS CONFERENCE 2015 BERLIN

1st – 2nd October

Odysseus' Trick or: How Self-Control in the Media Particularly Stands Out

Welcome Speech given by *Prof. Dr. Murad Erdemir*,
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Sirens!

When I first heard about sirens, I was still a teenager. Sirens were unique sea nymphs found in Greek mythology and lived on the Island of the Faiakes. Through their very seductive music, they lured in passing sailors and ultimately killed them.

And I also still remember a lot about resourceful Odysseus. The famous voyager who was warned about the sirens along his long journey to Ithaca. Because he was so curious to hear their singing, but didn't want to put his crew nor himself in danger, he came up with the idea to have his men seal their ears with wax. Odysseus himself, had them tie him to one of the masts on the ship. The crew was not to let him loose no matter the circumstances and how much he begged.

As soon as Odysseus caught sight of the sirens, his heart was so moved by their melodies, that he tried to free himself from the ropes to get to them. But his crew, whose ears were stuffed with wax, peacefully continued sailing on, which is how they all escaped the enchantment of the sirens.

Using this trick, Odysseus succeeded in becoming the only one to have ever heard the music of the sirens without getting killed. It was self-control that saved Odysseus, but at the same time allowed him to experience such acoustic bliss.

Odysseus took independent action. He bound himself in order to retain his freedom.

Voluntarily binding oneself in order to preserve one's own freedom: This is exactly what also makes self-control in the media in Germany stand out. Whether it's the FSK, USK, FSF or FSM: They all distinguish themselves in that they practice self-commitment in order to win as much freedom from the state as possible. And as a representative of regulation authority, I can tell you a thing or two about it: They are doing their job very well!

Ladies and Gentlemen, a very warm welcome to this year's International Classifiers Conference in Berlin!

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Dialogue instead of restriction!

There is no better way to describe our relationship. The relationship between the Hessian State Media Authority and – also located in Hesse – the FSK. Among our institutions, there is an ongoing exchange of expertise, which, from both perspectives – Christiane von Wahlert will most certainly agree – will be seen as a huge benefit for youth media protection.

Dialogue instead of restriction!

This is also the motto, which could unite each and every ICC event – formerly known as IFCC – that has taken place. Because the moment you enter the international dialogue, my dear guests, in which you listen to each other and discuss with one another, you provide an extremely valuable contribution to a step away from restriction ... and toward freedom.

And the discussion about new approaches regarding regulation and self-control, which you will conduct over these next two days, is essential in the light of an increasingly converging media landscape. Every regulation can and should be put to the test, if and when regulation and reality don't match up anymore. Also, internet-based communication doesn't fit to the mindset of conventional youth media protection. Furthermore, efficient self-control requires international thinking and acting today more than ever.

Aristide Briand, the French politician and Nobel Peace Prize Winner, once said: „A compromise is perfect when everyone's unhappy". However, the necessary route to an international standard of youth media protection without compromises will not be possible. Compromises are indispensable to learn from one another and to overcome cultural boundaries.

Regarding this topic, the „International Age Rating Coalition“ – IARC for short – has already given remarkably positive signals.

And finally back to the sirens: When I was young and first heard about them, I wouldn't have made a compromise and had myself tied up like Odysseus. I would've done the exact opposite. I would've gone to the sirens ... and given in to my desire ...

„Live fast, love hard, die young!“

This has been the life motto for many young generations. Well, I can assure you that I am very happy to still be here today!

And now, I wish you an insightful as well as exciting – not to say sexy – conference!