



re:publica 2017 Launches with a Call for Freedom of the Press and Communication

re:publica and MEDIA CONVENTION Berlin open their doors ++ Call for freedom of the press and communication as the main focus of the opening session ++ Over 1,100 speakers presenting 500 hours of programme on 20 stages

Berlin, 8 May 2017 – The eleventh re:publica launched in Berlin today with a call for freedom of the press and communication. In the opening keynote speech, journalists and activists from Egypt, Poland, Hungary and Turkey reflected on their experiences with restricted freedom of opinion. Polish activist **Katarzyna Szymielewicz** spoke about the ever-shrinking spaces left for civic participation and initiatives in Poland and **Ramy Raouf** explained how civil rights movements in Egypt are increasingly being restricted through the use of technologies. **Márton Gergely**, former deputy editor-in-chief for the Hungarian daily newspaper “Népszabadság”, which was shut-down for political reasons, outlined the important role that independent media plays in a society, and Turkish journalist **Can Dündar** reported on the charges of terrorism during his time as editor-in-chief at Turkey's largest newspaper, also showing pictures from the Turkish prison cell in which journalist Deniz Yücel is being held.

“Freedom of the press and freedom of communication are under threat all around the world. We have placed this topic front and centre in our opening session to call attention to this and to show solidarity with bloggers, journalists and activists from other countries and highlight their concerns”, stated Markus Bechedahl, co-founder of the re:publica.

re:publica founders Andreas Gebhard, Tanja and Johnny Haeusler, as well as Markus Bechedahl had previously opened this year's edition of the community conference. Together with Dr. Anja Zimmer, Director of the Medienanstalt Berlin-Brandenburg (mabb) and Helge Jürgens, Managing Director of the Medienboard Berlin Brandenburg (MBB), they also kicked-off the MEDIA CONVENTION Berlin (MCB), one of Europe's pioneering media congresses, taking place in cooperation with the re:publica for the fourth time now.

Andreas Gebhard thanked all the supporters: “A programme as extensive and comprehensive as this, with 20 different topic tracks on 20 stages wouldn't be possible without the support of our partners, some of whom have been supporting us for years, others for the very first time. Our thanks go out to them – and, of course, all of our visitors!”

Johnny Haeusler: “This year's motto of 'Love out Loud!' is also a call for digital civic courage. A call to stand by the side of those who become victims of online attacks and threats. A supportive tweet or comment from us as individuals is sometimes all it takes, because when this kind of support comes from enough people it drowns out the hate and shows the victim: you are not alone.”

With Tanja Haeusler adding: “We don't want to concede the world, be it real or virtual, to the assholes. Fuck yeah! Love out Loud!”

The serving Mayor of Berlin, Michael Müller, also took part in the joint opening for the first time. Müller emphasized the special significance that digitalisation has for the city of Berlin and closed with an appeal for freedom of the press: "This is about how we conserve our values – especially freedom of the press and opinion." Many took these values to be self-evident – however, one has to realize at the current moment, that one always has to keep fighting for them and commit to them.

The eleventh re:publica in Berlin will feature over 1,100 speakers from 65 countries, presenting 500 hours of programme on 20 stages. The range of topics covers everything from current politics, art and net culture to questions about the future of work, mobility, digital education or healthcare Together with the Science Year 2016*17, visitors can experience just how present modern technologies are throughout marine research in the sub:marine sub-conference. And for three days, the stages of the MEDIA CONVENTION Berlin will deal with current questions concerning media and internet policies, market trends and developments in the digital media society.

The re:publica will be taking place, together with the MEDIA CONVENTION Berlin in the STATION Berlin until 10 May. More than 8,000 participants are expected to take part.

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About re:publica:

re:publica is the most exciting conference about the Internet and Digital Society in Europe. It brings together more than 8,000 participants to discuss the issues of the contemporary digital society. Here bloggers meet with politicians, scientists with entrepreneurs, artists with activists. The shareholders of republica GmbH, newthinking communications and Spreeblick Verlag, have been active in the field of net politics, digital culture and society for more than a decade. The next re:publica will take place in Berlin, on May 8-10, 2017.

About MEDIA CONVENTION Berlin (MCB):

MEDIA CONVENTION Berlin (MCB) is one of Europe's pioneering media congresses. It is held by Medienboard Berlin-Brandenburg (MBB) and Medienanstalt Berlin-Brandenburg (mabb) and is taking place for the fourth time in cooperation with re:publica at STATION Berlin this year. From 8 to 10 May 2017, the stages of #MCB17 are dedicated to current issues of media and Internet politics, market trends and developments of digital media society. MCB and re:publica are once again expecting about 8,000 visitors from over 60 countries.

More information and contact:

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