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Stand up for culture!
Appeal to the Federal Government

The Akademie der Künste (Academy of Arts) feels obliged to take a position regarding central cultural-political issues. Therefore the critical discussion relating to the planned free trade agreement EU/USA (TTIP) is the focus of our work at present.

1. Due to the previous intransparency the few issues for negotiation which have become public constitute a reason to be significantly sceptical.

   In the TTIP negotiating mandate the issue of culture is not dealt with at all and cultural diversity only appears in the preamble. Only ‘audiovisual services’ are to be excluded from the negotiations.

2. Negotiations about a treaty of such fundamental significance for the lives of people in Germany and Europe can only be supported if they are handled completely transparently by Parliaments and peoples. The Minister responsible – The Minister for the Economy and Energy – Sigmar Gabriel, has thus convened an advisory committee to which the President of the Academy of Arts, Klaus Staeck, also belongs.

3. Alongside the Minister for Culture and Media, Monika Grütters, the Academy of Arts holds the view that art and culture should not be treated as normal economic goods as otherwise their legal constitutional protection would be called into question.

4. The planned free trade agreement is also planning an investor-state prosecution procedure aimed at giving investors the opportunity, in the event of would-be limitations to their investment, on the part of the contracting states, to telephone privately organized arbitrating bodies. Based on the rule of law such a clause to protect investment is unacceptable for us: intransparent arbitrating bodies should not disempower the state-guaranteed legal processes in both the EU and the US.

5. The Academy notes with concern that the EU Chief Negotiator Karel de Gut clearly assumes that the managment of the negotiation is solely in the hands of the Commission. We do not share this view. Countries and their parliaments must be able to decide jointly regarding the scope of such an agreement.

The Academy of Arts considers, in the current state of affairs regarding the negotiation, that our democratic principles are under threat and shares the view of many that the negotiations should be re-planned and conducted transparently with public participation.
We expect the Federal Government to resolutely represent our standards and principles regarding culture, the environment and work with the negotiating partners. We will support it in this regard.

Klaus Staeck, President, Akademie der Künste (Academy of Arts)