



The Berlin International Freedom of Expression Forum

*Censorship and Freedom in Traditional and New Media:
The Revolution of Media as a tool of Freedom of Expression*

Berlin, International Conference, February 28th - March 2nd, 2012





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Event Introduction

The "Berlin International Freedom of Expression Forum" is an annual conference on the issue of "Freedom of Expression". The aim of the conference this year is to reflect on the concepts of "freedom" and "censorship" and look at both past and potential challenges to realizing complete freedom of expression". Focusing on the role of the media, "The International Freedom of Expression Forum" will evaluate the tools in which freedom of expression can take place. The program will consist of lectures, seminars, debates and panel discussions that will feature leading figures from the media, international politics & diplomacy, academia, civil society, and the private sector.

With the transition from the traditional bi-polar international structure towards a more multi-polar world understanding state perspectives, different cultures and different traditions is important if the international system is to remain stable. The concept of "Freedom of Expression" is becoming more relevant as more states gain influence within the system as a whole. Looking at each state, it is clear that there is no one objective definition of the concept and recent world events, such as the "Arab Spring" and the "Occupy Wall Street" movement, have highlighted the importance of discussing the significance of freedom of expression as a whole.

This conference aims to constructively approach these issues and evaluate the role of technology, the disparities and trends in press freedom, democracy and censorship, and the role of social media.

Conference Participants

The conference is open to applications from governmental and diplomatic officials, civil society practitioners, young professionals, students and scholars, private sector representatives, journalists, and other interested stakeholders from across the world.

Certificate of Attendance

All participants will be awarded an official certificate of attendance upon completion of the program, which provides details about the speakers and topics at the conference. Each certificate will be signed by members of the ICD's Advisory Board.



FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION: A RIGHT AND



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Conference Locations

Based primarily in Berlin, the conference will be hosted at a number of important political, historic, and cultural locations across the city.

Conference Speakers

Speakers during the conference will include leading figures and experts from civil society, international politics, academia, diplomacy, and the private sector from across the world. These speakers will include a number of individuals from the ICD Advisory Board.

Participant Papers

The Institute for Cultural Diplomacy encourages research and progressive thought on the fields of culture, globalization, and international relations. As such, the ICD welcomes participants of the conference to submit relevant papers addressing topics within these fields particular to their interests and passions. Participants can submit papers written in the past for other purposes or ongoing research, or written specifically for the conference. Groups of students are also allowed to submit collaborative pieces of work.

Conference Agenda

The goal of the International Freedom of Expression Forum is to induce new momentum in the debates surrounding the concept of 'Freedom of Expression'. With such prominence in discussions about democracy, human rights and inter-state relations, 'Freedom of Expression' is a vital tool within Cultural Diplomacy and International Relations.

Founded loosely on the 1776 American Declaration of Independence, in which "liberty" is regarded as an inalienable right, the academic field of International Relations has explored the many arguments surrounding "freedom". In today's rapidly globalizing world, the meaning of "Freedom of Expression" and the consequences it has on personal, national and international relationships, however, is becoming more and more significant and as such The Institute for Cultural Diplomacy regards the issue as one of much importance.

In discussing the issues that surround the concept of "Freedom of Expression, issues such as freedom as an inalienable right, the consequences of such freedom and the right to censorship, The Institute for Cultural Diplomacy hopes to facilitate new tools to promote international relationships and cooperation in a globalised world. The Conference seeks to achieve a deeper understanding of the complexities and the importance of "freedom of expression" in an expanding international system.

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The following issues will be mentioned and explored:

Disparities and Trends in Press Freedom across the World

Inspired by the annual reports of global organizations active in the field of 'freedom of press', one focus of the conference will be on the concept of freedom and censorship in areas where free speech is traditionally respected and where it is not. As the Copenhagen Criteria affirms, the EU makes press freedom one of the main criteria for accession; but still, since six of its countries occupy very low positions in the Reporters without Borders ranking, the European Union is not a homogenous whole regarding media freedom. Still, the conference is aimed at answering the question: Is international cooperation or international pressure the key to support freedom of expression?

- **The EU and press freedom: a double-standard strategy?**
(Focus: press freedom as one of the main criteria to access the EU and lack of homogeneity among the 27 member States)
- Supporting press freedom through International Cooperation, or International Pressure?
(Focus: what is the role of international organizations and democratic states in supporting the promotion of free expression in the non-democratic countries)
- Anti-democratic traditions: the evolving situation of traditionally anti-democratic governments in the field of freedom of expression
(Focus: case studies on governments traditionally limiting the freedom of expression: China, Iran, Zambia, Rwanda, Zimbabwe, Cuba)
- Democracy and censorship: limitation of free expressions in the so-called democratic governments
(Focus: case studies on European countries with low position in the 'Reporters without Borders' ranking: Italy, France, Romania, Greece, Bulgaria)

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Freedom of Expression and Technology (Technological implications: freedom enhancement and control)

Whilst traditional methods of publishing, broadcasting and communicating exist, these are quickly being surpassed by modern methods using modern technology. This transition is arguably 'enhancing' freedom of expression for many people, allowing quicker and higher production and flow of information to larger audiences, with more ease than ever before. However, with that enhancement new matters arise. Governments and other bodies continually have to re-think their methods of surveillance and control as technology improves. Has the quality of information being 'expressed'/published deteriorated or improved as a result of the thousands of Internet 'bloggers' and media organisations publishing and the ease with which they can do so? When digital cameras were introduced, arguments arose of deteriorated quality in the field of photography because of the new camera's ease and speed of production compared to the traditional analogue one.

Where in the past it was usually only people interested in certain fields who had the sufficient knowledge and resources to access the relevant information, now many more people from different, non-specialist backgrounds can easily do the same because of technological development. Is the quality of information inversely proportional to the 'democratic' access to information? 'Democratic' access is defined by the quantity of people from different backgrounds (e.g. intellectually, financially, geographically) that are able access this information.

- **Cyberjournalism, blogging and the Right to access Information**

(Focus: the changes of the concept of journalism in the era of the new media: bottom- up information and its implications on enhancement, quality, access)

- **The New Role of Social Media in Civic and Political Protests**

(Focus: Arab Spring, Twitter and Facebook, bloggers as new political leaders, the trendy concept of "netizen", Occupy Wall Street and Puerta del Sol protest as example of demonstrations organized through new media with big eco on traditional media)

- **The Wikileaks case: spreading information without permission: privilege o damage for citizens' lives**

(Focus: a new way to make journalism, respect of the traditional rules of journalism, world implications of this new trend)

- **Government control and its adaptability to the changes in act in the field of information**

(Focus: governmental reactions, capacity of adaptation to the technological changes and internet, attempts to limit internet's flow of information)

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Freedom of expression, journalists' work ethics and the nature of information as filtered process

The nature of the journalistic profession is not objective in itself. There are different models and different ethics in the field of information all around the world. At the same time, there exist different schools of journalism: the British impartial information school and the tie between politics and journalism, for instance. There are many dissimilar ways to see the role of the information provider around the world and many diverse criteria to judge it. The role of journalists as a filter between the happenings and the perceptions of the citizens gives a lot of space for discussion over what journalists' ethics should be; equally, what their relationships with the governments and other big powers are. Especially in the case of conflict, the role of the reporters is fundamental in creating public opinion on an issue that is often far away from the public itself. With this backdrop, cultural diplomacy is also an actor very much involved in a process: the relationship between citizens of different countries and cultural stereotypes is often the result of 'information propaganda'. However at the same time, information has an important influence on the promotion of mutual understanding. Nevertheless, sometimes freedom of expression can be reason enough for diplomatic clashes between countries, like in the case of the Chinese dissident Liu Xiaobo, Nobel Prize winner for peace and reason of frictions between China and Norway.

- **Journalism and Power: does a general ethic in journalism exist?**
(Focus: relation between journalism and power, different models of journalism, objective journalism vs. partisan journalism)
- **Role of journalism as filter of information**
(Focus: how to minimize the impact of objectiveness in the role of reporter)
- **The War reporter and his importance in the global political perception of the citizens**
(Focus: war reporter creating fears and hopes, manipulating public opinion and helping power in establish policies: the case of the Iraq war)
- **Ethic of journalism and the safety of the journalist**
(Focus: cases of journalists' life safety in the exercise of their profession)
- **Cultural Diplomacy and the importance of Media in the propaganda against cultural diversity and in the construction of cultural stereotypes**
(Focus: information as a tool of cultural diplomacy or as foe)
- **Freedom of Expression and diplomatic clashes**
(Focus: when freedom of expression causes diplomatic clashes: the case of Liu Xiaobo and Salman Rushdie)

