

## Presse release

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### **Akademie der Künste calls again for Julian Assange's release**

The Akademie der Künste is shocked to learn that the British Home Secretary Priti Patel signed the order for the extradition of Wikileaks founder Julian Assange to the USA last Friday.

In a letter to the Federal Government Commissioner for Culture and the Media, Minister of State Claudia Roth, Akademie President Jeanine Meerapfel expressed her deep concern over current developments in the Assange case. She reiterated the Akademie der Künste's demand that German and European governments should vigorously push for the release of the journalist, writer and publisher.

Meerapfel pointed out that the previous appeals of the Akademie der Künste and those of many fellow campaigners have so far gone unanswered by political leaders. Immediately after Patel's decision, Assange's lawyers announced that they would appeal against the decision to the High Court in London. "Wouldn't now at the latest be the moment for the German government or Brussels to raise their voices in support within the bounds of the possibilities that certainly exist?" asks the Akademie President in her letter to the Minister of State.

The expected transfer of Julian Assange to US courts will have far-reaching consequences for the situation of all journalists worldwide, and as a direct consequence for academics and artists as well. Nothing less than the freedom of the word is under threat. Much is at stake – fundamental democratic values. An example is being made of Assange to intimidate and weaken the "fourth power". Journalists, writers and whistleblowers must be protected. They render an important service to society.

Press and  
Public Relations

Pariser Platz 4  
10117 Berlin  
T 030 200 57-15 14  
F 030 200 57-15 08  
presse@adk.de  
www.adk.de