

**Laudatio von Europa-Staatsminister
Michael Roth MdB
anlässlich der Verleihung des PRIX EUROPA
Lifetime Achievement Award
am 21. Oktober 2016**

Ladies and gentlemen,

A lifetime achievement award is usually given to older artists with grey hair who can look back on their life's work and no longer have great plans for the future.

But that is certainly not the case today. Today, we are honouring an institution that is a mere 25 years old and has great prospects for the future.

I am delighted to present the PRIX EUROPA Lifetime Achievement Award to ARTE in honour of its work, especially in the field of intercultural dialogue and European integration.

But there is another reason why this award to ARTE is so richly deserved. As a TV channel, ARTE can accomplish what no European politician can achieve, even with the best speech. Words and deeds are a politician's tools. But ARTE can do even more because it has the most powerful tool available – images.

All of us have certain images in our minds that we will never forget. We all remember the shocking images of 9/11 when two aeroplanes were crashed into the towers of the World Trade Center in New York City. More positive images come to our minds when we think of the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989: people standing and celebrating on the Wall, Trabis driving slowly through a lane of applauding and cheering people.

We first saw all of these images on television. This medium shapes the images in our minds, tells stories and creates emotions. This also holds true for ARTE, which stands for emotional pictures and documentaries that are often dedicated to the life of the individual. In this way, ARTE helps to shape Europeans' collective consciousness.

Allow me to mention some examples.

We all remember ARTE's documentaries on the Calais Jungle, which showed that the challenges of migration are a long way from being overcome.

“Children on the Frontline” (2014, a documentary on the Syrian civil war by Marcel Mettelsiefen, conveyed very strong images of the humanitarian tragedy unfolding in Syria. The events of the civil war reported from the perspective of children had a deep effect on many people.

With regard to Franco-German topics, one programme is particularly close to my heart. The weekly programme “Karambolage” presents Franco-German characteristics and oddities in an artistic, humorous and experimental way.

Taking a fresh look at our common history, discovering culture and developing scenarios for our future lives: this is very much the role of ARTE, which enables people to experience culture in Europe and to gain a better understanding of political and social developments. The growing knowledge about differences and areas of divergence creates closeness and mutual trust between our societies. We have to thank ARTE for building bridges and opening up new channels of dialogue.

ARTE succeeds in fulfilling this task with exceptional creativity and with one great aim, namely to give European identity a face and a soul. To be frank, that is something politicians rarely accomplish. And this is why this award is well deserved.

Along with my friend Harlem Désir, I wholeheartedly congratulate ARTE on the PRIX EUROPA Lifetime Achievement Award.