

Workshop 6: Social Media: how a new ethics of communication will help to combat intolerance, negative stereotyping and stigmatization

Panelists:

Ömür Orhun, OIC

Susan Moeller, ICMIPA, University of Maryland

Alfonso Molina, Fondazione Mondo Digitale

Islam Muhammad, Anna Lindh Foundation

Moderator:

Daniela Krautsack, Cows in Jackets

Workshop Summary

The workshop focused on the emerging role of social media and the balance between regulation policies, ethics of communication and freedom of expression. Susan Moeller underlined the importance of responsible leadership and strategic communication when it comes to agenda building via social media. Islam Muhammad thinks of social media as tool to promote cross cultural debate. There are various definitions of term „Social Media“, therefore the panelists had different approaches towards its implementation in communication processes. Alfonso Molina stated that challenge within regulation policies in the social media area is not about eliminating content, instead about education on new ethics of communication in order to be able to fight discrimination and to nurture tolerance, empathy and multi- cultural exchange. Ömür Orhun talked of the ethics of communication as a soft tool when it comes to regulate social media content. Although the international laws of regulation already exist the lack of guidelines and interpretations of this political framework is missing. One suggestion was to install the UN Human Rights Council Resolution 16/18 from March 2011 as a regulating tool.

Furthermore underrepresented communities could strengthen their identities through the use of social media. Technological censorship like algorithm based search engines were seen as obstacles to the free use of social media. Not all panelists agreed on the theory that social media are a challenge for traditional mass media. However it was clearly remarked that diverse strategies of responsible leadership and good practices have to be combined in order to implement a positive future of expression.