



Embassy  
of the Federal Republic of Germany  
Ottawa

**For immediate release**

The German Embassy is pleased to announce:

**The German Federal President, Dr. Frank-Walter Steinmeier,**

has just awarded

**John Ralston Saul CC OOnt,**

the **Officer's Cross of the Order of Merit**

of the Federal Republic of Germany.

The great Canadian writer, intellectual and philosopher has long established deep links of friendship and even kinship with Germany.

His passionate defence of freedom of expression, his often prescient warnings of the threat of erosion to our democracies and his fierce dedication to the promotion of inclusive, tolerant and democratic societies reverberated globally during his tenure as International President of PEN. John Ralston Saul has engaged intellectuals all over the world, especially in Germany, in debates about the complexities of modern societies and called upon them to join in “a new coalition of decency” against narrowminded nationalism and populism.

John Ralston Saul is a frequent contributor to the Frankfurt Bookfair. He has been extremely generous with his time and connected young German and Canadian writers on many occasions. His most recent contribution was a beautiful introduction to a collection of essays by German and Canadian authors *20 on 2020: 10 Canadian and 10 German Authors on a Year Like No Other* in which he fervently argues that we must all embrace our diversity and complexity.

With his wife the Right Honourable Adrienne Clarkson, John Ralston Saul founded “6 Degrees,” a new forum of dialogue and an innovative way to engage citizens on identity, immigration and inclusion. He exported this idea to Germany, working together with the Bertelsmann Foundation and the Bosch Foundation. “6 Degrees” takes place annually at the Barenboim-Said Akademie and has become a Berlin institution.

Sabine Sparwasser, German Ambassador to Canada:

„Germany is so fortunate to have such a friend as John Ralston Saul. There is no stronger voice for the rights of minorities and for inclusive and fair democratic societies. With prescience and sharp vision, he has described the dangers and downsides of globalization long before they became obvious. But he has always seen and developed the potential of citizens, especially in Canada and Germany to continue to defend this work in progress that is our democracy.“

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About **John Ralston Saul**: John Ralston Saul is an award-winning essayist and novelist. His philosophical and historical writings, such as *Der Markt frißt seine Kinder (The Unconscious Civilization)* and *Von Erdbeeren, Wirtschaftsgipfeln und anderen Zumutungen des 21. Jahrhunderts (The Doubter's Companion)*, are constantly being reissued and translated for a broad readership, as well as taught around the world. A long-time champion of freedom of expression, he was the elected President of PEN International from 2009 to 2015. He is a leading voice in the international movement supporting immigrants and refugees. Saul has had a significant impact on political and economic thought in many countries, particularly among young people confronting what they feel is a stagnant and walled-off society. Declared a “prophet” by TIME magazine, his 16 works have been translated into 29 languages in 38 countries.

About **Frank-Walter Steinmeier**: born in 1956 in a working class family in Niedersachsen, he studied Law in Giessen and wrote his PhD on the rights of homeless citizens. He was - first in Niedersachsen and then in Berlin - Head of Chancellery for the Social Democratic Chancellor Gerhard Schröder. He served altogether for eight years as Foreign Minister of Germany in the Cabinet of Angela Merkel and was elected Federal President in 2017.

**For more information:**

Christin Furtwängler  
Spokesperson of the Embassy  
Embassy of the Federal Republic of Germany  
[pr-1@otta.diplo.de](mailto:pr-1@otta.diplo.de)  
+1 613-867-5576