

TRANSHUMANISM



WHAT DOES TRANSHUMANISM MEAN FOR HUMAN RIGHTS?

The ancient story of Icarus vividly shows us what happens when technology develops faster than ethics. It teaches us, what happens when strong technology meets a weak human spirit and when more is possible technologically than humans can control and master in a good and healthy way. Icarus' father paved the way for this with his wealth of ideas:

“Daedalus said it and, directing his mind to new inventions, he cleverly changed nature.” ([Source](#))

Changing the weak, limited nature of man in order to make the impossible possible - this has always been the dream and aspiration of transhumanism (Latin “trans”: ‘beyond, above’ and “humanus”: ‘human’). At the end of January this year, a significant milestone was reached in this particular field of research: for the first time, a so-called brain-computer interface was implanted in a human being. The 29-year-old American Noland Arbaugh, who had been paraplegic since a diving accident, became world-famous overnight as “patient zero” of the US neurotechnology company Neuralink, part of Elon Musk’s corporate empire, when his identity was announced in a livestream on the X platform on March 20. He moved a computer cursor with his thoughts alone and played chess on the screen for the whole world to see. Although he admitted that the technology was not yet perfectly developed, he

What does Transhumanism Mean for Human Rights? | 2

What does Transhumanism Mean for Human Rights? | 4

can wish for such a world.

And this makes it clear: as human rights activists in this current age, we are well advised to take a very close look at the question of what transhumanism means for human rights.

Matthias K. Boehning
ISHR Secretary General