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**Press release**

**Federal President Köhler presents the Roland Berger Human Dignity Award to Reporters Without Borders and Iranian human rights activist Dr. Shirin Ebadi**

**Munich/Berlin, April 21, 2009: At a ceremony today in Berlin, two honorees received this year's Roland Berger Human Dignity Award: the international organization "Reporters Without Borders" was recognized for its global fight for press freedom. In light of current events, the Roland Berger Foundation has decided to also honor Iranian lawyer Dr. Shirin Ebadi. Despite increasing reprisals, she persists in her struggle for human rights in her homeland and around the world. Given annually, the Roland Berger Human Dignity Award is endowed with a total of EUR 1 million. This year, EUR 900,000 will go to Reporters Without Borders and EUR 100,000 to Dr. Shirin Ebadi. The funds are to support the work of the award winners.**

In selecting Reporters Without Borders as an award winner for 2009, the Roland Berger Foundation is highlighting the importance of freedom of expression and of the press: "Reporters Without Borders represents the large numbers of journalists who in many countries risk life and limb for free and independent reporting," said the Founder of the Award, Prof. Dr. h.c. Roland Berger, in his opening remarks at the award ceremony. "Such courageous reports are necessary to raise public awareness around the world of the ideals of freedom of expression and of the press." Headquartered in Paris, Reporters Without Borders has been fighting for press freedom for nearly 25 years, as well as exposing violations of this fundamental right and helping journalists in need.

Approximately 450 guests from politics, business, culture and media attended the award ceremony at Berlin's Konzerthaus am Gendarmenmarkt. Federal President Horst Köhler presented one of the two award medals made by Jonathan Meese to Jean-François Julliard, General Secretary of Reporters Without Borders. In his acceptance speech, Julliard emphasized how important public awareness is for the work of Reporters Without Borders: "We need the pressure of public awareness to defend freedom of the press and to enable journalists to work unencumbered. The Roland Berger Human Dignity Award helps us generate this public awareness." A speech honoring award winner Reporters Without Borders was given by Georg Mascolo, Editor-in-chief of news magazine Der Spiegel and an honorary member on the Board of Trustees for the German section of Reporters Without Borders.

In light of current events, Iranian Nobel Peace Prize Laureate Dr. Shirin Ebadi also received the Roland Berger Human Dignity Award. For 30 years now, Dr. Ebadi has been fighting for human rights as a lawyer, author and

university professor, both in her homeland and worldwide. The reprisals that she and her family have long been subject to have intensified over the past few months: for example, the Defenders of Human Rights Center, an NGO she founded, was closed in December 2008 and her life was threatened. Yet Dr. Ebadi refuses to be intimidated and continues her work as a human rights lawyer. It is this courage that the Roland Berger Foundation wishes to honor by giving her the Award.

"It is a great honor for me that my legal work has been recognized and rewarded by the Roland Berger Foundation," said Shirin Ebadi in her acceptance speech. She went on to point out: "The Roland Berger Human Dignity Award honors all those in Iran who have fought for human rights and democracy over the past 50 years." Ebadi also congratulated Reporters Without Borders on receiving the Roland Berger Award: "This organization has been fighting for freedom of expression in many countries for years and has made excellent progress in this regard in my own country of Iran. May the conferment of the Roland Berger Human Dignity Award be an effective step in the implementation of the organization's goals."

The Roland Berger Human Dignity Award is given once a year. Its endowment of EUR 1 million represents long-term financial support of the award winner and/or his or her organization. The funds are earmarked for the work of the award winner(s). The Awards Committee, which selects the winners, is made up of many prominent personalities: Besides Prof. Dr. h.c. Roland Berger, Founder of the Award, the committee includes physician and actress Dr. Maria Furtwängler; Head of the Office of the Federal President and State Secretary Dr. Gert Haller; Former Foreign Minister Dr. h.c. Joschka Fischer; and Nobel Peace Prize Laureates Dr. h.c. Kofi Annan, Prof. Muhammad Yunus and Dr. Shirin Ebadi (at her own request, she did not participate in the discussions and voting on her candidacy).

**More information on the Roland Berger Human Dignity Award and the 2009 award winners (in German and English, some materials also in Farsi), a report by the Roland Berger Foundation on freedom of expression and of the press around the world, plus high-resolution images and video footage can be found at [www.rolandbergerstiftung.org](http://www.rolandbergerstiftung.org).**

*The Roland Berger Foundation, headquartered in Munich, is an independent foundation under German civil law. It was founded by Prof. Dr. h.c. Roland Berger on March 27, 2008. The Roland Berger Foundation is endowed with a foundation capital of EUR 50 million and has an Executive Board and a Board of Trustees. The Foundation has two objectives: one, the Foundation is committed to the protection of human dignity worldwide. It promotes international understanding and tolerance to create a free and peaceful society in which all people can develop their skills. The "Roland Berger Human Dignity Award – to promote peaceful coexistence in the world" is*

*endowed with one million euros. The Roland Berger Foundation also has the objective of supporting talented young people with high potential, especially those from disadvantaged backgrounds. Roland Berger's "Fit for responsibility" scholarship program is intended to provide them with a top-quality education, thus enabling them to live a self-determined life in dignity.*

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