

PRESS RELEASE

New political impulses at the gamescom congress 2025

High-ranking politicians will discuss the future of games in politics and society at gamescom 2025 on August 21 +++ Nathanael Liminski, Heike Raab, Dr. Fabian Mehring, and Renate Nikolay confirmed as speakers +++ High-profile talks and panels on democracy, innovation, social cohesion, and sustainability with games

Numerous high-ranking politicians will attend the gamescom congress in 2025 to share their expertise and perspectives on the social significance of games. In exciting panels and discussion rounds, they will join personalities from business, science and society to discuss the potential that games offer for Germany and the world. A glance at the program shows that the congress will focus on topics of high relevance to society as a whole.

Moving the industry forward

A central panel will be dedicated to the question of how Germany can catch up with the leaders in international competition. After all, games have long been a central part of the global economy. In the panel discussion **"Shooting for the pole position! How Germany wants to compete at the top worldwide,"** Nathanael Liminski, Minister for Federal and European Affairs, International Affairs and Media of the State of North Rhine-Westphalia and Head of the State Chancellery, Heike Raab (State Secretary in the State Chancellery of Rhineland-Palatinate), Joachim Ebmeyer, Member of the Bundestag as part of the CDU/CSU parliamentary group, and Benedikt Grindel, Zone Managing Director at Ubisoft, will discuss the political decisions that need to be made now. The focus will be on the question: How will the funding strategies from the coalition agreement be implemented, and how can measures taken by the federal and state governments be optimally coordinated to advance Germany as a location for the games industry? The panel will be moderated by journalist Frauke Holzmeier (RTL/ntv).

Nathanael Liminski, Minister of Media of North Rhine-Westphalia, on the gamescom congress: "With the gamescom congress 2025, North Rhine-Westphalia is once again underlining its leading role as a games location in Germany. The congress is proof of how games can drive social innovation and teach skills for the digital future. The international networking of experts from business, science, culture and politics in Cologne will strengthen North Rhine-Westphalia as a games location in the long term. As the state government, we have been supporting the games industry for years because it is an important driver of creativity, education and economic growth in our state."

Further program items with political impact

The panel discussion **"Who is Bilal? Games against radicalization and disinformation"** sends a strong signal about the potential of games as tools for preventing social extremism. The focus is on the game "Who is Bilal?", which will be released in 2026 and is being developed by Paintbucket Games on behalf of the state government of North Rhine-Westphalia. It tells the impressive story of the radicalization of a youth, thus providing realistic access to a sensitive topic.

Nathanael Liminski (Minister of Media of North Rhine-Westphalia), **Jörg Friedrich** (Paintbucket Games), **Dr. Lisa König** (Center for Didactic Computer Game Research) and **Çiğdem Uzunoğlu** (Grimme Institute) will discuss how games can serve as educational tools to raise awareness at an early stage and promote dialogue. The debate will be moderated by journalist Marcus Richter.

Science meets games – with research strength into the future

At the panel discussion **Research. Funding. Professional Association. – The Role of Science in the German Game Ecosystem**, **Dr. Fabian Mehring** (Bavarian Minister of State for Digital Affairs), **Stephan Jacob** (Darmstadt University of Applied Sciences), **Michael Hebel** (Neu-Ulm University of Applied Sciences), **Lena Falkenhagen** (Essen University of the Arts), and **Karsten Lehmann** (Ubisoft) will provide insights into the needs of science and research in games, the challenges they face, and the recognition they require in the context of higher education policy.

Age verification for digital protection of minors

The topic of age verification is currently a hot topic when it comes to a safe internet for children and young people. In the panel discussion **"Age verification – panacea or mere placebo? How can sustainable youth protection work in games and online?"** **Heike Raab** (State Secretary in the State Chancellery of Rhineland-Palatinate), **Michael Terhörst** (Office for the Enforcement of Children's Rights in Digital Services "KidD"), **Kerstin Neubert** (Nintendo of Europe) and **Svea Windwehr** (Electronic Frontier Foundation (EFF)) will discuss how technical protective measures by providers, effective parental control functions and the active role of parents can be interlinked. The panel will be moderated by Elisabeth Secker (USK).

Urban gaming

In the panel **Cities x Games: Powering the Experience Economy**, **Andree Haack** (City of Cologne), **Ailsa Buck-Dell** and **Louise Conolly-Smith** (London & Partners), **Michael French** (London Games Festival) and **Jascha Braeker** (ESL) will show how cities can strengthen the experience economy with events from the gaming ecosystem. This creates a powerful new impetus for location marketing, tourism development and digital culture that is creatively stimulating and economically significant.

Games as tools for democratic participation

In the panel discussion **"Shaping Schools with Games in North Rhine-Westphalia: Learning Democracy Through Play,"** **Monika Pieper** (Ministry of Schools and Education of North Rhine-Westphalia), **Christian Huberts** (Digital Game Culture

Foundation), **Dr. Lisa König** (Center for Didactic Computer Game Research) and **Linda Scholz** (Center for Youth Media Culture) will discuss how playful formats can be systematically integrated into schools and classrooms. The goal: to strengthen democratic skills and promote media literacy in an increasingly digitalized learning world.

Investing in digital worlds – opportunities and perspectives

The panel **Invest in Games – is it finally happening?** with **Renate Nikolay** (European Commission), **Nathalie Chollet** (European Investment Fund), **Hendrik Lesser** (EGDF / remote control productions), **Ann Becker** (Video Games Europe) and **Jan Neiiendam** (NIMBI – Danish Institute for Game Development) will shed light on the current investment landscape in the games industry.

Global responsibility through playful empowerment

In **How UNICEF Leverages The Power of Games for Every Child's Future**, **Declan Henesy** (The Lego Group), **Tatjana Sachse** (Global Video Games Coalition) and **Ann Becker** (Video Games Europe) provide exciting insights into global education and protection work through games, as well as game development as a powerful tool for inclusion, participation, and social resilience – including for disadvantaged children worldwide. The international discussion will be moderated by Patty Alleman from the UNICEF Office of Innovation.

Olympic Esports Games: On the path to sustainable integration

The panel **Olympic Esports Games: How can sustainable integration be achieved in Germany?** will feature practical insights from **Julius Althoff** (esports player foundation), **Christopher Flato** (ESBD: E-Sport-Bund Deutschland), **Evi Sutter** (ALTERNATE aTTaX Ruby), **Julia Hämel** (Olympiastützpunkt Westfalen), **Jonathan Koch** (Deutscher Segler-Verband) and **Leon Ries** (DOSB: German Olympic Sports Confederation). The discussion will focus on how Olympic e-sports competitions can be seamlessly integrated into German sports.

Health meets gaming: Innovations for better well-being

With **Level Up Wellbeing: Video Games & Health with WHO**, **Andy Pattison** from the World Health Organization (WHO) will summarize current approaches to using games for health promotion and prevention.

The full program can be found [here](#).

In 2025, the gamescom congress will once again be an integral part of the official B2B app, gamescom biz. The app gives participants access to the full program, detailed session information, and simple tools to connect with speakers and other attendees. It is available free of charge for congress visitors on both iOS and Android.

[Download the iOS app](#)

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Information on participation:

Ticket sales for the gamescom congress 2025 are already underway. A ticket costs €109, with reduced* tickets available for €39. Selected program highlights and standalone online sessions can also be followed digitally via livestream. Due to high demand, early booking is recommended to secure your place at the event. Accreditation for gamescom includes free admission to the gamescom congress. All information and tickets are available at:

<https://www.gamescom.global/en/tickets/buy-tickets>

* For school pupils, students, trainees, pensioners, seniors aged 65 and over, severely disabled persons, and voluntary social service workers (FSJ/FÖJ) upon presentation of appropriate proof.

About gamescom congress

The gamescom congress is the world's leading conference on the potential of games in a digitalized world and offers interfaces far beyond the digital and media industries. Speakers from Germany and abroad present their topics in lectures, seminars, and panel discussions. The gamescom congress takes place annually as part of gamescom in Cologne and is organized by Koelnmesse GmbH and game – the German Games Industry Association. The gamescom congress is sponsored by the state of North Rhine-Westphalia. <https://congress.gamescom.global/en/>

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