

# EUROPEAN TELEVISION DIALOGUE

Forum for the exchange of ideas and experiences between the TV industries in Eastern and Western Europe

**DATE:** 08.09.2009, 4:30 - 6:00 pm

**PLACE:** International Media Congress, ICC Berlin, Neue Kantstr./Ecke Messedamm (main entrance), Hall 7, 14057 Berlin

**TOPIC:** **The Media's Treatment of Right-Wing Extremism and Xenophobia in Europe**



It is regrettable that right-wing extremist movements flare up time and again in Europe. In many post-communist countries, nationalism and extreme right-wing parties attract alarming support in times of financial crisis and major Euroscepticism. Even the racist British National Party of one the oldest European democracies, England, succeeded in securing two seats in the EU Parliament at the recent EU elections. In Hungary, the extreme right-wing party Jobbik, which openly agitates against Jews and gypsies, achieved 15 percent at the elections for the European Parliament. There are numerous other examples.

Besides, there are professionally structured neo-Nazi networks in Europe, some of them operating underground, such as Blut und Ehre (Blood and Honour). They spread National Socialist ideas through the various Internet forums, which is a punishable offence in Germany, for example, but does not result in legal consequences in other European countries.

How the media handles right-wing extremism and xenophobia will be the focus of discussion at the EUROPEAN TELEVISION DIALOGUES, which will take place within the scope of the next Berlin Brandenburg Media Week. The panel's purpose is to discover to what extent these movements can present themselves in the media, whether they have their own communication structures and how the media – primarily television – handles this topic, if at all.

## This results in the following focal points:

- Is there an involvement of state or public-service broadcasting media with right-wing extremism and neo-fascism, especially in the younger democracies in the EU?
- What role does new media (Internet, mobile phones) play in this?
- Are such movements glorified in part, as was the case when the ORF showed a live broadcast of xenophobic politician Haider's funeral?
- Boundless freedom of the internet – or should the spreading of racist, anti-Semitic and National Socialist ideas via the Internet or other media be inhibited?
- Do we need a EU media strategy against right-wing extremist activities to secure the moral principles of European democracies?

Together with other institutions, the MDR Sputnik radio station initiated a campaign under the motto of "Respect!" in mid-May: 40,000 CDs with songs against right-wing extremism and xenophobia by popular artists of the German rock and pop scene were distributed without charge to pupils. The radio station accompanied the campaign with a programme week. Could this type of media-powered, social initiative be implemented in other countries?

### Keynote speaker and host:

### Panel guests:



**Uwe-Karsten Heye**  
The Editor-in-Chief of the German SPD party organ „Vorwärts“ and former spokesman for the German government under Gerhard Schröder, Germany



**Cecilia Bäcklander**  
Department Head of Adult Education TV and Radio Programming for the Swedish Educational Broadcasting Company, Sweden



**Christoph Lanz**  
Director of Television Deutsche Welle, Germany



**Eric Markuse**  
Head of Programming MDR SPUTNIK, Germany



**Venelin Petkov**  
Producer and Anchor of the Balkan News Corporation, Bulgaria



**Gergely Pröhle**  
Senior Consultant at Roland Berger Strategy Consultants and former ambassador of Hungary in Germany and Switzerland, Hungary

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