

[DE] Coronavirus crisis: German Bundesländer launch initiatives to support local broadcasters

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Several German Bundesländer have launched programmes to support local and regional broadcasters during the coronavirus crisis, including subsidies for their technical infrastructure costs.

In North Rhine-Westphalia, the state government, local radio representatives, infrastructure providers and the *Landesanstalt für Medien NRW* (North-Rhine Westphalia media authority) agreed the '*Solidarpakt Lokalfunk*' (local radio solidarity pact) to cover the distribution costs for local radio stations for a three-month period. This is funded mainly by the state government and the *Landesanstalt für Medien NRW*. In return, the *Verband Lokaler Rundfunk* (local broadcasters' union - VLR) and the *Verband der Betriebsgesellschaften* (union of operating companies) promised to guarantee the jobs of editorial staff until 30 September 2020.

In Baden-Württemberg, the *Landesanstalt für Kommunikation Baden-Württemberg* (Baden-Württemberg communication authority - LFK) has made nearly EUR 1 million in funding available to support the radio sector. In a press release, the LFK stressed that this was only a temporary measure. It also announced additional support measures for non-commercial radio broadcasters, with further details to be announced soon.

The *Sächsische Landesmedienanstalt* (Saxony media authority - SLM) also promised to pay the distribution costs of all Saxony's local TV stations providing news coverage of the crisis for the duration of the pandemic. It also decided to award a special prize worth a total of EUR 100 000 in recognition of the services offered by local and regional broadcasters during the crisis.

In Thüringen, local TV broadcasters can apply for a one-off state-funded grant of up to EUR 20 000. The *Thüringer Landesmedienanstalt* (Thüringen media authority - TLM), as an independent public law institution, will distribute the grants to private local television companies that find themselves in desperate need as a result of the pandemic.

All the Bundesländer concerned said they hoped the measures would protect the jobs of journalists and editorial staff because local and regional broadcasters in particular had been hit by a sharp fall in advertising revenue during the

coronavirus crisis. The main legal basis for the support they are providing is Article 40(1)(2) of the *Rundfunkstaatsvertrag* (Inter-State Broadcasting Treaty – RStV). Under this provision, the state media authorities’ share of licence fee revenues can be used to finance the technical infrastructure required under state law for private broadcasting.

Pressemitteilung der Landesanstalt für Medien NRW (LfM)

<https://www.medienanstalt-nrw.de/presse/pressemitteilungen/pressemitteilungen-2020/2020/mai/solidarpakt-lokalfunk-nrw.html>

Press release of the North-Rhine Westphalia media authority (LfM)

Pressemitteilung der Landesanstalt für Kommunikation Baden-Württemberg (LFK)

<https://www.lfk.de/aktuelles/pressecenter/pressemitteilungen/detail/artikel/foerdermittel-fuer-baden-wuerttembergische-rundfunkveranstalter.html>

Press release of the Baden-Württemberg communication authority (LFK)

Pressemitteilung der Sächsische Landesmedienanstalt (SLM)

https://www.slm-online.de/2020_pressemitteilungen-a-5288.html

Press release of the Saxony media authority (SLM)

Pressemitteilung der Thüringer Landesmedienanstalt (TLM)

<https://www.tlm.de/infothek/pressemitteilungen/pm-einzelansicht/article/soforthilfe-fuer-thueringer-lokal-tv-veranstalter-staatskanzlei-und-landesmedienanstalt-ermoeglichen-bi/>

Press release of the Thüringen media authority (TLM)

