[DE] Federal government evaluates the coronavirus pandemic's impact on culture and media

IRIS 2022-6:1/19

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Responding to a question submitted by the CDU/CSU parliamentary group, the German *Bundesregierung* (federal government) gave its views on the consequences of the coronavirus pandemic in the cultural and media sector, along with a provisional evaluation of the various coronavirus grant programmes.

The question was based on the fact that the cultural, creative and events industry had been hit particularly hard by the consequences of the coronavirus pandemic because it had been placed under heavy restrictions from the outset and had drawn little benefit from temporary relaxations of the rules. It was therefore necessary, in the coming months, to take measures to enable the cultural and media sector to survive. To this end, the economic, social and financial consequences for the sector needed to be properly measured, grant programmes evaluated and adapted, and future prospects laid out.

With regard to lost turnover in 2020 and 2021, and that forecast for 2022, the government referred to a report published in January by its *Kompetenzzentrum Kultur- und Kreativwirtschaft* (Centre of Competence for the Cultural and Creative Industry). This report suggested that the cultural and creative sector had lost EUR 15.3 billion in 2020 (–8.7% compared with 2019) and EUR 11 billion in 2021 (–6.3% compared with 2019), while losses of between EUR 2.6 billion and EUR 11.4 billion were predicted for 2022. With regard to the broadcasting industry in particular, the report pointed to the pandemic's consequences for the advertising market. Broadcasters depended heavily on advertising and their growth had been restricted by a fall in regional and local advertising income. Paid audio content had also been taken over by large streaming portals. Although demand for video content had increased, unequal conditions for competition had particularly affected private broadcasters, which faced stiff competition from public service broadcasters and major online platforms. With regard to turnover, the report noted a serious decline in 2020 (–10% compared with 2019), which had not been reversed in 2021. For 2022, the report predicted that turnover would stagnate in the worst-case scenario, while a recovery of around 3% compared with 2021 was the best that could be hoped for.

The federal government's reply also mentioned that numerous grant programmes had been set up during the previous electoral term of the German *Bundestag*

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(parliament). These included the “NEUSTART KULTUR” programme, worth EUR 2 billion, the *Sonderfonds für Kulturveranstaltungen* (Special Fund for Cultural Events), worth EUR 2.5 billion, the recovery fund for trade fairs and exhibitions, emergency aid programmes, a voucher scheme for cancelled events, cancellation fees and temporary financial assistance such as subsidies for the self-employed and hardship funds. The reply contained a breakdown of the money that had already been paid out by the various programmes.

As to whether the current measures were sufficient to protect the whole of the cultural and creative sector, or whether additional steps to mitigate the consequences of the pandemic were in the pipeline, the federal government responded that the “NEUSTART KULTUR” programme and the Special Fund for Cultural Events, which had been specifically created for the cultural sector, would continue to provide support throughout 2022 and beyond. At the same time, through measures enshrined in the coalition agreement, such as the adjustment of the government’s strategy for the cultural and creative industry and strengthening of social insurance for creative artists, new structures would be created to support the sector after the pandemic and give it long-term sustainability.

Deutscher Bundestag, Drucksache 20/1180

https://dserver.bundestag.de/btd/20/011/2001180.pdf

German parliament, document 20/1180

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