[DE] Bundestag approves Deutsche Welle task plan and calls for greater support

IRIS 2023-2:1/22

Christina Etteldorf
Institute of European Media Law

In a resolution adopted on 16 December 2022, the German *Bundestag* (lower house of parliament) approved a motion tabled by the ruling parties SPD, Bündnis 90/Die Grünen and FDP, aimed at strengthening the work of Deutsche Welle (DW), the international broadcaster of the Federal Republic of Germany. On the basis of the 2022-2025 task plan submitted by DW, the federal government, using the available budgetary resources, will help DW to readjust and clarify its content-related and organisational priorities and objectives, in particular its transformation into a digital media company, by providing funding for technical innovations. The resolution also tackles topical issues such as the fight against censorship and technical measures taken to block access to DW abroad, as well as ongoing efforts to prevent anti-Semitism within the organisation.

The resolution was adopted against the backdrop of the *Deutsche-Welle-Gesetz* (Deutsche Welle Act – DWG), which requires DW to draw up regular task plans in which it independently sets out its programming objectives, key projects and their weighting, as well as the challenges faced and adjustments that need to be made over a certain period of time. The DWG also makes provision for a consultation procedure in which both the federal government and the *Bundestag* are invited to comment on these task plans. DW had therefore submitted such a task plan for the 2022-2025 period, which takes particular account of current challenges, to the *Bundestag*.

In its resolution, the *Bundestag* discusses the current situation and the role of Germany's international broadcaster: factors such as the pandemic, the war in Europe, along with its economic and political consequences, and undemocratic developments in autocratic regimes, are creating huge challenges for free societies and liberal democracies with a pluralistic media landscape. Targeted disinformation based on fake news and deep fakes is being used to create a destabilising effect which – even for experienced media users – poses serious threats to the democratic shaping of public opinion. This makes it all the more important to provide a strong response through the media, in which DW can play a crucial role.

In response to changing media consumption habits, DW's 2022-2025 task plan focuses on efforts to increase the broadcaster's reach by strengthening its

© European Audiovisual Observatory (Council of Europe) 2026

regional expertise and presence, especially through the development of on-demand services. DW also aims to expand its global journalistic content in German, English and 30 other regional languages in high-priority target countries. These key objectives are supported by the *Bundestag*. However, the task plan also addresses recent criticism that has been directed at DW. This concerns, firstly, the use of freelance staff, with more permanent staff to be recruited in the future, and secondly, a number of anti-Semitic comments made within DW circles. Although an independent report, commissioned promptly by DW in relation to these allegations, had found that there was no "structural anti-Semitism" at DW, it referred to anti-Semitic views held by its employees, problematic comments by distributors and programming errors. The *Bundestag* believes that the measures taken by DW to address this issue must be expanded as a top priority because DW, as Germany's international broadcaster, has a particular responsibility in the debate on anti-Semitism.

The resolution also addresses the recent blocking of DW services in countries such as Russia, as well as the need for related support measures. In particular, it calls for support for DW's plans to expand its Russian-language services and its efforts to combat disinformation and propaganda related to Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine. The proposed development of free Russian-language media and media content, in collaboration with Ukraine and other European partners, as well as the strategy to create media partnerships and joint services with other international broadcasters that share the democratic and humanistic values of the European Union, should also be supported.

Deutscher Bundestag, Drucksache 20/4352, 9. November 2022

https://dserver.bundestag.de/btd/20/043/2004352.pdf

German parliament, document 20/4352, 9 November 2022

Pressemitteilung des Bundestages, 16. Dezember 2022

https://www.bundestag.de/dokumente/textarchiv/2022/kw50-de-deutsche-welle-924580

German parliament press release, 16 December 2022

© European Audiovisual Observatory (Council of Europe) 2026

© European Audiovisual Observatory (Council of Europe) 2026