



The virtual SciCon conference series | Transcript

**René van Zanten, Ida Willig, Andy Kaltenbrunner: What states are doing to promote journalism: NL / DEN / A
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Moderation: Christopher Buschow

[Christopher Buschow] Welcome, everybody. Good afternoon. Welcome to today's virtual SciCon series on: "What states are doing to promote journalism". My name is Christopher Buschow and it is my pleasure to be your host today. I am an assistant professor at Bauhaus Universität Weimar in Germany, and my work here in Weimar is primarily focused on questions of organising and financing journalism in the digital age.

So first of all, some words regarding the context of today's session. The virtual SciCon series is part of the conference Science Journalism in the Digital Age, which is organised by *Wissenschafts-Pressekonferenz*, that is the Association of German Science Journalists, and *acatech*, which is the German National Academy of Science and Engineering. And in May this year, the SciCon working conference will take place when we want to discuss what we can do for science journalism in Germany. And we want to discuss this especially against the backdrop of the expert lectures that we heard in the last couple of months, that we of course hear today and that we will hear in the weeks to come. And the working conference, as well as our online lecture series, are made possible thanks to a grant from Germany's Federal Ministry of Education and Research. All the sessions of the lecture series will be recorded and transcribed to create a knowledge repository as input for the further discussions. And you can have a look at this knowledge repository at our website science-journalism.eu. So please note that, as every lecture, also this lecture will be recorded today.

And, um, yeah, well, today is actually the second time we deal with the role of the state in journalism funding. Last week we had very, very enlightening talks with guests from Canada, from the United Kingdom and the European Union. And today, we will hear three lectures from renowned media experts on journalism funding in the Netherlands, in Denmark and Austria. I would suggest to proceed as follows. We will first hear each presentation, will be around ten to 15 minutes. And if you, the audience, have any thoughts or questions on the lectures, please don't hesitate to write them in our chat here in Zoom. And after the three inputs we will come back to your questions and we will also have the possibility to have further Q&A and discussions for around 15 minutes.

So, today we will start with René van Zanten from the Netherlands. He is a journalist by training. And today he is the General Director of the *Stimuleringsfonds voor de Journalistiek* that supports the quality, diversity and independence of journalism in

the Netherlands by promoting innovation. René, we are very delighted to have you with us. Thank you so much for joining us and for giving a presentation. And we are very much looking forward to your talk. So the floor is yours.

[René van Zanten] Thank you. And let me first say, I'm very glad to be here and very anxious to hear about the colleagues from other countries what they have to say. I will try to give you a bird's eye view of what we are doing in the Netherlands, what my organisation is doing. We are a very small organisation. We are about twelve people. But we used to be a lot smaller than this because when we started this as an organisation, as a fund, we mainly focused on supporting the media companies that were having trouble surviving, but about ten years ago, we decided this was not the way to enter the future. We have to help media organisations and startups in a very different way. So that's what my presentation is about. I hope you can see it.

[Christopher Buschow] I'm afraid we cannot see it yet.

[René van Zanten] No, but. Uh. This is what you are afraid of. I'm used to work in Teams. It's different, you don't see it now?

[Christopher Buschow] No, no, but you might just want to proceed with the presentation. We can share the slides afterwards with the participants.

[René van Zanten] OK. That's good.

[Christopher Buschow] Great.

[René van Zanten] No problem. I think there are very different ways in which a government can support the media and the way we chose in the Netherlands is to do it modest but targeted in contrast to some other countries where media support's very unfocused but very generous. And so we have a very small amount of money we work with. We used to work with about €2.5 million a year. And what we did was we had a programme for innovation, we did some research, and we had a programme for sharing knowledge where we tried to be sort of a knowledge hub about media, but we were quite successful in that. So the... my fund is starting to grow. And now we have extra money for pilots, pilots in the field of investigative journalism, that's about €3 million a year. The pilots in the field of professionalising local journalism, that's about €3 million a year, that talent development, and we also have a small programme that's basically for... to teach journalists how to defend themselves, because, as you all know, there are more and more threats against journalists and they have to know how to deal with that.

Um. So what we do is we have an innovation programme that's called the Accelerator. We don't give money for good ideas, but we accept people in the programme with great questions, great problems, and we are going to help them to solve them with ideas. That's a very, very popular programme, I must say. We have every year many more applicants than we can really allow to enter the programme.

Now, the investigative journalism is a pilot and that has to answer the question: is it possible to have investigative journalism on an acceptable level in a country without extra funding? That we think that investigative journalism is often seen as very

expensive hobby for journalists, while it should be an integrated part of journalism, of course. We try to find out if there are ways to get that, to find sustainable models to do that.

And the other pilot we have is about local news organisations. We have a lot of them. Every city has its own local broadcaster, but very often it's poorly organised, a lot of volunteers, so we want to see what it takes to get them on the level they're really contributing to the news and information system in their communities.

Knowledge sharing is what we do by hosting events. We have big events every year, not now because of corona, of course, but normally we have big events about the future, about regional journalism and things like that. And we do a lot of research. We have done a lot of research in the field of trying to describe the news ecosystem in the country, locally and in the big cities. And right now, of course, we are researching the effects of the pilots and a very important thing we do, we feel, is we execute scenario studies. So we've done a big one five years ago, and that's where we try to picture what the media scenery will look like in five or six or seven years' time. We did one, you can see it on journalism2025.com. And right now we're organising a new one: because of corona things have changed so much and there are a lot of new ingredients for the news and area of study.

On this accelerated programme, we spend about €750,000 a year and about €250,000 on coaches and mentors and people who are guiding the programme. We work in this programme by [unclear]. So we don't give, as I said, money for ideas. We allow them to enter the programme if they have a good problem and we work [unclear]. So every time we say, "You can do experiments to validate the assumptions you have in your solution and we will pay for the experiments," and this works really, really well.

We also have an Accelerator Light now that's for people, teams that don't have the time to work very intensively, but they want to know how innovation works. So that's a very successful street we work on as well. And so innovation for us is building better solutions for better problems.

The investigative journalism is a five-year programme focused on local investigative journalism, about €3 million a year, which has been successful as well, because we see that local investigative journalism teams are working together with teams that work on the federal level. And so the big players like Bellingcat, they work together with very small regional teams. And this, they had some great results, great stories that came out. We are entering a third year now and that's a programme we're very enthusiastic about.

Local broadcasting, I told you something about that. It's for us, it's to find out what it takes to get them on the level that they can work professionally, which will take much more money than they have now.

And the last thing I should tell you about is we are executing a COVID-19 relief fund and the government gave us €35 million last year. And we do that, especially on a local level. Because of lockdowns people are forced to stay home. And they wanted to know, of course, what was going on in their own town. And we gave local

broadcasters and publishers money to make sure that the news would stay, would continue to go and not be a victim of COVID because a lot of them were trying to or threatened to go bankrupt.

So that's what we do. So in general, last year we have spent about 35 plus six... about €50 million, which is very unusual for us, because as I said, we come from an organisation with €2.5 million. So we grew. But I think it's worthwhile. And this COVID programme will stop, of course. So I hope that the second half of this year will be a bit more normal than the past year has been. I think that's in general what we do. Yes.

[Christopher Buschow] Yeah, René, thank you so much for the enlightening overview what is happening in terms of state's role in journalism funding in the Netherlands. So everybody is invited to post questions into the chat. Franco Zotta already did that. But we will keep them for the moment and answer them in the Q&A round after we heard all the presentations.

So let's now proceed to Denmark. We are very happy to welcome Professor Ida Willig, she is the head of Research Group for Journalism and Democracy at Roskilde University, and she's also a member of the Danish Media Board. The Danish Media Board handles the applications for editorial production and innovation subsidies of the Kingdom of Denmark. We are very much looking forward to your presentation, Ida. Thanks for joining us today. And the floor is yours.

We cannot hear you yet, Ida, I don't know if you're still muted

[Ida Willig] No. Think I'm unmuted now?

[Christopher Buschow] No, it's perfect. That's good.

[Ida Willig] That's good. And you can see my slides.

[Christopher Buschow] Yes.

[Ida Willig] Great. Well, thank you for this invitation and for the opportunity to discuss media funding with you. It's a, I think, it's an extremely important question, which has been even more important during the past year of COVID, where we've seen media, sort of, struggle with their business models as well. So I'm looking forward to hearing your questions and to hearing from the other countries as well.

And Denmark is, oh, I'll start with the conclusions. It's a good journalistic virtue. And Denmark has what we call a dual media system. We have a very strong public service sector, strong broadcaster, which is primarily funded, or almost all only funded by public funding, and we have a private sector with privately owned media, which is also funded partially by public media subsidies. And this will be the focus of what I have to say today.

I'll also tell you a little bit about an extraordinary call for compensation for lost advertising revenue that the government introduced last year and which will go on into 2021. And maybe also tell you a little about the context because we are... the

media settlement and the media agreement are being renegotiated at the moment. So I'll give you a status quo, but things are also sort of in flux in Denmark at the moment.

And I won't go into this, but I bet that most of you know this typology in Denmark is very much a typical democratic corporatist media system. As I said, we have, we call ourselves a dual media system because we have two strong sectors. Radio and television is dominated by the public service broadcaster and is regulated by the Public Service Board and the media formerly known as newspapers and some independent online media as well. They are privately owned, but they are also partly funded by public funds. And this is the written press, the printed online press, and they are regulated by the media board, of which I'm a member.

I just tell you briefly, all this is just to illustrate what the board is. That we are appointed by the Minister of Cultural Affairs and we are appointed for our expertise. But there's also a member of the Danish Journalism Association and Danish Publishers' Association. And if you look at the Public Service Board, it'll be sort of the same principles for appointing board members.

Danish media policy – traditionally based on political consensus. We focus on diversity and pluralism – this has been in the laws from the Second World War and onwards, diversity and pluralism – and also journalistic independence. So a very important principle in Danish media law is the arm's length principle, which is the idea that media owners should not interfere with the editorial staff at all. There's an arm's length between ownership and journalistic and editorial work.

The third characteristic of Danish media policy is that the media industry is included in, in all of the sort of democratic policy processes. You can also see that there's an important member of the newspaper association in the newspaper board. But right now, when we are... with the media agreements are being renegotiated, this also involves the stakeholders and the big organisations.

Fourthly, there's a strong political history of wanting to do what we often call "market correction". We're a very small country. We have 5.8 million population and we're a very small language market. Nobody else wants to read or listen to Danish journalism anywhere else but in Denmark. So we often talk about public media support as a kind of a market correction, which makes us have the quality that we should have or the diversity of media that we should have and we wouldn't have if it was only regulated by sheer market forces.

And we traditionally work with four-year media agreements, and that goes for the public service sector as well as the written online media.

Um. There we go. I don't know if these numbers, they're sort of... maybe I should have had something in comparison, but the total number of finances, state finances, for media is about five, so that's not million, that's billion. No. Yeah. Kroners, which is approximately €660 million, I think. And half of it sort of comes from the Finance Act or the state budget and half of it comes from a media licence fee. But this is changing now because the government made an agreement in 2019 that we should make a transition from funding public service broadcasting by a media licence fee

to transitioning into a media tax fee. At the same time, there's also a reduction of the big public broadcaster.

So if you look at what is it that the state subsidises? How or how does the Danish state subsidise journalism? The big paradigmatic shift occurred in 2014. Before that, the Media Support Act was for distribution of printed news. So it was a distribution subsidy. And that, of course, meant a bias or slanting towards legacy newspapers because they were printed. And it was also a support that actually favoured print or paper being put into people's houses and not actual journalism. So with the new Act in 2014, which is a production subsidy, we no longer subsidise paper, only indirectly, but subsidise journalism. So it's the production and the innovation of journalism. And this is written news both online and in print.

There were four pools at the beginning of the law, two of them don't really work anymore. The first one was an interim production subsidy, which was to catch media that was sort of caught in between the two laws. It was used a little in the first years. A great thing is that there's a whole pool for redevelopment subsidy and that has not been used yet. That was meant for media that were in severe financial problems. But we haven't used it yet. So that's good news. And the two pools that are existing now are the editorial production subsidy, which is the largest pool. It's almost DKR 380 million, and there's an innovation pool, sorry, which is DKR 20 million. So the innovation is... the pool is for establishing new media or for innovating existing media. And the editorial production subsidy is supporting the production of editorial content.

We could talk for ages about how you define editorial content and what the criteria are and what is journalistic quality, and I don't think we have time to go into this, but there's a range of criteria. These are just some of them whereupon the editorial content is measured. And as you can see, they're sort of like proxies for what we would call quality journalism. And media cannot be owned by political parties, it has to have an editor-in-chief, it has to be a critical mass, there needs to be newsroom when news are discussed and so on. But there's a lot of other criteria [indistinct]

And some, a little more numbers here. And it's around DKR 400 million, the subsidy for the written news media. Most of it goes for editorial production support, you can see a little innovation support. And recently, just in 2020, in summer 2020, the government initiated a pool for compensating for lost advertising revenue in relation to COVID-19. And this is an extraordinary pool. It's I think it's 240 million in total and 148 was granted last year.

This is just some, I know this is difficult to read in a short time, and maybe you can just look at the list of states on the left, to say that compared to other Nordic countries, Denmark, at least when compared to them, we are sort of very generous, or the Danish state is very generous in media funding.

And what is going on right now, we are debating on and off in the public and in sort of in the media business whether we should revise the public support scheme for both PSB and privately owned media, sort of altogether. For instance, why is it two different kind of schemes, the two pools? And why is not just media support taken as one? That is one of the things that are often discussed.

Also in the current media agreement we are discussing regional news deserts since we don't have a pool like you have in the Netherlands, René, maybe we should go back and say that to the government, because we can see that the local media is some of the media that are most hurt by COVID. We also discussed the public service cutbacks because people are using public service broadcasting even more now during COVID. And we are discussing taxation on tech giants as we are all over Europe – what, how do, how to get some of the money back into the national treasure boxes. And other issues that sort of go back and forth is where the, our broadcast is very strong online in written news. Is that something that should go on? No, say the newspaper associations. We also discussed the role of boards. Is it a good system to have these kind of boards with experts and the tradition of having two boards, sort of making two different kind of systems? And we are discussing whether it's an end of the era that we've had these broad agreements with political consensus because the last agreement from 2019 was very, very narrow. And this was sort of the first time this has ever happened.

And I'll just, I can send you these because we're talking, I was talking to you, I just looked because just for your information, you can get these later. Both this is what the innovation pool has been giving to science, journalism, all kinds of science journalism. And this sort of science journalism was getting editorial production subsidies and has been since the beginning of the pool. But that's just for information.

[Christopher Buschow] Thank you, Ida, for the very, very interesting overview of what is happening in Denmark, and in particular for bringing to our attention how far Germany is lagging behind in terms of constructing a feasible media funding policy, because since we heard that Denmark changed from distribution subsidy to production subsidies in 2014 already, Germany is now introducing kind of a distribution subsidy is quite, you know, well, but let's discuss this later on, maybe.

So next and last presentation for today, and we are very delighted to have him with us, is from Austria Professor Andy Kaltenbrunner. He is a long-time journalist and internationally active media consultant. For instance, especially in his role as managing partner of *Medienhaus Wien*, in Vienna. And Andy is also one of the initiators behind the new Vienna Media Initiative with which the city of Vienna aims to support innovative approaches in journalism. And I should declare here for full transparency that I am one of the board members, of the jury members of this initiative. But, Andy, now the floor is yours. Thank you for joining us today. We are looking forward to your presentation.

[Andy Kaltenbrunner] Thank you, Christopher. Thank you, Ida and René. Well, talking, another laggard talking, when you said Germany is far behind in some processes, Austria is not so far behind investing quite a lot of money, but far behind the moment when they can say on a national level what Ida said before, we are subsidising journalism. While we are subsidising media in many different ways and that we had some presentation, I hope I can share my screen, also to give as short as possible an overview to see what our discussion and what our project in Vienna is a local project is based on and what's the media market behind. So let me please try to open the presentation. I hope you can see my... Is that the case?

[Christopher Buschow] Not yet.

[Andy Kaltenbrunner] OK, that's not good. That's not good. It should be. Before it's worked quite well. Let me try again. So let me try again, I say open the screen. Appears not. Let me try again and I'll open the screen again. Can you see it now?

[Tech support] Do you see the respective buttons at the lower end of the screen for screen sharing?

[Andy Kaltenbrunner] Yeah. I just pushed that button.

[Tech support] Mhmm.

[Andy Kaltenbrunner] OK. I did it twice, but it didn't work.

[Tech support] OK, that's OK.

[Andy Kaltenbrunner] Now it works. Well, now that we have something, it talks to me, well, so I'll make it a big one. OK, so sorry. So I go to the beginning ... that takes another few seconds because [indistinct] around.

OK, so what I try to give you is a very fast overview about, like Ida did, to understand the Austrian market and the Austrian funding system, to understand why, what's the point where we are linked to.

So the Austrian market in a nutshell, some of the of the really Specifica Austriaca, is that small newspaper markets are still very strong. So a reach, a daily reach of 60 percent of readers is something internationally, as almost all the experts know, well, there was some 70 or more percent of newspaper readers only ten years ago, a decade ago. But it's going down permanently. But still Austrian newspapers are on a high level, but it's only 14 newspapers who are sharing this market. So that tells us something, of course. We have a dual broadcasting market also, but which was introduced by the [indistinct] Germans. I mean, we'll remember that in the 80s when the private TV market opened in Germany, that was long before Austria did. So that makes, of course, some certain market situation, especially when it comes to the role of the public broadcaster, OK, not only Danske Radio is very strong, also, the ORF has been holding a very strong position because of that and other reasons. That early digitisation, if it comes to when did the web come to Austria, when were first projects launched, which was also in the 1990s, as in many other European countries, so that Austria in this sense wasn't a laggard, but only very, very few new journalistic players that could use that because of the concentration in the market. They have strong private ownership with that, with of course, a high degree of concentration, as you can see, and they have independent journalism, of course, but with strong political parallelism. And when Ida talked about the democratic corporatist system, that's one characteristics like [indistinct], knowing it's very strong in Austria that political party alignment with political parties and the strong political influence on the market still exists, I would say in many ways.

So, why are Austrian media running for funding? Well, a long time and even more now. Just to give you a few pictures, not important to understand every figure, but what you can see here is like in the largest paper, like the well-known *Kronen Zeitung*, which is a world record holder with this twen... still 27 percent of Austrians reading it daily, has lost quite a number of, the large number of its circulation and its readership over the last ten, twelve years. And all the other newspapers did, too. So they are still large in some way on the local level, the local newspapers on the national level. But the main problem is the income that's coming from readership, from subscription and others. While twelve years ago, some 90 percent were paid newspapers on the market, now it's only 50 percent. That's the growth of the free papers, which is keeping up the readership. There's two big newspapers that are for free, and many others are given away for free in the market to keep up the circulation. So money's... they're running out of money coming from that... from still in a better situation than other countries.

And that's just the very first picture on the TV market, which it should give you an impression how much it is split on top of the list, of course, the public broadcaster with this 30 percent market share, but all the others on the list share the rest of the market, which makes it complicated, of course. If you stay on a small level and, even more differently to the Dutch situation or differently to the Danish situation, Austria is competing in the German market, in the German-speaking market. So, of course, national news media situation and journalism is completely different with its options in some way, but also with its risks. And the Austrians see more the risks now than the options to expand to a larger market. So also private broadcasting, late introduced and with big competition, has its problems.

And just to give you one figure, and the last figure of about the market situation to make you understand what we are discussing and why. Well, as I said, media companies, even the biggest ones, are running for all kinds of subsidies, funding, public help. So the biggest print company would be the Mediaprint owning the two largest newspapers and a lot of operations. Its turnover is seven... €400 million and its profit before taxes, before COVID, was only 20 million. So that's three to four percent, which isn't so much as we know, there have been the golden ages when every newspaper made a profit of 10 to 20 percent of its turnover long ago. And there's others like the News-Gruppe, I just highlighted the two examples, which is the largest magazine group in Austria, holding the most important political and economical weeklies and monthly magazine titles, which already was in red figures two years ago. So that's why that money is needed.

And while, if you talk about journalism coming from our own research, we did a rapid counting for two years in all the media companies, and we did it 16 years ago, the last time before. And what happened to journalism? We lost 25 percent of the fully paid journalists in twelve years. So that's something that should concern society in some way, not only the media companies, and in some ways, that's in some way that is not yet clear what this means for the quality of public debate and public discussion. But does the state do what in very different kinds in Austria? To give a short overview.

Since long time in some way, that's a private broadcast fund that gives €20 million, well, to support the private broadcasters, I don't speak about criteria. Very often I should say the criteria is not the best toolset [indistinct, mystical?].

For non-commercial broadcasters, and non-commercial broadcasters, which are very much like to say a personal thing, which is because in some way, it's the only one which was given to journalism, even if it was citizen journalism, because the clear connection is that the channels that are citizen channels, to support them and that some of them on TV and in radio, and while sooner or later they will expand most strongly, hopefully also to the digital world, as they do now.

That's press subsidies, the traditional press subsidies, in some way in the Scandinavian tradition founded in the 70s and Austria and not, well reformed two or three times, but still with the idea of funding press as it was in the 70s. That's one problem.

And there were corona subsidies, some special ones for dailies, weeklies, private and non-commercial broadcasters. Another, well, around 30 million last year given through different criteria and not too intelligent either. But as I said, support in the moment of crisis in the last year.

Here it comes where's the most money, which is in some way a subsidy, even if not called like this: public advertisement, which means state ministries, public organisations doing advertisements and the money they've been using in 2019 has been €178 million. That's about six times the normal press subsidy. Of course, there's a need for information of the citizen, but as you can easily find out, and we did a study on this just recently, what, how did the government use its money, according to which criteria, which is not very transparent? Well, we could also see that internationally that's much more money per capita than in every other Western European democracy. So the Austrians invest much more money to inform their citizens, whatever is the reason for them. And actually, that's where the market is regulated in a very non-transparent way, which is the problem.

Those advertising activities in 2020 went on even stronger. Well, because of corona, information and of course, of the need of media to have more money in the crisis situation. And as some digital transition subsidy planned with a new law that's just in the parliament to be discussed. And the Austrian government announced that only the government itself, ministries and the chancellor, will use €180 million throughout the next four years for its information campaigns, which is double as it was until now. Which makes it also an interesting point to be discussed politically, what that means. Everybody knows what I mean, because that's a discussion we have in many countries. What does that mean if money is given by the government directly and a not completely transparent way?

So what I'm talking about now, that's where, very fast, where the Austrian example I had the chance to support, to say, as with the research team *Medienhaus Wien*, which is a private research organisation, including colleagues from different universities, from industry, to do, as we say, intelligent things, as we hope that usually are not done otherwise.

And the city of Vienna asked me some two years ago in 2019, so you're permanently complaining that journalism is not funded? We want to do that in Austria. What happened to city in a nutshell, again, said, well, okay, to do a clever plan together with our colleagues here in the city, then we'll finance, which they did with the budget finally of 2.5 million annually. Journalism initiatives, journalism innovation, as you say, that this is necessary. So it started only last year. So it's only one year of experience.

And let me show you how they promote it and that gives us an overview of what happened in year and then finally, maybe some outlook: what are the learnings of only one year with that programme?

So that's how they promoted themselves. The carrier is the so-called *Wirtschaftsagentur*, which is the business agency of the city of Vienna, almost 100 percent city-owned, but that's the organisation which gives money to all kinds of initiatives, of business initiatives, of private industries, of private commerce, of, and in this case, that's the organisational carrier also.

And it started two funding programmes then according to, I would say, our plan, we developed in only a few months and we had a closer look at talking to many of your projects, also: who does what and what's the learning and what can be read out of it. But and which is 7.5 millions budget for the next three years. That was the decision of the Vienna government, not government, the Vienna parliament, so to say, funded by the city. And one major decision was this money is given or will be decided about the budgets, will be decided in the budget to be decided by an independent jury of experts. So that's what's one key point we had in mind, and especially situation as I told you, our politics is very often behind all kind of funding. And there's big scepticism also in the media organisations, whatever money is meant for when politics is behind.

So the bigger one system is the so-called *Medienprojekt* in German, the media project, which is for, for example, legacy media companies, for newly funded media companies, which are €100,000 funding for new ideas, for innovative ideas, for further development of the digitalisation processes where journalism is involved mainly. And that's why some extra points I mentioned one, which is sort of kind of a regulation like a women's bonus, which means if the project is directed by a woman, by a female member of the team, that's an extra bonus. So that some of these quality points are introduced in the system.

And the point is, what's the system looking for? According to the explanation, is mine, it's usually in German, but it's the look and feel how the *Wirtschaftsagentur* is promoting it or informing in short. So new ideas, journalism quality. There's one limitation. The operation has to be based in Vienna. It's local. It's coming... can be coming from media companies according to Austrian media law. So that's the definition for that. That's also a limitation. It can be companies that are under construction, but with the clear construction process to help the entrepreneur projects and, well, and one other limitation, I'll come back to that, is with a sustainable business model. So the business model is something that is to be discussed in that track of the support and that track of the subsidies. And to make clear what's not, some examples, what's not supported: if there's only a pure

technical solution, somebody coming, “I need a new CMS being funded by someone”, sorry, no. It’s not for corporate publishing, it’s not for association member newspapers, which are not independent. It’s not for PR agency journalism, all that kind of non-autonomous journalism.

That’s something very often also for the jury to decide, because there’s always grey lines, different decisions to make. And there’s another one which I can always say I was very proud of, to get the team through the system, which is not so much about money, but it’s called *Medienstart*. It’s €10,000 max. So usually it’s the €10,000 to good ideas of individual journalists and small media companies. Limitation is max. ten members, ten employees and for... get concept for the development, for the innovation, and to give them the chance to further develop their idea, the project development, to plan measures, to support training, to do some international benchmarking, maybe too to travel, to see a similar project in another country, to learn from it, to focus and, well, which focuses on socially relevant content and diversity and should be for the future media, a contribution to media, more media plurality in the city.

It’s not so much money, but I’m completely convinced, and many of the team were, that this €10,000 or sometimes €8,000 might make more, may have more effect on the long run than some of the some of the hundreds, thousands given in the traditional way.

So how is this done in their short proposals? It’s not so difficult. In some way it’s bureaucratic for some of the organisations, of course, to have to fill in papers and to have to answer questions, but not too difficult with a lot of help from that business agency. There’s a formality check first if it fits into the programme. And then there’s the jury meetings where the invited projects can be discussed. Also, there are hearings not in person that had been in 2020 in Vienna as planned with all the international jury members also, but on Zoom usually because of COVID, which was a pity. And then there’s the decision of the jury and the formal decision of the agency, where there’s a presidium, which has sort of never denied any of the suggestions of the jury, but has an official control function because it’s public money that’s used, so they have to have a close second look, if everything was alright with what the jury has decided.

So to give you an idea of what happened in this only first year and two rounds of proposals: so there were of the big project, *Medienprojekt*, submissions that had been 68, of those 23 have been funded. In the smaller ones, as you can see, of the 28, 24 have been funded, a high percentage, where the, all the true risk, taking more risk and say, OK, let’s try them, let’s give them a chance that there were novel ideas. And we are sure not each and every of them will be a big success. But we have to find out. And if it’s plausible, it’s well explained, then we’ll give such a small project, some ideas, has a chance to prove maybe using a little bit of money for doing the next step. So that’s the idea.

That’s the jury. What some of the colleagues, the Germans might know. I’ve put Christopher first on the list, also for transparency. The main, one main plan for us was to have some local knowledge, that complete independence of those people. So I think I’ve seen her in a Zoom chat today, Daniela Krauss, for example, the General

Secretary of the Press Club, of the Journalists' Press Club, that traditionally is one of the members. My colleague Matthias Karmasin from the Austrian Academy of Sciences of the communications sector. And many German colleagues, or also another one, for example, some might know Anita Zielina who is now in CUNY in New York, originally Austrian, so she knows a bit, or a lot, of the Austrian market still in after being away ten years, in international media management like Neue Zürcher, there for the digital management and now in the City University.

So that was one key point for us to have a strong jury. And let me maybe finish with, fast, with some learnings for the moment, maybe for our discussion, also. A few of them we have discussed, after only one year with not, well, hoping to learn from all your experience now so much more again. But our first-year learning was: generally speaking, the response in Austria was very high in the industry and very positive compared to the little money that is given, I mean, that was 2.5 million. Of course, that's money. But compared to the many millions I showed you before, why was that? Because the clear focus on journalism was, I mean, something that was so well-received in journalism. Not surprising, but people very well understood that something different for Austria. And also the idea of the independent jury, even projects I talked to some that were rejected because of quality differences, because of quality problems or other points, said, well, but the process was clear, transparent. We understand that. We learned from the feedback and we'll try again, maybe or so. So that was really positive to really focus, to have the clear focus on innovation journalism.

The quality of submissions still is very variable. I mean, there's good ones and bad, but, well, not so well-developed ones. But what we can see that, of course, there's a lot of room for improvement and that the support is needed. Also, the support by the organisation, by the business agency. But more than the business agency. Well, but some innovation plans are still... need still more background, which means, well, I'll come back to that one.

But what we see that's not solved now is as mentioned, and that is the growing sector of non-profit journalism is not solved by that kind of programme, which is clearly linked to a business plan. Very often we see very interesting, for sure, more in your countries even, interesting journalistic plans with that, which definitely, like in the US, would be the foundationbacking. But we don't have that kind of foundation backing in Austria, there's no tradition for that. So we have to think about, on the local level at least, we want to have to support that kind of ideas that never will be big business. And that needs another kind of support and funding programme linked to another organisation, which is not the business agency of a city.

And in addition to that kind of all the support that was well received, we can see that, and I heard very well what René was saying, with an open ear, that, kind of, now development of an ecosystem with training, with networking, with research, much more research, more research needed as we research, as usual trying to say. And that's one important learning. We still have to find out how to do that. Our role in that or my role in that also as a person is rather the advisory role, we're not the city, we're not permanently linked to this, but our suggestion now was from the very beginning, but now at the point has come to discuss also, how do we develop an

ecosystem that supports journalism and innovation and brings together the people who are interested in that.

So that was a fast overview about the Austrian situation. And maybe you switch off my thing now.

[Christopher Buschow] Thank you very much, Andy, for bringing to our attention how the situation in Austria is currently developing and also what Vienna is doing here. So first of all, thanks to all of you: thanks to Ida, thanks to René, thanks to Andy for being with us and for now going into discussion.

We already have some questions in the chat. And I'd like to invite the audience to post more questions if you want to ask our lecturers. So maybe we can start with a question. I could join one question from Franco Zotta and Anja Noster. So Franco is interested how the innovation, how juries are composed – Andy has already highlighted that for Vienna, but we might go in more detail for Denmark and the Netherlands. So first of all, are there other people besides media experts at your boards? And I would also be interested: are there any conflicts about these boards? I mean, Ida, you already highlighted that there might be some discussions if these boards are really fine and what our problems may be. And so maybe you can say something on... regarding this question and additionally on the question: what are central conditions for providing funding? This was the question of Anja Noster, if this project is rather digitally focused or also on print? It would be great if Ida and René, if you could highlight that.

[René van Zanten] You have an order too? Who would you like to answer first? Well, we have different juries, that you may call for, for different programmes, and we don't use our board for that. And so we ask people from mostly universities, experts in the field, to gather around a specific programme and help us to decide which programmes, which teams should be allowed to enter and which are not. So we have different juries for every programme every year.

[Christopher Buschow] But only media experts, not politicians or any of these kind of, these actors?

[René van Zanten] No, never politicians, they are always either the people who are experienced in the field of journalism or come from universities, yeah.

[Christopher Buschow] And are there any discussions in the Netherlands on the topic if that is a good way to select participants for your programmes?

[René van Zanten] No, not really. No, we had some... one court case around this, but because they wanted to know the names of the people who did it. That's always a sort of privacy thing. So we select people, we ask people to be in the selection board for a year. And there's always a question, do you publish their names because there are always, and increasingly so, people who get angry if they don't get funding from the programme. So that's why it's

[Franco Zotta] Renee, can I ask another question? Do you have any experts for innovation processes...

[René van Zanten] Yes.

[Franco Zotta] ...which are not connected with the media system?

[René van Zanten] No, we have a whole team of professors and coaches and mentors and experts. And they are, you know, they guide these people who are entering our programme, but as I told you, we have a different programme now that we don't give money for good ideas. And then that has to do with a little bit of experience because people tend to be in love with their idea and spend all their money on proving that the idea is really excellent. And we know that there's no such thing as a perfect idea. You have to change your idea every time. So that's why I told you we give... we allow them to enter the programme if they have a good problem. And then we ask them, "So what's your solution to this problem? For whom are you making the solution? And how can you be sure that those people are going to use your solution?" So that's basically how our programme works. So every time they have to do experiments to see if what they thought is correct, or if they should go in a different direction. So we have experts to help find teams, good teams with good problems. That's the main thing that we do.

[Christopher Buschow] It's a very smart way, but obviously also needs a lot of coaching, training, all these things that Denmark and Austria obviously at the moment do not have. I don't know. Maybe Ida, you can highlight more how if there is coaching, training for the ecosystem.

[Ida Willig] Now, coaching would definitely be one of the inspirations that Denmark could draw from the Netherlands, to answer one of the questions from Jonathan, I think. The question about the jury and what it means and whether there's a debate about juries, I think in Denmark there's a... there's been a debate on the public service... a recent public debate on the public service board, which made a decision to subsidise to, in fact, close down one radio station and open another one, which was very criticised and very debated. But it's very important to say, at least with... from the experience I have in the media board, that we have a whole range of criteria. So we have both qualification criteria, who qualifies to be able to apply to have two or three journalists working in order to create an environment? And then, and this is answering a question from Ilja, we have a different set of pay criteria as well. So one round is that if you're able to apply and the other one is then pay criteria, that, for instance, made sure that the large media companies, that there's a limit to how much subsidies they can have. So even though they grow, they can't have all of the subsidies.

Are they fair, these criteria? They're stated in the law, they're stated in the pre-words to the law and of course, there's sometimes media that are very, very unhappy with decisions that are made and will make sure that members of the board knows it and that the public knows it. But I'd like to tell you about one example, because the question of sort of quality or estimation or maybe even taste is not that relevant in the Danish case because we have these objective criteria. So this, for instance, means that we had a very, maybe almost an all-right media, a very, very, very far on a political scale right media. And they got media support in one of the first rounds, one of the first years. And there were quite a lot of debates

about that. And people were upset. Is this journalism and is this a quality journalism? But they met the criteria at that time. They had journalists working for them. They did news stories. So that's... and that's the criteria that we work in. So nobody is... we are not experts on good journalism and/or what is the right kind of journalism. We follow the objective criteria and then we sort of make our decisions on subsidies as well. So there are, of course, some grey zones where we have to... where the law is not very clear or whether the criteria can be sort of discussed. But in most cases, it's... we can follow the criteria stated in the law and make the decisions upon that. I think that answers most, I hope.

[Christopher Buschow] Yeah, thanks. Very, very interesting to see the situation. And Andy, you might want to elaborate on Holger's question. Holger Hettwer asks if the state media funding is becoming more disputed in Austria or also taking Ida's argument that political consensus becomes more narrow. Could you... What's your take on that?

[Andy Kaltenbrunner] Well, definitely it becomes more disputed. I mean, more disputed in that sense means that the small percentage of people interested in a topic coming from the industry and the political group that is interested is discussing it a lot now. The majority of Austrians is not really interested in the topic and is not really well-informed about what's going on.

So we could see that by the advertisement, what is this debate we've had recently after we, we in that case meaning, as we did a study on how did the government spend the money, for which daily newspapers and is the reason... that sounds... does that sound reasonable and fair and so? Which is definitely, it was not throughout the years 2018 and 19. And then we could see that was published. And many publishers and many news media informed about the results. And then there was kind of a debate more publicly about how should governments use public money to inform its citizens, especially if that is some... considered some kind of subsidy and not only information. So does it make sense to give them a huge amount of money, the huge amount of money, two thirds of the money was given to the three tabloid newspapers we have in Austria, and the other eleven had to share the rest 30 percent. Which I mean, well, if you have good arguments for that and the government hadn't of course, I could say, of course, I mean, there were arguments, sort of, they are printing more copies and we have to help them printing more copies so they need more money. That's why we do our ads there, which I mean, yeah, I don't want to touch it here, I've been in so many debates.

So you have that kind of starting debate. It's an experts' debate, but it's getting in Austria it's being stronger and stronger and stronger. And so that's one thing I hope, with the *Wiener Medieninitiative* is that sort of a role model for debate or to show with I mean, perhaps, of course, many news organisations and journalists also, I hope so. Many do hope so. But besides that, to be sort of an example today also like see not only other countries can do that, not only Denmark can have... think about financing journalism. We can do that. And even if we do it on the local level, maybe we can transfer this debate, this dispute on the national level also with the new laws coming out. Unfortunately, we have not been very successful with the newest one I've seen. So there's still only a few elements, too few elements, that are

orientated towards supporting journalism, independent journalism, but some at least. So the discussion just has started, I would say.

[Christopher Buschow] I'm afraid we are running a bit out of time, but I'd like to ask René on some of the conditions of the Accelerator, because we have a question from Franco Zotta. He's interested: when does the Accelerator call an innovation successful? This is his first question. And then like two technical questions. How long does the funding go and what is the maximum amount of funding that the SVDJ Accelerator can give out to each project?

[René van Zanten] We consider it to be successful if it's still there a year after the programme stopped. It's even more successful if the solution they found is being applied by more parties. And the interesting thing is by doing it the way we do it now, the success rate is close to 100 percent, where it used to be 50 at the most. So we're very happy with the way things are going now. We still think that there should be sort of follow-up programme for the programmes. But until now... but what we do is at the end of the [ride?], which takes about half a year, the programme takes about half a year, and then we have a big congress, conference, it's about tomorrow's media, the name, and we invite people who could be launching partners, financiers, you know, so we have a room with five or six hundred people who are generally interested in these startups. So that works very well, I must say. So they make contacts and that get confirmed.

The other question: how much money do they get? We have money for the programme, so some can do experiments for €10 and others need €200,000 to do their experiments. And that's all OK. But when they reach €750,000 altogether, it's, we have no more money. It's very simple.

[Christopher Buschow] It's a very flexible way. Very, very interesting.

[René van Zanten] Yeah, yeah, we have no ceilings or we don't, no.

[Christopher Buschow] Thanks for sharing. So let's end this very, very inspiring debate with one question from Jonathan. He was a guest last week. He is doing the Public Interest News Fund in the U.K. and he presented to us how the UK is doing state media funding. And he said it's not a best practice case that I remember very, very well that he said that. But now he has the question for all the panellists. And I would love to hear your short answer to this question. If you could steal one idea from a panellist today for your country's media funding strategy, what would that be? And we might start with... just start maybe.

[Andy Kaltenbrunner] Maybe in reverse order, so I...

[Christopher Buschow] OK, fine!

[Andy Kaltenbrunner] I can be fast. We have stolen so many already by reading what you did and what the developments [indistinct] and what the Danish colleagues did. And so we've been stealing quite a time.

From today's presentation, two things that strike me, and that's for sure as something we need. The one thing was the ecosystem question, of course, how to develop that and to learn from that. That's I think that's the most important thing for the little project we have in Vienna now, which has so much interest that, but to really base it more... better than today, we need to, well, find ways how to do that. That's one thing, local research can be very important in Austria also after the COVID situation and the situation of local journalism, because there's no local journalism at all. And just to give you one thing, what always strikes me as working in different parts, and today, I'm coming to you from Spain, where I work here in the university, and in Spain we have several hundred local digital news operations that had been starting throughout the last year. Some very, very good ones, coming from also from the journalistic point of view. And in Vienna, in Austria in general, there's almost none. I mean, there's a few. So there's some research needed. I will steal the idea, but we'll have to steal the money for that idea also that the research is funded. So that's another one I would... a big take away for me from today.

[Christopher Buschow] Well, OK, reverse order, then Ida would be next.

[Ida Willig] I would steal the idea of the *Medienstart* from Austria, Andy, and the focus on how very, very little money can make a huge difference. I think that's a brilliant idea. And from the Netherlands, I would steal the focus on the whole mentoring, the idea of mentoring, of putting people together, of creating a network, of giving not just money, but giving competences that I think that's an excellent idea as well.

[Christopher Buschow] OK, Renee.

[René van Zanten] We had a programme which was called the Challenge, where we give, gave, I think it was €5,000 max. for a good idea to especially young people. And we don't have the programme anymore. But now hearing Andy I think we will reinstate this programme because it's true that sometimes especially young people can do wonders with a very small amount of money. And the other thing is, and that goes for both of them, we started out as a fund, but that was 35 years ago, that was helping, let's say, mainstream media outlets, especially newspapers, who got into trouble. And we drifted away from that because we thought that that's not really the answer, they should renew, reinvent themselves, go to the digital age in order to survive. So we don't deal a lot with mainstream media anymore, and you have a lot more experience with that, I can hear from both your stories, so I would like to know a little bit more about them.

What we see in our Accelerator programme is that if we have people with innovative ideas, with new ideas coming from mainstream media, they have another problem. Their biggest problem is how to convince my editor-in-chief or my publisher that this is really a good idea and we should do that. So we... I'd like to know how you tackle that. So I'll come back to you on that.

[Christopher Buschow] Great. Yeah, I think we could discuss on and on, but actually we ran out of time. So thank you all. Thank you, Ida. thank you, Andy, thank you René for sharing your learnings with us today. That was very, very enlightening. And

I think Germany can learn very, very much from our European neighbours, that I have to say.

Jonathan asked if we can share the slides with the audience, and I think that will be, yes, I think, OK, great. So we will make that happen.

To end our today's session. I would like to thank all our audience as well and I'd like to invite you to the next lecture of the ScoiCon lecture series that will be on Wednesday next week, March 24 at four p.m., I think with Anya Schiffrin on "Saving Journalism: A Vision for the Post-Covid World". And if you like to know the next lecture dates and want to take a look at our knowledge repository, you're very much invited to visit our website science-journalism.eu. There you will find all the information. So thanks again for joining us today, for being part of this. Was a great pleasure for me. And have a nice evening. Goodbye.

[René van Zanten] Thank you.

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