

**BDZV Congress 2017****President's speech at the opening****Dr. Mathias Döpfner****Stuttgart, September 18, 1 p.m.**

The election is in one week. In Martin Schulz and Horst Seehofer, we have two of the most interesting of all possible speakers as guests. And from Jogi Löw we want to learn how to coach winning.

Let me therefore get straight to the point. Having outlined our media policy priorities in detail this morning, I now have but one single message. Fight for the future of free societies through free and this means critical journalism! The idea is not new and it has already been overworked from many a soap-box. In the meantime, however, the situation is serious. Throughout the world, things are not looking good as regards to free societies and critical journalism. Your responsibility as publishers is – forgive the pathos – of historic importance.

Three weeks this summer: at the end of July, Ahmad A., a Palestinian, stabbed a 50-year-old man in an Edeka supermarket in Hamburg. He wounded a further seven seriously. While he was stabbing, the man repeatedly cried out "Allahu akbar", God is great. On 9 August, Hamou Benlatrèche, a 36-year-old Algerian, ran over six soldiers in the town of Levallois-Perret, bordering Paris. Fortunately, they all survived. Three days earlier, an Islamist tried to stab people with a knife in front of the Eiffel Tower. The police prevented him from carrying out the crime and arrested him. On 18 August, a young man called Abderrahman Mechkah killed two people in the Finnish city of Turku. And wounded eight more. The day before, twelve terrorists murdered 13 people on the Boulevard La Rambla in Barcelona. They injured 119 other people, many of them seriously. Hours later, the terrorist organization "Islamic State" announced on its news channel "Amaq": the perpetrators were soldiers belonging to it.

And on Friday, a home-made, remotely detonated bomb exploded in the London underground. Fortunately there was no loss of life. And in Paris another terrorist attacked several soldiers, patrolling the city, with a knife.

Twenty years ago, Samuel Huntington published his theses on the Clash of Civilizations. The Harvard professor claimed that after the end of the Cold War, new conflicts would arise between different cultures and religions. Huntington's theses were much disputed at the time. Today they are reality. Terrorism is commonplace in Europe. And has been for 16 years. In 2001, on 9/11, terrorists murdered some 3,000 people. The frequency of these attacks has been increasing ever since.

We must take care that we don't soon find ourselves in the world that Michel Houellebecq describes in his book "Submission". A world in which attacks in Europe's major cities are part of everyday life. It is not something we can allow ourselves to get accustomed to. This is what happens in Houellebecq's „Submission“. The liberal French become accustomed to the enemies of freedom: it begins gradually, women no longer wear miniskirts, more and more of them convert to Islam in order to avoid attracting unwanted attention to themselves.

This is not yet the case here in Germany, but we are seeing the first signs more and more often. Lidl traditionally prints numerous products with a picture from Greece. It shows a picturesque landscape in which you can also see churches. So as not to offend any of its customers, Lidl removed the crosses from the churches. Only a few days ago, the Stadt-Kurier newspaper from Neuss reported that the traditional smoked Bockwurst sausage in the open-air swimming pool had been abolished. The reason: pork. Halal is no longer restricted to only Turkish or Arab restaurants. To put it bluntly: I wouldn't be worried about any new addition to a menu. Let people eat insects, vegetarian, vegan, snails, offal, halal or kosher. What worries me is the opposite: the striking-off. The end of variety. The worst of all is striking off from fear. The beginning of submission.

It is not only when it comes to food that we run the risk of sacrificing the rule of law and culture to the expectations of a small, radical minority. The Commissioner for Integration of the Federal Government, Aydan Özoguz, last year warned against a general ban on child marriages. Seriously. This year in Ramadan, the district mayor of Berlin-Neukölln tried to negotiate a twelve-point plan with 20 mosque associations. What was there to negotiate? For example, that students who do not fast should not

be treated with contempt because of this. That primary school pupils should be allowed to interrupt the fast for health reasons. A matter of course? Not at all. In the end, only three Imams signed the agreement. Meanwhile, in a school in Marzahn, harmless nude pictures were taken down because Muslims attended German courses there. In order not to offend the Iranian President Hassan Ruhani, naked statues have been hidden in coffin-like wooden crates on the Capitoline Hill in Rome. Occidental cultural understanding was also temporarily buried. For the statues on the Roman Capitoline Hill are an integral part of Western cultural history.

There are countless other cases. Contrary to what many people believe or would have us believe, accustoming the majority to an intolerant minority is by no means an exception. This is shown by the philosopher and mathematician Nassim Nicholas Taleb in his brilliant essay: "The Most Intolerant Wins: The Dictatorship of the Small Minority". And all around the world, more and more people are now attempting to win through intolerance.

At the beginning of this month, a woman was raped in Leipzig. She had to undergo emergency surgery. The culprit is unknown. But in this case, his origin doesn't make any difference whatsoever. A police spokesman said: "It would be better to go jogging in pairs, or at least to make sure that someone else is always somewhere nearby". This statement is, at the very least, a suspension of the rule of law in Leipzig Rosental. In Hamburg, violent left-wing criminals put an entire city in a state of emergency before the eyes of the world at the G20 summit. At times, the police were no longer able to ensure the safety of their citizens. At the same time, hardly a week goes by in which right-wing extremist violence and acts of anti-Semitism do not shake the country. Five Berlin schools alone reported anti-Semitic assaults in the past year. The numbers are continuing to rise.

The FAZ recently reported on a study for which more than 500 Jews in Germany were interviewed. It was commissioned by the Bundestag. Last year alone, 62 percent of the interviewees had had to listen to negative insinuations. 29 percent reported insults and harassment. Because they were Jews. And three percent had been physically attacked within the past twelve months.

The fewest cases are made public, if they are, they seem strangely commonplace: in Berlin Mitte, a burger chef tells a guest that he doesn't serve Jews. In Kreuzberg, young people spit at someone for wearing a skullcap. More and more Jews are therefore thinking about leaving Germany. This is also the Germany of today. Only a few days ago at an international match of the national team, Germans in Prague were heard bawling "Sieg Heil" in the stadium. Eyewitnesses report that the German Nazis had earlier forced landlords in Prague to play right-wing music under threat of physical violence. In the city in which and from where, only 70 years ago, the "Reich Protector of Bohemia and Moravia" had had thousands of people murdered.

Meanwhile, the AfD's front-running candidate Alice Weidel has very probably written at least one email that is so conspiracy-theoretical, anti-state and ethnically intolerant that it is difficult to know whether this way of thinking is still AfD or indeed already NPD, or how big the difference between the two is.

While the rule of law and democracy have a headwind in Germany, they are facing a storm surge in many other countries: Meşale Tolu is a German journalist. She works regularly in Turkey, the country from which part of her family originates. On the night of April 30, her apartment in Istanbul was stormed by anti-terrorist units. She was arrested and her two-year-old child left behind with neighbors unknown to her. The Turkish authorities did not inform the Germans about the arrest. This is contrary to international law. Her two-year-old son meanwhile lives with her in prison, cooped up in a cell with 24 other women. It is expected that Meşale Tolu will be charged with “terrorist propaganda” and “membership of a terrorist organization”. She is facing 15 years in prison. According to everything we know, she was arrested for doing her job. She attended an event in memory of a Kurdish activist – as a journalist.

Meşale Tolu shares her fate with the reporter Deniz Yücel from the “Welt” and also the human rights expert Peter Steudtner. All three are in prison in Turkey – a country that no longer wants to be a constitutional state. In the meantime, it is sufficient to enter as a normal tourist with German citizenship in order – if you are unlucky – to be arrested arbitrarily. Turkey, our closest ally in the Muslim world to date, is becoming estranged. A democracy has become an autocracy.

And what are we doing?

It is not only in Turkey that the government is turning away from liberal, western values. The freedom of the press was threatened more severely in 2016 than it has been for 13 years. Only 13 percent of the population still has access to free media. Enemies of an open society are not only to be found in Azerbaijan, Cuba, Eritrea, Iran, North Korea, Syria and China. Nuclear tests in North Korea, which had long been dismissed as folklore, are becoming an increasingly active and uncontrollable threat to world peace. Autocracy as a form of government is also gaining ground in our neighborhood: in addition to Turkey, more and more Eastern European countries are saying goodbye to the fundamental values of freedom and democracy and declaring critical reporting to be a disruptive factor.

What is even worse is the situation in our big neighbor to the east: this year alone, three reporters were murdered in Russia: Yevgeny Khamaganov in Ulan-Ude,

Nikolay Andrushchenko in St. Petersburg and Dmitry Popkov in Minusinsk. And ten days ago, the journalist Yulia Latynina, who is critical of the government, fled Russia. Her flight was preceded by a continuous escalation: in August 2016 she had feces thrown at her. In July 2017, a strong-smelling substance had been sprayed into her house. On 3 September, her car was set alight – right next to the wooden house where she lives with her parents.

It is important for me to remind you of these colleagues, as representatives of all the journalists who have been threatened or murdered in the course of their work. In 2016 there were 74 journalists who were killed in connection with their work. This year – up until today – there have been 23 journalists. And eight journalists' assistants. We pay tribute to their bravery, their courage and their dauntlessness. We have to think of them. And we have to ask ourselves the question: what are we doing? And how are we doing it? What do we have to counter the rise of authoritarian and autocratic forces?

It is helpful to remember that autocratic systems almost always begin with the freedom of expression, the freedom of opinion, the freedom of art and the freedom of the press. The harbinger of the Holocaust was the night of book burning in 1933. We all know where that led. A few weeks ago I traveled to the memorials of the extermination and concentration camps Sobibor, Majdanek and Belzec. In Belzec alone, more than 500,000 Jews were murdered in just a few months – driven from the trains directly into the gas chambers. There was no real camp there at all. The killings were immediate, efficient and perfectionist – no more than three deportees are said to have survived the death machine. After killing the Jews, the Nazis did their utmost to destroy all traces of these murders. But there is still a gas chamber in Majdanek. A room as narrow as a shoebox. A hellhole. When you stand there, you only feel one thing: abhorrence. I would ask you to go there. It is the lowest point of human civilization.

America and the Allies united to put an end to the barbarism. And instead of turning Germany into an agrarian state without industry, as was understandably suggested by Secretary of the Treasury Morgenthau, it was White House Undersecretary of

State James McCloy, who ensured that Franklin D. Roosevelt developed the vision of an independent democratic Germany. That was yesterday to the day, 73 years ago. Reunification forty years later would never have been achieved without the support of American President George Bush. Helmut Kohl stated this very emphatically many years ago. Maggie Thatcher was vehemently opposed to a united Germany. Francois Mitterrand was skeptical. And Günter Grass was rambling about how the Germans would soon be parading again on the Linden Boulevard in Berlin in their high boots.

We owe the Americans more than any other nation. Maybe that's why we've had such a hard time with our friendship for many decades. Because there is one thing that people never forgive others and often take revenge for: when they have to be grateful to them.

So it's reassuring for those who can't come to terms with it that the USA is now itself providing a reason for their phobia: Donald Trump. He is erratic, narcissistic, hostile to journalists and dangerous for democracy. His vision of America has little in common with the country that we know and love. It is now up to the Europeans to defend and exemplify the values which the United States has imparted to us. Not the American people who have lost none of their greatness! But its President and Commander-in-Chief, his Cabinet, his advisers. The transatlantic alliance is weakened. And it is being weakened by Washington D.C. itself, the city where freedom was once given to us. This is a problem in itself. What is even worse, this automatically shifts the concentration of global power to other players. To autocratic countries which relativize or abolish the rule of law, which fear freedom, especially the freedom of thought and words, and in which journalists are therefore being threatened or killed.

Considering things bluntly, the situation is as follows: centrist and moderate democracies are being weakened throughout the world with few exceptions. Populists, autocrats and dictators are globally on the rise and becoming stronger every day. Orban has his country under control. Kaczyński's approval ratings are soaring in Poland the more ruthlessly he rebuilds the legal system and the media system. Erdogan is the strong relentless leader that the majority in Turkey wants. Chinese President Xi Jinping, at the head of a non-democratic world power without free elections and without a free media, presents himself at the World Economic

Summit in Davos as the last guardian of free trade. At the same time, he is embarking on a geostrategic campaign of economic conquest that is capitalistically undermining entire continents. And Putin, with his strategy of annexation that is contrary to international law and his efficient digital propaganda, is leading one western democracy after another through the ring by the nose.

Don't get me wrong: I think all this is terrible. I am simply observing who is currently achieving their objectives more effectively. These are not the democracies, but rather the autocrats. Many people do not seem to be worried about this at all. Taken as a whole, the mood is better than the situation. And what are we doing? Is there anything we can do about it? In addition, the picture is becoming even more complicated because liberal values and peace are not only coming under pressure as a result of political developments.

A few days ago, the inventor and entrepreneur Elon Musk tweeted: "Competition for AI superiority at national level most likely cause of WW3 imo. (=in my opinion)" In German and without abbreviations, this means that competition for sovereignty over artificial intelligence between individual countries represents, in my opinion, the most probable cause of a Third World War. Musk is famous for many things. Fear of technology is not one of his well-known characteristics. Among other things, he wants to take us all to Mars. His cars, Teslas, are even equipped with a precursor version of artificial intelligence so that they can continue to drive while the driver takes a nap. When Musk was asked at a conference three years ago how long it would take before driverless cars would be permitted, he replied: what would interest him much more was how long it would take before cars with human drivers would be banned. Because they are simply too dangerous. This would be inconceivable, interjected one conference participant. Inconceivable? Musk replied: a hundred years ago it would also have been inconceivable to operate an elevator without an elevator boy.

Musk has now set up a fund and collected more than a billion dollars to combat the threats posed by artificial intelligence. I think it is important that we look at with Musk's arguments. Not least because our industry is directly affected by artificial intelligence. Or to put it a little more generally, because digitization clearly has the potential for both: to become something to be welcomed by humanity, such as the

invention of the wheel or book printing. Or an instrument of the deprivation of liberty that makes Orwell's "1984" seem like a harmless prelude.

I would like to give you an example. A few weeks ago I was on vacation. In a small place, not far from the sea. In the past, I used to just walk around when I was on holiday, let's say, to find the next bakery. In this way you get to know a place well. Today I use Google Maps. The way to the bakery is now always the shortest. I save time. Everything is more efficient. But I see less.

You are now thinking: Dear Mr. Döpfner, then just leave your mobile phone at home. That's right. That would work. But nobody does it. Because we all want the shortest route. And we are also not always on holiday and have time. We have long become accustomed to the fact that computers always offer us a better alternative to our original plan. And that Google is right that it is almost always quicker to navigate according to Google's plan than to follow signs, descriptions or old maps. Google Maps is harmless.

Now the systems are also offering us the better partner for life. The better job. The better house. Google's email software offers ready-made replies to certain mails. The bottom line: the better life. The more the machine knows about us, the better the suggestions. It is the dilemma of the better alternative. It raises the question of what will happen to our free will in the future. The development has almost reached its goal. Yuval Harari, the brilliant Israeli historian who has been justifiably dominating bestseller lists for a few years now, notes how little it takes for free will to end: "Google doesn't have to work perfectly. Google does not always have to be right. It's enough if it works better than I do on average."

And if you think that all this is a bit exaggerated, I would like to offer you the following quote: "We know where you are. We know where you've been. We can more or less know what you're thinking about." Eric Schmidt, Chairman of Google, said this in October 2010. The disenfranchisement of mankind by machine as a capitalist program? Another quote from Eric Schmidt is: "I actually think most people don't want Google to answer their questions. They want Google to tell them what they should be doing next."

We too are confronted with very specific questions in this context. How do we as an industry deal with the new power of numbers? Do we write a new text or rewrite one, because the statistics collected in real time indicate that it would be read even more if there were one or two changes? Should we outsource simple tasks, message texts or sports results to robots? How do we deal with the fact that platforms make individualized offers to users, which lead to more and more people simply reading the confirmation of their own prejudices? Or that the election of Donald Trump was influenced by the mechanisms on Facebook, by shares and likes, which can be given either for researched texts from the Schwarzwälder Boten for example. Or for fake news that Russian PR strategists have come up with in the service of the state.

How do we want to work? How do we want to live? What are we doing?

A few months ago, when I was discussing artificial intelligence with Tim Berners-Lee, the inventor of the World Wide Web, I asked him whether he believed that one day AI would supersede human intelligence and take over, he replied that it was not a question of whether, but when. A few weeks ago I was able to ask Chris Boos, the leading AI expert from Germany, the same question. His answer: of course it will happen. But don't worry about it! We'll live like animals in the zoo. We'll have enough to eat and we'll be all right. The only thing is: all the relevant decisions will be made by machines.

The new iPhone, the iPhoneX, can't even be unlocked without making sure the device can recognize you, it only opens after face recognition. It recognizes you the same way you recognize your husband or wife when you look into his or her face.

In his latest book "Homo Deus: A Brief History of Tomorrow", Yuval Harari reflects on the state of mankind in the light of technological progress. Homo sapiens is surrendering. We are surrendering. Humankind will be replaced by homo deus, the human who will be more like God. Not only more intelligent, but also increasingly long-lived and one day perhaps even immortal. Our old projects, with which we ensured our survival, are basically completed. Pestilence, famine, war. We can handle them. Now it's a question of creating new brains, bodies, memories. It sounds completely insane. But work is already under way. Harari says: with the help of biotechnology and artificial intelligence, we will create new beings.

Ray Kurzweil, a brilliant visionary who works for Google, believes that exactly in the year 2045 we will achieve something he calls “singularity”. This is the point at which the machine surpasses humans in terms of intelligence. It is very likely that man and machine will then merge, says Kurzweil. And for the first time in history, which until then will have been of humanity, the optimization of body and mind will also be a question of financial strength. People will have to be able to afford to become a godlike person. Those who cannot will have no value.

Are you feeling a little dizzy? Do you think I'm exaggerating? Is the picture I have drawn too apocalyptic for you? Or are you simply becoming more and more uncertain about what I'm actually trying to say by describing all these threats and changes? I can well understand that. What I'm trying to say is quite simple: For how can terrorist attacks, the major political upheavals, and the enormous social changes brought about by medical progress, digitization and artificial intelligence be averted, or shaped meaningfully and for our own benefit: how can we ensure that in future machines will serve mankind rather than mankind will serve the machines? My strongly held conviction is: through journalism. As a tool of freedom.

Journalism is the spotlight of clarification or, a size smaller, at least the torch of the responsible citizen. Journalism means asking uncomfortable questions, expressing unpleasant truths, revealing the hidden – shedding light on things that should remain in the dark. Journalism also means controversy, polemics, debate – and thus spiritual stimulation and the constant struggle for the right view of things, the eternal search for the right path. Journalism informs and educates – and ultimately forms the true sovereign of democracy: the responsible citizen. Only this responsible citizen, and not the citizen who is patronized or kept ignorant by monopolistic platforms, can make the right decisions on the basis of correct and relevant information and knowledge about what he wants and what he chooses. So that the politicians he elects will then set the right course. Or more self-confident societies will strip their autocrats of power. That is why dictators fear nothing more than the free press.

A prerequisite for these mechanisms to work is diversity in the competition of published facts and opinions. It is a part of democracy that we rarely agree. That we

are often not sure. That we argue about the best solution. Struggling for what is right is a hallmark of democracy, community and freedom. It is anchored in the parliaments, but at least as importantly in the preceding stage – in the media. In comments and editorials. In letters to the editor, comment columns and forums. In open, democratic societies there is a tried and tested balance: politicians and entrepreneurs act and shape, journalists ask critical questions to ensure that this action and shaping really serves citizens' interests.

All this does not mean that publishers and journalists do not make mistakes. Sometimes we jump too quickly when a politician holds out a stick for us. We publish too many interviews which have been authorized and edited until nothing is said in many words. We leave too many readers alone with their real problems because we are focusing on the lifestyles of urban elites. We should make clearer reference to the origin of the offenders in crime reporting, not only because it is true, but also to destroy the right-wing agitators' conspiracy theory of the Political Correctness Mafia. We must, to speak with Rudolf Augstein, write about what is and not write what should be. Some of us considered the election of Donald Trump to be too categorically impossible and then in our eagerness to counter the bad thing, reported about him too one-sidedly and unfairly. And some of us were completely wrong on BREXIT because what cannot be allowed to happen cannot happen. Annoying. However, with us, competition ensures self-regulation. Because we compete with each other. In our case, because hawks will indeed pick out hawks' eyes, the debate about our own industry is guaranteed.

This is different in other industries. Take the car industry for example. Others are called upon for the investigation. Here again, it was journalists who brought Dieselgate and the cartel affair out into the open. Once again, yes, we make mistakes. Even very simple search errors. But we do not make mistakes in order to earn money with them. Like the producers of fake news. Or to manipulate propaganda like autocratic politicians. We make mistakes because making mistakes is human. And: if someone makes a mistake, he will be corrected, either by the competition or because he realizes and apologizes for it. Transparent and public.

And there is something else we can be proud of: our innovative strength and speed. Unlike many other industries, we are adapting new opportunities at top speed. Data journalism. Interactive graphics. Content that adjusts to the size of the screen. Yes, even robot journalism and algorithmically controlled topic placement on homepages – there is hardly any trend, barely a single idea in our industry that is not being worked on in Germany.

In Essen at Funke, the employees are now using software they developed themselves that makes it much easier for editors in regional reporting to work with videos. Only a few kilometers away, the Rheinische Post has launched a major audio offensive. The readers are now also listeners. And they also get a glimpse behind the scenes in the editorial office when the editor-in-chief makes podcasts. The Handelsblatt binds its readers closer to the newspaper by becoming a club. The “Handelsblatt Business Club” is the logical further development of paid content: anyone who is in it receives exclusive information from trustworthy sources, as well as invitations to meetings with top politicians and the editor-in-chief.

The Tagesspiegel is publishing twelve newsletters in the meantime and is thus able to reach very specifically interested readers with hyperlocal coverage. With “Nordkind”, a mixture of blog and magazine, the Nordsee-Zeitung is addressing readers aged between 25 and 35. And in Vechta, the Oldenburgische Volkszeitung has created [www.karrierestart.tv](http://www.karrierestart.tv), a platform on which regional companies can present themselves – and school students can apply directly to them. Die Welt uses robot journalism in the sports editorial department and is therefore able to report in depth on the second and third soccer leagues, a segment for which there was little or no manpower in the past.

Our colleagues at the Mainpost in Würzburg rely on “Programmatic Publishing”: With the help of this technology, readers receive online content that corresponds to their interests. Nothing less than the end of scattering losses and a challenge to Facebook’s Timeline – from Würzburg! And speaking of major announcements, our colleagues at Medienhaus Lensing, home of the Ruhr Nachrichten and Münsterland Zeitung, among others, have built a platform in Dortmund called the “Dortmund Deal”, which links regional trade with regional readers. Anyone who shops here before 2 p.m. gets their products delivered the same day. Jeff Bezos would be amazed.

The foundation of the role that we play in society is trust. A recent survey by the British pollsters at yougov is interesting. Responding to the question “How trustworthy are the following sources of information?”, 47 percent of interviewees in the survey gave daily newspapers, newspapers and magazines the highest or second highest score. In the same survey, participants were asked: “How susceptible are the following sources of information to the dissemination of fake news?” Here the daily newspapers, newspapers and magazines were placed last. Facebook easily made it to first place: 61 percent of the interviewees believe the social network is very, or even highly susceptible when it comes to the dissemination of fake news.

Forget about the lying press („Lügenpresse“), forget about the gap press („Lückenpresse“): the Chair of Business Journalism at the University of Würzburg investigates trust in the media year after year. The Germans' trust in newspapers has risen sharply in recent months, by 10 percent to be precise. It is currently the highest it has been in 15 years.

Why is it that people trust us so much? Of course because of Brexit, fake news and the rise of populist movements in the West. And because of our ongoing work in general. But in particular, because of our investigative expertise.

For many decades our craft has not been as badly needed as it is today.

We want to be treated accordingly: we expect politics to provide the basic conditions that enable us to practice journalism as a business model. On the one hand, this means that competition that thrives on a kind of tax must have limitations set. And on the other hand, platforms must have to remain platforms. And should not be allowed to play the role of publishers with responsibility for content, editorial selection and one day even their own editorial offices. At this point, I do not want to go into the ethical problems that would arise, for example, if Facebook were a publisher. Only this much: If the biggest audience that mankind has ever experienced is supplied with content from a central source, then there would in fact only be one medium. And that is a state of affairs we know only from dictatorships.

It is above all a task for Brussels, at least in Europe, to create the conditions necessary for competition and diversity in this area as well. For this reason, we very much expect that politics will create these basic conditions, not in order to do us a favor, but in the very best interests of democracy, the rule of law and free and open societies. Fair competitive conditions - no more, but also no less is what we expect from politics.

And what should we expect of ourselves, of publishers and publishing managers? I would suggest two things: Firstly, that we fight with all our strength for the foundations of our business and thus for the future of journalism and its role in society. By defining and asserting the media policy objectives here in this association, which will enable the future of analogue, but above all digital journalism. Every single one of you here can help with this. Get involved, take part. This is about everything. Not just your business. This is about what our society will look like.

That is the first expectation. And the second one is that we create the basic conditions at home in our publishing houses so that journalism remains relevant and successful. My request to you, to every single person here in the room is this: in these difficult, politically very fragile times, create the preconditions necessary for free critical journalism to continue to be created and to prosper. The basic conditions are actually very favorable. The flood of fake news has initiated a renaissance of the news in the public consciousness. Correct, reliable facts and exclusive news are much sought after. The responsible sender is once more in demand. This is why you should invest in digital forms of distribution. Save money by modernizing workflows, save money by increasing efficiency through new technology, save wherever you want. But please invest in the reporters who go wherever there's a fire. Invest in investigative research and the trips that are necessary. And invest in the critical mavericks that sometimes annoy us, but often address the painful issues. And please invest in the excellent authors who write in such a way that people have to carry on reading.

I ask you, each of you, as publishers of local newspapers, regional newspapers and national newspapers: set an example to encourage your editorial offices through your courage for the freedom of critical research. Support the guy who's stirring up the

town council by always asking critical questions. Support the story that a leading politician wants to talk you out of. And support the publication of an article which could or will be punished with an ad boycott by a large advertising customer. We have no leeway to compromise with fear. Times are too serious. Too much is at stake. We can only win if we are combative and self-confident. You, dear publishers, have always practiced a special profession that plays a special role in society. You have always been important. Now you are vital for survival.

The good thing about it is that times have never been better for excellent journalism than they are today. We have the tools we need to do our job. Never before has a single journalist been able to reach as many people as today. To help ensure that the rule of law and not arbitrary justice triumphs, that tolerance has more charisma than resentment, that debate prevails and not state-controlled propaganda, that democracy is stronger than autocracy and that, in this wonderful open society in which we live so well and so happily, it is not fear that ultimately wins, but freedom.

Deniz Yücel recently wrote in prison: "As a journalist, I cannot imagine a more interesting and, as a citizen of this country, a more meaningful task than this one. I'm telling you, now is the time to be a correspondent in Turkey. Journalism is not a crime, after all." Let us work to ensure that it remains the case, or that it becomes the case everywhere again, that journalism is not a crime but rather one of the raw materials of democracy.

Ladies and gentlemen, I am looking forward to the next 12 months. This is about everything. And if we get it right, the best is yet to come. Let's get to work.