

PRESS RELEASE

Bertelsmann Brings Blue Sofa to Weimar for Goethe-Institut's Cultural Symposium

- **Authors Kate Connolly, Philipp Hübl, Jagoda Marinic, and Steffen Mau talk about their books and the key topics of the symposium.**
- **Bertelsmann Chief HR Officer Immanuel Hermreck highlights opportunities and challenges of the digital working world**

Weimar, May 8, 2019 – When the Goethe-Institut once again hosts its cultural symposium on global social issues in Weimar from June 19 to 21, 2019, Bertelsmann as the main sponsor of the event will provide input from the actual business world, as well as a cultural highlight. The international media, services, and education company is bringing its successful Blue Sofa literature format to Weimar for a compelling evening of authors discussing their books and the symposium's key topics.

The Goethe-Institut's three-day *Kultursymposium Weimar 2019* event will be held under the heading “**Recalculating the Route**” and will focus in particular on the topics of orientation, autonomy, regression and diginomics. Some 300 guests from the fields of culture, business, science, media, and politics are expected, from more than 50 countries. At the opening event on June 19, Bertelsmann CHRO Immanuel Hermreck and other panelists will discuss how people can confidently shape their lives in the face of rapid technological change. He will focus on the opportunities and challenges of the digital working world.

The Blue Sofa event will take place at the Duchess Anna Amalia Library study center in Weimar on the evening of June 20, 2019. Like the opening ceremony, this event doesn't require the purchase of a ticket to the *Kultursymposium*. For 20 minutes each, the British Germany correspondent Kate Connolly, the philosopher Philipp Hübl, the columnist Jagoda Marinic, and the sociologist Steffen Mau will present their latest books on the Blue Sofa. They will also discuss questions such as: How do you stay on top of things in a complex, global world? How can you remain autonomous and self-sufficient in this world? How are populists changing politics and society? How do digitalization and globalization influence the economy and our society? – with the moderators Daniel Fiedler, Vivian Perkovic, and Marie Sagenschneider. This makes the literary format initiated by Bertelsmann, Deutschlandfunk Kultur, ZDF, and 3Sat a good fit with the Cultural Symposium's festival concept, which focuses on presenting lectures, concerts, panel discussions, exhibitions, and performances.

About the authors and their books

In “Exit Brexit” (Hanser), **Kate Connolly**, Germany correspondent of “The Guardian,” tells the history of Brexit from her point of view, describes the identity crises of many Britons since the referendum, and explains why she herself has now acquired German citizenship.

Philipp Hübl’s “*Die aufgeregte Gesellschaft*” (“The Agitated Society”; C. Bertelsmann) addresses the question of how emotions shape moral identity and thus political preferences. The philosopher writes: “Using our moral emotions helps to better understand not only the shift to the right, but also why city dwellers and young people long for freedom, diversity, and openness, and why the elderly and rural dwellers long for structure and tradition. In short: why the world is polarized.”

In “Sheroes” (S. Fischer), **Jagoda Marinic** creates new role models in the immigration country of Germany. She provides food for thought for reevaluating gender relations, identities, and power relations and explains why women should “definitely bring men on board,” especially after the #MeToo debate.

Steffen Mau devotes his study “*Das metrische Wir*” (“The Metric We”; Suhrkamp) to the increasing collection and comparison of data through ratings of products and services, states, occupational groups, etc. The growing quantification of our society is neither values-neutral nor harmless, he argues. Instead, it leads to the standardization of people and systems and serves economic interests above all. He says the mania for data collection is displacing solidarity in society and is exacerbating and cementing social inequalities.

The Blue Sofa at the Goethe Institut’s Kultursymposium Weimar

Thursday, June 20 2019, 7:30 p.m.
Study Center at the Duchess Anna Amalia Library
Platz der Demokratie 4
99423 Weimar
Tel.: +49 (0) 3643 545400

Admission to the event is free of charge, but registration is required by June 19, 2019 at www.goethe.de/weimar/tickets

More information:

www.goethe.de/weimar

<https://www.bertelsmann.com/news-and-media/specials/das-blaue-sofa/einstiegsseite.jsp#st-1>

About Bertelsmann

Bertelsmann is a media, services and education company that operates in about 50 countries around the world. It includes the broadcaster RTL Group, the trade book publisher Penguin Random House, the magazine publisher Gruner + Jahr, the music company BMG, the service provider Arvato, the Bertelsmann Printing Group, the Bertelsmann Education Group and Bertelsmann Investments, an international network of funds. The company has 117,000 employees and generated revenues of €17.7 billion in the 2018 financial year. Bertelsmann stands for creativity and entrepreneurship. This combination promotes first-class media content and innovative service solutions that inspire customers around the world.

Bertelsmann engages in a variety of cultural initiatives both in Germany and internationally. The Group's "Culture@Bertelsmann" activities comprise exhibitions, readings and concerts, the "Blue Sofa" literary format jointly created with partners, as well as a commitment to preserving Europe's cultural heritage. For instance, Bertelsmann owns the Archivio Storico Ricordi in Milan, a music archive that contains a wealth of unique testimonies to Italian opera history. Bertelsmann is indexing the archival holdings to meet the latest standards and making the cultural treasures accessible for a wide audience. As a company with a long history in filmmaking, Bertelsmann also supports and sponsors the restoration, digitization and screening of major silent films.

About the Blue Sofa

The Blue Sofa is the author forum jointly hosted by Bertelsmann, ZDF, Deutschlandfunk Kultur and 3sat. It has become a fixture at the book fairs in Frankfurt and Leipzig. The Blue Sofa Berlin celebrated its premiere in 2005. In 2011, Frankfurt's Open Books reading festival opened with a Blue Sofa author's gala for the first time. Since the 2000 Leipzig Book Fair, 2,752 discussions with 1,687 authors have taken place on the Blue Sofa, including with Nobel Prize laureates Svetlana Alexievich, Mikhail Gorbachev, Günter Grass, Herta Müller, Christiane Nüsslein-Volhard, Orhan Pamuk, Joseph Stiglitz, Mario Vargas Llosa, and Mo Yan.

About the Goethe-Institut

The Goethe-Institut is the cultural institute of the Federal Republic of Germany with a global reach. With 159 institutes in 98 countries, it promotes knowledge of German abroad, encourages international cultural exchange and conveys an image of contemporary Germany. The Goethe-Institut's ties with partner institutions in many other places give it about 1,000 points of contact around the world.

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For further questions, please contact:

Bertelsmann SE & Co. KGaA

Andreas Grafemeyer
Senior Vice President Media Relations
Phone: +49 5241 80-2466
andreas.grafemeyer@bertelsmann.de