

Deutsche Welle Anstalt des öffentlichen Rechts, Bonn

Management report **for the financial year from** **1 January 2023 to 31 December 2023**

1. Business development and general conditions

1.1. Strategic Plan and objectives

As the media voice of the Federal Republic of Germany, Deutsche Welle (DW) broadcasts information around the world that allows people to form their own opinions. It produces program content in 32 languages, which is primarily aimed at users in prioritised target countries and are distributed using up-to-date distribution channels. Through the projects it undertakes, the DW Akademie operates as a European international media developer. Through its work, Deutsche Welle strengthens the human right to the freedom of opinion and unhindered access to information. At the same time, DW conveys an image of Germany internationally that is based on values. In this way DW presents Germany abroad as a European nation of culture and a democratic state under the rule of law with a free constitution. In this way it promotes understanding and necessary dialog between cultures and peoples.

Under Section 4 b (1) of the Deutsche Welle Act [Deutsche-Welle-Gesetz – DWG], DW prepares a Strategic Plan four years at a time, in which it lays down its program objectives, priority projects and their weighting. The Strategic Plan and the continually updated versions of it are forwarded to the German Bundestag and the Federal Government. The Strategic Plan and updates to it are adopted by the Deutsche Welle Broadcasting Council with the consent of the Administrative Board, taking into account opinions from the German Bundestag, the Federal Government and interested members of the public.

In its Strategic Plan for 2022-2025, DW defined the following three overriding strategic goals:

1. expanding its audience reach from 289 million to 400 million weekly user contacts.
2. increasing the relevance of its programming.
3. promoting dialogue.

To achieve these goals DW is concentrating its efforts on the following three areas of focus:

1. increasing its regional competence and presence.
2. producing on demand first.
3. making efficient and sustainable use of its resources.

DW creates a diverse and digital organisational culture as a guide for work and collaboration.

1.2. Funding of Deutsche Welle

DW is funded by the annual federal grant from the budget of the Federal Government Commissioner for Culture and Media (BKM) and by grants for projects from the German federal government and other fund providers.

In 2023, the federal grant from the Commissioner for Culture and Media (BKM) for operating expenses amounted to EUR 386.0 million (of which EUR 7.2 million was for rent Institute for Federal Real Estate (BlmA) and EUR 20 million for investment expenses. In addition, in 2023 DW received one-off earmarked special funds for digitalisation from the federal government stimulus package amounting to EUR 2.3 million. Furthermore, supplementary funds were allocated from the budgetary

amendment for additional DW activities related to Russia's war on Ukraine amounting to EUR 4.7 million. To fund expenditure for old-age pensions of former employees of the Deutsche Welle Further Education Centre (DWFZ), DW received federal funds amounting to EUR 0.5 million, the same amount as in the previous year. In 2023, the total funds from the Federal Commissioner for Culture and Media (BKM), including one-off special funds, therefore amounted to EUR 413.6 million.

The activities of the project-funded DW Akademie as part of media development are predominantly funded by the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) (drawdowns from BMZ in 2023: EUR 29.9 million).

Other major project funding for DW and DW Akademie came from the German Foreign Ministry (AA) (drawdowns from AA in 2023: EUR 13.5 million, of which EUR 2.2 million in funds forwarded to Deutsche Presseagentur). There were also funds from European Union grants for projects as well as from other donors.

The DW staffing plan was increased for 2023 by 56.1 to 1,568.1 posts.

1.3. Conditions of German international broadcasting

In recent years, the number of crises, conflicts and wars has continued to increase across the globe. In the reporting year 2023, Russia continued its war against Ukraine, and in October 2023 the conflict in the region around Israel escalated after the terror attack perpetrated by Hamas. There were also the protests against the government in Iran, armed conflicts in Sudan, upheavals in the Sahel and increasing tensions in the Balkans – DW intensely covered these developments in its reporting with programming in many languages.

In the financial year 2023, the trend of declining freedom of the press continued worldwide.¹ The conditions and challenges that DW faces as an international news provider became more acute in several priority target markets. In many DW target countries, state censorship and repression against media representatives continued to impose restrictions on media markets or tightened them in 2023. Journalists who flee from repression and violence and report from exile are persecuted from beyond the borders by regimes including Belarus, China, Iran, Russia and Turkey.² In March 2023, DW highlighted the danger to the staff of its Persian Service who report about Iran and their family members there at an event held at the UN Rights Council.³

The global media markets continued to be shaped by the competition between political and social systems. Authoritarian states like China, Iran and Russia operated media programming in many target countries as competitors to DW. All in all, public discourse in almost all prioritised DW target areas was influenced by propaganda, hate speech and disinformation, especially on issues of internal and international political conflicts, crises and wars. Owing to the extent of the disinformation disseminated, DW is investing in information verification and uncovering false reports to ensure it fulfils its mission. The sensitivity of the conflicts on social media also requires the increased use of resources to moderate the conversations that come about there, in order to allow dialogue to be constructive.

In this environment, the risks to the safety of DW's journalists are also increasing, which range from attempts at intimidation and persecution by authoritarian regimes all the way to the danger of coming under fire in a conflict zone.⁴ In 2023, DW's safety management therefore continued to require an increased use of resources.

An additional challenge comes from dynamic global digitalisation. In all the DW target areas, media consumption behaviour is changing long term. Particularly the prioritised DW target group between

¹ <https://rsf.org/en/2023-world-press-freedom-index-journalism-threatened-fake-content-industry>

² <https://freedomhouse.org/article/new-report-governments-are-escalating-transnational-repression-silence-journalists-around>

³ <https://corporate.dw.com/en/dw-and-bbc-appeal-for-protection-of-journalists-reporting-on-iran-at-un-rights-council-in-ge-neva/a-65051971>

⁴ <https://www.unesco.org/en/articles/2023-alarming-increase-journalists-killed-conflict-zones>

the ages of 14 and 40 is increasingly getting its information from digital, time-independent output channels. DW responded to this development by further transforming its programming. DW continued to focus its resources more strongly on creating and distributing on-demand programming.

One challenge to DW's digital distribution is making DW content available to its target groups under difficult circumstances and thereby to support the human right to freedom of information. The advance of censorship and fragmentation of the internet worldwide is increasing this challenge.

Besides conflicts and crises, DW is also facing challenges coming from technological developments in the area of artificial intelligence (AI). It has to assume that in future it will be confronted with increasing competition in the form of automatically generated content in its target areas. DW is therefore experimenting intensively with AI applications to increase the efficiency with which it creates and distributes its content and to relieve staff of burdensome routine tasks. AI is already being used in various areas such as the transcription, translation and subtitling of content. AI is also important at DW for evaluating data and detecting disinformation. As a principle, DW uses artificial intelligence in accordance with established ethical and legal guidelines and according to its mission. Its journalistic responsibility and high-quality standards are always ensured. The implementation of AI governance is supported by the inter-directorate AI team.

These general conditions impacted DW's activities and programming in the financial year 2023. In a world in which information is becoming ever more unclear, DW, as the media voice of Germany, stands up with reliable journalism for the values which Germany stands for in the world. Conveying independent reporting based on human rights, freedom, democracy, the rule of law and social equality in an international manner is the guide to action. This is not just a matter of reporting about problems and negative states of affairs. Rather, DW is investing more in constructive journalism with reports about people who are trying to find solutions to global challenges.

1.4. Use and development of DW programming in 2023

Deutsche Welle has orientated the development of its programming in such a way that its programmes contribute to the above goals, where increasing reach counts as having the same value as increasing the relevance of the programming and strengthening dialogue. To use resources in a targeted way, in 2020 DW already identified 71 countries as prioritised target countries, which hold great potential for fulfilling DW's mission.⁵ The focus of reporting is therefore on populous countries with dynamic media markets that are highly important to Germany. At the same time, DW targets countries that are suffering from massively restricted press freedom and the rule of autocrats and dictators. For these markets, DW produces programmes in 32 languages for the output channels that are regionally relevant.

Digital platforms have increased in importance above all. The number of internet users rose again in 2023, to more than 5.4 billion.⁶ To continue to be able to reach the target groups as well as possible in future, DW is increasingly focusing on "digital first" products. Social media, but also cooperation with over-the-top platforms and other digital distributors as well as the optimisation of web-based content for the requirements of search engines, are playing an ever more important role.

In 2023, DW was able to increase its reach with video, audio and text content significantly compared to the prior year: an average of 320 million user contacts was achieved weekly (PY: 291 million), of whom 257 million (PY: 225 million) were by video content alone. 51 million user contacts weekly were achieved via audio content and 12 million via textual content.⁷

Alongside successfully producing and broadcasting video content, the higher level of regionalisation of DW content and the development of local capacity was crucial to the increase in reach. DW trains its network of international correspondents by conducting training and networking events for DW correspondents from Africa, Latin America, Europe and Asia at its offices in Bonn. Furthermore, the

⁵ DW Strategic Plan 2022-25, p.13

⁶ Source: Statista, <https://de.statista.com/themen/42/internet/>

⁷ DW Gesamtnutzung 2023

network was expanded with the opening or expansion of more offices abroad. Deutsche Welle currently operates 17 offices abroad. A foreign office was most recently opened in Kinshasa.

Regarding the various regions of the world, DW achieved its greatest reach in Sub-Saharan Africa, with 91 million weekly user contacts. Use grew the most year on year in Asia, by 18 million user contacts to 55 million.

At 117 million weekly user contacts, the English-language service was the most used language in 2023, followed by Spanish with 46 million and Arabic with 38 million.⁸

Considering the legally enshrined mission to promote the German language and DW's conception of itself, the German-language service continued to be of particular importance. In the financial year 2023, the profile of German content was brought more into focus and starting from 2024 will be more sharply aimed at the target group of German speakers and learners of German outside the DACH region (Germany, Austria and Switzerland).

Journalistic content by target area⁹:

Global journalistic content in English and German: In 2023, English continued to be the most used DW language, with an increase in reach of 11 million, to 117 million weekly user contacts. Because the English-language content is used worldwide, DW faces the challenge of addressing a heterogeneous target group with various needs and habits with respect to information. DW provided a broad mix of partly regionalised programming for this, which was broadcast via linear and digital output channels. In terms of content, the focus was the subjects of civil liberties and human rights, democracy and the rule of law, world trade and social justice, protecting the environment, food and health education, technology and innovation, as well as culture and life in Germany and Europe.

One focus in the reporting year was "tandem productions", in which departments with a specialised subject collaborated with regional language departments, for example on the VoD series on health *Healthy Me* and the *Afrimaxx* series. The regionalised vodcast *Global Eyes*, also examines global security issues and their relevance for people in the global South.

To exploit the potential effect of its programming even better, DW places high value on developing series that expressly aim to foster debate and dialogue. New live talk shows on YouTube were made part of regular programming, and questions from users of these series on current topics were picked up and discussed by experts and correspondents.

The DW German-language content is aimed at a relatively small target group: the total number of people who speak German as their native language or as a second language is estimated at 103.5 million worldwide – only five million of them live in the DW target areas outside Europe.¹⁰ Furthermore, DW addresses its German courses in its target countries to a total of approximately 15.4 million learners of German.¹¹ The German-language DW target group increasingly uses the programming at no fixed time, which DW has responded to by changing the mix of media. In order to reach the target group of German speakers and those learning German abroad more effectively, since the start of 2024 DW has been exclusively using digital output channels for its German-language content. The DW website and YouTube primarily include informative photogenic videos on current developments in Germany, Europe and the world, while DW German-language linear TV programming was terminated on 1 January 2024.

Sub-Saharan Africa: Around one billion people live in the DW target area south of the Sahara, in 49 politically, economically, and culturally extremely different countries. In many of these African countries, authoritarian tendencies continued to increase in the reporting year, which impeded access to

⁸ DW Gesamtnutzung 2023

⁹ DW Strategic Plan 2022-25, p.31.f; DW Gesamtnutzung 2023

¹⁰ Ammon, Ulrich: Die Stellung der deutschen Sprache in der Welt. De Gruyter Mouton (2015), p.175.

¹¹ Federal Foreign Office: Deutsch als Fremdsprache weltweit (2020).

independent, balanced information and full political participation. In 2023, the region was increasingly characterised by instability, particularly by the civil war which broke out in Sudan, which had considerable humanitarian consequences for the civil population,¹² as well as military coups in Niger and Gabon. In the Sahel region, developments resulted in a retreat of Western democracies and the United Nations, as well as growing cooperation with Russia. Pressure on free media professionals by military governments is increasing.

The African DW target areas are the region of the world with the highest growth in population overall. At the same time, almost half of all Africans are younger than 18. DW has prioritized 20 target countries in Sub-Saharan Africa for which it produces content in six languages: Amharic, English, French, Hausa, Swahili and Portuguese.

In 2023 the region remained the target area that used DW the most and reached 91 million users on average a week with its programming, 7 million more than the previous year. The use of audio and video content was on a par for the first time. The trend of changing preferred media use towards digital media and social media continues, particularly among the young urban target group.

The growth in the use of video content can be mostly traced back to its higher level of regionalisation. Contents in the environmental magazine *Eco Africa* and the youth magazine *The 77 Percent* produced in regional languages achieved particularly high levels of reach. *The 77 Percent* is the umbrella brand under which the DW Africa programmes in six languages deal with subjects tailored to the interests of the young generation on TV, radio and the various social media. The increase in reach in the region by means of video can also be traced back to collaboration with regional distributors.

The Arabic World: In the 2023 reporting year, an average of 38 million user contacts per week was achieved for DW's Arabic-speaking programmes. This represents a slight drop in use compared to the previous year. The termination or temporary suspension of cooperation with Arabic-language distributors as a consequence of investigating allegations of antisemitism since the winter of 2021/22 is still having an effect here. Cooperation arrangements with regional distributors were impeded by the current situation but continued to provide a considerable portion of DW's reach in the target area.

The focus of content for Arabic programming was content about democracy, freedom of opinion, human rights, the fight against terror, exclusion, racism and antisemitism. With these topics, DW fulfilled its role as an independent source of information and offered the target group particular value because in nearly all Arabic target countries, reporting by national media was heavily restricted by state censorship, violence against the media and legal restrictions.

After the attack on Israel by Hamas on 7 October 2023, reporting was mostly concentrated on the conflict between Palestine and Israel. Within a very short time DW increased the staff at its office in Jerusalem. Particular focus was placed on presenting the perspectives from both sides, as well as increased resources to verify information.

The most used products in the reporting year 2023 included *Albasheer Show*, a satirical news programme specially for the Iraqi market, and *Jaafar Talk*, a talk show that discusses regional taboo topics like human rights violations and the lack of equality with guests.

Asia: A third of the world's population currently lives in the priority Asian target countries. The size of these target groups by itself makes these markets very important to DW. In many of these target countries, undemocratic political conditions and restrictions on free speech and the freedom of the press impact people's everyday lives. Even if elements of democratic structures can be seen in the political system and civil society in many target countries, they are often incomplete. The target groups in China and Iran have hardly any access to independent reporting, and in Bangladesh, India, Indonesia and Pakistan as well, political conflict and social inequality are becoming more acute.

¹² <https://www.dw.com/de/sudan-massaker-vertreibungen-und-kein-ende-der-gewalt/a-67640359>

Since the takeover by the Taliban in Afghanistan, there have been systematic violations of human rights. The protests in Iran, triggered by the death of Jina Mahsa Amini after her arrest for allegedly breaking the hijab law in September 2022 continued in 2023 and were met by the regime with repression and violence.

For these countries, DW produced programmes in the nine regional languages of Bengali, Chinese, Dari, Farsi, Hindi, Indonesian, Pashtu, Tamil and Urdu, as well as English content specially geared to the interests of target groups in East & South and South-East Asia.

In the 2023 reporting year, DW reached an average 55 million user contacts per week and thus 18 million more than the previous year. A great part of the growth is due to the use of video content through online and digital cooperation, in particular in Hindi on the Josh platform. Further factors for growth include the increase in the use of social media platforms in several languages. The reporting on the protests in Iran, particularly in Farsi and English, was also very important.

All Asia departments further expanded their digital content by including regionalised series. For example, for the target group in Afghanistan, the video series “Afghan’s health on the brink” was launched, which tackles issues of women’s health and mental health, with the aim of improving the situation of women in the country. Regarding regionalisation, the network of correspondents in the region is constantly being expanded and strengthened with training courses on journalistic skills as well as on DW’s values and objectives.

Latin America: In the target countries prioritised by DW in Latin America, the freedom of the press continues to be under pressure, particularly from targeted attacks on media professionals. In Venezuela, Deutsche Welle TV content was pulled from the cable network in March 2024 after a report criticising corruption. The increasing political polarisation, the flooding of social networks with Russian propaganda and the resultant growing rejection of Israel and its allies continue to make independent, up-to-date reporting necessary. Besides DW profile topics like democracy, the rule of law and social inequality, as well as migration, the environment and science, the portrayal of the German and European perspectives on international events is therefore also a focus of content. The Middle East conflict shaped the reporting on all channels after 7 October 2023, particularly in Spanish content.

Compared to the prior year, the use of DW content in the target area of Latin America rose from 45 million user contacts to a total of 51 million. The reason was the increased use of Spanish-language content on YouTube and the significant increase in use on cooperation partners on Instagram. This region was the market with the heaviest use in the reporting year 2023 for YouTube as well. Over 95% of reach in Latin America was achieved by video content. This was achieved via linear TV programs, social media, live crosses for regional TV channels and distribution partnerships.

In 2023 the Spanish department developed the new YouTube series *Como te afecta* especially for young viewers, in which the results of current developments in the region on the young generation are portrayed and examined using examples. The series is also repeated on TV. A dedicated YouTube channel for it was launched in February 2024.¹³

DW Espanol (Spanish-language TV content) was the language in the DW portfolio with the second largest reach in 2023, with 46 million weekly user contacts, after English.

As the only market for Brazilian content, Brazil still remains a deeply divided society after Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva took office again. The Brazilian department expanded its team in the region and achieved high levels of reach with specially developed new videos such as the YouTube series *Perspectiva DW*, which explains science and environmental topics in a clear way.¹⁴ Overall, monthly video use rose on all platforms by more than 109 percent compared to 2022.

¹³ <https://www.youtube.com/@DWComoTeAfecta>

¹⁴ <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCkJ8uPxz6Uv0l6ihgQJZnww>

Russia, Ukraine, and Eastern Europe: The freedom of the press in Russia and Belarus hardly existed at the start of the reporting year and were further restricted over the course of the year. DW content was blocked by Russian authorities. Statements critical of the regime are punished as crimes. Media professionals who work for DW, and DW itself, were declared foreign agents in Russia, which meant they were not able to carry on their work of reporting freely in safety. The DW office for reporting on Russia has been located in Riga since 2022. In Belarus, too, the restrictions on free media were further tightened. Since March 2022, DW Belarus content has been classified as “extremist” by the Belarusian interior ministry. DW’s goal is to support the freedom of information in the region, even under these conditions.

In 2023, Russia’s war against Ukraine was for the second year the determining topic for the target area. For months before the war and after it broke out, it was accompanied by a broad pro-Russian campaign of disinformation on social media via numerous state media actors and reporting sites.

DW media professionals report from the war zone in Ukraine at high risk. In July 2023 a DW cameraman was injured while filming in Ukraine.¹⁵

DW content in Eastern Europe and Central Asia reached 11 million weekly user contacts in the reporting year, despite the aggravated conditions for production and censorship. Increased views of the satire format *Zapovednik* on YouTube and TikTok caused the use of video content to increase slightly. Owing to the high amount and intensity of Russian state disinformation in the information space, DW focused as in the previous year on providing reliable news programmes like *DW Novosti*. In the reporting year, Russian language the talk show *W samuju toschku* (“Right on the point”) was produced regionally for states neighbouring Russia and former Soviet republics to reach civil society multipliers there.

Europe: Russia’s war against Ukraine again dominated the information space in 2023 in the target area of Europe, particularly in the target countries in geographical proximity to the war zone that are directly affected by the consequences of the hostilities and the threat of further escalation, including Moldova, Romania and Poland. In some target countries, like Hungary, press freedom is evaluated as critical. Internal tensions are a further factor that puts pressure on social stability. In the Balkans, the conflict between Kosovo and Serbia threatened to escalate. In this tense political atmosphere, the fight against disinformation using independent, balanced and reliable reporting is DW’s highest priority.

DW produced programme content for a total of 13 European target countries in the languages: Albanian, Bosnian, Bulgarian, Greek, Croatian, Macedonian, Polish, Romanian, Serbian and Hungarian. In the reporting year 2023, use in Europe was 35 million weekly user contacts, compared with 36 million user contacts in the previous year. Alongside successful video content like the regionalised *Europeo* series, textual content enjoys above-average use in the region.

The network of correspondents for the target area of Europe was further strengthened with training courses in 2023. For example, an editorial team was established that specialises in producing videos in the west Balkan languages of Bosnian, Croatian, Serbian, and Albanian and Macedonian, for channels on Instagram and TikTok for a young audience. The way of working across languages, cultures and countries in an environment shaped by conflict, focusing on constructive journalism aims to foster dialogue and combat prejudices and discrimination.

Turkey: Use of DW content by the Turkish target group continues to enjoy the highest priority. The department predominantly uses digital output channels, particularly social media. The department’s news flagship *DW Haber*, which goes out every weekday, in particular shares a level of familiarity with established programmes in Turkey. Turkish-language content on Instagram reached an average on 10.4 views per month in 2023 and 4.3 million views per month on Twitter. As part of its strategic partnership with the BBC, Voice of America and France Médias Monde, content adapted for the

¹⁵ <https://www.dw.com/de/dw-kameramann-durch-russische-streumunion-verletzt/a-66319336>

target group of a young Turkish audience are produced in the multi-platform series +90, which promotes freedom of speech. In the reporting year, +90 launched content on TikTok. The reporting includes interviews, reportage, and background to important regional topics, including the earthquake of February 2023, the collapse of the Turkish currency, and the lives of young people in Istanbul. In 2023, an average of 5 million user contacts per week was recorded for DW's Turkish-language programmes.¹⁶ Turkish thereby remained the language in Europe with the highest content use in 2023.

Media development

DW Akademie is Deutsche Welle's centre for international media development, journalistic education, training and knowledge impartation. It reinforces the human right to freedom of expression and enables people across the world to make their own decisions based on independent information, reliable facts and constructive dialogue. As a directive of DW, DW Akademie strengthens independent media and functioning media systems and thus safeguards long-term development – with a total of 84 projects in 72 developing countries in 2023. The main funder is the BMZ, which is a strategic partner of DW Akademie; other large funders are the EU and the German Foreign Ministry (AA). A letter of intent between the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) and DW, signed at the end of March 2023, has reinforced the strategic partnership in the area of supporting freedom of expression and freedom of the media in partner countries.

DW Akademie was able to expand its presence in partner countries in 2023. With the opening of the Akademie office in Mexico and the opening of the office shared with DW programming in Beirut, the total number of Akademie offices comes to ten. The office in Yangon was closed at the end of 2022 due to the threatening situation in Myanmar; the project work in and for Myanmar is now being directed from Chaing Mai (Thailand).

In its most important area of activity, international media development, one regional focus was Eastern Europe and Ukraine, with the aim of strengthening social resilience against disinformation and propaganda, reinforcing the freedom and regulation of the media and making the rebuilding of Ukraine transparent and effective through solution-based reporting. A second focus was the MENA (Middle East and North Africa) region. The last quarter was overshadowed by conflict in the Middle East; the projects in the Palestinian Territories came to a temporary halt. DW Akademie focused on reviewing all partnerships and maintaining them at this difficult stage. Furthermore, projects were implemented for the region with the goal of making innovative technologies usable to combat disinformation.

Another content focus was the topic of flight and migration (in Africa and Asia). Here, DW Akademie pursues the goal of bringing about constructive dialogue, participation and reliable channels for communication and information for refugees and host communities. The safety of media professionals was also in focus in 2023 – DW Akademie took over the coordination office of the Hannah Arendt Initiative, with which Germany has got directly involved in this area for the first time (via the Foreign Ministry and the BKM). Within the Initiative, the "Space for Freedom" project supports media professionals, specifically from Afghanistan, Belarus, Russia and Central America, who have had to flee their home countries owing to their courageous work.

Educational programmes, traineeships and Masters course

Now with mobile and multimedia content in more than 15 languages, the Educational Programs department of DW Akademie is designed for the 15 million learners of German across the globe, as well as German teachers. In 2023, work on the new teaching platform "learngerman.dw.com" was completed. This has laid the foundation for the development of further marketable learning content.

DW Akademie carries out the traineeship on behalf of DW. In 2023 a new class of twelve young people, this time from eight countries, began their 18-month traineeship. New modules included

¹⁶ DW Gesamtnutzung 2023

those on artificial intelligence and statistics in journalism, and the course was adapted to match the DW strategy (regionalisation, on-demand strategy). The traineeship and German learning content are financed by the BKM, unlike the projects in media development.

In collaboration with the University of Bonn and the Bonn-Rhein-Sieg University of Applied Sciences, the DW Akademie English-language Master's course "International Media Studies" was continued. Since it was introduced in 2009, more than 260 students from 68 countries have graduated. The goal of the course is to give students a well-founded insight into the interplay between media, politics and development, in-depth knowledge of digital media and media production as well as wide-ranging skills in media management. In this way, with the knowledge they have acquired, they will be able to contribute to strengthening the development of the media and the freedom of expression in their home countries. In the financial year 2023, a crucial foundation was laid for expanding French-language content in the form of a cooperation agreement with the University of Tours in France, with courses to start in September 2024.

Other projects and collaborations

The annual DW Global Media Forum (GMF) took place again in Bonn in 2023 as a hybrid conference in the Bonn World Conference Centre. More than 2,000 participants from over 120 countries took part in the two-day event. With the motto "Overcoming divisions", the impact of conflicts and wars on press freedom. The interdisciplinary conference also brought into the conversation the decline in press freedom, increasing economic pressure on journalism and the massive progress of artificial intelligence. The more than 150 guest speakers in 2023 included the journalist and Nobel Peace Prize winner for 2021 Dmitry Muratov, the prime minister of NRW Hendrik Wüst, and the journalist and writer Can Dündar. The international DW media conference was financially supported by the Federal Foreign Office (AA), the government of North Rhine-Westphalia, the Foundation for International Dialogue of the Savings Bank in Bonn [Stiftung Internationale Begegnung der Sparkasse in Bonn], the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) and the city of Bonn.

For the ninth time, DW presented its Freedom of Speech Award for outstanding work for human rights and freedom of expression. In 2023 DW awarded it to the journalist Oscar Martinez, who is the editor-in-chief of the digital new portal *El Faro* which combats violence and corruption in El Salvador with investigative journalism.

Again in 2023 DW was an important partner of the Munich Security Conference, the global forum for debates on the most urgent international security issues. DW correspondents reported on the conference in many DW languages, including English, German, Spanish, Arabic, Russian, Ukrainian, Turkish, and Hindi. The reporting was prepared on an individual basis according to the needs of the various output channels and DW target areas. Furthermore, DW moderated panel discussions and produced on-site three episodes of the interview series *Conflict Zone* with the French foreign minister and the Polish prime minister. The second film in the documentary series *Guardians of Truth*, which followed the Belarusian opposition leader Svetlana Tikhonovskaya for several months, was premiered at the conference.

In 2023, DW continued the pan-European collaboration ENTR - What's next! in a third round of funding. This is digital, multimedia and multi-language journalistic programme aimed at young Europeans between 18 and 34 in ten languages: German, French, English, Portuguese, Polish, Dutch, Romanian, Slovak, Bulgarian and Hungarian. Its content focuses on topics such as education and training, work and study, migration, justice and democracy and peace in Europe. All content is exclusively distributed on the social media platforms Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, X (formerly Twitter) and YouTube. DW acts as the consortium leader for the other nine partner broadcasters, including the umbrella organisation of French international broadcasting, France Médias Monde (FMM) and other public and private media in Europe as well as for the Genshagen Foundation. This media project is co-funded by the European Commission and the French Ministère de la Culture. *ENTR* reaches almost 10 million views on all platforms per month.

The *InfoMigrants* collaboration has been carried out since 2017, together with France Médias Monde and the Italian news agency ANSA. The project is co-funded by the European Commission and offers information and background on the topics of migration and seeking refuge for users in countries from Africa, Asia and the Near and Middle East in six languages on websites and social media. *InfoMigrants* is addressed both to people in their countries of origin and to those who are already on their way to Europe. *InfoMigrants* provides news and reports of personal experiences of refugees and migrants via digital output channels in Arabic, Bengali, Dari, English, French and Pashtu. The content is distributed on its own website and on Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, X (formerly Twitter), Telegram and Viber. In the reporting year 2023, the collaboration reached an average of 12 million views per month across all platforms.

In the reporting year 2023, the long-term collaboration with the ARD network of German public broadcasters, ZDF and Deutschlandradio was continued, particularly in shared programming and in co-productions. Furthermore, the *(D)ein SAP* project was carried out with further eleven broadcasters of ARD and Deutschlandradio, in which harmonised processes are carried out in a joint SAP system. The preparations at DW to switch from SAP R3 to SAP S4 HANA on 1 January 2024 ran until the end of 2023. This change represents the biggest reform of business processes in the last 30 years, with which over 250 processes in finances, procurement, managerial accounting and business trips will be harmonised within ARD. After the launch on 1 January 2024 with the switch-over in the areas of finances, procurement and managerial accounting, it is expected that the processes for e-procurement and business trips will be introduced or changed over in the second half of 2024.

DW has maintained an important partnership with Internationale Beethovenfeste Bonn gGmbH for 25 years. As a shareholder and media partner, DW supports the *Beethovenfest* particularly regarding how it is perceived internationally. More than 26,000 guests visited the annual festival of classic music in Bonn in 2023. In the reporting year, together with the *Beethovenfest* and ARD Kultur, DW developed the new video series *Tiny House Concert*. In this series, the director of the *Beethovenfest*, Steven Walter, invites well-known artists to his Tiny House close to Bonn to discuss and play music. The centrepiece of the collaboration in 2023 was again the joint Campus Project between DW and *Beethovenfest*. The Campus Project aims to bring young musicians from Germany and a guest country in contact with each other. In 2023, it was possible to hear and see live musicians from Iran and Afghanistan, together with German and other international musicians.

In March 2023, in collaboration with DW Bonn Institute gGmbH, Bonn, launched the first internal exchange programme for constructive journalism, with ten colleagues from various departments. The Bonn Institute gGmbH also put on the *b° future* festival in September 2023 for the first time. Around 500 journalists and media professionals took part in the premier. The institute focuses on the consulting and networking of media organisations with a view to the constructive development of journalism.

The Goethe Institute is one of the long-term partner institutions whose transnational operations overlap with the work of DW. The collaboration takes place both in business policy and in the areas of reporting on culture, media development and content for learning German. The joint projects include the EU project with DW Akademie to support public sector media in the western Balkans, podcasts for Russian-speaking users, documentaries on sustainable architecture in Africa, the annual awarding of the Goethe Medal and the *Deine Band* series for learning German.

1.5. New Work, diversity, sustainability, IT and cybersecurity

In its Strategic Plan for 2022 to 2025, DW has laid out a diverse, digital organisational culture as a guideline for action. The goal of this initiative is to promote an internal change in culture in order to equip the organisation for the challenges of digital change.

The umbrella term New Work includes a variety of initiatives, plans and projects with which digital, mobile and collaborative working is to be developed. The concept of digital leadership laid down inter-management cooperation across hierarchy levels as the target vision. In this way, DW fosters

being responsible for your own work and a constructive feedback culture. In the Digital Workplace project, the conditions are optimised in terms of technology, construction and organisation for DW staff to be able to work in future independently of time and place and in a flexible manner. The working areas at the DW offices in Bonn and Berlin have been optimally redesigned and re-equipped for the new working conditions.

DW specifically promotes Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI), at an organisation with staff from 141 countries. By establishing diversity management within the organisation, the condition has been laid down to develop DW into one of the most diverse and inclusive media organisations in Germany. To do this, a diversity strategy has been drawn up, which reinforces an inclusive corporate culture to break down structural barriers and better reflect the variety of views of the target groups in DW's media products. The measures include a variety of discussion series, as well as diversity training courses for management and staff. The DEI department and all the related interfaces within DW pursue a uniform approach to diversity, taking into account the six core dimensions of diversity established in the General Act on Equal Treatment [Allgemeines Gleichbehandlungsgesetz – AGG]¹⁷ as well as the additional dimension of "social background", which has been included in the Diversity Charter [Charta der Vielfalt].¹⁸ In the 2023 reporting year, the focus was on the dimensions of ethnic background and nationality, religion and philosophy, as well as people with disabilities.

The plan developed following the allegations of antisemitic and anti-Israeli attitudes held by individual staff and collaboration partners was successfully implemented in the financial years 2022 and 2023.¹⁹ Implementation of the plan ensures that antisemitism is effectively and thoroughly combated both among staff and in business relations and that DW's established values are accepted and complied with. The Compliance and Brand Integrity office of the Director General monitors the observance of legal regulations and compliance with DW's values and brand.

The topic of sustainability is established as an obligation in the DW organisational objectives. DW takes responsibility for creating a future-oriented organisation as well as for the ecological, economic and social impact of its actions. In the area of ecological sustainability, DW focuses on climate change mitigation. The DW climate protection strategy²⁰ lays down cutting the organisation's greenhouse gas emissions by 50% by 2030 and achieving zero net emissions by 2045. This goal refers to the basic analysis for 2019 as the base year. The measures to achieve this goal range from reducing business trips, to sustainable energy and procurement management, to more environmentally friendly production methods. Effective implementation of these measures in the past two financial years, as well as new routines during and after the COVID-19 pandemic have had a positive effect on DW's goal: in 2022, greenhouse gases were reduced compared to the base year of 2019 by approx. 60%. Even though a slight upwards trend can be seen after the end of the pandemic, emissions are still significantly lower than the pre-pandemic levels. Progress and achieving targets in sustainability are recorded by sustainability management. DW drafts a sustainability report on this every two years, which is reviewed for completeness by the office of the German Sustainability Code (DNK). The last sustainability report was drafted for the reporting year 2022.

DW has combined IT and cybersecurity responsibilities, which are becoming ever more important, into their own department to be able to address the challenges in this area in a more targeted way. As modern information societies increasingly digitise, the threats from hacking and cyber-attacks are intensifying. In cooperation with ARD, DW has therefore invested in modern IT security systems and security monitoring systems so that attacks on IT systems can be discovered and averted more quickly (detection and response systems). Risks to IT security are also identified more systematically and mitigated using appropriate technical and organizational measures. The IT and Cybersecurity

¹⁷ https://www.antidiskriminierungsstelle.de/SharedDocs/downloads/DE/publikationen/AGG/agg_gleichbehandlungsgesetz.pdf?__blob=publicationFile

¹⁸ <https://www.charta-der-vielfalt.de/fuer-organisationen/vielfaltsdimensionen/soziale-herkunft/>

¹⁹ <https://corporate.dw.com/de/dw-rundfunkrat-begrüßt-umsetzung-des-maßnahmenplans-nach-antisemitismus-vorwürfen/a-62173845>

²⁰ DW Climate Protection Strategy 2021

department's responsibilities also include carrying out communication and training measures to make DW staff aware of risks and of IT security and to train them.

2. Assets and liabilities, financial position and financial performance

2.1. Net assets position

In the reporting year, the organisation's total assets increased by EUR 17.3 million or 2.0% to EUR 836.9 million.

In the past financial year, a total of EUR 20.0 million (PY: EUR 17.1 million) was invested in intangible (EUR 0.9 million) and tangible (EUR 19.1 million) fixed assets. The main additions to tangible fixed assets in 2023 are attributable to investments in broadcast projects (EUR 4.2 million), IT projects (EUR 4.1 million), and data storage (EUR 3.9 million). Taking into account planned depreciation in the financial year, amounting to EUR 14.5 million, the carrying amount of fixed assets as at the balance sheet date increased by EUR 5.3 million to EUR 39.5 million.

The compensation claim against the German federal government for pension, early retirement and other benefit obligations not covered by reinsurance policies decreased compared to the previous year by EUR 20.2 million to EUR 547.7 million. The change was mainly due to an increase in asset values from reinsurance policies, which were EUR 14.6 million higher, and pension provisions, which were EUR 6.9 million lower, as at the balance sheet date.

Current assets decreased compared to the previous year by EUR 5.3 million to EUR 237.0 million. This results from the receivables due from BKM amounting to EUR 14.8 million (PY: EUR 39.4 million). The receivable from BKM was thereby reduced compared to the previous year by EUR 24.6 million. As at 31 December 2023 there were no outstanding receivables from other funders; in the previous year these receivables amounted to EUR 6.1 million. Contrary to this, the asset values from reinsurance presented under other assets increased (EUR +14.6 million). The increase in bank balances, by EUR 10.1 million, is mostly due, at EUR 7.6 million, to the bank balances of DW Akademie. The changes to the other balance sheet items under current assets are attributable to the reporting date.

Prepaid expenses amounting to EUR 12.1 million (PY: EUR 9.3 million) were mainly formed for social benefits paid in advance related to company pensions, satellite rental and the maintenance of hardware and software.

The institution's own capital (equity) increased by the net income for the financial year of EUR 0.6 million (PY: EUR 11.1 million). The equity ratio at the end of the financial year was 7.3% (PY: 7.1%), with total assets slightly lower compared to the previous year. The institution's own capital allows DW to remain able to act at short notice in the event of future uncertainties. The particular reasons for these are DW's funding from federal funds and project funding as well as business risks identified as part of the risk analysis 2023/24 (see Section 3. Risk report). Due to the fact that financing is ensured by the government, the liquidity Deutsche Welle requires is always guaranteed, irrespective of the equity the institution reports.

Provisions, at EUR 746.7 million, are EUR 5.0 million below the prior year figure. They are mostly formed for pension and other staff obligations. The decrease mostly results from the development of pension provisions, which decreased in total by EUR 6.9 million to EUR 646.3 million.

The reduction in liabilities, by EUR 12.6 million to EUR 29.0 million, is due to the change in other liabilities. Due to changing over Deutsche Welle's ERP system to S4 HANA as of 1 January 2024, various payment runs were brought forward from the begin of January 2024 to the end of December 2023 to ensure that payment obligations were fulfilled on time.

2.2. Financial performance

The income from federal subsidies presented in the income statement, of EUR 457.5 million (PY: EUR 461.8 million) predominantly refers to subsidies from the Commissioner of Culture and Media (BKM). Total subsidies from the BKM for operating budget and investments in the budgetary year 2023, including one-off special funds (for digitalisation measures and related to Russia's war against Ukraine) as well as funds to finance the old-age pensions of former DWFZ employees amount to EUR 413.6 million (PY: EUR 412.5 million). Besides this, subsidies from grants for projects from the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) for DW Akademie (EUR 29.9 million, PY: EUR 33.1 million) and project funding from the Federal Foreign Office (AA) for DW and DW Akademie (EUR 13.5 million, PY: EUR 14.9 million) are presented under this item. Added to this are subsidies from other funders, amounting to EUR 0.5 million (PY: EUR 1.2 million).

At EUR 31.7 million, other operating income is at the prior year level and is mainly composed of the change in the reinsurance guarantee funds (EUR 14.6 million, PY: EUR 15.6 million) and other project grants (EUR 9.6 million; PY: EUR 9.0 million).

At EUR 191.7 million, personnel expenses are EUR 9.0 million higher than the prior-year figure. Expenses for wages and salaries rose to EUR 133.2 million (EUR +3.9 million) and social security and expenses for assistance rose to EUR 24.4 million (EUR +3.2 million), mostly due to the rise in collective agreement pay by 2.8% as of 1 May 2023.

Post-employment expenses amount to EUR 34.0 million (PY: EUR 32.1 million). This increase is mostly due to the development and measurement of pension provisions. On the one hand, a drop in expenses can be calculated for the financial year 2023 compared to the previous year, of EUR 12.1 million. This results from the development of the actuarial interest rate used for pension provisions, which leads to a reduction by EUR 8.6 million in the effect of interest rate changes compared to the prior year. Furthermore, a reduction in other allocations/draw-downs of pension obligations is reported of EUR 3.5 million. This is offset by the one-off effect on the result recognised as an expense in 2022 of EUR 14.6 million, which resulted from the initial measurement of reinsured pension commitments under IDW Accounting Practice Statement IDW RH FAB 1.021. Overall, this results in a change to expenses for pension commitments amounting to EUR 2.5 million.

Expenses for programming declined compared to the prior year by EUR 3.5 million or 2.0% to EUR 170.5 million. This particularly results from the savings measures contained in the structural packet for 2024 that have already been initiated as well as from less project funds, particularly at DW Akademie.

Other operating expenses in 2023 amount to EUR 100.8 million (PY: EUR 101.3 million) in the financial year 2023 and, as in the prior year, are related to maintenance, operation, and repair expenses, various purchased services, and lease and rental expenses. Furthermore, the change in the compensation claim against the federal government amounting to EUR 20.2 million this year, similarly to the prior year, represents an expense and so is presented under other operating expenses (PY: EUR 24.3 million).

At EUR 14.5 million, depreciations are higher than in the previous year (EUR 13.6 million) due to the higher volume of investments in intangible and tangible fixed assets in 2023 (EUR 20.0 million, PY: EUR 17.1 million).

Interest expenses (EUR 11.6 million, PY: EUR 12.9 million) are mainly attributable to the reported interest portion from the compounding in the measurement of pension provisions and long-term provisions for personnel.

Deutsche Welle closed the financial year 2023 with net income for the financial year of EUR 0.6 million (PY: EUR 11.1 million).

2.3. Financial position

The revenue and expenditure account to be compiled at the same time as the annual financial statements corresponding to the budgetary system of the federal government, is based on government accounting methods, and in contrast to accounts stated above, which were compiled based on commercial principles, is based exclusively on payment transactions.

The revenue and expenditure account shows a decrease in cash funds, attributable to the reporting date, of EUR 18.1 million to a total of EUR 49.6 million. The portion of cash funds of DW from bank balances and cash-in-hand amounts to EUR 10.1 million (PY: EUR 7.6 million). Furthermore, federal government grants from the budgetary year 2023 not yet drawn down as at the balance sheet date, amounting to EUR 14.8 million (PY: EUR 39.4 million), are allocated to DW cash funds. These funds were used up in the first quarter of 2024, particularly to settle payment and project obligations entered into in the 2023 financial year. Cash funds of DW Akademie increased by 7.6 million EUR to 28.2 million EUR.

3. Risk report

As part of its internal early risk detection system, Deutsche Welle analyses its risks regularly. According to DW policy, risk management is restricted to taking monetary risks and takes place with the active involvement of all the executives who report to management.

The following risk presentation and assessment is based on gross presentation (risk assessment before measures taken to mitigate risks are considered). Additional explanations are included for individual risks which have an expected mid-range level of damage EUR >2 million and a probability of occurrence of >25%. These risks are differentiated in the DW risk report into severe, considerable and significant risks, depending on the extent of the losses and probability of occurrence.

The results of the risk inventory for 2023/24 show that the **development of the federal grant** represents one of the most severe financial risks that in the event of loss would have an adverse effect on the development of Deutsche Welle, since it is financed almost exclusively by the German federal government. The risk of a reduction in the amounts of project grants from various funders can also be regarded in this way. Due to the short-term nature of the fund commitments made by the federal government, the response time for unexpected reductions in funding is correspondingly short. Currently the probability of occurrence is considered to be 50%-75%.

The risk of **cyber-attacks on DW IT infrastructure** and the hindrances to production and loss of data that would result from them are still assessed as a serious risk (EUR >10 million), taking into consideration the total potential for damage and a total probability of occurrence of 75% to 100%. The assessment of a high probability of occurrence was derived from the increasingly frequent, successful attacks on public authorities, including attacks using encryption Trojans. The probability of occurrence and the amount of damage are reduced by a variety of technical and organisational measures, such as an intrusion prevention system, firewalls and virus filters on servers and PCs, setting up secured areas for server systems, as well as training and awareness-raising measures for all DW staff.

The **consequences of Russia's war on Ukraine** continues to be recorded as a further serious risk. The consequences particularly concern the expansion of reporting in Ukrainian/Russian as well as other regions (e.g. western Balkans). Further consequences of the crisis can also be stated, such as the energy crisis, the deployment of reporters to crisis zones, Basecamp, as well as indirect effects (the federal budget, project funding, the political situation in Germany/abroad, supply chains, impact in prices, impact on demand).

Considerable risks (EUR 5 million to EUR 10 million) arise from **events of force majeure, particularly from terror, war, crises, the deployment of project staff and journalists to crisis zones as well as natural disasters**, which Deutsche Welle has no way to influence. The probability of occurrence of this risk has been estimated at 50%-75%, taking into account current political and social events. In recent years, events have occurred, including the developments in Afghanistan and the

outbreak of the war in Ukraine, that particularly justified the need to immediately evacuate DW employees and local staff. By setting up a crisis team, DW was able to rapidly respond to these events with targeted measures, without a lot of paperwork and in a spirit of solidarity. Deutsche Welle has given a blanket commitment to its employees for deployments to war or crisis zones to give them safety and security in the case of accidents or illnesses (incl. continuing to pay salaries) that could arise from these deployments.

The **measurement of pension provisions/development of salaries** was included as a new considerable risk in 2023/24. In measuring pension obligations as of 31 December 2023, a long-term salary trend of 2.0% p.a. was applied, as in the prior year. Owing to inflation and depending on collective bargaining agreements for 2024 and following, the development of salaries and with it the obligation to pensions may increase significantly. The probability of occurrence is estimated at 25%-50%. Deutsche Welle recognises a compensation claim against the German federal government in its annual financial statements, the total of which always corresponds to the amount of the portion of pension provisions, provisions for early retirement and allowance commitments that is not covered by reinsurance. The compensation claim is indirectly recoverable based on the funding guarantee laid down by Section 44 of the Deutsche Welle Act [DWG]. As a result, the risk of increasing pension obligations is fully compensated for by the corresponding development of the compensation claim against the federal government.

The **risk arising from social insurance legislation from the use of freelancers** was classified as a considerable risk in the risk assessment 2023/24. In using freelancers, a distinction must be made between self-employed and not self-employed workers. A crucial criterion that is sometimes difficult to define is to determine the degree to which the workers are incorporated into the organisation (e.g. nature and extent of organisational and administrative tasks, division of labour in the collaboration). The German Pension insurance [Deutsche Rentenversicherung (DRV)] regularly audits the invoicing of freelancers as self-employed persons. There is the risk of having to back-pay social contributions if the audits come to a different evaluation of the freelancers' employment status. The last DRV audits for the financial years 2016-2022 have been completed. A potential change to the way the pay of certain groups of freelancers involved in programming is currently being examined, taking into account the results of these audits and changes in the general conditions.

As part of the 2023/24 risk inventory, the evaluation of significant risks (EUR 2 million to EUR 5 million) was assessed as follows:

As in the previous year, a significant risk exists related to the high costs of providing full access to linear TV to those with disabilities (subtitling, showing sign language). DW has set itself the goal of subtitling all its programming by the end of 2025.

Regarding production/broadcasting, risks exist from increases in costs due to dependency on manufacturers and suppliers, and from infringements of copyrights. Dependency on software manufacturers has increased in recent years due to a constriction in the market in some areas of application. The danger also exists of infringing copyrights inadvertently from ever more extensive and complex licenses. This risk is to be mitigated by collaborating in procurement with other broadcasters and centralising license management, amongst other things.

4. Report on expected developments

For 2024, the Federal Budget Act provides for a federal government allowance for Deutsche Welle for operating expenses amounting to EUR 390 million (of which EUR 7.2 million is rent to the Institute for Federal Real Estate [Bundesanstalt für Immobilienaufgaben – BImA], EUR 20 million for capital expenditure and EUR 0.6 million for refunding the DWFZ old-age pension (total of EUR 410.6 million). The staffing plan will be continued, with 1,568.1 employees in 2024. It was not possible to implement the increase of 270 positions required to fulfil Deutsche Welle's duties, mainly to transform freelance positions into fixed positions. The total requirement for the additional positions continues to exist and will be mentioned in the next financial years.

Furthermore, DW will also be supported in 2024 with project grants in order to fund its programmes as well as the activities of DW Akademie. The DW Akademie media development projects will be predominantly funded by the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ). The Federal Foreign Office (AA) will also continue to fund DW and DW Akademie with significant project grants. In addition to this are project grants from the European Union and other funders. Collaboration has existed between DW and its funders over many years. The project funds are granted during the year based on approval of the individual project applications.

The income from the funding by the German federal government and other funders is offset on the expenses side by considerable increases in costs, particularly from developments in collective bargaining and inflation. The current collective pay agreement ended in the middle of 2024. To be able to counter the increased costs from 2023 and to counter those for 2024, Deutsche Welle has set up a savings programme according to strategic criteria, of around EUR 20 million. Roughly half of this affects programming, with the reduction of around 100 full-time jobs. The remaining EUR 10 million is to be saved by investing in technology and infrastructure, amongst other things. The related measures were and will be taken in 2023/24.

Under these financial conditions, DW will continue to gear its activities in 2024 according to the main initiatives contained in its Strategic Plan and thus use resources efficiently and sustainably. Key to this is creating more regionalised contents, that is, products that are relevant to the target group and, at the same time, carry out DW's mission. The focus, here, is on producing regionalised content for the prioritised target countries of the 32 content languages. Central to this is expanding the network of regional correspondents in the target areas.

Owing to the increasing possibilities for creating media posts and content automatically, DW will encounter stiffer competition in its target areas in future. With its focus on original, exclusive and in-depth content requiring a high level of research, specialist knowledge and contextualisation, in these circumstances DW is gaining in importance. For this reason, DW will also invest in future further profiling its programming. At the same time, DW will also intensively review and use new AI applications. Used actively, with the common good in mind and bound by ethical guidelines, AI can also be used in the fight against disinformation as well as for the unhindered access to information.

DW continues to focus its business activities on implementing its on-demand strategy. DW will continue to drive forward the digital transformation of its media content and production: in future, content will primarily be produced for digital platforms.²¹ Hence, TV content, which traditionally occupies centre stage, has to be thoroughly rebuilt. DW will continuously evaluate which digital channels promise high use levels in the various markets, especially among young people. Accordingly, DW will enlarge its presence on these channels or collaborate with digital distributors. Besides DW's own content on dw.com, output channels of preference are third-party social media and streaming platforms.

With a view to the increasing worldwide polarisation, the expansion of journalistic content and dialogue series that encourage constructive debate on topics and issues with significance to society will also have a high level of importance in 2024.

Globally, the risk of social dialogue being distorted or manipulated is growing. The Global Risk Report 2024 put out by the World Economic Forum considers mis- and disinformation as the largest short-term risk on the global risk landscape.²² The role of DW is to produce an orientation and thus act to support democracy.

Filtering and blocking the internet is also increasing. The subject of internet censorship is playing an ever more important role in many of DW's prioritised target areas. DW's focus will nevertheless be aimed at enabling its target groups to gain access to DW information and content.

Carrying out the responsibilities and goals of a modern information society requires that the technical infrastructure (investments, ongoing equipment, technical personnel, project personnel) and the processes and information built on them is further strengthened across the entire organisation for the

²¹ DW linear strategy

²² https://www3.weforum.org/docs/WEF_GRR24_Press%20release_DE.pdf

necessary digitalisation and transformation. The on-going ARD (D)ein SAP project should be considered in this context, in which harmonised processes are to be run on a joint SAP system. The processes for finances, procurement and managerial accounting were changed over from SAP R3 to SAP S4 HANA on 1 January 2024. A digital end-to-end “procure to pay” process was introduced at Deutsche Welle. In the 2024 financial year, e-procurement and business trips are also to be introduced in further subprojects. Owing to the increase in digitalisation and related threats from hacking and cyber-attacks, it is necessary to thoroughly develop IT and cyber security across the organisation.

Decreasing the budgeted funding for investments as part of the savings packet for 2023/24 will slow down the urgently needed process of digital transformation. The room for internal restructuring without considerably reducing programming or distribution and strategic revaluations of topics affecting the entire organisation (sustainability, compliance, skilled worker shortage) is almost entirely used up. Potential for savings from implementing digitalisation only occur at a later time, e.g. when AI has been fully developed in programming or when support business processes are automated. At the same time digitalisation results in outsourcing existing capacities and new requirements due to new circumstances.

In performing its duties as a public institution, the goals of sustainability, diversity and inclusion and access to those with disabilities are further important aspects of DW's business activities.

In terms of structure, DW Akademie is focusing on consolidation required due to the sinking budget for projects. Therefore, acquiring new funds and increasing the efficiency of the use of funding internally will be a focus for 2024. In terms of content, much attention will be paid to the topic of disinformation and the development of a holistic strategy to combat it, as well as the subject of artificial intelligence and its often disruptive effects on the media landscape.

The financial challenges will continue beyond 2024 into 2025/26 in the expected increasing costs for staff. The DW collective agreement negotiations were started in July 2024. The high agreements concluded by the federal and state governments (particularly compensation for the high rate of inflation from 2021 to 2023) may well have a knock-on effect for DW.

Set against this, the government bill of 17 July 2024 on the federal budget for 2025 provides around an extra 15 million euros for Deutsche Welle compared to 2024. This means an expected federal grant in 2025 amounting to EUR 425.5 million, subject to the German federal government's current budgeting procedure.

The provided structural stabilisation of DW, in geopolitically challenging times, is an important signal to continue combating global disinformation, strengthening the freedom of the press and mastering the increased requirements on and relevant of Germany's international broadcaster. DW makes an important contribution to the changing times. The primary goal of DW remains securing, together with the federal government, funding that is fit for the future to fulfil DW's statutory responsibilities as an international broadcaster.

Bonn, 19 July 2024

Deutsche Welle Anstalt des öffentlichen Rechts

Peter Limbourg

Director General