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ifa-Edition Culture and Foreign Policy

Media-Conflict-Migration—

**The conflict potential of the media coverage
regarding migration from the countries of the
Arab Spring to Europe**

Conference Report

Bonn, 4 December 2012

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**MEDIA-CONFLICT-MIGRATION—
THE CONFLICT POTENTIAL OF THE
MEDIA COVERAGE REGARDING
MIGRATION FROM THE COUNTRIES
OF THE ARAB SPRING TO EUROPE**

On 4 December 2012 40 experts from politics, academia and the media participated in the conference “**In Focus: Media-Conflict-Migration. The conflict potential of the media coverage regarding migration from the countries of the Arab Spring to Europe**” at Deutsche Welle in Bonn.

The conference was initiated by ifa’s Research Programme “Culture and Foreign Policy” and jointly organised by the Bonn International Center for Conversion (BICC) and Deutsche Welle (DW). The conference forms the basis for an anthology on this topic to be published in 2013 by the publishing house Steidl.

The conference examined the impact of media coverage on public discourse on the issue of migration from the Arab Spring countries to Europe, as well as the role politicians and academics play within such coverage. Was coverage of the revolts in the Arab world well-balanced? How do certain narratives influence public discourse and why? And what are the underlying agendas behind these narratives?

During the conference, the conflict potential of migration-related policy within the European Union was also put under the microscope. What are the specific policy aims of the European Union and its individual member states? How does the media shape the progression of this conflict between the member states? To what extent should academia be held responsible for biased coverage in the media? Can conflict sensitive journalism provide a solution?



Daniele Saracino, a scholarship holder at ifa, outlined what would be covered at the conference. He called the coverage of migration from the countries of the Arab Spring to Europe unbalanced, even when this coverage comes from what are thought to be reliable media sources. He claimed that politicians' narratives seem to be adopted almost blindly by many media outlets, and consumers often do not think to question the information they are being fed. One of the central questions of the conference was why the media cannot fulfil its function and mission, frequently failing to provide accurate and well-balanced coverage of migratory movements from Arab Spring countries to Europe. In addition, since academia can often disprove most of the distorted narratives—or as Daniele Saracino calls them, “the myths of migration”—is it also to blame for the propagation and persistence of many of the “myths”? Daniele Saracino considered the cause of such a recirculation of false narratives to be a failed “system of checks and balances” between the interconnected spheres of media, politics and academia. He also argued that the rising tensions between the European Union's member states during the Arab Spring

in 2011 indicate the conflict potential that is inherent in migration.

A well-balanced and well-informed discussion of “migration—an anthropological constant that has an impact on almost every part of our lives”, as Daniele Saracino defines it, should not and cannot ignore the many positive aspects of migration.



Introduction

“Islam sells”

Lale Akgün, former Member of the German Parliament and current Head of International Affairs and Development Policy at the State Chancellery of North Rhine Westphalia, gave a keynote speech in which she outlined some of the most controversial aspects surrounding the issue of migration and its portrayal in the media. She stated that political and moral responsibility for the current situation in which migrants from the countries of the Arab Spring find themselves must be borne nationally and internationally. This shared responsibility is the result of Western interference during the events of the Arab Spring, but also, in Germany's case, from a fundamental commitment to international human rights. Lale Akgün stated that, far too frequently, German (and other European) media coverage has presented recent migration from North Africa to Europe as an “Islamic threat”. This label does not reflect the actual situation of migrants who are usually simply looking for refuge from economic hardship and political threats.

To illustrate her case, Lale Akgün presented some statistics on refugees who arrived in Europe during the Arab revolts. She indicated that the numbers are in fact relatively low and that Berlusconi's claim of a “human tsunami” was a vast exaggeration: this so-called “tsunami” turned out to be no more than a small “wave”. She went on to mention the way that some of the German media openly admitted to preferring Christian refugees to Muslim ones. To illustrate public opinion on the intake of refugees, Lale Akgün read out examples of comments left by readers on articles about migration in online versions of German newspapers. The comments demonstrate that racism and xenophobia are ubiquitous amongst the population. Accordingly, politicians seeking high approval ratings readily adopt the sentiments of their potential voters. In the same way, Lale Akgün pointed out that it is often in the media's interest to echo public sentiment: newspapers sell more copies when they run headlines about Islam. According to Lale Akgün, “It isn't ‘sex sells’ anymore, now it's ‘Islam sells’”. She concluded her keynote speech with a call for more humane and less sensational media coverage of migration.



Panel 1

Under scrutiny: The media coverage on the migratory movements from the coun- tries of the Arab Spring to Europe.

The migrations to Europe that took place during the uprisings in the Arab Spring countries are a complex phenomenon with manifold causes. It is the media's duty to analyse these movements in order to make migration comprehensible to the public. The first panel discussion at the conference, moderated by Fabian Pianka (DW), examined the nature and characteristics of the media's coverage of migration. The panellists then contrasted the image conveyed by the media coverage with actual events. The experts agreed that certain discrepancies exist between the two, and analysed the reason for the distortion that creates these discrepancies.

Wrong media focus

Salah Methnani, a journalist from Radiotelevisione Italiana (RAI) and member of the Permanent Conference of the Mediterranean Audiovisual Operators (COPEAM), who has been reporting from Tunisia, Libya, Egypt and most recently Syria during the revolts, gave a short overview of the current situation in Syria. He referred to the ongoing hostilities as “genocide” and called for intervention by the international community. He went on to criticise the media for not focusing on the real issues. For example, instead of pointing out that most migrants would prefer to have better living conditions in their home countries rather than feeling forced to leave, the media focuses on the perceived risks of migration from the Arab world, such as the emergence of Islamic extremism. He went on to say that Arab people felt betrayed by the way the events were covered by Western TV stations. It is this sense of disappointment that leads them to turn to Al Jazeera. Even though many prominent Western broadcasters have been addressing Arabic-speaking audiences for some time now, Salah Methnani bemoans that “they speak Arabic, but they do not speak to the Arab world”.



Migration-security nexus in the EU

Ruth Vollmer, a migration expert and researcher at BICC, explained the EU mechanisms for migration control, showing how the EU cooperated with the countries of the Arab Spring in order to prevent migration across the Mediterranean. She revealed that even during and immediately after the power shifts in North Africa, one of the primary subjects in negotiations between them and EU countries was the issue of migration control, even calling it an EU “obsession”. When it comes to media coverage, she underlined that migration issues are mostly subsumed into the category of security risks, and this is also the case in politics. Ruth Vollmer claimed that the media still mostly draws on its respective national policy when reporting on migration and therefore reproduces political narratives. Of course, audiences can hardly avoid having their views shaped by such reporting.

Lack of context

Loay Mudhoon, Head of the Qantara project based at DW, outlined the progression of media coverage following the outbreak of the Arab Spring uprisings. A large section of the media reacted positively to the Arab Spring and was generally positive in its coverage of the revolts. According to Loay Mudhoon, this initial positive attitude provided a particularly welcome change in light of the negative press the Islamic world had received following the events of 9/11. However, he went on to point out how this initial optimistic coverage soon turned to scepticism. The optimism had failed to give an adequate amount of context to the complex situation that presented itself in Arab Spring countries, creating unrealistic hopes in the West and generating impatience. According to Loay Mudhoon, failing to present events in their full complexity in the first place was a violation of the principles of good journalism. More generally, he stated that this lack of balance in reporting is a particular problem in the coverage of migration issues.



Discussion

Many of the participants agreed that positive aspects of migration, such as the contribution migrants make to economic growth and to revitalising an ageing European population, should be covered more frequently. The panellists emphasised that public broadcasters have to act as a reliable, critical and balanced source of information. However, their reliability is not being helped by the vast cuts to the funding allocated to foreign reporting that have been made in the past 10 to 15 years. In order to support balanced and objective reporting, the panellists stressed the need to establish international journalistic standards and provide journalists with better training and education. In addition, the speakers demanded a more objective, scientific approach on the part of journalists towards their stories. However, they admitted that a certain discrepancy between the coverage and real events is inevitable, since journalists are so deeply embedded in the political power structures of their country and in the power structures of the organisation that employs them. With such burdens to bear, journalists can only try their best

to stay as close to objective reality as possible. What is more, all the panellists agreed that social media are not part of the solution since their influence on public opinion is limited.



Panel 2

National perspectives, political narratives, public discourses, and media coverage: How big is the conflict potential regarding migration amongst the countries in Europe and who is responsible?

The different agendas of the EU member states with regard to migration consistently remain a sensitive political issue. Does national media coverage feed into this potential for political conflict? The moderator Jerry Sommer, freelance journalist and migration expert, discussed the following questions with the panellists: What are the views of specific EU countries on the events of the Arab Spring and on the impact these events are having on Europe? What narratives are used in the media, academia and in politics to influence discourse on migration and why? The influence of politics and the media can hardly be disentangled when it comes to shaping public opinion on migration in Europe in the context of the Arab Spring. This mutual influence was the subject of this panel discussion.

Traditional vs. unexpected, event-related migration

John Maguire, director of International Development at Radio France Internationale, provided an insight into the views on migration amongst the political parties in France as well as amongst the general population. He stressed the importance of distinguishing between the way countries cope with “traditional”, non-event-related migration and the way they cope with unexpected migration and refugee flows of the type that occurred during the Arab Spring.

Dublin II and the bargaining of refugees

Lale Akgün reminded the audience of the moral responsibility borne by politicians in shaping opinion about migration, especially in the context of Islam. In her statement, she urged politicians to weigh their words carefully and not to use anti-Islamic sentiment to gain popular favour. Lale Akgün pointed out that after the Dublin II Regulation, European countries now often view refugees in terms of how much they would cost the



respective country, rather than viewing them as subjects in need of protection—a policy approach that severely impeded the negotiations about a European asylum system.

Racism in a new guise

Although political opinion, mediated by the media, usually influences public opinion, Kai Hafez from the University of Erfurt claimed that when it comes to important events such as the Arab Spring the reverse can be true: public opinion aided by the media is indeed capable of putting pressure on political policy-makers. He disclosed a new kind of cultural and social problem with respect to migration: While most of the established political parties have tacitly agreed to keep populism out of the matter, new players have now joined the debate. These players include right wing movements or public figures such as Thilo Sarrazin in Germany and they represent a new kind of racism for the media to reproduce: racism in a new guise. The rise of such new populist movements can be observed all over Europe, according to Kai Hafez. Their views on Islam and migration are similar everywhere and their influence on traditional politics and on the media is greater than ever before. This populist trend can be traced back to a deep-seated Eurocentrism in the overall approach to the issue of migration. However, rather than blaming only political influence for populism, Hafez pointed to a need to fundamentally change people's values and ideas.

Discussion

In the discussion that followed, the panellists alluded to the importance of stereotypes in how news stories are selected. Though they acknowledged that objective, in-depth analyses do not usually sell as well as sensationalist stories that appeal to populist tendencies, the panellists also pointed out that as a journalist one must seize opportunities to provide background information to audiences wherever possible.

It was emphasised that the media must find a way to get through to people with low education levels in the Arab world and that in order to do this, education must be improved and civil society strengthened in these areas.

The panel discussion concluded with the argument that whilst our societies change, our narratives stay the same. Instead of presenting Muslims as a whole as a threat by focusing only on a tiny minority, media coverage should show that the vast majority of Muslims are not at all threatening. Our perception of Muslims is crucial in creating the narratives that our societies are based on, and that inform our self-perception. It is these fundamental narratives that have to change if we want society to change.

Panel 3

The role of conflict sensitive journalism in producing a well-balanced perspective on migration from the countries of the Arab Spring and its impact on Europe.

In the conference's last panel discussion, moderated by Karin Schädler, a freelance journalist and migration expert who focuses on the Arab world, the aim was to attempt to provide a solution for the problems debated in the previous two panels by looking towards conflict sensitive journalism. Balanced reporting and sound research, both of which should be self-evident in the media coverage regardless of the subject matter, are often lacking in today's news. The panellists discussed the reasons for this lack as well as its consequences and examined whether conflict sensitive journalism could provide a solution, especially when it comes to the coverage of migration.

Guidelines for conflict sensitive journalism

In his opening remarks, Martin Zint, a senior expert in conflict sensitive journalism, attempted to define some guidelines. In his guidelines he listed the need for journalists to have a specialised knowledge of conflict transformation, to be aware of a win-win solution (since conflict is a threat but also an opportunity), and not to use conflict as material for sensationalist stories but to use journalism as a tool to de-escalate. In order to de-escalate, journalists should try to avoid stereotypes, ask new questions in order to get new answers, and filter through the opacity the conflict parties purposely create. They could thus provide a transparent view of all the aspects of the conflict. He emphasised that news is usually event-oriented: peace, however, is not an event but a process. As Martin Zint put it: "When a tree falls, it makes a lot of noise, but nobody can hear the wood grow. Journalists must make people hear the wood growing".



Strengthening voices from the Arab world

Gernot Wolfram from the Macromedia University for Media and Communication in Berlin underlined the necessity of using new wording when reporting on the Arab Spring. He demonstrated how certain key words automatically attract other words in journalism, and how Western terms for events that took place elsewhere are often not precise enough to describe the facts correctly and therefore create a distorted image. Hence, we should strengthen voices from the Arab world, even if we do not necessarily agree with them. This especially concerns the voices of migrants who live in the West and report about events taking place in the Arab world. Gernot Wolfram pointed out that the few experts from the Arab world who are allowed to speak in Western coverage are omnipresent. These journalists are used constantly because they fit in with our views, our ideals and our ideological framework.

Overestimation of media

“Why is there not as much conflict sensitive journalism as we would like there to be?” was the question Andreas Schwarz from the Ilmenau University of Technology asked. His answer was unambiguous: Journalists are not autonomous; they are embedded in hierarchies and politics, so their choices, as well as their resources, are often restricted. Moreover, the media needs to appeal to its audience’s desires, he claimed. To report accurately on large-scale events like the Arab Spring, one would need a long-term perspective, sufficient time and an adequate format for conflict sensitive journalism, a combination that in most cases simply does not exist. Andreas Schwarz’s second argument related to the

impact of the media on public perception.

As he revealed, studies show that the media’s impact is overestimated. Usually, the media is not able to change attitudes, it merely strengthens existing ones.

Guidelines (to) put into practice

The next question that was raised was what individual journalists and editors-in-chief can do in practice in order to be conflict sensitive. In response, the panellists suggested training that includes editors, and the funding for relevant research and foreign reporting, preferably by NGOs. Giving journalists a freer rein when it comes to funds would enable more well-researched pieces and thus more unbiased reporting. Furthermore, the notion was raised that in order to make conflict sensitive journalism more attractive to audiences, political correctness should no longer be a barrier to sensitive stories and debates: the conference participants called for quality media to be provocative, albeit in a responsible way.

Discussion

On the issue of media coverage of migration more specifically, the discussion continued with the statement that better reporting within this subject area needs more competent journalists. In addition, participants stressed the need for more diversity in the newsroom and for migrants to organise themselves more successfully in order for their voices to be heard. Only such changes will allow journalism to change its perspective. The panel agreed that migrants need better media literacy in order to integrate their voice into society, and that society has to enable them to acquire media literacy. Asked for best practice examples, the panellists singled

out “Café Babel” and “EXBERLINER”, pointing out that these are good examples because they provide new journalistic perspectives by building a bridge between professional journalists and citizens. The experts underlined the need for scientific methods to disclose how strongly our values are expressed in the language we use, and demanded that Western journalists reflect more on the limitations of our reporting.

Subsequently, two points were raised for discussion: the question of academia’s role within the debate and the hope that the demographic change might naturally resolve the lack of diversity in newsrooms, in politics and in other crucial areas of society. The panel’s first answer alluded to the principles of academia, since it is usually against those principles to intervene publicly. Nonetheless, the panel recommended that the media refer more frequently to the results that science produces. Furthermore, consumers often want snappy answers that scholars cannot provide. In reference to the question of gradual demographic change the panel agreed that the problem of the under-representation of migrants will not disappear by

itself, since linguistic and societal barriers need to be broken down first. Finally, the problem of underlying racism and xenophobia in society was discussed. The panellists emphasised that social permeability is still a huge problem in Germany, as university education is still not accessible to most migrants. What is more, an increasing number of journalists have a university degree, which means that a university degree will become a prerequisite to entering the journalistic profession, a fact which will provide migrants with an additional barrier to entering the journalistic profession. The common consensus was to call for more journalists, more resources and more time in order to allow for more detailed and more balanced reporting. In addition, Gernot Wolfram stated that instead of meditating on a theoretical “diversity”, we simply need to accept the actual change that is taking place in society around us. Wolfram ended with an appeal to let the people with relevant knowledge participate in the aftermath of the Arab Spring, even if they don’t always fit into our ideological framework. They not only want to have their voices heard—we need to hear their voices!



Conclusion and Future Outlook

“We need many different voices and many people to be able to change the established narratives”

Dr. Odila Triebel, ifa

Better training for journalists

The necessity for better journalistic training and education, as well as more resources for journalists: Journalists should be permitted to report without drawing on sensationalist stereotypes, should be allowed to operate more freely in their field of work and should be relieved from their job-related restrictions. This can only be achieved if their superiors, for example their editors-in-chief are included in such training. If journalists and editors have a broader general knowledge and more balanced views on the topics, coverage will be more objective and closer to reality. More financial resources and time must be provided to the journalists to allow for in-depth reporting rather than event-oriented news.

Global harmonisation of journalistic standards

A closer adherence to journalistic standards and a global harmonisation of such standards: The guidelines for professional, or more specifically, conflict sensitive journalism, must be upheld and the adherence to such guidelines rewarded. The advantages of conflict sensitive journalism must be signalled not only to journalists, but also to media executives and managers, and perhaps most importantly, to audiences. Only if every party involved learns to appreciate the assets of professional journalism, can more balance be achieved in reporting.

Deconstruction of distorted narratives

The necessity to deconstruct distorted narratives that exist within the public discourse: As coverage of the migratory movements during the Arab Spring have shown, the images conveyed by a large part of the media are distorted, and are charged with biased narratives that lead to a misleading discourse. This produces “myths of migration” which are reproduced over and over and can exacerbate the real-life situation of migrants. Hence it can be gathered that the supposed system of checks and balances between the media, politics and academia is failing. This failure becomes especially clear where events in the Islamic world are concerned. In order to achieve more objective and balanced reporting, the above-mentioned recommendations should be followed, and reporting needs to include voices from the Arab world. Experts from respective conflict regions or subject areas must be included, even if they do not necessarily fit into the Western framework. Migrants and people from migrant backgrounds must be given the opportunity to play a larger role in key areas of society, especially in the media. There is a shared responsibility shouldered by politics, the media and academia to allow greater diversity and inclusion in our society.

CONFERENCE PROGRAMME

Media-Conflict-Migration—The conflict potential of the media coverage regarding migration from the countries of the Arab Spring to Europe

Time:

4 December 2012, 10 am–5.00 pm

Venue:

Deutsche Welle, Kurt-Schumacher-Str. 3, Bonn

Organisation:

Bonn International Center for Conversion (BICC),
Deutsche Welle (DW)

Institut für Auslandsbeziehungen (Institute for
Foreign Cultural Relations – ifa)

In Europe the Arab Revolutions not only raised great hopes of a political and social “spring” in the region, they also elicited fears and caused conflict regarding migration from various countries to the European continent. In this process, media coverage has played a crucial role. By informing the public about events, the media has to deal with a tension between policy interests and its societal duty to secure reliable, well-researched and preferably “conflict-sensitive” journalism. Beyond the scope of the media and political actors, academia also has an important role to play when it comes to the delicate and complex issue of migration. Academia is supposed to act as a corrective to sometimes biased or distorted societal and political narratives and discourses, and thereby ensure an accurate representation of migration issues.

This conference will take a close look at the media coverage of migratory movements to Europe from the countries of the Arab Spring during the revolts. Pictures, articles and other reports will be analysed. Representatives of the media, politics and science will address discrepancies between public perceptions and real events. Experts will examine the reasons for and the consequences of that gap and identify possible solutions to prevailing problems connected with specific migratory movements.

Conference Programme

10.00 am **Welcome Address**

Sebastian Körber (ifa),
Susanne Heinke (BICC) and
Adelheid Feilcke (DW)

10.15 am **Introduction**

Daniele Saracino (ifa)

10.25 am **Keynote**

Dr. Lale Akgün (State Chancellery
North Rhine-Westphalia, Former MP)

11.00 am **Panel 1:**

**Under scrutiny: media coverage
of migration from the countries
of the Arab Spring to Europe.**

The movements that took place during the revolts from the Arab Spring countries to Europe are a complex phenomenon with manifold causes. It is the media's duty to characterise and analyse those processes in order to make the realm of migration understandable and comprehensible for the public. How do the media meet this task? Is there a discrepancy between the image conveyed via the media and the real events?

If so, why? Which specific characteristics of migration are represented in the media's coverage? To what extent do politics influence public perception and which interests do they pursue? What role do scholars play in this respect?

Panelists:

Salah Methnani (Journalist, COPEAM)

Loay Mudhoon (Scholar and Journalist, Qantara)

Ruth Vollmer (Researcher, BICC)

Moderation: Fabian Pianka (DW)

12.30 pm **Lunch Break**

1.30 pm **Panel 2:**
National perspectives, political narratives, public discourses and media coverage: What is the potential for conflict regarding migration among European countries and who is responsible for such conflict?

The different agendas of the EU member-states regarding migration are a consistent political explosive. Does national media coverage add fuel to this potential for conflict? How do representatives of single member-states (Italy, France, Germany) assess the migratory movements from the countries of the Arab Spring? How is the media's coverage of events shaped by the respective political agendas? What impact do national public and political reactions to migration from the countries of the Arab Spring have on the relations amongst the EU member-states? Is it possible that migration is instrumentally used via the media coverage?

Panelists:

Dr. Lale Akgün (State Chancellery North Rhine-Westphalia, Former MP)

Prof. Dr. Kai Hafez (University of Erfurt)

John Maguire (Journalist, Radio France Internationale)

Moderation: Jerry Sommer (Freelance Journalist)

3.00 pm **Coffee Break**

3.15 pm **Panel 3:**
The role of conflict-sensitive journalism in producing a well-balanced perspective on migration from the countries of the Arab Spring and its impact on Europe.

Conflict sensitivity should be self-evident in professional journalism. However, are professional journalistic principles adhered to adequately in the coverage of migration from the Arab Spring countries to Europe? How can journalism mitigate conflict potential between the different actors? Are the people represented by the statistics considered adequately in the public, medial and political debate? Do the media cover migrants' grievances in a well-balanced way? Do they spotlight the positive aspects of migration adequately? Do they examine demographic change in Europe or the possibility of renewed and closer cooperation amongst EU member-states as well as with the countries of the Arab Spring?

Panelists:

Dr. Andreas Schwarz (Ilmenau University of Technology)

Prof. Dr. Gernot Wolfram (MHMK Macromedia University for Media and Communication)

Martin Zint (Journalist, Weltfriedensdienst e.V.)

Moderation: Karin Schädler (Freelance Journalist)

4.45 pm **Conclusions and Future Outlook**

Dr. Odila Triebel (ifa)

5.00 pm **End of Conference**

Speakers

Dr. Lale Akgün, born in Turkey, holds a doctorate in psychology from the University of Cologne. From 1981 until 1997 she served as a family consultant to the City of Cologne, by 1992 as deputy agency chief. Afterwards she was chief of the “centre of migration” of North Rhine-Westphalia. In 2002 she was elected to the German Bundestag where she was member of the Committee on the Affairs of the European Union, vice-chair of the working group European Politics and Migration and the SPD’s Faction Representative for Islamic Affairs. After leaving the Bundestag in 2009, she joined the State Chancellery of North Rhine-Westphalia where she is now responsible for International Affairs and development policies. She has published several books, articles and essays on the topics of migration and integration.

Adelheid Feilcke is Head of Deutsche Welle’s Culture Department. She joined the DW in 1992 and has worked as a trainer for Deutsche Welle Akademie since 1995. She studied music, theatre, film and television as well as anthropology in Cologne and as a DAAD scholar in Tirana, Albania. She obtained her master’s degree in ethnomusicology in 1990 and a second degree in cultural management at Hochschule für Musik und Theater in Hamburg in 1993.

Prof. Dr. Kai Hafez is Professor (Chair) for International and Comparative Media and Communication Studies at the University of Erfurt, Germany. He was a Senior Research Fellow of the German Institute for Middle East Studies, Hamburg, and a Guest Professor at Oxford University and the American University in Cairo. Kai Hafez’s research focuses on: international media reporting, globalisation and Islamic-Western relations; mass media and political transformation in the Arab World; and

media and migration in Europe. He is a member of several editorial boards of international academic magazines, and has been a frequent advisor to German governments.

Susanne Heinke is Head of Public Relations at Bonn International Center for Conversion (BICC). Before joining BICC she worked at the weekly *Volkszeitung* and the monthly *Sowjetunion heute*. She co-initiated *Wostok*, an independent journal on Russia and the Commonwealth of Independent States. As a freelancer, she worked for German and international media, such as WDR and Deutsche Welle. Susanne Heinke studied Slavic Studies and Library Sciences at the University of Cologne.

Sebastian Körber is Deputy Secretary General of the Institute for Foreign Cultural Relations (ifa) and Head of ifa’s Media Department. Before, he was editor-in-chief of ifa’s journal for international perspective *Kulturaustausch* and worked for the French AFP, reporting from Strasbourg and Brussels. Sebastian Körber studied Politics, English, American and Roman Studies in Munster, Trieste and Freiburg and European Journalism in Strasbourg and Brussels. He regularly publishes articles in the field of foreign cultural and educational policies and international cultural relations and is editor of numerous publications such as the *Culture Report/EUNIC Yearbook*.

John Maguire was named Director of International Development of Audiovisuel Extérieur de la France (AEF) in March 2012. He has been Director of International Affairs of Radio France Internationale (RFI) since May 2010. Before that he was a journalist and then head of the International Training department from 2004 to 2010. He was previously Managing Editor of RFI’s English service for

6 years. He is an African specialist and has taught in several French schools of journalism. He is a former correspondent of Irish Radio-Television (RTE) and The Irish Times in Paris.

Salah Methnani, born in Tunisia, graduated in Foreign Languages and Literature from Tunis University and moved to Italy shortly after. He has worked as a journalist and programme author for the pan-Arabian TV “Arab Radio and Television”, as a correspondent for Tunisian Radio and for a Tunisian newspaper in Rome. In 2011, he became foreign correspondent for Rainews24 and reported on the Arab Spring from Tunisia, Egypt and Libya. Since 2012 he has been reporting from the Syrian conflict area. On 24 November 2012 he was awarded the prestigious “Maria Grazia Cutulli” prize for his coverage.

Fabian Pianka has been working for the Directorate-General (department of International Relations) at Deutsche Welle since 2006. He studied Communications and Political Science (M.A.) at the University of Westminster and the Diplomatic Academy of London in London and Paris. In 2010, Fabian Pianka was awarded a stipend from the Institute for Foreign Cultural Relations (ifa), an award which promotes dialogue between future “multipliers” of predominantly Muslim countries and Germany. The scholarship was completed at the Arab States Broadcasting Union (ASBU) in Tunis, Tunisia. Fabian Pianka also works as a moderator with a regional focus on the Middle East and Africa.

Daniele Saracino is a fellow of ifa’s Research Programme “Culture and Foreign Policy” and a doctoral candidate at the Institute for Political Science and Sociology at the University of Bonn. He studied philosophy, political science and modern German literature in Bonn. Among other activities,

he worked on the research project “Migration and Security—Durable Solution for Refugees” at the University of Bonn and at the Bonn International Center for Conversion (BICC).

Karin Schädler works as a freelance journalist, project manager and facilitator in Germany and other countries. Her focus is on migration topics (especially Islam and Muslim migrants) and on Foreign Policy (especially Arab countries, Afghanistan/Pakistan). Her workshops mostly deal with intercultural understanding and/or journalism. She is currently managing journalism projects in Pakistan and Afghanistan for Deutsche Welle Akademie. She is an alumnus of Berlin Journalism School. (www.karinschaedler.de/ [www.twitter.com/karinschaedler](https://twitter.com/karinschaedler)).

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Organisation

BICC (Bonn International Center for Conversion)

As an independent, non-profit organisation, BICC deals with a wide range of global topics in the field of peace and conflict research. The promotion of peace and development is the most important precondition for security and the transformation of conflicts. BICC takes a comprehensive view of 'conversion' as the reduction and transformation of military stockpiles, capacities and processes. This perception of conversion comprises an understanding of peace and security, which goes far beyond the narrow focus that national states place on military security.

DW (Deutsche Welle)

DW represents Germany in the international media landscape. Germany's international broadcaster conveys the country as a nation rooted in European culture and as a liberal, democratic state based on the rule of law. As part of its statutory mission, DW works independently to present events and developments in Germany and the world and picks up on German and other points of view on important issues. It promotes exchange and understanding between the world's cultures and people. DW also provides access to the German language, daily life and the mentality of the people.

ifa (Institute for Foreign Cultural Relations)

The Institute for Foreign Cultural Relations (ifa) is engaged worldwide in promoting dialogue among civil societies, in the mediation of foreign cultural policy information and in artistic exchange. It promotes and funds cultural, artistic and arts exchanges through a programme of exhibitions, meetings, dialogues and conferences. It contributes to maintaining peace through civil conflict resolution work, and it fosters cultural diversity by supporting cultural minorities. As a centre of competence for foreign cultural and educational policy ifa works to bridge practice with scientific research and media. Within the framework of ifa's Research Programme "Culture and Foreign Policy" researchers examine current issues related to Germany's foreign cultural and educational policy.

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