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PRINCIPLES

Sustainability Report

RESPONSIBILITY

EMPLOYEES

SOCIAL COMMITMENT

ENVIRONMENT

VALUE CHAIN

ECONOMY

Home // Home



Sustainability Report 2015



Axel Springer presents a Sustainability Report every two years. This edition was prepared "in accordance" with the latest G4 Guidelines and the so-called "Core" option of the Global Reporting Initiative (GRI). Further information can be found here.

Florian Nehm.

Corporate Sustainability Officer, Axel Springer SE.

Foreword



Mathias Döpfner: "The soul and spirit of the Axel Springer company is journalism"

Stakeholder Interaction



Modern sustainability reports base the selection of topics on the stakeholders.

Journalistic independence



An Axel Springer Akademie video website on the attack on the editorial office of "Charlie Hebdo". Energy



New approach to the identification of the amounts of electricity, district heating and natural gas used by the company.

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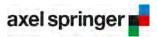
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Sustainability Report 2015

Print Excerpt of the Online Sustainability Report

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Axel Springer SE Print Excerpt of the Online Sustainability Report 2013

Source: http://nachhaltigkeit.axelspringer.de Responsibility for the content Florian Nehm Head of Corporate Sustainability & EU Affairs

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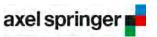
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Foreword from the Chairman and CEO



Mathias Döpfner, Chairman and Chief Executive Officer, Axel Springer SE.

What we are and what we want

Modern companies address the concerns of their stakeholders. These are not only interested in what products are made from and what side effects may result from their use, how the share prices develop or what the chances are of being able to get a job in a company and make a career. People also want to hear about the self-image of companies. They want to know which principles apply, how workers are treated and how the question of social responsibility is defined.

So what brings us together? What motivates people to work for this company?

The soul and spirit of the Axel Springer company is journalism. We serve our readers with independent and critical information and advice as well as good entertainment. Through our journalistic services we are making a contribution to the strengthening of freedom and democracy. The prerequisite for this is our economic success. We are working every day to improve our journalistic, technological and commercial competence.

We have set ourselves the target of successfully establishing independent journalism in the digital world – and want to be the world's leading digital publishing house.

Axel Springer is pursuing a strategy of profitable growth. Our majority shareholder safeguards our independence. We are a publicly listed company and, as such, committed to the efficiency and transparency requirements of the capital market. We do not restrict our self-image to economic success alone. For we know that: Profit is not everything, but without profit everything is nothing. We want to create value. Material and ethical value.

We want to increase the value of our company. In addition to the operating earnings (EBITDA), earnings per share is the key indicator against which we measure ourselves and against which we can be measured. At the same time we want to strengthen the values of freedom, democracy, the rule of law, competition, property, human rights, cosmopolitanism and tolerance through our journalistic work.

Our publishing house is committed to the values of its founder Axel Springer. He stood first and fore-most for freedom. It is in this sense that the five preambles of the company are defined: the consoli-



dation of German and European unity, support of the vital rights of the Israeli people, solidarity in the common values of free nations with the United States of America, the defense of the principles of a free social market economy and the rejection of all forms of political totalitarianism. These values do not prescribe the support of any ideology, government or political party, but rather they also allow and call, as does any true loyalty, for honest criticism.

Criticism and self-criticism are also a part of our overall corporate culture. Three values are decisive here: Creativity, entrepreneurial spirit, integrity.

We see the digital transformation of society and of our business as an opportunity which we are shaping actively: without fear of self-cannibalization and without dividing into analog and digital camps. All of our employees are responsible for the success of digitization.

Our company is divided into three segments, which are based on journalism or benefit from journalism to varying degrees.

- 1. Paid Services: These are all business models that are predominantly funded by paying readers.
- **2. Marketing Services:** These are all business models that are predominantly funded by advertising customers.
- **3.** Classified Advertising Services: These are all business models that are predominantly funded by job, real estate and auto advertising customers.

The traditional revenues of a publishing house are reflected in this structure. In the same way as a newspaper in the past was financed by subscribers, advertisers and classified advertising customers. We have become the leading digital publishing house when we have become number one in our respective market segments and in the countries in which we are active.

Axel Springer is an international company. Our core market is Europe. We also want to be successful in growth markets such as the United States of America. We do not do business in non-democratic countries on principle.

In our dealings with each other, we want to experience what we have collectively defined as socio-political objectives. Freedom demands a culture of trust, not of mistrustful control. We measure the success of our employees by their results, not by their presence. We encourage entrepreneurs in the company. We organize the publishing house as an operative holding company – as centralized as necessary and as decentralized as possible. All brands, business divisions and services develop into independent companies, which hold together in spite of their differences like members of a family.

Technological competence has increasing importance in a digital publishing house. For this reason we promote innovative technology, yet remain at heart a house of journalism.

We do what we do for our readers and customers. But reader and customer orientation does not mean courtesy journalism or ingratiation.

We defend editorial independence as our most precious asset. Independent, critical, and thereby credible journalism is the best service we can provide to all of our readers and customers.



We want to work quickly and unbureaucratically. Those who undertake entrepreneurial risks are rewarded for doing so, even if they do make a mistake.

We promote the diversity of gender, nationality, religion, sexual orientation, age and personality.

We treat every employee as we would like to be treated ourselves: respectfully and affectionately.

Axel Springer is a commercial enterprise, in which individualists feel at ease, because they have the freedom to make their own decisions and to shape things independently. A kind of "United Artists". Artists – irrespective of whether they are reporters or software developers – are independent, different and sometimes complicated. They may and should be like this, as long as they are excellent and, when it matters, hold together – United.

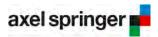
We are passionate and have the desire to discover new things, to change and to improve ourselves. We want to be successful, to do good and to have fun.

And we know that everything defined here describes a goal, which regrettably however is not yet reality at all times and everywhere. This is what we want to change.

Thank you for your interest in our company and I hope you enjoy reading this Sustainability Report.

Dr. Mathias Döpfner

Chief Executive Officer



Principles and sustainability-related objectives

The framework for sustainability management is formed by principles and objectives, the exchange of ideas with stakeholders, the control of measures, the review of results as well as the communication of developments.



Freedom is the foundation of our company



A passionate journalist, courageous entrepreneur and visionary freedom fighter, Axel Springer (1912 - 1985) accompanied the emergence of our democracy. (Foto: Axel Springer SE)

Axel Springer SE is the only independent media company to have a corporate constitution. The founder was aware of the special responsibility of his media: Axel Springer formulated four principles for the journalistic work of his company, and presented them to the public on 26 October 1967 in the Hamburg "Overseas Club". Following German reunification in 1990, the original wording was amended (furthering the unification of the peoples of Europe) and after the terrorist attacks in the United States on 11 September 2001, supplemented as a visible sign of solidarity (supporting the transatlantic alliance).

The five principles paint a liberal picture of the world. Mathias Döpfner explains Axel Springer's value orientation: "The media have a great responsibility towards individuals – and towards society as a whole. History casts doubt on whether the media in our country have always adequately fulfilled this special responsibility." Deliberations along these lines led Axel Springer to formulate the four essentials for the journalistic work of his company. The publisher referred to them as "stakes, between which the journalistic individuality and the professional competence of our editors, reporters, columnists and correspondents can find expression."

The five socio-political corporate principles form part of the company's articles of association. They paint a liberal picture of the world:

- To uphold liberty and law in Germany, a country belonging to the Western family of nations, and to further the unification of the peoples of Europe.
- To promote the reconciliation of Jews and Germans and support the vital rights of the State of Israel.
- To support the Transatlantic Alliance and maintain solidarity with the United States of America in the common values of free nations.
- To reject all forms of political extremism.
- To uphold the principles of a free social market economy.



How are the principles applied in the editorial offices?

Do they provide orientation? Does their transparency motivate people towards a clear, liberal attitude? Are they self-evident? Do they restrict the freedom of expression? Thomas Schmid comments on Axel Springer's intellectual, socio-political heritage from a publisher's point of view, three editors-in-chief report from the field.

The principles, a compass of values

"Freedom is only there, when use is made of it. The desire for freedom is something unconditional, also something irrepressible. If it didn't sometimes run riot, then things would be bad for it. And what is true for freedom, also applies to a part of it, to the freedom of expression. It cannot tolerate being regulated, accepts no authoritarian restrictions, no chains.



Thomas Schmid, 2008 to 2010, Editor-in-chief, Publisher WELT Group

Is it a violation of this basic rule of an open society, if the Axel Springer Publishing Company issues guidelines, that none of the company's journalists may violate with impunity? It is oppressive, if we are for instance enjoined to uphold liberty and law in Germany or to support the vital rights of the Israeli people and the transatlantic alliance? Does this mean we are leaving the path of unbiased journalism? Or: Why should it actually be forbidden, to not support the unification of the peoples of Europe?

Journalism is not art. Art can live from provocation, journalism cannot. Journalists are well advised to swim against the current, to

question dogmas and not to follow the mainstream. This could also all be different: It is a journalistic virtue, never to forget this.

No trace of regulation

Yet it is also a journalistic virtue to act responsibly. Even if it is only approximately true, that the press is the fourth power in the state, then this also means: It is not a private function, it also has obligations both to its customers, the readers, as well as to the community as a whole and its history. To agree on values and to respect them does not contradict freedom. It is the great good fortune of the Germans, following the Nazi barbarism for which they themselves were responsible, that they have succeeded, and not exclusively on their own, in creating the best community that has ever existed on German soil.

The fact that law and not arbitrariness prevails; that Europe is no longer a theater of war; that there is a Jewish state and – in spite of the Holocaust – there is Jewish life in Germany once again; that America, the runaway and better Europe, helped after the Second World War and ensured the Federal Republic survived the Cold War intact, that totalitarianism, always offering the sweet temptation of the simple solution, is an evil in every shape; and that only an economy that is not regulated, but rather is responsible, permits a good life: These are all insights and certainties, the lessons learned from the unfortunate part of our history and representing something like the essence of our fortunate post-war history. Nothing is forever in this world, but this should remain as durable as possible. To agree on this, to commit ourselves to it – that really has nothing to do with regulation."



Three times "Yes"

"Do the essentials provide orientation? Does they motivate people to form a clear position? Are they self-evident for you personally?



Jan Eric Peters, Editor-in-chief and Chief Product Officer at UPDAY

Three questions that can be answered with a single word?

Yes. Yes. Yes.

For our free nation governed by the rule of law, for the the vital rights of the Israeli people, for common values with America and a free and social market economy and against political totalitarianism. Of course the essentials are self-evident! I never wanted to work in an editorial office where any other values applied, I couldn't.

And nevertheless it is good that these self-evident values are also available as a written constitution for our company. The essentials are an avowal, which gives us complete journalistic freedom, which even makes this possible in the first place. They define our position for everyone visibly, both internally and externally; they literally support us.

To put it briefly: The essentials are the foundation upon which we can stand upright. Nice!"

Criticism not excluded

"Whenever I talk about the five principles of Axel Springer in speeches or conversations, as a rule there are three possible reactions: Surprise, confusion, admiration.

Surprise, that these principles form part of our employment contracts. This is by far not something that everyone is aware of.



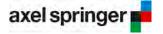
Kai Diekmann, publisher of the BILD Group

Confusion, as to whether or not that means that we always and absolutely have to report in a pro-Israel and pro-America manner.

Admiration for this attitude and for the fact that it is manifested in principles.

And then I often hear the question: How do we manage to keep to and to live by them?

Axel Springer was in favor of a clear position all his life. And he demonstrated the fact that the principles were not just empty words through his tireless commitment. A clear position is the brand essence of BILD. For us, the principles are not simply part of our employment contracts. For us they are guiding principles and a matter of course in our work – and of course it is possible to criticize the policy of Israel or the United States. For us they are a mission to continue with Axel Springer's commitment. They encourage us to send clear signals – such as the meeting of the "Fathers of Unification", George Bush, Mikhail Gorbachev and Helmut Kohl, to mark the 20th anniversary of German reunification, the handover of the original blueprints of the Auschwitz concentration camp to Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, which are today exhibited as "Documents of the Horror" in the Yad Vashem Holocaust Memorial, or the special edition for the 10th anniversary of the terrorist attacks in the USA, which BILD produced directly from New York with a 40-strong team."



It is much easier

"There are sentences that are so self-evident that you do not need to write them down. The second of the corporate principles, the "Promotion of the reconciliation of Jews and Germans" as well as "Supporting the vital rights of the people of Israel" is one of these. Who could disagree with this? Who is against a reconciliation between Germans and Jews; who, unless they are insane would want to deny the Israeli people (or any people) the right to live?



Peter Huth, Editor-in-chief of B.Z.

But there is nothing I have to defend more often: in the kitchen at parties, in panel discussions, talking with colleagues. The critics' method is always the same: They envision things in this sentence, which are not formulated there at all. That you are therefore against the vital rights of the Palestinians. That you therefore endorse Israeli policy in every case. That you are fundamentally hostile to Islam. And again and again the same sentence about the Jews, who have learned nothing from their own history; you almost feel sick when you write that down now. Because of course the opposite is the case.

The B.Z. was founded 135 years ago. Six months later it was bankrupt. The Ullstein family bought the paper and built up the largest newspaper company in Europe around it, a beacon for liberal spirit and excellent journalism. The Nazis wrested away everything from this German family with Jewish roots. The post-war authorities, however, did much more to hinder rather than to help the Ullsteins regain their property. Axel Springer saved the company, long before his ardent love for Israel was kindled.

We at the B.Z. see ourselves in the tradition of Axel Springer's visions and the spirit of the Ullsteins. We carry their name in the title of our publishing house, we are the heirs of a Jewish company in Berlin.

However, when I defend the second corporate principle of Axel Springer SE, I am not an editor-in-chief, I am not a salaried employee, it's much simpler than that: I am a German."



What we are and what we want

The soul and spirit of the Axel Springer company is journalism: The "homepage" published in December 2013 updates the self-conception and the objectives of Axel Springer SE in the digital world.



The mission of the Axel Springer company is the successful establishment of independent journalism in the digital world, with the aim of becoming the world's leading digital publisher. (Source: Axel Springer SE)

The soul and spirit of the Axel Springer company is journalism. We serve our readers with independent and critical information and advice as well as good entertainment. Through our journalistic services we are making a contribution to the strengthening of freedom and democracy. The prerequisite for this is our economic success. We are working every day to improve our journalistic, technological and commercial competence:

- We are and will remain a publishing house, a house of journalism
- We want to inform, advise and entertain our readers independently and better than others
- We are and we want to be economically successful
- We are actively shaping digitization and see this as our great opportunity
- We do what we do with passion and are constantly striving to become even better
- We attract individualists and really support them
- We are strengthening freedom, democracy and cosmopolitanism

Our mission:

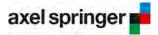
The successful establishment of independent journalism in the digital world. Our goal:

We want to be the world's leading digital publishing house.

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We know: Profit is not everything, but without profit, everything is nothing.

We want to create value. Material and ethical value.



We want to increase the value of our company. In addition to the operating earnings (EBITDA), earnings per share is the key indicator against which we measure ourselves and against which we can be measured. At the same time we want to strengthen the values of freedom, democracy, the rule of law, competition, property, human rights, cosmopolitanism and tolerance through our journalistic work.

Our publishing house is committed to the values of its founder Axel Springer. He stood first and fore-most for freedom. It is in this sense that the five preambles of the company are defined: the consolidation of German and European unity, support of the vital rights of the Israeli people, solidarity in the common values of free nations with the United States of America, the defense of the principles of a free social market economy and the rejection of all forms of political totalitarianism. These values do not prescribe the support of any ideology, government or political party, but rather they also allow and call, as does any true loyalty, for honest criticism.

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Our company is divided into three segments, which are based on journalism or benefit from journalism to varying degrees.

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The traditional revenues of a publishing house are reflected in this structure. In the same way as a newspaper in the past was financed by subscribers, advertisers and classified advertising customers. We have become the leading digital publishing house, when we are number one in our respective market segments and in the countries in which we are active.

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In our dealings with each other, we want to experience what we have collectively defined as socio-political objectives. Freedom demands a culture of trust, not of mistrustful control. We measure the success of our employees by their results, not by their presence. We encourage entrepreneurs in the company. We organize the publishing house as an operative holding company – as centralized as necessary and as decentralized as possible. All brands, business divisions and services develop into independent companies, which hold together like members of a family in spite of their differences.

Technological competence has increasing importance in a digital publishing house. For this reason we promote innovative technology, yet remain at heart a house of journalism.

We do what we do for our readers and customers. But reader and customer orientation does not mean courtesy journalism or ingratiation.

We defend editorial independence as our most precious asset. Independently critical, and thereby credible journalism is the best service we can provide all of our readers and customers.



We want to work quickly and unbureaucratically. Those who undertake entrepreneurial risks are rewarded for doing so, even if they do make a mistake.

We promote the diversity of gender, nationality, religion, sexual orientation, age and personality.

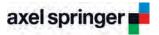
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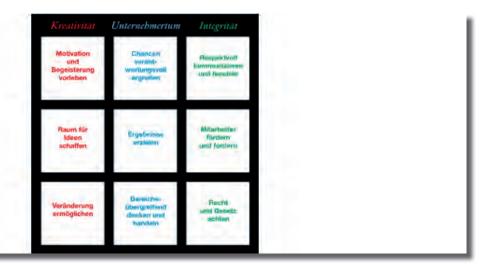
We are passionate and have the desire to discover new things, to change and to improve ourselves. We want to be successful, to do good and to have fun.

And we know that everything that is defined here describes a goal, but regrettably is not yet reality everywhere and all the time. This is what we want to change.

Berlin, December 9th, 2013



Values as a key to profitable growth



Axel Springer SE would like to be the world's leading digital publisher. For this reason, the company has divided itself into three segments, which are based on journalism or benefit from journalism to varying degrees. The three segments are: Paid Models, Marketing Models, and Classified Ad Models. (Source: Axel Springer SE)

In addition to strategic objectives, Axel Springer SE has defined values to guide each employee in his or her work, and which shape corporate culture at Axel Springer. Together these are the key to profitable growth.

Corporate culture at Axel Springer is based on three values

- **Creativity** as the decisive prerequisite for success as journalists, and in turn for commercial success;
- **Entrepreneurial spirit**, defined as imaginative, responsible and result-oriented action taken by employees and management;
- **Integrity** towards the company, readers, customers, employees, business associates and shareholders.



Principles of Leadership

"I regard success as a
quality, not as the result of a lucky
throw of the dice. Yet I also know
that success needs the active
contributor, the active thinker and
active emotional involvement."

Axel Springer, 1978

Preamble

Creativity, entrepreneurial spirit, integrity. These three values form the foundation of the self-confidence of Axel Springer. They set the standards for our daily activity. We lead, by creating space for creativity, by defining objectives and by shaping change. We want to continue to lead Axel Springer boldly to entrepreneurial success. The focus is on our employees, who we develop, challenge and encourage to work independently. In all of our activities we ensure that the law as well as our corporate guidelines are consistently observed.

Creativity

Exemplify motivation and enthusiasm

We inspire and convince. We identify new opportunities and make them clear. We exemplify motivation and maximum performance. We only demand what we expect of ourselves. We involve our employees, inspire them to change and encourage enjoyment at work.

Create space for ideas

We create space for new approaches. We support unconventional ideas and develop independence in thought and action. We value ideas and creativity independent of hierarchy and continually strive for improvement. We acknowledge creative performance and accord it a value, even if this cannot be directly exploited.

Facilitate change

We see change as positive and know that changes offer opportunities. We shape change processes and use opportunities to try out new ideas. Where necessary, we are ready to leave the familiar behind. We never stop learning. We are open to criticism, demand feedback and confront it seriously. We accept constructive contradiction from our employees and are able to acknowledge faults.



Entrepreneurial Spirit

Take chances responsibly

We make decisions and resolutely support them. We identify opportunities, carefully evaluate the risks involved and are also prepared to accept failures. We know our customers, the market and are in the vanguard of current developments – this is how we are leading our company to success.

Think and act cross-departmentally

We think and act across the boundaries of countries, sectors and brands as well as hierarchical levels. We first acknowledge the advantage for both parties in cross-sector co-operation. Over and above a will to co-operate we develop team spirit. In spite of the decentralization of entrepreneurial responsibility, the overall wellbeing of the whole company is our primary focus.

Achieve results

We set ourselves and our employees motivating and transparent goals. We assign clear priorities. We check and monitor results systematically. We celebrate successes together and analyse setbacks without attributing blame so as to learn from them.

Integrity

Communicate and act respectfully

Respect and fairness characterize our leadership. We have realized that recognition and respect are the most important foundations for performance. We continue a regular dialog with our team as well as individual employees and are receptive to our employees at all times. We communicate decisions honestly and respectfully. We are loyal to the company as well as to our employees – throughout the hierarchy.

Develop and challenge employees

The development of our employees is an integral part of our leadership philosophy. We trust our employees and delegate responsibility to them in order to develop them. The abilities of our employees determine our success as executives. We spend time a substantial share of our time on their development. We specifically look for development opportunities for our employees, even if these lie outside their own area. We make sure that the best come to Axel Springer and remain here. This means: We are looking for excellence and above all develop employees who are better than we are.

Respect justice and the law

Through all of our actions we ensure consistent compliance with justice and the law as well as our corporate guidelines. We orient ourselves both in our daily work and our leadership behavior in particular around our corporate constitution, our values, the Catalog of Social Standards (International Social Policy) and the Guidelines of Journalistic Independence. We are firmly convinced that success can only be guaranteed in an environment of compliance with the law and compliance with ethical standards.



Guidelines to Safeguard the Independence of Journalism at Axel Springer



The main entrance of the Axel Springer Building in Berlin. (Photo: Axel Springer SE)

Preamble

The editors of Axel Springer SE are aware of their responsibility for providing information and shaping public opinion in Germany. Independence is essential as a basis for their work.

The guidelines are a concrete expression of Axel Springer's understanding of the journalistic principles set forth in the Press Code of the German Press Council. Adherence to these guidelines by all editors in their journalistic work safeguards the overall conditions that enable independent, critical journalism at Axel Springer.

The chief editors are responsible for adherence to the guidelines and their implementation in day-to-day work.

Advertising

Point 7 of the Press Code requires publishers and editors to make a clear distinction between editorial text and advertising copy and points out the need to adhere to the regulations for paid advertising.

The journalists at Axel Springer

- shall ensure, together with the management of the publishing house, that a distinction is made between advertising and editorial material. Advertisements must not create the impression, through their overall design or major components, that they are part of the editorial material of the title. Special attention must be given to using different typography. If there is any doubt, the advertisement must be marked as such clearly and in sufficiently large type.
- shall resist attempts by advertisers or interested parties to influence content, and enter no agreements that might jeopardize their independence as journalists. Merchandising campaigns and media partnerships must be identified as such where necessary.



Personal and business interests

It is part of the responsibility of the press towards the public that journalistic publications should not be influenced by the personal or business interests of third parties or the personal financial interests of the editors themselves.

This is the subject of Points 6 and 7 of the Press Code.

The journalists at Axel Springer

- shall not report on persons with whom they have a close relationship, especially family members, in the form of copy or photographs unless there is an objective reason for doing so that has been approved by the writer's superior.
- shall not use their reporting to obtain benefits for themselves or others.
- shall consult their superior if membership of or the holding of an office or a seat in a society, political party, association or other institution, investment in a company, permitted side-line employment or a relationship with persons or institutions might create the impression that the neutrality of their reporting on such societies, political parties, associations, persons or other institutions is thereby impaired.
- shall take special care to meet the legal and professional obligations of the press with regard to inside information as set forth in the German Press Council's publication "Journalistic ethics concerning inside and other information with a potential effect on security prices".

Invitations, gifts and press trips

Point 15 of the Press Code is concerned with personal benefit as a danger to independent journalism. Even the appearance that journalists' freedom of decision might be impaired by the acceptance of invitations or gifts should be avoided.

The journalists at Axel Springer

- shall ensure that all costs (travelling expenses, entertainment etc.) incurred in the course of their research are paid by the editorial department. Any exceptions must be approved by the chief editor and have to be marked accordingly in the coverage.
- shall not accept any gifts that constitute a personal benefit or, if it is impossible to refuse them, shall pass them on to the company, which will then give them to a charity.

Treatment of sources

The journalist's duty of care in the treatment of information sources is extremely important for journalistic work and the public's opinion of the press. Point 2 of the Press Code regulates the treatment of sources in addition to the existing legal provisions.

The journalists at Axel Springer

• shall in all cases make sure that interviews are authorized verbally or in writing by the person interviewed, even if time is very short, unless other agreements are documented.



International Social Policy

In the light of its increasing international profile, Axel Springer has drawn up a catalog of social standards. It lays out the organization's position on issues relating to human rights, compliance with the law, child protection, the treatment of employees, health and safety as well as the work/family balance. These standards are binding worldwide for all of the company's activities.

Preamble

Axel Springer is an internationally operating media enterprise.

The core business of Axel Springer is information and entertainment distributed through newspapers, magazines and in digital media.

The core values of our corporate culture are creativity, integrity, and entrepreneurial spirit.

Our work is centered around people: readers, business associates, shareholders and our employees.

Motivated, competent employees produce good products. The quality of our products provides the basis for our company's economic independence and its future.

Social responsibility in our corporate management has always been of major importance for Axel Springer SE.

The organization does not only distinguish itself through good corporate governance, but also undertakes to comply with internationally recognized social standards.

1. Human Rights

Axel Springer acknowledges and supports the United Nations' "Universal Declaration of Human Rights" and does not tolerate any behavior that disregards this.

2. Compliance with the Law

Axel Springer observes the laws and regulations of those countries in which the company operates, as well as the principles enshrined in its International Social Policy.

3. Child Protection

Axel Springer does not accept the illegal employment of children and young people – either within its own organization or by its business associates. The legal employment of children and young people must also not be detrimental to their physical and mental development.

4. Treatment of Employees

Axel Springer is committed to treating every employee with dignity and respect and to ensuring that s/he can work in an environment which is free from physical restrictions and sexual, psychological or verbal harassment. All indications of infringements will be investigated – subject to the protection of the interests of victims and witnesses.

5. Equality of Opportunity

Axel Springer offers equality of opportunity to every member of staff.

In this connection ethnic origin, skin color, gender, age, marital status, disability, religion, nationality, sexual orientation or social origin is immaterial.

We expect our staff to declare their belief in democratic principles and to tolerate people with differing opinions.



6. Right of Association

Axel Springer respects the right of its employees to create an association to represent their rights and to join and actively participate in this association.

The company works with the employees' associations fairly, constructively and in a spirit of trust.

7. Health and Safety

At all its places of work, Axel Springer will take such measures as required to avoid accidents and damage to health. The company expects its employees to comply with regulations relating to health and safety at work.

8. Wages and Social Welfare Benefits

Axel Springer pays wages and salaries and grants social welfare benefits which at least match the relevant national statutory minimum standards.

9. Qualification of Employees

Within the context of its operational requirements, Axel Springer assists in developing the professional capabilities of its employees through suitable education and training measures.

10. Work/Family Balance

Within the context of its operational requirements, Axel Springer supports its staff in balancing their professional and private interests and, in particular, in achieving an appropriate work/family balance and complies with statutory requirements.

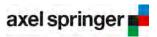
11. Cooperation based on Trust

Axel Springer expects integrity, loyalty and cooperation based on trust from its staff. Our actions are characterized by respect for the opinions of others and fairness in dealings with each other.

12. Expectations of our Business Associates

Axel Springer expects its suppliers to comply with the following principles described here:

- 1. Human Rights
- 2. Compliance with the Law
- 3. Child Protection
- 4. Treatment of Employees
- 5. Equality of Opportunity
- 6. Right of Association
- 7. Health and Safety at Work
- 8. Wages and Social Welfare Benefits

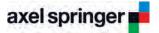


Environmental Guidelines

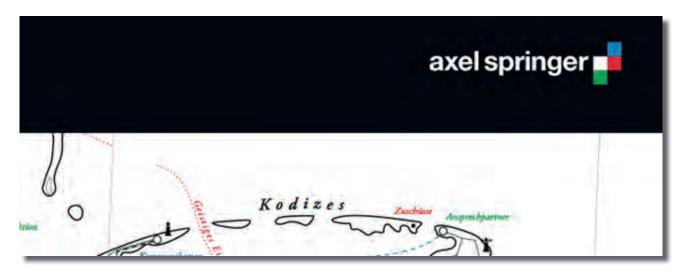
With its first environmental report in 1994, Axel Springer SE published a four-point environmental guideline. It serves as a practical guide to the many measures introduced by the company in the interests of environmental protection and comprises, among other things,

- 1. the raising of environmental consciousness among its readers, business associates and employees;
- 2. the promotion of the environmentally-friendly production of raw materials by exerting a positive influence on suppliers;
- 3. the use of environmentally efficient technologies and materials in all corporate divisions to reduce the burden on the environment, use materials sparingly and ensure their reusability;
- 4. the avoidance or reduction of the environmental impact by reducing energy and water requirements, emissions and waste per unit produced.

You will find further information on the following pages of the Sustainability Report.



Code of Conduct



To provide every employee with a reliable means of orientation for day-to-day responsible conduct in their professional lives, Axel Springer has summarized the existing corporate principles, values, directives and guidelines in the Code of Conduct. This binding code of conduct contains the ethical, moral, and legal standards expected of each employee.

Our Code of Conduct is a binding code of conduct, a guideline to provide us with a reliable means of orientation in our day-to-day conduct. It summarizes our existing corporate principles, values, as well as our directives and guidelines, which contain the ethical, moral, and legal standards expected of every employee. We feel especially committed to the freedom of expression and the freedom of the press, which are the constitutive prerequisites for freedom and democracy.

Those who breach the Code of Conduct are disloyal. They damage the reputation of the company and can cause serious economic damage. For this reason we ask you to ensure compliance with the Code of Conduct in your working environment and to address violations openly.

The central themes in the Code of Conduct are

- Freedom of the Press
- Journalistic Independence and Editorial Offices
- Social Responsibility
- Conduct within the Company
- Behavior in Business
- Confidentiality and Communication

The Code of Conduct is binding for all Axel Springer SE staff. You can find the full text and explanations as a pdf file for download on www.axelspringer.de.



Compliance Management



Reports can be made anonymously in the compliance whistleblower system. The explanatory film shows how this works. (Video: Axel Springer Compliance)

The Governance, Risk & Compliance (GRC) division supports the corporate management of Axel Springer SE in ensuring good corporate governance by, among other things, operating a Risk Management System, Internal Control System and Compliance Management System. Corporate Governance encompasses the management and supervision of the company. The goal of good corporate governance is responsible management and supervision geared towards generating sustainable value. The objective is to preserve and promote the trust and credibility of

- national and international investors,
- the readership,
- customers,
- business partners,
- employees and
- the general public

in Axel Springer.

Compliance Management

Compliance for Axel Springer SE means compliance with legal requirements, voluntary commitments and corporate guidelines.

With the introduction of Compliance Management at Axel Springer SE, the intention is to create and strengthen the awareness that violations of regulations can have adverse effects on the reputation of the company in the long term and can cause economic damage.

Against the background of the increasing importance of these consequences, appropriate organizational structures and processes have been established which are subject to a continuous improvement process. These are preventively to ensure behavior compliant with laws and regulations for all corporate officers, executives and employees. The Code of Conduct is named as an example as part of the Axel Springer Compliance environment, offering reliable orientation for behavior in an increasingly complex regulatory environment and at the same time providing transparency.



Apart from this, Compliance Management mainly addresses the following tasks:

- Preventive advice on compliance related issues
- Identification and monitoring of compliance risks
- Prevention and reduction of compliance risks through the introduction of appropriate control measures
- Detection and investigation of compliance violations
- Raising awareness throughout the company as well as provision of training on topics relevant to compliance
- Operation of a whistleblower system for reports and violations

The objectives of active Compliance Management, which is controlled by headquarters, are the avoidance of actions which could lead to civil and criminal consequences, economic damage and adverse effects on our reputation.

Policy Management

A further Compliance Management instrument at Axel Springer SE is the established Policy Management System. The directives and internal regulations at Axel Springer provide a regulatory framework for action in accordance with rules and the law in daily business operations.

Policy Management deals with the provision, updating, and company-wide distribution of directives and guidelines such as the Code of Conduct, for example. This means that once a year, the necessity of updating all directives and guidelines is determined systematically and the directives adapted accordingly. If needs for adjustment arise as the result of process changes or amendments to the law, the respective directives will be updated, provided or distributed accordingly. At this time, the responsibility for the content of directives lies with the persons responsible from the respective corporate divisions.

In addition, Governance, Risk & Compliance supports the executives of Axel Springer SE in determining a potential need for a directive and advises them on drafting.

Code of Conduct

Our "Code of Conduct" has been created in cooperation with the various divisions of our company which gives Axel Springer SE employees guidance and support in their daily work. It summarizes the existing corporate principles, values, as well as directives and guidelines. The Code of Conduct contains the ethical, moral, and legal standards expected of every employee. We feel especially committed to the freedom of expression and the freedom of the press, which are the constitutive prerequisites for freedom and democracy.

The central themes in the Code of Conduct are:

- Freedom of the Press
- Journalistic Independence and Editorial Offices
- Social Responsibility
- Conduct within the Company
- Behavior in Business
- Confidentiality and Communication

The Code of Conduct is designed to help answer questions such as: May I accept gifts from a business associate? How do I react when a colleague is treated badly? How should I behave if a third-party attempts to influence editorial publications?



Those who breach the Code of Conduct are disloyal. They damage the reputation of the company and can cause serious economic damage. This is why everyone within their working environment is expected to ensure compliance with the Code of Conduct and to address violations openly. The "Code of Conduct" can be found here or as a pdf file in the right menu bar.

Risk Management System

Axel Springer SE's risk policy principles and risk strategy are closely linked to its corporate strategy. And the most important thing here is not the strict avoidance of risks, but the careful weighing up of opportunities and risks within the context of our business activities.

Accordingly, opportunities should be systematically exploited and risks assumed only when these are within an acceptable and appropriate range for the company and when they provide additional income opportunities or opportunities to increase the value of our company in the long term. Appropriate measures are thus taken to minimize risks to an acceptable level, to partially or completely transfer them to third parties if economically feasible, or, if risk limitation does not appear to be sensible, to avoid and observe them. All employees are obliged to handle risks responsibly within their own work areas.

Risk management should be understood as a central element in the pragmatic and efficient implementation of statutory and operational requirements.

The Risk Management System addresses the following tasks:

- the identification, analysis, assessment and documentation of risks
- early identification of risks
- risk control
- risk reporting, including to the Executive Board and the Supervisory Board

The Axel Springer SE risk management system is designed to create transparency relating to the company-wide risk situation, as well as to identify significant and critical risks at an early stage. It is intended to allow Axel Springer, in accordance with its risk policy principles, to react in time to risks and to monitor the further progression of the risks as well as the implementation of control measures. This procedure ensures the controlled and responsible handling of risks.

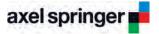
Internal Control System

The Axel Springer SE Internal Control System in particular serves to secure the effectiveness and efficiency of business activities, to secure the reliability and completeness of internal and external reporting, allows for the reduction and detection of errors and ensures compliance with the legal provisions and internal specifications relevant for the company.

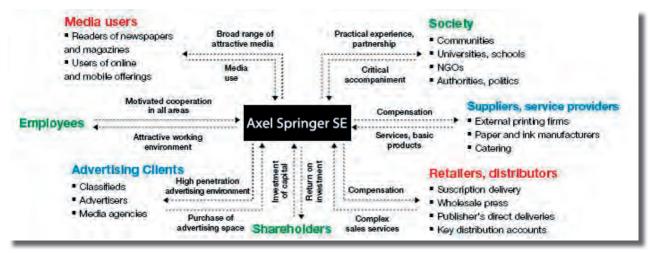
The Axel Springer SE Internal Control System includes the following elements:

- the identification of appropriate and functional controls to ensure the effectiveness of risk control measures
- the definition and implementation of controls in the respective strategic and operational processes
- the automation of controls for performance optimization
- the systematic monitoring and documentation of controls for risks determined to be critical or significant
- internal and external reporting

In addition to periodic inspections of the Internal Control System by the Group Internal Audit Department, the ICS is continually subjected to a systematic self-evaluation in order to verify the functionality and effectiveness of the entire control system.



Stakeholder Interaction



The graphic shows "stakeholders" who have or could have an interest in Axel Springer SE. Sustainability reports in the GRI format are oriented towards the concerns of stakeholders. The term "stakeholder" is used to denote a person or group which has a legitimate interest in the course or outcome of a process. The term "stakeholder" comes from the English. "Stake" can be translated as investment, share or claim, "holder" as owner. The term "stakeholder group" can also be used here.

Alongside annual reports, sustainability reports are important elements of a company's information policy. The Sustainability Report published every two years by Axel Springer SE follows the Guidelines of the Global Reporting Initiative (GRI), which change from time to time. This edition was prepared in accordance with the latest G4 provisions and the so-called Core option of the Global Reporting Initiative (GRI). The Initiative (GRI) sees itself as an ongoing international dialog which, through the definition of performance indicators, includes a large number of stakeholder groups. The secretariat of the Global Reporting Initiative is based in Amsterdam.

The term "stakeholder" comes from the English and is used to denote a person or group which has or could have a legitimate interest in a company's history or results. The extended G4 requirements include the plausible derivation of the content of the report from the concerns of stakeholders which have been researched as specifically as possible .

What is expected of our company, what is criticized? Which issues are of particular interest for users, for readers, for non-readers, for advertising and print customers, for employees, for shareholders or for environmental organizations that have dealings with our company? In addition to this, key stakeholders in the company are interviewed at regular intervals with the aid of market research.

Which stakeholder groups are we primarily interested in? (GRI-G4 survey No. 24)

Readers and users of our media services, advertising and print customers, employees, investors, neighbors, visitors, school pupils, students, scientific institutes, state supervisory authorities and regulators, suppliers, NGOs and the media express particular interest in the organization's operations as well as its products at home and abroad.

Axel Springer also wants to be in the top group of media companies in terms of customer-friendliness. The company uses the tried and tested TRI*M methodology from TNS Infratest to measure customer-friendly service.

TRI*M (Measure, Manage, Monitor) is the leading customer loyalty or stakeholder management system. It is a research approach customized to the respective business needs, which is used to transfer



the information from the survey of individuals or all relevant stakeholder groups into the entrepreneurial decision-making process. It supports the management in the setting of priorities and provides guidance for the optimization of relations with the various target groups.

For the ninth time, Axel Springer SE has allowed the quality of its customer relationships to be assessed using the TRI*M index. Due to the progressive digitization of the company, the focus was on the activities in this area. The evaluation of the digital Paid, Marketing and Classified Ad models was further expanded at the same time. The results confirm the thesis that readers also appreciate the value of professional journalism in the digital world. Print titles will from now on only be measured every two years, as the changes in this area are less dynamic than for the digital services.

These measurements target our priority stakeholder groups:

- Readers / buyers
- Users of websites
- Advertising customers

A further instrument in the direct exchange with readers are the Readers' Advisory Councils. They are intended to help us focus even more on the interests, concerns and problems of readers. The participants tell us what is important to them, what they find good or bad and what issues should be addressed in more depth.

Basis for the selection of stakeholder groups with whom to engage (GRI-G4 survey No. 25)

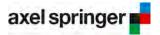
The focus is on users, readers and advertising customers who are so important for the long-term success of the company. A further basis for the selection of stakeholders is the degree of concern or interest in the work of the company. Readers and users of our media services, advertising and print customers, employees, investors, start-ups, grown-ups, neighbors, visitors, school pupils, students, scientific institutes, state supervisory authorities and regulators, suppliers, NGOs and the media express a particular interest in the organization's operations as well as its products at home and abroad.

Various sources of information are used to rank the various concerns of our stakeholders – from market research among readers and surveys of the customer loyalty programs through the various reader advisory councils up to the regular exchange with WWF, Greenpeace and Transparency International in countries such as Finland, Sweden, Russia, Canada, the USA, China, Uruguay and Brazil as well as internal employee surveys.

Where and how does interaction with stakeholders take place? (GRI-G4 survey No. 26)

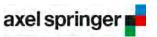
Personal contact to stakeholders comes about, for example, through directly addressing them, through exchanges of views at conferences, as well as through emails and phone calls.

Various sources of information are used to rank the various concerns of our stakeholders – from market research among readers and surveys of the customer loyalty programs through the various readers' advisory councils up to the regular exchange with business associates, with government departments, as well as with non-governmental organizations such as WWF, Greenpeace and Transparency International and internal employee surveys. The following table provides an overview of the opportunities and occasions for dialog with the major stakeholders in our company.



Stakeholder-Dialog

About Axel Springer	About stakeholders	Interaction
The company informs its sta- keholders	Stakeholders articulate their concerns to the company	Exchange of views and cooperation with stakeholders
Annual report, quarterly reports, other financial publications, "roadshows", presentations, Annual Shareholders' Meeting, etc.	Since 2006, annual representative and valid "Measuring, managing, monitoring"-"TRI*M" survey by TNS Infratest of readers, users and advertisers. Ongoing market research; employee surveys. Readers' advisory councils, external newspaper critiques	Works council meetings, regular staff meetings with the respective management. In Berlin: Executive Board members meet employees from all corporate divisions ("Lunch with the boss")
The Sustainability Depart my	Continuous contact with	Continuous and appoirie
The Sustainability Report published every two years in the GRI format (http://nachhaltigkeit.axelspringer.de)	stakeholders. Lectures and presentations as well as participation in public debates	Continuous and specific exchange with employees, users/readers, advertising and print customers with financial analysts and rating agencies, with schools and universities, with NGOs and government agencies.
Corporate Communications as a permanent point of contact for media and other stakeholders; replying to incoming requests by email, by letter or by telephone; social media, blogs and inside. app; lectures and presentations; participation in public debates; interviews with other media; visits to the company; the company website www.axelspringer.de published in German and English		Stimuli and platform offerings on social, economic and political debates and conferences (such as for example the Prizewinners Ceremony of the German Sustainability Prize or the annual "WELT Economic Summit")
Internal Communications as a permanent point of contact for employees; Intranet and the iMag employee magazine; inside.app; mails and video messages to the employees from the CEO		Membership in associations, participation in workshops with think tanks, NGOs, universities etc.



Participation in the Berliner CSR camp; cooperation in the "Boreal Business Forum" of the "Canadian Boreal Forest Agreements", a cooperation network of non-
governmental organizations,
the Canadian forest and paper companies as well as international
customers of wood and paper products:http://cbfa-efbc.ca/

Summary of the most important stakeholders' concerns (GRI-G4 survey No. 27)

We consolidate the findings of the analysis of the various stakeholders' concerns into a materiality matrix, which at the same time yields the orientation and priorities of sustainability management. Another guide are the issues and priorities of rating and ranking agencies in the area of sustainability.

In addition, there are the innovations and enhancements in the Evaluation System of the Institute for Ecological Economic Research (ioew) as well as the indicator matrix of the Global Reporting Initiative GRI, and the supplementary questions applicable to the media industry.

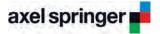
The subject areas are presented in the matrix according to the assessment of their relevance for the stakeholders as well as for the company – and addressed in the context of this Sustainability Report.

The stakeholders concerns involve for example issues of journalistic independence, the separation of advertising and editorial copy, the promotion of media literacy among young readers, data protection, transparency and standards along the digital value chain as well as the safeguarding of social and environmental standards along the wood, pulp, paper, printing and recycling chain.

Concerns of the Axel Springer company (GRI-G4 survey No. 18)

On the question, "What we are and what we want" the CEO of Axel Springer SE, Dr. Mathias Döpfner, writes in his foreword to this Sustainability Report:

"The soul and spirit of the Axel Springer company is journalism. We serve our readers with independent and critical information and advice as well as good entertainment. Through our journalistic services we are making a contribution to the strengthening of freedom and democracy. The prerequisite for this is our economic success. We are working every day to improve our journalistic, technological and commercial competence."



Customer Loyalty



Axel Springer Customer Loyalty, in collaboration with the in-house market research department and the TNS Infratest research institute, uses the TRI*M method to ascertain the Axel Springer customer loyalty index. (Source: Axel Springer SE)

Modern sustainability reports base the selection of topics on the concerns of stakeholders. The term stakeholder is used to denote a person or group which has an interest in the course or outcome of a process. Customers are among the most important stakeholders of a company. This is why Axel Springer SE consistently places the needs of its customers in the focus of its daily work. In order to learn from and meet these needs, the company started a Group-wide project on customer loyalty in 2006 and has been carrying out extensive market research ever since. In doing so, Axel Springer Customer Loyalty works, among other things, with the TNS research institute's TRI*M method.

The method stands for "Measuring, Managing, Monitoring", and for Axel Springer has meant a regular and representative survey of buyers, subscribers, users, and advertising customers since 2006.

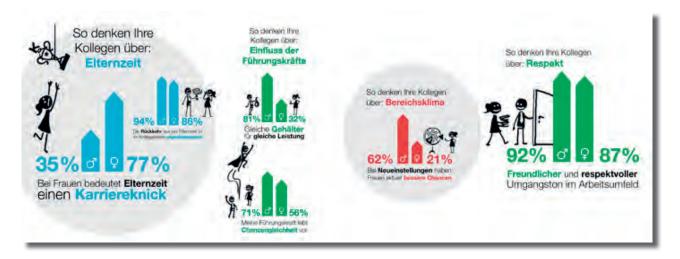
In 2015, Axel Springer SE once again asked for an assessment of its Paid Models, Marketing Models and Classified Ad Models in its survey on external customer loyalty. The number of offerings from Axel Springer for evaluation was expanded to 22.

The results show that print continues – even in times when the supply of digital brands is growing – to rate highly with readers, also in younger target groups. With a modern treatment of the issues, critical background reporting and exclusive news across all departments, the printed newspapers and magazines from Axel Springer are an ideal complement to digital offerings for the groups interviewed. The simultaneous use of the digital offerings for current information shows a clear brand understanding on the part of the customer: BILD-Zeitung readers also make use of the digital and mobile content from the brand.

The method of measurement was revised in terms of time and content and further developed in 2015 – from TRI*M 1.0 to TRI*M 2.0. For the first time the objects were measured exclusively digitally by the TNS market research institute – the print products via online panel and the websites "onsite", i.e. on the respective website itself. The on-site survey to evaluate the digital offerings is conducted continuously.



Employee Satisfaction



What do men and women with career ambitions think about children, career and colleagues? The graphics take a look at a number of issues. This demonstrates that agreement with numerous statements varies between the genders. (Source: insidemag 1/2015 - Axel Springer SE)

The Chancen:gleich! (opportunities:equal!) initiative at Axel Springer was launched in April 2010 with the goal of increasing the share of women in management positions throughout the group. In the context of this project, a first employee survey was carried out in 2010. In November 2014, Axel Springer carried out the "pulse check" and asked "Where are we four years after the first survey?"

2544 colleagues participated in the survey on the "Chancen:gleich!" initiative. The results showed how far Axel Springer has come in terms of the promotion of women and family-friendliness since the first survey in 2010. For the widest possible view of the Axel Springer "patchwork family", colleagues from the digital holdings meinestadt.de, Immonet and StepStone were also interviewed.

The direct comparison shows that Axel Springer has developed in the right direction in terms of family-friendliness and the promotion of women over the past four and a half years. 56 percent of respondents assess career opportunities for women at Axel Springer as good to very good. In 2010, only 37 per cent were of this opinion. A closer look at the figures also shows that women and men assess certain aspects of the equality of opportunity differently. For example, while 44 percent of women agree to a large extent that women have to do more within a division in order to be recognized, only 11 percent of the men surveyed affirm this statement.



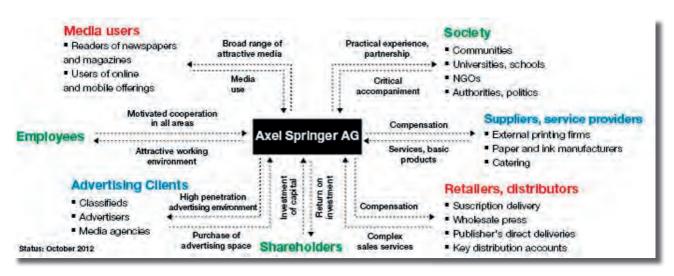
Trust through listening and verifiable action



This 12-minute video documents a discussion at the Technical University of Berlin in December 2013. Oliver Salge, Head of Greenpeace Germany's Forest and Oceans Campaign and Florian Nehm, Corporate Sustainability Officer at Axel Springer SE, explain their concepts of Stakeholder Management. Moderation: Professor Dr. Dodo zu Knyphausen-Aufseß. (Source: Axel Springer SE)

Since 1993, we have been continuously sounding out the interests, concerns and priorities of relevant stakeholders. Axel Springer SE published its first environmental report in 1994. In 1995, the Ahrensberg newspaper printing plant was the first in Europe to be validated according to the EU ecological audit EMAS. In 2001, the first externally audited sustainability report appeared. The indicators of the IÖW (Institute for Ecological Economy Research) as well as the GRI Media Sector Supplement are important fundamental requirements.

Users of online services, readers, advertising and print customers, employees, investors, neighbors, visitors, school pupils, students, scientific institutes, state supervisory authorities and regulators, suppliers, NGOs and the media express an interest in the organization's sustainability management among other things.



This sketch gives an overview of the ,stakeholders' using Axel Springer SE as an example. The term stakeholder is used to refer to a person or group which has a legitimate interest in the course or outcome of a process or project. The term ,stakeholder" comes from the English. "Stake" can be translated as investment, share or claim, "holder" as owner. The term ,stakeholder group' is also increasingly catching on.



MOVING THE WORLD. Taking responsibility



What packaging and how much of it does the environmentally conscious customer need? A panel of experts looked into this question at the invitation of the "MOVING THE WORLD. Taking responsibility." initiative. (Source: Moving the world)

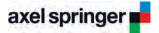
DIE WELT presented the sustainability initiative "MOVING THE WORLD. Taking responsibility" for the first time in July 2011. The concept was developed and implemented by Axel Springer Media Impact, Axel Springer's central marketing unit. The objectives of the initiative are to provide customers with concrete solutions for sustainable advertising space and for the communication of their commitment to sustainability.

Editorial platform for sustainable information and features: The up-to-date reporting of the "WELT" is concerned with the ecological, social and economic aspects of sustainability on a daily basis. Texts on these topics can be found online at www.welt.de/dieweltbewegen.

Exchange and networking: The initiative has so far launched a variety of events networking people, organizations and companies who campaign for more sustainability.



What power do consumers have to save the world through "eating properly"? The "MOVING THE WORLD. Taking responsibility" initiative invited government representatives, entrepreneurs, corporate managers and environmentalists to explore this question more thoroughly. (Source: Moving the world)



Securing habitat for Canadian caribou



Montreal, Canada: Melissa Filion, Greenpeace forest campaigner, informs Corporate Sustainability Officer Florian Nehm about the current status of the discussions on the protection of biodiversity in forestry. The habitat of the American reindeer (caribou) is to be preserved jointly with the forestry industry.

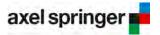
Dialogue instead of cold shoulder: Engagement with the Association of German Magazine Publishers VDZ

Anyone who identifies himself to Canadian environmentalists as a member of the "WEEDEESET" is usually received with benevolence – sometimes even approval. Because the "German Publishers" commitment to virgin forests on the Canadian Pacific and the threatened woodland caribou in Ontario and Quebec are regarded positively. VDZ members are considered to be ecologically aware purchasers of paper, that are also interested in Canadian pulp, which is processed in Germany and other places to make high-quality magazine paper.

The Axel Springer SE Corporate Sustainability Officer's first fact-finding mission to British Colombia took place back in 1994, together with the former managing director of the VDZ, Wolfgang Fürstner. However, at that time, the atmosphere was frosty and charged with mistrust. Environmental organizations such as Greenpeace and the forestry industry faced each other irreconcilably. Loud railing, protests and blockades were the order of the day. 7777 kilometers away in Germany, users of printing paper made from Canadian pulp were open to criticism. And when the Premier of British Columbia traveled to Hamburg to explain his viewpoint, he was attacked when still in his plane by environmental activists in a "leafleting campaign above the clouds" as the "Virgin forest killer on seat 1A".

The objective of the first "Forest Journey" to the Canadian West Coast was simply listening, understanding and signaling a willingness to talk. By way of introduction, a Professor from the University of Vancouver explained the unique features of the regional forest ecology. This was followed by appointments with family-owned forestry operations on Vancouver Island, with environmental organizations, with representatives of the Canadian indigenous people, with the Forestry Minister and with members of the Opposition. In addition, there were discussions with forest workers furious at the "Tree Huggers", as well as with reservedly cautious managers from major forestry companies and pulp producers.

Since then the Association of German Magazine Publishers, as a voice for the paper clients, has been making a contribution to the development of workable compromises between forest utilization and preservation in Canadian forestry. This has taken and will take a long time and in part tough negotiations. It took a process totaling 15 years before the major forest controversy concerning the "Great Bear Rainforest" was brought to a successful settlement in British Columbia in 2009.

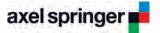


It was and is about reconciling the concerns of the forestry workers, the mayors of remote towns, the indigenous people, environmental organizations, the forestry, pulp, paper and sawmill companies, as well as those of the provincial government.

With the help of this experience a pan-Canadian framework agreement was also able to be signed in May 2010 – the "Canadian Boreal Forest Agreement" (CBFA). This relates to the protection of a forest area twice as large as Germany and at the same time the largest protected area of this type in the world. However, numerous details remain to be negotiated for its implementation. The main actors are members of the influential "Forest Products Association of Canada (FPAC)" as well as a number of environmental organizations under the auspices of Greenpeace. All stakeholders have developed their thinking and found ways to build the necessary degree of flexibility and trust. Representatives of the VDZ, including Axel Springer SE, take part in these discussions once or twice a year as ,active observers".

The initiative for a dialog in the Canadian forest has resulted in valuable experience for the stakeholder management system, which until today has also contributed to de-escalation in similar conflicts in other countries. The recommendations include, first and foremost

- The inclusion of as many affected stakeholders as possible
- A lot of patience and a willingness to understand the other positions
- Professional mediation where possible and carefully documented minutes
- A readiness to admit one's own mistakes promptly
- The ability to offer constructive alternatives



Innovation through conflict



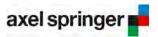
Oliver Salge (Leiter Wald- und Meereskampagne Greenpeace), Eva Goris (Journalistin und Pressesprecherin der Deutschen Wildtier Stiftung) und Florian Nehm (Leiter Referat Nachhaltigkeit und EU-Affairs Axel Springer) vor dem Greenpeace Sitz in Hamburg

Hamburg in June 2010: The journalist Eva Goris documents a conversation between Oliver Salge, Head of Greenpeace Germany's Forest and Oceans Campaign and Florian Nehm, Corporate Sustainability Officer at Axel Springer SE on the viewpoints of environmental organizations and companies.

The Greenpeace factor! What can a company do when Greenpeace comes? There is no easy solution, but one thing is certain: Clichés, empty promises and the faint hope that the "green lobbyists" will allow the wool to be pulled over their eyes at the conference table do not bear fruit in this type of debate. While struggling to find solutions, there is only one answer to this question: Remain open-minded, speak and act early.

"Greenpeace? They don't talk to us..." This is a sentence that Florian Nehm, Corporate Sustainability Officer at Axel Springer SE and also responsible for EU government affairs, often hears when he meets managers and executives from other corporations. "My experience has been quite different," says Nehm. He meets Oliver Salge in the Creative Room at the Greenpeace headquarters on the Grosse Elbstrasse in Hamburg. "Head of Forest and Oceans Campaign" is the job title on Salge's business card. This is of course, politically correctly, printed on recycled paper. Two men are sitting opposite each other in sagging seat elements. Men who, from a purely visual viewpoint, could not be more different. Florian Nehm personifies the consummate manager in a fine suit; Oliver Salge is emphatically informal in a T-shirt and jeans with youthful silver creole earrings. The small room is rather austere. Photos of spectacular actions from around the world are hung on its white walls: Greenpeace activists in the ice, Greenpeace activists in a rubber dinghy, Greenpeace activists in the forest. The activists, financed by their approx. 550,000 donors as a moral authority in issues concerning nature, with the mandate of being "fighters for a healthy environment" and admired as "green power" within the state, are seen as more of an enemy by many corporate managers. Green warriors, against whom there is no proper corporate strategy, unpredictable and disruptive. The worrying question "What shall we do if Greenpeace comes?" expresses what some executives in large companies feel: A fear of contact combined with a healthy dose of respect for the unknown opponent.

For the ignorant, the external impression of the "Greenpeace inteference factor" swings between two extremes: one considering the Greenpeace campaigners as green fools, the other as extremely smart environmental gurus. Both are wrong! But what should you do when Greenpeace comes? After years of analysis searching for solutions to this worrying question, Axel Springer's sustainability specialist knows of only one answer. It can be reduced to a few words: "Remain open-minded, speak and act early!"



"Nothing is worse than constantly changing contact persons"

There is no time for small talk between the two men in the creative den of the green lion. The meeting is friendly, but conducted self-assuredly by both parties and focused very firmly on the issue. They know each other and they know the topic of conversation down to the finest details which often seem insignificant to outsiders. They are talking about paper, about trees, the balance between forestry and forest conservation, about sustainability and shared experience, which also has a lot to do with "personnel sustainability" at Axel Springer. This is certainly how the man from Greenpeace sees it. "Florian Nehm has been our discussion partner for years. This is a good thing. Nothing is worse than constantly changing contact persons who have no idea of the issues and are rushed into the fire by the corporate management when Greenpeace comes," says Oliver Salge. Experience that the environmentalist has gained time and again in dealings with other corporations.

His voice is calm, even a little monotonous when he reports on the conservation of virgin forests in Canada, Brazil, Indonesia, Finland and Russia, recalls moratoria on logging and talks about concepts to "protect the forest, even though the timber industry is using individual areas". Oliver Salge plays the diplomat and sounds somewhat like an experienced, professional politician in an election campaign tent. It sounds almost statesmanlike when he says: "The road was not always easy and has been characterized by setbacks."

He speaks of "experience since 1997", his experience. It is not only at Axel Springer that there is consistency in terms of forestry. The environmentalist from Greenpeace is also an "old hand" in business. Then Salge verbally flexes his muscles with a sonorous timbre as he recalls a failed logging moratorium: "It was perhaps not entirely clear to the Canadian pulp producers at the time that Greenpeace means what Greenpeace says!" What sounds like a veiled threat for future meetings between corporations and Greenpeace may indeed be interpreted as a warning. "Greenpeace does not let anyone pull the wool



Exchange of ideas in the Greenpeace headquarters in Hamburg: Campaign director Oliver Salge (right), journalist Eva Goris (center) and Sustainability Manager Florian Nehm (left)

over its eyes!" and he adds quietly: Greenpeace operates internationally – and once the economic threshold has been crossed, even a global corporation has to act." Then a winner's smile plays around the corners of his mouth and he says: "Today, 28 million hectares of virgin forest in Canada are protected from the chainsaws of the timber industry for the next three years."

He is proud. That is unmistakable when he enthuses about the "unique forest ecosystem of the northern hemisphere", talking of bears, wolves and caribou. He calmly articulates words such as "logging ban, peaceful protest, tough negotiations" and is happy to talk

about "the long campaign that brought even Canada's leading wood and paper manufacturers to their knees". Greenpeace put the pressure on. The fact that this "pressure" would not have led to success without the large paper clients from media companies such as Axel Springer SE, the WAZ media group and DuMont, was even gratefully acknowledged in a Greenpeace press release. "German newspaper and magazine publishers procure pulp and paper from Canada and have campaigned for a solution to the virgin forest issue", it says in the announcement made by Greenpeace. Praise from the "greenest" quarter. "But the road was not always easy…", Salge relativizes.



NGOs as top clients

The discussion between Oliver Salge and Florian Nehm on the Elbe is a kind of interim balance in the cooperation between Europe's leading multimedia enterprise and Germany's largest and most powerful environmental lobbyist. They have known each other for years and have come closer through the occasionally also hard exchanges of ideas in the search for constructive solutions for "clean" paper. They have achieved a lot together. This is not a love affair.

Nevertheless, one thing is immediately noticeable whatever the differences: The respect is mutual. "No innovation without conflict" – a statement both immediately agree with.

Today the Goodie Two Shoes in the Greenpeace rubber dinghy can no longer be ignored. As members of a non-governmental organization (NGO), they have become an influential brand in international political and economic circles. "NGOs such as Greenpeace have a significant ability," says Florian Nehm. "They can determine issues publicly." This means that NGOs can initiate issues or even damage the reputation of a company or product! At the same time, the constructive contact with Greenpeace can result in innovative ideas which would warrant expensive consultancy fees on the market. "For many companies, the view of this aspect frequently remains distorted due to uncertainty in their dealings with the feared opponent Greenpeace", says Florian Nehm. Management that is open-minded, willing to learn and innovative is required in order to make constructive progress. "This really should be a case study in every business administration textbook," says Florian Nehm. "Answers to the often pointed questions that Greenpeace poses simply have to be genuinely persuasive." At the same time this does not mean a humble approach to dealings with Greenpeace. "Far from it", he stresses. "My experience in recent years shows that good new solutions for companies often arise from frank discussions of the issue."

But what should you do when Greenpeace comes? Oliver Salge is very familiar with the typical answers, which he hears in confrontations with other corporations: "Corporations like to hide behind the concept of the company secret." The environmentalists' forestry activist knows the standard excuses: Firstly: We are far too small a company. Since Greenpeace usually confronts the top ten of an industry that excuse is soon worthless!" Secondly: The other companies are to blame! Thirdly: I am not responsible! Salge stresses: "None of these were ever offered to me in my dealings with the Springer company."

Nehm: "This also has to do with customer service. We view the NGOs less as troublemakers but rather as top customers." Good customer relations can help to solve a lot of problems in advance. "Answers to inquiries may not be put aside or even ignored. Feedback should be as quick, competent and friendly as possible."

Misunderstandings, also on the part of Greenpeace, can for example be avoided by the environmentalists not simply addressing their letters "to the management", but wherever possible to a specific addressee. Otherwise, controversial post can perhaps drift around in large companies from post room to post room for days on end or even get lost. Then, Greenpeace in turn may think: Typical! They do not want to answer. This can lead to hasty reactions which are in turn answered by excessive counterreactions. There is often neither a deliberate strategy nor evil intention behind such misunderstandings. Even if the cause is the result of a certain negligence, such situations can blow up easily.

At the same time, in most cases there are no simple answers for the optimization of production processes anyway. The activist Oliver Salge is also aware of this: "Even Greenpeace does not always have solutions at hand." In the meantime Oliver Salge sees the naive "No, thank you!" mindset from the founding period of the Green movement as overcome. One thing is particularly important to him in this process: That a company is serious in addressing the Greenpeace demands.

Constructive discussions about requested changes work best when the participants on both sides are well informed. Florian Nehm compares this often lengthy debate with American court movies. "You have the prosecution, the defense and the jury. It is sometimes very emotional." And Greenpeace as the pro



secutor is the master of emotion. The companies must be well prepared for their defense, especially as the television media and the public judge their attitude and credibility as critically as a jury.

Once the Greenpeace criticism is in the media, the initially weaker position of defense is often all that remains to the corporations. With the protest banner hanging from the roof and leaflets being distributed to passersby in front of the main entrance, the company concerned is often left with its back to the wall. Greenpeace in the role of the prosecutor initially has the attention of the public on its side. "At this stage, how a corporation responds is extremely important", emphasizes Florian Nehm.

The power of the protest pictures

Nehm is happy to describe an early encounter with the environmentalists from Greenpeace. "It was in 1993. All of a sudden the Greenpeace prosecutors were in the main entrance of our publishing house in Hamburg and asked provocatively: "How much forest does your magazine cost?" For media coverage they had brought a TV crew and photographers along with them." Instead of calling for the security service – as could certainly have been expected at that time – the environmentalists were shortly afterwards sitting around the conference table with managers, works councilors and the Group spokeswoman. "And we talked," Florian Nehm recalls. It was a big surprise – for everyone involved! Greenpeace had not expected such an open-minded response from the supposed "enemy Springer". There were no dramatic pictures of a counteraction. Nehm admits today: "I was very proud of my company at that moment."

Dealing with Greenpeace is not easy. Many corporations find the initial contact difficult. Who is responsible when the feared opponent is standing in the foyer? "We don't deliver anything, we don't buy anything", says Oliver Salge and describes the procedure as follows: "First of all the question arises: Who should talk to Greenpeace?" The sales manager, the CEO or the public relations department? "In the public relations department we are confronted with people who know a lot about advertising and the positive public image of the corporation. But they have no idea of the production processes within the group." He could write the standard responses from the public relations departments "himself" says Salge. Often Greenpeace's criticism is not taken seriously. "And that is when just what corporate leaders fear the most happens: Greenpeace comes and uses the means of direct action", that is: protest banners are hanging from the rooftops of the corporate headquarters and the public focuses directly on the denounced problem in a flurry of photographers' flashlights and TV cameras. And Greenpeace shines brighter in the brilliant glare of the public eye as a moral authority with great credibility compared to a corporation which, viewed from the outside, appears rather "faceless" with its cold facades. This increases the impact of the "Greenpeacers", who seemingly selflessly chain themselves up for the "worthy cause" or even put themselves in danger while at the same time also risking legal consequences. The "Heroes from Greenpeace" deputize for Jim Block from Cologne. They boldly articulate what everyone "always wanted to say". A corporation can only rarely counter this strong emotion. If the security staff arrive and "dislodge" the heroes, the environmentalists win a media victory. This lies in apparently "losing" against the stronger party. That is the David-versus-Goliath principle. TV cameras and photos pass "judgment" - perhaps even unintentionally, and without ultimately wanting to "judge". Dramatic pictures speak for themselves.

"How much forest does your magazine cost?"

Between Greenpeace and Axel Springer SE, the campaign in 1993 was initially limited to a simple question: "How much forest does your magazine cost?" But this question at that time was almost revolutionary. It is only since the climate debate that everyone today quite naturally asks about the ecological footprint of a product. "At that time the interest in the value chain was new", Florian Nehm recalls. There were more questions than answers. Where does the responsibility for publishing products begin? At the gate of the printing facilities or earlier? "Axel Springer SE would have liked to have been able to present a 100-page-long document in 1993, but we didn't have one." Not yet! While other publishers succinctly referred Greenpeace to the paper industry and in turn were confronted with protest actions such as "Thursday is Deforestation Day" (as happened in front of Hamburg's Gruner & Jahr publishing house),



the bottom line at Axel Springer right from the beginning was: "No one should understand more about the entire manufacturing chain of our products than the managers in our company themselves." Paper as an unaccounted for resource? The media company's response to the environmentalists' provocative questioning at the time: "Give us four weeks time and then we will give you an answer."



Oliver Salge: "Greenpeace means what Greenpeace says."

The Greenpeace visit to the Hamburg-based publishing house is seen by Florian Nehm as a helpful impetus. From a journalistic viewpoint, the question "How much forest does your magazine cost?" is of course pointed. "And we as a journalistic company did our homework, researched our paper suppliers in Germany, Finland, Sweden, Norway, Canada and Russia and by the end of the process found answers not only to this question." Of course, at the time discussions came up repeatedly. Can the forest question be phrased in that way? Where does responsibility begin? What has the publisher to do with the production processes in the paper industry? "Today our position is clear: Even if there is only one stick whose origin remains unaccounted for – we need to find out soon and ourselves, whether this stick has grown sustainably. As a result, we are just as interested in our paper manufacturers' pulp suppliers – from Finland to Canada and Uruguay."

A kind of transparency which was new at the beginning of the 1990s. "We published the list of our paper suppliers, and their answers to questions unusual for that time such as: Where is your forest? Who is responsible for inspections? Does an environmental evaluation take place? How is the dialog with environmental organizations locally?

"We then presented the results at a press conference." There were more business representatives than journalists there, as this was the first time that a publisher had made these facts public. The process was revolutionary! This transparency was preceded by a major concern. Within our publishing house we were wondering: Are we now always open for attack whenever our suppliers are caught in the crossfire? Nehm: "But the opposite proved to be the case. We learned immediately whenever a problem arose and were able to react very quickly. Escalations therefore didn't happen at all."

"If anything was unclear or the presentations seemed implausible, Florian Nehm was not averse to going into the forest on site himself", recalls Oliver Salge. Surprises were often waiting – even for Greenpeace. "We learned a lot at this time, also as an environmental organization." For example, that "virgin forest" is often seen differently by some users in Canada, Russia and Finland than it is by Greenpeace. What is deemed an "ecosystem worthy of preservation" by the environmentalists was often interpreted fundamentally differently on site. Salge: "Especially for foresters, virgin forest is often nothing more than old and thereby poor forest that is mature and needs to be harvested before it decays." It is within this area of tension that the forest protectors and forest users, Greenpeace and Axel Springer SE are moving in an ongoing dialog. "It is a demanding and also a painful process," Florian Nehm sums up today. Sometimes one side has to back down from its maximal demands, sometimes the other. Greenpeace also knows that solutions must be viable: not only for the forest. Also for companies, forest workers and local residents, trade unions and other NGOs. All stakeholders want to benefit in the end. "And fair moderated dialog is the only way to this goal" emphasizes Florian Nehm.

From 1995, the publishing house extended its contracts with paper suppliers to include so-called forestry standards, with the company sporadically reviewing compliance on site. Axel Springer SE attaches great importance to sustainability. This means: Biodiversity must be ensured, so that animal and plant species are not endangered by forest use. Paper manufacturers must perform eco-controls as purchasers of timber and provide employees with environmental training.



Taking consideration of indigenous peoples such as the Sami in Northern Scandinavia is also a part of forestry standards, as is an open information policy by paper suppliers. Furthermore, the publisher attaches great value to the fact that no more timber is harvested than will re-grow. The forestry standards do not go far enough for Oliver Salge in this point. "We are talking about economic sustainability from the perspective of forestry experts. In environmental terms, with eye on valuable habitats, you cannot simply replace a tree with a new tree." Nevertheless: For Salge, the Springer company's forestry standards are "important results". And he adds: "Despite the intensity of the debate with Axel Springer SE, we never had the feeling they only wanted a greenwashing from Greenpeace." He emphasized in particular: "The discussions with Springer had substance and were conducted with seriousness."

No cozying up



Studying Canadian forestry maps in the Hamburg Greenpeace headquarters.

This form of competent and honest dealings with one another is frequently lacking with other companies. Oliver Salge, who studied economics and social sciences. cited the negative example of a meeting between the environmentalists and a large food manufacturer, which took place recently. The contact was initially reduced to the exchange of letters between the management of the corporation and the Greenpeace management. Then, Greenpeace started looking for a discussion. This discussion did indeed take place, but the bottom line however, was that it was reduced again to a kind of exchange of letters. "We were handed a letter

which stated that the corporation declared its support for the environment and that virgin forest should be preserved – period. No answer was forthcoming to the Greenpeace inquiry, as to what the company intends to do to emphasize the demands in countries such as Indonesia. "All of the Greenpeace proposals – for example to send a letter to the ambassadors of the respective countries – were ignored by the company representatives. Oliver Salge is irritated by such behavior: "The leading figures in such a powerful company naively think that you can simply write a letter to Greenpeace, and then they will just settle down and be quiet and everything will be fine!" It is the result of a discussion that is important for Greenpeace. "And nothing came of this contact with the corporation! The management was only interested in absolution." This behavior reflects uncertainty in dealing with the feared opponent Greenpeace. It attests to the almost pitiful helplessness of the group management concerned.

Much has changed since 1993, not only in the relationship between Axel Springer and Greenpeace. The annual report of the Finnish paper company Stora Enso – an Axel Springer SE paper supplier – includes a photo of Jouko Karvinen, CEO of the Group, in conversation with Oliver Salge. The issue is a longstanding conflict concerning ecologically sensitive forest areas, whose protection is demanded in Northern Finland. Karvinen praises the "open dialog" with Greenpeace.

Negotiations in Canada and Northern Finland

The tenacity of the paper customer Axel Springer certainly also contributed to the reaching of an agreement after many years of debate in this virgin forest conflict in Northern Finland. 100 000 hectares of forest have been taken out of use here, 17 000 hectares continue to be cultivated. "From our perspective this is a good compromise", says Oliver Salge. "In addition all of the NGOs are backing this solution – including the Sami, whose land is directly affected."



A process does not always end with such a success. In the Canadian province of British Columbia for example, there are local environmental groups who expected more from Greenpeace and at the end are even angry with Greenpeace. "This is unjustified and it hurts", says the forestry expert. "At the end of a process like this, you can never ensure that all parties are completely happy. Ultimately it comes down to an acceptable compromise. Greenpeace is not against the timber industry – we want a good timber industry."

In the search for acceptable solutions for environmental and social sustainability, the paper user Axel Springer and Greenpeace still occasionally give each other "a hard time". Florian Nehm: "We don't cozy up to them. But when analyzing the risks, opportunities and trends of sustainable logging worldwide, the regular exchange of ideas with a critical environmental organization such as Greenpeace is a very important element."

The wind is blowing fiercely, the Elbe is troubled. Now and then a patch of blue sky appears and the scene is immersed in bright sunlight. Meteorologically Hamburg is showing itself from its dramatic side. In spite of the unsettled weather, Oliver Salge wants to show Florian Nehm the Canadian Indians' totem pole. The environmentalists transported the raw trunk by ship across the Atlantic to the Elbe. "It was then carved by indigenous Canadians into a totem pole over a number of months during a protest trip to German paper manufacturers and paper buyers in Germany more than ten years ago," says Salge. The totem now stands on the waterfront just behind the Greenpeace headquarters on the Grosse Elbstrasse.

"We were given this totem pole by the indigenous Canadian people – the Indians", Salge declares proudly. He comes across as very gentle, as he says: "They ceremoniously thanked Greenpeace for its commitment." Both men touch the old, dried-out wood of the totem. "We need a corporate culture, managers who take more responsibility for the environment…", the wind freshens taking Oliver Salge's words away with it.



How a resource conflict can be resolved.



Front page of Greenpeace documentation: "Conflict Resolution and British Columbia's Great Bear Rainforest". This report documents the origins, escalation and easing of a major dispute about the balance between the use and protection of temperate rainforests in British Columbia.

On the west coast of Canada in March 2009, an ongoing negotiation process to find a balance between the use and protection of temperate rainforests which had lasted almost 15 years was successfully concluded. Participants included the provincial government of British Columbia, representatives of numerous Indian tribes, environmental organizations, the inhabitants of remote communities and a number of large companies from the wood, pulp and paper sector.

As customers of paper manufacturers that import cellulose from British Columbia, German magazine publishers, including Axel Springer SE, are also directly involved in this stakeholder process.

Under the title "Conflict Resolution and British Columbia's Great Bear Rainforest", a 30 page documentation about overcoming what at times was a violent conflict was published in agreement with Greenpeace. It also includes valuable insights into the factors that can help to resolve conflicts for natural resources.

Among the most important recommendations are

- 1. Time, patience and a willingness to understand the other positions
- 2. Professional mediation and carefully documented minutes of meetings
- 3. A readiness to admit your own mistakes promptly
- 4. The ability to offer constructive alternatives
- 5. The potential inclusion of all stakeholders affected



Topics and Objectives

What is expected of our company? Which issues are of particular interest for users, for readers, for non-readers, for advertising and print customers, for employees, for shareholders or for environmental organizations that deal with sustainability issues in our industry?

Sustainability experts refer to these "interest groups" with the English term "stakeholders". They are included in the discussion on the priorities of sustainability management. A continuous dialog with stakeholders and stakeholder surveys allow an assessment of the general social interest.

We use various sources of information to classify the various concerns, – from market research among readers and customer surveys through the various reader advisory boards up to the regular exchange with WWF, Greenpeace and Transparency International in countries such as Finland, Sweden, Russia, Canada, the USA, China, Uruguay and Brazil.

We consolidate the findings into a materiality matrix which yields the orientation and priorities of sustainability management. The topics are presented in the matrix according to their assessed relevance for the stakeholders on the one hand and for the company on the other.

The most important concerns of stakeholders in Axel Springer SE

1. Journalistic independence

Essential for corporate sustainability as well as acceptance by readers, users and society. How is this stakeholder concern managed?

Investment in the training of journalists; Strengthening the values of freedom, democracy, the rule of law, competition, property, human rights, cosmopolitanism and tolerance through journalistic work; Separation of editorial copy and advertising; Code of Conduct and Compliance Management; Axel Springer Prize for Young Journalists; Commitment to Reporters Without Borders; Commitment to "fair share" and "fair search" for quasi-monopolistic search engines;

2. Product Responsibility and Customer Satisfaction

Essential for corporate sustainability as well as acceptance by readers, users, advertising and print customers and society. How is this stakeholder concern managed?

Journalistic independence; Care in the treatment of sources; Innovative services for online users, readers and advertising customers; Customer service with the goal of becoming Europe's most

readers and advertising customers; Customer service with the goal of becoming Europe's most customer-friendly media company; Data protection; Media protection of young persons; Safeguarding of social and environmental standards; Compliance with justice and the law; Measurement of own customer orientation;

3. Identification with employees and attractiveness as employer

Essential for corporate sustainability as well as the binding of excellent, entrepreneurially-minded employees, for example in editing, software development, printing technology, marketing, distribution and management;

How is this stakeholder concern managed?

Identity: We are and will remain a publishing house, a house of journalism:

Mission: The successful establishment of independent journalism in the digital world;

Objective: We want to be the world's leading digital publishing house;

Variable remuneration; Pension plan; Family service; Modern cuisine and facilities; Onboarding; Networking; Mentoring; Further training; Digital Campus; Talent Campus; Development opportunities;



Equal opportunities and diversity; Health management

4. Compliance with high standards (Corporate Governance, Compliance with Social and Environmental Standards)

Essential for corporate sustainability as well as acceptance by employees, users/readers, customers and society; How is this stakeholder concern managed?

Strengthening of the values of freedom, democracy, the rule of law; competition, property, human rights, cosmopolitanism and tolerance through journalistic work; Good corporate governance as a central element of responsible corporate management and control; The Compliance Committee with representatives from the different divisions of the company acts to ensure cross-sector compliance; Compliance whistleblower system for employees, business associates and customers; International Social Policy; Environmental Guidelines;

5. Profitability (creativity and innovation capacity)

Essential for the long-term viability of the company; How is this stakeholder concern managed? Networking with the current generation of founders of digital start-ups; Developing an international digital portfolio with strong growth and profitability;

Transformation of established strong media brands; Own new online developments; Strategically-oriented acquisitions of web companies;



Insights and Perspectives

1. The derivation of the significant issues

Alongside the Annual Reports, Sustainability Reports are important elements of a company's information policy. The Sustainability Report published every two years by Axel Springer SE follows the Guidelines of the Global Reporting Initiative (GRI), which are amended from time to time. This edition was prepared in accordance with the latest G4 provisions and the "Core" option of the Global Reporting Initiative (GRI).

The extended G4 requirements, which can represent a particular challenge, include the plausible derivation of the report content from the concerns of the so-called stakeholders which have been researched as specifically as possible. The term stakeholder comes from the English and is used to denote a person or group which has or could have a legitimate interest in a company's history or results.

What is expected of our company, what is criticized? Which issues are of particular interest for users, for readers, for non-readers, for advertising and print customers, for employees, for shareholders or for environmental organizations that have dealings with our company? In addition to this, key stakeholders in the company are interviewed at regular intervals with the aid of market research.

Further findings arise through the work of the Readers' Advisory Councils, as well as the regular direct exchange with business associates, government agencies, universities and non-governmental organizations, among others. Examples of interaction platforms of the continuous stakeholder dialog are summarized in a table.

The company's perspective on this is explained by Dr. Mathias Döpfner, CEO of Axel Springer SE, in his foreword "What we are and what we want". The stakeholder concerns resulting from these sources are then compacted into a Materiality List. For Axel Springer SE, this results in the following five points:

- Journalistic Independence,
- Product Responsibility and Customer Satisfaction,
- Identification with Employees and Attractiveness as an Employer,
- Compliance with high Standards (Corporate Governance, Compliance with Social and Environmental Standards) and
- Profitability (Creativity and Innovative Capability).

What allows these five points to be 'material' and how they are dealt with in practice by the company is explained here, with numerous references to the relevant pages of this report.

2. The improved identification of Group-wide CO2 emissions

Progressive digitization uses a lot of electrical energy. Studies estimate that the energy demand of digital devices and data centers world-wide generates around two percent of global CO2 emissions, with the trend increasing.

So the question of identifying, in a complete, continuous and verifiable way, the amount of energy actually consumed in a company with as little effort as possible, in the light of further digitization, the ongoing debate about CO2-neutral production as well as climate-efficient corporate sales, continues to gain in importance. As long as real energy consumption does not appear in the "control cockpit",



actual CO2 emissions also remain unclear.

However, digitization and the internationalization of the company have diminished the representativeness of energy data in recent years. This is because in the course of the progressive digitization of the Group, Axel Springer SE is consolidating its now more than 180 larger and smaller companies located on several continents (the list of holdings as at 31 December 2015 can be found in the Annual Report 2015).

The Corporate Sustainability Office and Group Accounting are cooperating to counteract the problem of the decline in representativeness of CO2 emissions reported. The data collection tool "IAS Notes", used by Accounting and interface-linked throughout the company world-wide, was expanded to include a "Reporting Energy" input mask. This allows a first, significantly more complete record of the amount of electricity, district heating and natural gas used worldwide in 2014 and 2015. The results still contain a number of uncertainties, however they provide a good basis for the further optimization of complete data collection. A Country Overview of CO2 emissions relating to electricity, natural gas and district heating can be found here.

Besides the focus on renewable energy sources, the progress made in the context of Green IT, the conversion to LED lighting and improved energy management in everyday office life, such as, for example, the reduction of PC standby phases, the now significantly improved data situation is an important foundation for the continuous optimization of the CO2 efficiency of a company whose digital media channels are already contributing almost three-quarters of pro forma Group revenues internationally.

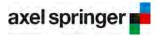
And once again to questions from our stakeholders

In addition to the systematic consultation of stakeholders described above, we have also noted individual voices, for example that of an environmental organization in Hamburg and of a professor of economics in Berlin. I should like to reflect here briefly on the concerns mentioned:

On the "importance of sustainability as well as the company's environmental footprint": Sustainability is a triad of environment, social responsibility and economy. A company that stands for critical journalism must therefore also stand up to critical review. This is why the company has published Environmental and Sustainability Reports since 1995.

On the "attitude with regard to international climate agreements": For the management, agreements of this kind are references to future requirements, which then also turn up again in the form of customer requests or specific regulation. For the editorial offices, international climate agreements are an important topic, which users and readers should be continuously informed about. At the same time, editorial offices also contribute to the debate in society on this topic with their analyses and critical comments.

On the "innovation and development of sustainable alternatives": Axel Springer founded his publishing house in Hamburg in 1946; the editors spent the first year working above a warehouse for tea and spices, often without electricity and using borrowed typewriters. Through internationalization and digitization, Axel Springer SE today is not only market leader in the German print business, but is also active in more than 40 countries through subsidiaries, joint ventures and licenses. Such a development is inconceivable without the efficient use of resources and continuous innovative restlessness.



On the "transparency and conciseness of sustainability reporting": With regard to user-friend-liness, Axel Springer publishes its Sustainability Reports exclusively in digital form. With each new edition, an attempt is made to keep the quantity of information as concise as possible. In contrast to this are the increasingly detailed requirements from the Global Reporting Initiative GRI, the standard for sustainability reporting, as well as from the numerous rating agencies, who want to make themselves a picture of the company's sustainability profile.

On the "evaluation of performance indicators": This is also a challenge for the business administration and an important field for the further development of Sustainability Reports. A prerequisite for benchmarking is the identification of the most complete data. With the example of energy and CO2, this edition reports on a new approach.

Please do not hesitate to contact the Corporate Sustainability Office at any time with your questions and suggestions.

Best regards

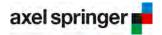
Florian Nehm

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Spheres of activity for 2016 and 2017

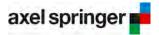
Spheres of activity	Objectives and Measures	
Sustainability Management		
Expansion and optimization of the sustainability processes	Further development of the reporting processes with regard to the requirements of the G4 standard of the Global Reporting Initiative (GRI).	
	Further completion of the data collected on energy use for the entire company.	
	Preparation of the necessary prerequisites with a view to the "Act on Strengthening the Non-financial Reporting of Companies in their Management and Group Management Reports".	
Employees		
Increasing the proportion of women in leadership positions from the current average of 27.9 percent (2015) to over 30 percent (by 2018) throughout the company.	Through the "Chancen:gleich!" project which was launched in 2010, Axel Springer wants to entrench more diversity in the company and to achieve a more equitable balance between women and men in leadership positions. This will include, among other things, the optimization of personnel processes and the setting of individual targets for each department.	
Motivation and satisfaction among employees through a family-friendly environment.	Axel Springer wants to be a company in which employees are able to flexibly arrange family commitments with their career. With day nurseries near the company in Berlin and Hamburg and our co-operation partner pme Familienservice, the company has sent initial major signals.	
Promotion of employee health	From Apple to Yoga course: We want our employees to feel good – and do a lot to ensure this, because only healthy employees are ready to fly high. The three pillars of our health management system – exercise, nutrition, relaxation – help them preventively keep fit: for example, through co-operation with gyms and spine centers, with days of action offering free health check-ups and screening, cooking workshops or even seminars and lectures on current topics.	
Offers from Personnel Development for the digital transformation	"move" is an initiative launched by Personnel Development and stands for awakening and movement. It is the call to try something new together and, with curiosity, to explore the undiscovered. "move" includes a variety of formats, measures and offers from Personnel Development, which deal with issues relating to the future and the digital world.	
Development of sustainability know-how	Support of subsidiaries in the area of digital services.	
Value chain		



General measures to improve energy and/or CO2 efficiency	Identification of the amount of energy used through the entire company: In the course of digitization and internationalization the company had around 180 consolidated subsidiaries at the end of 2015 (the complete list is documented in the annual report). Existing reporting procedures in Group Accounting will in future be used in order to identify the total amount of energy used in the company and the resulting CO2 emissions. For this purpose, the data collection tool "IAS Notes" which is interface-linked world-wide throughout the company was expanded to include a "Reporting Energy" input mask.
Improvement of the energy and/or CO2 efficiency in the current operation of the data centers	To improve energy efficiency and cost-effectiveness, the internal data centers at the German sites of Axel Springer SE are being largely dissolved and relocated step-by-step into the central location (Unified Data Center) of the digital business service provider Atos SE. The use of state-of-the-art data systems technology should improve CO2 efficiency.
Research into the innovation potential for the improvement of energy and/or CO2 efficiency in the entire process of digital data processing	Exploration of possible opportunities for co-operation, for instance in the context of research projects.
Improvement of the energy and/or CO2 efficiency at the digital workstation	Energy audit at locations in Germany: Implementation of the recommendations arising from the energy audit carried out at 23 locations in Germany in 2015 for the improvement of energy efficiency. This also includes the conversion to efficient LED lighting technology and energy-conscious behavior in everyday office life (light use, shutdown of electronic devices, etc.).
Improvement of CO2 efficiency in facility management	Feasibility study on a possible investment in the latest refrigeration technology in the Berlin publishing houses;
Renovation of the primary ventilation system in the Berlin Publishing House Tower B (built in 1993) in accordance with energetic aspects;	Printing presses A-F are to be converted so that they can be disconnected from the compressed air line during idle times. This should reduced the energy use required for the production of compressed air in one year by 80,000 kWh.
Feasibility study with regard to the energetic renovation of the refrigeration plant for the high-rise buildings (built in 1991);	Further eduction of the average CO2 emissions of company cars by providing incentives for selecting models with reduced CO2 emissions;
	Energy audit at locations in Germany: Implementation of the recommendations arising from the energy audit carried out at 23 locations in Germany in 2015 for the improvement of energy efficiency. This also includes the conversion to efficient LED lighting technology and energy-conscious behavior in everyday office life (light use, shutdown of electronic devices, etc.).
Ahrensburg printing plant: Improvement of CO2 efficiency	Partial conversion to LED lighting, for example in the workshop and the processing areas;
Reduction of the consumption of compressed air through improved control of leaks, for example.	Clarification of customer interests in socially defined standards for forestry and biodiversity through continuous contact for example with paper manufacturers, environmental organizations and others within the scope of the "Canadian Boreal Forest Agreement".



Kettwig printing plant: Improvement of the energy and CO2 efficiency of the electricity and refrigeration supply;	Specification of sustainability standards and risk criteria within the framework of the newly-appointed Supply Relation Management process (SRM);	
Continuation of the conversion to LED lighting	Reduction of the energy used for lighting (approx. 1,000 MWh) by 6 percent.	
Kettwig printing plant: Improvement of the energy and CO2 efficiency through a reduction in the consumption of com- pressed air	Leaks arise in the compressed air system due to porous hoses, untight connections and defective seals, which push up energy requirements. Energy demand in this area should be reduced by 15 percent through consistent review.	
Spandau printing plant: Improvement of the energy and CO2 efficiency	Printing presses A-F are to be converted so that they can be disconnected from the compressed air line during idle times. This should reduced the energy use required for the production of compressed air in one year by 80,000 kWh.	
Improvement of CO2 efficiency in the field of mobility	Further eduction of the average CO2 emissions of company cars by providing incentives for selecting models with reduced CO2 emissions;	
	The introduction of a bonus scheme as an incentive to select hybrid vehicles as well as battery-powered electric vehicles as company cars;	
	Review of options to offer additional electrical "filling stations" in the underground car park of the Berlin publishing house.	
Upstream Value Chain		
Extension and strengthening of network contacts as part of Stakeholder Management	Clarification of customer interests in socially defined standards for forestry and biodiversity through continuous contact for example with paper manufacturers, environmental organizations and others within the scope of the "Canadian Boreal Forest Agreement".	
Continuous optimization of sustainability standards and compliance with them within the framework of Group Purchasing's supplier qualification.	Specification of sustainability standards and risk criteria within the framework of the newly-appointed Supply Relation Management process (SRM);	
Downstream Value Chain		
Further development of sustainability- related services offered to customers	Use of experience in sustainability management for example to support print and advertising customers.	



Achievement of Objectives 2014/2015

Objectives for 2014 - 2015	Measure	ACHIEVEMENT OF OBJECTIVES
Expansion and optimization of the sustainability processes	Adjustment of the reporting processes to the G4 standard of the Global Reporting Initiative (GRI).	Achieved: The 2014/2015 Sustainability Report appears in G4 format
	Pilot project on sustainability reporting at a subsidiary with exclusively digital production.	Achieved: The joint venture Ringier Axel Springer published digital Sustainability Reports in 2014 in Poland, Slovakia and Serbia respectively. (http://www. ringieraxelspringer.com/compa- ny/corporate-responsibility)
Avoidance of redundancies between EMAS and software-based sustainability reporting	Use of synergies in data collection, internal controlling, external auditing and publication of results and objectives of EMAS and software-based sustainability reporting at the Ahrensburg, Kettwig and Spandau sites.	Not implemented: The Spandau and Kettwig printing sites have changed their location-based reporting from EMAS to ISO 50001 in order to focus on energy efficiency. The Ahrensburg printing site sources its useful energy from the neighboring rotogravure gravure printing site of the Prinovis company and therefore focuses on the energy audit according to the EDL-G (German Energy Services Act). All three sites are integrated into the sustainability reporting of Axel Springer SE.
Employees		
An increase in the proportion of women in leadership positions from the current average of 25.8 percent (2013) to over 30 percent (by 2018) throughout the company.	Promoting diversity and equality of opportunity for women and men through a targeted optimization of personnel processes. Setting of individual targets for each department.	This objective will be pursued through various initiatives targeting the advancement and networking of women as well as increasing the share of women in hirings and promotions. On 31 December 2015, the proportion of women of in management positions throughout the Group was 27.9 %.



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Motivation and satisfaction among the employees through a family-friendly environment.	The introduction of further measures, such as for example the special campaign "Secure handling of your own data on the Internet" within the scope of the "Employees' children in the company" initiative.	In Berlin, employees' children participated in a workshop on the safe use of data on the Internet, to which they had been invited by Axel Springer Group Security and Personnel Development. At various stations, the children and adolescents were able to inform themselves about the dangers, risks and strategies for dealing with social networks and other online platforms on the Internet. (2014)
Promotion of employee health	Introduction of further health promoting measures – such as, for example, "Healthy lunch breaks" and "Thai Chi on the roof terrace". The building blocks include reintegration measures after convalescence (BEM).	Movement in the lunch break was on offer for Axel Springer employees on the roof terrace of the Berlin publishing house in 2014, with classes in Qigong and Tai Chi demonstrating meditation and relaxation.
Offers from Personnel Development for the digital transformation	Launch of the "move" initiative in the Personnel Development department. This includes learning and dialog formats, lectures, specialist conferences, workshops and explanatory videos, some of which are streamed live.	Learning Lunch, PizzaConnection, Media Powerhouse – no employee has been able to avoid these terms over the past two years. Lunch break or even full-day events are regularly promoted on stand-up displays, in revolving doors, in elevators or on inside.net. Several of these events have also been offered in Hamburg since 2015.
Development of sustainability know-how	Sustainability coaching (personal counseling, seminars etc.) at subsidiaries in the digital media sector.	Energy audit 2015: 23 sites in Germany carried out the new energy audit. The main options include the conversion to efficient LED lighting technology and improved power management in everyday office life (light use, shutdown of electronic devices - consumption). The next energy audit will take place no later than 2019.
	Sustainability coaching (personal counseling, seminars etc.) at the Ringier Axel Springer Media AG joint venture.	Continuous exchange of information, experience and recommendations with holdings in Poland, in Hungary, in Slovakia and in Serbia.
	Sustainability coaching at PACE Paparazzi Catering & Events GmbH.	Continuous exchange of information and consultation on sustainability-related purchasing criteria (e.g. coffee, cups, clothing, etc.);



Wertschöpfungskette		
Reduction of hazardous substances in waste water at the Spandau printing site.	From 2014, hazardous substances are no longer to be used in the cooling towers for water conditioning and corrosion protection. Legionella must not be spread by the cooling water which evaporates in the cooling towers. To avoid the risk of legionella bacteria, a biocide (hazardous substance) was added, which passed along with the non-evaporated part into the waste water thereby burdening the sewage treatment plants. The four cooling towers are to be converted to a procedure in which the bioorganisms are reduced by using a solid catalyst with a patented foil, coated using nanotechnology.	SPANDAU: 100% achieved. Taken into operation in June 2014.
Biodiversity	Support of the Unternehmens- Natur (BusinessNature) Initiative of the Chamber of Commerce in Hamburg, the Hamburg Environmental Authority and the Nature And Biodiversity Conser- vation Union Germany (NABU) through the exchange of experi- ence in the field of semi-natural redesign of the green spaces on the grounds of the Ahrensburg newspaper printing plant.	Representation of semi-natural redesign of green spaces on the grounds of the newspaper printing plant in Ahrensburg near Hamburg as part of a video series produced by the Nature And Biodiversity Conservation Union Germany (NABU) in 2014.
Extension and strengthening of network contacts as part of Stakeholder Management	Clarification of customer interests in socially defined forestry standards through continuous contact with paper manufacturers and environmental organizations within the scope of the "Canadian Boreal Forest Agreement", among other things through participation in conferences and on-site visits.	"N100" Conference at Axel Springer in Berlin with the previous winners of the German Sustainability Award, as well as sustainability experts from associations, research and civil society (19 February 2015). "Canadian Boreal Forest Agreement": Continuous exchange of views with representatives of the Canadian forest industry, the provincial government of Quebec, as well as with the environmental organizations Stand and Greenpeace.



Continuous updating of sustainability standards in the purchasing of information and communication technology (ICT hardware).	Processing of available information relating to social and ecological standards in the production chain of information and communication technology (ICT hardware). Support of manufacturer's initiatives on transparency and improved traceability of raw materials.	Mandatory introduction of Code of Conduct and International Social Policy of Axel Springer SE into the process of supplier qualification in Corporate Procurement.
Further development of sustai- nability-related services offered to customers	Use of experience in sustainability management to support print and advertising customers.	"N100" Conference at Axel Springer in Berlin with the previous winners of the German Sustainability Award, as well as sustainability experts from associations, research and civil society (19 February 2015).



Developments 1979 to 2015



Main entrance of Axel Springer SE in Berlin. (Photo: Axel Springer SE)

2015

In August Ringier and Axel Springer celebrated the fifth anniversary of their eastern European joint venture. Ringier Axel Springer Switzerland AG, based in Zurich and Lausanne, was launched at the end of 2015 as a joint venture between Ringier AG and Axel Springer SE. The joint venture publishes around 30 titles, making it the largest magazine publisher in Switzerland.

The WELT Group and N24 continue their integration process. All the journalistic offerings from WELT and from N24 on the web, in print and on TV, will in future mention "WELT" in their name. This means that in future N24 will also be called WELT. The goal is to become a leading digital medium for quality journalism.

A fireworks of prizes for the Axel Springer media brands at the Lead Awards 2015. With a total of 14 prizes – three golds, two silvers, one bronze, and eight accolades – Axel Springer wins more medals and honors than ever since the Lead Awards were established.

Axel Springer brings the NOAH Conference to Berlin for the first time. The representatives of young, digital companies meet the protagonists of traditional commercial enterprises to make contacts, learn and discuss the digital future.

Axel Springer's digital magazine and newspaper kiosk, iKiosk, has expanded its portfolio, now available in five countries with around 500 publications from more than 100 publishers. Among the new offerings are the magazines "Newsweek", "Brigitte", "Geo", "Freundin" and "Instyle" as well as the regional titles "Rhein-Zeitung" and "Westdeutsche Allgemeine Zeitung".

2014

Since the end of March, the BILD editorial office has been working in one of the most modern production facilities on the 16th floor of the Berlin Axel Springer Building. Numerous monitors display the news from around the world, incoming photos and videos, as well as traffic trends or themes that are taking off virally. In the center of everything is the Ring, in which it is determined daily which stories are present and how the editorial office can tell them ideally on all channels.



Rem Koolhaas wins the architectural competition. A new building opposite the Axel Springer building in Berlin will create additional space for the growing business divisions. Mathias Döpfner praises the design, which will be built in the coming years, for its "radical beauty".

Funke Mediengruppe (FMG) takes over the titles "Berliner Morgenpost", "Hamburger Abendblatt", "Bild der Frau", "Frau von Heute", "Hörzu" and "TV Digital". Axel Springer and FMG have since been working together in the fields of marketing and distribution through service contracts.

Twelve press publishers, including Axel Springer SE, become shareholders in VG Media GmbH. The press publishers jointly acquire 50 percent of the shares, 50 percent remain with thirteen private TV and radio companies. With its entry in the commercial register, VG Media becomes the central collecting society of radio companies, television broadcasters and German publishers.

Axel Springer SE acquires 100 percent of N24 Media GmbH. In connection with the acquisition of the news channel, N24 and the WELT Group are merged to establish the leading multimedia news organization for quality journalism in the German-speaking world. At the same time, N24 becomes the central moving image provider for all Axel Springer brands.

New business publication BILANZ is launched. Publisher Arno Balzer and editor-in-chief Klaus Boldt started work on 1 February 2014. They are developing the German edition of the leading Swiss business magazine, which is published by Axel Springer Switzerland.

With a new segmentation, Axel Springer is consistently aligning its financial reporting to the revenue structure of the publishing business. Axel Springer has divided its activities into three operating segments: Paid Models, Marketing Models and Classified Ad Models. There is additionally a Services/Holding segment.

2013

The transformation of Axel Springer AG into a European Company (Societas Europaea / SE) has been completed. The new legal form became formally effective on 2 December 2013 with its entry in the Commercial Register. This should underline and facilitate the company's European and international market orientation.

The Axel Springer publishing house announces the transfer of the regional newspapers BER-LINER MORGENPOST and HAMBURGER ABENDBLATT, the advertising papers in Berlin and Hamburg, the five TV program guides and two women's magazines as well as their related digital brands to FUNKE MEDIENGRUPPE.

Plug and Play Tech Center, one of the world's leading startup investors from Silicon Valley, together with Axel Springer, founded the accelerator "Axel Springer Plug and Play" in Berlin.

The editorial offices of the tabloids, B.Z. and BILD are pooling their resources in order to face the challenges of digitization. B.Z., Berlin's largest newspaper, and BILD Berlin will be produced in a joint editorial office from November 2013. This co-operation will create Berlin's biggest regional newsroom.

You will find information from the field of "Social Commitment", for example on the pages about the Commitment of our media, Commitment of our readers, Commitment of our colleagues as well as on the Commitment of the company.



2012

The Axel Springer Akademie is extending its range of courses and is launching a journalistic school for presenters with the "Frank Elstner Masterclass".

100th birthday of Axel Springer, the publisher, journalist, and visionary freedom fighter Axel Springer would have celebrated his 100th birthday on May 2nd 2012. Axel Springer SE commemorated this day with a celebration in the Axel Springer Building in Berlin.

The Federal Ministry of Finance honors the publisher Axel Springer on the occasion of his 100th birthday with a special issue 55 cent stamp.

BILD celebrates its 60th "birthday" and delivers a "free BILD for everyone" one day before its birthday free of charge to all households in Germany.

DIE WELT introduces new subscription models for its digital services and is the first large German national news site to also launch a payment model for its previously freely accessible web page.

2011

The WELT Group started its own, paid download portal for audio books under the name HÖRWELT in cooperation with audible, the provider of audiobook downloads, and offers a variety of current literature to listen to. Whether summer reading, quality literature, biographies or interesting information about politics and contemporary history: At www.welt.de/hoerwelt current and regularly changing titles can be found in the five subject areas of fiction, detective stories, non-fiction, classics and children's books, which are presented and given in-depth reviews by the WELT Group feature editors.

With its iPhone "Radtouren" app, the HAMBURGER ABENDBLATT offers a digital selection of interesting routes. All of the starting and finishing points of the maps are connected with the city and regional network of the HVV. The app provides an overview of the distance traveled, speed, time and calories burned. The i Phone "Radtouren" app from the HAMBURGER ABENDBLATT costs 2.99 euros and is available in the iTunes App Store.

2010

WELT Group supports World Press Freedom Day: DIE WELT and WELT KOMPAKT supported World Press Freedom Day as the exclusive media partners of the "Reporters without Borders" organization. The front pages of the two daily WELT Group newspapers were published blank on 3 May - without lead stories, news, comments or photos. Instead, there was simply a small advert from "Reporters without Borders" at the bottom right of the front pages, drawing readers' attention to the global significance and importance of press freedom. The day's front pages are published on this day on page three. The idea for this layout was developed by the "Scholz & Friends Hamburg" agency. The full-page advertising space is provided free of charge by the WELT Group.

FUNK UHR awards Volunteer Prize: The program guide FUNK UHR and the advice magazine "ARD-Buffet" jointly distinguished "Stille Helden des Alltags" ("silent everyday heroes") for the second time. Winner of the Volunteer Prize in 2010 was Hedwig Hacker from Schnaittach for her initiative "Help for Women and Children in Need". The first prize is endowed with 5,000 euros.



2009

International Sustainability Management: As a part of the internationalization of Axel Springer SE, Axel Springer Polska, Axel Springer France and Axel Springer Schweiz have introduced a number of measures to develop sustainability management.

Overcoming years of forestry conflict: On the west coast of Canada in March 2009, an ongoing negotiation process to find a balance between the use and protection of temperate rainforests lasting almost 15 years was successfully concluded. Participants included the provincial government of British Columbia, representatives of numerous Indian tribes, environmental organizations, remote communities and a number of large companies from the wood, pulp and paper sector. German magazine publishers, as customers of cellulose importing paper manufacturers, including Axel Springer SE, are also directly involved in this stakeholder process.

CO2 calculator for newspapers: In cooperation with newspaper and magazine publishers and the German Printing and Media Industries Federation a CO2 calculator is developed which reflects the traditional production processes in print production.

2008

Introduction of Leadership Principles: In 2008 leadership principles are introduced at Axel Springer. The principles should give managers scope for action, providing transparency with regard to the demands and expectations of the leadership role.

Donation Record: The 30th anniversary broadcast of the TV charity donation gala EIN HERZ FÜR KINDER (A HEART FOR CHILDREN) reaches a new donation record of 15,105,639. The result is – in spite of the financial crisis – almost three million Euros above the donation record from the previous year. The BILD aid organization's live ZDF broadcast hosted by Thomas Gottschalk is a superlative TV evening with many moving moments and flashbacks.

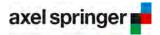
New "School" section: In response to the poor PISA results for the Hanseatic city, a "School" page appears daily in the HAMBURGER ABENDBLATT. The specific information and opinion forum brings together the skills of the award-winning local city desk with the expert knowledge of specialists from the politics, science and business sections.

2007

Health Prize: For the fourth time BILD am SONNTAG - in co-operation with the Technical Health Insurance Company – awards the PULSUS Health Prize. This pays tribute to special achievements in the field of health and social commitment. The prize for the "Healthiest Elementary School of the Year" is awarded to schools which take an active interest in promoting health, for example by integrating Nutrition as a subject into the timetable or also offering many extracurricular sporting activities.

Prize for Committed Women: In the presence of Federal Minister for Family Affairs Ursula von der Leyen, BILD der FRAU awarded the "GOLDEN BILD der FRAU" Prize worth a total of 70,000 Euros for the second time to five socially committed women.

First "Hamburg Children's Paper": on the occasion of Universal Children's Day, the first "Hamburg Children's Paper" was published in the HAMBURGER ABENDBLATT. For one day 50 children aged between eight and fourteen took over the editorial office of this eight-page special supplement. They were able to determine all of the topics, select the photos and also decide on the layout. Experienced editors from the HAMBURGER ABENDBLATT lend them support as advisers. More than 500 children had applied to take part in the project.



"Save our Earth. Count me in!": In order to familiarize the public with the complex of problems involved in climate change, the BILD newspaper started a co-operation project with the BUND, Greenpeace and WWF environmental associations. Under the motto "Save our Earth", BILD publishes information on the background and possible solutions as well as giving tips for personal action.

Distinction: In the critical comparison of Sustainability Reports published by 150 German organizations carried out by the Institute for Environmental Management and Economics (IÖW) in 2007, the 2005 Sustainability Report of Axel Springer SE was rated eighth overall and second in the Environmental Protection segment. In the even smaller group of companies who publish their Sustainability Reports exclusively on the Internet, Axel Springer was rated first. In the rankings carried out over the past ten years, Axel Springer SE's Sustainability Report, published every two years, has been ranked in the Top 10 five times.

2006

Girls Day: Within the framework of the nationwide "Girls Day" initiative, 180 young people informed themselves about training opportunities and everyday working life at Axel Springer SE. Employees' children had an opportunity to get to know their parents' workplace, gain an insight into everyday working life and find out about training opportunities at the company.

Against Violence and Racism in Football Stadiums: Through the distribution of the campaign sticker "STOP. No violence in the stadium!" with a part of the circulation as well as an editorial discussion, SPORT BILD is setting an example against violence, racism and Nazi terror in stadiums.

"Green Money", the publication with the highest circulation by far in the environmental investment sector is published as a special issue in EURO am SONNTAG and EURO.

Nature in Germany is the focus of a new series of books which BILD is publishing along with WWF and the Weltbild publishing group. Each volume costs 5.95 Euros and has 120 pages. The six-volume series is divided into habitats: Life in the Forest, In Streams & Lakes, In the Mountains, On the Coast & by the Sea, In Fields & Meadows and In the Garden.

2005

Pilot project: Together with the paper manufacturer Stora Enso (Helsinki), the publishing houses Random House Group (London) and Time Inc. (New York) as well as the packaging manufacturer Tetra Pak (Stockholm), the publishing firm presents the project "From Russia with Transparency" (www.tikhvinproject.ru). One of the main priorities is the promotion of sustainability as well as the fight against corruption in the cross-border timber trade for the manufacture of printing paper.

Distinction: In the critical comparison of the Sustainability Reports published by 150 German organizations, Axel Springer SE was fourth overall in the CAPITAL ranking, and first in the Environmental Protection segment.

2004

GRI: As the first media organization worldwide, Axel Springer SE publishes a Sustainability Report which complies with the Guidelines of the Global Reporting Initiative (GRI/www.globalreporting.org) and also fulfils the comprehensive catalog of criteria of so-called "in accordance" requirements of the GRI.

International Social Policy: In view of the company's growing international presence, Axel Sprin-



ger SE has adopted a catalogue of social standards. It lays out the organization's position on issues relating to human rights, the protection of children and young people, the qualification of its workforce and the achievement of a work/family balance.

Tiger Protection: HÖRZU offers new subscribers an interesting bonus offer. In future, everyone who subscribes to Germany's biggest weekly television program guide for one year may instruct HÖRZU to utilize 50 Euros directly for a World Wide Fund For Nature (WWF) Tiger Protection Project in Indonesian Sumatra. The goal is to support the efforts to save the last remaining Sumatran tigers.

Distinction: For its "exemplary Commitment to Sustainable Development", the publishing firm was awarded the Environmental Award 2004 (Major companies category) by the German Environmental Management Association (B.A.U.M.).

2003

German Agro Action: The Small Change campaign raised a donation of EUR 25,000.-, which was given to the private Indian development aid organization "Social Work and Research Centre" (SWRC). In cooperation with German Agro Action, this organization finances educational programs for school-children in 50 villages in the Indian desert State of Rajasthan.

Eldercare: The sudden need of nursing care for an elderly relative can sometimes become a problem for working people. The Family Service therefore offers special advice and assistance when this situation arises.

2002

Distinction: In conjunction with project partners (Otto, UPM-Kymmene) the publishing firm wins the award for "Sustainable Development Partnerships" from the International Chamber of Commerce (ICC) and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) for sustainability initiatives along the paper chain.

Equality of opportunity: For the second time, the publishing firm is singled out for the "Total E-Quality" distinction for equal opportunities for and promotion of female employees. Family Service: Since March of 2002, the "Company Kids" kindergarten, an extension of the corporate Family Service, has been enabling parents to get quick and unbureaucratic assistance in emergency situations.

Forestry: Start of a pilot project with Russian forestry firms to improve safety at work in the harvesting of timber.

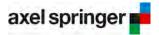
2001

Distinction: The first audited sustainability report appears. For this, Axel Springer wins the "German Environmental Reporting Award" (2nd place) of the Deutsche Wirtschaftsprüfungskammer (German Chamber of Auditors).

Tracing Russian Wood Imports: Anybody can trace the origin of wood fiber in the Internet.

Distinction: Award of eleven environmental pins by the Studien- und Förderungsgesellschaft der Wirtschaft Schleswig-Holsteins (Society for the Study and Promotion of the Economy of Schleswig-Holstein) to members of staff of the company. Some of the prizewinners had modified water cooling systems in the Ahrensburg rotogravure printing facility to conserve energy.

Distinction: The Bundesvereinigung für innerbetriebliche Kommunikation (German Federal Associati-



on for Internal Corporate Communications) awards the "Dr. Martin Nebe Prize" to trainees of the Axel Springer group for their commitment to combating hostility towards foreigners.

2000

Cooperation: In cooperation with the Universities of Lüneburg and St. Gallen, with the companies Bahlsen and VW as well as the large Swiss bank UBS, the research project "Sustainability Balanced Scorecard" is born, the aims of which include investigating the inclusion of environmental management in strategic company management.

1999

Pilot project to optimize the paper chain: from the family forestry firm in Norway to the finished magazine in the Ahrensburg printing facilities – exemplified by the magazine "Familie&Co".

1997

Rapprochement: Dialog with foresters in Austria, Germany and Scandinavia who had protested against what they presumed would be economic disadvantages resulting from forest certification.

1995

European Environmental Management System (EMAS): Validation of the Ahrensburg newspaper and magazine printing facilities as the first in Europe to be validated according the voluntary EC Eco Audit.

1994

Reporting: The first Environmental Report is published.

1993

Transparency: Publication of the document "Printing paper and the Environment: Questions asked of Paper Suppliers to the Axel Springer publishing company".

1979

Investment: Complete encapsulation of the rotogravure machines to reduce solvent emissions. International Social Policy: Mit Blick auf die wachsende internationale Präsenz des Verlages hat die



Awards 2004-2015



Die Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung zeichnete Friede Springer für ihre unternehmerischen Leistungen und ihr soziales Engagement aus. Die Laudatio hielt der ehemalige Bundespräsident Horst Köhler. (Foto: Axel Springer SE)

2015

The Konrad Adenauer Foundation honors Friede Springer with the "Social Market Economy Prize"

The Konrad Adenauer Foundation awarded a prize to Friede Springer in Frankfurt for her entrepreneurial achievements and her social commitment. With her courage and pioneering spirit, Friede Springer has decisively influenced the development of Axel Springer SE into the leading digital publishing according to the findings of the jury. In addition to her outstanding entrepreneurial action, it is above all her social commitment which makes her the worthy prizewinner.

B.Z. and BILD Berlin-Brandenburg win award for social commitment

The employees of B.Z. and BILD Berlin-Brandenburg are regularly involved in social projects and get stuck in. In the meantime, they have cleaned, painted or worked in the gardens of five institutions as part of the "Social Day". For this, they were awarded a prize by Caritas of the Archdiocese of Berlin.

Mathias Döpfner presented the McCloy Award

Mathias Döpfner was presented with the McCloy Award of the American Council on Germany in New York. He accepted the award for the special role played by the Axel Springer Publishing House in German reunification.

PACE awarded the "Top 100" Innovation Prize again

For the second time following 2013, the PACE Paparazzi Catering & Event GmbH was the only company from the catering and events industry to be awarded the "Top 100" Innovation Seal. The "compamedia GmbH" has awarded the "Top 100" seal of approval for particular innovative strength and outstanding innovation successes to medium-sized enterprises since 1993.

Grand Prix Awards for inside.mag

At the award ceremony of the "inkom. Grand Prix 2015", the media prize for internal communication of the German Public Relations Society (DPRG), Axel Springer won the prize for one of the best employees magazines in Germany for the sixth time. The magazine received an award in gold for its interview with CEO Mathias Döpfner in issue 1/2015. The entire issue was presented with a bronze award.



German PR Prize for employer communication at Axel Springer

The employer brand campaign of Axel Springer has received the international German PR prize in the category "Employer Branding and Personnel Communication".

2014

Offset printing works in Ahrensburg once again in the world's best newspaper printers club

Together with WELT, the offset printing facility in Ahrensburg has once again been awarded membership of the WAN-IFRA Newspaper Color Quality Club. Companies which have successfully taken part in a quality test competition are admitted into this circle. The leading industry association WAN-IFRA holds this international competition in which participants are assessed every 2 years on the basis of the criteria of repro and printing quality.

PACE receives industry award for community catering

The PACE Paparazzi Catering & Event GmbH was awarded the "Frankfurter Prize - Grand Prize of German Community Catering" by the business magazine gv-praxis. Every two years the prize is awarded to recognize pioneering conceptual as well as entrepreneurial and personal achievements in the market of community catering.

World Jewish Congress presents Axel Springer the Theodor Herzl Award

The World Jewish Congress posthumously honored the publisher Axel Springer in the Jewish Museum in Berlin with the prestigious Theodor Herzl Award. In her laudatory speech, Chellah Safra, Treasurer of the World Jewish Congress, recalled the numerous donations by Axel Springer for institutions in Israel and the principles of Axel Springer, which until today, in addition to a commitment to democracy and freedom, also provide for reconciliation with the Jewish people.

Mathias Döpfner presented B'nai B'rith Europe honorary award

Mathias Döpfner has been presented with the "B'nai B'rith Europe Award of Merit" for his commitment to the fight against anti-Semitism. The "B'nai B'rith" order – in English "Children of the Covenant" – is one of the world's largest Jewish organizations and is committed to combating racism and anti-Semitism. It commends Döpfner as a friend and a supporter of the State of Israel and the Jewish people.

Gold Award for inside.mag

The inside.mag was once again presented a gold award at the "inkom. Grand Prix 2014", the media prize for internal communication of the German Public Relations Society (DPRG).

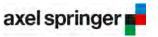
2013

Axel Springer's Code of Conduct occupies second place within Germany in a European study

The "Compliance Insider" magazine published a study of European Codes of Conduct. The aim of this study was to assess the current landscape of codes of conduct in three European countries. In this study, fifty codes were investigated from France, Germany and Switzerland respectively. The Axel Springer Code of Conduct was rated second in Germany.

inside.mag employee magazine wins two Gold Awards

The Axel Springer employee magazine won two Gold Awards at the inkom. Grand Prix 2013, the Media Prize for internal communication awarded by the German Public Relations Association (DPRG). The Prize was awarded for the overall concept and the photo story "California, here we are" by BILD editor-in-chief Kai Diekmann. This means that inside.mag is one of the best employee publications in Germany, Austria and Switzerland. The 2013 Awards continue a success story: inside.mag had previously won the inkom. 2009, 2010 and 2011.



PACE Paparazzi Catering & Event GmbH wins Gold at the "DEHOGA Environmental Check"

Paparazzi (Axel Springer SE Berlin company restaurant) was awarded with Gold at the "DEHOGA Environmental Check" for environmentally conscious and sustainable action. The participants in the "DEHOGA Environmental Check" must undergo a critical review of the sectors of energy and water consumption, waste generation or residual waste, and food, such as for example, their regional purchasing. PACE has been successfully focusing on sustainable management for a number of years.

Ahrensburg offset printing works wins award for digital inkjet printing

At the award ceremony of the "PrintStars 2013", the Innovation Awards of the German Printing Industry, Ahrensburg offset printing works won first prize in the "Newspaper Products" category. The printing works was honored for its digital inkjet printing, which was developed with the manufacturers "Kodak" and "manroland websystems" from the idea to the production stage.

Dorothea Siems awarded Journalism-Prize by the Friedrich-August-von-Hayek-Stiftung

Dorothea Siems, senior economic policy correspondent at DIE WELT, wins the prestigious Journalism Prize of the Friedrich-August-von-Hayek-Stiftung. She received the award "for her tireless commitment in her commentaries and reporting to those regulatory principles essential for a liberal and market economy system", explained the Board of Trustees chaired by former Federal President Roman Herzog.

Mathias Döpfner is "European Manager of the Year 2013"

The European Business Press Association (EBP) presented its "European Manager of the Year 2013" award to Mathias Döpfner. The "European Manager of the Year" has been awarded annually by the EBP since 1991. The European Business Press is a federation of 48 European business newspapers and magazines from 27 countries, including "The Wall Street Journal Europe", "Handelsblatt" and "Les Echos".

2012

Mathias Döpfner receives "Strategist of the Year" award for Axel Springer's digitization strategy

For the ninth time in succession, the daily "Financial Times Deutschland", strategic advice consultants Bain & Company and the WHU business school have nominated successful CEOs of listed companies as "Strategist of the Year". Mathias Döpfner received the award in the "medium-sized enterprises" category.

Golden Medal of Merit for the B.Z. "Berliner Heroes" campaign

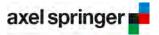
As a sign of gratitude and in appreciation of the important and dedicated work by the B.Z. Heroes editorial office, the Unionhilfswerk-Landesverband (State Association of the Union Relief Organization) awarded the editorial office of the Berlin Heroes with the association's Golden Medal of Merit.

Ahrensburg offset printing works wins UNESCO award

Axel Springer SE's offset printing works in Ahrensburg has been presented an award by UNESCO for its particular commitment to school projects in the environmental field. The printing works has been working with Ahrensburg schools on environmental, economic and social issues since 2008. This cooperation has now been honored by the German UNESCO Commission within the framework of the UN Decade of "Education for Sustainable Development".

Environmental Protection Pin for Ahrensburg Offset Printing Works

Stephan Wellnitz, Sales Manager in the Customer Center of the Ahrensburg offset printing works, has been awarded the Environmental Protection Pin of the Studien- und Fördergesellschaft der Schleswig-Holsteinischen Wirtschaft e.V. (Society for the Study and Support of the Economy in Schleswig-Holstein) in Kiel for his environmental commitment.



PACE receives award for "ESSENTIA" menu line

The "Initiative Zukunft Ernährung" ("Initiative Future Nutrition") (IZE) has presented PACE with its "Future Nutrition Award" for the self-developed "ESSENTIA – healthy. fresh. delicious!" menu line.

Konrad Adenauer Foundation honors Axel Springer

The Konrad Adenauer Foundation (KAS) has honored Axel Springer on the occasion of his 100th birthday with a symposium entitled: "Axel Springer – perseverance and dissent". Prof. Hans-Peter Schwarz, author of the recent Axel Springer biography, held the laudatory speech and praised Axel Springer as a "memorable, really important personality with strong convictions".

2011

Axel Springer awarded audit certificate for family-friendly policies

The Herti foundation has offered the "berufundfamilie" (work and family) audit to companies that want to further develop their family-friendliness since 1998. The result for 2011 certifies that Axel Springer SE has an above average degree of commitment to family-friendly personnel policies. As part of a comprehensive auditing procedure the inventory of the company's services for improving the work/family balance was assessed.

"Prime" in sustainability ratings

The rating agency oekom research, which specializes in sustainability issues, assessed Axel Springer SE with a overall rating of C+ and classified it as "prime". This qualifies the company's securities traded on the market for an investment from an ecological and social point of view.

Placed 11th in the IÖW/future-Ranking of sustainability reports

The reports of the 150 largest German industry and service companies are evaluated in the IÖW/ future-Ranking of large companies. The first three positions in the ranking of large companies were taken by the companies BMW, Siemens, and BASF. Axel Springer SE's ranking improved from 23rd (2009) to 11th place.

Best staff publication

The Axel Springer staff magazine inside.mag was acclaimed as best staff publication for the third time in a row at the inkom. Grand Prix. The media prize for internal communication is awarded annually by the German Public Relations Society (DPRG) and is intended for publications from Germany, Austria and Switzerland. Axel Springer SE prevailed against 70 other staff magazines and newspapers, including Deutsche Telekom, Deutsche Bank and Volkswagen.

2010

TOTAL E-QUALITY distinction

The company was awarded the TOTAL E-QUALITY distinction for the successful implementation of equal opportunities. "As the first media enterprise, Axel Springer has been a member of the "Women in the Economy" Forum since 1999, in which equal opportunities and diversity representatives from 20 well-known major German companies have joined together", according to the jury statement.

School Projects at the Ahrensburg Offset Printing Works

For their commitment in school projects Eight employees from Ahrensburg offset printing works have been awarded the Environmental Protection Pin of the Studien- und Fördergesellschaft der Schleswig-Holsteinischen Wirtschaft e.V. (Society for the Study and Support of the Economy in Schleswig-Holstein) at a ceremony in Rendsburg attended by Minister President Peter Harry Carstensen.



"Prize for Civic Engagement" and "Silver Badge" for B.Z. "Berlin Heroes" campaign

The B. Z. was awarded the German Prize for Civic Engagement 2010 in the Business category for its major "Berlin Heroes" campaign, as well as the Silver Badge of the Paritätischen Wohlfahrtverbandes Berlin (Berlin joint charity association). "The "Berlin Heroes" campaign addresses people who want to tackle problems" said the laudation. And: "Through continuous reporting, the topic of volunteering in Berlin has had its visibility considerably increased."

Health management with "Corporate Health Award"

The health of its employees is very important to Axel Springer. The health management campaigns include numerous exercise programs, lectures and medical checkups. For these Axel Springer SE was awarded the seal of excellence at the "Corporate Health Awards".

2009

Herbert Quandt Media Award for "Kinderleicht" ("Child's Play")

The WELT am SONNTAG was awarded the prestigious Herbert Quandt Media Award 2009 for the idea and concept of the "Kinderleicht" series. The "Kinderleicht" supplement answers questions that adults do not dare to ask. The series addresses economic issues from the perspective of children and adolescents and makes complex issues understandable.

"Kinderleicht" was also awarded the Ernst Schneider Prize and the European Newspaper Award.

2008

Axel Springer is presented the "German Sustainability Award 2008"

Axel Springer SE won the "German Sustainability Award 2008" in the category of "Most Sustainable Purchasing". The award was for the "numerous initiatives, above all in the area of Purchasing, which have led to clear improvements in sustainability", according to the jury statement.

The German Sustainability Award is awarded to companies which combine economic success with social responsibility and the conservation of the environment in an exemplary fashion - and make use of sustainable action for additional growth. The jury received applications from 350 companies, including more than half of the DAX 30 companies.

Distinction in oekom research rating

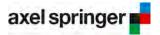
The rating agency oekom research AG, Munich, which specializes in sustainability, has had a closer look at 24 of the world's most important listed media enterprises. Axel Springer SE was ranked third after the British television channel ITV and the British scientific publisher Reed Elsevier.

Essen-Kettwig offset printing works receives EMAS Award 2008

The Essen-Kettwig offset printing works received the EMAS Award 2008 in the "Large Organizations" category. With the introduction of an energy management system for all types of energy and targeted investments, the offset printing works was able to significantly reduce all greenhouse gases as well as energy consumption from 2005 to 2007. The Essen-Kettwig offset printing works has been validated regularly according to the EU Eco Audit (EMAS) since 1997.

NEWSWEEK editor-in-chief receives award for outstanding journalism

The editor-in-chief of the Russian edition of NEWSWEEK, Mikhail Fishman, was awarded this year's "Prize for Excellence in Journalism" by the Paul Klebnikov Fund in New York. The prize for the 35-year-old is a stay of several weeks in the American NEWSWEEK editorial office. The Paul Klebnikov Fund is committed to the independence of Russian media and presents awards every year to journalists for their commitment.



2007

Axel Springer's vocational training is awarded prize

The Chamber of Industry and Commerce and the Berlin Chamber of Skilled Crafts awarded prizes to training companies for their "excellent vocational training performance". These companies also included Axel Springer SE, which offers apprenticeships for printers, media designers and industrial mechanics, as well as various occupations in the business area.

The Institute for Environmental Management and Economics (IÖW): Right up front with the online Sustainability Report

In the critical comparison of Sustainability Reports from 150 German organizations in 2007 carried out by the Institute for Environmental Management and Economics (IÖW), the Sustainability Report 2005 of Axel Springer SE was rated eighth overall and second in the Environmental Protection segment. In the even smaller group of companies who publish their Sustainability Reports exclusively on the Internet, Axel Springer SE was rated first. In the rankings carried out over the past ten years, Axel Springer SE's Sustainability Report, published every two years, has been ranked in the Top 10 five times.





Our Responsibility as a Media Company

Responsibility at Axel Springer has many facets: a clear position, journalistic independence, energy efficiency of IT systems, data protection and the safeguarding of social and ecological standards.



Journalistic courage



Six months after the attack on "Charlie Hebdo" on 7 January 2015, the Axel Springer Akademie published jerestecharlie.eu – a video website with information about religiously motivated terrorism and its impact on society. At the center of the website is a moving documentary film, in which members of the editorial team at "Charlie Hebdo", relatives of those who were killed, and others who were affected relate how they have continued with their lives after the assault and how the terrorist attack has changed both them and French society. (Source: Axel Springer Akademie)

The attack on the satirical magazine Charlie Hebdo

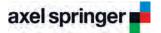
This is what Mathias Döpfner said at the New Year's Reception 2015 (extract):

"The attack in Paris, the almost complete annihilation of the editorial office of the satirical magazine Charlie Hebdo, the murder of 17 people has attacked and intimidated an entire profession, a central element of our western democracies: the media, the free press, in short: the freedom of expression. And the crucial question is: did the terrorists succeed, has this attack had a behavior-changing effect on journalists in the long term or hasn't it?

If it has had this effect, then 7 January 2015 will go down in history as the day that Islamic terror cut the western world down to size. As the beginning of the end of real freedom of expression. As the beginning of a new appearament and the intellectual capitulation of democracy, the rule of law and human rights. If the attack has not had this intimidating effect, then it can – inversely – go down in history as a day that has strengthened our values. Both are possible. There is evidence of both.

Millions of people are taking to the streets around the world these days – as a sign of solidarity with the victims and as a gesture for the self-confidence of free societies. Islamic organizations have – more clearly than ever before – distanced themselves from the attack with extremely strong words. Yet at the same time, the first media organizations, TV broadcasters and newspapers around the world are beginning to make compromises, and are not showing the cartoons in their reporting on the attack, or are using a somewhat milder tone in their reporting – for fear of the consequences.

Fear is in the air. The days when medial courage was free are a thing of the past. Now courage is starting to cost something once again. At worst, life. We are at a fateful crossroads."



Guidelines to Safeguard the Independence of Journalism at Axel Springer



The main entrance of the Axel Springer Building in Berlin. (Photo: Axel Springer SE)

The guidelines specify and extend the company's understanding of the publishing principles of the press code of conduct issued by the German Press Council.

Observance of the guidelines by all editors in their journalistic endeavors safeguards the general conditions that make independent and critical journalism possible. The editors-in-chief are responsible for the observance of the guidelines and their implementation in day-to-day business. The guidelines deal with the distinction between advertising and editorial copy as well as between editors' personal and professional interests, prevent the exercise of personal advantage and define a position with respect to the treatment of sources.

Preamble

The editors of Axel Springer SE are aware of their responsibility for providing information and shaping public opinion in Germany. Independence is essential as a basis for their work.

The guidelines are a concrete expression of Axel Springer's understanding of the journalistic principles set forth in the Press Code of the German Press Council. Adherence to these guidelines by all editors in their journalistic work safeguards the overall conditions that enable independent, critical journalism at Axel Springer.

The chief editors are responsible for adherence to the guidelines and their implementation in day-to-day work.

Advertising

Point 7 of the Press Code requires publishers and editors to make a clear distinction between editorial text and advertising copy and points out the need to adhere to the regulations for paid advertising.

The journalists at Axel Springer

• shall ensure, together with the management of the publishing house, that a distinction is made between advertising and editorial material. Advertisements must not create the impression, through their overall design or major components, that they are part of the editorial material of the title. Special attention must be given to using different typography. If there is any doubt, the advertisement must be marked as such clearly and in sufficiently large type.



• shall resist attempts by advertisers or interested parties to influence content, and enter no agreements that might jeopardize their independence as journalists. Merchandising campaigns and media partnerships must be identified as such where necessary.

Personal and business interests

It is part of the responsibility of the press towards the public that journalistic publications should not be influenced by the personal or business interests of third parties or the personal financial interests of the editors themselves.

This is the subject of Points 6 and 7 of the Press Code.

The journalists at Axel Springer

- shall not report on persons with whom they have a close relationship, especially family members, in the form of copy or photographs unless there is an objective reason for doing so that has been approved by the writer's superior.
- shall not use their reporting to obtain benefits for themselves or others.
- shall consult their superior if membership of or the holding of an office or a seat in a society, political party, association or other institution, investment in a company, permitted side-line employment or a relationship with persons or institutions might create the impression that the neutrality of their reporting on such societies, political parties, associations, persons or other institutions is thereby impaired.
- shall take special care to meet the legal and professional obligations of the press with regard to inside information as set forth in the German Press Council's publication "Journalistic ethics concerning inside and other information with a potential effect on security prices".

Invitations, gifts and press trips

Point 15 of the Press Code is concerned with personal benefit as a danger to independent journalism. Even the appearance that journalists' freedom of decision might be impaired by the acceptance of invitations or gifts should be avoided.

The journalists at Axel Springer

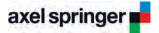
- shall ensure that all costs (travelling expenses, entertainment etc.) incurred in the course of their research are paid by the editorial department. Any exceptions must be approved by the chief editor and have to be marked accordingly in the coverage.
- shall not accept any gifts that constitute a personal benefit or, if it is impossible to refuse them, shall pass them on to the company, which will then give them to a charity.

Treatment of sources

The journalist's duty of care in the treatment of information sources is extremely important for journalistic work and the public's opinion of the press. Point 2 of the Press Code regulates the treatment of sources in addition to the existing legal provisions.

The journalists at Axel Springer

• shall in all cases make sure that interviews are authorized verbally or in writing by the person interviewed, even if time is very short, unless other agreements are documented.



Principles for the Freedom of the Press



"Medien und Journalisten haben Anspruch auf ungehinderten Zugang zu allen Nachrichten und Informationsquellen. Der Öffentlichkeit jedes Staates ist freier Zugang zu allen nationalen wie ausländischen Medien und Informationsquellen zu gewähren." (Quelle Illustration: Code of Conduct/Axel Springer SE; Quelle Text: "Europäische Charta für Pressefreiheit"

48 editors-in-chief and senior journalists from 19 countries adopted the first "European Charter on Freedom of the Press" on 25 May 2009 in Hamburg. This Charter formulates principles for the freedom of the press from government intervention, and in particular for their right to safety from surveil-lance, electronic eavesdropping and searches of editorial departments and computers, and to unimpeded access for journalists and citizens to all domestic and foreign sources of information.

The Charter was subsequently notified to the EU Commission in Brussels, in order to assert its validity throughout the Community and to make its adoption a condition in EU accession negotiations.

European Charter on Freedom of the Press

Article 1: Freedom of the press is essential to a democratic society. To uphold and protect it, and to respect its diversity and its political, social and cultural missions, is the mandate of all governments.

Article 2: Censorship is impermissible. Independent journalism in all media is free of persecution and repression, without a guarantee of political or regulatory interference by government. Press and online media shall not be subject to state licensing.

Article 3: The right of journalists and media to gather and disseminate information and opinions must not be threatened, restricted or made subject to punishment.

Article 4: The protection of journalistic sources shall be strictly upheld. Surveillance of, electronic eavesdropping on or searches of newsrooms, private rooms or journalists' computers with the aim of identifying sources of information or infringing on editorial confidentiality are unacceptable.

Article 5: All states must ensure that the media have the full protection of the law and the authorities while carrying out their role. This applies in particular to defending journalists and their employees from harassment and/or physical attack. Threats to or violations of these rights must be carefully investigated and punished by the judiciary.



Article 6: The economic livelihood of the media must not be endangered by the state or by state-controlled institutions. The threat of economic sanctions is also unacceptable. Private-sector companies must respect the journalistic freedom of the media. They shall neither exert pressure on journalistic content nor attempt to mix commercial content with journalistic content.

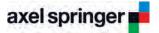
Article 7: State or state-controlled institutions shall not hinder the freedom of access of the media and journalists to information. They have a duty to support them in their mandate to provide information.

Article 8: Media and journalists have a right to unimpeded access to all news and information sources, including those from abroad. For their reporting, foreign journalists should be provided with visas, accreditation and other required documents without delay.

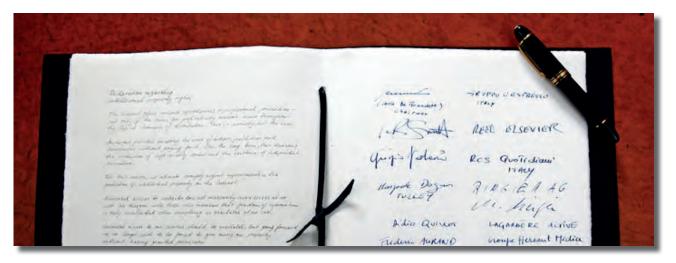
Article 9: The public of any state shall be granted free access to all national and foreign media and sources of information.

The government shall not restrict entry into the profession of journalism.

Further information can be found at www.pressfreedom.eu.



Declaration on the protection of intellectual property



"The Internet offers immense opportunities to professional journalism. But only if the basis for profitability remains secure throughout the digital channels of distribution. This is currently not the case."

In 2009, the European Publishers Council (EPC), of which Axel Springer SE is also a member, presented the EU Commission the "Hamburg Declaration on the protection of intellectual property". The declaration is supported by the World Association of Newspapers and News Publishers' (WAN-IFRA) and has in the meantime been signed internationally by a large number of publishers and publishing managers.

Hamburg Declaration on the protection of intellectual property

"The Internet offers immense opportunities to professional journalism. But only if the basis for profitability remains secure throughout the digital channels of distribution. This is currently not the case.

Numerous providers are using the work of authors, publishers and broadcasters without paying for it. Over the long term, this threatens the production of high-quality content and the existence of independent journalism.

For this reason, we advocate strongly urgent improvements in the protection of intellectual property on the Internet. Universal access to websites does not necessarily mean access at no cost. We disagree with those who maintain that freedom of information is only established when everything is available at no cost.

Universal access to our services should be available, but going forward we no longer wish to be forced to give away property without having granted permission.

We therefore welcome the growing resolve of federal and state governments all over the world to continue to support the protection of the rights of authors, publishers and broadcasters on the Internet.

There should be no parts of the Internet where laws do not apply. Legislators and governments at the national and international level should protect more effectively the intellectual creation of value by authors, publishers and broadcasters. Unauthorized use of intellectual property must remain prohibited whatever the means of distribution.



Ultimately, the fundamental principle that no democracy can thrive without independent journalism must also apply to the World Wide Web."

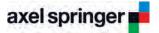
The first signatories included Frederic Aurand (Groupe Hersant, France), Francisco Balsemão (Impresa, Portugal), Carlo De Benedetti (Editoriale L'Espresso, Italy), Carl-Johan Bonnier (Bonnier, Sweden), Oscar Bronner (Der Standard, Austria), Bernd Buchholz (Gruner + Jahr, Germany), Hubert Burda (Burda Media, Germany), Mathias Döpfner (Axel Springer SE, Germany), Hanzade Dogan (Milliyet, Turkey), Stefan von Holtzbrinck (Verlagsgruppe Georg von Holtzbrinck, Germany), Patrick Morley (Telegraaf Media Group, The Netherlands), James Murdoch (News Corporation Europe and Asia), Horst Pirker (Styria, Austria), Didier Quillot (Lagadére, France), Gavin O'Reilly (Independent News and Media, Ireland), Michael Ringier (Ringier, Switzerland), The Viscount Rothermere (Daily Mail and General Trust, Great Britain), Ian Smith (Reed Elsevier, Great Britain/The Netherlands), Hannu Syrjanen (Sanoma, Finland), Robert Thomson (Dow Jones and Wall Street Journal), Giorgio Valerio (RCS Quotidiani, Italy) and Christian Van Thillo (de Persgroep, Belgium).

Dr. Mathias Döpfner, Chief Executive Officer of Axel Springer SE, said: "I am pleased with this international appeal by publishers. It is an important step in the interests of the global Internet community. The Internet is not the enemy, but rather the future of journalism, providing intellectual property is also respected in the digital world. There are above all two objectives: A fair share of the revenues generated by those who are commercially exploiting our content, and in addition, the development of a market for paid content in the digital world. We are confident that the representatives of search engines and other aggregators will also want to join us in recognizing, developing and sharing together the market opportunities for legitimate paid content in the Internet."

WAN-IFRA president Gavin O'Reilly said: "We are continuing to attract an increasingly larger audience for our content. But, unlike the Print or TV business models we are not making any money from our content. This is an untenable situation. Publishers failing will benefit no-one, least of all consumers, or indeed the search engines and other aggregators who currently make huge profits on the back of our intellectual property."

EPC president Francisco Pinto Balsemão added: "A fundamental safeguard of democratic society is a free, diverse and independent press. Without control over our intellectual property rights, the future of quality journalism is at stake. And at the same time our ability to provide our consumers with quality and varied information, education and entertainment on the many platforms they enjoy. With this declaration we call on governments worldwide to support the copyright of authors, publishers and broadcasters on the Internet."

You can find the full text of the "Hamburg Declaration" at www.hamburgdeclaration.org.



What is product responsibility all about?



A colorful and diverse media world has gathered under the Axel Springer umbrella. No matter whether the medium is online, print or audiovisual carrier – the media brands and their respective journalistic copy are the center of attention. (Source: Axel Springer SE)

The core business of Axel Springer is informative and entertaining journalism, whatever the media channel. The offering encompasses a broad range of printed and digital media.

By product responsibility Axel Springer SE refers to the responsibility that the company takes with regard to its media products. This consists first and foremost of journalistic independence, care in the treatment of sources, the separation of advertising and editorial copy, data protection, media protection of young persons, the safeguarding of social and ecological standards, as well as compliance with justice and the law.

Axel Springer SE protects the information transmitted to its website with technical and organizational security measures in order to protect personal data from random or deliberate manipulation, destruction or unauthorized access. The company is continuously improving its security measures in line with the latest technological developments.

In the course of the fast-paced digital transformation of our company, we are at the same time looking at the transparency and optimization of social and environmental standards along the digital value chain. Our goal is the successful establishment of independent journalism in the digital world. You can find more information by following the links on the side.



Ausgezeichnete Journalisten der Axel Springer SE



Team 13 of the Axel Springer Akademie won third prize in the Internet category of the Axel Springer Prize with its web project "wahllos.de – Germany's non-voters". The photo shows the award winners in the Internet category with (f.l.t.r.) Mathias Döpfner (CEO of Axel Springer SE), jury spokesman Rowan Barnett, keynote speaker Stefan Aust (Publisher WELT Group), Friede Springer (Deputy Chair of Axel Springer SE Supervisory Board) and Marc Thomas Spahl (Director Axel Springer Akademie). (Photo: Axel Springer SE)

A large number of journalists' prizes are awarded in Germany. They are awarded by associations, institutions, business and private initiatives. A large number of journalists from Axel Springer SE received awards for their work between 2012 and 2015. Here is an overview:

2015

Ernst Cramer Reporting Award

For his report "By tram through the Holy City", the journalist Jan Schapira (DIE WELT) was awarded the Ernst Cramer Reporting Award for the best German reportage. He shared first prize with Jonathan Stock (Der Spiegel) for the article "Goliath's War".

"By tram through the Holy City" Jan Schapira, DIE WELT

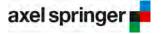
Rocco Clein Prize

The ROLLING STONE has been awarded the Rocco Clein Prize for the best cover of 2015. The prize was awarded for the cover picture of the July 2015 edition, which showed Eurovision Song Contest winner Conchita Wurst – topless. The picture was taken at an exclusive photo shoot in Vienna; the design was created by Walter Schönauer, art director of ROLLING STONE.

MUSIKEXPRESS was also awarded the Rocco Clein Prize in 2015. ME author Arno Frank won in the category of "Best Interview" for an interview he conducted with Blixa Bargeld, singer of the "Einstürzende Neubauten", and British band leader Stuart Staples.

ROLLING STONE in July 2015 - Cover Story: Conchita Wurst

Interview: Blixa Bargeld & Stuart Staples MUSIKEXPRESS 01/2015, Download article



Horizont Award

The Chair of the BILD Group Management Board Donata Hopfen was awarded the "Horizon Award" in the Alte Oper (Old Opera) in Frankfurt. With this award, the specialist magazine "Horizon" paid tribute to Hopfen's entrepreneurial achievements – in particular for the introduction of digital paid models.

2014

The Axel Springer Prize for Young Journalists

Team 13 from the Axel Springer Akademie won 3rd place in the Axel Springer Prize in the Internet category with their web project "wahllos.de – Germany's non-voters". Team 13 from the Axel Springer Akademie: Sarah Borufka, Christopher Clausen, Niklas Cordes, Paulina Czienskowski, Henrik Jacobs, Eva Marie Kogel, Sebastian Kolsberger, Larissa Hoppe, Maria Menzel, Nils Mertens, Karina Mößbauer, Niclas Renzel, Aylissa Schäfer, Oliver Schmidt, Susanne Schumann, Romy Schwaiger, Magdalene Weber und Katharina Weiß.

View wahllos.de website

Rocco Clein Prize

ROLLING STONE author Berni Mayer received "Best Interview" prize for his interview with US rock musician Bob Mould about their common hobby of wrestling. ROLLING STONE columnist Eric Pfeil won the award in the "Best Music Blog" category. In addition, the just 17-year-old Ivo Ligeti from MU-SIKEXPRESS won one of the three young talent awards.

"Berni Mayer vs. Bob Mould" ROLLING STONE: June 2015

"Music Blog: Eric Pfeil's Pop Diary" www.rollingstone.de

Top 30 under 30

"medium magazin" selects the 30 best young journalists in Germany annually. The relevant criteria for selection are: an own style, creative thematic approach, thorough research, personality, curiosity, willingness to take risks, eagerness to experiment and depth. Six colleagues from the publishing house are among the award-winners: Christian Stenzel, Pia Frey, Carline Mohr, Henrik Neumann, Vanessa Schlesier and Florian Flade from the BILD and WELT Groups.

2013

Axel-Springer-Preis für junge Journalisten

Das Team 11 der Axel Springer Akademie gewann den 2. Platz des Axel-Springer-Preises im Bereich Internet mit ihrem Webprojekt "ZOOM BERLIN – Das Hyperlokalprojekt über die Oranienstraße". Team 11 der Axel Springer Akademie: Matthias Bannert, Til Biermann, Ricarda Biskoping, Christin Bohmann, Benjamin Doerfel, Viktoria Dümer, Stefanie Enge, Alexandra Grauvogl, Lena Kappei, Moritz Leihkamm, Nadja Lucas, Stefan Mair, Lucas Negroni, Henrik Neumann, Inga Pylypchuk, Victor Reichardt, Anja Richter, Evelyn Rosar, Julia Szyndzielorz, Jan Vollmer

http://zoom-berlin.com/



Deutscher Reporterpreis

Drei Kollegen der BERLINER MORGENPOST und der WELT am SONNTAG wurden mit dem Deutschen Reporterpreis ausgezeichnet. Eva Sudholt wurde für ihre Reportage "Mein Freund Jürgen" in der Kategorie "Beste Lokalreportage" geehrt. Die WELT-Redakteure Benjamin von Stuckrad-Barre und Hajo Schumacher wurden in der Kategorie "Bestes Interview" für ihr Gespräch mit Theater-Intendant Jürgen Flimm und CDU-Politiker Jörg Schönbohm, "Ohne unsere Frauen wären wir jetzt tot", ausgezeichnet.

"Mein Freund Jürgen"

Berliner Morgenpost: 4.08.2013

"Ohne unsere Frauen wären wir jetzt tot" WELT am SONNTAG: 23.06.2013

Theodor-Wolff-Preis

Journalisten vom HAMBURGER ABENDBLATT und der WELT wurden im September mit dem renommierten Theodor-Wolff-Preis geehrt. Jan Haarmeyer erhielt den Journalistenpreis für seinen Artikel "Im Namen des Volkes, auf Kosten des Kindes", der Geschichte eines Ehepaars, welches um das Sorgerecht für ein traumatisiertes Pflegekind kämpft. Robin Alexander wurde für seinen Essay "Auf den Herd gekommen" geehrt, einer treffenden und ausführlichen Auseinandersetzung mit der "Herdprämie".

"Im Namen des Volkes, auf Kosten des Kindes"

Hamburger Abendblatt: 8.06.2012

"Auf den Herd gekommen" DIE WELT: 11.11.2012

Publizistik-Preis der Friedrich-August-von-Hayek-Stiftung

Dorothea Siems, Chefkorrespondentin für Wirtschaftspolitik bei der WELT, wurde mit dem renommierten Publizistik-Preis der Friedrich-August-von-Hayek-Stiftung ausgezeichnet.

Rocco-Clein-Preis

Frédéric Schwilden vom ROLLING STONE wurde mit dem Rocco-Clein-Preis, einer Ehrung für junge Musikjournalisten, ausgezeichnet. Schwilden hatte in einer Tour-Reportage im ROLLING STONE geschildert, wie die einstmals gefeierte britische Band Art Brut damit lebt, acht Jahre nach ihren größten Hit wieder in kleinen Clubs angekommen zu sein.

"ART BRUT: Eine Band auf Reisen"

Rolling Stone: 30.09.2013

2012

Axel-Springer-Preis für junge Journalisten

Michael Bee gewinnt mit seinem Beitrag: "Abschied mit einem Knall" den Preis in der Kategorie Print/Lokale/Regionale Beiträge. Er ist seit 2012 Online-Redakteur der Berliner Morgenpost.

"Abschied mit einem Knall

Berliner Morgenpost: 20.11.2011



Britta Stuff gewinnt mit ihrem Beitrag: "Herr Schröder will es allen zeigen" den Preis in der Kategorie Wochen-/Monatspublikationen. Britta Stuff arbeitet als Redakteurin im Ressort Vermischtes/Reportage der Welt und Welt am Sonntag.

"Herr Schröder will es allen zeigen" Welt am Sonntag: 14.03.2011

Theodor-Wolff-Preis

Philip Cassier von der BERLINER MORGENPOST wurde für seine Reportage "Eine Dosis jüdisches Penicillin" ausgezeichnet.

"Eine Dosis jüdisches Penicillin" Berliner Morgenpost: 23.10.11

Henri-Nannen-Preis

Für den Artikel "Wirbel um Privatkredit – hat Wulff das Parlament getäuscht?" vom 13. Dezember 2011 erhielten die BILD-Redakteure Martin Heidemanns und Nikolaus Harbusch den Henri-Nannen-Preis in der Kategorie "Beste investigative Leistung des Jahres".

"Wirbel um Privatkredit – hat Wulff das Parlament getäuscht?" BILD: 13.12.2011

Ludwig-Erhard-Förderpreis

Die Ludwig-Erhard-Stiftung hat Tina Kaiser, Wirtschaftskorrespondentin der WELT-Gruppe in London, in diesem Jahr mit ihrem Förderpreis für Wirtschaftspublizistik ausgezeichnet. Sie erhielt den Preis für ihren Artikel "Die Bilanzenversteher" der in der WELT am SONNTAG erschien.

"Die Bilanzenversteher" WELT am SONNTAG: 27.03.2011

"Medienpreis Politik"

Der Deutsche Bundestag hat das HAMBURGER ABENDBLATT mit dem "Medienpreis Politik 2012" ausgezeichnet. Volker ter Haseborg, Karsten Kammholz und Lars-Marten Nagel nahmen den Preis am Mittwochabend von Norbert Lammert im Rahmen des Presseempfangs des Bundestagspräsidenten entgegen. Ausgezeichnet wurden sie und ihr Kieler Kollege Ulf B. Christen für das Dossier "Feind, Todfeind, Parteifreund" über den Sturz des damaligen schleswig-holsteinischen CDU-Spitzenkandidaten Christian von Boetticher.

"Feind, Todfeind, Parteifreund"
HAMBURGER ABENDBLATT: 29.12.2011



Media Protection of Young Persons

The task of Media Protection of Young Persons is to protect children and adolescents from influences from the adult world, which are likely to impair the development of young people as independent and active members of the community, or even to threaten this development.

Axel Springer SE respects the legal requirements of the Media Protection of Young Persons and beyond that also pays attention to self-imposed obligations, such as those in Germany imposed by the German Advertising Standards Council and the German Press Council:

Rules of Conduct of the German Advertising Standards Council: www.werberat.de/Grundregeln

Press Code of the German Press Council: www.presserat.info/pressekodex

This applies both to our own editorial articles as well as to the content of advertisements from our advertisers which are distributed. The editorial offices select the journalistic topics and the nature of their presentation so that no undesirable influence on young people need be feared. Publications targeting young readers are carefully designed according to age. Content that is potentially relevant to the protection of minors is, in cases of doubt, either not distributed at all, or distributed exclusively in publications determined as inaccessible for children and adolescents.

Further information on Media Protection of Young Persons

The right of freedom of expression, the right to information and the freedom of the press are expressly limited in article 5 of the German Basic Law by the provisions for protection of young persons. The Youth Protection Act restricts the supply and advertising opportunities for objects that have been indexed by the Federal Review Board for Writings Harmful to Young Persons in Bonn, or are seriously liable to corrupt the young.

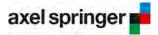
The Review Board is usually active on request.

Titles with content that is harmful to minors are also known as age-restricted items. They may not be displayed in stores that are accessible for young people, and may only be sold to adults. In regular press retailing they are only offered "under the counter".

If a freely distributable title is designated as harmful to minors, it is entered into the so-called index. If two issues of a periodic title are entered within 12 months, the title may remain on the Index for three to 12 months and may not be freely distributed during this time. In case of a breach of the provisions, not only the publisher but also the retailer can be held responsible.

Writings which contain glorifications of violence according to § 131 of the German Criminal Code (StGB) or so-called hard-core pornography according to § 184 III, are subject to a general sales ban and may not be distributed. Advertising these writings is also prohibited.

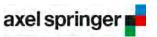
With the proliferation of electronic media in the press retail trade – such as floppy disks, CDROMs or DVDs – the question of Media Protection of Young Persons was also extended to include these products and thus includes all the media referred to in the law as carrier media. In 1995, publishers, wholesalers, railway station bookshops and the retail sector founded "Voluntary Self-Regulation in Press Distribution", DT Control for short, which upon request reviews the contents of such media prior to their being offered on the market in regard to their compatibility with youth protection regulations. This has also applied in particular since 01.04.2003 to questions of age labeling, as well as material



with a potentially undesirable impact on young people in the sense of § 12 para. 5 Youth Protection Act. The age specifications for diskettes, CD-ROMs, DVDs and videos are to be observed even when the data carriers appear as supplements in association with newspapers or periodicals. The designated age restrictions also apply to computer games. For full versions of PC games or feature films, the data media and its cover must clearly indicate the age restriction. These so-called "age cohorts" for full versions are issued by the Voluntary Self Regulation of the Movie Industry (FSK) or the Entertainment Industry (USK).

Free gifts including demo versions of PC games or movies are permitted only if the carrier is accompanied by a note from the vendor, which makes it clear that an organization of voluntary self-regulation has determined that these extracts will not have a potentially undesirable impact on young people. Wholesale and retail trade are required to only distribute approved data carriers to avoid facing criminal proceedings and seizures.

Extracts from the VDZ Distribution Glossary © VDZ Zeitschriften Akademie GmbH



Safeguarding of personal information

General implementation of data protection at Axel Springer SE

I. Training and Counseling

At Axel Springer, competent data protection counseling within the Group enables us to explain to our employees the safe handling of customer data, both preventively through training courses and seminars, as well as operationally through our daily business operations. For this we have the company data protection officer as well as experts in the legal department.

II. Project support

From our point of view, data protection starts right from the planning stage of services and products. That is why Axel Springer calls for early data protection counseling right from the concept of a project and ongoing project support, so as to ensure the implementation of legal requirements and to offer its customers a product that is both appealing as well as safe to use.

III. Media skills and informational self-determination

Knowledge of data protection increases media literacy, and thus also the protection of the data of each individual. This is why we provide information to our customers about data processing at Axel Springer. In addition, we offer regular editorial articles on the protection and the security of data in our print and online services (e.g. www.computerbild.de/sicherheitscenter/). In this way, each individual can exercise his right to informational self-determination. You can find a small selection of our editorial articles here:

- "Ten Tips for secure WLAN"
- "How to create secure online passwords"
- "These security suites fight the new viruses"
- "These weapons can defeat the NSA spies"
- "The dangers of Facebook: This is what you must be aware of!"
- "The COMPUTER BILD scam protection service"

IV. Membership and Data Protection Associations

We are a member of various associations and organizations, which apply themselves to the observance and implementation of data protection:

- The German Association for Data Protection and Data Security (GDD)
- Association of German Magazine Publishers Association (VDZ)
- Federal Association of German Newspaper Publishers (BDZV)

Use and disclosure of personal data

The protection of personal data is important to us. As a rule, you can visit all of the nachhaltigkeit. axelspringer.de pages, without us requiring personal data from you. All of the personal data collected is processed and used according to the German provisions for the protection of personal data.

Generally speaking, we need your personal data in order to reply to your queries or enable you access to special information or offers, such as our newsletter or media subscriptions. We do not collect any personal data through our website without your consent. Should this be necessary, we will inform you and obtain your consent. We will not sell or otherwise market your personal data to third parties.



We will collect personal data only with your consent and only in the following cases:

- Subscription to the Newsletter
- Feedback forms
- Order brochures
- Applications

Depending on the purpose, name, address, gender, date of birth, telephone number, fax number and e-mail address are collected and saved.

Statutory deadlines for the deletion of data

The deletion of the data occurs after the expiry of the legal, statutory or contractual retention periods. Data not affected by this will be deleted when the intended purpose of use agreed with you ceases to apply.

Automatic collection of non-personal information

Google Analytics

This website uses Google Analytics, a web analytics service provided by Google Inc., Amphitheatre Parkway, Mountain View, CA 94043, USA ("Google"). Google Analytics uses so-called cookies (see clause 4 above), which allow the website to analyze how you use the site.

The information generated by the cookie about your use of the website is generally transmitted to and stored by Google on a server in the United States. In case IP anonymization is activated on this website, your IP address will be truncated by Google within the Member States of the European Union or other parties to the Agreement on the European Economic Area and thereby anonymized. In exceptional cases only, the complete IP address is transferred to a Google server in the USA and truncated there. Google will use this information for the purpose of evaluating your use of the website, compiling reports on website activity for website operators and to provide them other services relating to the use of the website and the Internet. The IP address that your browser transmits within the scope of Google Analytics will not be associated with any other data held by Google. You may prevent the use of cookies by selecting the appropriate settings on your browser, however if you do this you may not be able to use the full functionality of this website. You can also prevent the collection of data generated by the cookie and related to your use of the website (including your IP address) by Google, as well as the processing of this data by Google, by downloading and installing the deactivation add-on available at the following link:http://tools.google.com/dlpage/gaoptout?hl=de.

Links to other websites

Upon leaving the websites of Axel Springer SE, you will be informed by an "external link" (a new browser window opens) that you are accessing a different provider.

Twitter

Axel Springer SE uses a number of Twitter accounts. Twitter is a microblogging service provided by the American company Twitter, Inc. (795 Folsom St., Suite 600, San Francisco, CA 94107).

If you actively use Twitter yourself and post a tweet, we can also see it if you have made it accessible to everyone or if we follow you on Twitter. We can also see your details on Twitter, if Axel Springer SE follows your tweets. For details on the processing of data by Twitter and visibility settings please refer to the Twitter privacy policy: https://twitter.com/privacy



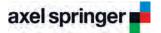
Security

Axel Springer SE protects the information transmitted to its website with technical and organizational security measures in order to protect personal data from random or deliberate manipulation, destruction or unauthorized access. Axel Springer SE is continuously improving its security measures in line with the latest technological developments.

Right to information and public procedures directory

On request, we will inform you in writing in accordance with applicable law, whether and which personal data we have saved about you.

Please do not hesitate to contact our data protection officer if you have any questions regarding the processing of your personal data: datenschutz@axelspringer.de



The Axel Springer Akademie



As the largest private institution of its kind in Germany, the Axel Springer Akademie every year offers 40 aspiring journalists a sound two-year vocational training course as editors. (Video: Axel Springer Akademie)

Training at the Axel Springer Akademie

The Axel Springer Akademie is the most modern school of journalism in Germany. Training to be an editor takes two years. It combines the advantages of a well-established School of Journalism with those of a classical internship. Our vocational training has a clear cross-media focus and attaches great importance to language and exclusivity.

Practice-oriented learning of all journalistic disciplines

Cross-media focus

Individual work in small groups (max. 20 participants)

One year practical phase in the editorial office of your choice

Digital training at BILD.de

Newspaper design training at WELT KOMPAKT

Study trip to Israel to conclude the training

Prospects in one of the most successful media companies in Europe

1,200 per month training allowance

Sequence of training

1st six months Basic course

In your first weeks with us you will learn the craft of journalism from scratch. You will write news articles, reports and portraits, research your own stories, produce headlines and lead stories. Moreover you will also receive comprehensive research training. Right from the beginning you will interview a lot of people, also in front of the camera of course.

Home editorial office

Following your basic course you will spend a month in your home editorial office. There you can use and practice what you have learned so far. You will get to know your future colleagues and your workplace and perhaps even be able to publish one or more of your own stories.



Advanced course

When you return to the Akademie after your month in the home editorial office, you will deepen your knowledge of the world of video. In addition you will practice further digital forms of presentation, non-linear storytelling and dealing with social media.

Masterpiece

As a constant development laboratory we observe the developments within the industry and are looking for responses to the challenges facing the journalism of the future.

Practice orientation is the most important part of our concept. For this reason you will independently develop a digital project with your team as part of your training and come to know an entirely convergent production. We refer to it as "Masterpiece", in order to make the requirements clear. The project marks the end of the first six months of your training.

2nd six months WELT KOMPAKT

The Axel Springer Akademie is the only school of journalism in Europe to have its own daily newspaper, WELT KOMPAKT. On your own responsibility you produce the daily newspaper in the most modern newsroom in Germany.

BYou - BILD.de's youth portal

You also receive training "on the job" at BILD.de. On your own responsibility you produce content with your team for the target group of 14 to 17-year-olds. Texts, videos and new digital formats – at BYou you can give your creativity free rein.

3rd and 4th six months Home editorial office

You spend your second training year in your home editorial office where you deepen the skills learned so far. You produce your own stories, develop yourself further and become part of your editorial office.

Final trip to Israel

At the end of your two-year training course it's time to pack your suitcase; you're off on a study trip to the Holy Land. This is a unique opportunity for the teams from the Akademie to form their own impressions of the politics, culture and the economy of a country full of contrasts and tension. At the end of this trip, every trainee journalist is ceremoniously awarded their editor's certificate.

You will find further information at: www.axel-springer-akademie.de



The 2015 Axel Springer Prize for Young Journalists



The Axel Springer Akademie awarded the Axel Springer Prize for Young Journalists for the 24th time in 2015. (Source: Axel Springer Akademie)

The Axel Springer Prize for Young Journalists was established in 1991 by Axel Springer SE and the heirs of the company's founder. The prize is aimed at authors who were not older than 33 when their contributions were published. The reason for this is the desire of the sponsors to support budding journalists and to encourage special achievement.

The award ceremony for the Axel Springer Prize for Young Journalists was held in Berlin for the 24th time in 2015. The Axel Springer Prize is one of the most important awards for young journalists in Germany, Austria and Switzerland. The four independent juries awarded a total of 54,000 euros in prize money to twelve contributions in the categories of Internet, Television, Radio and Print before an audience of 250 invited guests from the media, culture and politics.

The guest speaker for the evening was Lord George Weidenfeld (1919-2016). Under the motto "Look very closely – The journalist at a crossroads in the history of the world", the 95-year-old journalist and publisher made a plea for the core virtues of journalism. He spoke about how important it was to remain courageous when researching and in interviews. Yet above all, it is important to develop the courage to form your own attitude, especially when this seems to be unpopular and polarizing.

The first prizes were awarded to Isabelle Buckow and Christian Werner in the Internet category, to Philipp Grull (Bayerischer Rundfunk) in the Television category and to Mareike Aden (DLF) in the Radio category. In the Print/Monthlies and Weeklies category, Anne Kunze (Die Zeit) won the first prize, as did Massimo Bognanni (Handelsblatt) in the Print/National articles category. Daniel Gräber (southern Baden weekly "Der Sonntag") was the winner in the Print/Local and Regional articles category.

Marc Thomas Spahl, Director of the Axel Springer Akademie: "We award this prize in memory of Axel Springer, who most people remember as a publisher. But above all he was a journalist, who practiced this occupation with passion in his younger years, and for whom the promotion of young talent was always near to his heart."

Further information is available at www.axel-springer-preis.de.



The "Women in Media Award" 2015



All the finalists of the "Women in Media Award" 2015. The prize was awarded for the third time in 2015. (Photo: Christian Kielmann)

Axel Springer presented the "Women in Media Award" in Berlin for the third time in 2015 to women enthusiastic about media and technology. The "Women in Media Award" is part of the group's own "Chancen:gleich!" project that aims to support the careers of women at Axel Springer. The digital publisher specifically promotes young talents with the award and brings together women keen on media and technology with the digital industry.

This year's prizewinners are Hanna Löbke (deputy head of advertising BILD and marketing manager at BILD am SONNTAG), Sally Meukow (freelance travel writer and blogger) and Marlen Ring (Media Manager Marketing Communications, Coca-Cola). The winning team succeeded in convincing the jury with its innovative app "WITNEXT", which connects world-wide user generated content directly with editors.

Matthias Brügelmann, Chairman of Axel Springer's "Chancen:gleich!" Initiative and deputy editor-inchief of BILD, explained: "This year as well, the powerful presentations and innovative ideas from the finalists have shown what impressive results creative, interdisciplinary teams are able to achieve. With the "Women in Media Award" we want to promote women and encourage them to bring their own digital visions to life in this industry which is still largely dominated by men. As a digital publisher, we do not want to miss out on their innovative strength."

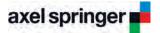


BILD launches Peter Boenisch Fellowship for young journalists



Peter Boenisch (center) at the BILD copy desk (Photo: Axel Springer SE)

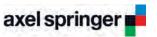
BILD launched the eponymous fellowship in honor of Peter Boenisch. For three months, young journalists can follow in the tracks of Boehnisch and put into practice a multi-media reportage.

"The moon is now a yank" – this legendary headline made the former BILD editor-in-chief Peter Boenisch famous. He was considered to be an exceptional journalist and a fighter for freedom and democracy who had a lasting influence on the German media landscape. In honor of Peter Boenisch, BILD established the "Peter Boenisch Fellowship" on the occasion of the 10th anniversary of his death on 8 July 2015. The Fellowship targets talented young journalists.

Kai Diekmann,BILD editor-in-chief: "Peter Boenisch was one of the journalists of the century. It would certainly have made him happy to know that we are giving young, talented people such a chance under his name."

The three-month fellowship is based on the journalistic work of Peter Boenisch, who campaigned in particular for German-American and German-Russian relations. The first of four stages in the Fellowship Program leads right into the heart of BILD – the federal editorial office in Berlin. After four weeks, the foreign stages follow: the Los Angeles office of BILD and a stay in Moscow. Finally, the fellow receives an opportunity to put their own multi-media reportage for BILD into practice, no matter wherever in the world the research may lead. The topic can be freely selected and should be told as Peter Boenisch would have told it: brilliantly, emotionally and grippingly. The "Peter Boenisch Fellowship" is awarded once a year and remunerated with 3,000 euros monthly, BILD also bears the costs for travel and accommodation.

Further information on the Peter Boenisch Fellowship can be found on www.peterboenisch.de/



Cross-media project on the refugee crisis



Schaffen wir das? Eine Frage, der das Team 18 der Axel Springer Akademie in einem einzigartigen Langzeitprojekt auf den Grund gehen möchte. Ein Jahr lang begleiten sie zehn Menschen, die wesentliche Aspekte der Zuwanderung abdecken. Am Ende wollen sie sehen, wie die Frage "Schaffen wir das" und die Antworten darauf Deutschland verändern. (Video: Axel Springer Akademie)

The Axel Springer Akademie, Germany's most progressive school of journalism, launched a 365-day long-term cross-media project on the refugee crisis in December 2015. In this project, young journalists from the Axel Springer Akademie are accompanying ten people who are in the center of this crisis for a whole year: refugees, mayors, crisis managers, doctors, police officers, neighbors next door. They are representative of the main challenges of the refugee crisis. Along with these representatives, the reporters want to clarify the crucial question for the coming years: Can we do it?

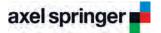
"Staying on topic for the long-term instead of selective reporting - that is the goal of this unique journalistic project", says Marc Thomas Spahl, Director of the Axel Springer Akademie. "We want to illustrate the lives of refugees and the people who accompany them on their journey as closely as possible."

Each of the ten protagonists has their own subpage at www.schaffenwirdas.de. There they are portrayed in video reports, above all there will be a year of regular updates on their development – either as text, video, curated user content or integrated social media postings.

Additionally, there will be an extensive context section with superordinate contributions and interviews. Debates, analyses and best practice examples will also find a place there.

Among the protagonists of "Schaffen wir das?" you will find the mayor of Calden, who has to mediate between the 3000 citizens of his municipality in Hesse and 1500 refugees in the camp next door. The young woman, who could only take her six-year old son with her when she fled from Syria, and who had to leave her daughter behind. The Welcome Manager of the LaGeSo in Berlin, who struggles with chaos on a daily basis. Or the 79-year-old from the Nordstrand peninsula in Schleswig-Holstein, who has committed herself completely to the care of refugees and can no longer stop.

"We will show both the positive stories affecting our protagonists throughout the year, but of course also the dark side of the crisis, the moments of doubt and frustration. By the end we want to see how the question "Schaffen wir das" ("Can we do it?") and the responses to it are changing our country, says Kristin Schulze, Head of Cross-Media Studies at the Akademie.



Live Project "Generation Separation"



18 reporters in five teams visited 15 countries and reported live over a period of ten days on their research from Transylvania, the Basque Country, Kosovo, Greece, Latvia, and Cyprus, among others. (Video: Axel Springer Akademie)

The Axel Springer Akademie launched an international, digital live project in 2014. At www.generation-separation.eu, 18 reporters investigated ongoing conflicts in Europe. Divided into five teams, they traveled to 15 countries and reported live for a period of ten days on their research from Transylvania, the Basque Country, Kosovo, Greece, Latvia, Cyprus and other regions where European crises are having an effect.

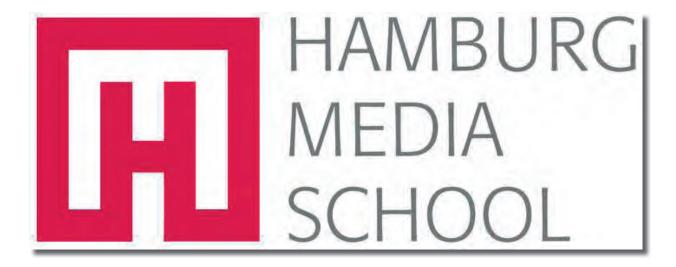
The topic of Europe is of high journalistic relevance: Right-wing populism, economic crises, autonomous trends, extremism and ethnic conflicts – it is apparent that fewer and fewer people see the EU as a solution for national problems. But who or what can offer remedies? The young journalists wanted to find answers to this question on an international level. The topics were researched partly in advance, partly on site and were presented in multimedia formats. To help them do this, the reporters were equipped with cameras, smartphones and laptops, and developed numerous video formats.

This was the first Axel Springer Akademie project which was produced almost completely in English. "Because GENERATION SEPARATION only addresses topics which are of concern to all Europeans, production in English is a must," says Kristin Schulze, Head of Cross-Media at the Akademie.

Further information on all the travel routes and reporter teams, as well as a video trailer, can be found at www.generation-separation.eu, as well as through the links in the right menu bar.



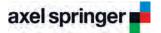
Sponsorship of the Hamburg Media School



Axel Springer SE is continuing to sponsor the Hamburg Media School, in particular the Bachelor's degree course in "Digital Media" until 2018.

The Hamburg Media School has offered a Bachelor's degree course in "Digital Media" for two years, together with the Lüneburg Leuphana University. The internationally oriented, English-language education prepares young students for the shaping of the digital future. They learn the basics of digital media and implement their own projects in the areas of video, audio, games, apps, or mashups. The course of study provides an ideal integration of theory and practice.

"The promotion of dedicated media talent is important to us. The inter-university, interdisciplinary and international orientation of the degree program is an offer for young people that persuaded us", says Dr. Alexander Schmid-Lossberg, Head of Human Resources at Axel Springer SE.



Promotion of media literacy



There are downloads, prescriptions, greeting cards, driver's license tests and much more available free on the Internet. However: Those who don't pay attention can unintentionally be trapped into paying costs. Axel Springer media inform and explain. Computer-BILD for example, offers the free "Abzock-Schutz" browser add-on (scam protection service) as a download. This add-on protects users from malware, phishing, spam and scareware. (Source: www.computerbild.de)

Access to knowledge, the understanding of political processes and the development of media literacy are essential preconditions for participating in democratic decisions. That is why Axel Springer SE is promoting the media literacy of young people with a range of measures.

Example 1: Knowledge of data protection increases media literacy and thereby also the protection of personal data. Our titles inform and explain. In this way they contribute to the critical media literacy of young readers in particular. In our print and online services (e.g. www.computerbild.de/sicherheitscenter/), we offer regular editorial articles on the protection and the security of data. Here are a few examples:

- "Ten Tips for secure WLAN"
- "How to create secure online passwords"
- "These security suites fight the new viruses"
- "These weapons can defeat the NSA spies"
- "The dangers of Facebook: This is what you must be aware of!"
- "The COMPUTER BILD scam protection service"

Example 2: The Axel Springer Akademie was also one of the main partners of the Jugendmedientage (Youth Media Days) in 2015. These are organized by the Jugendpresse Deutschland (Federal Youth Press Association), a largely voluntary association made up of 15,000 young media producers. The Association wants to impart journalistic skills and represent the interests of young people in the media. During the Youth Media Days, young media producers and media users aged between 14 and 26 years can gain insights into the exciting world of the media.



Employees' children explore their digital footprint

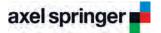


Eva Maria Kirschsieper from Facebook gave the adolescents tips on profile settings when using social media services. (Photo: Axel Springer SE)

In 2014, Group Security, in cooperation with the Axel Springer Personnel Development, organized a half-day workshop for employees' children under the motto "Back to the Future". At various stations, the children and adolescents were able to inform themselves about the dangers, risks and strategies for dealing with social networks and other online platforms on the Internet.

In workshops on topics such as password security, your own pictures on the web and the dangers of shopping online, the participants, along with employees from Group Security developed their knowledge of the correct handling of sensitive data. Eva Maria Kirschsieper from Facebook joined them as a guest and passed on interesting tips about profile settings when using social media services.

Axel Allerkamp, responsible for crisis management within Group Security, stressed: "Just as I have to make my child aware of dangers in traffic on the road, I have to train them the same way in their dealings with the Internet. And you can simply not start early enough".



Germany's largest Youth Media Congress



The Axel Springer Akademie is a main partner of the Jugendmedientage (Youth Media Days). The participants in 2015 were young media producers aged between 16 and 26 years. School classes, students and all those interested were also invited to the media fair. (Photo: Florian Timpe)

The Jugendmedientage is a four-day media congress for young people. It is organized annually by the Jugendpresse Deutschland (Federal Youth Press Association) in cooperation with the German Federal Agency for Civic Education. The Axel Springer Akademie is one of the main partners of this event.

The Jugendmedientage invites up-and-coming young journalists and young adults who are media enthusiasts to try things out at the media fair and get to know the various education and training opportunities in the media industry. Through the wide-ranging program of workshops, discussions and media insights, participants discover the exciting world of the media and can get an impression of the jobs of newspaper editors, communications agencies or political institutions.

Through the realization of the Jugendmedientage, the Jugendpresse Deutschland has set itself the goal of promoting the concept of democracy and the media literacy of young media makers. The Jugendmedientage claim to make media perceptible and comprehensible for all interested young people – irrespective of their country of origin or level of education. Basic, but also in-depth journalistic skills are conveyed by experts in the field.

The title in 2015 was "machtWorte" ("powerWords") – freedom//diversity//responsibility and about 400 young media producers occupied themselves with the questions:

- 1. What is the role of the media in the midst of social and political change?
- 2. What does digitization mean for journalism? What future prospects arise from digitization and social change?
- 3. Our society is diverse! But how does media shape our pictures, our reasoning and opinions? How diverse are our media and those that make them? And above all: What can we change?

Young media producers aged between 16 and 26 years of age can take part in the Jugendmedientage. School classes, students and all those interested are also invited to the media fair.

Further information can be found at 2015.jugendmedientage.de



Digital paper chase through the Berlin publishing house



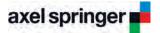
"Future Day" at Idealo, the large digital price comparison platform: The children learned about working with hardware and software from Software Developer Nicole Rendel (right). (Photo: Florian Pfennig)

Axel Springer SE participated in Future Day for the thirteenth time in April 2015. Employees' children were given the opportunity to gain an insight into their parents' working world in the Berlin publishing house, at Idealo and at the print locations Essen-Kettwig, Ahrensburg and Spandau.

In the Berlin publishing house, the young generation were confronted with a "digital paper chase", organized by the Group Security and Vocational Training departments. The emphasis was on fun, games and enjoyment. The children had to solve exciting tasks in nine departments: In Corporate Purchasing they ordered electric cars and negotiated discounts. At BILD.de, they could enter their preferred apps on an Apple Watch model, and learned how difficult it is to ensure that apps and websites run properly on different operating systems. In Group Security, the task was connected to the security of passwords and at Axel Springer Plug and Play they tested the user-friendliness of websites and apps. A ride in the truck elevator and a tour through the kitchen of the Paparazzi restaurant were also included in the program. In the printing works they learned how newspapers are produced and staged a rally through the various departments.

At Idealo, the adolescents visited the workplaces of IT developers, product owners, quality assurance managers and system administrators. Here they learned what has to happen, so that all the products and their associated prices – from sneakers to smartphones – are up-to-date and correctly displayed on the Idealo webpage.

Lilli Buhren, aged 12: "Cool. A beautiful day with a lot of new experiences. What was especially good was the app development at Axel Springer Plug and Play."



Commitment to the Interest of Media



Every day, thousands of articles are produced at great expense in newspaper and magazine publishing houses, which can, in the Internet age, be partially or completely taken over, recycled and marketed by third parties within seconds. Publishers in Germany were defenseless against this commercial exploitation until the adoption of the ancillary copyright for publishers (2013), because unlike other agents of copyrighted works, such as in the film and music industry, they had no proprietary rights to the fruits of their labor. The European Commission now also wants to close this legal loophole in the European Union with an EU Publishers' Right. (Video: Federal Association of German Newspaper Publishers)

Transparency: In order to strengthen the transparency in the representation of interests towards the institutions of the European Union, the European Parliament, together with the European Commission, has set up a Transparency Register for interest groups. Every citizen may inspect this register. **The registration of Axel Springer SE bears the number 742417913824-11**.

The continuous and transparent exchange of ideas between the European institutions and consumer associations, non-governmental organizations, companies, trade associations, trade unions, think tanks, etc. promotes the co-ordination of diverse concerns in the democratic decision-making process.

Citizens have a right to expect that this process is transparent and takes place in compliance with the law as well as in due respect of ethical principles: No undue pressure is to be exercised; illegitimate or privileged access to information or to decision-makers is to be avoided.

Our Commitment: Standing up for the legal and economic prerequisites of a free press is one of the central concerns of Axel Springer SE. This is why the company is involved – both directly and indirectly – in a number of associations and initiatives.

These include:

- The Association of German Magazine Publishers (VDZ)
- The Federal Association of German Newspaper Publishers (BDZV)
- The German Association of the Digital Economy (BVDW)
- German Printing and Media Industries Federation
- European Magazine Media Association (EMMA)
- The European Publishers Council (EPC)
- The World Association of Newspapers (WAN)
- International Federation of Periodical Publishers FIPP
- The Interactive Advertising Bureau (IAB) Europe
- VG Media
- Other industry associations in the countries in which the company is active

Examples of current topics are documented on the websites of the above-mentioned associations.



Dealing with History



More than 5,900 articles, comments, readers' letters, cartoons, features, commentaries and interviews from the years 1966 to 1968 show how the editorial offices of Axel Springer reported on the movement of 1968. (Source: Axel Springer SE)

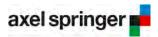
Axel Springer SE opened the Medienarchiv68 online database in 2010. Approximately 5,900 newspaper articles from the years 1966 to 1968 show how the editorial offices of Axel Springer reported on "1968" and the student movement. Using this extensive service, anyone can comprehensively and easily inform themselves for the first time using original sources. The archive is also intended to be a catalyst for further debate and scientific reappraisal.

Dr. Mathias Döpfner, Chief Executive Officer of Axel Springer SE: "It is my hope that this media archive is understood as an invitation. An invitation not only to contemporary witnesses, but also expressly to the next generation, to make their own impression of the role of our newspapers at that time."

All the relevant articles, comments, letters, cartoons, reports, commentaries or interviews on the student movement were collected for the Medienarchiv68. The period under review extends from December 1966 to December 1968. The following of the company's media services from that time were evaluated: BERLINER MORGENPOST, BILD Berlin, B.Z., DIE WELT Berlin, HAMBURGER ABEND-BLATT, WELT am SONNTAG, BILD am SONNTAG. In addition, the reporting from these papers can also be compared with that of competitors such as DER TAGESSPIEGEL and TELEGRAF.

Thomas Schmid, Editor-in-Chief of the WELT Group and the initiator of the rerun of the "Springer-Tribunal" planned last year, announced the media archive in autumn 2009. Schmid: "I am surprised myself. Reading shows that mistakes were made, but the reality was more complex than I thought."

As a further service the database contains edited summaries of each article to help improve search results. For each article, a photo of the entire respective newspaper page can be downloaded, so that readers can also inform themselves about the editorial environment of an article. The archive can be searched in various ways, for example, for keywords, type of document or placement. To facilitate the development of individual aspects the articles have also been divided by topic.



Employees

More than 15,000 employees are working on continuing to occupy the top journalistic and economic positions. Axel Springer offers them attractive benefits and opportunities for development.



Openings



Axel Springer AG...19th floor...12.45 AM. With "Well people: Are you ready? Listen up! Content is king and the medium is the fucking message" is how a young candidate introduces himself to the surprised members of the board.

Axel Springer is the leading digital publisher in Europe. In accordance with our slogan "There's more to it", we offer the best of two worlds as an employer: a momentum and work culture that we have adopted from the start-up industry in the course of the cultural change. And in addition all the benefits and diversity of a large international group of companies. The people who work at Axel Springer are each unique in their own way and are not satisfied with a "that's-how-everyone-does-it" attitude. This is the only way to use curiosity and passion to break through existing conceptual barriers and creatively shape the future of media.

Direct entry

Direct entry to Axel Springer is possible at any time – no matter whether applicants already have indepth media experience or are making a lateral career move. All our current vacancies can be found herehttp://www.axelspringer.de/karriere.

Trainee Program

Graduates develop their knowledge continuously during the 18-month trainee program. Through systematic learning by doing, you will become ready to subsequently take on specialist and management responsibility. You will work your way through various departments so that you can take part in a complex range of tasks on site. We currently offer three different trainee programs:

- Commercial Trainee Program
- IT Trainee Program
- Trainee Program in the digital portfolio

Junior Executive Program

The Junior Executive Program gives participants the opportunity to surpass themselves and overcome existing career boundaries. During the 18-month program, they pass through various individual stations and are prepared for a responsible career as a media manager through systematic "learning by doing".



BestSeller Program

In internal sales and field service throughout Germany, you enthuse customers and agencies as an advocate for our printed and digital media. During this time, experienced sales managers will provide you with comprehensive advanced training and assignments which are ideally suited to your knowledge and personality.

School of Journalism

Every year, the Axel Springer Akademie, Germany's most progressive school of journalism, offers up to 40 budding journalists a solid two-year vocational training course as editors. Within these two years the craft of journalism is learned from scratch: ranging from research to training in all forms of journalistic presentation to experience in the field. The focus is on cross-media training, investigative research methods, language and exclusivity. The deadline for applications is the beginning of June to start the following year.

Commercial and technical vocational training

In the 2.5 to three-year vocational training course, the necessary skills are imparted for a successful start to a professional life. Whether as a media manager or a designer, the apprentices get to know the different tasks involved in one of the most exciting multi-media companies. And after completing the course, they have the opportunity to apply for the Axel Springer SE Study Scholarship Program. We offer training in numerous commercial and technical vocations. The deadline for applications for vocational training is the end of September to start in September of the following year.

Dual Course of Study

In three years to Bachelor of Science in Business Administration: Practical media know-how is gained through work experience at Axel Springer SE while academic knowledge is accumulated at the Nord-akademie Elmshorn.

Editorial or commercial internship

An editorial internship provides a four-week insight, a commercial internship a three to six-month insight into the company.

Further information, vacancies and contacts can be found here.http://www.axelspringer.de/karriere



Germany's most modern school of journalism



As the largest private institution of its kind in Germany, the Axel Springer Akademie every year offers 40 aspiring journalists a sound two-year vocational training course as editors. (Video: Axel Springer Akademie)

Training at the Axel Springer Akademie

The Axel Springer Akademie is the most modern school of journalism in Germany. Training to be an editor takes two years. It combines the advantages of a well-established School of Journalism with those of a classical internship. Our vocational training has a clear cross-media focus and attaches great importance to language and exclusivity.

- Practice-oriented learning of all journalistic disciplines
- Cross-media focus
- Individual work in small groups (max. 20 participants)
- One year practical phase in the editorial office of your choice
- Digital training at BILD.de
- Newspaper design training at WELT KOMPAKT
- Study trip to Israel to conclude the training
- Prospects in one of the most successful media companies in Europe
- 1,200 per month training allowance

Sequence of training

1st six months Basic course

In your first weeks with us you will learn the craft of journalism from scratch. You will write news articles, reports and portraits, research your own stories, produce headlines and lead stories. Moreover you will also receive comprehensive research training. Right from the beginning you will interview a lot of people, also in front of the camera of course.

Home editorial office

Following your basic course you will spend a month in your home editorial office. There you can use and practice what you have learned so far. You will get to know your future colleagues and your workplace and perhaps even be able to publish one or more of your own stories.



Advanced course

When you return to the Akademie after your month in the home editorial office, you will deepen your knowledge of the world of video. In addition you will practice further digital forms of presentation, nonlinear storytelling and dealing with social media.

Masterpiece

As a constant development laboratory we observe the developments within the industry and are looking for responses to the challenges facing the journalism of the future.

Practice orientation is the most important part of our concept. For this reason you will independently develop a digital project with your team as part of your training and come to know an entirely convergent production. We refer to it as "Masterpiece", in order to make the requirements clear. The project marks the end of the first six months of your training.

2nd six months WELT KOMPAKT

The Axel Springer Akademie is the only school of journalism in Europe to have its own daily newspaper, WELT KOMPAKT. On your own responsibility you produce the daily newspaper in the most modern newsroom in Germany.

BYou - BILD.de's youth portal

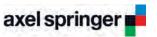
You also receive training "on the job" at BILD.de. On your own responsibility you produce content with your team for the target group of 14 to 17-year-olds. Texts, videos and new digital formats – at BYou you can give your creativity free rein.

3rd and 4th six months Home editorial office

You spend your second training year in your home editorial office where you deepen the skills learned so far. You produce your own stories, develop yourself further and become part of your editorial office.

Final trip to Israel

At the end of your two-year training course it's time to pack your suitcase; you're off on a study trip to the Holy Land. This is a unique opportunity for the teams from the Akademie to form their own impressions of the politics, culture and the economy of a country full of contrasts and tension. At the end of this trip, every trainee journalist is ceremoniously awarded their editor's certificate. Mehr Informationen finden Sie unter: www.axel-springer-akademie.de



Further development of the employer brand campaign



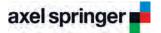
Axel Springer advertises itself to young workers with "YEAH3000 - the coolest start-up on the planet!" video, a tongue-incheek satire which pokes fun at the clichés of the start-up industry. (Video: Axel Springer SE)

People who work at Axel Springer are each unique in their own way and are not satisfied with a "that's-how-everyone-does-it" attitude. This is the only way to use curiosity and passion to break through existing conceptual barriers and creatively shape the future of media.

In 2015, Axel Springer further developed its employer campaign "There's more to it", and presented itself with the motto "All the opportunities of a start-up" as an employer that brings together the work culture of start-up companies and the benefits and diversity of a digital publishing house. The campaign is designed to appeal to talented young people from the digital environment and to programmers.

A new video was presented, showing the working life in the fictitious start-up "YEAH3000" and playing with clichés from the start-up community. The often colorful and creative work environment, in which Axel Springer's accelerator program also operates, is the target of tongue-in-cheek satire. Six advertisements are also part of the new brand campaign focusing on the diversity of the digital publishing house.

"As an employer, we offer the best of both worlds: in the course of the change in corporate culture, we have learned a lot from the work culture and momentum of the start-up industry. At the same time, employees can also derive benefits from the large international family of companies," explains Alexander Schmid-Lossberg, Head of Human Resources at Axel Springer SE. "We want to show this attractive combination in the campaign with a healthy dose of irony."



Benefits for Employees



Alba, David, Caspar, Justus and Antonia (f.l.t.r.) were enjoying the "Wolkenzwerge" ("Cloud Dwarves") Children's Olympics in Berlin. With a "Wolkenzwerge" day nursery in both Berlin and Hamburg, Axel Springer SE is making a contribution towards more equal equality of opportunity and an improvement of the work/family balance. (Photo: Axel Springer SE)

Axel Springer's corporate culture is characterized by the three values of creativity, entrepreneurial spirit and integrity. We are looking for employees who do not simply settle for the first idea to come to mind and who are passionate about their jobs. In return, Axel Springer offers, in addition to the attractive salary development, numerous further training opportunities and additional benefits such as, for example:

Variable Remuneration

With profit-sharing and target agreements, employees have an opportunity to benefit from the company's success and their own individual performance. All eligible employees at Axel Springer SE received a profit share bonus of 600 euros for the 2015 fiscal year. In addition, a share participation program was offered once again, in which employees can convert their profit share or target agreement into company shares.

Pension Plan

Axel Springer offers eligible employees a flexible VarioRente pension plan at an attractive rate of interest.

Family Service

The reconciliation of work and family life is a matter of course for Axel Springer SE. In the company's two "Wolkenzwerge" day nurseries in Hamburg and Berlin, employees' children can be looked after in a professional and loving environment. In addition, we offer an emergency childcare service and support in searching for suitable regular child care or for the support of dependent relatives.

Further Education

Axel Springer SE is active in a dynamic industry, at the same time deploying a great deal of pioneering spirit to promote innovation for readers and users. In order to keep that one step ahead, employees are offered a training program, ranging from "Subscription Marketing" to "The Art of Editing" to the "Future of Media Sales and Distribution".

Health Management

The health of our employees is very important to the Axel Springer company, which is why we offer comprehensive health management.

Modern Cuisine and Facilities

Axel Springer employees are also able to satisfy their culinary desires. A varied and excellent selection of food and drinks is available for them. Lunch is subsidized by the company.



Development Opportunities for employees

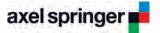


Creative, courageous and committed employees are the foundation of the entrepreneurial success of Axel Springer SE. (Photo: Axel Springer SE)

Axel Springer has an extensive development program to develop new skills and to build on existing strengths. This ensures the personal advancement of the individual as well as our mutual success.

Advancement has many faces at Axel Springer and begins on the first working day: The Onboarding Program extends a warm welcome to the new employees. The extensive qualification program for all company staff includes a large number of seminars. Moreover Axel Springer SE supports colleagues who want to qualify themselves further and take on new challenges through in-service advanced vocational training.

Success also requires contacts – various networks exist for this purpose. In this way a targeted exchange of information and the team concept is promoted throughout the whole company. One successful element among the support measures at Axel Springer AG is the Mentoring Program, which is an important point of departure for the development of junior staff in specialist and management positions, also in the context of equality of opportunity.



Equal Opportunities and Diversity



Everyone is different – and that is a good thing! Because diversity within teams of employees, personal experience and individual biographies are an essential part of Axel Springer's corporate culture. It is only in this way that are we able to respond creatively to the diverse needs and interests of our customers. (Photo: Axel Springer SE)

Diversity is an essential part of Axel Springer's corporate culture. The company sees the diversity within our workforce, in particular for us as a publishing house which moves people and picks up on on the various facets of life on a daily basis, as a great opportunity to respond creatively to the diverse interests and needs of our customers. As an innovative and internationally established publisher, optimal and non-discriminatory cooperation among our employees has high priority for Axel Springer.

The employee network queer:seite for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transsexual people has been a point of contact for all employees for overall and individual lesbian-gay interests since December 2014. Axel Springer promotes progressive corporate change and also internal dealings with people belonging to the LGBT group as part of the Chancen:gleich! initiative. The aim of the employee network is a lively exchange of ideas and establishing new contacts among employees as well as the identification of problems, violations of equal opportunities policies in the work environment and LGBT conformity.

Equality of Opportunity is not simply a fashionable phrase at Axel Springer. That is why Axel Springer SE has been the recipient of numerous awards – most recently the "Total E-Quality" distinction, the Helga Stödter Prize and the "Career and Family Audit" certificate.

The following topics are currently the focus of diversity activities in various project groups:

- More Women in Leadership Positions
- Personnel policy oriented towards equal opportunities
- Demographic Change and Interculturality
- Work/Family Balance
- Employee Network queer:seite for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transsexual people



Sustainable working pace through "agile" methodology



Marco Böttcher (Agile Coach from AS Ideas Engineering, 2nd from left) and an ideas development team prioritize the next to do's on the kanban board with Michael Oertel (CTO of AS Ideas Engineering). (Photo: Axel Springer SE)

Software development is not the monotonous implementation of complex algorithms, but rather a creative process in which innovative concepts, along with a detailed analysis of customer needs, ultimately lead to a software product with the maximum benefit for customers. Software development is a creative and innovative act! In order to establish the environment necessary for this with maximum levels of freedom, creativity, productivity and artistic development, AS Ideas has relied from the beginning on agile software development processes and autonomous teams. For a high level of motivation, each employee can now join teams with different specialist areas according to his/her interests. At AS Ideas, s/he has the choice between:

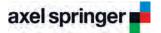
- a pool of experts with highly diversified specialist knowledge,
- an innovation team for the primarily exploratory generation of ideas,
- an opera team with a high level of administrative expertise
- two platform teams, which are responsible for the settlement of online paid and editorial models.

Without the sustained and continuous improvement of these agile workflows and the granting of levels of freedom to each individual, successful product development would not be possible. An end to the sovereignty of knowledge is meanwhile at the heart of the improvement measures. Notwithstanding any division of labor and necessary specialization, the development teams should combine all the necessary competence within themselves and beyond the interdisciplinary development work, not lose sight of the final product. The connection to the finished product should be present from the first decision through to market maturity and beyond. On the one hand this allows a kind of team intelligence to develop, and on the other hand software products are produced to meet market needs which can be used long-term.

Another aspect: In the sometimes stormy team dynamic of programming processes, individual reserves of energy can sometimes be overloaded, which is neither beneficial for employee satisfaction and health nor for the work results.

Agile methods help to counter this. Work processes are decelerated. It has to do with gradual, flexible processes with continual opportunities for feedback and change. Interim results are constantly tested and working methods adapted. Every team member knows what the others in the team are currently doing – and the present status of ongoing projects.

Agile methods are now being used in more and more corporate divisions at Axel Springer, for example in the subsidiary companies of the Marketing and Classified Ad Models. So it is not surprising that the "Agile Springers" have been meeting regularly since 2013 for an exchange of experiences and to discuss tried and tested team structures or best practices.



move - dialog. Knowing. Doing.



In order to make Axel Springer employees fit for the digital transformation, Personnel Development has developed new networking formats such as for example the Digital Campus, Media Powerhouse or PizzaCONNECTion. These networks facilitate the exchange of knowledge and information among the staff and aid the identification of developments and trends. Through "move", Personnel Development has created a uniform communicative roof for its events. Source: Axel Springer SE

"move" is an initiative launched by Personnel Development and stands for awakening and movement. It is the call to try something new together and, with curiosity, to explore the undiscovered. "move" includes a variety of formats, measures and offers from Personnel Development, which deal with issues relating to the future and the digital world. It is about participating, entering into a dialog and becoming a "mover" yourself.

Media Powerhouse

Experts from the Axel Springer family come together on stage to share their expert knowledge of innovative and future-oriented topics such as journalism, marketing and social media etc. The event combines an optimal mix of knowledge input from experts and active audience participation.

Welcome Day

On Welcome Day, all the new employees are once again officially welcomed to the company. Several speakers give interesting lectures about the company, its history, its culture and the corporate objectives.

Learning Lunch

At the Learning Lunch, employees can visit short, exciting talks from external speakers during the lunch break. Talks are held on digital issues and trends from the areas of IT, Journalism, Social Media and Marketing.

Pizza CONNECTion

Four times a year, while eating pizza in a relaxed talk show atmosphere, there are discussions about how to make the most of and act upon the opportunities presented by digitization.

Early Bird Café

Colleagues from different specialist departments and companies can get to know each other in a relaxed atmosphere and exchange ideas.



Talent Campus Network. Events. Projects.

Proactive, interdisciplinary and innovative: these are the attributes of the Talent Campus Network. Employees from IT, journalism and management come together here to help shape events and get involved in projects on business-related issues.

Best Practice Club

The Best Practice Club is an opportunity, as an expert to get in contact with other experts from the Axel Springer Publishing House and to exchange information about a topic with them. In this way knowledge is shared and everyone benefits from a diverse and strong network.

Job Rotation

In the think tank, employees' knowledge is networked. New concepts and solutions are developed in interdisciplinary teams for real-life tasks facing different specialist departments. This gives each participant the opportunity to get to know a new work environment, to face new challenges and to actively contribute to solutions. The aim is to experience a different way of working in new areas of activity and to open up new career paths.



Meet the digital world with attentiveness



In the media industry it is important to stay on the ball every day. Health is an important requirement for this. Axel Springer SE helps its employees to stay healthy. What would you think about Qigong on our roof terrace for example? (Video: Axel Springer career)

In the fast-moving media industry it is important to stay on the ball every day. The health of its employees is very important to the Axel Springer company, which is why it offers them comprehensive health management. The three pillars of this health management system – exercise, nutrition, relaxation – help employees to keep fit.

Health management includes, for example: Collaborations with gyms and spine centers, days of action offering free health check-ups and screening, cooking workshops or even seminars and lectures on current health issues. In addition we have recently added customized offers tailored to meet the individual needs of teams or departments.

Furthermore, there is also a wide range of company sports clubs available, as well as experts on health issues who can provide advice on the set-up of your workplace.



Social Commitment

With a large number of projects and initiatives, our employees, our readers, our media and the company get together to address social concerns. In 2015 there was a focus on aid for refugees.

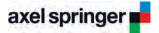


BILD campaign: "We help - #refugeeswelcome"



BILD calls for solidarity with refugees. (Photo: Axel Springer SE)

Currently people are arriving every day in Germany, who have had to leave their home country because of war, hunger and violence. The shameful reality: Refugees in Germany are not infrequently subjected to insults, assaults and attacks. BILD is setting an example with the campaign "We help – #refugeeswelcome" against xenophobia and calling for solidarity with displaced persons.

War and exile are theoretical concepts for most Germans: We have been living in peace with our neighbors for 70 years. Many of the people who came to Europe in 2015 have personally experienced the horrors of war and often only barely survived. It is all the more shameful that many of them have not met with sympathy and hospitality in our country. So-called "asylum critics" demonstrate outside many refugee hostels and also do not shrink from verbal abuse and arson. Axel Springer's media brands set a example against the hatred.

BILD calls for aid and solidarity with the campaign "We help – #refugeeswelcome". The campaign was launched in August 2015: BILD reported on people, organizations and companies that help refugees and calls for donations to "Ein Herz für Kinder". In addition, BILD invites readers to share the logo in social networks, print it, and display it as a sticker.

Kai Diekmann, BILD editor-in-chief: "The people who are coming to us need homes, schools, perspectives – they need us. This enormous task cannot be managed by public authorities alone. Here every individual is called upon to help – with ideas, with commitment, with application. This is why we want to set an example with the campaign "We help – #refugeeswelcome", to show solidarity. To motivate citizens to do something themselves, on-site, in their own neighborhood, at home."



A bridge between Germany and Israel



Detail from the picture "Ein Frühling" ("One Spring") by Karl Boden and Kurt Löw (1941). A bridge between Germany and Israel

BILD was the initiator of the exhibition "Art from the Holocaust" and, in collaboration with the Bonn-based "Foundation for Art and Culture", presented 100 works from the Yad Vashem World Holocaust Remembrance Center for the first time in Germany. The Israeli artworks could be seen at the German Historical Museum in Berlin.

The Yad Vashem World Holocaust Remembrance Center has allowed the transport of selected works from Israel to Germany for the exhibition for the first time. Jewish prisoners created the works in various concentration camps, labor camps and ghettos. The works are silent witnesses to the atrocities and humiliations experienced by the artists. Kai Diekmann: "On one of my visits to the Yad Vashem Memorial, the desire arose to show these deeply impressive works of art for the first time on this scale in Germany. In the tradition of Axel Springer, who called for and promoted the bringing about of reconciliation between Jews and Germans, I hope that art can help rebuild destroyed bridges."

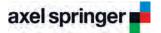


BILD am SONNTAG honors Medical Heroes



(fltr) BILD am SONNTAG editor-in-chief Marion Horn with the "pulsus" winners Bastian Hauck, Dr. Mathias Wendeborn, Dr. Bernhard Albrecht and Siegfried Rauch as well as Dr. Jens Baas, CEO of the health insurance company Techniker Kranken-kasse (photo: Axel Springer SE)

At a gala event in the Axel Springer Building in Berlin, BILD am SONNTAG and the Techniker Kranken-kasse (TK) presented the "pulsus" award in June 2015. The prize was awarded for the eleventh time to recognize special projects and above-average commitment in the health care sector.

These are the winners of the "pulsus 2015":

Bastian Hauck, founder of the online platform www.dedoc.de, was awarded the "pulsus" for the "Best digital medical project". In order to share his experience with diabetes and to support other sufferers, the economist and type 1 diabetic from Berlin founded the digital self-help forum.

Dr Mathias Wendeborn was commended as the "Best doctor 2015". The Munich specialist in child and adolescent medicine is the initiator of the "Refudocs e.V." association and together with 70 other doctors offers proper medical care for refugees and asylum seekers in the Bavarian barracks.

The journalist Dr. Bernhard Albrecht was honored with the "pulsus" for his report "Dangerous healers" for "outstanding medical reporting". His investigative reportage in the "Stern" told of somewhat dubious recommendations and diagnoses by a number of doctors and alternative health practitioners in Germany.

Actor Siegfried Rauch also received the "pulsus" award for his role in the doctor's series "Bergdoktor" as the "Most popular TV doctor". He plays Dr. Roman Melchinger, a retired village doctor, in the ZDF/ORF co-production.

Die Jury:

The winners of the first three "pulsus" categories were selected by a jury made up of ARD presenter and doctor Dr. Susanne Holst, doctor and presenter Dr Eckart von Hirschhausen, Prof. Dr. Wolfgang Henrich from the Berlin Charité hospital as well as BILD am SONNTAG editor-in-chief Marion Horn and the CEO of the health insurance company Techniker Krankenkasse, Dr. Jens Baas. The "Most popular TV doctor" was established by a Germany-wide survey conducted by the "TNS Emnid" market research institute. Presenter Susanne Holst hosted the gala evening.



B.Z. took part in the #WelcomeChallenge



Friederike Corts from B.Z. Berlin Heroes presented the toys. (Photo: Ralf Lutter)

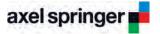
In the summer of 2015, two Berliners set out the new Facebook challenge #WelcomeChallenge. Its goal was and is to help refugees.

"Help should be provided where it is needed most," says co-founder Michael Simon de Normier (42). "In the Internet you can use lists to see where something is required and how much is needed." Quick newspaper, quickassistance – B.Z. took up the challenge!

In the Gierso boarding house, a refugee accommodation center in Weissensee, playground equipment for outdoors was required. "260 people from 17 nations live here, including more than 100 children", says Heike Witte (39). She supervises the group "Mit Herz für Flüchtlinge" ("With a Heart for Refugees") on Facebook, works daily on a voluntary basis in the accommodation center and takes care of every resident affectionately, the good soul of the home so to speak. "It used to be a hotel, one family lives in a room with a bed, a chair and a table. The children don't have anywhere to play," says Witte.

And so the B.Z. brought a Sprinter full of outdoor toys to Weissensee. The kids jumped right onto the Bobby Cars and scooters. "They have all been through so much, they have never seen anything like this before," says Witte.

B.Z. has been reporting on voluntary commitment for six years. The staff also pitch in themselves: On "Social Days" they have helped day nurseries, fulfilled the Christmas wishes of children in homes with the wish tree, and now were lighting up refugee children's eyes.



Specialist knowledge for employees of social agencies



Das Berliner-Helden-Team der B.Z. unterstützt die Berlin Social Academy: Engagierte Berliner Unternehmen geben ihr Fachwissen in Workshops und Seminaren eine Woche lang pro bono an MitarbeiterInnen sozialer Einrichtungen weiter.

The Berlin Social Academy is an innovative further training platform at the regional state level. Specialists from Berlin companies share their knowledge free of charge in workshops and seminars to employees of social agencies. Within a week, there are about 20 free lectures and workshops. In this way, civil society initiatives from Berlin are selectively supported with know-how and built up with competencies such as organizational development, fundraising or public relations.

The initiative has two main objectives:

- 1. Innovative knowledge transfer: Free and practice-oriented professional development for non-profit institutions, mediated by experts from Berlin companies.
- 2. Networking and dialog: Industry, politics and civil society meet as equals and come together for a strong and committed society.

The Berlin Heroes team from B.Z., ImmobilienScout24 and Scholz & Friends Reputation are sponsors of the Berlin Social Academy initiative.

You can find more information here: www.berlin-social-academy.de



Commitment of our readers



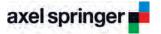
Record: The TV Charity Gala "Ein Herz für Kinder" achieved a total of 18,865,926 euros in donations in 2015. (Photo: Ein Herz für Kinder)

The aid organization BILD hilft e.V. "Ein Herz für Kinder" ("A Heart for Children") collects donations to support national and international aid agencies and projects for children in need. In addition, BILD and ZDF organize a Gala in December every year. In 2015, the TV gala "Ein Herz für Kinder" went down in the now 37-year history of the aid organization with a new record result for donations: During the program, many callers and prominent guests donated a total of 18.865.926 euros for children in need. The TV gala was held in Berlin and presented by Johannes B. Kerner. In the program, prominent patrons presented cases from Germany and all over the world where children in need have been helped by "Ein Herz für Kinder".

The "Golden Heart" was awarded this year to Sister Karoline Mayer, who received the honor for her untiring efforts in the slums of Latin America; the laudatory speech was given by Vice Chancellor Sigmar Gabriel. Til Schweiger was awarded the "Herz für Kinder" special prize for his commitment and clear, public voice for children in need.

More than 60 celebrities from society, politics and show business manned the donation telephones during the live broadcast, including Maria Furtwängler, David Garrett, Vladimir and Vitali Klitschko, Samuel Koch, Anna Loos, Manuela Schwesig and Wolfgang and Stephanie Stumph.

You will find more information on "Ein Herz für Kinder" at www.ein-herz-fuer-kinder.de and www.axel-springer.de/ehfk2015



B.Z. Berlin Heroes on tour



On the occasion of their fifth anniversary, the Berlin Heroes went on tour through Berlin. Along with partners, interest was awakened for social commitment at four prominent locations. (Photo: Axel Springer SE)

The B.Z. has brought social commitment in Berlin and its many volunteers into the public eye over the last six years. Six times a week, it reports on voluntary projects on the "Berliner Heroes" page and gives the people who work for others in Berlin a chance to have their say. The Everyday Heroes! Every helper is a hero for the B.Z. — whether he builds a new climbing frame in the Kindergarten, tidies up the neighborhood voluntarily, tutors schoolchildren or helps the elderly and the sick.

For the Jubilee the B.Z. called on all its readers to get involved. For this the "Berlin Heroes" went on a second tour through Berlin's neighborhoods in 2014. They advertised projects, associations and organizations in the area, and showed where interested parties could take action.

Along with partners, interest was awakened for social commitment at four prominent locations. In addition the B.Z. called for a collection campaign: Good second-hand schoolbags for the "Children help children" campaign, as well as children's books for projects could be handed in at the information stand.



Employees get involved for refugees



Through their voluntary commitment, Axel Springer employees are helping to alleviate the suffering of the refugees. (Photo: Axel Springer SE)

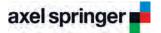
People are still fleeing to Germany. It is a great challenge for municipalities to take adequate care of the new arrivals. This makes voluntary assistance provided by committed citizens even more important. Many employees at Axel Springer have committed themselves. Here are a few examples:

After the "Berlin Heroes", a social initiative from the B.Z., had already donated toys for refugees, the B.Z. colleagues also wanted to get involved. On the suggestion of Kristin Schulz, an employee in the B.Z. advertising department, a collection campaign was spontaneously launched without complication. The "Berlin Heroes" made their office available as a collection point and organized the transportation. B.Z. online expert Philipp Kaste also organized 180 rain ponchos for the refugees who often have to wait outdoors.

Franziska Hartmann-Sternke, Brand Manager Corporate Social Responsibility and Social Media at BZ Ullstein GmbH, delivered a station wagon filled with donations to the Regional Office for Health and Social Affairs Berlin (LaGeSo) in Berlin: "An amazing experience, to see how many people were waiting there. You can see by looking at them that they have been through a lot, I was most affected by the children's eyes in particular."

Together with fellow students, Philipp Erhardt, intern in the BILD Shop, has dedicated himself to collecting donations for refugees. During his studies to become a "Master of Online Communications" at the University of Anhalt, he came across the topic of crowdfunding. It was soon clear that the trial concept could also be used to help refugees. Philipp Erhardt and his friends opted to support the association "Flüchtlingsrat Leipzig e.V." ("Leipzig Refugee Council"), which has been involved for years in the education and training of young immigrants through its sub-association "Integration durch Bildung e.V." ("Integration through Education").

In October 2015, almost 100 employees from BILD, B.Z. and BILD am SONNTAG visited the refugee shelter in the former town hall in Berlin-Wilmersdorf as part of the "Social Day". About 850 refugees were living there at the time, most of them from the Arab region. Equipped with painters' supplies, knitting utensils, waffle irons, a bouncy castle and footballs, the colleagues arrived to give the old town hall a new coat of paint, and in particular to give the large numbers of refugee children a welcome break from their daily routine.



The Small Change Campaign collects the cents after the decimal point



In 2015, a total of 1,816 Axel Springer employees took part in the "Small Change Campaign". A total of 20,000 euros was achieved – including a grant from the Executive Board. The donation was used to support the "Stand Proud" aid project in the Congo. (Video: Welthungerhilfe)

The staff of Axel Springer have been supporting projects organized by the German Welthungerhilfe (German charity fighting against hunger) with the "Small Change Campaign" since 1987. The small change donated benefits one of the organization's worldwide children's aid projects.

Every month, Axel Springer employees allow the sum after the decimal point in their pay slips – a maximum of 99 cents – to be deducted and automatically donated to an aid project. The works council and the management jointly determine which project is to be supported with the money.

In 2015, a total of 1,816 Axel Springer employees took part in the "Small Change Campaign". A grant from the Executive Board made up a total of 20,000 euros which was thus donated. The donation supports an aid project in the Congo, which provides children with impaired mobility the opportunity for a new start in life.

Congo: where the "Small Change Campaign" cents are helping

War, famine and displacement: These words have described the everyday life of the people in the Democratic Republic of the Congo for years. The misery of the war-torn country is particularly visible in the province of North Kivu, in the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo: In years of war, villages here were destroyed, schools and health centers razed to the ground. The sick often only receive very basic medical attention – if they can afford treatment at all. It is particularly bad for people with a disability and children: In North Kivu's poor settlements, disabled children only rarely have the opportunity to attend a school. They mostly survive by begging or poorly paid casual work.

Welthungerhilfe, together with its local partner "Stand Proud", gives children with impaired mobility the opportunity for a new start in life. In the centers supported by Welthungerhilfe, orthopedists examine and treat the young patients. Those requiring operations receive them in a suitable hospital. When all the examinations have been completed and the wounds healed, the children are fitted with prostheses. In addition, the children are able to attend a school during their stay.



Social Day: BILD.de employees help Arche children



The Christmas wish tree with the wishes of children in need. (Photo: Axel Springer SE)

For the Christmas period in 2015, the "Talent Campus" placed a green fir tree in Berlin's Axel Springer Passage. Instead of Christmas decorations, around 400 children's wishes were hidden among its branches. The staff had the opportunity to fulfill one of the wishes, either alone or together with colleagues.

Lots of donations were made and so 396 gifts came about, which were distributed to children from the "Albert Schweitzer Children's Village" as well as to refugee children at the "AWO Refugium Lichtenberg" shelter.

"I would like to thank everyone who has helped to fulfill wishes, everyone who passed on the idea and told others about it, and all the departments that collected money", said Franziska Hartmann-Sternke from B.Z. Marketing.



Initiative of the Association of German Magazine Publishers



The Association of German Magazine Publishers (VDZ) – of which Axel Springer SE is a member – established the Deutschlandstiftung Integration (Germany Foundation Integration) in 2008. It's goal is to achieve equality of opportunity in Germany for people with immigrant backgrounds.

The Association of German Magazine Publishers VDZ established the Deutschlandstiftung Integration in 2008. The editor-in- chief of BILD, Tanit Koch, is a member of the Executive Board of Deutschlandstiftung Integration. Together with its partners, the Foundation supports equal opportunities for our fellow citizens with an immigrant background in Germany. Equal opportunities in access to education, work and social participation are the basis for successful integration.

Through its activities, the Foundation wants to make people aware of integration, overcome prejudices, educate and network stakeholders. It supports measures for targeting language support, initiates and networks mentoring programs and carries out information campaigns.

In 2012, Deutschlandstiftung Integration launched the "Geh' Deinen Weg" ("Go your way") scholarship and mentoring program with over 150 talented people of different origins. The two-year, conceptual support scheme supports 16 to 29-year- old scholarship holders with a migrant background in their vocational learning and in their career planning.

This "Geh Deinen Weg" program is linked to this objective. Here is the subject of integration is addressed very personally by involving specific persons in the project. In addition, it is intended to address those migrants in particular, who have "arrived" and are "successful" in Germany, thereby demonstrating that and how integration can be achieved. As a complement to the Foundation's broadbased language campaign, "high potentials" from a wide range of professional groups have been won over as role models for others.

Up to 200 scholarship holders are taken on per year in the program for a period of two years. Each participant is put in touch with a mentor, who becomes a career advisor and facilitator. Further program elements such as coaching, thematic workshops, online internship fairs and network events round off the scholarship.



Ernst Cramer & Teddy Kollek Reporting Award



The Ernst Cramer Reporting Award was awarded on the occasion of the 50th anniversary of diplomatic relations between Germany and Israel. (Photo: Axel Springer SE)

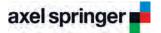
The Ernst Cramer Reporting Award was awarded in the Axel Springer Building in Berlin in May 2015 on the occasion of the 50th anniversary of diplomatic relations between Germany and Israel. The award honors the best German and the best Israeli reportage which was published in the calendar years 2012 to 2015 on the political, economic or cultural situation of the respective partner country, and which was particularly noteworthy from a journalistic point of view.

The German jury, headed by Frank-Dieter Freiling from the International Journalists' Programmes (IJP) and Jan-Eric Peters, former editor-in-chief of WeltN24, awarded the 5,000 euros prize money for the best German reportage in equal parts to the two journalists Jan Schapira (DIE WELT) for the report "By tram through the Holy City" and Jonathan Stock (Der Spiegel) for the article "Goliath's War", which examines the recent Gaza offensive. The prize for the best Israeli reportage, also endowed with 5,000 euros, was shared by the journalists Avner Shapira and Doron Halutz (both Haaretz) for their reports "Walter Benjamin's Berlin 120 Years On" and "The last word" about the circumcision of newborn males in Germany.

The Ernst Cramer Reporting Awards are a further indication that Ernst Cramer's vision of dialog, understanding and tolerance between Germans and Jews is being carried forward until today. Ernst Cramer (1913-2010) was Chair of the Board of the Axel Springer Foundation for many years and a companion of Axel Springer's. He campaigned throughout his life for the maintenance of German-Israeli relations.

Through the "Ernst Cramer and Teddy Kollek Fellowship", which allows young German and Israeli journalists to work in the other country, Axel Springer has already been promoting relations between Germany and Israel in Ernst Cramer's name together with the IJP since 2003.

The Ernst Cramer & Teddy Kollek Fellowship is intended to enable the participants to familiarize themselves with the prevailing political issues of the host country. In this way, future multipliers are made aware of issues affecting German-Israeli relations. They gain a personal insight into culture, mentality and everyday life. The media branch (newspapers, radio, TV, magazines) is selected by the journalist, the specific workplace by the organizer in consultation with the fellowship holder.



Support for the American Academy Berlin



The participants of the fifteenth Transatlantic Round Table (fltr): Alan Posener, Eva Marie Kogel (both WELT), Rüdiger Jürgensen (American Academy), Andrea Seibel (WELT), Larissa Krüger (BILD), Axel Springer Fellow Brenda E. Stevenson, Julia Maria Grass (Axel Springer Akademie), Gunnar Schupelius (B.Z.), Prof. Gerhard Caspar (American Academy) (Photo: Axel Springer SE)

Axel Springer Fellow Brenda E. Stevenson is conducting research on one of the darkest chapters of American history: Slavery in the southern states of the USA and Latin America. During her time at the American Academy in Berlin, she will be looking at biographies, in particular those of women enslaved during the American Civil War.

What began as a "lecture" on her current research, developed into a lively discussion about the role of black women then and now, about black blues music and Beyoncé's new album "Lemonade", and about reality in TV series on the topic of slavery (essentially: "Roots" – very good; "North and South" – definitely not).

Patron Andrea Seibel, deputy editor-in-chief of DIE WELT, was therefore able to moderate an interesting round table, which not only covered historical but also current topics.



New building for the mobile work environment



The winner of the architectural competition announced by Axel Springer SE is the design by Rem Koolhaas (OMA). The task was to develop innovative ideas for an additional building at the Berlin headquarters. (Photo: Rem Koolhaas)

Work began on the new building in the immediate vicinity of the existing high-rise building and the Axel Springer Passage in Berlin in mid-2016 after receiving planning permission. The new building is being built on the approximately 10,000 square meter large "Lindenpark Site" in the heart of the former newspaper district and along the former site of the Berlin Wall.

In May 2013 Axel Springer announced an architectural competition. The task was to develop ideas for Axel Springer's growing business divisions, and above all to create additional space for its digital services. At the same time, new standards were to be set for a modern working environment.

The central component of the design by Rem Koolhaas selected by the competition jury is the atrium which, at more than 30 meters in height, faces the existing Axel Springer Building. The interconnected terraces and a public workspace create an environment in which both individual and collective work is possible. The apparent "open valley" design thereby answers the question as to how offices may look in a mobile work environment.

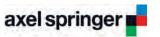
Prof. Dr. Friedrich von Borries, president of the competition jury: "Good architecture has a high symbolic value. Good architecture influences its environment. Yet over and above these aspects, the competition for the new Axel Springer Campus also poses the question of how we want to work in future. The contribution from Rem Koolhaas proposed a spectacular answer to this question, opening up a working and communication landscape to future users, which had not previously existed."

Dr. Mathias Döpfner, Chief Executive Officer of Axel Springer SE: "We are looking forward to building our new publishing house with Rem Koolhaas. He submitted the most conceptually and aesthetically radical design. The fundamental innovation of workspaces will support our cultural transformation to a digital publishing house. I would also like to thank the offices of Ole Scheeren and Bjarke Ingels for their outstanding designs, which also offered creative and passionate responses to the requirements we had expressed."



Environment

Digitization uses a lot of electricity. In view of the carbon footprint, the issue of determining data on energy use in the company as completely as possible is therefore becoming more central.



New approach for identifying energy use



Among other things, the numbers for cost categories – such as energy – are merged from the entire company in Group Accounting. Martin Hunger (left in picture) and Thomas Brennenstuhl also use existing 'reporting lines' to the many subsidiaries to determine the amount of energy used. For this purpose, the world-wide interface-linked data collection tool "IAS Notes" has been expanded to include a "Reporting Energy" input mask. (Photo: Axel Springer SE)

The Problem

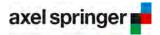
Progressive digitization consumes a lot of electrical energy. Studies estimate that the energy demand of digital devices and data centers world-wide generates around two percent of global CO2 emissions, with the trend increasing. This roughly corresponds to the CO2 emissions generated by global air mobility. So the question of identifying, in a complete, continuous and verifiable way, the amount of energy actually consumed in a company with as little effort as possible, in the light of further digitization, the ongoing debate about CO2-neutral production as well as climate-efficient corporate sales, is gaining in importance. As long as real energy consumption does not appear in the "control cockpit" of a company, actual CO2 emissions remain unclear.

In our private households, we read our electricity bills in much the same way as filling our cars at the gas pump: The invoice amount and quantity received are easily identifiable. Companies in the predigital era generally owned a stable number of firmly located office buildings and operating locations, which were equipped with a manageable number of electricity meters that could be easily read. Those who ask around will probably find that many businesses do not actually have very precise perceptions of the total amount of energy actually used throughout the group. In addition, digitization and internationalization in many cases strengthen the deficit of representativeness of disclosures made in Sustainability Reports on energy and CO2.

The Challenge

For as precise an overview as possible of sustainability perspectives, a most accurate awareness of the volume of energy used throughout the entire company is necessary, together with its resulting calculable climate-effecting CO2 footprint. In the course of the progressive digitization of the Group, Axel Springer SE is consolidating its now more than 180 larger and smaller Internet-based companies located on several continents (the list of holdings as at 31 December 2015 can be found in the Annual Report 2015).

This "family of companies" is being continually expanded to include new digital "grown-ups" and "start-ups". They physically comprise offices with coffee machines, lighting and telephone systems, PCs, laptops, scanners with numerous data centers stationed at various locations and even a fleet



of vehicles. The identification of the energy consumption figures to date for three newspaper printing plants and a large publishing location was carried out easily using conventional processes. However, because the number and global location of the "start-ups" and "grown-ups" which make up Axel Springer as a digital publisher is undergoing continuous dynamic change, the "reading of electricity meters" as in times past is no longer practicable.

The representativeness of the amounts declared for the Group will steadily decline. So how could world-wide energy use be identified for all the consolidated business units at a manageable cost? Seeking for new approaches, the Group Accounting Unit and the Corporate Sustainability Office of Axel Springer SE have jointly developed and implemented a group-wide energy use identification procedure.

The New Approach

One of the few "reporting lines", established immediately after the respective incorporation into the Axel Springer family, is the reporting of relevant financial figures to Group Accounting – including various revenue and cost elements, among these the energy costs. The input and reporting of this financial data is the responsibility of the employees of the respective Chief Financial Officers (CFO) of the subsidiaries. The idea was that this established reporting procedure for all companies could therefore also be useful for the collection of non-financial performance indicators, such as the amount of energy consumed. For this purpose, the data collection tool "IAS Notes" which was already in use and interface-linked throughout the company world-wide, was expanded to include a "Reporting Energy" input mask.

A good future development

Understanding and motivation are positive in the subsidiaries. Existing and established reporting procedures and reporting tools can be used to improve efficiency through adaptive measures and routine. And of great importance: In future, around 90 percent of the energy purchased by the consolidated business units at Axel Springer in a given year can be quantitatively documented. On this basis, with the help of the country-specific CO2 emission factors, at least approximate CO2 emissions can be verifiably identified for the entire company.

This is progress, because the representativeness of the amounts of energy consumed and CO2-emissions declared by the company in the Axel Springer SE Sustainability Report has tended to lean worryingly towards the 50 percent mark in the course of internationalization and digitization. Thus, the approach described here can also offer a pragmatic solution to other companies for the increased deficit in the representativeness of disclosures on CO2 emissions in the course of internationalization and digitization.

Footnote

Notes on the energy use recorded for the entire company

Digitization and the internationalization of the company have made the collection of data more difficult in recent years due to the growing number of consolidated subsidiaries. This has reduced the completeness of the energy data documented in the Sustainability Report.

To counter this problem, the company has adopted a new approach: Among other things, the numbers for cost categories – such as energy – are merged in Group Accounting for the entire company. Existing 'reporting lines' to the many subsidiaries are now also used to determine the amount of energy used. For this purpose, the world-wide interface-linked data collection tool "IAS Notes" has



been expanded to include a "Reporting Energy" input mask. This allows for an initial, for the most part complete record of the energy (natural gas, district heating and electricity) used by the company as well as the 180 (status 31 January 2015) fully consolidated subsidiaries world-wide for the years 2014 and 2015. This new method of data collection will be further developed and optimized.

The recording of the quantity of natural gas, district heating and electricity used by the company, including the fully consolidated subsidiaries, resulted for the year 2015 in a total of 137,433 MWh (2014 = 143,989 MWh).

Due to the learning curve accompanying the use of this method for the first time to record global amounts of energy used (electricity, district heating and natural gas), the data obtained using the data collection tool "IAS Notes" is subject to a number of inaccuracies.

Causes of data inaccuracies:

- 1. Office moves, which occur in a growing company, lead to "mixed" energy quantity accounts and thus contribute to data inaccuracies. A number of the consolidated subsidiaries reported the amount of energy (electricity, district heating, natural gas) either only incompletely, clearly implausibly or not at all. Taking the energy costs reported by these companies into account however, it is clear that the orders of magnitude are negligible for the overall view. Where data reports of energy amounts were missing, an estimate of energy costs has been made.
- 2. Rental accounting transparency: A number of real estate agencies both within and outside the EU, who rent office space to subsidiaries, report the settlement of energy-related costs with a considerable time lag. With a number of rental contracts, especially those for smaller offices, energy costs for heating are included in the rental payments. In these cases, the amount of energy used was determined by using average costs. In cases of incomplete data reporting, average costs were estimated. In some subsidiaries, international parts of the company were allocated the same average costs for different countries. Where no energy costs were available, energy amounts were not projected in order to ensure consistency in cost recording.

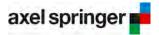
External plausibility check

The recording of the quantity of natural gas, district heating and electricity used by the company, including the fully consolidated subsidiaries, resulted for the year 2015 in a total of 137,433 MWh (2014 = 143,989 MWh). Of this, a total of 105,204 MWh was determined for the year 2014, in the framework of the external energy audits of the use of natural gas, district heating and electricity carried out at selected locations in Germany in 2015 and validated by ECG. This corresponds to 69 percent of the use of natural gas, district heating and electricity specified in this report for the overall company in 2014.

The remaining 31 percent specified in this report for the year 2014, are the quantities of natural gas, district heating and electricity obtained solely through the data collection tool "IAS notes" used by Group Accounting, which is interface-linked to all parts of the company and subsidiaries world-wide. As the energy audit was not carried out again for 2015, the share of the externally validated amounts of energy (electricity, district heating, natural gas) for 2015 is 39 percent and the share of data obtained solely through the data collection tool "IAS notes" used by Group Accounting is 61 percent.

The external validation carried out by ECG is based both on a review of raw data from the load profile as well as a review of manually recorded energy bills including invoices for additional costs.

Objectives: To determine 75 percent of the global use of energy by Axel Springer SE in the form of lectricity, district heating and natural gas, in validated quality for the years 2016 and 2017.



Total amount of energy used

Record of the amount of gas, district heating and electricity used by the company worldwide.

Energy types	2014	2015
Electricity	91.231 MWh (328.433 GJ)	89.377 MWh (321.759 GJ)
District heating	33.558 MWh (120.810 GJ)	31.394 MWh (113.018 GJ)
Natural gas	19.199 MWh (69.117 GJ)	16.662 MWh (59.984 GJ)
Total	143.989 MWh (518.360 GJ)	137.433 MWh (494.760 GJ)



PwC evaluated

Notes on the energy use recorded for the entire company

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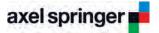
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New: Conducting of large-scale energy audits



Recommended measures to improve energy efficiency include the introduction of LED lighting technology. (Photo: Multi-license CC-BY-SA-3.0 and GFDL)

The European Union wants to increase energy efficiency by 20 percent by 2020. This objective is to be achieved by improving energy efficiency in as many commercial enterprises as possible.

To this end, the European Parliament in 2012 further developed the existing energy efficiency directive (EED 2012/27/EU): This stipulates that companies of a certain size must be regularly subjected to an energy audit from December 2015 in accordance with DIN EN 16247-1. The corresponding implementing provisions for Germany have applied – within the framework of the adapted Act on Energy Services (EDL-G) – since April 2015. The obligation to conduct an energy audit was prescribed by law for all non-SMEs (small and medium-sized enterprises), provided the company has no active energy management system or environmental management system.

The German Axel Springer SE companies are also subject to this legal obligation to conduct an energy audit. By law, the audit has to be conducted by an energy consultant listed with the Federal Office of Economics and Export Control (BAFA). Axel Springer SE has commissioned the ECG Energy Consulting GmbH for Germany.

Energy issues have been intensively managed at Axel Springer for decades. So the company was prepared for the requirements of the energy audits both in its printing facilities and in the publishing buildings. The objective is the consistent use of energy saving potential. The Berlin-Spandau newspaper printing plant is involved in an "Energy Efficiency Network" moderated by energy supplier EnBW.

The following procedure was adopted to conduct the energy audit: Corporate divisions and subsidiaries with particular relevance for an improvement in energy efficiency were selected for the energy audit. 23 locations were thereby subjected to an energy audit with external assurance. The newspaper printing plants in Berlin-Spandau and Essen-Kettwig already have an energy management system and were therefore not on the audit list.

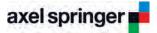
An energy management system is an internationally recognized management concept for the systematic identification and implementation of energy efficiency potential. The international standard ISO 50001 establishes bindingly how such a system is to be introduced and operated. Evidence of an active EnMS often needs to be provided for the granting of state benefits in the energy sector. This evidence must be in the form of an annual surveillance audit conducted by an external auditor from a regulated certification authority. The offset printing works in Kettwig and Spandau are currently ISO 50001 certified.



All of the necessary energy data was obtained at the relevant 23 locations by December 2015. In March and April 2016, the process was scheduled with three final events at which the results of the conducted energy audits were presented to the audited companies through the issuing of the energy audit reports. On this basis, the audit results were simultaneously made known to the German Group companies who had not been subjected to their "own" energy audit in 2015/2016.

Result: Savings potential in the use of electricity and natural gas was identified during the conducted energy audits. The first priority here is the conversion to energy-efficient LED lighting technology and improved energy management in everyday office life (use light, temporary shutdown of electronic equipment, decrease in consumption through reducing the standby phases for electrical equipment).

A concept for the simplified acquisition of energy data has been developed by the 'Services & Real Estate' division, in cooperation with the energy consultant ECG, to prepare for the energy audits which are required at least every four years. This should allow future audits to be prepared and the provision of energy data for the company's Sustainability Report to be optimized.



Increase Energy Efficiency through Green IT



Axel Springer SE has addressed the question: "How can you make the energy consumption of complex business processes visible?" The film on the IT2Green Project "GreenIT Cockpit" shows how the energy consumption for the development of the online edition of the Hamburger Abendblatt is measured and can be visualized.

How can the energy efficiency of digital processes be improved? The film resulting from the cooperation between Axel Springer SE and the TU Berlin shows how the energy requirements of the online edition of a newspaper can be measured and visualized.

Sustainability is the triad of social, environmental and economic responsibility. Through our commitment we are underlining our special responsibility as a media company – from journalistic independence and the separation of advertising and editorial copy via the promotion of media skills among young readers, up to data protection as well as the safeguarding of social and environmental standards along the value chains relevant to our company. Traditionally the wood, pulp, paper, printing and recycling chains have been a focus, to which we are continuing to devote a great deal of attention.

In the course of the fast-paced digital transformation of our company, we are at the same time looking at the transparency and optimization of social and environmental standards along the digital value chain. Our responsibility is the successful establishment of independent journalism in the digital world.

We want to focus on improvements to our energy efficiency (Green IT) over the next few years. The energy efficiency field of action covers three measures in particular:

1) Green IT:

Through the digitization of the media industry, our core business processes are becoming increasingly dependent on the use of the respective information and communication technologies (ICT). ICT-related electricity consumption in Germany already makes up 10.5 percent of total electricity consumption. For this reason, it is of major relevance for Axel Springer SE that its ICT-related energy consumption and related costs are presented transparently.

To achieve this, we participated in the now completed IT2Green research project, with which the Federal Ministry for Economic Affairs and Energy promoted knowledge relating to energy efficiency in information and communications technology.

In co-operation with the Federal Environment Agency and the Technical University Berlin, we took a critical look at the measurement of the electricity consumption of business processes. With the "Green IT Cockpit", we have established a model of suitable measuring and control instruments for the continuous improvement of organization-wide energy efficiency oriented to our business processes. Relevant information is clearer and easier to interpret. The model underwent practical tests in



2012 and 2013 using the example of the Online Editorial Office of the Hamburger Abendblatt (note: The Hamburger Abendblatt has been a part of the Funke-Mediengruppe since early 2014).

The information presented using tachometers and charts allow for both an analysis of the key performance indicators as well as a detailed examination of the cause-and-effect relationships. The knowledge gained will allow us in future to adjust our strategic planning with regard to Green IT.

In the pilot project, we focused on indicators which are relevant to the quality of IT services:

- Intensity of use of services
- Performance of the process
- Input of IT resources
- Use of IT resources

The indicators developed help to answer important questions concerning the intensity of use:

- How many (business) activities are actually processed
- Are the quantities measured and the load profile in line with the forecast?
- Are warning and/or action limits being exceeded?
- Is IT capability being used too little, sufficiently, or even too much?
- Are there acceptance problems during use?

The question concerning the use of IT resources relates to the indicators of the intensity of use, and shows us how the two are related.

- Does system utilization correspond to the forecast and does this follow the load profile of the intensity of use?
- How does utilization develop over various time periods (day/week/month/year)?
- Does the use of IT resources dynamically follow the load profile of the intensity of use?
- Are the (purchased) IT resources (servers, storage, ...) well utilized?
- Are warning and/or action limits being exceeded?

The insights gained in pilot projects like this contribute to improving the energy efficiency of other business processes.

2) Replacement of old workstation printers

In the hardware sector, we have not only replaced workstation printers and fax machines with energy-saving multi-function devices, but a large number of processes, such as Purchasing and Invoice Receipt, are already paperless.

3) Operation of data processing centers

Axel Springer SE currently runs a large number of its own servers or purchases the operation of its business applications from various data processing centers. Each server is also designed to show an acceptable response time behavior during peak-load times. The use of the application systems is not evenly spread throughout the day. Typical load peaks for online services are apparent in the evening hours. In contrast, the load peak for internal business applications is in the morning when starting work by logging into the systems. To optimize energy efficiency, the systems must be examined in relation to each other.

With the aid of a utilization forecast, the assignment of services to the physical servers should in future be controlled where possible in such a way that by turning off unused servers as much energy as possible is saved and the thermal load reduced.

This approach does not only have energy saving potential. The smart exploitation of computing capacity for evaluation projects at the same time allows existing servers to be used, thus avoiding the necessity of purchasing additional hardware. Applications that are running will only be slightly influenced by this redistribution. In order to achieve these efficiency gains, the company is working on concepts to utilize uniform external computing capacity.



Presentation of CO2 emissions

The New Approach

Progressive digitization requires a lot of electrical energy. So the question of identifying the amount of energy consumed in a company in a complete, continuous and verifiable way, in view of the ongoing debate about CO2-neutral production as well as climate-efficient corporate sales, is gaining in importance. As long as real energy use does not appear in the "control cockpit" of a company, actual CO2 emissions remain unclear.

In the course of the progressive digitization of the Group, Axel Springer SE is consolidating more than 180 larger and smaller Internet-based companies located on several continents (the list of holdings as at 31 December 2015 can be found in the Annual Report 2015).

One of the continuous "reporting lines" of the consolidated business units is the reporting of relevant financial figures to Group Accounting – including the energy costs. The idea was that this established reporting procedure for all companies could therefore also be useful for the collection of non-financial performance indicators, such as the amount of energy consumed. For this purpose, the data collection tool "IAS Notes" which was already in use and interface-linked throughout the company worldwide, was expanded to include a "Reporting Energy" input mask.

Among other things, the numbers for cost categories – such as energy – are merged from the consolidated business units in Group Accounting.

Existing ,reporting lines' to the many subsidiaries are used to identify the quantities of natural gas, district heating and electricity used in one year. For this purpose, the world-wide interface-linked data collection tool "IAS Notes" was expanded to include a "Reporting Energy" input mask.

How did we go about this?

We identified energy quantities for purchased natural gas (for the generation of power within the company), district heating and electrical power according to the method described in the chapter "Energy" for all countries in which consolidated subsidiaries are active as per the Annual Report.

The classification into Scope 1, 2 and 3: When considering CO2 emissions resulting from entrepreneurial activity, a distinction is made into three categories: direct emissions from our own facilities (known as Scope 1 emissions), indirect emissions from purchased energy (Scope 2 emissions) and indirect emissions from CO2 emissions in the supply chain and from related services (Scope 3 emissions).

An overview of the natural gas burned in our own facilities (Scope 1) as well as of the purchased district heating (Scope 2) and electricity (Scope 2), directly or indirectly generated CO2 emissions for each country in which consolidated subsidiaries are active, can be found here.

How was the amount of energy used converted into the resulting CO2 emissions?

CO2 emission factors for the specific types of energy are used for the presentation of the CO2 emissions generated by the whole company worldwide. The identification of greenhouse gas emissions for recorded resource use is made in "tonnes of CO2 equivalents" (CO2e). With a view to better readability, this text exclusively uses the spelling "CO2".



For the conversion of the various energy resource uses into the resulting CO2 emissions, the World Resources Institute (WRI, Washington DC) and the World Business Council for Sustainable Development (WBCSD, Geneva) have created the Greenhouse Gas Protocol (GHG Protocol). It is used worldwide by companies and institutions worldwide, including the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA, London). Various institutions periodically publish updated conversion tables for most of the countries in the world.

DEFRA data from the years 2014 and 2015 was taken as a basis for this Sustainability Report. As DEFRA had no rendering value for Mauritius, the DEFRA average value for Africa was taken. Greenhouse Gas Protocol values last published by the WBCSD in Geneva in 2009 were used for the Czech Republic and Turkey, as no specific DEFRA values were available here either.

(Note: Since June 2016, the emission factors for the production of electricity outside the UK is no longer available free of charge. This information was still freely available at the time this report was prepared.)

Example Germany

In 2015, 80 percent (2014: 81 percent) of the quantities of natural gas, district heating and electricity used by the company was accounted for by business units in Germany. This corresponds to 74 percent (2014: 77 percent) of the CO2 emissions generated from these types of energy by the company. Against this background, a differentiated consideration of CO2 emissions should be made based on the data available for business units active in Germany.



CO2 from electricity, natural gas and district heating

Summary of the company's energy-related CO2 emissions taking into account a) the combustion of natural gas in the company's own plants (Scope 1), b) indirect emissions from the purchase of the energy sources electricity and district heating (Scope 2) as well as c) the indirect emissions resulting in the supply chain for natural gas, electricity and district heating (Scope 3).

CO2 emissions from the combustion of natural gas by location (Scope 1) for 2014 and 2015

Scope 1	2014	2015
Total	3,543 t CO2	3,073 t CO2

CO2 emissions from the purchase of district heating and electricity by location (Scope 2) for 2014 and 2015

Scope 2	2014	2015
Total	52,195 t CO2	51,336 t CO2

CO2 emissions from services and use of infrastructure (Scope 3) for 2014 and 2015

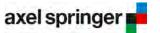
Scope 3	2014	2015
Total	9,378 t CO2	9,926 t CO2



PwC evaluated

Overview of the company's energy-related CO2 emissions by country taking into account a) the combustion of natural gas in the company's own plants (Scope 1), b) indirect emissions from the purchase of the energy sources electricity and district heating (Scope 2) as well as c) the indirect emissions resulting in the supply chain for natural gas, electricity and district heating (Scope 3). Because of the varying degrees of intensity of emissions (high for fossil fuels, low for renewable primary energy) in the power generation mix, some countries in this ranking take a different position than they should simply in terms of the amount of energy used by the respective business unit.

Country	CO2 emission 2014	Share of total emissions 2014	CO2 emission 2015	Share of total emissions 2015
Total	65.116 t	100 %	64.335 t	100 %
Germany	50.245 t	77,16 %	47.556 t	73,92 %
Poland	9.333 t	14,33 %	11.604 t	18,04 %
Serbia	1.583 t	2,43 %	1.724 t	2,68 %
Hungary	1.128 t	1,73 %	1.035 t	1,61 %
Great Britain	454 t	0,70 %	833 t	1,29 %
Slovakia	839 t	1,29 %	654 t	1,02 %
Netherlands	81 t	0,13 %	265 t	0,41 %
France	238 t	0,37 %	208 t	0,32 %
South Afrika	85 t	0,13 %	164 t	0,26 %
Belgium	57 t	0,09 %	64 t	0,10 %
Spain	68 t	0,10 %	62 t	0,10 %



Irland	67 t	0,10 %	63 t	0,10 %
USA	74 t	0,11 %	51 t	0,08 %
Switzerland	36 t	0,05 %	23 t	0,04 %
Italy	20 t	0,03 %	13 t	0,02 %
Austria	15 t	0,02 %	10 t	0,02 %
Mauritius	7 t	0,01 %	5 t	0,01 %
Other	784,3 t	1,20 %	1,5 t	0,00 %



Environmental key performance indicators for our own printing plants in Germany



The environmental organization Nature And Biodiversity Conservation Union Germany (NABU) wants to raise awareness among companies of the possibilities of creating valuable habitats for animals and plants through the semi-natural design of their premises. To document suitable examples of "UnternehmensNatur" (BusinessNature) sites, NABU Hamburg recorded a video in the Ahrensburg newspaper printing plant in 2014.

Early warning system to detect weaknesses

Alongside controlling and providing information, environmental controlling is also responsible for the generation of specific environmental indicators. These figures condense the environmental data into a manageable overview, rendering it possible to plan improvements and detect weaknesses in the system at an early stage. If, for example, the specific volume of waste in a printing facility increases conspicuously in comparison with the previous year, the causes can be investigated immediately. Environmental indicators thus also fulfill the function of an early warning system. Using indicators, the effectiveness of the measures implemented can also be compared between the various production facilities. This is the formula used to calculate the specific environmental indicators for the printing plants at Axel Springer:

material and energy flows divided by
----- = resource efficiency
printed paper surface

Indicators of material and energy flows for printing plants: The indicators for efficiency in material and energy flows show how much paper, printing ink and water are used for one million square meters of paper printed during the reporting period, by printing plant. These indicators are also recorded for waste and air emissions. Axel Springer SE uses the material data provided by SAP for its materials and energy balance sheet

Printing paper efficiency

Changes in paper demand are greatly influenced by changes in reading habits, by the use of digital alternatives to the use of journalistic services, by demographic developments as well as by the economic situation. The paper throughput in our own newspaper printing plants (incl. that provided by print customers) dropped from 159,297 to 124,172 tonnes in a comparison of the years 2013 and 2015. This is equivalent to a reduction of 22 percent.



Specific indicator

An average of 25.2 tonnes of printing paper was used to produce one million square meters of marketable newspapers in 2015 in our own print locations in Germany (2013 = 22.6 tonnes).

This indicator should demonstrate the efficiency (printed surface per tonne of paper) in the use of paper raw material. The indicator in this case shows how many million square meters of printed newspaper pages have been produced per tonne of paper.

In 2013, 22.6 tonnes of paper were required to produce one million square meters of printed newspaper pages – this figure increased to 25.2 tonnes in 2015. In this respect, paper efficiency has deteriorated.

This development is primarily due to the significantly lower paper throughput, especially as the resulting mill broke has not decreased in the same proportion. The term mill broke is used in the printing industry to describe damaged or defective samples that must not be offered for sale. It also refers to the packaging for the rolls of paper and the tubes that the paper is rolled on as well as printed and non-printed scrap paper. Mill broke is a much sought-after recycling material for the production of new paper products.

Key performance indicators in the field of printing paper efficiency (tonnes of paper per million square meters of printed newspaper pages) can lose their validity and comparability through variations in the grammages of the printing paper used.

In principle, the improvement in paper efficiency is supported by a number of technical innovations. These measures include, among other things, the reduction in the number of paper breaks through improvements in paper adhesive (important when changing paper rolls) as well as the objectivity and/or automation of decisions concerning the saleability of proof copies.

Work is continuously being done to reduce the quantities of mill broke as part of the environmental and economic optimization of the printing processes. For example, investments are being made in new color control systems in the printing facilities. This meant that the number of non-salable printed copies was reduced by 25.5 percent in a comparison of the years 2013 and 2015. The effect of the measures taken also led in the same period – despite a decline in print runs and volumes – to a consistent specific indicator (mill broke per million square meters of printed paper surface).

Printing inks

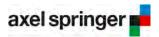
In a comparison of the years 2013 and 2015, ink usage in our own newspaper printing facilities in Germany has dropped by 17 percent from 2,932 to 1,587 tonnes. The reason for this is the general decline in the circulation and volume of newspapers.

Waste water

The waste water volumes discharged into the sewerage system from the printing locations in Germany dropped by 14.4 percent between 2013 and 2015. This was brought about, among other things, by a reduction in the dampening water requirements of the printing presses, by improvements in the management, and by the decline in the number of employees at the Ahrensburg printing location.

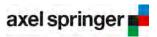
Specific indicator

Waste water volumes per million square meters of printed paper surface increased by 22 percent. One important reason for this: The demand for water, for example during machine start-up phases, has hardly changed despite smaller print runs, resulting in an unfavorable development of the specific indicator.



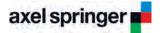
Transparency in the value chains

The upstream and downstream stages of the value chain include, for example, external server operators for our digital products, or the wood, paper, printing, and distribution chains of our print products.



Services of external data centers

To improve energy efficiency and cost-effectiveness, the internal data centers at the German sites of Axel Springer SE are being largely dissolved and relocated step-by-step into the central location (Unified Data Center) of the digital business service provider Atos SE. The use of state-of-the-art data technology should help to continuously optimize the CO2 efficiency of the outsourced data centers.



From which countries does our printing paper come?



The picture shows the paper warehouse at the Hamburg-Ahrensburg offset printing works. Axel Springer SE has published a list of its suppliers of printing paper since 1993. Since 1995, contracts for paper have included a clause on compliance with "Forestry Standards". (Photo: Offsetdruckerei Hamburg-Ahrensburg)

Axel Springer SE procured 150,023 tonnes of printing paper in 2015 for newspapers and magazines in Germany, as well as for its subsidiaries at home and abroad. Its suppliers include around 12 paper mills in 14 countries. Since 1993, Axel Springer has published the names and contacts of its paper suppliers. In addition to the commercial and technical quality contacts, there has also been a continuous exchange of ideas with paper suppliers since 1993 on issues of stakeholder management, as well as on specific issues relating to sustainability, above all with regard to the procurement of wood raw materials. The Forestry Standards developed by the company have applied here since 1995.

The following table gives an overview of the countries from which printing paper is centrally sourced. This paper tonnage is processed in the company's own printing plants as well as, according to requirements, in around 40 external printing plants both in Germany and abroad. The contact partners on environmental issues at individual paper suppliers are listed under the menu item "Paper Suppliers".

Country	Share 2013 in t	Share 2014 in t	Share 2015 in t
Belgium	6.595	1.496	113
Germany	81.845	76.605	59.302
Finland	34.129	14.800	4.932
France	30.684	19.295	22.397
Great Britain	-	9.909	-
Italy	-	391	134
Canada	20.008	13.227	16.000
Netherlands	-	1.061	10
Austria	28.466	15.925	9.752
Slovakia	-	3.602	-
Russia	3.401	2.067	5.103
Sweden	49.289	25.091	14.258
Swiss	35.142	24.497	17.111
Spain	1.126	1.071	911
Total	315.385	209.036	150.023



Forestry Standards

Since 1995 six clear and comprehensible sustainability indicators have been considered when purchasing printing paper. The selection of paper suppliers at Axel Springer is based on four criteria: Product quality, reliable supply, competitive prices and compliance with environmental standards. Six Forestry Standards were agreed with paper suppliers in 1995:

1. Sustainability

Harvesting more timber than will re-grow is prohibited.

2. Biodiversity

Forestry shall not endanger animal or plant species.

3. Control

The paper manufacturer must perform eco-controls as a purchaser of timber.

4. Training

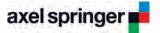
The paper manufacturer must ensure that the necessary ecological knowledge is conveyed to personnel (for example, forest workers).

5. Indigenous population

The paper manufacturer must take the indigenous people (for example the Sami in Northern Scandinavia) into consideration.

6. Information

The paper manufacturer must keep the public informed of the advances made and problems encountered in environmental protection.



Paper Recycling



Used paper is a valuable raw material: Around 77 percent of the printing paper used in the company contains used paper. The photo shows a used paper sorting plant of the Alba company in Berlin.

The recycling of graphic papers in 2013 at a rate of 84.7 percent was above the desired target corridor of 80 percent (+/- 3 percent) set by the Graphic Paper Alliance (AGRAPA). The corresponding report was presented at the AGRAPA Meeting in Berlin on 8 July 2015. Through the AGRAPA voluntary commitment declaration, companies have been complying with the requirements of product responsibility in the graphical value chain on a voluntary basis for 20 years.

Used paper is a valuable raw material. The most important paper categories in terms of quantity are:

- Products made of graphic papers, such as newspapers and other printed products as well as office paper and
- Products made of packaging papers, such as sales packaging, transport packaging or secondary packaging

In recent years, a series of new paper machines that process used paper have been put into operation in Europe.

When recycling used paper in the paper mill, a proportion of the paper fibers cannot be used and are separated off. About 120 to 125 kilograms of used paper is required to produce 100 kilograms of newsprint paper. For this reason the fiber cycle only functions if the overall mixture of fresh and used fibers is right. That is why the supply of fresh fibers is of central importance in maintaining this cycle.

Around 77 percent of the printing paper used by Axel Springer contains used paper. The following table provides a breakdown of the distribution of used paper for 2015.

Newsprint paper:

Standard and improved newsprint paper

SC magazine paper:

Supercalendered wood-containing paper - paper smoothed (satined) between the rollers of a calander for offset and rotogravure printing

LWC magazine paper:

"light weight coated" - lightweight, wood-containing, rolling press paper, coated on both sides



Share of used paper in newsprint and magazine paper (in percent for 2015)

	Newsprint paper	SC magazin paper	LWC magazin paper
Total quantities of paper	123.436 t	13.264 t	13.323 t
Share of used paper			
0%	22%	1%	51%
1% - 14%	6%	3%	7%
15% - 29%	0%	0%	1%
30% - 44%	5%	0%	32%
45% - 59%	1%	0%	0%
60% - 74%	14%	85%	0%
75% - 89%	10%	0%	0%
90% - 100%	42%	11%	36%

Source: Calculation based on manufacturer's data 2015



Paper Suppliers

Paper Suppliers Status 2015

BURGO Deutschland Papiervertrieb GmbH

The Burgo Group is the largest producer of graphic papers in southern Europe.

Gisela Brosch

D-81677 Munich

Tel: +49 89 45 50 35 13 brosch.gisela@burgo.com

www.burgogroup.com

Holmen Paper

Holmen Paper is one of the leading producers of newsprint paper. It has paper mills in Sweden (Norr-köping, Hallstavik) and Madrid.

Lars Strömberg

S-11451 Stockholm

Tel: +46 8666 2154

lars.stroemberg@holmenpaper.com

www.holmenpaper.com

Kruger Inc.

Kruger Inc. is one of the leading producers of newsprint paper. It has paper mills in Canada. Among these is the Cornerbrook paper mill.

Pat O'Brien

GB-Knutsford, Cheshire, WA16 1AR

Tel: +44 7831 628487

pat.obrien@kruger.com

www.kruger.com

Norske Skog

The Norwegian group is the world's third-largest newsprint and magazine paper producer with production facilities on four continents.

Jens Borge

N-1326 Lysaker

Tel: +47 67 599 203 Mobile: +47 90 559 356 jens.borge@norskeskog.com

www.norske-skog.com

Paper Trading Group SA - Kondopoga

Kondopoga is a Russian newsprint paper producer. The factory is in the Russian Republic of Karelia. The Swiss trading company represents Russian newsprint paper mills.

Vera Orlova

CH-2001 Neuchatel

Tel.: +41 32 710-01-65 Sales@papertrading.ch www.papertrading.ch



Papierfabrik Palm

Papierfabrik Palm has its head office in Aalen-Neukochen (Baden-Württemberg). It also has a factory in Eltmann (Bavaria) and in Wörth (Rheinland-Palatinate).

Karl-Heinz Bestle

D-73406 Aalen-Neukochen

Tel: +49 73 61 577 122

Karl-Heinz.Bestle@papierfabrik-palm.de

www.papierfabrik-palm.de

Perlen Papier AG

Perlen Papier AG is one of the leading Swiss producers of magazine and newsprint paper. The family-owned enterprise was founded in 1872.

Achim Busch CH-6035 Perlen

Tel: +41 41 455 80 92 achim.busch@perlen.ch www.perlen.ch

SAPPI

An international paper producer with production facilities on three continents. Its head office is in Johannesburg, Republic of South Africa.

Michael Mirwald

Sappi Deutschland GmbH

D-30715 Hannover

Tel: +49 511 123 33 610 michael.mirwald@sappi.com

www.sappi.com

SCA Publication Papers / SCA Forest Products AB

The paper subsidiary of the Swedish SCA Group. The approx. 2.6 m hectares owned by SCA make it one of the largest forest owners in Sweden.

Björn Lyngfeld

SE-85188 Sundsvall

bjoern.Lyngfeld@sca.com

www.sca.com

Heinzel Paper - Laakirchen Papier AG

The factory specializing in SC paper was part of the Swedish SCA Group until the beginning of 2013. Walter Hennerbichler

A-4663 Laakirchen

Tel.: +43 76 138 80 05 50

walter.hennerbichler@heinzelpaper.com

www.heinzelpapier.com

Stora Enso

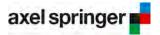
The Finnish-Swedish corporation is one of the largest forest and paper products companies in the world.

Contact in Germany

Klaus Barduna, Vice President Environment

Mobile: +49 173 294 1716 Tel.: +49 211 581 2432

klaus.barduna@storaenso.com



Stora Enso Group in Helsinki

Terhi Koipijärvi, Head of Global Responsibility Stora Enso Group, Head Office, Helsinki Tel.: +358 2046 21347 terhi.koipijarvi@storaenso.com www.storaenso.com

UPM-Kymmene

The Finnish corporation is one of the largest forest and paper products companies in the world. Päivi Rissanen Environmental Director, Paper UPM, P.O. Box 380, Eteläesplanadi 2, 00101 Helsinki, FINLAND Tel: +358 40 743 0306 paivi.rissanen@upm.com www.upm.com



Talks on the ecology of timber production



Southern Portugal: Luis Neves Silva (I.), Eucalyptus expert at the environmental organization WWF, explains the environmental standards for fast-growing timber plantations to Paula Guimaraes, forest expert at pulp producer Portucel, and Florian Nehm, Corporate Sustainability Officer at Axel Springer SE.

For its printed newspapers and magazines, Axel Springer SE annually obtains paper rolls from 12 paper mills in 14 countries. Modern press publishers distinguish themselves by being well-informed about the environmental and social standards of the different stages of the production chain – from the forest via the paper mill and printing plant through to the kiosk and paper recycling.

Printing paper for newspapers and magazines is produced – with regard to its necessary tear resistance – from the long wood fiber of spruces and pines. These conifers used for our printing paper grow in the green belt of the Northern hemisphere – nurtured by water, nutrients and solar energy.

Printed products such as papers, magazines and catalogs are collected as waste paper after use and then used for example as raw material for new newsprint paper. In Germany, 84.7 percent of graphic papers (these include newspapers and magazines) are re-used via waste paper as paper raw material (AGRAPA Statistics 2015). Thus the bulk of the wood fiber is used several times.

More than 37,000 pages of publication paper are produced from one spruce

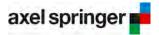
A model calculation shows that using the fiber gained from an average-sized spruce originating from Swedish forestry (aged between 30 and 60 years) will produce a total of 37,440 pages of newspaper (weight of the paper: 42.5 g per m², format 40 x 57 cm). 13,440 pages are produced from the fresh wood fiber alone and a further 24,000 pages can be gained through recycling.

Cross-border Co-operation

The company has initiated numerous optimization projects with paper suppliers over the past 20 years. Some examples of this are creating an ecological balance for newspapers and magazines for the first time, the "Opti" project in co-operation with 8,900 Norwegian family forest owners and the paper manufacturer Norske Skog as well as the "Tracing Russian Wood" project in cooperation with the paper products company UPM and Greenpeace Russia.

"From Russia with Transparency" (2005)

In September 2005, the company, in collaboration with the paper manufacturer Stora Enso (Helsinki) and the publishing houses Random House Group (London) and Time Inc. (New York), presented the



project "From Russia with Transparency". A focus was placed on combating corruption in the crossborder timber trade.

Transparency International, the leading NGO on Fighting Corruption, took on the role of "Critical Reviewer".

Cobus de Swardt of Transparency International on this project: "Many forestry companies want to achieve sustainability, yet shy away from discussing sensitive issues such as corruption. The members of the Tikhvin Project see that sustainability and ethical business practices have much to do with each other. We welcome this pioneering commitment and hope that the project team follows our recommendations."

The paper manufacturer Stora Enso's cooperation with the publishing houses Time Inc. (New York), Random House Group (London) and Axel Springer (Berlin) as well as the non-governmental organization "Transparency International" has also been documented. Its main priorities are the promotion of sustainable forestry, the fight against corruption in the cross-border timber trade for the manufacture of printing paper as well as the prevention of occupational accidents.

"Tracing Russion Wood Imports" (2002)

In a joint project, Axel Springer, with the Finnish paper manufacturer UPM-Kymmene and the Otto Group, has made the wood chain transparent from the forest in Russia to the paper mill in Finland. The project report "Tracing Russian Wood Imports" shows how imports of wood from Russia are ecologically audited. There is also room for critical voices from the Russian forest management and the environmental organization Greenpeace Russia.

"Environmental Improvements in the Paper Chain" (1998)

This report describes the background, goals and realization of the co-operation between the Otto Group and Axel Springer with 8,900 Norwegian family forest owners and the paper manufacturer Norske Skog.

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Ecological certification labels

In order to be able to guarantee good ecological quality for timber or paper clients, two ecological certification labels for wood products have been established – after considerable debate. Their standards have moved markedly closer in the meantime. Axel Springer SE supports the forestry certification, as well as talks on the development of mutual recognition of FSC and PEFC.

S FSC

FSC

(Forest Stewardship Council). The international ecological certification label for forestry products was established in Toronto in 1993 by leading environmental organizations, among others. It is supported mainly by environmental organizations, owners of woodland, and wood processing firms.

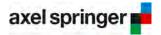
Info: www.fsc-deutschland.de



PEFC

(Programme for the Endorsement of Forest Certification). The European ecological certificate for forestry products was established in Paris in 1999 by the associations of European forest owners under the name "Pan European Forest Certification". It is supported in particular by the associations of European forest owners.

Info: www.pefc.de



Modes of transport for printing paper

Anteile in Prozent	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Schiff	50	55	49	51	55	64
Bahn	13	12	21	22	16	12
LKW	37	33	30	27	29	24

Standorte der liefernden Papierfabriken beeinflussen Transport-Wege

Die per Schiff zu Druckstandorten in Deutschland transportierte Papiertonnage hat sich in den Jahren von 2013 bis 2015 um 16 Prozent erhöht. Im gleichen Zeitraum haben sich der per Bahn und LKW transportierte Anteil um 45 Prozent und rund 17 Prozent verringert. Die Wahl des Transportmittels hängt vom Standort der Papierfabriken ab. Die Lieferanteile der verschiedenen Papierfabriken ändern sich ständig und werden von Faktoren wie Bedarf, Kapazität, Qualität, Waldnutzungsstandards und Preis bestimmt. Die Axel Springer SE bezieht Druckpapier von 12 Papierfabriken in 14 Ländern.

Um die Produktion auch bei Qualitäts- und Lieferproblemen sicherzustellen, werden die eigenen sowie die fremden Druckereien in der Regel von mindestens zwei Produktionsstandorten mit Druckpapier beliefert. Die Entfernungen zwischen Papierfabrik und Druckerei können dabei zwischen 35 Kilometern (Eilenburg - Leipzig) und knapp 7.000 Kilometern (Kanada - München) schwanken.



Inquiries on International Social Policy



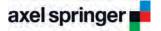
Sandra Fischer heads the gastronomic team at the large ,Mittelbar' in the heart of Berlin's Axel Springer Passage. She wants to know more about the production processes of tea and coffee and has already traveled to Sri Lanka and El Salvador. In Antioquia, one of the coffee provinces in Colombia, she informed herself in 2015, among other things, about working conditions at the ,high bed' plant for drying coffee beans. (Photo: Axel Springer SE)

The Axel Springer Corporation is expanding internationally. This is why we have adopted a catalog of social standards, our International Social Policy, which is a binding guideline for social integrity and applies to all the company's activities worldwide. In the procurement of printing paper, of advertising media and product supplements, in merchandising, as well as in the sale of title licenses, emphasis is also placed on the observance of standards through site visits.

This is what the "International Social Policy" is about: raising awareness along the entire value chain, including the suppliers of our supplier's own suppliers.



New Delhi in February 2013: A visit to Thomson Press, where the Indian media company India Today prints the magazine AUTO BILD India as a licensee. The picture shows the production manager and certification representative Shireesh Keskar (left in the picture) in discussion about social and environmental standards with Florian Nehm, Axel Springer SE Corporate Sustainability Officer. (Photo: Axel Springer SE)



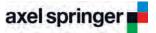
Inquiries on International Social Policy



Uruguay in March 2013: A visit to the Finnish forest, pulp and paper company UPM's eucalyptus tree nursery. The picture shows the director of the nursery Jorge Doe (left in picture) in conversation about issues of plantation ecology with Oliver Salge, Head of Forest and Oceans Campaign at Greenpeace Germany, and Florian Nehm, Axel Springer SE Corporate Sustainability Officer. (Axel Springer SE)



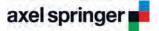
Dongguan, province of Shenzhen, China in May 2010: Uwe Schroeder, Head of Production and Purchasing of printed matter and advertising material for the WELT Group, acquainted himself in May 2010 with social standards and looked over a female employee's shoulder at a watch manufacturer's. Watches are popular promotional gifts for attracting newspaper subscribers.





Paysandú, Uruguay in May 2009: Employees during the lunch break at a eucalyptus tree nursery in conversation with Florian Nehm, Axel Springer SE Corporate Sustainability Officer. The nursery supplies seedlings to plantations. The plantations supply wood to a pulp factory, whose clients include paper mills in Germany, from which Axel Springer SE procures printing paper for magazine covers.





"We are living responsibility daily"



The Paparazzi restaurants are supplied with fresh ingredients every day. On offer are both vegetarian as well as good solid meals, crispy salads from the large salad bar, sweet desserts or fresh fruit from the fruit counter.

PACE Paparazzi Catering & Event GmbH is a subsidiary of Axel Springer SE. It serves more than one million guests annually - in staff restaurants at several company locations as well as at numerous activities and events for internal and external customers. At the end of 2012, the subsidiary published its first Sustainability Report meeting the GRI "Level A" requirements. The company compiled its activities and measures in a "Report on internalized sustainability" for customers and guests.

Internalized sustainability at PACE

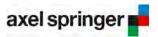
Sustainability has been internalized for years at PACE in all three dimensions: socially, environmentally and economically. This was documented through the last two Sustainability Reports, which were each evaluated by the Global Reporting Initiative (GRI) to be Level A. In the last two years, PACE has set its focus in the area of sustainability on the following topics:

- Development of vegetarian and vegan dishes
- Communication with guests and employees
- Practice partnerships and stakeholder dialogs

Development of vegetarian and vegan dishes

ESSENTIA - healthy, fresh, delicious.

"With our menu line we want to make it easy for guests to have a balanced diet. The individual dishes are ideally matched. All important nutrients such as vitamins, minerals and fiber are included", says Marco Roland, executive chef at PACE. He developed ESSENTIA with his team who oriented themselves both according to the recommendations of the German Society for Nutrition (DGE), as well as the needs of the guest. In the ESSENTIA nutrition line, meat is in one dish per week, a further dish contains fish. On the other three days, there are vegetarian dishes with a high proportion of vegetables. The offer of meals containing meat has also been reduced over the past two years in the overall daily offerings in the Paparazzi restaurants. In its place, the selection of vegetarian and also increasingly vegan products has been substantially widened. This has been well received by the guests and the daily portion of meat-free products is now already at 20 percent of the entire range of lunch offerings. On the one hand, PACE wants to use its sustainable range of meals to comply with the requests of many of its restaurant guests. On the other hand, there are also positive effects in the purchase of goods and their preparation in relation to:



- Climate protection
- Health
- Ethics and animal welfare
- Food security
- Enjoyment

Communication with Employees

The management as well as the General Works Council at PACE carried out an employee survey in the autumn of 2015. This had three objectives: to show the current atmosphere, to analyze weak points and to illustrate the employer image. The survey revealed, among other things, the following indicators:

- 78 percent of participating employees are satisfied with the organization of the working schedule;
- 83% of participating employees confirm there is a good to very good business climate;
- 85 percent of participating employees make use of the health promotion service (e.g. fitness pass, health workshops);
- 92 percent of participating employees would recommend PACE as an employer;

The results of the survey are an important part of employee communication within PACE. Only in this way can topics such as transparency, further training and leadership culture in the company be optimized and developed.

Communication with Guests

"Eat what is cooked, drink what is clear, speak what is true", or something similar is supposed to have been said by Martin Luther. The Berlin Paparazzi Restaurant is far above the "Lutheran Standard". The dishes are of high quality, regional, partly vegetarian, partly vegan and are freshly prepared every day. Once a month the Paparazzi Restaurant Berlin has an invitation to the "Day of the open Pots", where the chef de cuisine guides visitors through the kitchen and answers questions. Guests learn why there are no strawberries at Christmas and how chives live up to their name. Interesting cooking workshops for employees are offered in PACE at regular intervals (in cooperation with the Personnel Development of Axel Springer SE health management program). The focus here is on a healthy and sustainable diet, for example:

- Spices and their effects
- Kitchen herbs and their use
- Forgotten cereals small grains with a big effect

Practice Partnerships & Stakeholder Dialogs

PACE is a practice partner in the NAHGast project, a project funded by the German Federal Ministry for Education and Research. The NAHGast project is at the interface between supply and demand in the out-of-home dining sector. Its central elements are:

- The development of integrated methods for the measurement and evaluation of environmental and healthy dishe
- The development of methods to address consumers and standardization of the specific requirements of different settings

As part of this project, PACE has a critical look through stakeholder dialogs with the development, testing and dissemination of concepts for sustainable production and consumption in the external catering sector



Economy

Axel Springer SE is the leading digital publishing house in Europe. The company is the market leader in the German print business and with subsidiaries, joint ventures and licenses is active in more than 40 countries. Today already, the digital media channels make up almost three quarters of Group revenues.



The Axel Springer Share

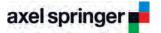


The picture shows the price performance of the Axel Springer share. The Axel Springer share has been traded since 1985 and was admitted to the SDAX on June 5, 2007. It has been listed in the MDAX since September 20, 2010. Indexed to the closing price of the Axel Springer share on 31 December 2015.

Eventful Trading Year 2015

The exchanges look back on an eventful year with phases of high volatility. Without exception the relevant indices ended the year positively. While the German leading index DAX closed the reporting year with growth of 6.9 percent, the MDAX, in which the Axel Springer share is listed, increased by 19.7 percent. At a European level, the media industry index DJ EuroStoxx Media rose by 7.1 percent.

Particularly in the first half of the year the Axel Springer share experienced a positive development in its price performance, in the course of which it also reached a new record high of 59.04 euros in April. It was unable to hold this level until the end of the year, closing only slightly up at 51.34 euros (+2.5 percent). Axel Springer's market capitalization at the end of 2015 was approximately 5.5 billion euros.



Corporate Governance



The Berlin headquarters of Axel Springer SE, at the Axel-Springer-Street 65th (Photo: Axel Springer SE)

Good corporate governance as a leitmotif

At Axel Springer, good corporate governance is considered to be a crucial element of responsible management and control, aligned to a long-term increase in the company's value. This boosts the confidence of our domestic and international investors, customers, employees and the general public in the management and supervision of the company and is an essential basis for the company's sustainable success. In this, we orient ourselves on the German Corporate Governance Code (GCGC).

We have taken appropriate measures in order to implement and comply with its recommendations. The Corporate Governance Officer is the Executive Board member responsible for Human Resources, Finance and Services. The compliance with and implementation of the GCGC recommendations are reviewed continuously.

Axel Springer SE published the annual Declaration of Conformity on 9 November 2015 in accordance with § 161 of the German Stock Corporation Act. The recommendations of the German Corporate Governance Code as amended on 5 May 2015 (published in the official section of the electronic Federal Gazette on 12 July 2015) are largely complied with.



Annual Report 2015



Der Vorstandvorsitzende der Axel Springer SE, Dr. Mathias Döpfner, richtete sich anlässlich der Bilanzpressekonferenz 2015 an alle Mitarbeiter der Axel-Springer-Familie. (Video: Axel Springer SE)

Development of Business and Earnings in 2015 at a glance

Axel Springer closed the 2015 fiscal year successfully. In the year under review, total revenues of 3,294.9 million euros were 8.5 percent higher than the previous year's figure (3,037.9 million euros). The increase in revenue resulted from increases in the Marketing and Classified Ad Models, while the revenues of the Paid Models and Services/Holding segments were down on the previous year. Adjusted for consolidation and currency effects, total revenues remained above those of the previous year (+1.6 %).

The pro-forma revenues from digital media rose to 2,004.6 million euros (PY: 1,794.6 million euros), organic growth was 11.7 %.

EBITDA (earnings before interest, taxes, depreciation and amortization of intangible assets) rose compared with the previous year by 10.2 percent to 559.0 million euros. (Previous year: 507.1 million euros). The EBITDA margin also improved slightly to 17.0 percent (PY: 16.7 percent). The significant increase in earnings of our Classified Ad Models and the improvement in results in the Services/Holding segment are counterbalanced by declines in the Paid and Marketing Models. EBITDA for the digital activities increased by 19.4 percent from 358.9 million euros to 428.7 million euros.

Adjusted earnings per share from continuing operations of 2.22 euros were 10.3 percent higher than the previous year's figure of 2.01 euros.

The Executive Board and the Supervisory Board propose the payment of a dividend of EUR 1.80 euros (PY: EUR 1.80 euros) per dividend-bearing share to the Annual General Meeting on 13 April 2016. Outlook 2016

For the 2016 fiscal year we expect an increase in total revenues for the Group in the lower single-digit percentage range. Adjusted for consolidation effects, mainly due to the deconsolidation of the activities in Switzerland, growth would be higher and the rate would be in the mid single-digit percentage range. We assume that the planned increase in advertising revenues will more than offset the decline in circulation revenues and other revenues.



We expect a rise in EBITDA in the low to mid single-digit percentage range. This includes an expected increase of EBITDA in the Classified Ad Models segment, while the result in the Marketing Models segment should remain approximately at the same level as the previous year. In the Paid Models and Services/Holding segments, the EBITDA is expected to be below that of the previous year.

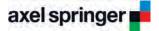
Due to increased depreciation, we expect a development of EBIT slightly below that of EBITDA.

For our adjusted earnings per share, we expect an increase in the mid to high single-digit percentage range.

Source: Annual Report 2015



Reporting according to GRI



Sustainability reports in the "GRI" format



The Global Reporting Initiative (GRI) sees itself as an ongoing international dialog which, through the definition of performance indicators, involves a number of stakeholder groups worldwide. These include companies, universities, governmental organizations and non-governmental organizations from the fields of labor, social affairs, human rights and the environment.

What is a Sustainability Report?

Alongside annual reports, sustainability reports are important elements of a company's information policy. They emerged as a further development of the environmental reports published by companies in the 1990s. They address the central topics of sustainability, which relate to employees, society, environment and the economy.

The Global Reporting Initiative (GRI) is the format used throughout the world for the preparation of sustainability reports. GRI sees itself as an ongoing international dialog which, through the definition of performance indicators, includes a large number of stakeholders. It operates worldwide with the active participation of companies, universities, governmental organizations and non-governmental organizations from the fields of labor, social affairs, human rights and the environment. The objectives of reporting according to GRI are transparency, standardization and comparability.

The Guidelines offer two options for an organization to prepare its sustainability report "in accordance" with the Guidelines: the "Core" option and the "Comprehensive" option. Both options can be applied by all organizations, regardless of their size, sector or location. The focus of both options is on the process of identifying material aspects. Material aspects are those that reflect the organization's significant economic, environmental and social impacts; or that substantively influence the assessments and decisions of stakeholders. The "Core" option contains the essential elements of a sustainability report. The "Core" option provides the background against which an organization communicates the impacts of its economic, environmental and social and governance performance.

This Sustainability Report was prepared "in accordance" with the G4 Guidelines and the "Core" option. This corresponds to answering all the required general standard disclosures of the Global Reporting Initiative (G4) as well as answering the specific standard disclosures (management approaches and indicators) for the material aspects. In addition, the key GRI indicators of the "Media Sector Disclosures" (MSD) are taken into account. The report was checked by the GRI in Amsterdam and audited by the consulting company PwC in Berlin.



Principles for Defining Report Content:

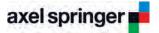
- Stakeholder Inclusiveness: The reporting organization should identify its stakeholders and explain in the report how it has responded to their reasonable expectations and interests.
- Sustainability Context: The report should present the organization's performance in the wider context of sustainable development.
- Materiality: There is an emphasis on information that reflects the organization's significant economic, environmental, and social impacts, or that would substantively influence the assessments and decisions of stakeholders. Materiality is the threshold at which aspects become sufficiently important that they should be reported.
- Completeness: All material aspects and their boundaries should be included, so that an economic, environmental and social assessment of the performance is possible.

Principles for Defining Report Quality:

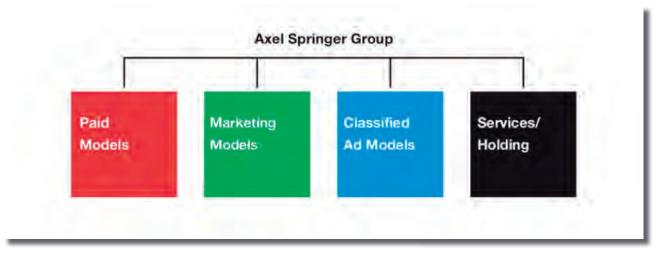
- Balance: The report should reflect positive and negative aspects of the organization's performance to enable a reasoned assessment of overall performance.
- Comparability: The organization should select, compile and report information consistently. The
 reported information should be presented in a manner that enables stakeholders to analyze changes in the organization's performance over time, and that could support analysis relative to other
 organizations.
- Accuracy: The reported information should be sufficiently accurate and detailed for stakeholders to assess the organization's performance.
- Timeliness: The organization should report on a regular schedule so that information is available in time for stakeholders to make informed decisions.
- Clarity: The organization should make information available in a manner that is understandable and accessible to stakeholders using the report.
- Reliability: The organization should gather, record, compile, analyze and disclose information and processes used in the preparation of a report in a way that they can be subject to examination and that establishes the quality and materiality of the information.

What are the requirements for GRI reports prepared "in accordance" with the Guidelines and the "Core" option?

- Answering the required standard disclosures.
- Answering the specific standard disclosures (management approach and indicators) for the material aspects.
- GRI Content Index, if applicable with reference to the external, independent assurance of the report.



Group structure and locations



With the goal of becoming the world's leading digital publisher, the company has aligned the segmentation of its report to the traditional revenue structure of the publishing business. The previous differentiation of segments into print and digital, national and international has been abolished.

With the goal of becoming the world's leading digital publisher, the company has aligned the segmentation of its report to the traditional revenue structure of the publishing business.

Axel Springer SE, the lead company in the Group, is a listed company with its headquarters in Berlin. In addition, we are represented at a number of other locations in Germany. There are also a large number of companies abroad. The consolidated shareholdings of the Group are presented in subparagraph (43) of the Annex to the Annual Report.

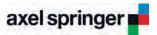
The Executive Board and the Supervisory Board decided in December 2014 to prepare for the conversion of Axel Springer SE into a partnership limited by shares (Kommanditgesellschaft auf Aktien – KGaA). The Executive Board however has decided not to proceed with the planned conversion.

The company and Dr. h. c. Friede Springer, following a thorough examination of the conversion in February 2016, have come to the conclusion that the legal form of the SE is the better alternative for the long-term development of the company and its attractiveness on the capital market. Axel Springer remains committed to the objective of continuing to grow and to become the world's leading digital publisher.

The segments of the Axel Springer Group:

The activities of Axel Springer are bundled into three operating segments: Paid Models, Marketing Models, and Classified Ad Models. There is additionally a Services/Holding segment.

The different customer groups and revenue types of a publishing house whose activities are increasingly digital are reflected in the segment structure.



General Standard Disclosures



The Global Reporting Initiative (GRI) sees itself as an ongoing international dialog which, through the definition of performance indicators, involves a number of stakeholder groups worldwide. These include companies, universities, governmental organizations and non-governmental organizations from the fields of labor, social affairs, human rights and the environment.

The General Standard Disclosures are divided into seven parts: Strategy and Analysis, Organizational Profile, Identified Material Aspects and Boundaries, Stakeholder Engagement, Report Profile, Governance, and Ethics and Integrity.

1 Strategy and Analysis

G4-1 Statement from the most senior decision-maker of the organization about the relevance of sustainability to the organization and its strategy.

Importance of Sustainability

Sustainability and Social Responsibility. Sustainability for Axel Springer entails combining economic success with environmentally compatible and socially responsible activities. These three criteria are an integral part of our corporate strategy. In this way, sustainability is integrated into the business processes. The Corporate Sustainability Office supervises related activities throughout the company – from measures to improve the efficient use of resources up to initiatives for social commitment. The field is assigned to the Chief Executive Officer's area of responsibility. With our sustainability strategy we assume responsibility for present and future generations and lay the foundations for long-term business success.

Axel Springer started to publish environmental reports as early as the mid-1990s, sustainability reports followed from 2000. Since 2005, we have published a Sustainability Report every two years, which corresponds to the complete Disclosure of Indicators of the Global Reporting Initiative (GRI), the internationally relevant format for sustainability reporting. Axel Springer's Sustainability Reports are assured by auditors.

A publishing house committed to critical journalism must itself stand up to close scrutiny. Through continual sustainability reporting taking the maximum GRI "Standards of Disclosure" into account, Axel Springer SE is underlining its special responsibility as a media company – from journalistic independence and the separation of advertising and editorial texts via the promotion of media literacy among young readers up to data protection as well as the transparency of social and environmental



standards along the digital value chain as well as the wood, pulp, paper, printing and recycling chain.

Value-driven management

Our mission: the successful establishment of independent journalism in the digital world. Our goal: We want to be the world's leading digital publishing house.

Axel Springer is pursuing a strategy of profitable growth. Our majority shareholder safeguards our independence. We are a publicly listed company and as such committed to the efficiency and transparency requirements of the capital market. We do not restrict our self-image to economic success alone.

We want to increase the value of our company. In addition to the operating earnings (EBITDA), earnings per share is the key indicator against which we measure ourselves and against which we can be measured. At the same time we want to strengthen the values of freedom, democracy, the rule of law, competition, property, human rights, cosmopolitanism and tolerance through our journalistic work.

Our publishing house is committed to the values of its founder Axel Springer. He stood first and fore-most for freedom. It is in this sense that the five preambles of the company are defined: the consolidation of German and European unity, support of the vital rights of the Israeli people, solidarity in the common values of free nations with the United States of America, the defense of the principles of a free social market economy and the rejection of all forms of political totalitarianism. These values do not prescribe the support of any ideology, government or political party, but rather they also allow and call, as does any true loyalty, for honest criticism.

Non-financial control parameters

The non-financial performance indicators make it possible to measure the success of Axel Springer's efforts in the areas of customers, offerings, processes, employees and sustainability. For environmental and social performance criteria, the company orients itself towards the indicators of the Global Reporting Initiative (GRI).

Customer retention index

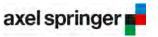
Axel Springer has set itself the goal of becoming Europe's most customer-friendly media company. To achieve this, a differentiated measurement and evaluation system has been developed in collaboration with the TNS Infratest institute since 2007 to measure the customer retention index regularly. This is the most important indicator of the satisfaction and loyalty of our readers and advertising customers.

In order to identify and promote efficient processes within our company as well, we also measure the quality of our internal cooperation and service orientation and aggregate the results to form an internal customer retention index. This indicator, in combination with the external customer retention index, is the starting point for a sustainable improvement process.

G4-2 Description of key impacts, risks, and opportunities.

Risks relating to the company-wide implementation of environmental and social standards: In view of the organization's growing international presence, Axel Springer SE has developed a catalog of social standards. This "International Social Policy" is a binding guideline for social integrity and applies to all the organization's activities throughout the world. Deficits in compliance with the International Social Policy can occur mainly in the procurement of printing paper, ICT hardware, advertising media, product additions, in merchandising, and in the sale of title licenses and can result in a loss of image. To minimize this risk as much as possible, we work closely together with experts from the wood, pulp and paper industry and environmental organizations. We also conduct monitoring measures along the value chain, as well as eco-audits. The economic risks and opportunities can be found in the 2015 Annual Report.

The experience gathered in sustainability management since 1992 acts as a driving force and motiva-



tor. It supports, among other things, our journalistic credibility, our attractiveness as an employer, our innovative response to customer expectations and in general, the optimization of management processes. The stakeholder concerns provide an overview of the priorities.

Supplementary sector disclosures (G4 Media Sector Disclosures):

Axel Springer is and will remain a company whose purpose and soul is journalism. For us it is a matter of informing people, of entertaining them, of giving them guidance, of surprising them with news which should often not actually be made public. This is why journalistic independence is an essential prerequisite of journalistic quality. News requires research, uncomfortable inquiries, investigative work. However, journalistic quality is only financially viable if it has two sources of revenue: Paid advertisements as well as readers who pay for journalistic content on the Internet as well as on paper.

The international debate on intellectual property rights is of central importance for the economic base of creative performance. Independent journalism is the bedrock of democratic knowledge-based societies. Intellectual property needs effective protection in the same way as material property. This must also apply to editorially researched and edited texts and representations of publications on the Internet.

In recent years Axel Springer has developed into a media company with a strong digital portfolio. The next step: stepping up the pace to becoming an online company. To achieve this, the company is focusing on the three pillars that have already made it successful in the offline world: Journalism, advertising, classifieds.

2 Organizational Profile

G4-3 Name of the organization

Founded in 1946, Axel Springer is Germany's biggest newspaper publisher and one of the leading international media enterprises.

G4-4 Primary brands, products, and/or services

In recent years Axel Springer has developed into a media company with a strong digital portfolio. The next step: stepping up the pace to becoming an online company.

To achieve this, the company is focusing on the three pillars that have already made it successful in the offline world: Journalism, advertising, classifieds.

Through consistent internationalization and digitization, Axel Springer SE is not only market leader in the German print business today, but is also active in more than 40 countries through subsidiaries, joint ventures and licenses.

G4-5 Location of organization's headquarters

Axel-Springer-Straße 65 10888 Berlin

G4-6 Number of countries where the organization operates, and names of countries with either major operations or that are specifically relevant to the sustainability issues covered in the report

Axel Springer SE is a leading integrated multimedia company in Europe with an integrated media company with activities in more than 40 countries in the fields of digital, printed and audiovisual journalistic publications and services. The company is listed in the MDAX.

Sustainability is of importance throughout the Group. The national and international subsidiaries of Axel Springer SE are to be gradually included in sustainability management.



One priority is the development of sustainability reporting by the Joint Venture Ringier Axel Springer Media AG in Poland, Slovakia, Hungary and Serbia.

G4-7 Nature of ownership and legal form

The company has the legal form of a joint-stock company. The Axel Springer share has been traded since 1985 and was admitted to the SDAX on June 5, 2007. The shares of Axel Springer SE have been listed in the MDAX since 20 September 2010.

G4-8 Markets served (including geographic breakdown, sectors served, and types of customers).

The core competence of Axel Springer is excellent journalism: Topical, informative and entertaining. The company operates in networks and cross-media. In this way it links the print and the digital world together and distributes high-quality information and entertainment in newspapers, magazines, and digital distribution channels.

Through consistent internationalization and digitization, Axel Springer SE is not only market leader in the German print business today, but is also active in more than 40 countries through subsidiaries, joint ventures and licenses.

Now it is a question of pressing ahead with digitization even faster and more vigorously. For Axel Springer SE, informative and entertaining journalism is a viable business model also in future on the Internet, along with marketing and classifieds, the other two business segments in which the company is traditionally strong.

In the tradition of its founder, who fostered journalistic and technological innovations in his time, Axel Springer SE is breaking new ground. The company is consistently pursuing the objective of building up a fast-growing and profitable digital portfolio, and for this reason is networking today more than ever before with the current generation of founders: digital start-ups. Along with the transformation of our established strong media brands, our own new developments online and strategically-oriented acquisitions of web companies, this networking is one of the building blocks of the company's international digitization strategy: Axel Springer SE wants to be the world's leading digital publishing house.

G4-9 Scale of the reporting organization

(Source: Annual Report 2015)

Number of employees	15,023 employees (Paid Models: 47 percent; Marketing Models: 17 percent; Classified Ad Models: 24 percent; Services/Holding: 12 percent.)
Total number of operations	The company is active in more than 40 countries with subsidiaries, joint ventures and licenses.
Total revenue/sales	3,294.9 million euros (advertising revenues: 2,107.6 million euros; sales revenue: 721.7 million euros; printing revenues: 59.3 million euros; other revenues: 406.3 million euros)
Equity	2,511.5 million euros (also includes the separately reported assets and liabilities allocated to discontinued operations)
Net debt	1,066.6 million euros
Quantity of products/services provided	The company is active in more than 40 countries with subsidiaries, joint ventures and licenses.



Supplementary sector disclosures (G4 Media Sector Disclosures):

For more information and details on the scale of the reporting organization see the Annual Report 2015.

G4-10 Employee Indicators

A breakdown of the numbers of employees by field of activity can be found in table GRI-LA1. (Source: Annual Report 2015)

(334,331,41,134,114,134,114,134,114,134,114,134,114,134,114,134,114,134,114,134,13	
Total number of employees by employment contract and gender	See table LA1
Total number of permanent employees by employment type and gender.	See table LA1
Total workforce by employees and supervised workers and by gender.	See table LA1
Total workforce by region and gender.	See table LA1
What percentage of the workforce are freelancers?	In a modern media company, the role played by freelancers is mainly in the editorial area, either as authors and photographers, for example when it comes to identifying and researching topics, or in illustrating as well as commenting by experts. The frequency of their deployment depends on the respective news situation and cannot therefore be precisely quantified.
Are there significant	no
variations in employment numbers?	

Supplementary sector disclosures (G4 Media Sector Disclosures):

In a modern media company, the role played by freelancers is mainly in the editorial area, either as authors and photographers, for example when it comes to identifying and researching topics, or in illustrating as well as commenting by experts. The frequency of their deployment depends on the respective news situation and cannot therefore be precisely quantified.

G4-11 Percentage of total employees covered by collective bargaining agreements

The General Works Council of Axel Springer SE, the General Works Council of ASV Direct Marketing GmbH (asdirekt), the General Works Council of PACE Paparazzi Catering & Event GmbH, as well as its subsidiaries ASMI Services GmbH, AS Mediahouse, Bergedorfer Zeitung, BILD digital GmbH, BZ Ullstein GmbH, Immonet, IMS and Schwartzkopff TV are all represented in the Group Works Council of Axel Springer SE.

G4-12 Describe the organization's supply chain

At least two supply chains can be described for media companies such as Axel Springer SE:

- 1) The digital presentation of content
- 2) The wood, pulp, paper, printing and recycling chain G4-13 Significant changes during the reporting period regarding size, structure, or ownership

The digital business made up 62 percent of total revenues in 2015. Around 70 percent of EBITDA is generated online. And 80 percent of advertising revenue came from the marketing of digital products.



The following significant changes with respect to size, structure or ownership in the organization fell within the 2014 – 2015 reporting period:

General Atlantic has exchanged its holding in the Classified Ad Models for a share in Axel Springer SE. Shares in the fitness data platform Runtastic and shares in the Indian auto portal CarWale were sold.

Further information on "Business Activities and Operating Environment", "Economic Situation" and "Outlook" can be found in the Axel Springer SE Annual Report 2015.

COMMITMENTS TO EXTERNAL INITIATIVES

G4-14 Precautionary principle

The overall responsibility for risk management lies in the hands of the Executive Board. By comparison, the respective divisions or group companies are responsible for the operative processes of early identification, assessment, management and documentation of risks, the determination and execution of suitable measures as well as all communication on this.

G4-15 Participation in and endorsement of external initiatives

Axel Springer SE complies with the German Corporate Governance Code, the 2015 Declaration of Conformity can be found here. Within the scope of its "International Social Policy" adopted in 2004, the entire company supports and acknowledges the United Nations "Universal Declaration of Human Rights" and does not tolerate any behavior that disregards this.

As the first media organization, Axel Springer SE has been a member of the Women in the Economy Forum since 1999.

G4-16 Memberships

Axel Springer SE is a member of the Federal Association of German Newspaper Publishers (BDVZ), the Association of German Magazine Publishers (VDZ), the German Association of the Digital Economy (BVDW) as well as a corporate member of the European Magazine Media Association EMMA. The company is represented in the executive committee of several of these associations as well as in numerous working groups – for example in the sustainability working group of the VDZ. The international subsidiaries are also members of the respective publishing associations in their own countries.

3 Identified Material Aspects and Boundaries

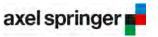
G4-17 List all entities included in the organization's consolidated financial statements or equivalent documents

On pages 165 to 171 of the Axel Springer SE Annual Report 2015, a total of 340 companies are named in which Axel Springer SE is involved.

G4-18 Process for defining report content Process for defining the report content and the Aspect Boundaries

General identification:

Since 1993, the interests, concerns and priorities of relevant stakeholders have been continuously sounded out. Axel Springer SE published its first environmental report in 1994. In 1995, the Ahrensburg newspaper printing plant was the first in Europe to be validated according to the EU ecological audit EMAS. In 2001, the first externally assured sustainability report appeared. The indicators of the IÖW (Institute for Ecological Economy Research) as well as the Global Reporting Initiative GRI and the Media Sector Supplement were and are important fundamental requirements.



Readers, advertising and print customers, employees, investors, neighbors, visitors, school pupils, students, scientific institutes, state supervisory authorities and regulators, suppliers, NGOs and the media express particular interest in the organization's sustainability management.

What is expected of our company? Which issues are particularly interesting for readers and non-readers, users of online platforms or even environmental organizations that deal with sustainability issues in our industry?

We use various sources of information to classify the various concerns, – from market research among readers and customer surveys through the various reader advisory boards up to the regular exchange with WWF, Greenpeace and Transparency International in countries such as Finland, Sweden, Russia, Canada, the USA, China, Uruguay and Brazil.

Current identification:

Market research, Readers' Advisory Councils, external newspaper critiques, as well as since 2006 the annual representative and valid "Measuring, managing, monitoring"-"TRI*M" survey by TNS Infratest of readers, users and advertisers, are primarily used as sources for the definition of priority stakeholder concerns and defining the report content.

We consolidate the findings into a materiality matrix which yields the orientation and priorities of sustainability management. The topics are presented in the matrix according to their assessed relevance for the stakeholders on the one hand and for the company on the other.

The contents of the report are based on the expertise of this stakeholder dialog which has taken place continuously since 1993.

Implementing the Reporting Principles for Defining Report Content

Prioritization through Stakeholder Inclusiveness:

Market research, Readers' Advisory Councils, external newspaper critiques, as well as since 2006 the annual representative and valid "Measuring, managing, monitoring"-"TRI*M" survey by TNS Infratest of readers, users and advertisers, are primarily used as sources for the definition of priority stakeholder concerns and defining the report content.

Sustainability Context:

The structure and content of the Sustainability Report is based on the company's social, societal, environmental and economic frameworks.

Prioritization by testing Materiality:

The report covers the relevant sustainability implications of the company, which influence assessments and decisions made by stakeholders;

Completeness:

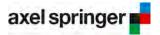
The report refers to the years 2014 and 2015, and also deals with aspects of sustainability in the upstream and downstream value chain.

Balance:

The report does not envisage itself as an "advertising brochure" but rather reacts to the real development of the relevant sustainability criteria.

Comparability:

Axel Springer SE has presented an externally assured Sustainability Report every two years since 2001 and in so doing seeks to ensure comparability. The difficulty lies on the one hand in the GRI dis-



closure formats which are being continuously further developed, and on the other hand on changes in the company structure resulting from the digital transformation of the company.

Accuracy:

The origin, derivation and significance of quantitative disclosures is explained.

Timeliness:

The Axel Springer SE Sustainability Report is published digitally every two years. The current report is prepared in accordance with the GRI G4 format.

Clarity:

In order to meet the expectations of different target groups, the report also contains, in addition to the stringent GRI section, an informative service oriented towards prevailing reading habits.

Reliability:

The key sections of the report are assured by the auditing company PwC.

Boundaries of the report

A series of quantitative disclosures in the fields of Environment and Employees relate to the printing plants in Germany. If the scope of application is not explicitly stated, all the other disclosures apply for the Group.

State any specific limitations to the scope or boundaries of the report

No specific limitations.

Developments, that can significantly affect the comparability from period to period or of disclosures

Comparability with the sustainability reports of previous years is not affected.

Data measurement techniques and the bases of calculations

- The environmental data are based on documented disclosures by suppliers or are collected at the locations involved.
- The environmental data are collected at the locations involved and forwarded to Corporate Controlling. The relevant data in the field of Energy are recorded locally using IAS Notes and evaluated in Group Accounting at the company headquarters in Berlin.
- Personnel figures from all relevant departments of the organization are collected in Personnel Statistics, checked for plausibility and published in the Annual Report.
- Information on openings, company training, measures to promote equal opportunities and the development of our employees, etc. are generated in the Personnel Development department and published in the Annual Report as well as the company's Internet portal.
- The regular exchange of ideas between the Group Sustainability Department and the sustainability officers at the company locations is also a part of data collection.

G4-19 List all the material Aspects identified in the process for defining report content.

- Journalistic Independence: Material for corporate sustainability as well as acceptance by readers, users and society;
- Product Responsibility and Customer Satisfaction: Material for corporate sustainability as well as acceptance by readers, users and society;
- Identification with Employees and Attractiveness as an Employer: Material for corporate sustainability;

•



- Compliance with high Standards (Corporate Governance, Compliance with Social and Environmental Standards): Material for corporate sustainability as well as acceptance by employees, readers, users and society;
- Creativity, Capacity for Innovation and Profitability: Material for corporate sustainability;

These material Aspects apply to all areas of the company.

G4-20 Materiality within the organization: For each material Aspect, report the Aspect Boundary within the organization

The number of subsidiaries belonging to the company is growing in the wake of the digital transformation. The ownership structures of the individual companies are published in the Annual Report. The media company is active in more than 40 countries with subsidiaries, joint ventures and licenses. The material Aspects of the report content apply to all areas of the company.

G4-21 Materiality outside the organization: For each material Aspect, report the Aspect Boundary outside the organization

The number of subsidiaries belonging to the company is growing in the wake of the digital transformation. The ownership structures of the individual companies are published in the Annual Report. The media company is active in more than 40 countries with subsidiaries, joint ventures and licenses. The material Aspects of the report content apply to all areas of the company.

G4-22 Effects of amended restatements of information

Axel Springer SE is a journalistic company. Axel Springer SE has presented an externally assured Sustainability Report every two years since 2001 and in so doing seeks to ensure comparability. The difficulty lies on the one hand in the GRI disclosure formats which are being continuously further developed, and on the other hand on changes in the company structure resulting from the digital transformation of the company. These amendments have no material effect on the continuity of principles and objectives.

G4-23 Changes from previous reporting periods

The growing contribution of the digital media channels to group revenues. This is over 70 percent in Germany today. Through internationalization and digitization, Axel Springer SE today is not only market leader in the German print business, but is also active in more than 40 countries through subsidiaries, joint ventures and licenses. Axel Springer SE generates more than 40 percent of its turnover with international business. For Axel Springer SE, informative and entertaining journalism is a viable business model also in future on the Internet, along with marketing and classified ads, the other two business segments in which the company is traditionally strong.

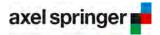
4 Stakeholder Engagement

G4-24 Stakeholder groups engaged by the organization

Readers and users of our media services, advertising and print customers, employees, investors, neighbors, visitors, school pupils, students, scientific institutes, state supervisory authorities and regulators, suppliers, NGOs and the media express particular interest in the organization's operations as well as its products at home and abroad.

Stakeholder Management – the management of the relations with the different groups that have an interest in a company and, directly or indirectly influence the added value – counts as one of the priorities at Axel Springer.

Axel Springer wants to be the most customer-friendly media enterprise in Europe. The company uses the tried and tested TRI*M-methodology from TNS Infratest to measure customer loyalty.



TRI*M™ (Measure, Manage, Monitor) is the leading customer loyalty or stakeholder management system. It is a research approach customized to the respective business needs, which is used to transfer the information from the survey of individuals or all relevant stakeholder groups into the entrepreneurial decision-making process. It supports the management in the setting of priorities and provides guidance for the optimization of relations with the various target groups.

For the ninth time, Axel Springer SE has allowed the quality of its customer relationships to be assessed using the TRI*M index. Due to the progressive digitization of the company, the focus was on the activities in this area. The evaluation of the digital Paid, Marketing and Classified Ad models was further expanded at the same time. The results confirm the thesis that readers also appreciate the value of professional journalism in the digital world. Print titles will from now on only be measured every two years, as the changes in this area are less dynamic than for the digital services.

The stakeholders of the measurements include

- Readers / buyers
- Readers / buyers
- Users of websites
- Advertising customers

A further instrument in the direct exchange with readers are the Readers' Advisory Councils. They are intended to help us focus even more on the interests, concerns and problems of readers. They tell us what is important to them, what they find good or bad and what issues should be addressed in more depth.

G4-25 Basis for the selection of stakeholders with whom to engage

The basis for the selection of stakeholders is the degree of concern or interest in the work of the company. Readers and users of our media services, advertising and print customers, employees, investors, start-ups, grown-ups, neighbors, visitors, school pupils, students, scientific institutes, state supervisory authorities and regulators, suppliers, NGOs and the media express a particular interest in the organization's operations as well as its products at home and abroad.

Various sources of information are used to rank the various concerns of our stakeholders – from market research among readers and surveys of the customer loyalty programs through the various reader advisory councils up to the regular exchange with WWF, Greenpeace and Transparency International in countries such as Finland, Sweden, Russia, Canada, the USA, China, Uruguay and Brazil as well as internal employee surveys.

G4-26 Approaches to stakeholder engagement

Personal contact to stakeholders comes about, for example, through directly addressing them, through exchanges of views at conferences, as well as through emails and phone calls.

Various sources of information are used to rank the various concerns of our stakeholders – from market research among readers and surveys of the customer loyalty programs through the various reader advisory councils up to the regular exchange with business associates, government agencies as well as with non-governmental organizations such as WWF, Greenpeace and Transparency International in countries such as Finland, Sweden, Russia, Canada, the USA, India, China, Uruguay and Brazil as well as internal employee surveys. Please click here for further information.

G4-27 Key topics and concerns of stakeholders

We consolidate the findings of the analysis of the various stakeholders' concerns into a materiality matrix, which at the same time yields the orientation and priorities of sustainability management. Another guide are the issues and priorities of rating and ranking agencies in the area of sustainability.



In addition, there are the innovations and enhancements in the Evaluation System of the Institute for Ecological Economy Research (ioew) as well as the indicator matrix of the Global Reporting Initiative GRI, and the supplementary questions applicable to the media industry.

The subject areas are presented in the matrix according to the assessment of their relevance for the stakeholders as well as for the company – and addressed in the context of this Sustainability Report.

The stakeholders concerns involve issues of journalistic independence, the separation of advertising and editorial copy, the promotion of media literacy among young readers, data protection, as well as the safeguarding of social and environmental standards along the wood, pulp, paper, printing and recycling chain. Within the scope of digitization, there are also issues of the transparency of standards along the digital value chain.

5 Report Parameters

G4-28 Reporting period

2014 and 2015

G4-29 Date of most recent previous report

2012 and 2013

G4-30 Reporting cycle

Biennial

G4-31 Contact point for questions regarding the report

The list of contact partners can be found here.

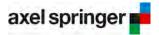
G4-32 GRI Content Index

This Sustainability Report was prepared "in accordance" with the G4 Guidelines and the "Core" option. The "Core" option contains the material elements of a Sustainability Report and provides the background against which Axel Springer SE communicates the impacts of its economic, environmental, social and societal performance. In addition the Sustainability Report responds to the specific standard disclosures ("Disclosure on Management Approach" (DMA) and indicators) for the material aspects. In addition, the GRI indicators of the "Media Sector Disclosures" (MSD), which are available for the industry and material, were also taken into consideration.

A part of the quantitative disclosures contained in this report was assured by PricewaterhouseCoopers AG auditing company (PwC).

The four links below lead to the material GRI topics. The subsequent table lists the associated key points for details.

General Standard Disclosures	Strategy and Analysis, Organizational Profile, Report Parameters, Governance
Specific Standard Disclosures Society	Employment, Labor/Management Relations, Occupational Health and Safety, Training and Education, Diversity and Equal Opportunity, Equal Remuneration for Women and Men, Grievance Mechanisms, Investment, Nondiscrimination, Assessment, Suppliers, Governance, Anticorruption, Security Practices, Public Policy, Anticompetitive Behavior, Compliance, Product Responsibility, Customer Health and Safety, Marketing Communications, Media Literacy, Customer Privacy, Compliance



Specific Standard Disclosures Envi- ronment	Materials, Energy, Emissions, Effluents and Waste, Emissions, Transport, Suppliers, Grievance Mechanisms
Specific Standard	Economic Performance, Procurement Practices
Disclosures Econo-	
my	

Supplementary sector disclosures (G4 Media Sector Disclosures):

Among the focal points of the GRI indicators in the "Media Sector Disclosures" (MSD) are an extensive number of issues concerning the role of the media in society, on Ensuring editorial independence and diversity of opinion, on the Structure of ownership and shareholders, on Quality assurance during the creation of journalistic content, on Interaction with readers, on the Observance of declared corporate values, on Ensuring the protection of sources and confidentiality, on the Protection of intellectual property, on the Avoidance of conflicts of interest in content creation and dissemination, on the Separation of editorial content and advertising, on the Significance of advertising revenue received from government sources, on the Avoidance of the risks of corruption, on Contractual general conditions for salaried and freelance employees, on Security during journalistic assignments in crisis regions, on Offers of continuing vocational training, on Transparency in representing industry interests to regulators and – of particular importance - on Current processes of change in media as part of the process of digitization.

Contact for the Sustainability Report:

Florian Nehm Axel Springer SE Corporate Sustainability Officer Tel: +49 30 2591 79370 nachhaltigkeit@axelspringer.de

G4-33 External assurance for the report

The Axel Springer SE Sustainability Reports have been externally assured since 2001.

The quantitative disclosures in the Axel Springer AG 2015 Sustainability Report assured by the Price-waterhouseCoopers AG auditing company (PwC) are individually identified. The basics, the scope and the results of the assurance can be taken from the certificate on the assurance by PwC.

6 Governance

GOVERNANCE STRUCTURE AND COMPOSITION G4-34 Governance structure of the organization

At Axel Springer, good corporate governance is considered to be a crucial element of responsible management and control, and thus an essential foundation for sustainable corporate success. In this regard, we are guided by German principles of sound governance, and in particular the German Corporate Governance Code.

The Supervisory Board of Axel Springer SE consists, in accordance with the statutes, of nine members who are elected by the annual shareholders' meeting. The period of office of its members is five years as a rule; re-election is permitted. The Supervisory Board elects its chair from among its own ranks; the term of office corresponds to that of the Supervisory Board. In accordance with its procedural rules, the Supervisory Board has established four committees – Executive Committee, Personnel Committee, Nomination Committee and Audit Committee – which support the work of the plenum. The Supervisory Board consists of two female and seven male members (the proportion of females is 22 percent).



The Executive Board of Axel Springer SE runs the company on its own authority. The Executive Board in its management function is committed to serving the interests of the company and sustainable corporate development. It develops the strategic orientation of the company and is – in coordination with the Supervisory Board – responsible for its implementation. The Executive Board manages the Company in accordance with the relevant laws, articles of association and its rules of procedure. The body currently consists of four members.

Supplementary sector disclosures (G4 Media Sector Disclosures):

Guidance to ensure ethical Media Standards: To ensure compliance with laws, voluntary commitments and guidelines, a Group-wide compliance management system has been introduced at Axel Springer. A Compliance Committee monitors compliance with the Code of Conduct. The Code of Conduct is part of the compliance organization and is to be understood as a summary of the Axel Springer rules of conduct, which also include the guidelines for safeguarding journalistic independence.

The protection of the freedom of the press ranges from the procurement of information to the communication of the news. Protection is enjoyed for example by the determination of the bias of a newspaper, the confidentiality of editorial work, and in particular the non-disclosure of sources of information in the interest of a broad flow of information.

The guidelines on the journalistic endeavors of all editors safeguard the general conditions that make independent and critical journalism possible at Axel Springer.

Further information and details can be found in the Annual Report 2015.

G4-38 Report the composition of the highest governance body and its committees

As a German SE, the Group has a dual structure through the separation of the Supervisory Board and the Executive Board.

The members of the Supervisory Board are:

- Dr. Giuseppe Vita (Chair)
- Dr. h. c. Friede Springer (Deputy Chair)
- Oliver Heine
- Rudolf Knepper
- Lothar Lanz
- Dr. Nicola Leibinger-Kammüller
- Prof. Dr. Wolf Lepenies
- Prof. Dr.-Ing. Wolfgang Reitzle
- Martin Varsavsky

The term of office of the current Supervisory Board members shall expire at the end of the Annual General Meeting 2019. The résumés of the Supervisory Board members can be found here. Objectives for the composition of the Supervisory Board

With regard to point 5.4.1 of the German Corporate Governance Code (GCGC), the Supervisory Board of Axel Springer SE has decided upon the following objectives for its composition:

- The Supervisory Board of Axel Springer SE should be composed in such a way that its members
 as a group possess the knowledge, ability and expert experience required to properly complete its
 tasks.
- With due consideration given to the company's business object and purpose, the size of the company, and the relative importance of its international activities, the Supervisory Board will strive, as a goal for the upcoming regular elections, to bring about a composition of its members that is appropriate in view of the following considerations, in particular:



- At least two seats on the Supervisory Board should be held by persons who fulfill the criterion of
 internationality to a particular degree (for example, by reason of relevant experience in international
 business).
- Supervisory Board members should not hold any position on a board or perform any consulting work for major competitors of the company.
- The Supervisory Board should have an appropriate participation of women. Currently, two of the total of nine members (22.2 %) are women; the Supervisory Board considers this appropriate in any event. Accordingly, and due to the fact that no regular Supervisory Board elections are due within the agreed maximum first implementation period permissible by law, the target figure for the share of women on the Axel Springer SE Supervisory Board was also established at 22.2%.
- In making nominations, due consideration should be given to the general rule that Supervisory Board members should not be older than 72 years; the Supervisory Board can approve exceptions to this policy. Furthermore, the Supervisory Board should observe the principle that as few members as possible should be subject to a potential conflict of interest, e.g. in connection with an advisory role or board seat with major customers, suppliers, creditors or other significant business partners of Axel Springer. In addition, the Supervisory Board should give due consideration to the principle that its composition should meet the criterion of diversity.
- With respect to its composition, the Supervisory Board strives to ensure that at least two of its members are independent according to the definition of the GCGC.

However, despite the recommendation pursuant to section 5.4.1 sentences 2 and 5 of the GCGC, the Supervisory Board has decided not to set a control limit with regard to the length of membership on the Supervisory Board. A fixed control limit does not take individual factors into account, which would justify the longer membership by individual members of the Supervisory Board (cf. the stated deviations on this in the Declaration of Conformity of 9 November 2015, see page 67). The above-mentioned objectives have been fully achieved with the current composition of the Supervisory Board of Axel Springer SE. In addition, the Supervisory Board, with its proposals for the election of new board members, has made sure that the respective candidates will be able to find the time expected.

(Source: Annual Report 2015)

G4-39 Indication of whether the Chair of the highest governance body is also the executive officer

As a German Societas Europaea (SE), the Group has a dual structure through the separation of Supervisory Board and Executive Board.

The Executive Board of Axel Springer SE runs the company on its own authority. The body consists of four members at the present time. The Executive Board informs the Supervisory Board regularly, promptly and extensively on all questions of planning, business development, risk situation and risk management which are relevant for the company. Every member of the Executive Board must disclose any conflicts of interest to the Supervisory Board without delay.

G4-41 Processes in place for the highest governance body to ensure conflicts of interest are avoided

Every member of the Executive Board must disclose any conflicts of interest to the Supervisory Board without delay. Every member of the Supervisory Board must also disclose any conflicts of interest to the Supervisory Board without delay. Please see also "Corporate Governance".

Supplementary sector disclosures (G4 Media Sector Disclosures):

Processes to avoid conflicts of interest in the selection of content: To ensure compliance with laws, voluntary commitments and guidelines, a Group-wide compliance management system has been introduced at Axel Springer. A Compliance Committee monitors compliance with the Code of Conduct.



The Code of Conduct is part of the compliance organization and is to be understood as a summary of the Axel Springer rules of conduct, which also include the guidelines for safeguarding journalistic independence.

Editorial publications may not under any circumstances be influenced by the personal or business interests of third parties or the personal economic interests of editors.

The journalists at Axel Springer

- shall not report on persons with whom they have a close relationship, especially family members, in the form of copy or photographs unless there is an objective reason for doing so that has been approved by their superior;
- shall not use their reporting to gain advantages for themselves or others;
- shall consult their superior if the membership of or the holding of an office or a seat in a society, political party, association or other institution, investment in a company, permitted secondary employment or through a relationship with persons or institutions the impression might be created that the neutrality of their reporting on such societies, political parties, associations, persons or other institutions is thereby compromised;
- shall pay particular attention to the observance of the legal regulations and ethical obligations of the press concerning inside and other information which may potentially affect security prices.

G4-45 Procedures of the highest governance body for monitoring sustainability performance

To ensure compliance with laws, voluntary commitments and guidelines, a Group-wide compliance management system was introduced. A Compliance Committee monitors compliance with the Code of Conduct.

Sustainability performance is monitored by the Controlling, Human Resources, Compliance and Risk Management divisions. An externally assured sustainability report is published every two years in a format complying with the GRI. In addition, the Annual Reports published every year also contain sustainability-related information.

G4-51 Relations between remuneration for the highest governance body and the organization's performance

In accordance with the requirements of the German Stock Corporation Act and the recommendations of the 'German Corporate Governance Code' (GCGC) the remuneration of the Executive Board members contains fixed and variable components. Variable remuneration comprises an annual bonus paid as a cash component combined with a long-term stock-based remuneration component. All of the remuneration components are appropriate, both individually and as a whole. The tasks of the individual board member, his personal performance, as well as the economic situation, the success and the future prospects of Axel Springer are used as criteria for appropriateness.

The sector environment of the company is also taken into account. No external remuneration experts were consulted by the Supervisory Board in this reporting year.

Fixed remuneration is equivalent to the annual salary, in addition to which the members of the Executive Board also receive a company car or car allowance, as well as expenses for security as fringe benefits. The annual salary is based among other things on the tasks of the individual board member, on the current economic situation, the success and the future prospects of the Group.

The variable remuneration element in the form of a cash bonus has an upper limit and is dependent upon the performance of the individual within the context of individual targets (also including quantitative division and qualitative individual targets oriented to the strategy of Axel Springer SE) as well as the objectives of the Group.



7 Ethics and Integrity

G4-56 Principles and guidelines of Corporate Governance

The corporate values of Axel Springer SE are explained, among other things, with the management approach in the section on GRI economic indicators. The standards required for the production of copy are set out in points M2 and M3.

Supplementary sector disclosures (G4 Media Sector Disclosures):

Axel Springer SE is an integrated multimedia online, print and TV company. The company wants to be the world's leading digital media company. Whether digital or printed: every medium obeys its own laws, but the quality of the content is decisive everywhere. News, views, well told stories – that's what it's about in the future and what it was always about. Our work is networked and cross-media thus integrating the different worlds.

Axel Springer is the only independent media company to have a corporate constitution. The five principles expressed therein serve as a foundation for publishing operations. They define fundamental convictions on social policy, yet do not set out an opinion. Details can be found here.

In addition to these five principles, the company has also defined values that distinguish Axel Springer's corporate culture. In 2008, leadership principles were introduced at Axel Springer, giving managers a framework for action in their daily work.

The editors-in-chief and publishing directors of the company developed guidelines to safeguard journalistic independence at Axel Springer and introduced them in August 2003 in co-ordination with the Executive Board.

The catalog of social standards which was published in July 2004 is a binding guideline for social integrity and applies to all the company's activities throughout the world. Axel Springer SE attaches great importance to good corporate governance in the management and control of the enterprise. Moreover, with its first environmental report in 1994 the company published a four-point environmental guideline.

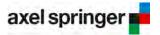
To ensure compliance with laws, voluntary commitments and guidelines, a Group-wide compliance management system was introduced. A Compliance Committee monitors compliance with the Code of Conduct.

It summarizes our existing corporate principles, values, as well as our directives and guidelines which contain the ethical, moral, and legal requirements for every employee.

The Internal Control System (ICS) is an integral part of the Axel Springer SE corporate governance system and supports the achievement of the strategic business objectives. For this, the effectiveness of the specified risk control measures is monitored systematically in the context of risk management. The internal control system has the task of ensuring that the risk control measures also are actually carried out by the risk owners. For this purpose, the control system undergoes a systematic self-evaluation to verify the functionality and effectiveness of the entire control system. Carrying out ICS activities allows for the detection of errors and irregularities.

We feel especially committed to the freedom of expression and the freedom of the press, which are the constitutive prerequisites for freedom and democracy.

The company was one of the signatories of the "European Charter on Freedom of the Press" in May 2009. It formulates principles for the freedom of the press from government intervention, and in particular for their right to safety from surveillance, electronic eavesdropping and searches of editorial

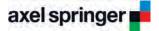


departments and computers, and to unimpeded access for journalists and citizens to all domestic and foreign sources of information.

The complete text of the "European Charter on Freedom of the Press" can be found at www.pressfreedom.eu.

The cornerstones of our responsibility as a media enterprise include first and foremost:

- journalistic independence
- care in the treatment of sources
- the distinction between advertising and editorial copy
- the code of conduct of the advertising industry
- the media protection of young persons
- data protection and the security of digital information systems using WELT ONLINE as an example
- the safeguarding of social and environmental standards along the wood, pulp, paper, printing and recycling chain as well as in the procurement of advertising media
- compliance with justice and the law



Specific Standard Disclosures on Society



The Global Reporting Initiative (GRI) sees itself as an ongoing international dialog which, through the definition of performance indicators, involves a number of stakeholder groups worldwide. These include companies, universities, governmental organizations and non-governmental organizations from the fields of labor, social affairs, human rights and the environment.

Social Indicators

A Labor Practices and Decent Work

The following indicators meet the G4/MSD Guidelines of the "Global Reporting Initiative" (GRI) for the internationally uniform structuring of sustainability reports. ("MSD" stands for Media Sector Disclosures.) The abbreviation "LA" in the GRI Numbers stands for "Labor Practices and Decent Work".

A1. Management approach for stakeholder concerns: Identification with employees and attractiveness as an employer

G4-DMA-A Report why the Aspect is material. Report the impacts that make this Aspect material.

- Creativity, entrepreneurial spirit and integrity count as key requirements for success in the digital transformation.
- The company cannot make progress without qualified and motivated employees.

G4-DMA-B Report how the organization manages the material Aspect or its impacts. (Policies, commitments, goals and targets, responsibilities, resources, specific actions)

Policies

- 1. Principles of Leadership were introduced at Axel Springer in 2008. The principles should give managers scope for action, providing transparency with regard to the demands and expectations of the leadership role.
- 2. In view of the organization's growing international presence, Axel Springer SE adopted a catalog of social standards in 2004. This "International Social Policy" is a binding guideline for social integrity and applies to all the organization's activities throughout the world.



Commitments

Continuous monitoring by Heads of Human Resources in the company divisions

Goals and targets

Creativity, entrepreneurial spirit, integrity. These three values form the foundation of the self-confidence of Axel Springer. They set the standards for our daily activity. We lead by creating space for creativity, by defining objectives and by shaping change. We want to continue to lead Axel Springer boldly to entrepreneurial success. The focus is on our employees, who we develop, challenge and encourage to work independently. In all activities in all parts of the organization, we pay careful attention to compliance with justice and the law, our corporate guidelines and the Code of Conduct.

Responsibilities

The ultimate responsibility for labor aspects lies with the Executive Board of Axel Springer SE.

Resources

More than 15,000 employees are working on continuing to occupy the top journalistic and economic positions. Axel Springer SE offers them attractive benefits and opportunities for development.

Specific actions

Actions related to training and raising awareness

The maintenance and improvement of companies' competitiveness is to a great extent dependent on its employees' know-how and the development thereof. This is why our seminars focus on our company's strategic goals.

G4-DMA-C Report the evaluation of the management approach, including the mechanisms for evaluating the effectiveness of the management approach; the results of the evaluation of the management approach; the consequences the organization will draw.

Mechanisms

Continuous dialog between management and the elected employee representatives, employee surveys;

Results

Employees identify with the company.

Consequences

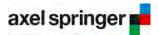
The company will consistently continue to offer benefits and opportunities for development to its employees.

Supplementary sector disclosures (G4 Media Sector Disclosures):

Remuneration of rights of use: There are different ways of acquiring rights of use. The regulations to ensure the preservation and remuneration of these rights of use are accordingly diverse. They can be essentially categorized as follows:

Salaried employees: Salaried employees transfer the rights of use of the results of their work (these are essentially works created in the context of their respective activity) to their respective employer. The transfer is made – in so far as this concerns computer programs – generally without a separate agreement in accordance with § 69 b of the Copyright Act, in other cases generally in accordance with the contract of employment. They receive an equitable wage for their work, with which the transfer of rights of use is as a rule also remunerated.

The Axel Springer Code of Conduct ensures the safeguarding of journalistic independence in the creation of journalistic content.



Freelance (full or part-time) authors: Axel Springer also purchases journalistic content from full or part-time non-salaried persons. The acquisition of user's rights is arranged through contracts and/or business conditions. Remuneration is in part individually negotiated, in some areas collective agreements apply. Publishers' associations and trade unions (DJV -German Federation of Journalists, ver. di - United Services Union, dju - German Union of Journalists) in Germany have concluded the "Remuneration agreement for freelance full-time newspaper journalists" and the "Collective agreement for employee-like freelance newspaper journalists" which apply to the area of journalistic freelance employees.

Agencies: Insofar as content is purchased from agencies, the acquisition of rights is either negotiated individually or based on the agencies specified terms and conditions. In case of doubt, the law of copyright applies.

User content, letters to the editor, interactive services: Readers or users also generate content – usually without a commercial background – which is included in Axel Springer publications. These contributions are in part rewarded (e.g. Bild reader reporters, competitions), in part this is unpaid interactive user behavior (e.g. letters to the editor, comments on Internet forums or online portals).

Safety at work, as well as while working as a journalist: On the journey between their workplace and home, Axel Springer SE employees are covered by the Employers' Liability Insurance in Germany. The same applies to workplace accidents at Axel Springer SE. Axel Springer SE also pays 50 percent of the costs of a statutory health insurance policy.

Against the background of the kidnapping of two BILD editors in 2011, Axel Springer SE issued a Corporate Guideline for journeys to areas of war, risk and crisis. This provides the employees concerned with information about the dangers. Journalists, who travel to crisis areas, receive safety training prior to their journey, which informs them of how to behave in hazardous situations.

Employees themselves decide on the necessity of working in a crisis area. Axel Springer SE has always behaved generously towards employees who have encountered danger.

A.2 Disclosures and references for the reporting period 2014 + 2015

A.2.1 Aspect: Employment

G4-LA1 Total number and rates of new employee hires and employee turnover by age group, gender and region

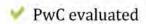
An average of 15,023 persons (excluding apprentices and trainees) were employed by the company as a whole in 2015. The Group employed an average of 6,289 women (41.9 percent) and 8,733 men (58.1 percent). You can find a breakdown according to employment type, location and gender here.

Average rate of employee turnover*

The total employee turnover rate in 2015 was 11.8 percent. The rate for women (13.4 percent) was higher than that for men (10.8 percent).

Length of service and age structure: On the 2015 balance sheet date, the employees of the German companies had an average length of service with Axel Springer of 10.4 years (PY: 10.5 years); 41.8 percent (PY: 42.5 percent) of the workforce had been with the Group for more than ten years. More than half of all employees are between 30 and 49 years old. The proportion of severely disabled people in the German companies was on average 3.7 per cent for the year (PY: 3.8 percent).

*Disclosures only for affiliates accounted for through Personalservice GmbH and AS SE





G4-LA2 Benefits provided to full-time employees

The works council and management have agreed a nine-page catalog of voluntary social benefits for the locations in Germany, as well as German wholly-owned subsidiaries. Further information can be found here.

Separate agreements have also been reached respectively for the employees at foreign locations.

G4-LA3: Return to work and retention rates after parental leave

All German companies which are accounted for by Personalservice GmbH were taken into consideration (on average approx. 7,117 employees not including trainees/ apprentices/ assistants, of which 4,329 were men and 2,788 women).

A total of 414 employees took parental leave in 2015, of which 254 were women and 160 men. A further 108 employees were employed on a part-time basis during parental leave in 2015 (of which 94 were women and 14 men).

Information has been collected for this indicator since 2010. In our German locations, the proportion of employees returning to the workplace after parental leave is at 86.5 percent.



PwC evaluated

A.2.2 Aspect: Labor/Management Relations

G4-LA4 Minimum notice periods regarding significant operational changes

The communication of significant operational changes is expeditious. Details are regulated in the Works Constitution Act in Germany.

The managing director or the Human Resources manager is in close contact with employees and their representatives and they meet regularly or when circumstances require for discussions on a wide range of subjects. At specially organized events, internal speakers, using practical examples, explain concepts, strategies, plans and perspectives that are significant for the future of the company or for developments in the industry.

Important changes are communicated to employees internally via the Intranet, email, and where necessary also the bulletin board.

A.2.3 Aspect: Occupational health and safety **G4-LA5** Health and safety committees

The Safety Engineers at each location are responsible for all matters and measures relating to safety at work, fire protection and environmental protection. The education and counseling of employees plays a central role here.

Working Committee Meetings: Representatives of the management and the works council of the respective locations of the company meet at least four times a year to discuss issues of occupational health and safety. At these meetings, 100 percent of the workforce is represented by the works council.

G4-LA6 Occupational diseases and accidents at work

This table documents occupational accidents at the printing locations in Germany as well as in the publishing office locations in Berlin and Hamburg. The statistics are based on the respective local statutory regulations or the guidelines of the respective trade association (insurer). You can find a breakdown of the number of accidents and days lost here.

Supplementary sector disclosures (G4 Media Sector Disclosures):

There was a work-related fatality in the reporting period at the Essen-Kettwig printing plant.



Health, motivation and creativity of the employees are key success factors for a media company. The Axel Springer SE in-house health management system was awarded the seal of excellence at the "Corporate Health Awards" in 2011.

(Note regarding LA6: No differentiation was made between men and women in the documentation of numbers of accidents due to its lack of relevance.)

A.2.4 Aspect: Training and Education

G4-LA9 Average hours of training per year per employee by employee category.

In order to meet the growing challenges - also of a technological nature - facing our industry, the Axel Springer personnel policy comprises a diverse training and qualification program.

Axel Springer in Germany: A total of 69,829 hours of training and education were carried out in 2015. 5,765 of these hours covered the specific needs of the editorial offices.

The decline in the number of training hours in the comparison of the years 2013 and 2015 is related to an increase in training activities in the previous reporting period, in particular in the field of the development dialog. The content was well-received and has now been largely implemented.

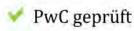
Supplementary sector disclosures (G4 Media Sector Disclosures):

The employees are the core of a media enterprise such as Axel Springer. Our creative, competent and committed employees are an essential prerequisite of our entrepreneurial success. This is supported with a comprehensive program of training and education.

(Note regarding LA9: No differentiation was made between men and women in the documentation of participation in relevant programs due to its lack of relevance.)

Table LA9: Average annual number of hours per employee by employee category that the employee received training or education in Germany

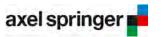
	2013	2014	2015	2015 vs. 2013
Total amount spent on training in TEuro	1.831	1.862	1.760	-3.9 %
Total seminar and training hours	105,095	102,136	69,829	-33%
Seminar hours Editors	16,295	8,760	5,765	-64.6%
Seminar hours Employees	85,499	87,990	62,836	-26.3%
Seminar hours Specialists	1,279	783	514	-59.8%
Seminar hours Temporary Staff	217	382	183	-15.6%
Seminar hours Apprentices	1,805	4,275	531	-70.6%



G4-LA10 Programs for lifelong learning

The employees are the core of Axel Springer. Our creative, competent and committed employees are an essential prerequisite of our entrepreneurial success. In order to develop new skills and to build on existing strengths, we have an extensive development program.

This ensures the personal advancement of the individual as well as mutual success. Whether in the development dialog, as part of our extensive range of seminars, at the Axel Springer Media Sales Academy or completing a sector-specific qualification – the focus is always on the employee. His or her qualification and education is an investment in the future of the company.



Personnel Development has consistently aligned its qualification activities to the needs of digitization and intensified this focus in recent years. More than one-third of the 2014 employee training program consists of newly developed training courses, which address the aspects of the digital transformation. Along with the already successfully established formats and seminars, the personnel development measures have a clear focus on digital content.

Moreover we support colleagues who further qualify themselves through in-service advanced vocational training and want to take on new challenges. Success also requires contacts – various networks exist for this purpose. In this way a targeted exchange of information and the team concept is promoted throughout the whole company. Our mentoring program and cross company mentoring are also successful elements of the advancement opportunities at Axel Springer.

Those who want to keep themselves up-to-date on which projects are successful in other areas as well, are advised to pay a visit to the Current Topic. The Digital Campus is also reflected in the Current Topic series of lectures. Here you can find out about new developments in the Axel Springer SE digitization strategy.



PwC geprüft

G4-LA11 Percentage of employees receiving regular performance and career development reviews.

As part of the variable compensation scheme, Axel Springer SE offers its employees in Germany the opportunity to participate in the target agreement system. The manager and the employee decide jointly whether it makes sense to participate in the system.

In addition, Axel Springer SE introduced a pilot project for employee development dialogs in Germany in 2008. The employee development dialog is a regular, binding discussion between the manager and the employee as annual feedback on their personal level of development. This highlights the need for development in each case and gives rise to concrete development measures such as, for example, seminars and job rotation. Around 5,450 managers and employees took part in the development dialog in 2015.

Since 2009, the development dialog has been gradually extended to the subsidiaries.

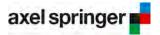
A.2.5 Aspect: Diversity and Equal Opportunity G4-LA12 Composition of governance bodies and breakdown of employees per category according to gender, age group, minority group membership, and other indicators of diversity.

The average age of the four-member Executive Board in 2015 was 50. The Supervisory Board and the Executive Board are made up of 15.4% women and 84.6% men as at 31.12.2015. Detailed information on the Executive Board and the Supervisory Board can be found here.

The number of employees in 2015 (excluding trainees/ apprentices) was approx. 15,023. Of these, 58 percent (8,733) were male and 42 percent (6,289) female. The share of other nationalities in Germany, 589 of 6.892 employees in Germany were foreign (8.54%).

Age	Editors	Salaried staff	Qualified staff	Temporary staff	Trainees/ Apprenti- ces	Total
below 30	7%	17%	2%	4%	95%	13%
30 to 49	62%	61%	39%	36%	5%	59%
over 50	31%	22%	59%	60%	0%	28%

^{*}Disclosures only for affiliates accounted for through Personalservice GmbH and AS SE und AS SE



Diversity is an essential part of corporate culture for us. Globalization, demographic change and increasing individualization will further strengthen this development. For us, as a media company that moves people and picks up on the various facets of life on a daily basis, the diversity within our workforce is a great opportunity to respond creatively to the diverse interests and needs of our customers.

As an innovative and internationally established media enterprise, the optimal and non-discriminatory cooperation among our employees is a high priority for us. This means the mutual acceptance of differences in terms of

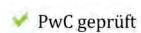
- origin,
- age,
- gender,
- religion and belief,
- nationality and ethnicity,
- sexual orientation, as well as
- disability.

This diversity is of inestimable value, just like the personal experience and individual biographies of our staff.

Axel Springer has initially identified the following priorities which are the focus of our diversity activities:

More women in leadership positions: Our goal is to increase the proportion of women on all levels of management on average throughout the company to over 30 percent. The "Chancen:gleich!" (equal opportunities) project group was launched in 2010 to achieve this. At the end of 2015, the proportion of women across all levels of management was at around 27.9 percent.

- Demographic change: Migration and age, as well as other aspects of diversity, are in the center of the work of the Equal Opportunities and Diversity Working Group (AKC).
- Work/family balance: The improved work/family balance for all employees as an important guideline for our human resources work.



A.2.6 Aspect: Equal Remuneration for Women and Men G4-LA13 Ratio of basic salary of men to women

The company is in competition for qualified employees. The remuneration systems are based on the performance of the employees and the market conditions. Discrimination, e.g., on the grounds of gender or age, is rejected. Pay is determined by the type of work performed, based on the job evaluation. Individual performance, professional experience and developments on the labor market are taken into consideration.

(Note regarding LA13: Basic salaries for men and women are equal and are therefore not documented.)

A.2.8 Aspect: Labor Practices Grievance Mechanisms G4-LA16 Number of grievances about labor practices filed, addressed, and resolved through formal grievance mechanisms

More than 15,000 employees are working on continuing to occupy the top journalistic and economic positions. Axel Springer SE offers them attractive benefits and opportunities for development.

No formal grievances relating to labor practices were filed in the reporting period.



B Human Rights

The following indicators meet the G4/MSD Guidelines of the "Global Reporting Initiative" (GRI) for the internationally uniform structuring of sustainability reports. ("MSD" stands for Media Sector Disclosures.)

The abbreviation "HR" in the GRI Numbers stands for "Human Rights".

B.1 Management approach for stakeholder concerns: Observance of human rights G4-DMA-A Report why the Aspect is material. Report the impacts that make this Aspect material.

- Axel Springer stands up for the freedom of the press. A free press is an essential element of our democratic society.
- In the Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 1948, the freedom of opinion, the freedom of expression and of the press are enshrined as fundamental human rights. It is a precondition for journalistic independence.

G4-DMA-B Report how the organization manages the material Aspect or its impacts. (Policies, commitments, goals and targets, responsibilities, resources, specific actions)

Policies

The Code of Conduct of Axel Springer SE including a reference to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 1948.

Commitments

Compliance with justice and the law.

Goals and targets

Axel Springer acknowledges and supports the United Nations' "Universal Declaration of Human Rights" and does not tolerate any behavior that disregards this. This is how it is set out in the first item of our International Social Policy. Further information can be found here.

Responsibilities

The ultimate responsibility for labor aspects lies with the Executive Board of Axel Springer SE.

Resources

Actions related to training and raising awareness.

Specific actions

Principles of Leadership were introduced at Axel Springer in 2008. The principles should give managers scope for action, providing transparency with regard to the demands and expectations of the leadership role. This involves training for employees and executive staff. Read the full text of the Principles of Leadership here.

G4-DMA-C Report the evaluation of the management approach, including the mechanisms for evaluating the effectiveness of the management approach; the results of the evaluation of the management approach; the consequences the organization will draw.

Mechanisms

Verification of compliance with legal requirements, voluntary commitments and corporate guidelines by Compliance Management.



Results

The results to questions on corporate governance are also published in the Annual Report.

Consequences

Continuation of the development of a company-wide awareness of topics relevant to compliance.

Supplementary sector disclosures (G4 Media Sector Disclosures):

As a media company, both the aspect of exercising as well as the aspect of supporting social freedoms play a central role in the freedom of expression.

Axel Springer is the only independent media company to have a corporate constitution. The five principles expressed therein serve as a foundation for publishing operations. They define fundamental convictions on social policy, yet do not set out an opinion.

Axel Springer stands up for the freedom of the press. A free press is an essential element of our democratic society. The protection of the freedom of the press ranges from the procurement of information to the communication of the news. The protection of the freedom of the press for example, the determination of the bias of a newspaper, the confidentiality of editorial work, and in particular the non-disclosure of sources of information in the interest of a broad flow of information. The freedom of the press may come into conflict with other values that are protected by the Basic Law and is not unconditionally guaranteed. In order to preserve the freedom of the press from being relativized, the interpretation of the laws restricting it have always to be guided by the significance of the freedom of the press, which is in turn constitutive for democracy.

Any influence on content from advertisers, governments or political parties restricts free reporting and is met with aversion by the reader. Independence is thereby the first prerequisite for excellent journalism.

Guidelines: The editors-in-chief and publishing directors at Axel Springer introduced relevant guidelines to safeguard journalistic independence back in 2003. These include the distinction between advertising and editorial copy. The guidelines have been part of the Code of Conduct applicable throughout the Group since 2012.

Charter on Freedom of the Press: Axel Springer SE was one of the signatories of the "European Charter on Freedom of the Press" in May 2009. This formulates principles for the freedom of the press from government intervention, and in particular for their right to safety from surveillance, electronic eavesdropping and searches of editorial departments and computers, and to unimpeded access for journalists and citizens to all domestic and foreign sources of information. The complete text of the "European Charter on Freedom of the Press" can be found at www.pressfreedom.eu.

Promotion of media literacy: Access to knowledge, the understanding of political processes and the development of media literacy are essential preconditions for participating in democratic decisions. For this reason Axel Springer SE promotes the media literacy of young people.

Commitment to Press Freedom: DIE WELT and WELT KOMPAKT supported the World Press Freedom Day in 2010 as the exclusive media partner of the "Reporters without Borders" organization. The front pages of the two daily WELT Group newspapers were published blank on Monday, May 3, 2010 - without lead stories, news, comments or photos. Instead, there was simply a small advert from "Reporters without Borders" at the bottom right of the front pages, drawing readers' attention to the global significance and importance of press freedom.

Online magazine on press freedom: The Axel Springer Akademie publishes an online magazine on press freedom in Germany. Under the motto "Write it loud!" on the website www.20zwoelf.de, 20 young journalists investigate the issue of media freedom in Germany. With the aid of numerous back-



ground reports, interviews and videos, they document how attempts are made to influence independent reporting. They also portray people who champion the fundamental right of freedom of the press in Germany.

"BILD on the election" 2013: In order to give a positive impulse against the falling turnout at elections in recent years, BILD published one day before the election – on Saturday, September 21, 2013 – a thematic special edition with a circulation of more than 40 million copies. The edition illuminated topical political relationships, examined the parties' election programs, introduced the candidates for Chancellor and analyzed the most important opinion polls.

Protection of Intellectual Property: As a media group, Axel Springer is particularly committed to the protection of intellectual property rights of third parties. The applicable laws are instrumental in the protection of intellectual property rights. Since these vary internationally, the respective local versions are to be complied with.

Treatment of sources: Journalists are required to exercise particular care in the treatment of sources and research. They stand up for freedom of expression and of the press and take decisions on the public interest in reporting, which are determined by the law and acknowledged rules of journalistic due diligence.

B.2 Disclosures and references for the reporting period 2014 + 2015 B.2.1 Aspect: Investment

G4-HR1 Percentage and total number of significant investment agreements that include human rights clauses or that underwent human rights screening.

Every significant investment or procurement undergoes human rights screening as part of the due diligence processes.

In view of the organization's growing international presence, Axel Springer SE has adopted a catalog of social standards. This "International Social Policy" is a set of binding guidelines on social integrity and applies to all the organization's activities worldwide. These standards, for example, form part of the contracts for the magazines licensed to other publishing companies.

G4-HR2 Total hours of employee training on policies and procedures concerning aspects of human rights that are relevant to operations, including the percentage of employees trained.

The leadership principles introduced by Axel Springer SE in 2008 are part of the annual continuing education program for employees and managers. This includes seminars on equality, diversity, health management, labor law, reflection on the leadership role, intercultural competence, conflict management, and press law. Axel Springer in Germany had a total number of 70,005 training hours in 2015, thus around 33.3 percent fewer than in 2013.

Supplementary sector disclosures (G4 Media Sector Disclosures):

The training courses offered relating to editorial content include journalistic ethics (Axel Springer Akademie), Code of Conduct, press law, data protection, etc.

B.2.2 Aspect: Non-discrimination

G4-HR3 Incidents of discrimination and actions taken

Incidents of discrimination are not known. Since August 2006, the General Equal Treatment Act (AGG) has been in force in Germany, which is used to put into practice the corresponding European Union anti-discrimination guidelines. In internal seminars, employees have been instructed on the guidelines of the General Equal Treatment Act (AGG).



B.2.8 Aspect: Assessment

G4-HR9 Percentage and total number of departments that have been subject to human rights reviews or human rights impact assessments.

The Group Internal Audit Department is an essential element of modern and efficient corporate management and monitoring (Corporate Governance). Its responsibilities include

- Risk-based audit of the correctness, efficiency, appropriateness and safety of processes, structures and IT systems in all Group companies and departments;
- Assessment of the effectiveness of the centralized and decentralized internal monitoring system (Risk Management, Internal Control System, Compliance Management System);
- Event-related implementation of special orders on behalf of the Executive Board and the Supervisory Board, for example in cases of suspected fraudulent dealings (Fraud Audits);
- Full scope Process and IT Audits for (newly acquired) subsidiaries in Germany and abroad;

Commentary within the framework of the GRI "Media Sector Supplement":

Media organizations can have a significant impact on the aspects of human rights (including the freedom of expression, the representation of human rights, cultural rights, intellectual property and the protection of privacy). Evaluations and impact assessments as to how relevant aspects are integrated into the company, are material to ensure the impacts of the organization are in accordance with the values of their content or editorial guidelines. See General Standard Disclosure G4-56.

Independent and critical journalism

Dr. Mathias Döpfner, CEO of Axel Springer SE, writes the following on this subject in his Foreword to this Sustainability Report:

"The soul and spirit of the Axel Springer company is journalism. We serve our readers with independent and critical information and advice as well as good entertainment. Through our journalistic services we are making a contribution to the strengthening of freedom and democracy. The prerequisite for this is our economic success."

Axel Springer is the only independent media company to have a corporate constitution. The five principles expressed therein serve as a foundation for publishing operations. They define fundamental convictions on social policy, yet do not set out an opinion.

The promotion of adherence to editorial standards when creating content is a continuous process. This includes – in addition to a good journalistic apprenticeship and calling in professional advice – actions such as the critique of papers within the editorial offices or also publicly, and the exchange with Readers' Advisory Councilors. Institutions such as Readers' Advisory Councils help editorial offices to focus even more on the interests, concerns and problems of readers. Editorial offices find out even more directly what is important to readers, what they find good or bad and which issues should be addressed in more depth.

Media services – whether online or in print – must be convincing through their quality; which is why the excellent training of the next generation of journalists is especially important. The Axel Springer Akademie takes a cross-media approach and is for this reason regarded as Germany's most modern school of journalism, successfully integrating classical, traditional journalism with the technology of cross-media presentation.

Any influence on content from advertisers, governments or political parties restricts free reporting and is met with aversion by the reader.



Independence is thereby the first prerequisite for excellent journalism. This is also valued by advertisers. Axel Springer SE insists upon the strict separation of editorial copy and advertising. Advertisements are marked.

Readers can lodge complaints against journalistic content with the Press Council, the institution for voluntary self-regulation of the press, as well as before the courts.

The German Press Council is an organization of the major German publishers' and journalists' associations such as the Federal Association of German Newspaper Publishers (BDZV), the Association of German Magazine Publishers (VDZ), the German Federation of Journalists (DJV), as well as the German Journalists' Union (dju). The Press Council was founded on 20 November 1956.

The Axel Springer SE is represented on the board of trustees of "Reporters without Borders".

Alexander Schröder, Chief Risk & Compliance Officer of Axel Springer SE, participated in the study published by Transparency International on "Corruption in journalism – perception, opinion, solution".

B.2.9 Aspect: Supplier Human Rights Assessment G4-HR10 Percentage of significant suppliers and contractors that were screened using human rights criteria and actions taken.

Every significant investment or procurement undergoes human rights screening as part of the due diligence processes.

Business partners are informed of the company's Code of Conduct. Since 1995, Axel Springer has been making sure that paper suppliers comply with the contractually agreed forestry standards with respect to the clause pertaining to the protection of indigenous peoples. As a customer of publication paper manufacturers in many countries, the company also visits on-site seeking information on the social, economic and ecological conditions in forestry as well as in pulp and paper production. The International Social Policy forms a part of the contracts of the magazines licensed to other publishing companies for example.

B.2.10 Aspect: Human Rights Grievance Mechanisms G4-HR12 Number of complaints and grievances related to human rights as well as methods and mechanisms for resolution.

No complaints or grievances related to human rights with respect to Governance, Risk & Compliance at Axel Springer were recorded in the reporting period 2014 and 2015.

Commentary within the framework of the GRI "Media Sector Disclosures":

The motivation of employees and journalistic credibility are essential prerequisites for the success of a media company. They form a virtual natural barrier against grievances in the field of human rights.

C. Society

The following indicators meet the G4/MSD Guidelines of the "Global Reporting Initiative" (GRI) for the internationally uniform structuring of sustainability reports. ("MSD" stands for Media Sector Disclosures.)

The abbreviation "SO" in the GRI Numbers stands for "Society".



C.1 Management approach for stakeholder concerns: Journalistic independence and social responsibility

G4-DMA-A Report why the Aspect is material. Report the impacts that make this Aspect material.

- As the publisher of digital and printed media, the company is at the heart of society. Journalistic independence and credibility count among the prerequisites.
- A distancing or isolation from social reality would be contrary to the sustainable continued existence of the company.

G4-DMA-B Report how the organization manages the material Aspect or its impacts. (Policies, commitments, goals and targets, responsibilities, resources, specific actions)

Policies

Axel Springer is the only independent media company to have a corporate constitution. The five principles expressed therein serve as a foundation for publishing operations. They define fundamental convictions on social policy, yet do not set out an opinion. Details can be found here.

In addition to these five principles, the company has also defined values that distinguish Axel Springer's corporate culture. In 2008 leadership principles were introduced at Axel Springer, giving managers a framework for action in their daily work.

Guidelines of Journalistic Independence at Axel Springer: The editors-in-chief and publishing directors of the company developed guidelines to safeguard journalistic independence at Axel Springer and introduced them in August 2003 in co-ordination with the Executive Board. Details can be found here.

The catalog of social standards which was published in July 2004 is a binding guideline for social integrity and applies to all the company's activities throughout the world. Axel Springer SE attaches great importance to good corporate governance in the management and control of the enterprise. Moreover, with its first environmental report in 1994 the company published a four-point environmental guideline.

Commitments

The company's social commitment is reviewed and updated in an ongoing exchange of ideas with our stakeholders.

Readers and users of our media services, advertising and print customers, employees, investors, neighbors, visitors, school pupils, students, scientific institutes, state supervisory authorities and regulators, suppliers, NGOs and the media express particular interest in the organization's operations as well as its products at home and abroad.

Goals and targets

Axel Springer is one of the leading integrated multimedia print, online and Web TV companies in Europe. Whether printed or digital: every medium obeys its own laws, but the quality of the content is decisive everywhere. News, views, well told stories – that's what it's about in the future and what it was always about. Our work is networked and cross-media thus integrating the different worlds.

It is a question of journalistic credibility for Axel Springer, to commit itself to the concerns of our readers and viewers and of society as a whole. The various spheres of activity of our social commitment – our media, readers and employees as well as the company itself can be found here.

Responsibilities

The ultimate responsibility for questions relating to social responsibility lies with the Executive Board of Axel Springer SE.



Resources

Among other things the training of young editors at the Axel Springer Akademie

Specific actions

On 1 October 2015 "Bild" delivered a special edition to all households in Germany. The occasion was the 25th anniversary of German reunification.

G4-DMA-C Report the evaluation of the management approach, including the mechanisms for evaluating the effectiveness of the management approach; the results of the evaluation of the management approach; the consequences the organization will draw.

Mechanisms

Market research

Results

Confirmation of actions taken.

Consequences

Further development of measures to strengthen journalistic reader-friendliness and credibility. Supplementary sector disclosures (G4 Media Sector Disclosures):

The requirements for safeguarding journalistic independence at Axel Springer are laid down in the following guidelines (excerpt from the Code of Conduct)

- Publishing staff as well as editors are called upon to make a clear distinction between editorial copy and publications for advertising purposes and to adhere to the regulations for paid advertising.
- The journalists at Axel Springer ensure jointly with the publishing staff that a distinction is made between advertising and editorial copy. Advertising, either through its overall design or major components, for example, its typography may not create the impression that it is part of the title's editorial material. If there is any doubt, the advertisement must be clearly marked and in sufficiently large type as such; attempts by advertising clients or other interested parties to influence content are to be resisted and no agreements may be entered into that could compromise a journalist's independence.
- Editorial publications may not under any circumstances be influenced by the personal or business interests of third parties or the personal economic interests of editors.
- Journalists at Axel Springer shall not report on persons with whom they have a close relationship, especially family members, in the form of copy or photographs unless there is an objective reason for doing so that has been approved by their superior; shall not use their reporting to reap benefits for themselves or others; shall consult their superior if the membership of or the holding of an office or a seat in a society, political party, association or other institution, investment in a company, permitted secondary employment or through a relationship with persons or institutions the impression might be created that the neutrality of their reporting on such societies, political parties, associations, persons or other institutions is thereby compromised; shall pay particular attention to the observance of the legal regulations and ethical obligations of the press concerning inside and other information which may potentially affect security prices.
- In order not to endanger independent journalistic work through the exercise of personal advantage, the mere appearance of the fact that journalists' freedom of decision could be affected by the granting of invitations or gifts is to be avoided
- The journalists at Axel Springer shall ensure that all costs (travel, entertainment etc.), incurred in the course of their research are paid by the editorial office; any exceptions are to be approved by the editor-in-chief; shall not accept gifts that constitute a personal benefit, or if acceptance is impossible to refuse shall pass them on to a charity.



C.2 Disclosures and references for the reporting period 2014 + 2015

C.2.2 Aspect: Anti-corruption

G4-SO3 Percentage and total number of business units assessed for risks related to corruption

As part of the integrated Compliance and Risk Management System introduced at Axel Springer, a systematic collection and evaluation of all annual compliance-related risks, also including corruption, is carried out every year. Furthermore, corruption-related risks are the subject of audits by the Group's internal audit department. Whenever evidence of corruption-related risks emerges from compliance-related reporting or the compliance management system, audits and investigations, this flows into the inventory of risks. In this respect, 100% of the active operational holdings in the risk management system as well as the divisions of Axel Springer SE were the object of observation by Compliance and thus corruption-related risks.

G4-S04 Communication and training on anti-corruption policies and procedures

Various measures to provide information and training on anti-corruption policies and procedures and on legally compliant behavior were carried out in the reporting period. Among other things, communication with the decision makers of Axel Springer SE on issues such as corruption was made possible through the introduction of an electronic whistleblowing system accessible to external and internal groups of persons. Furthermore, in 2014 a guideline on the acceptance and granting of gifts and invitations entered into force and the internal publication of the guideline was accompanied by appropriate communication measures. Every new employee continues to be informed of the Axel Springer Code of Conduct during the recruitment phase. In addition, the requirements of the Code of Conduct are taught in seminars and training courses on various topics.

In accordance with its procedural rules, the supervisory board has established four committees – Executive Committee, Personnel Committee, Nomination Committee and Audit Committee – which support the work of the plenum. The Audit Committee is kept regularly up-to-date.

In accordance with its procedural rules, the supervisory board has established four committees – Executive Committee, Personnel Committee, Nomination Committee and Audit Committee – which support the work of the plenum.

The Audit Committee, notwithstanding the responsibilities of the Supervisory Board as a whole, is responsible for the preparation of the decisions made by the Supervisory Board concerning the adoption of the financial statements and the approval of the consolidated financial statements, by conducting a preliminary review of the financial statements, the dependency report and consolidated financial statements, the management report and the consolidated management report, reviewing the proposal for the appropriation of the profits, discussing the audit report with the auditor and by monitoring the financial reporting process and the statutory audit, in particular the independence of the auditor, the monitoring of the effectiveness of the Risk Management System, the Internal Control System (ICS), the Compliance Management System as well as the Internal Audit System. It is further responsible for the audit of the interim financial statements and interim reports and the discussion of the auditor's report of the review of the interim financial statements. With regard to the statutory audit, it is responsible among other things for the preparation of the proposal by the Supervisory Board at the Annual General Meeting on the selection of the auditor, as well as for the granting of the audit mandate to the auditor and the determination of focal points for the audit. The Audit Committee is composed of Lothar Lanz as chair, Dr Giuseppe Vita as deputy chair and Oliver Heine, Rudolf Knepper and Dr. h. c. Friede Springer as further members.

G4-S05 Confirmed incidents of corruption and actions taken

In 2015, in addition to previously existing channels of communication, an electronic whistleblowing system was introduced that can be used both externally as well as internally, for example to report cases of corruption. Such instances are subject to a standardized process – where appropriate with



defined escalation levels. Possible measures range from a detailed analysis of the relationships between cause and effect, the adjustment of processes and internal control systems up to training and sanctions. The focus is on the prevention of incidents of corruption. Quantitative data is not collected in order to protect confidentiality.

C.2.3 Aspect: Public Policy

G4-S06 Total value of financial and in-kind contributions to political parties, politicians, and related institutions by country.

Axel Springer SE does not support any political parties, nor does it make any illicit contributions of this kind.

Commentary within the framework of the GRI "Media Sector Disclosures":

Axel Springer SE does not support any political parties, nor does it make any contributions of this kind.

C.2.4 Aspect: Anti-competitive Behavior

G4-SO7 Total number of legal actions for anti-competitive behavior, anti-trust, and monopoly practices and their outcomes.

There are no legal actions of this type.

C.2.5 Aspect: Compliance with the law

G4-SO8 Monetary value of significant fines and total number of non-monetary sanctions for non-compliance with laws and regulations.

The publishing companies are advised by the legal departments of the company with the aim of avoiding fines and non-monetary sanctions for non-compliance with laws and regulations. Cases of significant fines as well as non-monetary sanctions for non-compliance with laws and regulations did not occur.

D. Produktverantwortung

The following indicators meet the G 3.1 MSS Guidelines of the "Global Reporting Initiative" (GRI) for the uniform, international structuring of sustainability reports. ("MSS" stands for Media Sector Supplement.)

The abbreviation "PR" in the GRI Numbers stands for "Product Responsibility".

D.1 Management approach for stakeholder concerns: Product responsibility and customer satisfaction

G4-DMA-A Report why the Aspect is material. Report the impacts that make this Aspect material.

- Customer satisfaction is one of the material prerequisites for the sustainable continued existence
 of the company.
- Growing customer satisfaction has a positive effect on the company's success.

G4-DMA-B Report how the organization manages the material Aspect or its impacts. (Policies, commitments, goals and targets, responsibilities, resources, specific actions)



Policies

By product responsibility Axel Springer SE refers to the responsibility that the company takes with regard to its media products. This consists first and foremost of:

- journalistic independence
- care in the treatment of sources
- the distinction between advertising and editorial copy
- the code of conduct of the advertising industry
- the protection of minors
- data protection and the security of digital information systems
- the safeguarding of social and environmental standards along the wood, pulp, paper, printing and recycling chain as well as in the procurement of advertising media
- compliance with justice and the law.

Commitments

Compliance with legal requirements, voluntary commitments and corporate guidelines.

Goals and targets

Axel Springer SE wants to be the world's leading digital media company.

Responsibilities

The ultimate responsibility for questions relating to product responsibility lies with the Executive Board of Axel Springer SE.

Resources

Monitoring is – apart from the responsibility of the main editorial offices and publishing house managers, the legal department, the Human Resources managers, the Data Protection officers, the Purchasing Department and the Corporate Sustainability Office – central to the Governance, Risk & Compliance division. Compliance for Axel Springer means compliance with legal requirements, voluntary commitments and corporate guidelines.

Specific actions

Employees and executives are trained within the framework of the Principles of Leadership introduced in 2008. Editors are instructed in and made aware of quality assurance in journalism in the course of the training they receive at the Axel Springer Akademie and from their superiors. Training on compliance with data protection regulations is also part of the training program.

G4-DMA-C Report the evaluation of the management approach, including the mechanisms for evaluating the effectiveness of the management approach; the results of the evaluation of the management approach; the consequences the organization will draw.

Mechanisms

include Readers' Advisory Councils and market research;

Results

Suggestions for improvement

Consequences

Continuous improvement in customer-friendliness and the assurance of quality standards.



Supplementary sector disclosures (G4 Media Sector Disclosures): M2: Methodology for assessing and monitoring adherence to content creation values

The idea of the newspaper has to do with attitude as well: The user and reader wants to know what editorial content stands for. Unless this attitude is self-evident, journalism loses its appeal. This is as important today as it was hundreds of years ago – whether on paper or on the Internet.

Axel Springer SE's broad media portfolio encompasses multimedia brand families such as the BILD and WELT Groups.

Editors at Axel Springer SE are aware of the responsibility they have for information and opinion-forming. Independence is the indispensable foundation of their work. The guidelines on the journalistic endeavors of all editors safeguard the general conditions that make independent and critical journalism possible at Axel Springer.

Protection of Intellectual Property: As a media group, Axel Springer is particularly committed to the protection of the intellectual property rights of third parties. The applicable laws are instrumental in the protection of intellectual property rights. Since these vary internationally, the respective local versions are to be complied with.

Treatment of sources: Journalists are required to exercise particular care in the treatment of sources and research. They stand up for freedom of expression and of the press and take decisions on the public interest in reporting, which are determined by the law and acknowledged rules of journalistic due diligence.

The editors-in-chief are responsible for the observation and implementation of the guidelines in the company's day-to-day editorial activities.

To ensure compliance with laws, voluntary commitments and guidelines, Axel Springer has introduced a Group-wide compliance management system. A Compliance Committee monitors compliance with the Code of Conduct. The Code of Conduct is part of the compliance organization and is to be understood as a summary of the Axel Springer rules of conduct, which also include the guidelines for safeguarding journalistic independence. (Further information can be found here.)

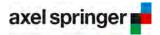
The safeguarding of standards facilitates the continuous exchange with readers. This includes the processing of readers' letters and e-mails, the critique of papers, as well as the discussion with Readers' Advisory Councilors. (Further information can be found here.)

Online-Netiquette: In order to safeguard standards online as well for example, the BILD.de community has established relevant guidelines. Among other things, contributions are not tolerated if they discriminate against others because of their gender, age, language, origin, religious affiliation or beliefs, or if they violate laws. Corresponding entries and user profiles are deleted immediately. Texts, pictures, and videos may only be uploaded if the author holds the copyright! Quotes are to be identified as such. With the "REPORT" function, users have the opportunity to report contributions that are not in accordance with Netiquette.

M3: Actions taken to improve adherence to content creation values

Axel Springer is the only independent media company to have a corporate constitution. The five principles expressed therein serve as a foundation for publishing operations. They define fundamental convictions on social policy, yet do not set out an opinion.

Around 2800 editors were employed by the Axel Springer SE titles in 2013. The promotion of adherence to content creation values is a continuous process. This includes – in addition to a good



journalistic apprenticeship and calling in professional advice – actions such as the critique of papers within the editorial offices or also publicly, and the exchange with Readers' Advisory Councilors. Institutions such as Readers' Advisory Councils help editorial offices to focus even more on the interests, concerns and problems of readers. Editorial offices find out even more directly what is important to readers, what they find good or bad and which issues should be addressed in more depth.

Media services – whether in print or online – must be convincing through their quality; which is why the excellent training of the next generation of journalists is especially important. The Axel Springer Akademie takes a cross-media approach and is for this reason regarded as Germany's most modern school of journalism, successfully integrating classical, traditional journalism with the technology of cross-media presentation.

Any influence on content from advertisers, governments or political parties restricts free reporting and is met with aversion by the reader.

Independence is thereby the first prerequisite for excellent journalism. This is also valued by advertisers. Axel Springer SE insists upon the strict separation of editorial copy and advertising. Advertisements are marked.

Readers can lodge complaints against journalistic content with the Press Council, the institution for voluntary self-regulation of the press, as well as before the courts.

The German Press Council is an organization of the major German publishers' and journalists' associations such as the Federal Association of German Newspaper Publishers (BDZV), the Association of German Magazine Publishers (VDZ), the German Federation of Journalists (DJV), as well as the German Journalists' Union (dju). The Press Council was founded on 20 November 1956.

The organization has had its head office in Berlin since June 2009.

M4: Actions taken in relation to the dissemination and accessibility of content

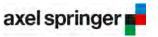
Actions taken for the dissemination and accessibility of content include, among other things, the development of press outlets, the expansion of journalistic services on the Internet, either as audio or moving image files as well as apps. This is accompanied by measures which facilitate the access to knowledge, the understanding of political processes as well as the development of media literacy. Digitization: As part of the digitization strategy, existing print titles and content are being transferred onto digital distribution channels. The service is supplemented through online portals. This promotes the accessibility of journalistic content.

Readers' satisfaction: Within the context of its customer retention initiative, Axel Springer SE compared itself with its German competition for the eighth time in 2015.

- Buyers / readers of press products
- Users of websites
- Advertising customers

Online privacy: The online titles provide their users with detailed information on important issues, such as privacy policy, personal data, consent, user profiles, disclosure, cookies / web analytics service, right of access, and right of objection. (data protection using DIE WELT as an example).

Media Protection of Young Persons: The task of Media Protection of Young Persons is to protect children and adolescents from influences from the adult world, which are likely to impair the development of young people as independent and active members of the community, or even to threaten this development.



Axel Springer SE respects the legal requirements of the Media Protection of Young Persons and beyond that also pays attention to self-imposed obligations, such as those in Germany imposed by the German Advertising Standards Council and the German Press Council.

M5: Complaints related to content dissemination

The company's legal departments examine every single complaint related to the editorial content in our publications. If legally necessary, replies or corrections are published and a recurrence of violations prevented; in rare individual cases, material compensation is also paid. In Germany, the legal editing of our publishing content at an early stage helped to keep the number of incidents of non-compliance low.

Readers can lodge complaints against journalistic content with the Press Council, the institution for voluntary self-regulation of the press, as well as before the courts.

The German Press Council is an organization of the major German publishers' and journalists' associations the Federal Association of German Newspaper Publishers (BDZV), the Association of German Magazine Publishers (VDZ), the German Federation of Journalists (DJV), as well as the German Journalists' Union (dju) in ver.di (German United Services Union). The Press Council was founded on 20 November 1956. The organization has had its head office in Berlin since June 2009.

Complaints against promotional content can be lodged with the advertising industry's voluntary self-regulation institutions, as well as before the courts.

The German Advertising Standards Council, founded by the ZAW (Central Association of the German Advertising Industry) in 1972 as a self-regulating institution, works to settle conflicts between complainants from the population and advertising companies. Members of the groups represented in the ZAW make up the working panel.

M6: Methods to interact with audiences and results

The continuous exchange with the readers and users of our services is one of the key success factors for a media enterprise. Numerous activities serve this purpose.

The safeguarding of standards facilitates the continuous exchange with readers. This includes the processing of readers' letters and e-mails. Important instruments for the direct exchange with readers are the Readers' Advisory Councils. They are intended to help us focus even more on the interests, concerns and problems of readers. They tell us what is important to them, what they find good or bad and what issues should be addressed in more depth.

bild.de has established a "Community function" to promote the exchange of ideas with readers. The very active bild.de community on Facebook and Twitter also aids the exchange with users.

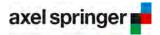
Within the context of its customer retention initiative, Axel Springer SE compared itself with its German competition for the ninth time in 2015.

D.2 Disclosures and references for the reporting period 2014 + 2015

D.2.1 Aspect: Customer Health and Safety

G4-PR1 Life cycle stages in which health and safety impacts of products and services are assessed for improvement, and percentage of significant products and services categories subject to such procedures

Axel Springer is one of the leading integrated multimedia online, print and TV companies in Europe. All of the life cycle stages of the products and services are continuously assessed in terms of potential for optimization in the areas of health and safety. There is a focus on the field of press printing.



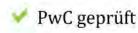
The printer's trade association ETEM regularly issues position statements in Germany on health issues in connection with the production (and use) of media products. ETEM has published numerous studies on this topic (www.bgdp.de/index2.htm).

Further studies and descriptions can be found in this Sustainability Report under the Service Menu:

- Printing ink and Sustainability (2006): Printing methods, printing inks and raw materials are presented in general and under the aspect of sustainability on 25 pages.
- Ecological Learning Processes in the Paper Chain (2000): This study was written at the university of St. Gallen in Switzerland. Among other things, it describes how companies integrate ecological insights into their decision-making processes, using Axel Springer SE as an example.
- Evaluation of the ecological life cycles of newspapers and magazines (1998): This analysis researches the environmental aspects of pulp and paper production using data gathered in Sweden, Germany, and Canada. It was prepared in co-operation with the Stora Enso and Canfor companies.

G4-PR5 Practices related to customer satisfaction, including results of surveys measuring customer satisfaction.

Axel Springer SE has set itself the goal of becoming Europe's most customer-friendly media company. A differentiated measurement and evaluation system has been developed for this purpose. Within the context of its customer retention initiative, Axel Springer SE compared itself with its German competition for the 9th time in 2015.



D.2.3 Aspect: Marketing

G4-PR7 Total number of incidents of non-compliance with regulations and voluntary codes concerning marketing communications, including advertising, promotion, and sponsorship, by type of outcomes

Only three complaints were submitted to the German Advertising Council in the reporting period 2014 - 2015 relating to Axel Springer SE or its subsidiaries:

1. "Cocaine dealer" – advertisement in Welt am Sonntag (2014)

In 2014, there was a complaint about an advertisement from Welt am Sonntag "Cocaine dealer" (dachshund with white powder on its snout looks into camera; "Have you arranged a meeting with your cocaine dealer already today?(...) in good company"). The allegation of a breach of ethics and morality was rejected as follows:

Of course you are correct to say that the displayed image of a dog with white powder on its nose could be suitable to trivialize the use of cocaine and thereby that of a dangerous drug. On the other hand however, from our point of view such an intention is not apparent from the overall context of the advertisement. The display announces rather a detailed report on the use of cocaine in the German capital. In no way is it suggested that the use of cocaine is something harmless or even desirable. This also does not result through the use of the term "good company". For saying this does not in itself state that the use of cocaine itself is something good; rather this shows that even people you might not expect take cocaine. In doing this, the advertisement literally relates to "bad and good company". Against this background, we assume that the advertisement, and in particular the image of the dog, certainly presents the consumption of cocaine to a certain extent in an ironically exaggerated form. We do not, however, see a trivialization or even incitement to consume.

2. "Refugees" – Radio trailer for Welt am Sonntag on NDR2 (2015)

In 2015, there was another complaint about a radio trailer from the Welt am Sonntag, which aired on



NDR2 and took up the political debate about the issue of refugees. The complainant found the contents contemptuous, the criticism was however again rejected by the Advertising Council: In the spot, the main themes of the advertised Sunday newspaper are called up. The fact that the fears of the population and their thematisation are addressed, especially in the current political situation, lies in the product advertised. Accordingly we are not of the opinion that fears are being kindled here in an unacceptable way. The spot describes the political situation concerning the refugee problem and the potential issues deriving from it. Since radio spots are produced several days before the first broadcast as a rule, it cannot be assumed that the attacks in Paris had already occurred when the spots were produced.

3. "Sad confession" radio spot for Ampya (2015)

A young girl admits to stealing her sister's boyfriend. According to the criticism by the complainant, the content suggests that a breach of trust within the family is not morally reprehensible. The Advertising Council was also unable to find a breach of the code of conduct:

After reviewing the advertising campaign, the German Advertising Council does not call it into question for the following reasons: A teenage girl in her bedroom reports to the camera between stuffed toys and posters on the wall that she has stolen her sister's boyfriend. At the same time it is clearly shown that she is torn between pride and insecurity - and appropriate to her age doesn't know exactly how she should deal with the situation. We do not see in the spot that abuses of trust or similar are positively portrayed, but that the chaotic world of feelings confronting young people is shown to be frequent at that age. Since there was no breach of the code of conduct of the German Advertising Council, the German Advertising Council will not object.

Commentary within the framework of the GRI "Media Sector Disclosures": Advertising aimed to promote sales of the publishing products of Axel Springer SE orients itself towards the principles and voluntary codes of conduct of the German Advertising Standards Council and complies with its decisions when complaints are submitted by the public.

D.2.4 Aspect: Media literacy

M7: Actions taken to empower audiences through media literacy skills development

Access to knowledge, the understanding of political processes and the development of media literacy are among the preconditions which are essential for participating in democratic decision-making processes. For this reason Axel Springer SE promotes the media literacy of young people.

BILD is a project partner of Stiftung Lesen (Reading Foundation): The work of Stiftung Lesen is not only financed by contributions from foundation councilors and by the public sector, but also by numerous institutions, companies and private persons. Through this support from numerous project partners, donors and sponsors, more than 140 projects and programs could be achieved that contribute to shaping the reading landscape in Germany.

D.2.5 Aspect: Protection of Customer Data G4-PR8 Total number of substantiated complaints regarding breaches of customer privacy and losses of customer data.

In accordance with the legal definition in the Federal Data Protection Act (BDSG), personal data in Germany means "any information concerning the personal or material circumstances of an identified or identifiable individual".

The European Union has regulated the treatment of personal data since 1995 in the Data Protection Directive 95/46/EC of the European Parliament and the European Council. Its implementation into national law is through the BDSG. This implementation allows for different organizational forms of data protection in companies. The German regulation follows the model of voluntary self-monitoring in the form of company Data Protection Officers.



Data Protection Officers have been appointed for the German companies within Axel Springer SE as outlined in the Federal Data Protection Act (§ 4f BDSG). These Data Protection Officers work towards compliance with the Data Protection Act and other regulations on data protection at Axel Springer SE and all its affiliated companies.

The number of inquiries from data protection supervisory authorities and customers has increased every year since 2007. A continuing increase in the number of external inquiries is expected. These inquiries were mainly requests for information and contradictions in advertising. The wishes of the inquirers were complied with in each case.

In addition to the external inquiries, there was a sharp increase in the number of internal inquiries and projects. This reflects the increasing importance of corporate data protection in all internal procedures and processes. This is taken account of through increased consultation and training, so that the understanding and sensitivity to the concerns of data protection are increasing continuously.

D.2.6 Aspect: Compliance with the law G4-PR9 Monetary value of significant fines for non-compliance with laws and regulations concerning the provision and use of products and services.

No fines were imposed for non-compliance.

The company's legal departments examine every single complaint related to the editorial content in our publications. If legally necessary, replies or corrections are published and a recurrence of violations prevented; in rare individual cases, material compensation is also paid.

In Germany, the legal editing of our publishing content at an early stage helped to keep the number of incidents of non-compliance low.



Specific Standard Disclosures on Environment



The Global Reporting Initiative (GRI) sees itself as an ongoing international dialog which, through the definition of performance indicators, involves a number of stakeholder groups worldwide. These include companies, universities, governmental organizations and non-governmental organizations from the fields of labor, social affairs, human rights and the environment.

Environmental Indicators

The following indicators meet the G4/MSD Guidelines of the "Global Reporting Initiative" (GRI) for the internationally uniform structuring of sustainability reports. ("MSD" stands for Media Sector Disclosures.)

The abbreviation "EN" in front of the GRI Numbers stands for "Environment".

- 1. Management approach for stakeholder concerns:
 High environmental standards of Axel Springer SE
 G4-DMA-A Report why the Aspect is material. Report the impacts that make this Aspect material.
- Sustainable growth and a sustainable increase in value emerge from the triad of social, environmental and economic responsibility.
- A publishing house committed to critical journalism must itself stand up to close scrutiny with regard to these standards.

G4-DMA-B Report how the organization manages the material Aspect or its impacts. (Policies, commitments, goals and targets, responsibilities, resources, specific actions)

Policies

Company Policies - Organization-wide policy that defines the organization's overall commitment related to the Environmental Aspects.

With its first environmental report in 1994, Axel Springer SE published a four-point environmental guideline. It still serves today as a practical guide to the measures introduced by the company in the interests of environmental protection.

To raise environmental consciousness among its readers, business associates and staff.



To promote the environmentally-friendly production of raw materials by exerting a positive influence on suppliers.

To use environmentally efficient technologies and materials in all corporate divisions to reduce the burden on the environment, use materials sparingly and ensure their reusability.

To avoid or reduce the environmental impact by reducing energy and water requirements, emissions and waste per unit produced.

Commitments

Monitoring

Compliance for Axel Springer means compliance with legal requirements, voluntary commitments and corporate guidelines. For this, awareness is raised on the part of the employees. Violations of guidelines and regulations can damage the environment, adversely affect the reputation of the company and cause economic damage.

Against this background appropriate structures and processes have been established to ensure behavior compliant with laws and regulations for all corporate officers, executives and employees. The Axel Springer SE Code of Conduct gives employees reliable orientation. The Compliance department monitors compliance.

Goals and targets

Goals regarding performance relevant to the Environment Aspects.

The goal is the continuous improvement of efficiency in the use of resources. This primarily has to do with the operation of printing plants, server systems and computers, the administration of offices, the distribution of newspapers and magazines, the procurement of printing paper, the consumption of water and energy, as well as the generation of waste and emissions.

Responsibilities

The Corporate Sustainability Office is a Group administrative department which is attached to the Chief Executive Officer's division. The Corporate Sustainability Office supports and advises throughout the group all the relevant divisions of the company with respect to the ecological optimization of processes and coordinates the corresponding pilot projects. In the printing plants as well as the publishing office locations, environmental and safety officers are responsible for the operative implementation and ensuring of environmental standards. Contacts are also available in the subsidiaries for questions of sustainability management.

Resources

Corporate Sustainability Office, internal and external experts for processing the GRI indicators, energy audit, etc.

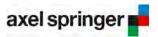
Specific Actions

Actions related to training and raising awareness

Questions concerning environmental optimization are integrated into education programs as well as being part of the introductory seminars for trainees. At the same time, sustainability issues are addressed in internal communications media.

G4-DMA-C Report the evaluation of the management approach, including the mechanisms for evaluating the effectiveness of the management approach; the results of the evaluation of the management approach; the consequences the organization will draw.

Continuous sustainability reporting according to GRI with external assurance.



Supplementary sector disclosures (G4 Media Sector Disclosures):

The Corporate Sustainability Officer of Axel Springer SE maintains regular contact with the Environment and Safety Officers at the various locations. The company publishes a sustainability report every two years externally assured to the highest GRI standards.

Transparency in the paper chain is documented through the publication of the suppliers of printing paper. Contracts with suppliers contain sustainability-related clauses such as the Forestry Standards which are also verified by the company on site. In 2012 and 2013 these included visits to suppliers – e.g. jointly with the environmental organization Greenpeace to eucalyptus plantations and short fiber pulp manufacturers in Uruguay. The proportion of used paper in printing paper averages around 77 percent. 86 percent of newsprint paper contains used paper.

The efficiency in the use of printing paper is optimized by measures used to reduce mill broke. Returns (= unsold copies of newspapers and magazines) are reduced through the continually refined control of copies delivered to the respective sales outlets.

Newspapers and magazines are supplied to municipal waste paper collection points for recycling by readers. The collection rate in Germany amounts to approx. 80 percent.

2. Details and references for the reporting period 2014 + 2015

2.1 Aspect: Materials

G4-EN1 Materials used by weight or volume

The quantity of the materials used both in the printing process as well as at office locations is documented in the table.

Supplementary sector disclosures (G4 Media Sector Disclosures):

As an indicator for efficient resource management, the presentation of specific indicators is more important than simply listing absolute consumption figures. The prerequisite for this is the definition of a functional unit, such as, for example, the ,square meters of printed paper'.

	2013	2014	2015
Raw materials			
For producing our own magazines, printing paper purchased (in tonnes)	315,385	209,036	150,023
Printing paper which is processed in our own printing plants in Germany and Hungary for our own and other products (in tonnes)	159,297	137,857	124,172
Millions of square meters of printed area in our own printing plants for our own and other products	7,063	5,224	4,922
Supplements and pre-products (in tonnes)	37,087	37,237	42,465
Printing Ink (in tonnes)	2,932	2,611	1,587
Damping-agent concentrate (in tonnes)	181	183	176
Operating Materials			
Printing Plates (in tonnes)	516	455	479
Printing plate developer (in tonnes)	49	42	44
Lubricants (in tonnes)	16	6	12
Production cleaning agents (in tonnes)	213	246	201
Other operating materials (in tonnes)	5	1	1



Auxiliary materials			
Packaging materials (in tonnes)	257	214	205
Stitching wire (in tonnes)	11	11	9

Note

Due to the sale of a number of magazines (Hörzu, Funk Uhr, TV Neu and Bild der Frau) and by the integration of Axel Springer Hungary into the Ringier Axel Springer AG in Zurich in 2014, the comparison with the previous year figures from 2013 is no longer meaningful.



PwC geprüft

G4-EN2 Percentage of materials used that are recycled input materials

In 2015, around 77 percent (2014: 81 percent) of the newspaper and magazine papers used to print the company's titles included used paper.



PwC evaluated

G4-EN3 Energy consumption within the organization

Record of the amount of gas, district heating and electricity used by the company worldwide.

Energy Types	2014	2015
Electricity	91.231 MWh (328.433 GJ)	89.377 MWh (321.759 GJ)
District heating	33.558 MWh (120.810 GJ)	31.394 MWh (113.018 GJ)
Natural gas	19.199 MWh (69.117 GJ)	16.662 MWh (59.984 GJ)
Total	143.989 MWh (518.360 GJ)	137.433 MWh (494.760 GJ)

Umrechnungsfaktor GJoule vs. kWh = 1/277,78

Umrechnungsfaktor Erdgas m3 (L- und H-Gas Gemisch): 1 m3 = 11 kWh

Notes on the energy use recorded for the entire company

Digitization and the internationalization of the company have made the collection of data more difficult in recent years due to the growing number of consolidated subsidiaries. This has reduced the completeness of the energy data documented in the Sustainability Report.

To counter this problem, the company has adopted a new approach: Among other things, the numbers for cost categories – such as energy – are merged in Group Accounting for the entire company. Existing 'reporting lines' to the many subsidiaries are now also used to determine the amount of energy used. For this purpose, the world-wide interface-linked data collection tool "IAS Notes" has been expanded to include a "Reporting Energy" input mask. This allows for an initial, for the most part complete record of the energy (natural gas, district heating and electricity) used by the company as well as the 180 (status 31 January 2015) fully consolidated subsidiaries world-wide for the years 2014 and 2015. This new method of data collection will be further developed and optimized.

The recording of the the quantity of natural gas, district heating and electricity used by the company, including the fully consolidated subsidiaries, resulted for the year 2015 in a total of 137,433 MWh (2014 = 143,989 MWh).

Due to the learning curve accompanying the use of this method for the first time to record global amounts of energy used (electricity, district heating and natural gas), the data obtained using the data collection tool "IAS Notes" is subject to a number of inaccuracies.



Causes of data inaccuracies:

- Office moves, which occur in a growing company, lead to "mixed" energy quantity accounts and
 thus contribute to data inaccuracies. A number of the consolidated subsidiaries reported the
 amount of energy (electricity, district heating, natural gas) either only incompletely, clearly implausibly or not at all. Taking the energy costs reported by these companies into account however, it is
 clear that the orders of magnitude are negligible for the overall view. Where data reports of energy
 amounts were missing, an estimate of energy costs has been made.
- Rental accounting transparency: A number of real estate agencies both within and outside the EU, who rent office space to subsidiaries, report the settlement of energy-related costs with a considerable time lag. With a number of rental contracts, especially those for smaller offices, energy costs for heating are included in the rental payments. In these cases, the amount of energy used was determined by using average costs. In cases of incomplete data reporting, average costs were estimated. In some subsidiaries, international parts of the company were allocated the same average costs for different countries. Where no energy costs were available, energy amounts were not projected in order to ensure consistency in cost recording.

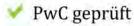
External plausibility check

The recording of the the quantity of natural gas, district heating and electricity used by the company, including the fully consolidated subsidiaries, resulted for the year 2015 in a total of 137,433 MWh (2014 = 143,989 MWh). Of this, a total of 105,204 MWh was determined for the year 2014, in the framework of the external energy audits of the use of natural gas, district heating and electricity carried out at selected locations in Germany in 2015 and validated by ECG. This corresponds to 69 percent of the use of natural gas, district heating and electricity specified in this report for the overall company 2014.

The remaining 31 percent specified in this report for the year 2014, are the quantities of natural gas, district heating and electricity obtained solely through the data collection tool "IAS notes" used by Group Accounting, which is interface-linked to all parts of the company and subsidiaries world-wide. As the energy audit was not carried out again for 2015, the share of the externally validated amounts of energy (electricity, district heating, natural gas) for 2015 is 39 percent and the share of data obtained solely through the data collection tool "IAS notes" used by Group Accounting is 61 percent.

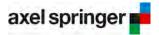
The external validation carried out by ECG is based both on a review of raw data from the load profile as well as a review of manually recorded energy bills including invoices for additional costs.

Objectives: To record 75 percent of the global use of energy by Axel Springer SE in the form of electricity, district heating and natural gas, in validated quality for the years 2016 and 2017.



G4-EN5 Energy intensity

Data refers to our own newspaper printing facilities in Germany. The digitization and the internationalization of the company have reduced the representativeness of the data reported for the whole company over the past few years, such as for example in the field of energy. This problem arises when determining the total energy consumed by a large company, including its consolidated business units. Through an initial, almost complete record of the energy used by the approximately 180 for the most part digital subsidiaries worldwide by Group Accounting, a significant part of the CO2 emissions calculated from this for the company can now also be documented for 2014 and 2015. Work is currently



being done on the further differentiation of the data as well as on an intensity ratio appropriate for Internet companies.

All 3 printing facilities report different values for the energy intensity ratio.

The organization-specific metric used to calculate energy intensity is printed surface area in millions of m2.

The types of energy included in the intensity ratio are: gas, electricity and district heating.

The ratio refers to the energy consumption within the organization.

G4-EN6 Reduction of energy consumption

Data refers to our own newspaper printing facilities in Germany. The digitization and the internationalization of the company have reduced the representativeness of the data reported for the whole company over the past few years, such as for example in the field of energy. This problem arises when determining the total energy consumed by a large company, including its consolidated business units. Through an initial, almost complete record of the energy used by the approximately 180 for the most part digital subsidiaries worldwide by Group Accounting, a significant part of the CO2 emissions calculated from this for the company can now also be documented for 2014 and 2015. Work is currently being done on the further differentiation of the data for the whole company.

Supplementary sector disclosures (G4 Media Sector Disclosures):

The gradual optimization of the energy efficiency and CO2 efficiency of servers and data processing centers is at the forefront in the area of digital media services. To this end, Axel Springer has taken part in pilot projects in co-operation with the Federal Environment Agency and the Technical University of Berlin within the scope of the "Green IT Berlin-Brandenburg" initiative. In co-operation with the Norwegian operators of data processing centers, the "Fjord-IT" pilot project was initiated, involving the reduction of CO2 emissions by using electricity generated through hydropower.

G4-EN7 Reductions in energy requirements of products and services

With its numerous titles, Axel Springer SE offers editorial content both digitally and in print. Against this background, indicator EN7 is only of limited relevance, especially as reading editorial content – whether digital or on paper – does not in itself consume energy. The decision as to whether editorial content is assimiliated digitally or in print lies with the user. The editorial offices inform users and readers regularly about alternatives and innovations in the field of energy-saving digital readers.

2.5 Aspect: Emissions, effluents, and waste Notes on emission data

The digitization and the internationalization of the company have diminished the representativeness of energy data in recent years. Through an initial, to a large degree complete record of the energy (natural gas, district heating and electricity) used by the approximately 180 for the most part digital subsidiaries worldwide by Group Accounting, a significant part of the CO2 emissions calculated from this for the company can now also be documented for 2014 and 2015. Work is currently being done on the further differentiation of the data for the whole company.

CO2 emission factors for the specific types of energy are used for the presentation of the CO2 emissions generated by the whole company worldwide. The identification of greenhouse gas emissions for recorded resource use is made here in tonnes of CO2 equivalents (CO2e). With a view to better readability, this text only uses the spelling "CO2".

For the conversion of the various energy resource uses into the resulting CO2 emissions, the World Resources Institute (WRI, Washington DC) and the World Business Council for Sustainable Development (WBCSD, Geneva) have created the Greenhouse Gas Protocol (GHG Protocol). It is used worldwide by companies and institutions worldwide, including the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA, London). Various institutions periodically publish updated conversion tables for most of the countries in the world.



DEFRA data from the years 2014 and 2015 was taken as a basis for this Sustainability Report. As DEFRA had no rendering value for Mauritius, the DEFRA average value for Africa was taken. Greenhouse Gas Protocol values last published by the WBCSD in Geneva in 2009 were used for the Czech Republic and Turkey, as no specific DEFRA values were available here either.

(Note: Since June 2016, the emission factors for the production of electricity outside the UK is no longer available free of charge. This information was still freely available at the time this report was prepared.)

Overview of the entire company's energy-related CO2 emissions taking into account a) the combustion of natural gas in the company's own plants (Scope 1), b) indirect emissions from the purchase of the energy sources electricity and district heating (Scope 2) as well as c) the indirect emissions resulting in the supply chain for natural gas, electricity and district heating (Scope 3).

CO2 emissions from the combustion of natural gas by location (Scope 1) for 2014 and 2015

Scope-1	2014	2015
Total	3.543 t CO2	3,073 t CO2

CO2 emissions from the purchase of district heating and electricity by location (Scope 2) for 2014 and 2015

Scope-2	2014	2015
Summe	52.195 t CO2	51,336 t CO2

CO2 emissions from services and use of infrastructure (Scope 3)

Scope-3	2014	2015
Summe	9.378 t CO2	9.926 t CO2



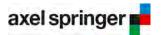
PwC evaluated

The classification into Scope 1, 2 and 3: When considering CO2 emissions resulting from entrepreneurial activity, a distinction is made into three categories: Direct emissions from our own facilities, known as Scope 1 emissions, indirect emissions from purchased energy sources, known as Scope 2 emissions, and indirect emissions from CO2 emissions in the supply chain and from related services, known as Scope 3 emissions.

The following tables show the CO2 emissions generated by the company directly, through the combustion of natural gas in our own plants (Scope 1), as well as indirectly, through purchased district heating (Scope 2) and electricity (Scope 2), in those countries in which consolidated business units are active. Due to their particular relevance, Scope 3 emissions are shown using the example of resource use in Germany.

G4-EN15 Direct greenhouse gas emissions (Scope 1) CO2 emissions from the combustion of natural gas by location (Scope 1) for 2014 and 2015

Country	2014	2015
Germany	2.457 t CO2 13.313 MWh	2.169 t CO2 11.762 MWh
Slovakia	555 t CO2 3.008 MWh	371 t CO2 2.011 MWh



Poland	280 t CO2 1.517 MWh	264 t CO2 1.433 MWh
Hungary	189 t CO2 1.027 MWh	227 t CO2 1.231 Wh
Belgium	21 t CO2 113 MWh	26 t CO2 138 MWh
Netherlands	30 t CO2 162 MWh	16 t CO2 86 MWh
Others	11 t CO2 61 MWh	0,01 t CO2 0,055 MWh
Total	3.543 t CO2 19.199 MWh	3.073 t CO2 16.662 MWh

G4-EN16 Energy indirect greenhouse gas emissions (Scope 2)

CO2 emissions from the purchase of district heating and electricity by location (Scope 2) for 2014 and 2015

Country	2014	2015
Germany	40.921 t CO2	38.657 t CO2
	(103.387 MWh)	(97.794 MWh)
Poland	7.334 t CO2	9.098 t CO2
	(9.403 MWh)	(11.756 MWh)
Serbia	1.245 t CO2	1.347 t CO2
	(2.913 MWh)	(3.079 MWh)
Great Britain	413 t CO2	676 t CO2
	(835 MWh)	(1.464 MWh)
Hungary	729 t CO2	614 t CO2
	(2.300 MWh)	(1.930 MWh)
Netherlands	40 t CO2	206 t CO2
	(100 MWh)	(517 MWh)
South Africa	68 t CO2	130 t CO2
	(79 MWh)	(151 MWh)
Slovakia	189 t CO2	206 t CO2
	(919 MWh)	(998 MWh)
France	219 t CO2	188 t CO2
	(1.987 MWh)	(1.865 MWh)
Ireland	55 t CO2	50 t CO2
	(129 MWh)	(119 MWh)
Spain	54 t CO2	49 t CO2
	(186 MWh)	(170 MWh)
USA	61 t CO2	41 t CO2
	(122 MWh)	(83 MWh)
Belgium	28 t CO2	30 t CO2
	(145 MWh)	(156 MWh)
Switzerland	19 t CO2	19 t CO2
	(626 MWh)	(590 MWh)



Total	52.195 t CO2 (124.790 MWh)	51.336 t CO2 (120.771 MWh)
Others*	784 t CO2 (1.551 MWh)	1 t CO2 (28 MWh)
Mauritius	6 t CO2 (10 MWh)	4 t CO2 (7 MWh)
Austria	12 t CO2 (56 MWh)	8 t CO2 (38 MWh)
Italy	17 t CO2 (41 MWh)	11 t CO2 (28 MWh)

^{*)} The sharp decline in CO2 emissions from 2014 to 2015 under "Other" results from the divestment of the activities of Ringier Axel Springer in the Czech Republic which are no longer consolidated from 2015.

G4-EN17 Other indirect greenhouse gas emissions (Scope 3)

Scope 3 = CO2 emissions indirectly generated through the purchase of services or through the provision of infrastructure for the purchase of commercial energy.

Example Germany

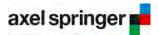
In 2015, 80 percent (2014: 81 percent) of the quantities of natural gas, district heating and electricity used by the company was accounted for by business units in Germany. This corresponds to 74 percent (2014: 77 percent) of the CO2 emissions generated from these types of energy by the company. Against this background, a differentiated consideration of Scope 3 CO2 emissions should be made based on the data available for business units active in Germany. Apart from the CO2 emissions generated in the supply chain for natural gas, electricity and district heating, emissions for externally purchased mobility and logistics services are also reported here for Germany.

Notes on press distribution logistics:

- The data relate to the press distribution transport from the printing plants to the trading partners (wholesalers and railway station bookshops) as well as delivery organizations and special points of sale:
- The weight was collected for the circulations that were logistically supported. Projections were made on the basis of an annual fixed week. From these the CO2 emissions were estimated;
- Account was taken of the entire print run produced in our own and external printing plants in Germany;
- The data relate to all the newspaper titles published in Germany by Axel Springer SE (as well as the titles "Hamburger Abendblatt" and "Berliner Morgenpost" which are logistically supported for the Funke Mediengruppe).

CO2 emissions from services and use of infrastructure (Scope 3)

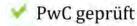
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Scope 3 sources for resource use in Germany	2014	2015
Total in tonnes	42.236 t CO2	36.755 t CO2
Air travel	4.742 t CO2	3.913 t CO2
Local rail transport	85 t CO2	65 t CO2
Car sharing, car rental	570 t CO2	604 t CO2



Total	42.236 t CO2	36.755 t CO2
Emissions from the natural gas supply infrastructure	331 t CO2	292 t CO2
Emissions from the district heating supply infrastructure	46 t CO2	41 t CO2
Emissions from the electricity supply infrastructure	6.491 t CO2	6.396 t CO2
Press distribution	18.103 t CO2	16.823 t CO2
Delivery of printing paper rolls	11.868 t CO2	8.620 t CO2

Notes on press distribution logistics:

- The data relate to the press distribution transport from the printing plants to the trading partners (wholesalers and railway station bookshops) as well as delivery organizations and special points of sale:
- The weight was collected for the circulations that were logistically supported. Projections were made on the basis of an annual fixed week. From these the CO2 emissions were estimated;
- Account was taken of the entire print run produced in our own and external printing plants in Germany;
- The data relate to all the newspaper titles published in Germany by Axel Springer SE (as well as the titles " Hamburger Abendblatt" and " Berliner Morgenpost" which are logistically supported for the Funke Mediengruppe).



G4-EN19 Initiatives to reduce greenhouse gas emissions

A range of measures have been introduced to improve resource efficiency with regard to the emission of greenhouse gases. These include:

- 1. Measures for the more complete documentation of the energy used throughout the entire company
- 2. Carrying out of European energy audits at relevant locations
- 3. Raising of employees' awareness at the publishing office locations with regard to energy efficient behavior (reducing standby energy consumption, etc.)
- 4. Using more energy-efficient computers.
- 5. More energy-efficient ventilating systems for cooling or heating in the printing facilities
- 6. Optimized energy management through periodic shut-downs of equipment in the printing facilities
- 7. Controlling the lighting using motion detectors at the publishing office locations
- 8. Trial use of vehicles with alternative drive technology and energy.

Supplementary sector disclosures (G4 Media Sector Disclosures):

The gradual optimization of the energy efficiency and CO2 efficiency of servers and data processing centers is at the forefront in the area of digital media services. To this end, Axel Springer has taken part in pilot projects in co-operation with the Federal Environment Agency and the Technical University of Berlin within the scope of the "Green IT Berlin-Brandenburg" initiative. The digitization and the internationalization of the company have reduced the representativeness of the data reported for the whole company over the past few years, such as for example in the field of energy. This problem arises when determining the total energy consumed by a large company, including its consolidated business units. Through an initial, almost complete record of the energy used by the approximately 180 for the most part digital subsidiaries worldwide by Group Accounting, a significant part of the CO2 emissions calculated from this for the company can now also be documented for 2014 and 2015.



Work is currently being done on the further differentiation of the data for the whole company.

G4-EN20 Emissions of ozone-depleting gases

No significant emissions are generated in the company's production processes by substances which could contribute to the depletion of the ozone layer.

G4-EN23 Total weight of waste by type and disposal method

The following picture emerges for the printing plants in Germany for the years 2013 to 2015:

Figures in tonnes (t)	2013	2014	2015	2015 vs. 2013
Total residual materials	18,075	14,001	13,124	-27 %
Non-hazardous solid waste for recycling	17,488	13,150	12,259	-30 %
Non-hazardous solid waste for disposal	94	326	325	+246 %
Hazardous solid waste for recycling	434	477	489	13 %
Hazardous solid waste for disposal	59	48	51	-14 %

Supplementary sector disclosures (G4 Media Sector Disclosures):

The disposal of printing ink residues, of plastic waste materials, batteries and electrical equipment, etc. are subject to detailed national and European regulations, with which compliance is reviewed. Mill broke from the company's printing plants is fed into the recycling process through licensed used paper dealers.

2.8 Aspect: Transport

G4-EN30 Significant environmental impacts of transporting products and other goods and materials used for the organization's operations, and transporting members of the workforce.

Fossil fuels are mostly necessary for transporting of goods and people. Three transport areas deserve special mention with respect to the company's operations:

- Delivery of printing paper by suppliers
- Transport of newspapers and magazines from most publishing companies from the publishing wholesaler to the kiosks by independent carriers.
- C02 emissions caused through business trips by employees in Germany.

2.10 Aspect: Supplier Environmental Assessment

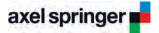
G4-EN32 Percentage of new suppliers that were screened using environmental criteria

Central purchasing: The screening of our relevant suppliers is generally perpetual. As a rule through the presentation of relevant certificates and audits, insights into externally assured Sustainability Reports, exchange of paper profiles, waste paper usage quotas, on-site visits as well as personal discussions.

2.11 Aspect: Environmental Grievance Mechanisms

G4-EN34 Number of grievances about environmental impacts filed, addressed, and resolved through formal grievance mechanisms

No formal official / regulatory complaints were lodged against our own printers in Germany regarding violations of permits, requirements, statutory guidelines during the 2014/2015 reporting period.



Specific Standard Disclosures on Economy



The Global Reporting Initiative (GRI) sees itself as an ongoing international dialog which, through the definition of performance indicators, involves a number of stakeholder groups worldwide. These include companies, universities, governmental organizations and non-governmental organizations from the fields of labor, social affairs, human rights and the environment.

Economic Indicators

The following indicators meet the G4/MSD Guidelines of the "Global Reporting Initiative" (GRI) for the internationally uniform structuring of sustainability reports. ("MSD" stands for Media Sector Disclosures.)

The abbreviation "EC" in the GRI Numbers stands for "Economic".

1. Management approach for stakeholder concern: Economic performance and profitability G4-DMA-A Report why the Aspect is material. Report the impacts that make this Aspect material.

- Profitability
- Profitable growth
- Sustainable increase in the value of the company
- Consistently high dividend yield
- Fair market valuation of the share
- Cooperation based on trust

Without profitability the company has no sustainable continuity. Further details are documented in the 2015 Annual Report.

G4-DMA-B Report how the organization manages the material Aspect or its impacts. (Policies, commitments, goals and targets, responsibilities, resources, specific actions)

Policies

Company Policies - Organization-wide policy that defines the organization's overall commitment related to the Economic Aspects.



Commitments

Corporate Values: Our corporate values are the foundation for the strategic and operational development of the Group. They guide every employee in his/her work and are the cornerstones of our corporate culture. The three corporate values are:

- Creativity as the decisive prerequisite for success as journalists as well as for commercial success
- Entrepreneurial spirit, defined as imaginative, responsible and result-oriented action taken by employees and management
- Integrity towards the company, readers, customers, employees, business associates and shareholders.

Goals and targets

Organization-wide goals regarding performance relevant to the Economic Aspects: Value-Driven Management: The business strategy of Axel Springer is based on the three tenets of extending the company's market leadership position in the German-language core business, as well as internationalization and digitization. The overriding goals of this strategy are to ensure profitable, long-term growth and sustainably increase the value of the company.

Responsibilities

The ultimate responsibility for Economic Aspects lies with the Executive Board of Axel Springer SE.

Resources

Qualified employees and capital

Specific actions

Internationalization and digitization

G4-DMA-C Report the evaluation of the management approach, including the mechanisms for evaluating the effectiveness of the management approach; the results of the evaluation of the management approach; the consequences the organization will draw.

Mechanisms

The Supervisory Board appoints the members of the Executive Board. It monitors and advises the Executive Board in the running of its business operations.

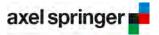
Results

More than 15,000 employees generated total revenues of 3,294.9 million euros and earnings (EBIT-DA) of 559.0 million euros in 2015.

Consequences

The company will push ahead with internationalization and digitization.

Further details are documented in the 2015 Annual Report.



2. Disclosures and references for the reporting period 2014 + 2015

2.1 Aspect: Economic Performance

G4-EC1 Direct economic value generated and distributed, including revenues, operating costs, employee wages and benefits, donations and other community investments, retained earnings, and payments to capital providers and governments (taxes)

Fiscal years 2014 and 2015: (Group)

(*Note: figures only comprise continued operations)

Revenues*:

3,294.9 million euros in 2015 and 3,037.9 million euros in 2014.

Operating costs*:

Defined as the sum of material costs, personnel expenditure, other operating expenses: 2,975.9 million euros in 2015 and 2,721.7 million euros in 2014.

• Employee wages and benefits*:

Personnel expenditure in 2015: 1,100.3 million euros (of which wages and salaries: 932.8 million euros)

Personnel expenditure in 2014: 974.4 million euros (of which wages and salaries: 820.3 million euros)

Donations:

Cannot be calculated at Group level. We do not have this information available in detail.

Retained earnings:

Equity capital generated as per 31.12.2015: 1,508.4 million euros; Equity capital generated as per 31.12.2014: 2,041.2 million euros;

• Payments to capital providers (equity capital providers):

Dividends for the fiscal year 2014 (paid in 2015): 178.1 million euros; Dividends for the fiscal year 2013 (paid in 2014): 178.1 million euros

• Payments to governments (taxes):

Tax expenditure* (taxes on income and on earnings) in 2015: 136.2 million euros; taxes on earnings paid in 2015: 174.9 million euros

Tax expenditure* (taxes on income and on earnings) in 2014: 78.9 million euros; taxes on earnings paid in 2014: 147.5 million euros

G4-EC2 Financial implications and other risks and opportunities for the organization's activities due to climate change

- No direct effects have been identified to date
- Indirect effects: Rising energy costs could have implications for the distribution of newspapers and magazines, the operation of printing facilities and publishing office buildings as well as the manufacture of printing paper

G4-EC3 Coverage of defined benefit plan obligations

Fiscal year 2015: (Group)

- social expenditure (employer contributions to social security, incl. health insurance) Social expenditure: 138.2 million euros
- Pension expenditure, company pension plan, pension plan expenditure: 11.8 million euros



Fiscal year 2014: (Group)

- social expenditure (employer contributions to social security, incl. health insurance) Social expenditure: 130.1 million euros
- Pension expenditure, company pension plan, pension plan expenditure: 8.5 million euros

By participating in the "VarioRente", a forward-looking deferred compensation company pension plan, employees of Axel Springer SE in Germany accumulate a sizable balance in their pension account by the time they enter retirement.

G4-EC4 Significant financial assistance received from government (e.g. subsidies, advertising)

Investment grants:

Liabilities from investment grants as per 31.12.2015: 10.9 million euros Liabilities from investment grants as per 31.12.2014: 12.4 million euros

Supplementary sector disclosures (G4 Media Sector Disclosures):

The group of shareholders does not include government agencies. The proportion of gross advertising expenditure by state governments and the federal government as a share of the company's advertising revenue (without classifieds) in Germany in the year 2015 was around 0.46 percent.



PwC evaluated

M1. Significant funding and other support from non-governmental sources (advertisements, etc.)

Axel Springer SE generated advertising revenues (not including media self-advertising and charitable institutions) amounting to approximately 1.2 billion euros in 2015. None of the advertisers was responsible for more than an approximate 7 percent share of advertising revenues (not including media self-advertising and charitable institutions). (Source: Nielsen Media Research GmbH).

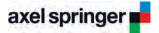


PwC evaluated

2.4 Aspect: Procurement Practices

G4-EC9 Proportion of spending on local suppliers at significant locations of operation.

The company generates almost all of its revenue in OECD or EU countries, such as Germany, Hungary, Spain, Switzerland, Slovakia, Poland. The publishing subsidiary in Moscow (Russia), a number of the locations of the Zanox subsidiary, as well as the location of the RASM AG joint venture in Serbia are exceptions. Supplies come almost without exception from local sources or the region. One exception, depending upon the location, is the procurement of printing paper, particularly as paper for newspapers and magazines is only produced in very few countries in the required quantity and quality. The same is true for the procurement of printing ink, printing machines and computers. An overview of the origin of the printing paper used by the company can be viewed here.

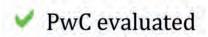


How is a sustainability report assured?



The expectations placed on modern sustainability reporting are rising continuously. This picture shows the essential stages of the external assurance of a sustainability report. (Source: PwC).

PricewaterhouseCoopers AG auditing company (PwC) has performed a review of the material indicators for the reference years 2014 and 2015 to achieve limited assurance. The disclosures assured in the Sustainability Report are additionally marked as follows:



Assurance of the Axel Springer SE Sustainability Report 2014/2015 by the auditing company PricewaterhouseCoopers (PwC)

Since the late 1990s, in addition to the traditional financial reporting and the social and environmental reporting, through so-called sustainability reporting, comprehensive reporting on economic, environmental and social/societal aspects has become widespread. Sustainability reporting is not only directed towards the company's shareholders, but to a very broad audience of stakeholders, which include for example the employees, suppliers, customers, current and potential investors, the public, non-governmental organizations and various public authorities and institutions. In accordance with the definition of the Global Reporting Initiative (GRI), Sustainability Reporting comprises "measuring, disclosing and being accountable to internal and external stakeholders for organizational performance towards the goal of sustainable development. [...] A sustainability report should provide a balanced and reasonable representation of the sustainability performance of a reporting organization, including both positive and negative contributions".

Both management and stakeholders require additional assurance that sustainability reports inform accurately, completely and appropriately on environmental and social/societal aspects, and an external assurance certificate within the scope of the assurance of the sustainability reporting is increasingly demanded by companies.

The object and basis of assurance

The object of the assurance is generally the specifically defined material (quantitative) data in the Sustainability Report. The GRI guidelines provide a comprehensive and internationally accepted recommendation for the content of sustainability reporting. These define economic, environmental and social standard disclosures as well as information on the strategy, company profile and management systems as the minimum content of a sustainability report. In concrete terms, the standard disclosures comprise indicators from the areas of Economy, Environment (e.g. disclosures on materials,



emissions, energy consumption, water consumption, biodiversity, and waste) and Social Impacts (e.g. disclosures on humane working conditions, observance of human rights, social commitment and product responsibility).

The central principles for defining the content of the report are materiality, stakeholder engagement, sustainability context and completeness. The goal of these principles is the definition of the content of sustainability reports, taking the expectations and demands of the relevant stakeholders into account. The central principles for defining the quality of reported information consist of the principles of balance, comparability, accuracy, timeliness, reliability, and clarity. They are designed to ensure the transparency of sustainability reporting and enable stakeholders to make a sound assessment of performance.

To enhance the credibility of sustainability reporting, the GRI recommends, in addition to the establishment of suitable management systems and reporting processes, having the reports certified by experts on the basis of the GRI reporting principles.

Assurance procedure

The PwC approach for the assurance of a sustainability report basically follows the same standards as the audit of other business data and processes, and is followed in accordance with an international assurance standard ("ISAE 3000 Revised"). A special feature of the assurance of sustainability reports, however, is that there are as yet no statutory provisions and requirements in Germany; meaning that the object, scope and standard of the assurance procedure are therefore agreed individually and entered in the assurance certificate. The assurance procedure for the business audit of the Axel Springer SE 2015 Sustainability Report is briefly outlined below:

Design Inspection

At the beginning of an audit, the assurance procedure, the necessary paperwork, documentation and contacts as well as the schedule are agreed with the client. This serves the senior auditor as a basis for drawing up a detailed assurance program. The preaudit itself includes the recording of the relevant systems and processes of sustainability reporting, as well as an assessment of adequacy in accordance with the agreed assessment criteria (process evaluation).

Audit of the reporting processes

Following this, the assurance team establishes that the relevant reporting processes and process controls within the company have been complied with, particularly the processes concerning the gathering, quality assurance and aggregation of data for sustainability reporting (process validation). This can be done – depending upon the type and complexity of the processes – by process observation or an analysis of individual processes and controls. To do this, the auditor establishes on the one hand through so-called on-site inspections at the data source that data is fully and correctly recorded. On the other hand, the understanding of the process acquired during the preaudit ensures that the essential controls along the entire process chain up to the aggregation of key performance indicators and their provision for the report can be included in the audit. What is permissible and also desirable to ensure the efficient performance of assurance, is the use of audit results from third parties, provided they meet the high standards of assurance procedure and assurance reliability demanded by PwC.



Assurance of selected (quantitative) information

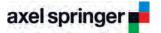
The assurance of the quantitative data in the Sustainability Report is enhanced through analytical inspections – such as the generation and review of expected values, or the conducting of trend and deviation analyses – as well as the classical scrutiny of documents. This applies mainly to those indicators which did not achieve sufficient assurance reliability through the process audits. This can also apply to individual information for which an individual audit promises higher assurance reliability or greater efficiency. The assurance is accompanied by a review of the drafts of the Sustainability Report, to assess the compatibility of their content, language and design with the GRI reporting principles as well as the quantitative information in the context of the report.

Documentation of the assurance

At the conclusion of the assurance, the assurance findings and any recommendations on improving the systems and processes of sustainability reporting are discussed with the client and the assurance certificate is issued. The auditor's examination of systems and processes, along with the associated findings and recommendations, which are recorded in the assurance certificate are often starting points for the optimization of internal sustainability management.



Appendix



About Axel Springer

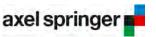


The Axel Springer logo above the main entrance of the Axel Springer building in Berlin. (Photo: Axel Springer SE)

Axel Springer SE is the leading digital publishing house in Europe. The digital media channels make up almost three quarters of pro forma Group revenues already today. Through consistent internationalization and digitization, Axel Springer SE is not only market leader in the German print business today, but is also active in more than 40 countries through subsidiaries, joint ventures and licenses. Axel Springer SE generates more than 40 percent of its turnover with international business.

The company has its headquarters in Berlin, and through subsidiaries, joint ventures and licenses is active in more than 40 countries. More than 40 percent of turnover comes from international business. More than 15,000 employees generated total revenues of 3,294.9 million euros and earnings (EBIT-DA) of 559.0 million euros in 2015.

Mehr Informationen finden Sie auf www.axelspringer.de



Studies and Reports

Sustainability Management at Axel Springer

- 1. Sustainability Report 2015
- 2. Sustainability Report 2013
- 3. Sustainability Report 2011
- 4. Sustainability Report 2009
- 5. Sustainability Report 2007
- 6. Sustainability Report 2005

7. Printing ink and Sustainability (2006)

Printing methods, printing inks and raw materials are presented in general and under the aspect of sustainability on 25 pages (in German).

8. From Russia....with Transparency (2005)

This report is about the so-called "Tikhvin-Chalna-Project" and the cooperation of the paper manufacturer Stora Enso with paper customers Axel Springer SE, Random House Group and Time Inc. in order to increase transparency in the cross-border timber supply chain. The critical review is carried out by Transparency International, the leading NGO on fighting corruption.

9. Sustainability Balanced Scorecard (2003)

In this research project Axel Springer cooperated with the Universities of Lüneburg and St. Gallen as well as with companies such as Bahlsen, Volkswagen and the Swiss UBS Bank. The project focussed on value-driven options of sustainability management and integration of environmental issues in strategic planning documents. The results of this work sponsored by the Federal Ministry of Education and Science (BMBF) are published in book form by the Gabler publishing house (in German).

10. Tracing Russian Wood Imports (2001)

In a joint project, Axel Springer, together with the Finnish paper manufacturer UPM-Kymmene and Otto Versand (mail order), has made the wood chain transparent from the forest in Russia to the paper mill in Finland. The first project report "Tracing Russian Wood Imports" shows how imports of wood from Russia are ecologically audited. There is also room for critical voices from the Russian forest management and the environmental organization Greenpeace Russia.

11. Ecological Learning Processes in the Paper Chain (2000)

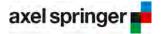
This study was written at the university of St. Gallen in Switzerland. Among other things, it describes how companies integrate ecological insights into their decision-making processes, using Axel Springer as an example (in German).

12. Ecological Improvements in the Paper Chain (1999)

This report, available in German only, describes the background, goals and realization of the cooperation between Otto Versand and Axel Springer with 8,900 Norwegian family-owned forestry enterprises and the paper manufacturer Norske Skog (in German).

Evaluation of the Ecological Life Cycles of Newspapers and Magazines (1998)

This analysis researches the environmental aspects of pulp and paper production using data gathered in Sweden, Germany, and Canada. It was prepared in conjunction with the StoraEnso and Canfor companies.



Glossary

Explanation of Abbreviations and Terms

Accessibility: the accessibility and usability of a system for people with disabilities.

Application: alternative designation for a program or software.

Occupational safety/health: includes safety at work, health, environmental and fire protection.

ION: improved offset publication paper

IGN: improved gravure publication paper

Benzol: hydrocarbon contained in petrol. Small amounts escape through exhaust fumes.

Bio-diversity: Diversity of species of flora and fauna

Blog (short for: weblog): a regularly updated website, whose articles (blog posts) are read in reverse chronological order.

Combined heating and power plant: gas-powered generator for producing power, heating and cooling

Browser: a software program, which can retrieve, download, buffer and display documents which are available on the World Wide Web. Popular browsers include Internet Explorer, Firefox, Chrome and Safari.

Chlorine: greenish-yellow, toxic gas with an acrid odor. It is still used sometimes for bleaching textiles, cellulose and paper.

Compliance: conformity to laws, voluntary commitments, guidelines and codes.

Community: a community refers to (regular) users of portals, forums or social networks. A characteristic feature of communities is that their users generate the content themselves (User Generated Content).

Cross-media: Cross-media is the content-based, creative and formal networking of different media channels and advertising media relevant to target groups, with the aim of achieving maximum advertising success through the multi-channel appeal to target groups.

Data protection: Refers in general to the protection of personal data against misuse thus ensuring the informational self-determination of the individual, i.e. the fundamental right of the individual to make his own decisions concerning the disclosure and use of his personal data.

Dioxin: toxic hydrocarbons. They are released, for example, in the production of pesticides.

Discrimination: Discrimination, unequal treatment or degradation of people on the basis of certain characteristics or properties.

Printing inks: comprising of pigments, binding agents (for the adhesion of the pigment to the paper) and solvents (to keep the printing ink liquid until it is applied to the surface of the paper).



ECF: "Elemental Chlorine-Free" – cellulose bleached with chloride compounds instead of pure chlorine

E-commerce: The sale of products or services on or via the Internet.

Emission: Liquid, solid (dust) or gaseous substances released from technical plants into air and water

Fossil energy: also known as primary energy; naturally formed gaseous, liquid and solid fuels such as natural gas, oil and coal

Fresh fiber: also known as primary fiber; paper fiber obtained from the resource wood

Information security: Refers to all the planned and implemented technical and organizational aspects that serve the protection of data and information sensitive or critical to the company.

International Social Policy: A catalog of social standards drawn up by Axel Springer on issues relating to human rights, compliance with the law, child protection, the treatment of employees, health and safety as well as the work/family balance. These standards are binding worldwide for all of the company's activities.

Antitrust law: Legal regulations which deal with the prohibition or the requirements for admissibility of agreements between companies and other market participants which relate to competition, or contain requirements relating to behavior, in particular that of market-dominating companies.

Carbon dioxide (CO2): colorless, odorless and tasteless gas. It is formed by, among other things, combustion of substances containing hydrocarbons (such as, for example, wood, oil, petrol).

Carbon monoxide (CO): odorless, non-irritant but highly toxic gas. It is formed by the incomplete combustion of fossil fuels.

Highly-volatile non-methane hydrocarbons: odorless, non-irritant but highly toxic gases. They are formed by the incomplete combustion of fossil fuels.

Life Cycle Assessment (LCA): Analysis of the life-cycle of a product

LWC: "light weight coated", lightweight rolling press paper, coated on both sides, for magazines, envelopes and catalogs

Mill broke: printed and unprinted scrap paper

Sustainability: According to the classical definition (Brundtland Report, 1987): "Sustainable development means satisfying the needs of the present generation without compromising the ability of future generations to satisfy theirs."

On Demand: Type of use in which the user may select any unit from a portfolio and consume it immediately.

Regenerative energy: renewable energy sources such as sun, geothermal energy, water, wind and wood

Resources: Raw materials such as wood, oil, coal, clean water and clean air

SRP: Special Rotogravure Paper



SC: super-calandered paper, magazine paper smoothed between the rollers of a calandering machine in the rotogravure process

Sulphur Dioxide (SO2): colorless, highly-toxic gas with an acrid odor, formed in the combustion of fossil fuels. The major cause of "acid rain".

Site map: a document that describes the structure of a web site.

Social Media: Social Media refers to digital media and technologies that enable users to swap content and to create media content either on their own or with others. All of the media (platforms) are understood, which support users in their mutual communication through digital channels and in the interactive exchange of information.

Stakeholders: The term stakeholder is used to refer to a person or group which has a legitimate interest in the course or outcome of a process or project. The term "stakeholder" comes from the English. "Stake" can be translated as investment, share or claim, "holder" as owner. The term "stakeholder group' is also increasingly catching on.

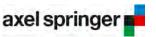
Nitric/Nitrous Oxides (NOX): toxic combustion gases – result in smog formation, overfertilization and "acid rain".

SON: Standard Offset Newspaper publication paper

TCF: "Totally Chlorine Free", cellulose bleached without chlorine or chlorine compounds

Toluol: Solvent present in the printing inks used in newspaper and catalog rotogravure

Usability: of a web site or software often indicates how often, productive and useful it is used.



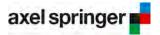
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Contacts for sustainability

Your feedback is welcome!

Here you will find your main contacts in the publishing and printing locations, in the editorial offices as well as at the suppliers of printing paper and printing services.

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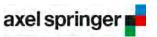
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LA1 Total workforce by employment type and country

GRI-Indicator LA1

Axel Springer SE Sustainability Report 2015

Personnel by occupation								
	2013	2014	2015					
Editors	2.797	2.771	2.730					
Company employees	9.167	10.457	11.572					
Skilled workers	448	353	383					
Skilled labourers	432	336	338					
Total	12.843	13.917	15.023					

Personnel by location			
	2013	2014	2015
National	7.562	8.190	8.177
International	5.281	5.727	6.846
Total	12.843	13.917	15.023

Locations national

LI L	2.554	1.050	1 200
Hamburg	2.554	1.656	1.260
Ahrensburg/Offset	346	307	282
Essen-Kettwig	218	209	182
Berlin	3.819	4.709	4.889
Spandau	309	286	273
Munich	126	117	94
Dusseldorf	64	612	772
Cologne	84	291	248
Frankfurt	83	83	83
Branch offices home country	945	501	750
Total	8.548	8.771	8.833

National locations are reported on January 31st.

International subsidiaries

Poland	1.254	1.237	1.324
UK	0	1.166	1.299
France	520	866	851
India	0	369	516
Slovakia	409	402	434
United States	0	8	428
Hungary	502	328	378
Serbia	374	378	353
The Netherlands	0	0	344
Switzerland	430	417	313
Other	1.771	534	339
	·	·	·

Total international	5.260	5.705	6.579	
Total	13.808	14 476	15 <i>/</i> 112	
iotai	13.808	14.476	15.412	



LA1 Total workforce by employment type and country

GRI-Indicator LA1

Axel Springer SE Sustainability Report 2015

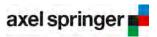
Breakdown of number of employees by gender								
	2	2013		2014		2015		
	m	m w		W	m	W		
Editors	1.673	1.124	1.613	1.159	1.530	1.200		
Company employees	4.969	4.199	5.865	4.592	6.614	4.957		
Gewerbliche	720	160	593	95	589	132		
Total					8.733	6.289		
Summe	12	12.843		13.917		15.023		

Sickness absence (Germany)								
	2013	2014	2015					
Editors	3,2%	3,1%	3,7%					
Company employees	3,3%	3,4%	4,0%					
Skilled workers	6,5%	5,9%	7,9%					
Skilled labourers	6,7%	8,2%	8,4%					
Gesamt	3,6%	3,6%	4,3%					

Average length of employment (Germany)							
	2013 2014 2015						
Length of employment in years	10,4	10,5	10,4				

Average age (Germany)							
	2013	2014	2015				
Average age in years	41,7	41,6	41,7				

SHE figures							
	2013		20)14	2015		
Axel Springer SE	absolut 179	% 4,4%	183	5,2%	85	4,1%	
Axel Springer SE and consolidated companies	307	3,7%	294	3,8%	278	3,7%	



LA7 Occupational diseases and accidents at work

LA7 - Occupational diseases and accidents at work

Axel Springer SE Sustainability Report 2015

	Reportable work accidents	Reportable accidents (1000- employee quota)	Reportable commuting accidents	Reportable commuting accidents (1000- employee quota)	Reportable work accidents	Reportable accidents (1000- employee quota)	Reportable commuting accidents	Reportable commuting accidents (1000- employee quota)	Reportable work accidents	Reportable accidents (1000- employee quota)	Reportable commuting accidents	Reportable commuting accidents (1000- employee quota)
		20	13			20	14			201	.5	
Publishing offices Germany												
Office Berlin	15	5,74	21	8,04	4	1,38	23	7,35	4	1,36	26	8,86
Office Hamburg	7	5,18	18	13,31	5	4,90	15	14,70	3	3,10	13	13,50
Own printing plants												
Printing plant Spandau	9	30,30	5	16,84	9	32,28	0	0,00	2	7,51	2	7,51
Printing plant Ahrensburg	8	24,62	2	6,15	11	38,10	1	3,50	12	46,20	1	3,80
Printing plant Kettwig	7	31,96	3	13,70	10	49,75	0	0,00	7	40,23	o	0,00



PwC Prüfbescheinigung Seite 1 von 3



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Independent Practitioner's Limited Assurance Report regarding sustainability information¹

To Axel Springer SE, Berlin

We have been engaged to perform a limited assurance engagement on the sustainability information marked with "PwC geprüft" in the Sustainability Report of Axel Springer SE (hereafter the "Sustainability Report"), Berlin, (hereafter the "Company") for the period from 1 January 2014 to 31 December 2015.

Management's Responsibility

Company's Management is responsible for the preparation and presentation of the Sustainability Report in accordance with the criteria as set out in the G4 Sustainability Reporting Guidelines of the Global Reporting Initiative (GRI) (hereafter the "GRI-Criteria") and for the selection of the information to be assessed.

This responsibility includes the selection and application of appropriate methods to prepare the Sustainability Report as well as the use of assumptions and estimates for individual sustainability disclosures which are reasonable in the circumstances. Furthermore, the responsibility includes designing, implementing and maintaining systems and processes relevant for the preparation of the Sustainability Report, which is free of material misstatements due to intentional or unintentional errors.

Audit Firm's Independence and Quality Control

We have complied with the German professional provisions regarding independence as well as other ethical requirements.

The audit firm applies the national legal requirements and professional standards — in particular the Professional Code for German Public Auditors and German Chartered Auditors ("Berufssatzung für Wirtschaftsprüfer und vereidigte Buchprüfer": "BS WP/vBP") as well as the joint opinion of the Wirtschaftsprüferkammer (Chamber of German Public Auditors; WPK) and the Institut der Wirtschaftsprüfer (Institute of Public Auditors in Germany; IDW): Requirements to quality control for audit firms ("Gemeinsamen Stellungnahme der WPK und des IDW: Anforderungen an die Qualitätssicherung in der Wirtschaftsprüferpraxis": "VO 1/2006") — and accordingly maintains a comprehensive system of quality control including documented policies and procedures regarding compliance with ethical requirements, professional standards and applicable legal and regulatory requirements.

Our engagement applies to the German version of the Sustainability Report. This text is a translation of the Independent Assurance Report issued in German language - the German text is authoritative. The entity is responsible for their website and we do not accept responsibility for any changes that may have occurred to the reported subject matter information or criteria since they were initially presented on the website.



PwC Prüfbescheinigung Seite 2 von 3



Page 2 of 3

Practitioner's Responsibility

Our responsibility is to express an opinion on the sustainability information marked with PwC geprüft in the Sustainability Report based on our work performed.

Within the scope of our engagement we did not perform an audit on external sources of information or expert opinions that are referred to in the Sustainability Report.

We conducted our work in accordance with the International Standard on Assurance Engagements (ISAE) 3000 (Revised): "Assurance Engagements other than Audits or Reviews of Historical Financial Information" published by IAASB. This Standard requires that we plan and perform the assurance engagement to obtain limited assurance whether any matters have come to our attention

that cause us to believe that the sustainability information marked with PwC geprüft in the Sustainability Report has not been prepared, in all material respects, in accordance with the GRI-Criteria.

In a limited assurance engagement the evidence-gathering procedures are more limited than for a reasonable assurance engagement and therefore significantly less assurance is obtained than in a reasonable assurance engagement. The procedures selected depend on the practitioner's judgement. This includes the assessment of the risks of material misstatements of the sustainability in-

formation marked with PwC geprüft in the Sustainability Report with regard to the GRI-Criteria.

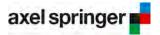
Within the scope of our work we performed amongst others the following procedures:

- Obtaining an understanding of the structure of the sustainability organization and of the stakeholder engagement
- Inquiries of personnel involved in the preparation of the Sustainability Report regarding the preparation process, the underlying internal control system and selected sustainability information
- Analytical procedures on selected sustainability information of the Sustainability Report
- Comparison of selected sustainability information with corresponding data in the consolidated financial statements and in the group management report
- Assessment of the presentation of selected sustainability information in the Sustainability Report regarding the sustainability performance
- Gaining further evidence for selected data of the sustainability report due to inspection of internal documents and reports of external service providers.

Conclusion

Based on our limited assurance engagement, nothing has come to our attention that causes us to believe that the sustainability information marked with

Pwc geprüft in the Sustainability Report of the Company for the period 1 January 2014 to 31 December 2015 has not been prepared, in all material respects, in accordance with the GRI-Criteria.



PwC Prüfbescheinigung Seite 3 von 3



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Emphasis of Matter – Recommendations

Without qualifying our conclusion above, we make the following recommendations for the further development of the Company's sustainability management and sustainability reporting:

- Further formalization of internal processes and controls for reporting sustainability information
- Further adaptation of sustainability reporting to the changing business model, including extension of reporting to subsidiaries outside of Germany.

Restrictions on use and distribution

We issue this report on the basis of the engagement agreed with the Company. The review has been performed for purposes of the Company and is solely intended to inform the Company about the results of the review. The report is not intended for any third parties to base any (financial) decision thereon. We do not assume any responsibility towards third parties.

Berlin, 27 October 2016

PricewaterhouseCoopers Aktiengesellschaft Wirtschaftsprüfungsgesellschaft

Hendrik Fink Wirtschaftsprüfer (German Public Auditor) ppa. Susanne Klages

