News Item, 30/04/2010, Gütersloh: Bertelsmann Stiftung honors Reinhard Mohn's life work

Thielen announces new programs on the future of democracy and the social market economy

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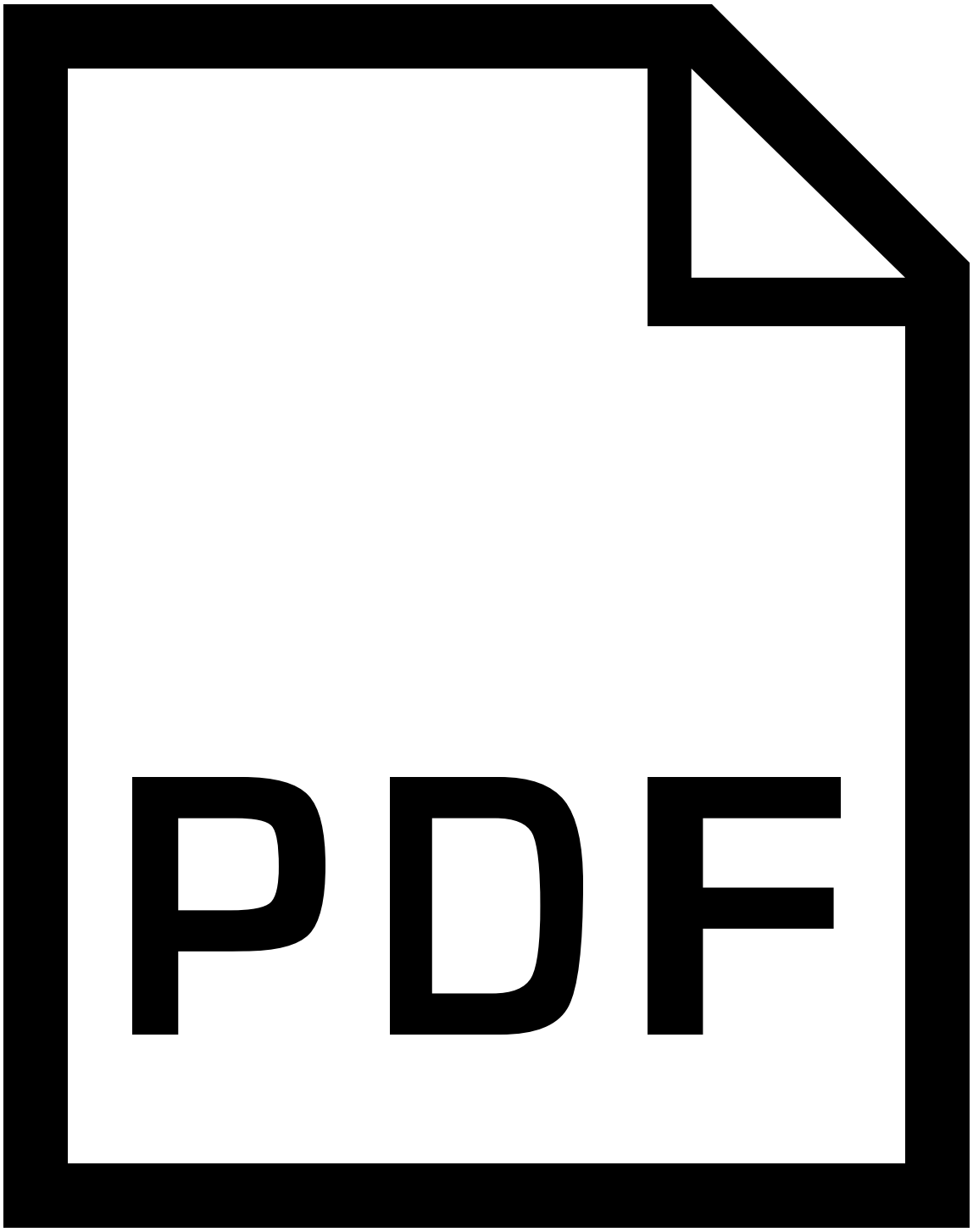

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Dr. Thomas Wittek

The Bertelsmann Stiftung will be founding a new business institute and renaming an existing prize to honor the legacy of its late founder, Reinhard Mohn, and keep the memory of his life's work alive. Dr. Gunter Thielen, chairman and CEO of the Bertelsmann Stiftung, announced that that the Reinhard Mohn Institute (RMI) for Executive Leadership and Corporate Governance would soon open its doors at the University of Witten/Herdecke and that the Reinhard Mohn Foundation, established in 2006, will now take up its work. In addition, the Bertelsmann Stiftung's internationally recognized Carl Bertelsmann Prize will be renamed the Reinhard Mohn Prize, he said. "Reinhard Mohn will therefore continue to influence our foundation's organizational culture and the way it carries out its work long after his death," Thielen said during the presentation of the foundation's 2009 Annual Report.

The new institute at the University of Witten/Herdecke will continue to develop the ideas relating to corporate culture and leadership advanced by Mohn. The institute's work will focus on examining the topics of leadership, corporate governance and controlling. In addition, it will offer excellent, practice-based courses for business management students.

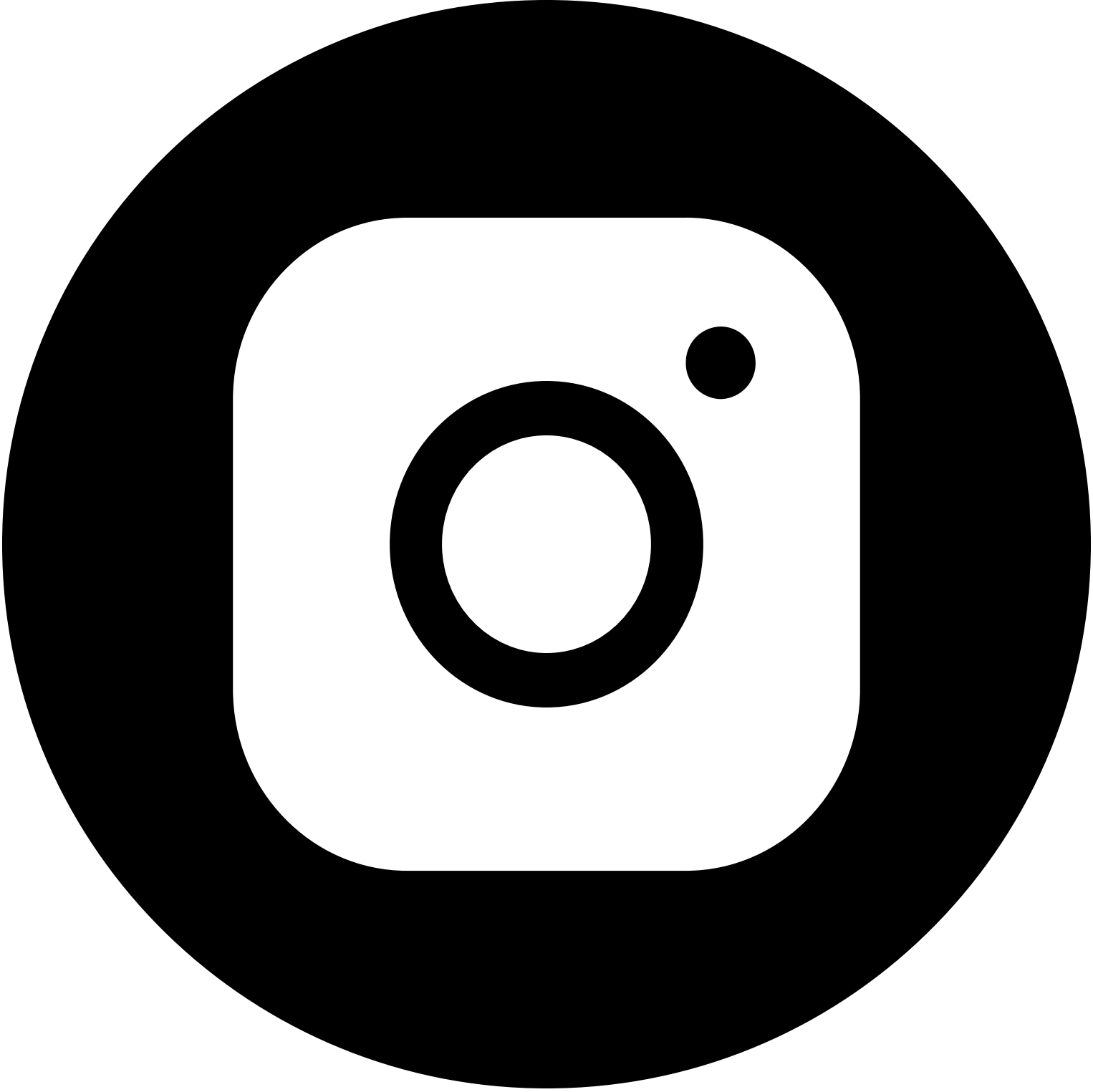
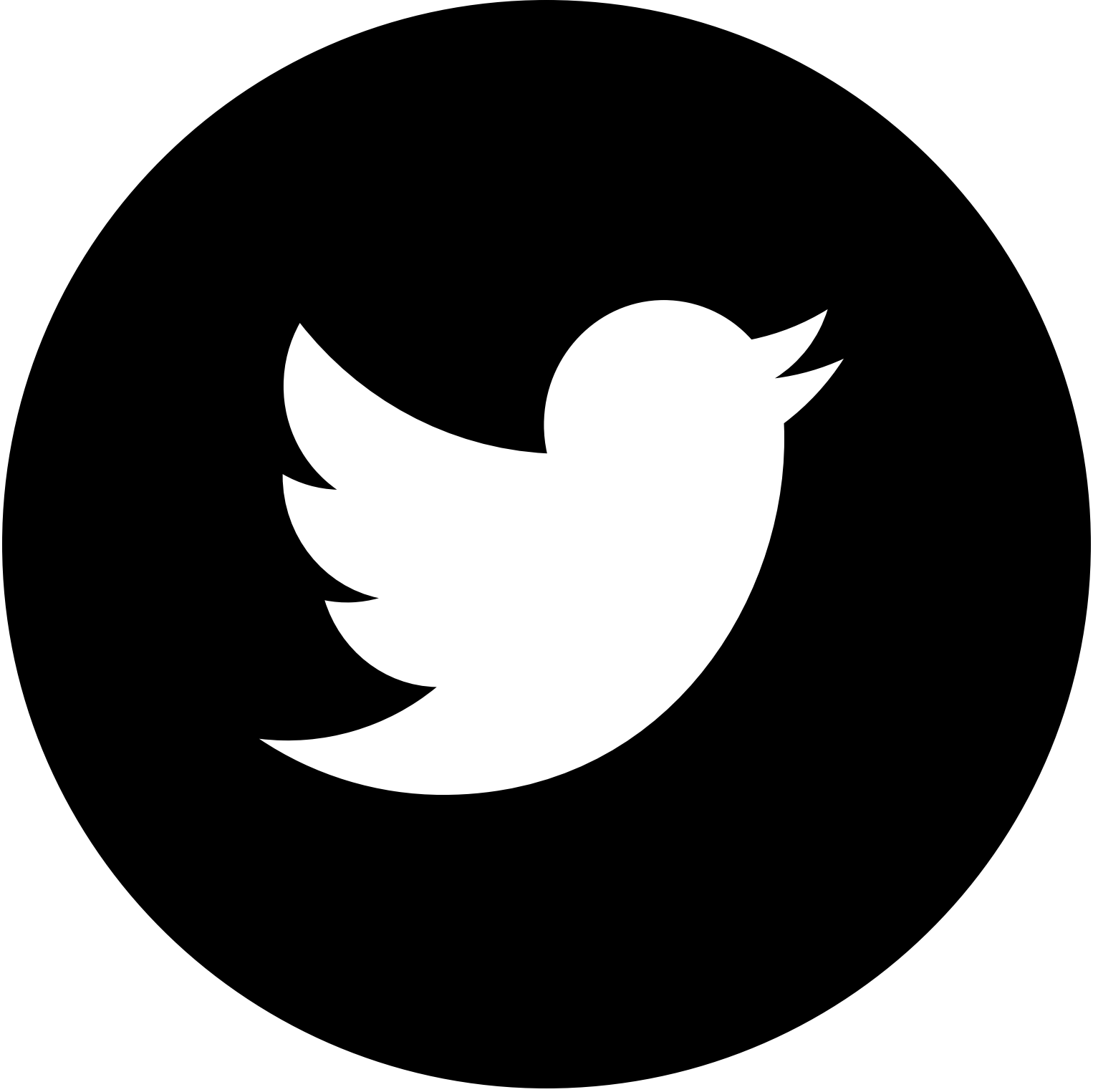
Moreover, the Reinhard Mohn Foundation, established in November 2006, will also open its doors in the near future. The nonprofit organization will be led by Mohn's son, Christoph, and will focus largely on projects relating to the region of Eastern Westphalia. The foundation's articles of incorporation allow for a broad range of activities, such as supporting organizations and initiatives addressing social, cultural and educational issues or those dedicated to increasing international understanding. Its annual budget will be in the mid-six-figure range.

Awarded for the first time in 1988, the Carl Bertelsmann Prize will also be renamed the Reinhard Mohn Prize. The internationally recognized award reflects Mohn's approach to reform to a degree unequaled by any other Bertelsmann Stiftung initiative. Bearing the name of his last book, "Learning From the World," it also guides the work carried out by the foundation. In awarding the prize, the foundation conducts an international search to identify exemplary approaches addressing key social concerns so that they can be adapted for use in Germany.

"The global financial and economic crisis has diminished the trust that people have in our political, business and social leaders," Thielen said. "Many people thus feel that their interests are no longer being adequately represented. As a result, the Bertelsmann Stiftung wants to focus even more intently in coming years on the future of democracy and Germany's social market economy."

As a first step in this direction, it will be awarding the 2011 Reinhard Mohn Prize on the topic "Revitalizing democracy -- Increasing political participation." The search committee will thus be looking for organizations or initiatives that have successfully reduced the distance between policymakers and the public and have established new democratic approaches to problem solving.
A innovative method developed by the Bertelsmann Stiftung and the Heinz Nixdorf Foundation will also be used on a broad scale for the first time to determine who will be given the award. In March 2011, about 12.000 representatively selected German individuals will select the prize winner.

The Bertelsmann Stiftung will also focus on a new interdisciplinary project called The Future of the Social Market Economy, in which it will invest a total of €4 million over the next three years to further develop Germany's post-war economic model. The project will examine a number of topics, including education, integration, demographic change, the labor market and social assistance programs.

About the Bertelsmann Stiftung

The Bertelsmann Stiftung is dedicated to serving the common good. It executes projects in its four core areas of education, business and social affairs, health, and international relations, and strives to promote peaceful coexistence among the world's diverse cultures. Through the example of its civic engagement, it wants to encourage others to support their own communities as well. Founded in 1977 as a registered charity, the Bertelsmann Stiftung is majority shareholder of Bertelsmann AG. Structured as a private operating foundation, it is politically non-partisan and works independently of Bertelsmann AG. The Bertelsmann Stiftung currently employs 331 people and has a budget of approximately €60 million. Since its inception it has made €868 million available for its charitable activities.