

PRESS RELEASE

## Strengthening European unity in times of crisis

**In these challenging times, the Bertelsmann Stiftung is committed to promoting European unity. The European Union has responded decisively and stood together against Russia's war of aggression. The majority of Europeans support this course. Those are the findings from current studies carried out by the Bertelsmann Stiftung which were presented at the foundation's annual press conference in Gütersloh. Through its work, the Bertelsmann Stiftung aims to strengthen this position among Europeans and promote democracy. It is also continuing its efforts begun last year to assist people from Ukraine.**

Gütersloh – March 22, 2023. A current survey by the Bertelsmann Stiftung shows that Europe stands united behind Ukraine. According to the findings, 65 percent of Europeans believe that Ukraine should become a member of the EU in the coming years. Moreover, 67 percent say that Europe should become less dependent on energy from Russia, even if this leads to more inflation. In addition, 61 percent are in favor of the EU supplying Ukraine with weapons.

Those are the most recent results from the eupinions survey, which the Bertelsmann Stiftung has now used for the fourth time since the beginning of the war to ask some 13,000 Europeans about their attitudes.

The foundation presented the findings at its 2023 annual press conference in Gütersloh. The conference was attended by Ralph Heck and Brigitte Mohn, members of the Bertelsmann Stiftung Executive Board, and Liz Mohn, president of the Liz Mohn Center and the Bertelsmann Stiftung's global representative.

The data show that the European public is remarkably united and is giving policy makers considerable room to maneuver. "If Europe succeeds in maintaining its current unity, it would be precisely the source of strength the EU needs for the future. Then these challenging times really would offer an opportunity to create a strong Europe, both internally and externally," explained Heck, chairman of the Bertelsmann Stiftung Executive Board.

"The world faces major political, economic, demographic and ecological challenges," emphasized Liz Mohn at the press conference. "We live in a fragmented world. Politics, economies and societies will continue to change."

The Liz Mohn Center is addressing these challenges with the goal of promoting an international exchange between business, culture and politics. As Liz Mohn explained: "Over many years, our international dialogue formats have shown that this is possible. For more than 25 years, I have been organizing the Trilogue Salzburg in Austria, where leading figures from the political, cultural and business spheres convene for a confidential dialogue on the world's pressing issues. Bringing people together is truly a matter of the heart for me, as is building bridges of understanding across cultures and borders."

## Helping refugees

The Bertelsmann Stiftung is participating in Alliance4Ukraine. The coalition of more than 570 civil society organizations, foundations, government institutions and companies is designed to provide the best possible support to aid initiatives for Ukraine by making the necessary resources available quickly and unbureaucratically. The Bertelsmann Stiftung's experts provide coordinated assistance for integrating refugees.

“One consequence of Russia's invasion of Ukraine and the earthquake in Turkey and Syria is displacement and migration. The question is how we as a society can respond and provide people with effective assistance. At the Bertelsmann Stiftung, we are doing this through our involvement in Alliance4Ukraine. The goal of the alliance is to create cross-cutting solutions that meet the needs of refugees,” explained Brigitte Mohn at the press conference.

The foundation is also providing assistance locally. “When it comes to the topic of integration, we cooperate closely with the city and district of Gütersloh. For example, we were actively involved in further developing the integration plan put in place by the city, which was one of the pilot communities in our cooperation project Cosmopolitan Communities. We also participated in the related conference on integration that took place in November 2022. Naturally, we are also in contact with each other when it comes to receiving and integrating people from Ukraine,” Brigitte Mohn said.

## Constructive solutions

Commenting on the Bertelsmann Stiftung's future efforts, Heck said: “At the Bertelsmann Stiftung, we work strategically not only to highlight critical developments, but also to offer constructive solutions for social problems. In 2022, we engaged in a wide range of activities to strengthen and further develop democracy. Our commitment in this area will continue in the coming year.”

Since it was established 46 years ago, the Bertelsmann Stiftung has made some €1.9 billion available for its nonprofit activities. In 2022, it allocated €71 million for its project work. A total of 322 people are employed by the foundation at its offices in Gütersloh, Berlin and Brussels. It also has affiliated organizations in Washington and Barcelona.

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### About the Bertelsmann Stiftung: Inspiring people. Shaping the future.

The Bertelsmann Stiftung is committed to enabling social participation for everyone – politically, economically and culturally. Our programs include Education and the Next Generation, Democracy and Social Cohesion, Digitalization and the Common Good, Europe's Future, Health, and Sustainable Social Market Economies. In our work, we focus on people, since only they can change the world and make it better. We share knowledge, promote expertise and develop solutions. A nonprofit foundation, the Bertelsmann Stiftung was established in 1977 by Reinhard Mohn. **For more information, please visit: [www.bertelsmann-stiftung.de/en](http://www.bertelsmann-stiftung.de/en)**

