

PRESS RELEASE

## The Blue Sofa: A Cornucopia of Events for Autumn 2024

- **Dana Grigorcea, Marco Balzano, Melanie Raabe and others: 15 authors from literature, culture and science present their latest books**
- **Karin Schlautmann: “As part of our Culture@Bertelsmann activities, the Blue Sofa is an integral part of Bertelsmann’s cultural efforts”**
- **A new cooperation: The Blue Sofa makes its debut as part of the Days of Jewish Culture Berlin**

Berlin, August 8, 2024 – For 24 years, the Blue Sofa has provided a stage for personalities from the worlds of literature, culture, politics and society to share their latest books with a wide audience. In fall 2024, the renowned author forum will present a variety of events in Frankfurt, Berlin, Gütersloh and Luxembourg at both established and new venues. For the first time, the Blue Sofa will also take place as part of the Days of Jewish Culture Berlin’s literature program.

Karin Schlautmann, Head of Bertelsmann Corporate Communications, said: “Books have been part of Bertelsmann’s corporate DNA for almost 200 years: Founded in 1835 as a small publishing house, Bertelsmann has felt a deep connection to its authors ever since – today, at Penguin Random House, the world’s largest book publishing group. As part of our Culture@Bertelsmann activities, the Blue Sofa is an integral part of Bertelsmann’s cultural efforts, which also extend to exhibitions, concerts, and the preservation of European cultural heritage. Bertelsmann is thereby positioning itself as a company that is committed to the value and protection of creative content.”

### This Fall’s Events at a Glance:

**Welcome Italy! – The Blue Sofa welcomes the 2024 Frankfurt Book Fair Guest of Honor**  
Thursday, September 12, 7:00 p.m.  
Bertelsmann Representative Office, Unter den Linden 1 in Berlin, 10117 Berlin

Bertelsmann Unter den Linden 1 in Berlin welcomes Italy, the Guest of Honor at this year’s Frankfurt Book Fair. After a brief preview of the program, Italian authors **Viola Ardone** (“The Unbreakable Heart of Oliva Denaro,” published in German as “*Was wissen sie vom Freisein*” by C.Bertelsmann), **Marco Balzano** (“Café Royal,” Diogenes) and **Igiaba Scego** (“Kassandra in Mogadischu” – Cassandra in Mogadishu; S.Fischer) will present their latest books. Ariane Binder and Thomas Böhm will be their hosts.

The event is being jointly organized with the Frankfurt Book Fair and the Italian Publishers Association, and with the kind support of the Italian Embassy in Berlin.

**The Blue Sofa at the Days of Jewish Culture Berlin 2024 – New Voices, Strong Stories, Unique Literature**

Tuesday, September 17, 7:00 p.m.

*Literaturzelt* (Literature Tent) on Bebelplatz, Unter den Linden, 10117 Berlin

This year marks the Blue Sofa's debut as part of the Days of Jewish Culture Berlin's literature program. The inaugural guests are **Stephan Abarbanell** ("Paula oder Die sieben Farben der Freiheit," Blessing), **Hannah Brinkmann** ("Wie geht es dir – Zeichner:innen gegen Antisemitismus, Hass und Rassismus" – How are you? Illustrators Against Anti-Semitism, Hatred, and Racism), **Sara Klatt** ("Das Land, das ich dir zeigen will" – The Country I Want To Show You; Penguin), **Lana Lux** ("Geordnete Verhältnisse" – Everything In Order; Hanser Berlin) and **Marko Martin** ("Und es geschieht jetzt – Jüdisches Leben nach dem 7. Oktober" – And it's happening now. Jewish Life After October 7; Tropen). The talks will be moderated by Christine Watty and Marie-Christine Knop.

The Days of Jewish Culture Berlin 2024 will take place from September 12 to 22, organized and hosted by the Jewish Community of Berlin.

### **The Blue Sofa with Dana Grigorcea – Bertelsmann's Literature Forum for the 3<sup>rd</sup> time at Luxembourg's Institut Pierre Werner**

Monday, October 14, 2024, 7 p.m.

Institut Pierre Werner, 28 rue Münster, 2160 Luxembourg

The Romanian-Swiss author **Dana Grigorcea**, winner of the Swiss Literature Prize and recipient of the Romanian Order of Cultural Merit, will be a guest on the Blue Sofa at the Pierre Werner Institute in Luxembourg. She will present her new novel "*Das Gewicht eines Vogels beim Fliegen*" (The Weight of a Bird In Flight, Penguin Verlag). The discussion will be moderated by Luxembourg author and literary critic Samuel Hamen.

The event is organized in collaboration with the Institut Pierre Werner.

### **The Blue Sofa opens the OPEN BOOKS – Top-class authors at the start of the Frankfurt reading festival**

Tuesday, October 15, 2024, 8 p.m.

German National Library Adickesallee 1, 60322 Frankfurt am Main

On October 15, the OPEN BOOKS reading festival at the Frankfurt Book Fair will kick off with a Blue Sofa event. Its guests will be the winner of the German Book Prize 2024, who will be announced the day before, the authors **Anna Katharina Hahn** ("Der Chor" – The Choir; Suhrkamp) and **Christoph Peters** ("Innerstädtischer Tod" – Inner City Death; Luchterhand), as well as the archaeologist **Harald Meller** and the historian and literary scholar **Kai Michel** ("Die Evolution der Gewalt" – The Evolution of Violence; dtv).

The Blue Sofa in Frankfurt am Main is organized by Bertelsmann together with the Cultural Office Frankfurt am Main and the German National Library.

### **The Blue Sofa with Melanie Raabe – The Bestselling Author Presents Her New Novel at Theater Gütersloh**

Tuesday, November 19, 2024, 7:30 p.m.

Theater Gütersloh, Hans-Werner-Henze-Platz 1, 33330 Gütersloh

Award-winning author **Melanie Raabe** will present her new novel "*Der längste Schlaf*" (The Longest Sleep; btb), on sale in bookstores from September 18, 2024, on the Blue Sofa at

Theater Gütersloh. Her novels regularly make the bestseller lists and have been translated into 22 languages. Her thriller “The Shadow” was filmed for ZDFneo.

The Blue Sofa in Gütersloh is made possible by Bertelsmann as part of its cultural sponsorship in the city. The event is organized by Theater Gütersloh.

You can find more information about our events [here](#).

### **About the Blue Sofa**

The Blue Sofa is one of the longest-running and most successful literary formats in the German-speaking world. Since its debut in 2000, more than 3,100 authors have taken a seat on the famous piece of furniture to present their new books at book fairs and beyond. In the past, the format was jointly organized by Bertelsmann, ZDF, Deutschlandfunk Kultur, and 3sat; since 2023, the Blue Sofa has been under Bertelsmann’s sole responsibility with a new concept. The most prominent guests to date have included Nobel Laureates Svetlana Alexievich, Mikhail Gorbachev, Günter Grass, Abdulrazak Gurnah, Herta Müller, Christiane Nüsslein-Volhard, Orhan Pamuk, Joseph Stiglitz, Olga Tokarczuk, Mario Vargas Llosa, and Mo Yan.

### **About Bertelsmann**

Bertelsmann is a media, services and education company with more than 80,000 employees that operates in about 50 countries around the world. It includes the entertainment group RTL Group, the trade book publisher Penguin Random House, the music company BMG, the service provider Arvato Group, Bertelsmann Marketing Services, the Bertelsmann Education Group, and Bertelsmann Investments, an international network of funds. The company generated revenues of €20.2 billion in the 2023 financial year. Bertelsmann stands for creativity and entrepreneurship. This combination promotes first-class media content and innovative service solutions that inspire customers around the world. Bertelsmann aspires to achieve climate neutrality by 2030.

[www.bertelsmann.com](http://www.bertelsmann.com)

### **Bertelsmann online**



### Enquiries:

#### **Bertelsmann SE & Co. KGaA**

Mandy Berghoff

Communications Content Team

Phone: +49 5241 80-78063

[mandy.berghoff@bertelsmann.de](mailto:mandy.berghoff@bertelsmann.de)