



## Press release

### Opening: With the opening of Publix, Berlin gains a unique innovation centre to strengthen media diversity and democracy

*An initiative of the Schöpflin Foundation, Publix provides a working environment for more than 30 organisations, including Correctiv, Reporters without Borders, Netzwerk Recherche and Lie Detectors. The opening program begins on September 12<sup>th</sup> with an open house on September 15<sup>th</sup> and weekly events to follow.*

**Berlin, September 10<sup>th</sup>, 2024:** Premiere: Publix – the first Centre for Journalism and Public Debate – is opening its doors to the public in Berlin. It is at once a competence centre and a home for knowledge transfer, networking and innovation. Publix re-imagines journalism and the role of journalists in democracy while elaborating transnational solutions that help overcome the crisis of public information and political opinion making. This orientation makes Publix unique, both in Germany and the rest of Europe.

Publix Founding Director, Maria Exner: “Democracy can only exist where people have access to a variety of credible resources and can form their own opinions. But this foundation of democracy is in danger. Mistrust of the media, misinformation and hate speech are on the rise. Quality journalism is in dire need of support. Publix aims to bring together all those who resolutely stand up for the value of independent information. Publix sees itself as a place for confidence and optimism, where the journalism of tomorrow can invent itself anew.”

#### Working, producing, discussing together, and a canteen for everyone

In practical terms, Publix is a working environment that provides 350 workstations. You will find it in Berlin Neukölln at Hermannstraße 90. It offers 4,000 square metres of space to more than 30 organisations and 120 co-workers from the broad spectrum of political opinion making; to editorial offices and freelance journalists and to NGOs and providers of media literacy programs. Correctiv, Reporters Without Borders and Netzwerk Recherche are among the first users of the space. Publix provides these organisations with a well-equipped and safe working environment. Users can also avail of state-of-the-art production studios and event spaces. Of course, all such users contribute in some way to operations at Publix. The canteen and a large garden space are open to everyone in the building and to the local community.

While providing an extensive program of specialized conferences and workshops for professionals from the fields of media, politics and civil society, Publix also addresses the public much more broadly, seeking both to provide information about journalism and what it means for democracy, as well as educating people in terms of editorial skills. Publix prepared the way for the founding of the *Media Forward Fund*, which will begin funding journalistic business models in Germany, Austria, and Switzerland in Autumn. Their *Nina Grunenberg fellowship* supports a month-long further education program in educational



journalism, while the organisation is currently developing a similar program for technology journalism.

As part of its opening program, the Publix team will be hosting a number of events together with the various organisations that call Publix their home. On September 12<sup>th</sup>, there will be a specialized conference with various speakers including executive director of Wikimedia Deutschland, Franziska Heine, the multi-award-winning photojournalist Mads Nissen, and the director of the Reuters Institute in Oxford, Rasmus Kleis Nielsen.

On September 13<sup>th</sup>, Publix celebrates the opening of its doors with a talk by the Minister of State for Culture and the Media, Claudia Roth, among others. Some 400 attendees are expected from the fields of media, politics and civil society, including TV moderator Louis Klamroth and media manager Julia Jäkel.

Minister of State, Claudia Roth: “Reliable journalistic reporting on the basis of profoundly researched information is a veritable lighthouse for the process of democratic opinion making. If we are to successfully tackle the challenges of our time, such as misinformation, a loss of trust in the media, and the rising costs of traditional newspaper production, we need to find new, innovative ways of doing journalism. With Publix comes a network that bolsters media diversity with concrete projects and innovation.”

On September 15<sup>th</sup>, the open house will host a program focused on podcasting, research techniques, and source checking that is aimed at kids, teens, and adults from Neukölln and Berlin-wide.

### **The Schöpflin Foundation brought Publix into being**

Publix was launched by the Schöpflin Foundation. The idea for the Publix building came about in 2017 during a conversation with David Schraven, the founder of Correctiv. Founded by the entrepreneur and investor, Hans Schöpflin, the foundation has been contributing to the protection of independent media and a lively democracy for many years.

Executive director of the Schöpflin Foundation, Tim Göbel: “Robust and independent journalism is the lifeblood of any democratic society. With Publix comes a place where innovative forms of quality journalism and freedom of information and opinion can be tested and developed. We’re delighted to welcome Publix onto the scene and wish everybody involved the greatest success.”

The building was developed in collaboration with its future users. In total, the Schöpflin Foundation has invested 25 million euros in the planning, construction, and equipping of the building. Publix has been supported from the beginning by the Stiftung Mercator Schweiz and the ZEIT STIFTUNG BUCERIUS. Their commitment to the project is grounded in their conviction that only together and only across borders can we tackle the immense challenges faced by journalism and, thus, by democracy.