

CORRECTIV

Recherchen für die Gesellschaft



Annual report 2021

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Cover photo: Still image from the Arte documentary "Auf der Spur des Geldes" (Tracking the Money)

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EDITORIAL

Dear readers,



2021 was an exciting and turbulent year. It started with a shocking event that left many people speechless: On January 6th, supporters of Donald Trump stormed the Capitol in Washington D.C. to prevent the confirmation of Joe Biden as elected President. They were incited by stories of conspiracy and lies that Trump spread repeatedly. The images of the storming of the Capitol were seen all around the world. They show how dangerous the spread of disinformation is and how important, reliable, trustworthy and, above all, fact-based journalism is. Precisely this is CORRECTIV's role. Our journalism is a means of (further) educating people, informing them about abuses and allowing them to participate in debates.

2021 was also the second year of the pandemic: The coronavirus and the rules to contain it continued to dominate our social and everyday life. Our fact-checking team confronted the deluge of false reports spread about the pandemic with carefully researched facts. In the beginning, it was mainly incorrect information about the Covid-19 vaccinations that we checked. Some of the claims are so dangerous that they can endanger human life. But over the course of the summer, more and more false news about the federal elections and the candidates were spread.

2021 – the super election year: After 16 years, Angela Merkel's chancellorship finally ended. Politics and the

election campaign were topics that also occupied us. Jointly with the Bundesverband Deutscher Anzeigenblätter (Federal Association of German Advertising Papers), we started an information campaign to make the most important topics of the election campaign as easy to understand as possible, for as many people as possible: We were able to reach around 20 million people via weekly papers. An informed decision when voting is the most important thing in a democracy.

At the same time, we addressed the misuse of democratic rights. Thus, we were able to bring to light the illegal donations in favour of the AfD. The trigger was the #GrünerMist campaign, which caused a stir throughout Germany. With the help of the population, we collected further evidence and gained access to internal documents of the largest German billboard advertiser, Ströer. The data revealed that poster campaigns worth over three million euros were financed by dubious sources to support the AfD. Once again the trail led to Switzerland. The findings of our investigation were the cause of new commotion and the party is now being threatened with fines of several million euros.

Creating transparency, especially when abusive behaviour occurs, is one of CORRECTIV's central concerns. Our investigation into anonymous donations to political parties at municipal level in July led several political parties to call for more transparency to be enshrined in the laws. Large secret donations to parties or members of legislative bodies are a threat to democracy.

Secret flows of money and their negative effects concern each and every one of us on a personal level as well. This was shown by our investigation with 16 media partners from five continents on what is probably the biggest tax robbery in history: 150 billion euros were stolen worldwide with CumEx and other tax tricks. This money is lacking in the countries' budgets for environmental protection, education, the switch to ecological energy sources in traffic, or digitisation.

Another characteristic of the summer of 2021 was extreme continuous rain and flooding. More than 160 people died in

Rhineland-Palatinate and North Rhine-Westphalia alone. The devastating consequences show how climate change is already having a direct impact on our lives, here and now. And it shows the urgency to change something. Our Climate Newsroom investigates where climate policy fails and where lobbyists exert their influence.

Our society is facing major challenges. Early participation in social developments is becoming increasingly important. Despite the pandemic, our Salon5 youth editorial team set up a radio station with around 40 students for a year – 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. In addition to learning how to conduct interviews and make videos, the young people at Salon5 learn, above all, to find their own voice.

There was also a lot of enthusiasm for the documentary "Auf der Spur des Geldes" (Tracking the Money), which was broadcast on ARTE in November. For a change, we were the subject of an investigation ourselves. Two documentary film makers accompanied us for a year during our investigations on CumEx and the AfD. The film shows impressively how investigative journalism works and how important it is for our society. We would appreciate you taking the time to view it.

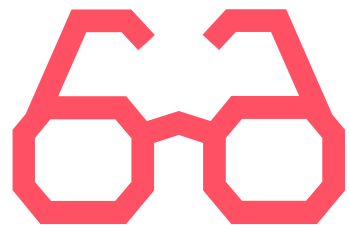
In December, we also received the good news that our Editors-in-Chief were distinguished as "Editor-in-Chief of the Year" 2021. A special award for Olaya Argüeso Pérez and Justus von Daniels, who have headed the editorial team since November 2019. And honour for the entire team, because it shows, once again, how important cooperation and cohesion are.

Without the support of numerous people, our work would not have been possible over the past year. More than 17,000 people supported us with a donation in 2021. More than ever before. We are very happy about this and say: Thank you for your trust and appreciation! We want to get even more people interested in investigative journalism in 2022 and are initiating changes for the better.

Your CORRECTIV team

2021 IN FIGURES

#COMMUNITY



14 M.

people read
our investigations

#COMMUNITY

17,000

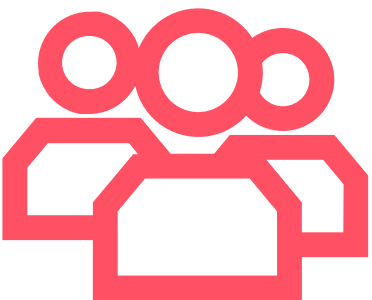
donors
support us



#LOKAL

1,000

Journalists in the
CORRECTIV.Lokal network



#FACTCHECK

480

Fact checks were published
by our fact check team



#MEDIACOMPETENCE



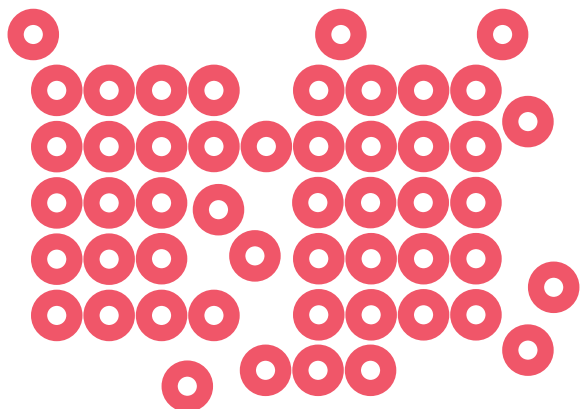
50,000

people attend our
online courses

#TEAM

50 +

employees were members of
our team at the end of the year



OUR MISSION

Investigative. Independent. Non-profit.



Investigative journalism stands at the heart of CORRECTIV. We conduct long-term investigations with extreme care. Whether tax fraud, illegal party financing or targeted disinformation – we intend to uncover situations where power is being abused.

With our work we stand for an open and enlightened society. Our goal is to enable people to participate knowledgeably in discussions and democratic processes. Thus, we initiate changes with our work.

Our investigations are free of political and economic dependencies. Our reporters are guided by the common good. We work with transparency and accountability. We choose our topics and activities ourselves.

As a non-profit organisation, we are convinced that independent journalism should be accessible to everyone. Our content is free for everyone, so that citizens can play an informed role in our pluralistic society.

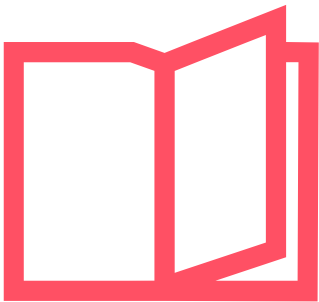
Our work is based on three pillars: Information, participation, and learning. The more people are familiar with the mechanisms of journalistic work, the stronger the media competence and culture of debate in a society will be. The combination of investigative journalism, our educational mission, and a participatory approach is reflected in our investigations and projects.

Photo: Ivo Mayr/CORRECTIV



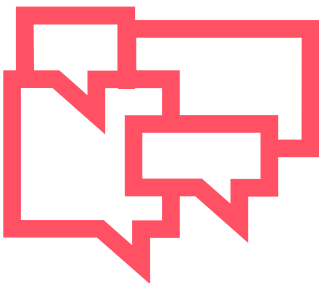
INFORMATION

Abuses in our society must not remain hidden. Because they endanger democratic rules or even invalidate them. We investigate extensively and bring to light issues that are highly relevant to our public. A fact base is created for readers. In this way, everyone can make better decisions in the long term.



LEARNING

We want the right to education to be put into practice, especially concerning the digital world. Media competence is a key skill in dealing with the daily flood of news and increasing disinformation. Comprehensive further training is important for everyone. We share our knowledge in workshops, events and online tutorials.



PARTICIPATION

For us, investigations are based on shared knowledge – the cooperation between citizens and reporters enriches journalism. We believe that participation in investigative reporting strengthens an active civil society. We find out what is on people's minds and can handle larger data investigations. Together we ensure comprehensive transparency on issues that affect us all.

AWARDS

Awards

Once more, our work received many awards in 2021.
We are very happy about this recognition!



Photo: Wolfgang Borrs/mediummagazin



EDITOR-IN-CHIEF OF THE YEAR

1st place in the category “National Editor-in-Chief” in the Medium Magazin “Journalist of the Year” selection



REPORTERS’ PRIZE

In the category “Data Journalism,” for the team responsible for the investigation “No Filter for the Right”



DR. GEORG SCHREIBER MEDIA PRIZE

In the category “Online” for the CORRECTIV Pillenkick investigation team and the ARD doping editorial team



SIGMA AWARD FOR DATA JOURNALISM

For the investigation “No Filter for the Right”



INVESTIGATIONS

CumEx-Files II

The scandalous tax fraud goes on

It is the biggest tax robbery in history. Three years after the publication of the CumEx files, an international media cooperation led by CORRECTIV shows how taxpayers worldwide were cheated out of 150 billion euros. An insider reports on the limitless deals, the fact that financial experts still believe tax fraud is possible, and authorities that decline responsibility.



Artwork: Benjamin Schubert, Belén Ríos Falcón

“Cum-Ex is white-collar, anti-social behaviour”

— Anonymous quotation from a reader survey

What is the investigation about?

Under the name “CumEx-Files 2.0,” 15 media from 15 countries teamed up under the leadership of CORRECTIV to investigate the full extent of the tax robbery. Among them, and in addition to the ARD magazine “Panorama,” the BBC from Great Britain, Le Monde from France and NBC from the United States. According to the new calculations, the worldwide damage caused by Cum-Ex, Cum-Cum and comparable fraud systems amounts to at least 150 billion euros. In Germany alone, the total damage amounted to almost 36 billion euros.

For the first time in German media, one of the biggest tax robbers in the world made a statement: Sanjay Shah. He has been in Dubai for years now. He is being investigated by the authorities in Germany, Belgium, Luxembourg, and Denmark. He alone is held responsible for a tax loss of more than one billion euros.

Why is this investigation important?

Our investigation shows that the authorities have done little to stop the tax fraud and that the fraud is likely to continue. We were able to estimate once again the global fraud damage, a task that no authority has yet tackled: 150 billion

euros. In addition, in this investigation we used various elements (FAQs, visualisations, etc.) to make it clear to readers that the stolen money is actually their money and that it is thus missing in other places.

What was surprising about this investigation?

CORRECTIV has managed to make the fraud known on all five continents, thereby increasing the global relevance of the investigation. Neither the first calculation of the damages nor the second have been questioned by the authorities or experts, confirming our assumption that nobody knows how much money was actually stolen.

What was achieved with the disclosure?

CORRECTIV was invited to present the results of the investigation to the European Parliament. Almost a month after publication, the BaFin (German Federal Financial Supervisory Authority) announced that it would request information from the banks on the consequences of the Cum-Cum deals.

CORRECTIV team Olaya Argüeso Pérez, Oliver Schröm, Manuel Daubenberger, Jonas Seufert, Benjamin Schubert, Belén Ríos Falcón, Sophia Stahl, Miriam Lenz, Hatice Kahraman, Jonathan Sachse, Katarina Huth, Justus von Daniels, Gabriela Keller, Frederik Richter, Marcus Bensmann, Isabel Knippel, Max Donheiser, Luise Lange-Letellier, Valentin Zick, Maren Pfalzgraf

Cooperation partners BBC, NBC, ABC, El Confidencial, Le Monde, Profil, Panorama/ARD, Il Sole-24 Ore, The Irish Times, Follow The Money, Tansa, Reporter, SVT, De Tijd, amaBhungane.

AfD donations affair

The most dangerous donation affair of the republic

The AfD donation scandal runs into the millions: An anonymously funded poster campaign from 2016 to 2018 amounts to more than three million euros for the outdoor advertising company Ströer. In response to the investigation, Ströer announced that they would withdraw from political party advertising.



Illustration: Janosch Kunze/CORRECTIV



What is the investigation about?

Based on statements and documents of former AfD party leader Frauke Petry and internal documents of the outdoor advertiser Ströer, we were able to specifically show how the AfD was supported from Switzerland with millions in election campaign aid from 2016 to 2018. Our investigations uncovered what is probably the biggest foreign donation scandal in the history of the Federal Republic. In addition, we showed the danger posed to democracy in Germany by the lack of transparency and too lax legislation when donations to political parties are the issue.

Why is this investigation important?

The lack of transparency in donations to political parties endangers democracy. We show how the AfD was pushed into the German parliaments with many millions of euros coming from Switzerland.

What was achieved with the disclosure?

The extent of the AfD donation affair became clear through our investigation, and we saw that the legal and parliamentary controls have apparently not been able to counteract election campaign aid of this kind from Switzerland.

What was surprising about this investigation?

As a reaction to our investigation, the Cologne-based outdoor advertiser Ströer withdrew from political poster advertising at short notice. However, they were back for the state elections in North Rhine-Westphalia in 2022.

Correctiv team Marcus Bensmann, Gabriela Keller, Jonathan Sachse, Justus von Daniels, Miriam Lenz

Cooperation partners ZDF-Magazin Frontal, Der Spiegel, t-online, Kontraste

Secret donations

Who is secretly influencing politicians?

Large anonymous donations to political parties are a threat to democracy. Together with more than 100 local journalists from all over Germany, we investigated shady payments, thus contributing to more transparency in donations to political parties.



Why is this investigation important?

Our investigation shows the lack of transparency of donations to political parties at the municipal level. Because it was not known previously which district associations of the political parties received the most donations, although more than 50 million euros flow to the local party branches every year. In Germany, donations to political parties are only published after a two-year delay, and they are only broken down at federal and state level. This is actually a problem. Whoever collects more money for their constituency can achieve more in the election campaign. This can lead to conflicts of interest, for example, when politicians accept money from corporations, in turn expect something in return. For this reason, CORRECTIV, together with dozens of members from local editorial offices, posed questions about donations to municipal political parties for the first time.

What was surprising about this investigation?

The political parties reacted very differently to the enquiries, so that getting down to specific donations was a task of varying complexity. Almost all district associations of the CDU (Christian Democratic Union) and the AfD (Alternative for Germany) stayed silent. This is particularly explosive because the CDU and the CSU (Christian Social Union) receive the most donations. In 2019, almost 36 million euros went to the Union. Almost 80 percent of this amount went to the lower levels of the party. That is, local, district and regional associations. Only six of them disclosed to CORRECTIV the amount received in donations in the past five years. For the year 2019 alone, more than 28 million euros in donations remain hidden.

Photo: Marcus Spiske/unsplash

The milk lobby

How our milk harms the climate and the environment

Advertising campaigns and lobbying have turned cow's milk into a mass-produced staple food. But the price paid is high. The hidden environmental costs of the German milk production amount to 7 to 11 billion euros per year. It was calculated by CORRECTIV based on the results of an, as yet unpublished study by the German Federal Environment Agency.



What is the investigation about?

For decades, the milk lobby's influence in parliaments has ensured that milk remains cheap and a daily product. But the true price paid is high. The hidden environmental costs of the German milk production amount to 7 to 11 billion euros per year. And only the milk lobby benefits from this – at the expense of the cows, the climate, and our society.

Why is this investigation important?

Daily milk consumption is the result of targeted lobbying in politics. Milk is considered indispensable, but it causes animal suffering and climate damage. We expose the system.

Artwork: Benjamin Schubert/CORRECTIV

Domestic violence

A Germany-wide investigation on the situation during the coronavirus pandemic

The four walls of their own homes have turned into hell for tens of thousands of women and children during the pandemic. They looked for a safe place in women's shelters. However, dozens of these facilities were overcrowded, and in some cases they had to turn away hundreds of women. And the situation is also precarious at other places within the aid system against domestic violence. This is what an investigation by CORRECTIV.Lokal with numerous cooperation partners from all over Germany shows.



Why is this investigation important?

There is an alarming situation concerning German women's shelters: The investigation by CORRECTIV.Lokal showed for the first time, based on a large data analysis, the regions in which hundreds to thousands of safe places for women and children do not exist. Thus, we were able to draw attention to the fact that the support system for women and children affected by violence has serious gaps and that the people affected are in a precarious situation. And COVID-19 redoubles the problem: Measures to combat the virus make daily work more difficult – and domestic violence increases during lockdowns. Ninety-two employees of women's shelters provided unembellished reports about on-site conditions.

What was surprising about this investigation?

The way women's shelters are financed in Germany differs from state to state, sometimes even from municipality to municipality. In Baden-Württemberg they are financed through daily rates for accommodation and care that if the women are entitled to receive social benefits, the job centre covers the costs. But this does not apply to female students. Some of the affected may simply not be able to afford a stay at the women's shelter. This was something we were not aware of before the investigation.

Photo: Peter Steffen/dpa

People in the crosshairs of right-wing terror

57 portraits of people who are on enemy lists

CORRECTIV teamed up with the WEISSER RING and more than 15 journalists from eleven well-known local media outlets for the project "People in the crosshairs of right-wing terror." The project gives face and voice to 57 people who were placed by neo-Nazis and right-wing extremists on enemy lists.



What is the project about?

Right-wing extremism affects us all. Because neo-Nazis attack the most precious thing we have as a society: people. To show this, we portrayed 57 people who are on the so-called enemy lists of right-wingers. The people on the lists are a reflection of our open society. People of all religions and backgrounds. People of almost all political tendencies, who only stand up for democracy. We have portrayed them for who they are: People like you and me. With dreams, concerns about parents who need to be cared for, favourite foods and beautiful hours by the sea. These people are the door openers and the heart of this investigation.

Why is this project important?

We conducted this investigation in central places all over Germany, from Lörrach to Rostock. We presented the portraits and artwork on right-wing extremism at 18 exhibition stands. The investigation could not simply be clicked away, as it was in the middle of the cities, right in front of people.

Above all, a warning is intended with this project: If we as a society fail to resolutely counter right-wing terror, it will drive us apart and alienate us from one another. It will rob us of the most precious thing we have: the people around us. That is why it was important to get so close to the people affected.

Photo: Ivo Mayr/CORRECTIV

Editorial project: Election2021

Cooperation for the federal election with the BVDA

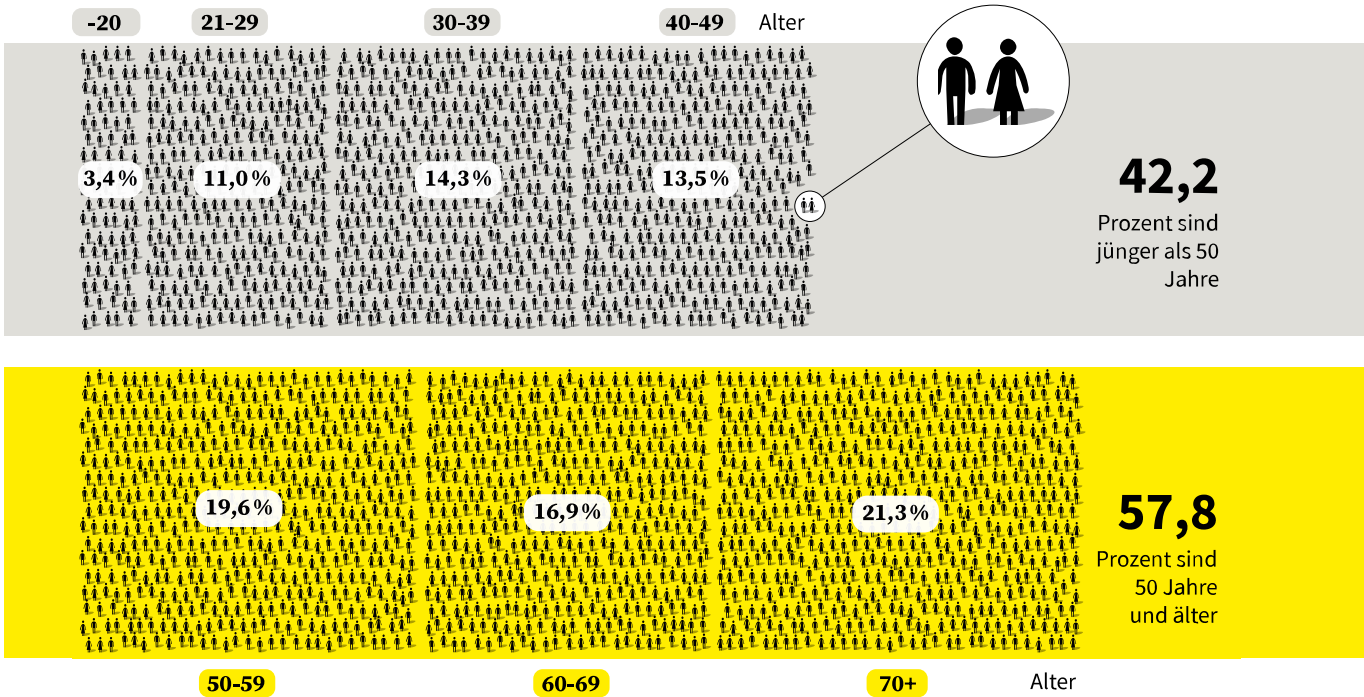
Together with the Bundesverband Deutscher Anzeigenblätter (BVDA – Federal Association of German Advertising Papers), and until the 26th September, we answered important questions about the federal election in a compact and understandable way. The enormous outreach of the weekly papers allowed us to reach around 20 million people.



Photo: Fionn Large/unsplash, infographic: Stefan Fichtel

Wer die Wahl entscheidet

Wahlberechtigte 2021 nach Altersgruppen



What is the project about?

CORRECTIV designed a focus series jointly with the Germany-wide association of weekly papers for the 2021 federal election. In a total of six episodes, we explained individual topics relevant to the election campaign in an easy to understand way. Each time we filled one page of each of the weekly papers with text and infographics.

Why is this cooperation important?

With this cooperation, a unique project succeeded in bringing complex content to a particularly broad readership. We presented the essential information and positions of the political parties on issues such as climate change, migration, social justice or mobility, in such a way that citizens were able to make an informed decision about who to vote.

What was achieved with the cooperation?

This cooperation was unusual and at the same time groundbreaking for future collaborations. With the dissemination via the weekly papers, we were able to reach around 20 million readers and thus create an information base for many people, regardless whether they are consumers of classic media. From the point of view of the weekly papers, the series represented a gain in well-edited content.

Correctiv team Ansgar Kneip, Cristina Helberg, Justus von Daniels

Cooperation partner BVDA

**CORRECTIV.
FAKTENCHECK**

CORRECTIV.Faktencheck

Pandemic and election campaign – a turbulent year for CORRECTIV.Faktencheck

Targeted disinformation is used to divide our society, spread hate, or do business. One-sided or false information creates distorted worldviews. Our fact check team counteracts this and uncovers false information, rumours and half-truths on a daily basis.



Photo: Ivo Mayr/CORRECTIV

“Thank you very much for your constructive educational work (and of course also that of your colleagues)!”

— Excerpt from a reader’s email

“Stay brave! You are on the right side! I wouldn’t be able to do it. You have my full respect and admiration. Don’t allow yourselves to be fooled. Thank you.”

— Excerpt from a reader’s email

“I recently started receiving the Faktencheck newsletter. I find very interesting and well-prepared articles inside, and I pass them on to my circle of acquaintances. This way, I can take immediate action against false reports. My most heartfelt thanks to you and your team for your commitment and dedication to uncovering false reports. I wish you continued strength and endurance. The goal of false reports is to unsettle people. And this is something we really don’t need at all right now in these difficult times.”

— Excerpt from a reader’s email

Once again, in 2021, our fact check team focused on scientific fact checks on the topic of the coronavirus and vaccinations. It was a big challenge. In addition to our daily work, we practically trained ourselves further in this field. Hate messages against our team increased, but we were also rewarded with the encouragement and gratitude shown by many people because our fact checks provided them with orientation in the confusing circumstances of the pandemic.

Another highlight was our joint effort for the federal election in September. We followed the election campaign systematically for months in advance and thus we were able to react very quickly to allegations circulating about a supposed electoral fraud and manipulation on the election weekend and the following week.

CORRECTIV.Faktencheck starts a fact-check chatbot

An efficient warning system for disinformation via WhatsApp: With the new CORRECTIV.Faktencheck chatbot, people can not only submit information in an easy way, but also automatically receive existing fact checks.

How to recognise false reports

False reports spread swiftly and cause great uncertainty. They aim to undermine the trust in democracy. Our fact-check team gives tips on how to recognise false reports by means of workshops and recommendations.

CORRECTIV.Faktencheck

Strong partners against false reports

In order to contain false reports as far as possible, we work together with well-recognised partners. CORRECTIV.Faktencheck is part of an international network of fact checkers – the IFCN of the Poynter Institute of the United States. More than 70 organisations belong to the alliance, including the Washington Post, Reuters, Le Monde and the Deutsche Presseagentur (dpa - German Press Agency).

Last year, the global fact-checking community IFCN was nominated for the 2021 Nobel Peace Prize. We, along with all the fact checkers, were delighted by this honour.

Most read fact checks



Intensive care unit in Antwerp: The fact that the majority of patients are vaccinated is a statistical effect

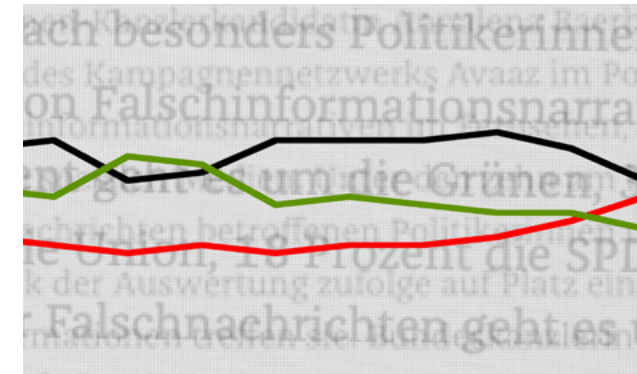
In early November, all COVID-19 patients in an intensive care unit in a hospital in Antwerp, Belgium, had been vaccinated. A video with this statement by a chief physician is being spread on social networks and suggests that the vaccinations do not work. However, without context, the video is misleading, because the patients belonged to risk groups, and the vaccination rate in Belgium is very high.



Another quotation by Annalena Baerbock that is a fake: The candidate of the Greens does not want to abolish widows' pensions.

Does Annalena Baerbock want to abolish widows' pensions so that the money can be used to better integrate refugees? No. The quotation spread on social networks is totally fabricated.

Important backgrounds



Dirty election campaign – How disinformation poisons the Federal Parliament election

Massive disinformation circulated on the Internet before the Federal Parliament election. We were able to uncover the scale and methods behind the spread of this misinformation.



“Information will take place by fax:” Why nobody in Germany knows how many vaccinated people contract Covid-19

For the health authorities in Germany, the fight against the coronavirus is also a struggle with huge amounts of data. In 2021, the Robert Koch Institute did not know the vaccination status of every fifth person suffering from Covid-19. How is that possible? Our investigation revealed the complex structures and the consequences of a lack of digitisation.



The newspaper forgers: How a quirky network of fake accounts on Facebook creates a buzz

We uncovered a network of fake profiles centred around a fictional newspaper called “NRW Kurier” that stirred up hatred against the media and spread disinformation.

SALON5

Salon5

Between lockdown and homeschooling: Young people get involved!

Salon5 is CORRECTIV's youth editorial team. Here, young people between the ages of 13 and 18 learn the journalist's craft to give voice to their own topics and their world. In workshops and by means of daily editorial work, young people can learn how to conduct interviews, investigate, check facts and much more, in order to have a say on youth-related topics concerning social media in a journalistic way. Thus, the project is very important, because it shows the prospects, life situations, and problems of young people and gives them a platform where they can discuss and exchange ideas with other young people.



Photo: Salon5/CORRECTIV

Media reactions to our work



Salon5 rethinks the Bottrop protocols

A report on "Bottrop Protocols 2.0" in the *Bottroper Zeitung* by Tobias ten Hoopen.



Bottrop's Salon5 awards a Youth Book Prize once again

WAZ reported on our 2021 Youth Book Prize.

"It is a great enrichment to have a place where your own voice is acknowledged and taken seriously."

— Semih Sahin, Salon5 reporter

"Working at Salon5 feels like I got off on the right foot"

— Dina Bogdanski, Salon5 reporter

Over the past year, we dealt with many topics that interest and move young people. We would like to emphasise the week, in which young people address the issue and show what drug use can lead to. We also published an audio documentary in which we spoke to people from Bottrop and showed what motivates the so-called "working class." With the "Bottrop Protocols 2.0," we intend to give a voice to people who are otherwise hardly heard.

What motivated us most was the commitment and performance of young people with regard to their own topics and interests. The past year has not been easy for young people. They had to go into lockdown and homeschooling and were hardly able to really experience their youth. Nevertheless, they deal with important topics in the youth editorial team and demonstrate the existing challenges and possible solutions to other young people. Salon5 has, by now become an integral part of the young voices in the Ruhr area and shows how important youth work is.

Artwork: Salon5/CORRECTIV

Salon5

2021 highlights



Salon5's first anniversary

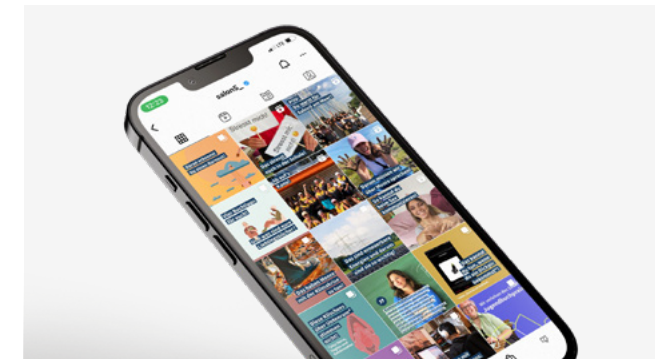
Becoming a journalist at the age of 14, interviewing the spokesman for the federal government or being on a stage for the first time: Our young reporters from the youth editorial team managed all this and much more in their first year. CORRECTIV provides simply the tools – what young people create is up to them. The editorial team of Salon 5 has grown from 2 to more than 30 members in one year, has produced more than 350 podcasts and conducted many exciting interviews – among others, with Düzen Tekkal (author), Massiv (rapper) and Christian Daum (football coach).

Photo: Ivo Mayr/CORRECTIV



Salon5's Youth Book Prize

The editorial team awarded the Youth Book Prize for the second time, thus creating a format in which young people can choose their favourite books themselves. Young people from all over Germany were able to submit their favourite books: In the end, the five best were chosen by the youthful reporters.



Bottrop Protocols 2.0

Our society has been shaped by the coronavirus pandemic for almost two years. Many people have concerns, problems, questions, and ideas. But they are not heard. Salon5 wants to change this with a new audio documentary. The "Bottrop Protocols II" are a testimonial to German society in 2021.

Start of the thematic weeks

2021 ends with an idea: To bundle topics that many people find concerning into thematic weeks. The Salon5 team gather knowledge, share reports about experiences and, in addition to podcasts, are now increasingly producing videos for Instagram and TikTok. And they are doing this in their free time. It is all about fast fashion, fears, the NRW elections from the perspective of GenZ and, last but not least, the Ukraine crisis.

Photo: Salon5/CORRECTIV, Ivo Mayr/CORRECTIV



PROJECTS

CORRECTIV.Lokal

With around 1,000 people, we promote investigations in local journalism

CORRECTIV.Lokal initiates investigations in subjects that are of nationwide importance and, at the same time, relevant to the local population. For this purpose, we work together with local journalists in a nationwide network, as well as other people who support journalism with their expertise.



Photo: Ivo Mayr/CORRECTIV

Important publications



This is how publishers influence reporting in local journalism

Numerous reporters from various local newspapers inform CORRECTIV.Lokal about editorial interventions by their management. With this story we take a critical look at the weak points in our own industry.

Start of our series of workshops

We have been offering monthly free workshops for all members of the network since April 2021 and, depending on the topic, they are attended by between 30 and 100 people. With this further training, we intend to strengthen investigations and promote teamwork. As a result, a local journalism knowledge database, which members of CORRECTIV.Lokal can use free of charge, is growing.

“Local media and freelance journalists often lack the money for further training. That’s why I think it’s great that CORRECTIV.Lokal offers such great workshops for us.”

— Vanessa Möller, member of the network, local journalist in Würzburg.

In the past year, CORRECTIV.Lokal achieved several leaps concerning development. Around 200 stories were published in more than 80 local media outlets throughout Germany. The network has grown beyond its own expectations. With around 1,000 members, it reached a size that enabled us to have a nationwide local impact with every investigation for the first time. With the new webinar offers, we have also established a second pillar alongside the investigation offers. The interplay of investigations, networking opportunities, and educational offers strengthens local journalism in Germany.

For us, 2021 brought decisive new dynamics to the network and in the exchanges with local journalists. In the meantime, there are so many people participating that something is happening on the network every day. Ideas for new topics are shared, help with investigations is requested, or new tools are presented. In this way, the members help each other to strengthen local journalism.

Photos(from left to right): Dylan Gillis/unsplash.com, Marvin Meyer/unsplash

CORRECTIV.Klima

About dairy cows and solar investors: The climate crisis is becoming an existential issue

Our Climate Newsroom adheres to constructive journalism. We want to go beyond mere reporting and show people courses of action and approaches on how we can all meet the climate crisis. We inform, we network, and we investigate: Whether undercover to expose the machinations of the international climate denial lobby, or on doorsteps in exchanges with citizens on the local aspects of the climate crisis.



Photo: Ivo Mayr/CORRECTIV

Important publications



Glowing landscapes – this is why solar investors are endangering nature and agriculture

Ecologically sustainable, socially questionable: Chaos reigns in the conversion to solar energy. High yields attract investors who want to build mega parks on agricultural land – preferably in inexpensive Brandenburg. Farmers and local residents feel that they are under pressure, and the municipalities and community representatives feel unable to cope. An investigation on what goes wrong in the energy transition when “the market is supposed to regulate.”

Our Climate Newsroom has a new focal point – since last year we work in internal cooperation with CORRECTIV.Lokal. Together, we conduct investigations on climate issues with a local focus, in cooperation with local media and organise events and training courses.



How the federal government overcalculated billions for the coal phase-out

The government wants to compensate the German brown coal companies for the coal phase-out with 4.35 billion euros. But the federal government has not revealed so far how this amount was calculated. Internal documents suggest how the Economics Ministry overcalculated these billions.

We had a big kick-off meeting on our new focal point with local journalists from the CORRECTIV.Lokal network, presented our project, and collected initial ideas and suggestions. It was great to see how much interest there is in the topic of climate change and to share ideas.

Photos(from left to right): Andreas Glückhorn/unsplash, Patrick Stollarz/AFP

CORRECTIV.Verlag

An eventful year for the CORRECTIV Publishing House

With our own publishing house, CORRECTIV regularly publishes non-fiction books, graphic reports and other formats on our current investigations and relevant topics. We are committed to producing high quality books. We want to create a basis for an informed social debate in Germany and enable new literary formats.



Photo: Ivo Mayr/CORRECTIV

“Aesthetically, the book is delightful, vivid and impressive. ‘Erdoğan’ is a source of knowledge and, despite all its sombreness, also entertainment.”

— *Frankfurter Rundschau* on the Erdoğan comic

“Carefully researched... you can not only better understand the President of Turkey, but also the history full of vicissitudes of the country.”

— *Tagesspiegel* on the Erdoğan comic

“Very opportune. You can’t stop reading this book.”

— Serdar Somuncu, *Radio Eins/rbb* on the Erdoğan comic



A lot happened at the CORRECTIV Publishing House in 2021. Three books were published: On the occasion of the 60th anniversary of the German-Turkish Recruitment Agreement, we published the book “Wie Deutschland zur Heimat wurde” (How Germany became a homeland). It paints a picture of the people who came to Germany from Turkey since 1961 and their descendants, and it celebrates their lifetime achievements. The book “Menschen – im Fadenkreuz des rechten Terrors” (People in the crosshairs of right-wing terror), concerning the project with the same name, was published to attempt to capture the extent of right-wing terror in Germany. Towards the end of the year, the cartoon biography “Erdoğan” by Can Dündar and Mohamed Anwar was published and sold out just a few weeks afterwards. In addition, the CORRECTIV publishing

house, in cooperation with local partners in Essen, opened the reading room on Akazienallee and is making an important contribution to the literary and cultural scene in the Ruhr area.

The success of the Erdoğan comic exceeded our expectations. The entire German edition (3,000 copies) was sold out within six weeks. However, we encountered some problems: The ongoing paper shortage caused the printing of the second edition to be delayed until 2022. At the same time, the Turkish edition of the book never reached the people of Turkey. To date, more than 80 books are stuck in Turkish customs. Despite these obstacles, the cartoon biography was well received: A great reward for several years of work on the comic.

Photo: CORRECTIV

Reporter Factory

Off into the new hybrid reality: How to teach media competence during the pandemic

The Reporter Factory is a journalism school for everyone on the Internet. It provides journalistic knowledge and skills to interested citizens. It contributes to the further training of media professionals and aims to help them improve their use of the new digital possibilities to investigate, tell stories, publish. We use the Internet to strengthen media literacy everywhere - be it with our online courses, which our users can use independently at any time, or as an intermediary between journalism and schools to reach young people.



Photo: Reporter:innenforum

“I liked the personal reports of the two journalists and the valuable tips on the sidelines of the presentation regarding the ‘traps’ you can run into.”

— Anonymous course participant

“Very informative, explained in a simple and understandable way.”

— Anonymous course participant

The ever-changing pandemic year with a long lockdown, but also some face-to-face instances, has shown us that we have to take advantage of our strengths both online and offline.

The first on-site shooting for tutorials after almost a year and a half was a great moment. Because everything that happens in front of the camera benefits greatly from a lively off-stage exchange. Nevertheless, it was also a highlight to realize that during the lockdowns, both the infrastructure and the willingness to connect online emerged, and that we can reach many more people with our content.

Our work is particularly fun when we can develop new subject areas, for example, political education, and thus expand our workshop programme. It is particularly gratifying when we receive feedback saying that people have been waiting for exactly these topics from us.

Impressions and figures

- Last year we were able to achieve 50,000 course registrations on the learning platform.
- “If you want to tell stories about hell, you’ll have to talk to demons from time to time. Angels are only known from hearsay.” In their workshop, Marcus Bensmann and Gabriela Keller showed how to properly deal with sources and informants.
- “I don’t like interviews, I like conversations.” In the interview workshop, Giovanni di Lorenzo explained what made conversations with the Pope, Helene Fischer and Recep Tayyip Erdogan so special.

beabee

We develop a software application for community-centred local journalism

beabee is a software that allows new and innovative (local) editors to work in journalism in exchange with their communities. This includes actively involving people in journalistic processes, but also involving them in their financing through a membership model. beabee not only provides the digital tool to set up community-centric (local) newsrooms but is also a learning and exchange platform where founders can network and exchange ideas to learn from each other.



Photo: CORRECTIV

“Since I am part of your network, I actually feel more confident in my work – the exchange is very inspiring.”

— Anonymous quotation from the beabee community in our year-end survey

“Participating motivates me to further expand my project, because I can exchange ideas with colleagues in similar situations and I know that I am not alone.”

— Anonymous quotation from the beabee community in our year-end survey

Why is this project important?

Our democracy is in danger when people can only obtain insufficient information from reputable sources. Distrust and resignation grow, disinformation spreads. And this happens precisely where people are most likely to help shape democracy: On their own doorstep. This needs to be strengthened again. The path to new approaches in journalism is through greater participation of the people. The project is important because we need more journalism, especially locally.

exchange information about their projects much more intensively and received even more inputs and motivation. Subsequently, we used the content of these sessions to produce a course for the CORRECTIV Reporter Factory.

We particularly enjoyed the workshop day in Bottrop. It was great to bring together such great and diverse local media makers from all over Germany in one place to talk about innovative ideas in local journalism and to provide inputs. We also gained a lot of motivation for our own work.

What were last year's highlights?

In October and November 2021, we conducted a three-part workshop series for 10 local journalism founders. During two online sessions, the participants learned many things that are important for founding a community-centric local medium, e.g. choosing the right legal form, diversifying business models or the elements required for building a community. In addition, there was always room for exchanges and reflections. During the final, all-day face-to-face meeting at the Salon 5 youth newsroom of CORRECTIV in Bottrop, the participants were able to

#ÖZGÜRÜZ

Transcending boundaries

Under the leadership of Can Dündar, former editor-in-chief of the newspaper Cumhuriyet, Turkish journalists publish investigations and stories on our web radio #OZGÜRÜZ to understand Turkish daily politics and their importance for German society. We also publish background stories about Turkey in various forms, from podcasts to films.



Photo: AFP PHOTO/OZAN KOSE

“We publish books by the persecuted. We give them a spiritual home. We transcend boundaries.”

— Can Dündar

#Özgürüz underwent a major transformation last year under Can Dündar’s leadership. The Turkish newsroom’s radio programme expanded its podcast production on YouTube, thereby drastically increasing its outreach. The YouTube channel alone has over 170,000 subscribers by now. There are also over 5 million followers on various social media used by #Özgürüz.

In addition, #Özgürüz has now opened its own publishing house: #ÖZGÜRÜZ Press. It is managed as a separate company, with which CORRECTIV continues to be connected. We publish books together and want to give people who are persecuted, whose books are burned, a new home. Our first book was the graphic novel “Erdoğan” – a cartoon biography about the current Turkish President’s path to power. The book is a great success. It quickly became a bestseller and helps many thousands of people to better understand what is happening in Turkey.

It is still very difficult to help people in exile. Once and again we have to experience how the longing for home is greater than the fear of persecution. Reporters who came to us, who we took in, could not bear the pain of separation, went back and disappeared in prisons. It is a grief we can hardly share.

But we admire the courage with which these people stand by their convictions and are unafraid of the consequences of their desire for freedom. We continue to stand up for them and try to help them wherever we can. In front of and behind the scenes.

And currently, the publisher is just about persecuted reporters from Turkey. Thousands of colleagues have fled Russia because they are gay, because they call corruption by its name, because they tell the truth, because they cannot bear the daily crimes. We know we must help them. And we are glad that we can contribute our experiences from the #Özgürüz project.



Photo: #ÖZGÜRÜZ

CORRECTIV

Community

“A very important point for me, as a mother with thoughts about the future of the children: My children know you, and that’s reassuring.”

— Agnes S., CORRECTIV supporter



More than 17,000 people supported us in 2021 with one-time or regular donations. This enormous response shows us how valuable independent journalism is for many of you. As a result, we are able to expand our team by several people this year, thus creating even more impact. The donations enable further intensive investigations, hundreds of fact checks and the expansion of our educational work.

The more independent investigating provides a look behind the scenes, the less scope there is for abuse of power, corrupt influences, or targeted disinformation. And, now more than ever, this is necessary.

Next year, CORRECTIV will continue to be your reliable source, your stimulus for critical debates with friends and colleagues. You can trust us to accompany you with our independent and investigative journalism.

Our most heartfelt thanks to all those who are already supporting us.

Team

Three things unite us at CORRECTIV: a passion for investigative journalism, the realisation that we can achieve more as a team than alone, and the conviction that our work can initiate positive social changes.



Why do you work at CORRECTIV?

→ “A reader once praised us greatly: ‘If you didn’t exist, you would have to be invented.’ I believe that this shows pretty much why the work here is so important. CORRECTIV is not only strong in exposing unbelievable things. We are also strong at explaining, teaching, and listening. This turns journalism at CORRECTIV into something very personal. The name CORRECTIV is part of daily life for many people. I am glad that my inventive talent helps to reach out to even more people.”
— Valentin Zick, Community Engagement

→ “CORRECTIV not only promotes investigative journalism, but also young people through the youth editorial team, who otherwise hardly get to be heard. That’s why I like working at CORRECTIV, because here I have the feeling that every person gets a chance to speak out by means of diverse projects.”
— Hatice Kahraman, head of Salon5

Our finances

Donations over 1000 euros | Period: 1st January to 31st December 2021

CORRECTIV financial contributors	Total
Donations from supporters	€1,384,681.02.
Luminate - Omidyar Network Foundation	€414,078.67.
Schöpflin Stiftung	€263,000.00.
Stiftung Adessium	€106,000.00.
Open Society Foundations	€70,240.54.
Rudolf Augstein Stiftung	€70,000.00.
Mercator Stiftung	€52,677.00.
Fundación Maldita	€47,529.00.
Deutsche Telekom AG	€25,000.00.
Weißer Ring e. V.	€25,000.00.
Stiftung für Engagement	€25,000.00.
EUR Climate Foundation	€15,000.00.
Alfred Toepfer Stiftung	€7,500.00.
Donau-Stiftung	€6,000.00.
Twitter	€5,000.00.
Open Knowledge GmbH	€5,000.00.
Deutsche Telekom Stiftung	€5,000.00.
Netconomy Germany GmbH	€4,000.00.
GuD Geotechnik und Dynamik Consult GmbH	€2,000.00.
24Volt.de GmbH Co. KG	€2,000.00.
Otto A. Muller Recycling GmbH	€2,000.00.
Richard Tscherwitschke GmbH	€1,500.00.
Strehl IT- + Management- Consulting UG	€1,200.00.
Asquera GmbH	€1,000.00.
Nitrokey GmbH	€1,000.00.
Ulrich Zehfuss Carta GmbH	€1,000.00.
PE TEC GMBH + CO. KG	€1,000.00.
C&C Alliance LTD	€1,000.00.

Salon5 youth editorial team financial contributors	Total
State Chancellery of the State of North Rhine-Westphalia	€150,665.50.
RAG-Stiftung	€85,000.00.

Community software beabee financial contributors	Total
State Chancellery of the State of North Rhine-Westphalia	€225,735.84.

Reporter Factory financial contributors	Total
GLS Treuhand	€200,000.00.
Google	€150,000.00.
German Federal Agency for Civic Education	€35,800.00.

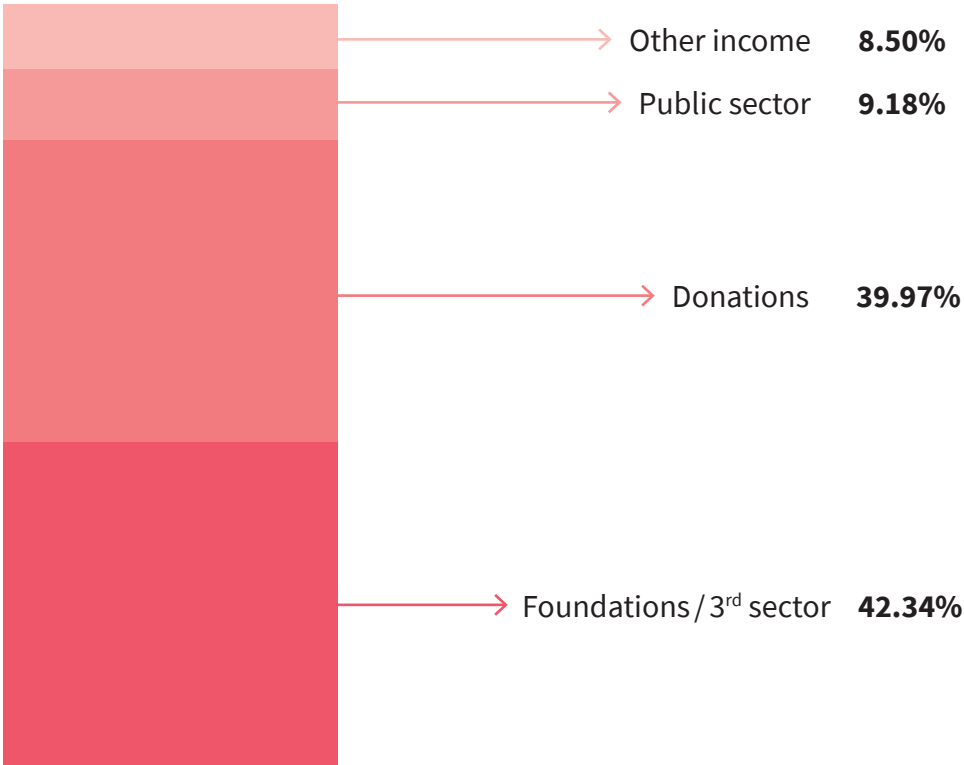
SUBSIDIARY: CORRECTIV – Verlag und Vertriebs für die Gesellschaft UG (limited liability) has provisionally achieved a total income of €752,612.26 from January 1st to the December 31st, 2021. With total costs of €748,585.83, there is an EBIT of €4,026.43 at the end of the fourth quarter.

We disclose our structures and have committed ourselves to complying with the standards of the Siegel Gemeinnütziger Journalismus (Non-Profit Journalism Seal) and the Initiative Transparente Zivilgesellschaft (Transparent Civil Society Initiative).



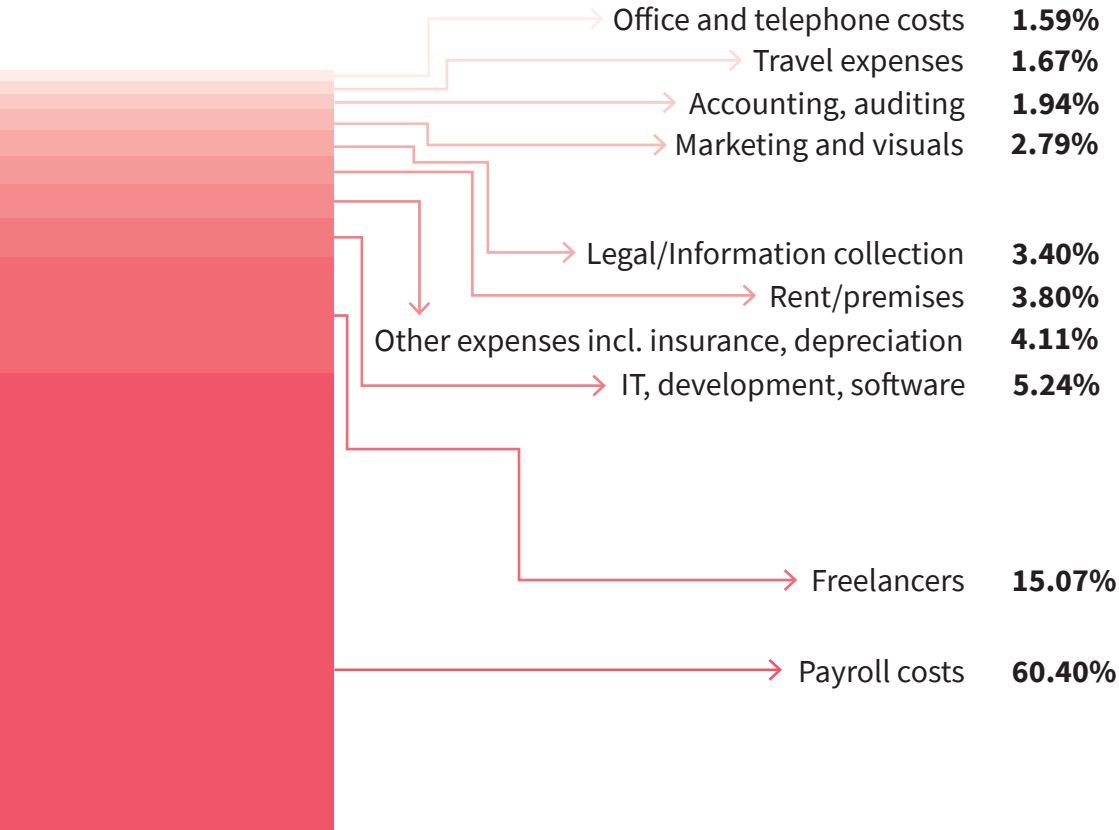
Our finances

Income in the period January 1st to December 31st, 2021



Type of income	Total
Foundations/3 rd sector	€1,581,631.
Donations	€1,493,089.
Public sector	€343,094.
Other income	€317,584.

Expenses in the period January 1st to December 31st, 2021



Type of expense	Total
Payroll costs	€1,934,509.
Freelancers	€482,536.
IT, development, software	€167,854.
Other expenses including insurance, depreciation	€131,612.
Rent/Premises	€121,732.
Legal/Information collection	€108,866.
Marketing and visuals	€89,477.
Accounting, auditing	€62,019.
Travel expenses	€53,420.
Office and telephone costs	€50,803.

Strategic Partnerships



OPEN KNOWLEDGE FOUNDATION DEUTSCHLAND

We cooperate with the Open Knowledge Foundation Deutschland in operating the website fragdenstaat.de. The website links our claim for a transparent society with technical innovation.



BUREAU LOCAL With Bureau Local, the Bureau of Investigative Journalism in London (TBIJ) has successfully established the model of collaborative journalism for the UK. We entered into a partnership with the TBIJ for the specific implementation of our CORRECTIV.Lokal project. The Bureau of Investigative Journalism was founded in 2010 and is one of the most important non-profit news organisations in the world.



WHISTLEBLOWER-NETZWERK The civil society organisation works to strengthen the rights of whistleblowers in Germany and supports and advises (potential) whistleblowers.



INTERNATIONAL FACT-CHECKING NETWORK/ POYNTER INSTITUT We cooperate with the International Fact-Checking Network of the *Poynter Institute* in dealing with targeted disinformation. Via the network we are in contact with over 75 organisations worldwide.

Thank you!

CORRECTIV is the first non-profit investigation centre in the German-speaking area. Our team of reporters uncovers systematic abuses and examines complex relationships.

Investigative journalism enables a strong society. In this way we strengthen democracy and freedom. The exchange with our readers enables us, as an educational institution, to engage ourselves to ensure a better future. This is how journalism returns to its roots: It becomes the fourth power in society.

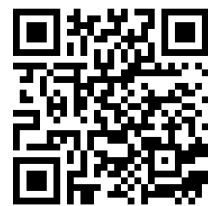
CORRECTIV is financed mainly by donations and contributions made by foundations. This guarantees independence of advertising revenues, sales figures, and membership fees.

We thank all our supporters!

Support independent journalism

Your donation allows us to conduct investigations that uncover abuses of power, as well as hundreds of fact checks that offer orientation. You promote our offers for more media competence and constructive exchanges. You can help – together with thousands of supporters – to strengthen our democratic society.

For more information visit <https://correctiv.org/en/single-donation/>



Investigative. Independent. Non-profit.

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Huyssenallee 11

45128 Essen

Commercial Register Essen

HRB 25135

Managing Director: David Schraven

Responsible for content within the meaning of § 18 Para. 2
of the MStV (Interstate Media Agreement: David Schraven

info@correctiv.org