

## PRESS RELEASE

# Bertelsmann Launches New Literary Podcast: ‘The Blue Sofa – New Books. New Voices.’

- **Podcast format to complement the established live program**
- **Further development of the ‘Blue Sofa’ brand into a multimedia literary forum**
- **Guest pairings for the first three episodes: Daniel Donskoy and Maya Rosa, Martin Suter and Christoph Peters, Annegret Liepold and Marie Menke**
- **Now available on all podcast platforms**

Gütersloh / Berlin, April 22, 2026 – Bertelsmann is expanding its literary format “The Blue Sofa” with a podcast: “The Blue Sofa – New Books. New Voices.” is a new audio format that complements the established stage program. Until now, “The Blue Sofa” has been known primarily as an author forum at major book fairs and literary festivals.

While the live conversations on The Blue Sofa focus on individual authors and their works, the new podcast format deliberately centers on dialogue: Established voices and literary newcomers engage in conversation. Together, they discuss current books, the spirit of the times, personal turning points, and the topics that shape and inspire their writing.

The podcast further develops the ‘Blue Sofa’ brand into a multimedia literary forum that reaches new audiences and increasingly contributes to current literary and societal debates.

Karin Schlautmann, Head of Corporate Communications at Bertelsmann, said: “The podcast opens up ‘The Blue Sofa’ to new voices and new listening habits. Bringing established authors together with literary newcomers creates fresh perspectives on today’s world and makes literature feel immediate and accessible. I’m delighted that we’re expanding our podcast offering with such a strong format.”

The first season comprises six episodes and is hosted by author and presenter Thomas Böhm. It is now available on all major podcast platforms.

Guests featured in the first three episodes:

Daniel Donskoy (“*Brennen*” (Burning), Kiepenheuer & Witsch) and Maya Rosa (“Moscow Mule,” Penguin)

Martin Suter (“*Können Sie mich sehen*” (Can You See Me), Diogenes) and Christoph Peters (“*Entzug*” (Withdrawal), Luchterhand)

Annegret Liepold (“*Unter Grund*” (Under Ground), Blessing) and Marie Menke (“*Spielverderberin*” (Spoilsport), Kiepenheuer & Witsch)

The new series expands Bertelsmann’s podcast portfolio alongside the “Creativity & Entrepreneurship” (“*Kreativität & Unternehmertum*”) and “Experience Bertelsmann”

(“*Bertelsmann erleben*”) podcasts. In “Creativity & Entrepreneurship,” ntv presenter Isabelle Körner speaks with members of top management, while “Experience Bertelsmann” offers insights into day-to-day work across the Group.

### **About Bertelsmann**

Bertelsmann is a media, services and education company with about 75,000 employees that operates in some 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 €19 billion in the 2025 financial year. Bertelsmann stands for creativity and entrepreneurship. This combination enables first-class media offerings and innovative service solutions that inspire customers around the world.

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

### **About The Blue Sofa**

The Blue Sofa is one of the longest-running and most successful literary formats in the German-speaking world. Founded in 2000, it has hosted more than 3,100 authors, who have presented their new books at major book fairs and beyond. In recent years, the format was jointly curated by Bertelsmann, ZDF, Deutschlandfunk Kultur, and 3sat. Since 2023, Bertelsmann has continued The Blue Sofa independently with a new concept. Past guests include Nobel Prize 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. [www.das-blaue-sofa.de](http://www.das-blaue-sofa.de)

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