

# Europe Monitoring

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## Germany

### TV station pays terrorist money for an interview



*A terrorist at the hostage-taking in Munich; Photo: AP*

The producer of a German TV documentary about the 1972 Olympics attack paid \$2,000 to one of the murderers from back then. This is reported by the German news magazine "Focus". According to the news magazine report, an ARD spokeswoman confirmed that the assassin, contrary to an original announcement, received an exclusive fee for his statements in the documentary.

Originally, the German public broadcasters SWR, RBB and BR involved in the documentation agreed not to pay any fees to hostage-takers. The representatives of the bereaved react accordingly outraged. "For me it is a media scandal by ARD that killers are paid money for their inhuman statements," said Ankie Spitzer, wife of fencing

coach André Spitzer who was murdered in Munich.

The statements made by the terrorist Mohamed Safady in the documentary are all the more shocking. He has no regrets, he said. The operation was "successful" and will be remembered for a long time.

### Vice-President of German Parliament calls Turkish President "little sewer rat"

The German ambassador in Ankara has been summoned to the Turkish Foreign Ministry because of statements made by Bundestag Vice President Wolfgang Kubicki.

At an event, the liberal politician described Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan as a "little sewer rat". He was referring to Erdoğan's refugee policy.

"A sewer rat is a small, cute, yet clever and devious creature, which is why it also appears as a protagonist in children's stories,"

said Kubicki. In terms of refugee policy, Erdoğan had "concluded a deal with the European Union that was advantageous for Turkey to reduce the number of refugees". After that, Turkey received money from the EU for blocking the way for refugees to Europe. "Nevertheless, we have to see that the wave of refugees via the Balkan route is increasing again, which



*Wolfgang Kubicki; Photo: dpa*

poses new challenges for German foreign and domestic policy.”

Kubicki versus Erdoğan is reminiscent of the Turkish president’s legally momentous dispute with German TV presenter Jan Böhmermann. In 2016, he wrote a nasty diatribe about Erdoğan, which he dressed up as satirical. Because the Turkish president had reacted angrily to another satire in the TV program Extra 3, Böhmermann pretended to show him didactically what is not allowed in Germany. Namely, publicly reciting a poem with such nasty insults as Böhmermann was now reciting publicly. A satirical disclaimer if you will; “He likes to fuck goats best,” declaimed Böhmermann. The judiciary did not share Böhmermann’s humor and did not believe that satire allowed what would otherwise be forbidden. The Regional and Higher Regional Courts in Hamburg banned several passages of the poem, while the Federal Constitutional Court agreed with the lower courts. Incidentally, the old-fashioned paragraph on “Insults to Majesty” was removed from the Penal Code.

## Muezzin may call at the Cologne Central Mosque

Next Friday the muezzin will be allowed to call for the first time in Cologne as part of a municipal project. It has signed a corresponding contract for its central mosque in the Ehrenfeld district, a spokeswoman for the municipality told the Catholic News



*Ditib Central Mosque in Cologne;  
Photo: dpa*

Agency (KNA) on Wednesday. According to municipal regulations, the muezzin call, which can then be heard at the central mosque from this Friday, must not exceed 60 decibels. That’s about as loud as a conversation. The call will not be heard over the two minarets that are not accessible, each 55 meters high, but over two loudspeakers that are aimed at the courtyard between the mosque and the administration building. The building is located on two major streets. About a year ago, the city of Cologne started a

pilot project, according to which Islamic communities are allowed to sound the call to prayer for five minutes on Fridays, subject to conditions. To do this, they must first inform the neighborhood, appoint a contact person for complaints and submit a sound report. The volume limits the municipality depending on the environment. According to the city, around ten of the approximately 35 mosque communities have now shown interest in the project. Only one - the Ditib Central Mosque - submitted an application with the necessary documents. After the project was presented, a nationwide debate ignited. Critics warned, among other things, that Ditib was an extended arm of the Turkish state. The city, on the other hand, relies on freedom of religion. An estimated eleven percent of the more than one million residents of Cologne are of Islamic faith.

## Israel/Lebanon

### Israel and Lebanon agree on sea borders

After decades of dispute, Israel and Lebanon have agreed on the course of their sea border in the Mediterranean Sea. Israeli Prime Minister Jair Lapid called the agreement “historic” and Elias Bou Saab, a member of the Lebanese negotiating group, described the agreement as satisfactory. Both states should therefore have access to gas fields in the eastern Mediterranean.

After the discovery of the gas fields, the dispute had escalated further. The Karish gas field is located in an area that both Israel and Lebanon have claimed as



*Ship at Karish gasfield; Photo: Reuters*

their own exclusive economic zone. The terrorist organization Hezbollah had described it as a “red line” for the agreement, should Israel start gas production there.

The country now wants to start doing this as soon as possible. “This historic agreement will strengthen Israel’s security and inject billions into the Israeli economy,” Lapid said. The Israeli security cabinet met yesterday and discussed the agreement. After that, the government’s approval

will be obtained at a special meeting of the full cabinet before the agreement is presented to parliament.

The gas fields could also become relevant for Europe, because Israel promised to supply more gas to Europe after the Russian attack on Ukraine and the resulting energy crisis. Lebanon hopes gas production will help the country deal with its economic crisis. The national currency has drastically lost value since 2019, and poverty and unemployment have recently risen sharply.

## Austria

### 19 months imprisonment for contact person of the Viennese assassin

A contact person of the Vienna attacker, who killed four pedestrians and injured 23 people, some seriously, in the city center on November 2, 2020, has been convicted at the Vienna Regional Court. The 24-year-old, who according to the indictment is said to have provided the assassin with mental tools, was sentenced to 19 months imprisonment for supporting a terrorist and criminal organization.

"You are an IS man. We are convinced of that," said the presiding judge in the verdict. The pun-

ishment had to be taken into account a judgment in a separate, previous procedure for theft. In total, the 24-year-old would have to serve two years, should the current judgment become final. The man has been in custody since November 3, 2020, he was arrested a few hours after the terrorist attack in downtown Vienna.



Photo: Christian Fischer

In his final statement, the accused clearly distanced himself from the attack in Vienna and declared himself innocent. "I want to make it very clear that I regret what happened," said the accused. He had seen the assassin two or three times and knew nothing of his plans: "If I had known about it, I would have reported it."

