
Germany: TV programme “Sunday Word” marks 70 years. Ecumenical party in Berlin with President Steinmeier

Following the televised celebrations on 8 May marking 70 years since the first historic Sunday broadcast of “Wort zum Sonntag” (“Sunday Word”), it was announced today that Federal President Frank-Walter Steinmeier will officially participate in the religious celebrations scheduled for 14 November in Berlin. Jointly organised by the German Bishops’ Conference, the Evangelical Church in Germany and the state television channel ARD, the ecumenical religious celebrations will be a feast of thanksgiving and revival for what, after the “Tagesschau” news programme, is Germany’s oldest broadcast. Today, it currently has a viewership of over 1.28 million people every Sunday, accounting for a share of over 8%. The celebrations marking 70 years of “Wort zum Sonntag” feature a broad, varied programme, with a reconstruction of the programme’s history. Among the participants will be Bishop Kirsten Fehrs, current President of the EKD Council; Cardinal Reinhard Marx, Archbishop of Munich-Freising and President of the Media Commission of the German Bishops’ Conference; Katja Wildermuth, Director of Bavarian radio broadcaster “Bayerischer Rundfunk” ; and ARD Programme Director Christine Strobl. The first episode was aired on 8 May 1954. All presenters now agree: they see in the programme a huge opportunity for everyone, being an interface even with sectors of society for which churches and faith do not exist or have no importance. “Wort zum Sonntag” is also a catalyst for ecumenical dialogue.

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