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Channel for older viewers launched

Former ARD star battles against youth obsessed TV

By [ERIK KIRSCHBAUM](#)

BERLIN — A former ARD host thrown off the air two years ago because of his advancing age announced on Tuesday plans to launch a new digital channel with the working title Bono TV devoted to issues for viewers above 50.

Max Schautzer, 66, has campaigned for the past two years against the "youth madness" that he says has afflicted television. Pubcasters ARD and ZDF have in recent years tried to attract larger market shares among young viewers even though they are obligated under German law to keep all their auds informed and entertained, says Schautzer.

The Austrian native whose Sunday program "Immer wieder Sonntags" (Always on Sundays) was abruptly cancelled in 2004 — he got the bad news in a cell phone call — turned that talk into action with the concrete plans for the new channel, which is to be broadcast over the Astra satellite and through cable providers from next year.

"Until now there was no broadcaster for the target groups 50 and above," Schautzer said in an interview with German business daily Handelsblatt on Tuesday. "Obviously ARD and ZDF serve the older target groups. But in contrast to us, they're not allowed to broadcast any advertising after 8 p.m.," he added, referring to German regulations that ban pubcasters from airing ads after that time.

Schautzer, a vital looking senior with a slightly receding hairline and a contagious smile, has been working on the project for the past 18 months. He holds 40% in Bono TV and his partner Sven Eggert, a 48-year-old Duesseldorf advertising executive, has a 20% stake. Other partners include former ZDF executive Josef Goehlen and media researcher Jens Ochel.

"We will be profitable within three or four years," said Schautzer, who said the aim is to have a 1% share of the 50-plus aud in the first year and 3.5% within five years. He pointed out that seniors in Germany are not only growing in numbers but also have above average income and wealth.

The partners have not yet decided where to base their channel but Duesseldorf, Cologne, Munich and Berlin are under consideration. They are expecting costs of Euros 50 million (\$65.5 million) a year at first and plan to broadcast 12 hours each day and then repeating the program from 11 p.m.

Schautzer wrote a bestseller about his firing and age discrimination called "Rock 'n' Roll in the Head, Waltzes in the Legs."

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