

**ZDF Director-General Markus Schächter's statement on Administrative Council's decision not to extend Editor-in-Chief Nikolaus Brender's contract**

At its meeting on 27 November 2009, the ZDF Administrative Council rejected a proposal to extend the contract of the corporation's Editor-in-Chief Nikolaus Brender. Only seven of this board's fourteen members voted for the Director-General's proposal to continue with Brender until January 2012. Nine "yes" votes would have been necessary.

Statement by ZDF Director-General Markus Schächter:

"My proposal to extend Nikolaus Brender's contract with ZDF has not been accepted today, since it failed to gain the necessary majority of three fifths of the members of the Administrative Council. Only seven of the fourteen members voted for my proposal in what was a secret ballot. The constitutionally required mutual agreement on this matter between the Administrative Council and Director-General has therefore not been reached.

I very much regret this outcome because I had good reasons for arguing in favour of Nikolaus Brender. He has made an important contribution to the success of ZDF over the last ten years and has been a cornerstone of our management team. In putting forward the case for Nikolaus Brender, I highlighted his journalistic independence and expertise, his strong and confident vision for the future of current affairs and information programming in a digital world, and his solid record of budgetary management, which has enabled considerable savings.

I fail to understand why no majority could be found even for my attempt, agreed with Nikolaus Brender, to find a compromise that would break the deadlock, namely by re-appointing him on a shortened contract due to run until January 2012.

The public discussion of this matter has brought up the fundamental question of how the Administrative Council relates to the Director-General at ZDF. It is now up to the States, as the political entities responsible for ZDF, to make sure that robust legal foundations be put in place for ZDF as part of the forthcoming amendment of the Federal State Treaty on Broadcasting.

As the Director-General, I must ensure that ZDF is in a position to take effective action and meet tomorrow's challenges. The question of appointing a new Editor-in-Chief must therefore be settled as a matter of urgency. The Administrative Council has agreed with me on the need to convene an extraordinary meeting to appoint an Editor-in-Chief before the end of this year. Nikolaus Brender has informed me that, following today's vote by the Administrative Council, he will no longer be available for any continuation in this role."

Mainz, 27 November 2009  
ZDF Press Office