

opposition24.com

A site covering German and international politics and business that has published false claims, including about the COVID-19 pandemic.



Proceed with caution: This website severely violates basic journalistic standards.

Ownership and Financing

Opposition24.com is owned by Wolfgang van de Rydt, who describes himself on the site as an “independent journalist.” The site is based in Rhineland-Palatinate. Van de Rydt, who also is a songwriter and singer, owns a blog called Fantareis.de that publishes political satire and sells his songs, which often ridicule the German government. Van de Rydt’s music is also available on Apple Music, under his artist name Fantareis.

According to Psiram, an online encyclopedia documenting conspiracy theories and pseudoscience, van de Rydt has performed at various protests, including at rallies against the Euro and Stuttgart 21, a large urban development project in Stuttgart.

In 2013, Van de Rydt and an SPD politician, Francesco Garita, co-founded the German “5 Stars” (“5 Sterne”) movement, which was modeled after the populist, anti-establishment Five Star Movement party in Italy. However, the German spinoff did not gain traction.

The site solicits donations and runs advertising.

Content

Opposition24.com states in its mission statement (“Leitbild”) that “our reporting critically deals with current political and social developments and events. To do so we use various stylistic devices, which also include polemics, satire, and the classic opinion commentary.” The mission statement continues: “We stand for the overcoming of ideologies and ideological rifts that hinder the progress of our society. Politically, this means that we regard our party system and the current representative democracy as urgently in need of reform.”

The site mainly covers German and international politics and business, frequently writing critically about left-wing and green parties and policies, the “mainstream media,” climate change, and Islam. The site also includes sections for Crypto-world, Technology, Health, Environment, Society, and Satire. The “Liberal Control Room” (“Liberale Werte”) section features a

Score: 20/100

- ✗ Does not repeatedly publish false content (22points)
- ✗ Gathers and presents information responsibly (18)
- ✗ Regularly corrects or clarifies errors (12.5)
- ✗ Handles the difference between news and opinion responsibly (12.5)
- ✗ Avoids deceptive headlines (10)
- ✓ Website discloses ownership and financing (7.5)
- ✓ Clearly labels advertising (7.5)
- ✓ Reveals who's in charge, including any possible conflicts of interest (5)
- ✗ The site provides names of content creators, along with either contact or biographical information (5)

Criteria are listed in order of importance.

[More information.](#)

video series of conversations between the site's owner, Wolfgang van de Rydt, and German-Iranian author Ramin Peymani, who argues that the German government and mainstream media are "indoctrinating" citizens.

Typical articles on the site have run under headlines including "Brutalization: Humanist press service compares abortions to a haircut at the salon" ("Verrohung: Humanistischer Pressedienst vergleicht Abtreibungen mit einem Haarschnitt beim Friseur"); "#Economiccrisis2020: Wikipedia announces eco-dictatorship" ("#Wirtschaftskrise2020: Wikipedia verkündet Öko-Diktatur"); and "Bitter reality: Bill Gates wanted to destroy the ozone layer to stop climate change" ("Bittere Realität: Bill Gates wollte die Ozonschicht zerstören, um den Klimawandel aufzuhalten").

Credibility

Articles on Opposition24.com typically rely on reporting by other news outlets, with added commentary from the site. These outlets include credible sources such as Südwestrundfunk, Redaktionsnetzwerk Deutschland, and the Rheinische Post. However, the site also often publishes interviews with people who have promoted conspiracy theories — among them, Wolfgang Wodarg, who is known for spreading falsehoods about the COVID-19 virus, and Jürgen Elsässer, co-owner of the far-right magazine Compact. The site also frequently republishes videos from sites that NewsGuard has found to be unreliable, including RT Deutsch, Ruptly, and Compact-TV.

The site itself has frequently published false claims. For example, a July 2020 article, titled "Phase 2 - a DNA-lockdown?" ("Phase 2 - ein DNA-Lockdown?"), claimed that "The WHO has confirmed that people who tested positive for the 'coronavirus,' who show no symptoms, are not contagious."

The World Health Organization has never said that asymptomatic coronavirus patients are not contagious, although one WHO official did describe asymptomatic transmission as "very rare" in a press conference in Geneva in July, before walking back the comment the next day. The official subsequently explained that exact data on asymptomatic transmission had not yet been published, but that some preliminary prediction models estimated transmission rates of up to 40

percent. Health agencies around the world have warned that asymptomatic people can spread the virus. In a scientific brief from July 2020, the WHO clearly stated that “Transmission can also occur from people who are infected and remain asymptomatic.”

The same Opposition24 article included a video from conspiracy-oriented site KenFm.de, which claimed that “Bill Gates and the WHO are currently promoting their latest vaccine innovation: Their new vaccines are designed to directly alter our DNA.” The article continued: “What once again sounds like science fiction is unfortunately bitter reality: A new world government with its new world order is about to take hold - a world government that has already unabashedly announced a mandatory DNA-altering vaccine.”

There is no evidence that a future COVID-19 vaccine would alter people’s DNA or be mandatory globally. In a post on his personal blog, Microsoft co-founder Bill Gates explained that his foundation is helping to fund research into many types of vaccines, including experimental mRNA vaccines. mRNA molecules carry DNA code to other parts of the cell for processing, but there is no evidence that such a vaccine could “alter our DNA.” A March 2019 review of existing scientific research on mRNA vaccines, published in the journal *Frontiers in Immunology*, found that the mRNA “cannot potentially integrate into the host genome and will be degraded naturally” after the body produces the antigen.

An April 2020 article, titled “A light at the end of the tunnel for millions of disappeared children” (“Ein Licht am Ende des Tunnels für Millionen verschwundener Kinder”), claimed that the U.S. government was conducting a massive rescue operation to free children imprisoned by the “elites” — a conspiracy theory that has been spread by members of the QAnon movement. “World-wide there are enormous underground tunnel systems and facilities for perverse inclinations of the elites,” the article stated.

The article continued: “There is hope for the children in the bunkers and tunnels — the US Army has begun the search for the tunnels and the recovery.... Right now and since last week, thousands of hungry and terribly abused children have been found dead or rescued in an underground tunnel in New York. This tunnel is said to extend over a distance of 4 kilometers between the

Clinton Foundation Building and the Port of New York!
... In the harbor of New York the huge white rescue ship 'Comfort' with its oversized red crosses is moored and ready for patients. But they are not those with the flu virus Corona, but with much worse wounds on body and soul."

To back these claims, the article only cited a story published on the NewsGuard Red-rated site News-For-Friends.de. The article also linked to a Twitter post by U.S. President Donald Trump, which stated in its entirety: "Light at the end of the tunnel!" This tweet was seized upon by QAnon followers as validation of the tunnel claims, although the tweet said nothing about missing children or a rescue operation.

There is no evidence of any organized global plot to kidnap children or of a large-scale rescue effort involving tunnels, much less of a tunnel leading to the Clinton Foundation. The Navy hospital ship U.S.N.S. Comfort was brought to New York to treat coronavirus patients, and there is no evidence that it treats children that had been imprisoned and recently freed.

A June 2019 article, titled "The new antisemitism: Germany's politics and the elephant in the room" ("Der neue Antisemitismus: Deutschlands Politik und der Elefant im Raum"), suggested that anti-Semitic crimes were incorrectly being classified as right-wing extremism, when most such crimes are being committed by Muslims. "The enormous increase in anti-Semitic crimes is often cited as evidence of renewed German right-wing extremism - a deliberate cover-up," the article said. "[M]any commentators blame the new everyday anti-Semitism on an allegedly rapidly growing group of neo-Nazis in order to distract attention from the real perpetrators."

In fact, a 2017 report by the Federal Ministry of the Interior (Bundesministerium des Innern) on anti-Semitism in Germany concluded that "most of the anti-Semitic crimes identified are committed within the still male-dominated right-wing extremist spectrum." NewsGuard could find no any evidence suggesting that most or even many of these crimes were in reality committed by Muslim immigrants.

Because Opposition24.com has published numerous false or misleading claims, NewsGuard has determined that the website repeatedly publishes false content,

does not gather and present information responsibly, and does not avoid deceptive headlines.

The site does not articulate a corrections policy, and NewsGuard did not find any corrections on the site.

The site purports to separate news from opinion, by publishing opinion articles in a separate Opinion section and by labeling some individual articles as Opinion (Meinung). However, articles published in the site's other sections also frequently include opinionated content advancing an undisclosed right-wing agenda.

For example, an August 2020 article published in the Politics section, titled "Democracy held hostage: The lessons of the Berlin demonstrations" ("Demokratie in Geisel-Haft: Die Lehren aus den Berliner Demonstrationen"), stated, "Anyone who moves outside the left-green milieu and shows his face in public is exposing himself to be shot dead in an ever-eroding democracy."

An April 2020 article also published in the Politics section, titled "Tax money for the Gates vaccination: Is that treason already?" ("Steuergeld für die Gates-Impfung: Ist das schon Hochverrat?"), stated, "By what right does [German Chancellor Angela] Merkel dare to squander the 'wealth' of the Germans, or rather the debt of the working population, in favor of a dubious initiative? Who benefits from a vaccination against a disease which, according to many critics of the Corona restrictions, is in most cases not fatal and resembles a 'normal flu'?"

A July 2020 article published in both the Politics and Economics sections, titled "The financial system - a presumptuous swindle" ("Das Finanzsystem – ein anmassender Schwindel"), stated, "The arrogance and hubris with which the world is being led to ruin by 'those up there' will in any case take its revenge. But unfortunately this punishment will affect the whole world and not only the elite, who are responsible for it."

Because Opposition24.com frequently publishes unlabeled opinionated content outside of the Opinion section, NewsGuard has determined that the site does not distinguish between news and opinion responsibly.

Reached via email, the site's owner, Wolfgang van de Rydt, declined to answer NewsGuard's questions about the articles cited above and about the site's approach to

corrections and its labeling of opinion.

Transparency

The site's Imprint page identifies its owner and editor-in-chief, Wolfgang van de Rydt, and provides an email address to contact the editorial department.

Articles generally credit the editorial department as a whole, or in the case of guest contributions, name the author. Many articles are also credited to van de Rydt. However, the site does not provide biographical or contact information for its authors, including van de Rydt — which does not meet NewsGuard's standard for providing information about content creators.

Advertisements are distinguished from editorial content.

Van de Rydt declined to answer NewsGuard's questions about the site's lack of disclosure regarding content creators.

History

The site was launched in September 2013.

In July 2020, the German Bundestag, in response to an inquiry from representatives of the Green Party (Bündnis 90/Die Grünen), said that Opposition24.com was found to “play a role in mobilizing, strengthening or spreading anti-science, conspiracy-ideological campaigns.”

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Send feedback to NewsGuard: [Click Here](#)

Sources

Ownership and Financing

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Example headlines:

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<https://opposition24.com/author/mariaschneider/>

Content creators:

<https://opposition24.com/author/mariaschneider/>

<https://opposition24.com/author/designer/>

History

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