

‘The Correspondent’ Goes West



The innovative Dutch online news platform *De Correspondent* is announcing today that it is expanding to the US, in collaboration with New York University. Editor-in-chief Rob Wijnberg and co-founder and publisher Ernst-Jan Pfauth – a regular moderator at the John Adams – are moving to New York later this year to investigate at first hand the feasibility of an international version called *The Correspondent* that will be based in the US.

Three questions from John Adams Institute director **Tracy Metz** for **Ernst-Jan Pfauth** - and one from him:

Why the US?

Our dream is to provide the best English-language journalism on an independent, ad-free podium with worldwide reach. We already write a lot in English, and since 2015 we have an international team: translator Erica Moore, *engagement editor* Travis Mushett and international editor Maaïke Goslinga. Our English-language newsletter reaches 12,000 people and in the last six months over 1.1 million readers read our English-language stories.

We realized that an international audience is interested in our online news platform, especially when our correspondent Rutger Bregman’s book *Utopia for Realists: How We Can Build the Ideal World* became a bestseller in English and he was interviewed on CNN. The translation rights have been sold in 21 countries.

Why the US? Because it is a big market, people are enterprising and more accepting of young businesses, and we are working together on this with NYU. This first year of researching the international market is funded by the Knight Foundation and the Democracy Fund.

What does the collaboration with NYU entail?

Jay Rosen, a professor of journalism at NYU and I have known each other for a long time. Jay's credo is: 'no journalism without participation'. That is the basis of *De Correspondent* in the Netherlands: our readers share their knowledge with our correspondents, and they are members of our platform. We therefore have no commercial interests and no ads.

One of the puzzles will be whether membership as a business model works in the US. That's why we are launching the site www.membershippuzzle.org of which Jay is the project director. That is where we'll publish the results of our year-long feasibility study.

Why do you think that American readers will trust a foreign medium like The Correspondent when they don't trust their own media?

I believe so, even though it appears that only a third of Americans trust 'the media'. There is a lot of innovation in American journalism, but almost all directed towards either the form or the distribution or support through philanthropy. I miss new ideas about journalism as a means to allow or to inspire readers to participate in democracy. Of course *The Correspondent* will not be just about the US, but will write about issues all over the world, and will work together with *De Correspondent* in the Netherlands. If all goes according to plan, *The Correspondent* will have an American editor-in-chief.

You have a question too.

Please let me know who the interesting American journalists are who write about global issues such as privacy, food, sustainable energy. **Email me at ernst-jan@thecorrespondent.com.**