



November 2022

MEDIA MEDIA MEDIA EU SUPPORT TO THE MEDIA SECTOR IN THE WESTERN BALKANS

Freedom of expression, media freedom and pluralism are key pillars of a democratic society and must be upheld. The EU assistance for media freedom and media development originates from the enlargement strategy, and is based on wide consultations, such as the **Speak-up!** and **EU – Western Balkans Media Conferences**. The European Commission (EC) has developed a long-term strategic approach for EU assistance to media freedom in the region – the **Guidelines for EU support to media freedom and media integrity** in enlargement countries. The Guidelines have double purpose: direct the thematic focus of our EU assistance, but simultaneously constitute a result framework to measure its success. The EU is currently reviewing and updating the guidelines.

The EU is supporting **freedom of expression** and **independent journalism** in the Western Balkans with ongoing bilateral and regional programmes worth almost **€38 million**.

€31.6
million EU contribution

PROGRAMMES
ONGOING REGIONAL PROGRAMMES

€10
million

€2
million

€3.7
million

Support to Media Freedom and Pluralism in the Western Balkans (2022-2025)

The project, implemented by GIZ, Deutsche Welle Akademie and Internews, aims to improve the economic sustainability of independent media outlets in the Western Balkans, improve their capacities for quality reporting and facilitate regional exchanges and networking between media outlets and other media market actors.

Building Trust in Media (2019-2022)

The project, implemented in partnership with UNESCO, supports media accountability, media internal governance and media literacy. This second phase of the project focuses primarily on media literacy curricula in schools, enhancing professional and ethical standards and self-regulation as well as the work of press councils, to address challenges related to disinformation in the region.

JUFREX 2 – Reinforcing Judicial Expertise on Freedom of Expression and the Media (2019-2022)

The project, implemented in partnership with Council of Europe in the context of the **EU-COE Horizontal Facility**, supports the judiciary in applying the European Court of Human Rights case-law system and media regulatory authorities in their area of responsibility as well as trains journalists and other media actors on duties and responsibilities and fosters networking.

PROGRAMMES

ONGOING REGIONAL PROGRAMMES

ONGOING REGIONAL

€ 1.9
million

Regional Training Programme to improve Quality and Professionalism in Journalism (2018-2022)

It supports a regional network led by the **Balkan Investigative Reporting Network (BIRN)** to consolidate journalism education and promote exchanges between EU and Western Balkans' academia and schools. This includes the continuation of the [Regional EU Award for Investigative Journalism in the WB and Türkiye](#).

€ 11
million
earmarked for
Western Balkans

4 Direct grants to the European Endowment for Democracy (EED) (2020-2026)

For targeted support to media outlets and civic actors: it is a flexible re-granting scheme for pro-democracy support in fast changing environments.

Grants to support regional networks of media and journalist associations awarded periodically through out the year (2020-2023):

€ 1
million

€ 1
million

€ 1
million

www.Safejournalists.net

to build the capacity of journalist professional organisations and support a regional early warning platform reporting cases of attacks and threats against journalists.

Resilience: Civil society action to reaffirm media freedom and counter disinformation and hateful propaganda

to support networks of media NGOs to strengthen resilience against disinformation, fake news, and hate speech.

Reporting Diversity Network 2.0

a regional network of CSOs aiming to influence the quality of media messages in relation to ethnicity, religion and gender, and promote tolerance and diversity.

€ 6.2
million EU
contribution

BILATERAL ASSISTANCE

COUNTRY SPECIFIC BILATERAL ASSISTANCE

COUNTRY SPECIFIC

€218,500

Using Big Data and Multimedia to Boost Quality and Independent Journalism in Albania (until Sept. 2023)

The project, implemented by BIRN Albania, aims at producing data driven in-depth stories on topics that are particularly important to citizens such as health, labour and consumers' rights, food and drug safety, environmental protection at both national and local level.

€48,000

Study on information manipulation and disinformation in Albania (2022)

A grant contract with BIRN Albania. It aims to collect and analyse data on disinformation materials and foreign narratives, including mapping of the main actors and channels, but also aims to provide pedagogic insights into main topics and several useful guidelines. Funded by the European External Action Service (EEAS).

€60,000

Fact-checking (until Nov. 2022)

A grant contract with the Albanian NGO and website [Faktoje.al](#) aiming at producing qualitative media reporting and at fact-checking the media and policymakers public narrative. Funded by the European External Action Service (EEAS).

€50,000

Communication campaign on disinformation & media literacy

An upcoming grant contract, starting by the end of 2022, through which the EU Delegation to Albania will raise awareness among the general public and media professionals need to fight disinformation and it will promote the importance of media literacy. Funded by the European External Action Service (EEAS).

**BOSNIA &
HERZEGOVINA**
€ 467,500

Youth for Better Media (2021-2023)

The overall objective of the project, implemented by a consortium led by Foundation Mediacentar, is to support the creation of a stronger and more vibrant civil society that would actively demand professional credible journalism whilst supporting the protection of media freedom.

KOSOVO*
€ 1.5 million
Recent Assistance

€444,400
Innovation for
resilient media
and citizen engagement
(until June 2022)

The aim of the project, implemented by Kosovo 2.0, in partnership with the Institute for Advanced Studies - GAP, is to increase public understanding on the issues that directly affect citizens' lives through linking media production and think-tank research and analysis to produce accessible, innovative and professional media.

€447,000
Solidifying the
resilience
of Kosovo's current and
future journalists
(until June 2022)

The objective of the action implemented by BIRN, in partnership with other partners, is to bring together the wider community of journalists and media professionals, media outlets, civil society and the public to increase awareness, recognition and support for professional journalism.

€566,200

Europeanisation of Kosovo's Environmental Agenda (until July 2022)

The objectives of the project, implemented by BIRN, in partnership with other partners, are: to enhance CSO's and media's capacities to promote environmental policies; to strengthen the dialogue on energy efficiency between them (CSOs and media) and the public institutions; and to raise the awareness of the public at large on the importance in renewable sources, environmental protection and their impact on the health.

NORTH MACEDONIA €400,000

€100,000

Direct grant to the Council of Media Ethics (until Dec. 2022)

The project aims at strengthening of the capacity of the Council of Media Ethics, enhancement and promotion of media self-regulation among media workers, CSOs, citizens, as well as integrity and professionalism in the newsrooms.

€300,000

Technical Assistance for Alignment of national media legislation with EU media acquis and media standards (until Aug. 2023)

The overall objective of the project is to enable a legal environment that will promote freedom of expression, competitiveness and sustainability of the media market, through the harmonisation of the media legislation with the Audio-visual Media Services Directive (EU) 2018/1808 and international standards.

MONTENEGRO

€130,000

Ongoing assistance (2021-2023)

Consists of 4 small grants under the regional European Endowment for Democracy funding with no bilateral project currently.

SERBIA

€ 3.42 million

**€ 2.4
million**

Support to the media sector in Serbia to overcome the economic challenges of COVID-19 pandemic (2020-2023)

Implemented by the European Endowment for Democracy, this is the core Media Support Programme in Serbia, which has already assisted well over 30 independent media and media organisations and contributed strongly to keeping media diversity alive. It has proved instrumental for the survival of independent media in Serbia during the COVID-19 crisis. It focuses on supporting media pluralism in Serbia, also on a local level, and it provides vital support for media's staying in business and developing their business further.

€320,000

Strengthening Freedom of Expression and Quality Journalism in the Digital Environment in Serbia (2020-2023)

Implemented by OSCE, it focuses on providing direct support to the implementation of the media strategy in Serbia, notably in terms of increasing the safety of journalists through enhanced capacities of the police, prosecution and journalists and media associations, as well as empowering journalists' associations and media to respond to the needs of citizens in a digital society.

€699,438

Direct support for the Press Council of Serbia (2022-2026)

It focuses on supporting the Press Council in carrying out its media self-regulation functions, by monitoring the observance of the Journalist's Code of Ethics, solving complaints made by individuals and institutions related to media content.