



European
Commission

EU - WESTERN BALKANS MEDIA DAYS 2019

PODGORICA, 12-13 SEPTEMBER 2019

 #EUWBmedia

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Neighbourhood
and
Enlargement
Negotiations

FOREWORD



Johannes HAHN

EU Commissioner for
European Neighbourhood Policy
and Enlargement Negotiations

It is my great pleasure to welcome you to the third edition of the EU-Western Balkans Media Days in Podgorica, Montenegro.

Freedom of media is one of the fundamental principles of the European Union and a key political indicator in the EU accession process. However, current developments across the Western Balkans region give cause for concern.

Undue political interference in the work of public broadcasters, non-transparent use of public funds for media and intimidation of journalists has continued. The spread of disinformation that distorts public debate and fuels hatred, division, and mistrust in democracy is also alarming.

The [EU-Western Balkans Media Days](#), launched in 2017 by the European Commission, aim to ensure that media freedom remains a priority while tackling the complexity of pressing political, economic and social issues the region experiences at present. This year's edition will shine a spotlight on the relations between policy and media. It will involve for the first time political representatives from the region directly in charge of information and media for a "Policy meets media" discussion. This will be an opportunity for an open and honest exchange about the state of play of freedom of media in the Western Balkans, the governments' responsibility and about concrete actions for improvement of the current situation.

Building on the lessons learnt from the previous conferences regarding the sustainability of media production and the role of international assistance, it is now time to carry out a reality check. I want to hear directly from the media organisations concerned about the advantages and limitations of the assistance received so far. We must also continue to identify ways to increase the professionalism of journalism. This refers in particular to online and social media and the challenges of digital transformation. We have to explore ways to establish new, innovative business models for media.

Finally, encouraging reconciliation and regional cooperation also remains a challenge in a region still too often dominated by a "black and white" approach. Media can and should contribute to a mutual understanding by resisting simplistic stereotypes and polarisation.

I am glad that during my mandate as Commissioner for European Neighbourhood Policy and Enlargement Negotiations, I have put a special focus on media freedom and freedom of expression. This is a necessity. The Media Days are an example of the EU's enhanced engagement in this domain. The EU will continue to strengthen its support to independent media in the region. But there is also work that can be done by the media themselves: getting ready for change!

In this spirit, I look forward to our discussions and I wish all participants fruitful and inspiring exchanges.





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PROGRAMME

WEDNESDAY | 11 SEPTEMBER 2019

19:00 - 22:00

Networking dinner

Opening by **Aivo ORAV**, EU Ambassador and Head of Delegation to Montenegro

THURSDAY | 12 SEPTEMBER 2019

08:30 - 09:15

Registration & Coffee

09:15 - 09:30

Kick Off and Outline of the Day
Conny CZYMOCH, Conference Moderator
Caroline CHAPPLE, Illustrator

09:30 - 10:00

Welcome and Opening Speeches

Welcome remarks by **Duško MARKOVIĆ**, Prime Minister of Montenegro
Opening remarks by **Johannes HAHN**, *EU Commissioner for European Neighbourhood Policy and Enlargement Negotiations*

10:00 - 12:15

Grand Panel 1: Ensuring media freedom and sustainability of independent media in the Western Balkans

Visual Opening

Moderator: **Valerie HOPKINS**, *Financial Times*
Kurt BASSUENER, *Democratization Policy Council*
Mihailo JOVOVIĆ, *Vijesti*
Marija RISTIĆ, *BIRN*
Genoveva RUIZ CALAVERA, *European Commission*
Klaus SCHWEIGHOFER, *Styria Media Group*
Questions and answers

12:15 - 13:45

Lunch and Coffee

13:45 - 16:15

Parallel Workshops:

- *Independent reporting: How to cope with the manipulation of information space*
- *Reconciliation and regional cooperation: Overcoming nationalist narratives*
- *Encouraging new generation of journalists and new business models*



PROGRAMME

16:15 - 16:30 | Coffee

16:30 - 17:30 | **Lightning Talks**

- *Support to public service media in the Western Balkans*
- *Lessons learnt from the project “Building trust in media”*
- *Opportunities and resources for investigative journalism*
- *Ensuring safety for journalists in the Western Balkans*

20:00 - 22:00 | Cultural Evening Programme

FRIDAY | 13 SEPTEMBER 2019

08:15 - 08:45 | Registration and Coffee

08:45 - 09:00 | **Kick Off and Outline of The Day**
Conny CZYMOCH, Conference Moderator
Caroline CHAPPLE, Illustrator

09:00 - 09:30 | **Presentation of Workshops Recommendations**

Moderator: Valerie HOPKINS, *Financial Times*

Workshop rapporteurs:

Darko BRKAN, *Zašto ne*

Ilir GASHI, *Independent media analyst*

Serbeze HAXHIAJ, *RTK*

09:30 - 11:00 | **Grand Panel 2: Policy Meets Media**

Moderator: Valerie HOPKINS, *Financial Times*

Aleksandar BOGDANOVIĆ, *Minister of Culture of Montenegro*

Harlem DÉ SIR, *OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media*

Alfred LELA, *Politiko*

Damjan MANCHEVSKI, *Ministry of Information Society and Administration of North Macedonia*

Esmir MILAVIĆ, *N1*

11:00 - 11:30 | **Closing Session**

Concluding remarks by Commissioner Johannes HAHN

11:30 - 12:00 | Coffee and Take-Away Lunch



WORKSHOPS

WORKSHOP: INDEPENDENT REPORTING

How to cope with the manipulation of information space

By polarising public views and interfering in democratic decision-making processes, disinformation can have long-term adverse effects on the democratic development of our societies, and it requires a whole-of-society response. According to 2018 Flash Eurobarometer on this topic, most of the Europeans consider journalists to be at the first front of defense against fake news. The workshop will be the place to discuss how impactful professional journalism is in the era of information manipulation. What are the most recent trends in this field, and what are the best ways forward to deal with disinformation and build societal resilience in the Western Balkans?

Moderator: **Srđan CVIJIĆ**, *Open Society European Policy Institute*

Rapporteur: **Ilir GASHI**, *Independent media analyst*

Milica BOGDANOVIĆ, *Centre for Democratic Transition*

Igor BOŽIĆ, *TV N1*

Tijana CVJETIČANIN, *Raskrinkavanje.ba*

Lutfi DERVISHI, *RTSH*

Diyana DOBREVA, *Cardiff University*

Golli MARBOE, *Association for a Self-determined Use of Media*

WORKSHOP: RECONCILIATION AND REGIONAL COOPERATION

Overcoming nationalist narratives

As the long-awaited reconciliation in the Western Balkans remains to be achieved, the communication space is still dominated by “black and white”, often simplistic and nationalistic rhetoric which is echoed by media organisations and reflects a fragmented, politically polarised media landscape. Media outlets are often recruited by political establishments to perpetuate conflicts in the region.

While the European Commission relentlessly continues to raise the issue among its institutional counterparts, efforts also need to be made towards the media communities to encourage them to refuse politically imposed narratives.

Joint unbiased productions would counterbalance oligarch backed and state sponsored media organisations. The EU is keen to promote and support bottom-up initiatives that contribute to reconciliation and regional cooperation.

Moderator: **Adelheid FEILCKE**, *Deutsche Welle*

Rapporteur: **Serbeze HAXHIAJ**, *RTK*

Benjamin ARIFI, *Euronews Albania*

Nikola BURAZER, *European Western Balkans portal*

Olivera NIKOLIĆ, *Montenegro Media Institute*

Maja VASIĆ-NIKOLIĆ, *NUNS*

Velma ŠARIĆ, *Post-Conflict Research Centre*

WORKSHOP: ENCOURAGING NEW GENERATION OF JOURNALISTS AND NEW BUSINESS MODELS

Listening to the feedback from the media organisations

The 2018 edition of Media Days covered the needs of media organisations to reach a new level of sustainability for journalistic production. It is now time to carry out a “reality check” and hear directly from the media professionals themselves which concepts work and how new and innovative business models could be supported. Continued undue political interference jeopardises the very existence of independent journalism. This is further undermined by both the increased contamination of the information space by opaque media ownership and by manipulated narratives and disinformation.

These phenomena need political attention and creative rethinking of existing strategies.

Among the subjects to be examined:

- Advantages of donors’ long-term engagement in comparison with beneficiaries as opposed to the project-based approach
 - Criteria for such an engagement and for granting core support to media organisations to compensate for current market failures
- Advantages and limitations of the business support instruments in the Western Balkans media business environment.

Moderator: **Jerzy POMIANOWSKI**, *European Endowment for Democracy*

Rapporteur: **Darko BRKAN**, *Zašto ne*

Aleksandar MANASIEV, *VidiVaka*

Vitomir OGNJANOVIĆ, *Južne vesti*

Brankica PETKOVIĆ, *Ljubljana Peace Institute*

David QUIN, *Thomson Foundation*

Afërdita SARAÇINI-KELMENDI, *TV 21*



LIGHTNING TALKS

LIGHTNING TALK – SUPPORT TO PUBLIC SERVICE MEDIA IN THE WESTERN BALKANS

Why the EU needs to provide sustained long-term assistance to public broadcasters

Since February 2018, the EU regional program has helped six national broadcasters to improve the political and financial independence of public media. The program includes plans for integrated newsrooms, editorial guidelines and long-term strategies. This assistance program has also managed to expand cooperation on investigative journalism, co-producing youth programs and regional exchange of archive materials.

The initial results are encouraging, the feedback is positive, but still requires sustained, long term effort. Public broadcasting has to provide a platform for dialogue to improve social cohesion in often divided societies.

The Technical Assistance to Public Service Media in the Western Balkans is a Service Contract of the European Commission that has been awarded to the consortium of six reputable international partners^[1] (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo*, Montenegro, North Macedonia and Serbia). Other stakeholders include the parliamentary committees responsible for media, the media regulatory bodies, public service media governing bodies and relevant NGOs. The implementation is planned to last until July 2020.

Vojislav RAONIĆ, *International Federation of Journalists*

LIGHTNING TALK – LESSONS LEARNT FROM THE PROJECT “BUILDING TRUST IN MEDIA”

How can media self-regulation and information literacy contribute to rebuild trust in media?

Support from civil society to protect and defend the media are fundamental for press freedom. Yet, this support very much depends on the climate of trust in the media.

To address the decline in civil society’s trust in media in South East Europe, UNESCO together with partners implemented an EU funded project developed around three aspects of the media ecosystem:

- 1 - reinforcing media self-regulation mechanism
- 2 - strengthening internal media accountability
- 3 - promoting media and information literacy

The project was implemented from 2016 to 2019. It supported press and media councils of the region to improve their functioning, outreach and sustainability. It introduced the idea to work directly with media outlets to increase their commitments to transparency, ethics and labour rights. It also introduced media and information literacy policy and strategies for the region and built a coalition for media and information users.

Adeline HULIN, *UNESCO*



LIGHTNING TALK – OPPORTUNITIES AND RESOURCES FOR INVESTIGATIVE JOURNALISM

Subsidies and grants

The presentation will focus on opportunities and grants for journalists, provided by the Balkan Investigative Reporting Network (BIRN) and its partners. They have created and managed subsidies such as BIRN Summer School of Investigative Reporting, Reporting Democracy grants, CEU regional program for investigative journalism. These incentives help provide structural support to media operators to enhance freedom and media integrity in the Western Balkans and in the other countries where the network is active. The objective of the grants is to contribute to independent journalistic activity covering regional and local topics of public interest in Central, Eastern and South-Eastern Europe.

Ivana JEREMIĆ, *BIRN*

LIGHTNING TALK – ENSURING SAFETY FOR JOURNALISTS IN THE WESTERN BALKANS

Consequences and prevention

Whilst in some of the Western Balkans countries, physical crimes against journalists and media operators are declining, the impunity of offenders remains a serious issue due to an inability to conclude investigations and a lack of political will.

The associations of journalists from the Western Balkans are joining forces to fight this situation together. They speak out against infringements of the rights of journalists, a precondition for freedom and democracy.

The joint European Commission and journalists' associations project, launched in 2016, resulted in a decrease in the number of attacks on journalists.

It also achieved the aim of boosting solidarity among professionals of the media sector. We need to unite and continue to develop tools and mechanisms to protect journalists.

Dragan SEKULOVSKI, *Association of Journalists - AJM*

[1] International Federation of Journalists (IFJ), the European Broadcasting Union (EBU), the European Federation of Journalists (EFJ), the Austrian Public Broadcaster (ORF), the Balkan Investigative Reporting Network (BIRN) and the Eurovision News Exchange for South-East Europe (ERNO).

*This designation is without prejudice to positions on status, and is in line with UNSCR 1244 (1999) and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo declaration of independence.



CULTURAL EVENING

Join us for wine tasting in a very special location:
a former aircraft hangar!

The wine cellar is situated 8km southeast of Podgorica and it is operated by Plantaže, Montenegro's largest wine company. It occupies a 356m-long tunnel which was once a secret underground passage for military planes. Partially destroyed in 1999 and abandoned immediately afterward, the revamped hangar now houses millions of liters of wine, aging gently in oak barrels and bottles.

The event will be hosted by Deputy Prime Minister for Political system, Interior and Foreign Policy Zoran Pažin.



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BIOGRAPHIES



Benjamin ARIFI

Euronews Albania

Benjamin Arifi is a young journalist from Skopje, North Macedonia. Currently working as a correspondent from Skopje for Euronews Albania. Previously, he worked as a journalist for Portalb.mk and Alsat M TV, and as news editor and moderator of a political show for TV Shenja. He is also a member of the managerial board of Association of Journalists of North Macedonia.



Kurt BASSUENER

Democratization Policy Council

Kurt Bassuener is co-founder and Senior Associate of the Democratization Policy Council, under whose support he has published numerous policy briefs, papers, and studies. He has worked on Balkan policy since 1997. His most recent report, "Pushing on an Open Door: Foreign Authoritarian Influence in the Western Balkans," a NED Working Paper, was published in May 2019. He is currently a Fulbright scholar and PhD candidate at the University of St. Andrews. His dissertation, to be defended in the autumn of 2019, explains the functional dynamics of post-war power-sharing – particularly how oligarchic politics are entrenched by such arrangements and resistant to evolutionary change.



Aleksandar BOGDANOVIĆ

Minister of Culture of Montenegro

From 2000 to 2005 Aleksandar Bogdanović was an adviser in the Ministry of Economy of Montenegro. He was also on the board for economy, finance and budget and the board for International Relations and European Integration.

From 2007 to 2011, he was lecturer at the Faculty for State and European Studies in Podgorica, on the subjects Economy of public sector and Public finances of the EU. He became Mayor of the Old Royal capital Cetinje in December 2010 and voted Best Mayor of the region in 2014. He has won significant awards and titles such as Order of the Star of Italy in 2014, for an extraordinary contribution to the promotion of Italian culture.



BIOGRAPHIES



Milica BOGDANOVIĆ

Centre for Democratic Transition

Milica Bogdanović is currently working in a Montenegrin NGO Centre for Democratic Transition (CDT) as a journalist and researcher. She is researching for CDT's platform Raskrinkavanje.me for debunking fake news and propaganda with the aim to foster a critical approach to media content and strengthen media literacy. Previously, she worked in the political newsroom of independent daily Vijesti and at Vijesti online portal.



Igor BOŽIĆ

TV N1

Igor Božić is a team member that launched TV N1 in 2014. He played the role of Executive Producer while anchoring special TV programs. From 1993 he has been in journalism working as a TV and radio reporter in media outlets in Serbia. He has spent most of his career in B92, where he was chief in editor of "B92 Info", the first specialised Serbian TV news channel. He used to be the news director in RTV Vojvodina, a public broadcaster in

Vojvodina province, and editor of the daily news Blic. he provides training in TV journalism, as well as mobile journalism courses.



Darko BRKAN

Zašto ne

Darko Brkan is the president of civic association "Why not", a Bosnian NGO that promotes civic activism, government accountability, and the use of technology and digital media in deepening democracy, in Bosnia and Herzegovina. He also acts as the President of the Board of the regional network Action SEE, member of the Board of TransparenCEE network in Central and Eastern Europe, as well as a member of the International

Advisory Board of ePanstwo Foundation from Poland. A leading civil society activist, he began his career in civic activism more than 19 years ago. He is the member of the Advisory Board for the Open Government Partnership for Bosnia and Herzegovina. He is also a member of the Board of the Human Rights Foundation and Foundation "Ekipa", as well as a founding board member of the Centre for Election Studies.



Nikola BURAZER

European Western Balkans portal

Nikola Burazer is the Programme Director at the Centre for Contemporary Politics and Executive Editor at European Western Balkans. He previously worked as a researcher for the Forum for Ethnic Relations from Belgrade and Institute for Development and International Relations from Zagreb. Nikola was also a guest lecturer at the Mathias Corvinus Collegium (MCC) in Budapest, where he was teaching courses on nationalism in the Balkans

and a Research Fellow at the Balkans in Europe Policy Advisory Group (BiEPAG). He holds an MA in Nationalism Studies from the Central European University (CEU) in Budapest and a BA in Political Science from the University of Belgrade.



Caroline CHAPPLE

Artist and illustrator

Caroline Chapple is a graphic recorder, visual thinker and business illustrator with over twenty years' experience of corporate communications. She believes strongly in the power of visuals to expand our thinking and speed up our understanding of even complex information. Her job is to visually capture not only the key points of conversations but also their themes and connections. She uses visual thinking to help organisations bring

their information to life through graphic recording during live events and by creating digital illustrations. She also uses visuals to help businesses solve problems and find paths through complex or excessive information.



Srđan CVIJIĆ

Open Society European Policy Institute

Dr. Srđan Cvijić is a Senior Policy Analyst in the Open Society European Policy Institute in Brussels, a premium European think tank and part of one of the largest private philanthropic organisations in the world. He leads the Open Society Foundation's advocacy in Europe on several foreign policy portfolios, including EU enlargement, Western Balkans, Turkey and North Africa. Previously he was a senior diplomat in the Ministry of Foreign

Affairs of the Republic of Serbia. He also worked as advisor for the Special Coordinator of the Stability Pact for South Eastern Europe, European Policy Centre and the NATO Parliamentary Assembly.

BIOGRAPHIES



Tijana CVJETIĆANIN

Raskrinkavanje.ba

Tijana Cvjetićanin has been the co-creator, editor and author of two fact-checking platforms in Bosnia and Herzegovina: Istinomjer, set up in 2010, which tracks and rates the statements of public officials and implementation of pre-election promises of political parties in Bosnia and Herzegovina; and Raskrinkavanje, set up in 2017, which is a media fact-checking project. She was also the lead editor of 'FemFacts', an international fact-checking project of NewsMavens, which analysed reports on women and women-related issues in European media from September 2018 to June 2019. She has been a member of the advisory board of the International Fact-Checking Network since March 2019. Aside from her fact-checking work, she has authored and co-authored several research studies and policy papers in areas such as political accountability, media/discourse analysis, media freedoms, EU integrations of Bosnia and Herzegovina and government openness.



Conny CZYMOCH

Moderator, presenter, media coach

Conny Czymoch is an experienced international moderator, presenter and media coach, empowering others to improve their communication skills on camera and on stage. She has been a journalist for most of her life, working for local and international media, newspapers, radio and television, and now uses her extensive professional experience to contribute to conferences and events around the world, and to help others become more effective public speakers. She has been the media advisory board member of the Kiel Institute for the World Economy's 'Global Economic Symposium' forum since 2016.



Lutfi DERVISHI

RTSH

Lutfi Dervishi is a media expert and host of the political talk show "Perballe", in Albania Public Television. He is a lecturer at the University of Tirana, teaching investigative journalism at the Journalism Department and a trainer at the Albanian Media Institute. He is the founding member of the Investigative Journalism Lab which teaches young reporters' investigative skills.

Lutfi is a compiler of the Ethical Code for Albanian journalists. He worked previously as news director to Public Television and "Vision +". He has been working as Executive Director of Transparency International Albania from 2008 to 2013. He is also a contributing editor to the Tirana Times Newspaper.

BIOGRAPHIES



Ilir GASHI

Independent media analyst

Ilir Gashi is currently working as project developer in the areas of media literacy and media sustainability. He comes with a diverse professional background in journalism, human rights and social advertising.

Most recently he authored 'Dr Spin - Guide Through Control of Media for Dictators'. The ten-episode animated Facebook series uses a sarcastic twist to raise awareness of the general public on pressures exerted on

media and journalists, and of ways of manipulating public opinion to best fit the needs of authoritarian rulers around the world.

He is the former executive director of Slavko Curuvija Foundation, where he conceived the School of Digital Journalism for young local media journalists, and Cenzolovka.rs, a popular online media writing exclusively about issues related to press freedom. He was also one of the founders of the Group for Freedom of Media, a unique movement that brought together hundreds of Serbian media organizations, NGOs, journalists, and activists.



Johannes HAHN

EU Commissioner for European Neighbourhood Policy and Enlargement Negotiations

Johannes Hahn has held various management functions in different sectors of the Austrian economy and industry, including as CEO of Novomatic AG for 5 years. Between 1992 and 1997 he was Executive Director of the Austrian People's Party office in Vienna, becoming Deputy Chairman of the Party in 2002 and Chairman in 2005. A member of the Regional Parliament

of Vienna from 1996 to 2003, he became Federal Minister for Science and Research in 2007. He was the European Commissioner for Regional Policy from 2010 to 2014, and since November 2014 he is the Commissioner in charge of the EU's Neighbourhood Policy and Enlargement Negotiations.



Serbeze HAXHIAJ

RTK

Serbeze Haxhijaj has been working as an investigative journalist and news editor in Kosovo and for international media for 20 years, dealing mainly with the most pressing issues such as corruption, human rights, security issues, religious extremism, terrorism and war crimes. She is currently an editor at Radio Television of Kosovo and a journalist of the Balkan Investigative Reporting Network (BIRN). She has previously worked for the daily newspapers Rilindja, Zeri, Lajm and Koha Ditore. She was the

correspondent in Pristina of the French Courier des Balkans and recently had her articles published in The Financial Times, Der Standard, Neue Zürcher Zeitung and Al Jazeera. Her articles were published also in some of the main newspapers in Europe. For her reporting on war crimes, organised crime, corruption, human rights and violence against women, Serbeze has been awarded 12 times by various local and international organisations.

BIOGRAPHIES



Valerie HOPKINS

Financial Times

Valerie Hopkins is the Financial Times' South-East Europe correspondent, covering Hungary, Romania, Slovenia, Croatia and the Western Balkans. Before moving to Budapest, she worked extensively in the Balkans, with the Balkan Investigative Reporting Network and the Organized Crime and Corruption Reporting Project and as a freelance journalist. Her writing has appeared in The Washington Post, The Atlantic, Politico, Foreign Policy, Al

Jazeera, the Guardian, Reuters, OpenDemocracy, Mother Jones, and more. She has a Master of Arts in Political Journalism from Columbia Graduate School of Journalism, and a B.A. in International Relations (focus on Russian and Post-Soviet Studies) from the College of William and Mary in Williamsburg, Virginia.



Adeline HULIN

UNESCO

Adeline Hulin worked for the UNESCO Communication and Information Sector as a Project Officer based in the UNESCO Liaison Office in Brussels. Before, she worked for the Office of the OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media in Vienna. Her educational background includes a PhD in Political Science from the University Paris II Panthéon Assas, a Master Degree in Journalism from the University Paris Dauphine and a BA in Political Science

from the Bordeaux Institut d'Études Politiques. She authored a RSC Working Paper for the European University Institute, Statutory media self-regulation: beneficial or detrimental for media freedom and wrote the monograph Autorégulation des médias en Europe: impact, perspectives et limites.



Ivana JEREMIĆ

BIRN

Ivana Jeremić is an editor at Balkan Insight in charge of coordinating and working on investigative stories. Before joining BIRN, she was an investigative reporter/fact-checker at the Centre for Investigative Journalism of Serbia during a five-year period between 2012 and 2017 and was Deputy Editor-in-Chief at the same organisation between 2017 and 2018. For the last seven years, she has also been a fact-checker at

the Organized Crime and Corruption Reporting Project. Additionally, she has been an External Assessor at the International Fact-checking Network since 2017.

BIOGRAPHIES



Mihailo JOVOVIĆ

Vijesti

Mihailo Jovović, editor at large and journalist with Vijesti, the most influential Montenegrin newspaper, covering politics, crime, intelligence and justice affairs, writing and mentoring investigative stories. Until October 2018, he was editor in chief, political editor and international news editor. Born in 1962, lawyer by education, bass player in free time.



Alfred LELA

Politiko

Alfred Lela will join Euronews, Albania in September as in-house political analyst and anchor of the daily show DigiLab. He is the founder of Politiko. al. From 2010-2017 he worked for Media MAPO, as Deputy Editor-in-Chief for the daily MAPO, Editor-in-Chief for MAPO magazine and Executive Director of MM. In 2012, he won the Teodor Keko Award and in 2013 the At Zef Pllumi Award. He is the author of two books: 'Secilit Shqipërinë e Tij' (2013), and 'Fjalori Politik i Berishës' (2018). He holds a Ph.D. in Communication from the European University of Tirana and a BA in Journalism from the University of Tirana. In recent years he has lectured in Journalism and Political Communication at both Universities he graduated from.



Aleksandar MANASIEV

VidiVaka

Aleksandar Manasiev is an award-winning investigative journalist from North Macedonia. He has been working as a professional journalist since 2003, mostly in print media in North Macedonia and as a foreign correspondent for several news media outlets. For almost two years he also worked as an investigative TV reporter. Since 2016, Aleksandar has been the Editor-in-Chief of Vidi Vaka, medium for the digital generation, through which he successfully implements new forms of digital storytelling. His articles and video stories have been published in more than 50 news outlets such as The Guardian, BBC, Deutsche Welle, Forbes Croatia, Jutarnji List, Ekonom:east etc. He also works as a trainer for digital and investigative journalism. He is an enthusiast in the field of documentary film-making, working as a scriptwriter or a director in four documentaries during the past few years.

BIOGRAPHIES



Esmir MILAVIĆ

N1

Esmir Milavić had his first journalistic experience from 2005 to 2007 in Mostar's "Daily newspaper" on the position of journalist, photo reporter and editor. From 2007 to 2015 he continued his journalistic and analytical career in Vancouver where he collaborated with local and regional media, but also successfully launched new online media. After returning to Bosnia and Herzegovina in 2015, he worked on the duties of editor and chief producer of IPP FACE TV. Arriving at N1 is a new step in his career that opens up new opportunities for upgrading, learning and achieving new results. He currently works as a producer and as Foreign Affairs reporter/editor at N1 Sarajevo.



Olivera NIKOLIĆ

Montenegro Media Institute

Olivera Nikolić is currently working as Acting Director of the Montenegro Media Institute, a non-profit civil society organization founded in 2000 dedicated to the improvement of professional and ethical standards in journalism.

She is a professional journalist since 1996. She has been working for BBC, Deutsche Welle (DW), Agency France Presse (AFP), Radio Free Europe (RFE), Reporters Without Borders (RSF), Beta News Agency, in the role of correspondent, or stringer, from Montenegro. Currently she is also engaged as correspondent of AFP from Montenegro. She graduated at the Faculty of Political Sciences in Podgorica at the department for Diplomacy and International relations.



Vitomir OGNJANOVIĆ

Južne vesti

Vitomir Ognjanović is a co-founder of Simplicity, an online business solutions company, and a co-founder of Južne vesti, a regional online portal best known for investigative journalism. He and his team have been working with medias on development of sustainable business models in "hostile" environments based on the experiences they have within Južne vesti and Simplicity. The team that he leads, successfully cooperates with more than 50 media, local and international organisations and institutions. Becoming a rare independent media in Serbia Južne vesti and Simplicity are recognised as a valuable regional partner of BBC, IREX, OSCE, USAID, FCO, SIDA, BIRN and several other institutions.

BIOGRAPHIES



Aivo ORAV

EU Ambassador and Head of Delegation to Montenegro

Aivo Orav graduated in 1992 from the Estonian School of Diplomacy. Since 2016 he is the Ambassador and Head of EU Delegation in Montenegro. From 2012 to 2016 Ambassador, he was the Head of EU Delegation in North Macedonia. For one year, he was the Ambassador to Lebanon, residing in Turkey and from 2008 to 2012 the Ambassador in Azerbaijan to Turkey. He also got training in Disarmament and Security Policy Course at the Marshall

Centre as well as a UN Disarmament Fellowship Programme in Geneva, Vienna and New York.



Brankica PETKOVIĆ

Ljubljana Peace Institute

Brankica Petković is a researcher at the Peace Institute – Institute for Contemporary Social and Political Studies in Ljubljana, Slovenia. She has more than 20 years of experience in initiating, designing and leading media reform initiatives and projects in the region of South East Europe. She led the project “South East European Media Observatory” in the period 2012-2016. She designed a methodology for monitoring media integrity in

the Western Balkans, and wrote numerous regional comparative studies with recommendations for policy changes. She contributed to the 2017 monitoring of the Guidelines for EU support to media freedom and media integrity in enlargement countries. She was Program Director and Editor of Media Watch Slovenia for 15 years. She was a member of the Ministry of Culture’s expert committee on media laws, the governing body of public service media RTV Slovenia, and of the jury of the Slovenian Association of Journalists for annual journalist’ awards. She holds a Master’s Degree in Sociology of Culture.



Jerzy POMIANOWSKI

European Endowment for Democracy

Jerzy Pomianowski worked in international affairs for almost 30 years as Deputy Foreign Minister of Poland, Director of OECD-UNDP’s Partnership for Democratic Governance and Poland’s Ambassador to Japan. In 2013, he led the establishment of the European Endowment for Democracy (EED) and has since served as its Executive Director. He began his career as a

civil servant in 1990, just after the fall of communism, first in the Ministry of Education, and then in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. He oversaw the launch of Poland Aid (2006-2008) and served as Director General of the Polish Foreign Service (2005-2006). In his free time, he serves as president of the Polish Aikido Federation.





Genoveva RUIZ CALAVERA

European Commission

Since June 2016 Genoveva Ruiz Calavera is the Director in charge of the Western Balkans at the European Commission. She served in the European Commission Taskforce for the Reconstruction of Kosovo during 1999-2000 in Pristina and as Deputy Head of Unit for Serbia and Montenegro and Head of the Kosovo issues unit until 2009. She was Head of Unit for “Crisis Response and Peace Building” in the Directorate-General for

External Relations and following the creation of the European External Action Service in 2011, she joined the Service for Foreign Policy Instruments (FPI). She held different management positions in the private sector before joining the EU.



Afërdita SARAÇINI-KELMENDI

TV 21

Since 1998 Afërdita Saraçini-Kelmendi is the General Director of Company 21- RTV 21 & TV21 Macedonia. She is also involved in different movements, and recognised for her activism. She is president of the Board of Directors of Women Chamber of Kosovo-G7, a member of the International Women Media Foundation since 1999, Board Member of the Kosovo Committee at KAEF (Kosovo American Education Fund) since 2008 and finally a board

member of the American Chamber of Commerce in Kosovo. Since 2000 she is also President of the Board of Directors of AMPEK – Association of Independent Electronic Media in Kosovo and President of the Board of Directors at KTTN – Kosovo Terrestrial Telecommunication Network.



Velma ŠARIĆ

Post-Conflict Research Centre

Velma Šarić is a researcher, journalist, peacebuilding expert, and human rights defender from Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina. She has over 15 years of work experience and is currently the Founder and President of the Post-Conflict Research Centre, Founder and Editor-in-Chief of Balkan Diskurs, and Project Manager of WARM Foundation, Bosnia Branch. She is a journalist, trained at the BBC Reporting School. As a journalist at the Institute for War and Peace Reporting (IWPR) in London and the Hague,

she spent eight years reporting on war crimes trials and investigating transitional justice processes in the former Yugoslavia. Additionally, she spent three years working as a court reporter at the Balkan Investigative Reporting Network and Association of Court Reporters in Bosnia and Herzegovina, covering court procedures at local and national levels.

BIOGRAPHIES



Klaus SCHWEIGHOFER

Styria Media Group

Since January 2018 Dr. Klaus Schweighofer has been the Chairman of Styria Media International—Styria Media Group’s Holding Company for expansion to the Western Balkans. He studied jurisprudence and media law at the Karl-Franzens University of Graz, and then became Editor-in-Chief of the town’s weekly newspaper in 1991. In 2002, he began to working on equity and finance management for Styria Media, and since then has been responsible, besides radio and television in Austria, for the company’s expansion to Slovenia and Croatia. Amongst other outlets, the newly-founded daily newspapers “24sata” (Croatia) and “zurnal24” (Slovenia) came under his area of responsibility.



Dragan SEKULOVSKI

Association of Journalists – AJM

Dragan Sekulovski is a dynamic and experienced professional, with a considerable track record and experience in Project Management which he gained through work for a variety of non-governmental, governmental and private actors, most of whom are involved in the process of development. He has broad work experience in the donor and non-governmental environment in North Macedonia. Recently, he is involved in managing strategically important projects of the Association of Journalists, supported by different international donors supporting the freedom of media and democratisation processes in the country.



Maja VASIĆ-NIKOLIĆ

Independent Journalists’ Association of Serbia

From 2001 to 2003 Maja worked for Brook Lapping Productions as an archive assistant/researcher on an award-winning series ‘The Fall of Milosevic’. Maja spent the next couple of years freelancing as a researcher and working for the Centre for Strategy and Communication before returning to Serbia in 2006 to take the post of a project manager with the Independent Journalists Association of Serbia. In the last four years she has been deeply involved in development, fundraising and implementation of a regional project focused on strengthening capacities of journalists’ associations of the Western Balkans to be effective advocates for media freedoms and safety of journalists. Since April 2019 Maja also works with the Thomson Media GmbH Western Balkan team.

