The founding of the ECPMF

After years of preparation 25 representatives of European journalists associations, publishing houses, academic institutions, trade unions and media rights experts from 16 European countries met at the 24th of June 2015 in Leipzig/Germany and founded the European Centre for Press and Media Freedom (ECPMF).

The new organisation was established as an independent non-profit European Cooperative Society (SCE). The ECPMF conceives of itself as a pan-European organisation of journalists with the goal of procuring the application of the European Charter on Freedom of the Press throughout Europe. The centre helps shaping a common European media space and supports, defends, elaborates and expands pan-European media freedom.

The ECPMF is constituted democratically and is politically independent as a non-profit European Cooperative Society (SCE). The work of the ECPMF is based on thorough, objective and professional analysis based on high research standards.

What we do – activities of the ECPMF

In the spirit of solidarity the European Cooperative creates a network for the otherwise very fragmented media and journalism community. The centre moderates the member network consisting of individuals, academic bodies, unions, investigative journalist organisations, media industry, campaigning and aid organisations etc. The cooperative will support and coordinate the activities of its members. Together with local and international members and partners it organizes solidarity – covering the continent from Portugal to Russia and from Norway to Malta.
European Centre for Press and Media Freedom

The ECPMF will work as a central registration office for violations of press freedom, and as a central contact point for organisations and individuals who need contacts, analyses and information regarding press freedom in Europe. Violations of press freedom are observed and researched by regional editors and registered in a central data base - the Press Freedom Ressource Centre. Also scientific analysis about press freedom in Europe will be collected systematically.

The activities of the ECPMF and its members range from “journalists in residence”, diplomatic efforts, international petitions, fact finding missions, campaigning, rapid response forces, legal aid, to legislative initiatives. The centre will also award the European Journalism Prize and offer training and education in the near future. We set up all our activities in close cooperation with our members and partners.

How we work – Europe’s newest Co-op

The ECPMF operates as an independent non-profit European Cooperative Society, SCE. It is democratically organized, legally allowed to operate in all 28 EU countries and it gets automatically an external auditing by the Federation of Co-operatives (Genossenschaftsverband) every year.

Co-operatives exist across the globe in many different forms. They are part of a movement that began in the North of England in 19th century when poor, hungry weavers and shoemakers decided to pool their money and buy food together from wholesalers, then re-sell it at fair prices. The first co-operators were the Rochdale Pioneers.

Today there are thousands of cooperatives, because they are a flexible, democratic business model with a strong track record of sustainability. The ECPMF is built on the European model, and since it is based in Leipzig, it is registered in Germany and works under the umbrella of the Federation of German Co-operatives.

Under the terms of the statute, anyone or any organization that agrees with the aims of the ECPMF, works professionally in the Media and promises to keep the rules in the Codex can become a member.
Who can become a member?

If you agree with the European Charter on Freedom of the Press as well as with our Statute and Code of Conduct, membership is available for:

(a) Natural persons
(b) Partnerships with a registered office in Europe
(c) Legal entities in private law with a registered office in Europe
(d) Legal entities in public law with a registered office in Europe

Benefits of membership

As a member of the ECPMF you are fully involved in our decision-making processes. Thus you are an integral part of our press and media freedom community. Members’ rights include, for example, participation, submitting motions to the general assembly, voting and access to a unique network of many FoX organisations in different European countries. To become a member you must pay a one-off fee of 100 euros and this entitles you to own one share of the ECPMF, which is constituted as a not-for-profit co-operative registered in Germany as a European Co-operative Society (SCE).

How to become a member

Please contact us on membership@ecpmf.eu
European Centre for Press and Media Freedom

Current members (August 2015)

Galina Arapova  
Mass Media Defence Centre (MMDC), Russia

Mogens Blicher Bjerregaard  
European Federation of Journalists (EFJ)

Federica Delogu  
Ossigeno per l'Informazione, Italy

Vesselin Dimitrov  
Forbes Bulgaria

Jodie Ginsberg  
Index on Censorship

Nadine Gogu  
Independent Journalism Center Moldova

Esad Hećimović  
OBN TV Sarajevo, Bosnia Herzegovina

Hans-Ulrich Jörjes  
Gruner+Jahr, Germany

Henrik Kaufholz  
SCOOP, Denmark

Christoph Keese  
Axel Springer SE, Germany

Flutra Kusari  
ECPMF, Germany

Dr. Harald Langenfeld  
Sparkasse Leipzig and Media Foundation of Sparkasse Leipzig, Germany

Gavin MacFadyen  
Centre for Investigative Journalism, University of London, UK

Martin Răzvan  
FreeEx Program, ActiveWatch, Romania

Dr. Anthony McNicholas  
Faculty of Arts, Design and Media, University of Westminster, UK

Dr. Kerstin Mey  
Faculty of Arts, Design and Media, University of Westminster, UK
European Centre for Press and Media Freedom

Dr. Helga Montag
Journalists Help Journalists, Germany

Dr. Lutz Muekke
ECPMF, Germany

Balazs Nagy Navarro
Freelance Journalist, Hungary

Peter Noorlander
Media Legal Defence Initiative (MLDI), UK

Prof. Dr. Stephan Ory
Institute of European Media Law (EMR), Germany

Dr. Georgios Pleios
Department of Communication and Media Studies, National and Kapodistrian University of Athens, Greece

Vladimir Radomirovic
Pištaljka, Serbia

Renate Schroeder
European Federation of Journalists, Belgium

Stephan Seeger
Media Foundation of Sparkasse Leipzig, Germany

Naser Selmani
Association of Journalists of Macedonia

Ljiljana Smajlović
Journalists’ Association of Serbia

Trine Smistrup
Journalismfund, Belgium

Margo Smit
Director of Dutch-Flemish Association of Investigative Journalists, Netherlands

Martin Stoll
Öffentlichkeitsgesetz.ch, Switzerland

Dirk Voorhoof
International Media Law, Ghent University, Belgium

Oliver Vujovic
SEEMO, Austria
**ECPMF History**

Media Freedom is one of the key values and ideals of democratic societies in the world. It must be defended at all times because it is constantly under pressure and attack. To ensure this freedom in Europe 48 editors-in-chief and leading journalists from all over the continent convened in 2009 and formulated the European Charter on Freedom of the Press. The goal of the initiative was to assert the charter’s validity across Europe and to make its adoption a condition in EU accession negotiations. The Charter was handed over to the European Commission in Brussels on June 9th 2009 and to the Council of Europe in Luxembourg on October 26th 2009.

In Brussels, the Charter is handed over by Hans-Ulrich Jörges, Co-editor of German Magazine "Stern", to the European Commissioner Viviane Reding on June 9th 2009. Source: ECPMF

In recent years the supporters of the European Charter on Freedom of the Press have established a strong network of partners all over Europe. The aim is to establish the independent, non-governmental European Centre for Press and Media Freedom (ECPMF). Therefore the network unites partners from all communities that are professionally involved with journalism and press freedom – academics, unions, investigative journalism organisations, the media industry, campaigning and aid organisations etc. Together, they form a strong European Co-operative.
European Charter on Freedom of the Press

Article 1
Freedom of the press is essential to a democratic society. To uphold and protect it, and to respect its diversity and its political, social and cultural missions, is the mandate of all governments.

Article 2
Censorship is impermissible. Independent journalism in all media is free of persecution and repression, without a guarantee of political or regulatory interference by government. Press and online media shall not be subject to state licensing.

Article 3
The right of journalists and media to gather and disseminate information and opinions must not be threatened, restricted or made subject to punishment.

Article 4
The protection of journalistic sources shall be strictly upheld. Surveillance of, electronic eavesdropping on or searches of newsrooms, private rooms or journalists’ computers with the aim of identifying sources of information or infringing on editorial confidentiality are unacceptable.

Article 5
All states must ensure that the media have the full protection of the law and the authorities while carrying out their role. This applies in particular to defending journalists and their employees from harassment and/or physical attack. Threats to or violations of these rights must be carefully investigated and punished by the judiciary.

Article 6
The economic livelihood of the media must not be endangered by the state or by state-controlled institutions. The threat of economic sanctions is also unacceptable. Private-sector companies must respect the journalistic freedom of the media. They shall neither exert pressure on journalistic content nor attempt to mix commercial content with journalistic content.

Article 7
State or state-controlled institutions shall not hinder the freedom of access of the media and journalists to information. They have a duty to support them in their
mandate to provide information.

Article 8
Media and journalists have a right to unimpeded access to all news and information sources, including those from abroad. For their reporting, foreign journalists should be provided with visas, accreditation and other required documents without delay.

Article 9
The public of any state shall be granted free access to all national and foreign media and sources of information.

Article 10
The government shall not restrict entry into the profession of journalism.
Journalists in Residence

The ECPMF starts its Journalists-in-Residence Programme. It serves media freedom in two ways:

a) It provides a safe house in Leipzig, a scholarship, health insurance and publicity to dedicated journalists, who have come under pressure due to their work. To relieve them from a permanent state of anxiety, focus public attention on their situation and support their work, we shall host them in Leipzig.

b) As an alternative it offers a scholarship to journalists and media freedom experts, who contribute in an extraordinary way to media freedom in Europe. If a proposed project is evaluated as essential, it is supported by the scholarship and the infrastructure of the ECPMF.

Journalists from all over Europe can apply to become a Journalist-in-Residence at ECPMF in Leipzig. The duration varies, depending on the individual case up to twelve months. For a successful application, the following conditions should be met:

- Proof must be provided that he or she is under pressure due to their research or publication.
- The applicant must have worked full-time and for at least five years as a journalist.
- The journalist should not be member of a political movement.
- He or she should speak proficient English and be able to represent his/her case in public.
- He or she should be willing to contribute to the work of ECPMF at Leipzig during the residence.
- He/she must be able to return after the end of program to his or her home country.

If you want to apply, please fill out this application form and attach the requested references. The application, which can be sent by mail via mail to the address below or by contacting one of our partner organisations, will be checked instantly by ECPMF and its partners.

All personal information will be kept confidential. If your application fulfils the criteria of the Journalists-in-Residence programme, it is handed over to the boards. Each individual case will be discussed and decided by our boards and management. A successful application is confirmed by an official letter of invitation to the designated Journalist-in-Residence, which serves as support of the visa application.

All travel and visa costs are covered by the ECPMF, as well as a basic private health care, the accommodation and a monthly scholarship of 1.000 Euro.
European Centre for Press and Media Freedom

To design this programme, the ECPMF has cooperated with experienced organizations like the International City of Refuge Network (ICORN) and the Hamburg Foundation for Politically Persecuted People.

Contact:
European Centre for Press and Media Freedom
Journalists in Residence
Menckestrasse 27
04155 Leipzig
Germany
info@ecpmf.eu

Please find further information and the application form soon at our website www.ecpmf.eu (upcoming)
The FoX Grant: Get paid to speak out

Application deadline September 15th 2015

Journalists all over Europe have experienced forms of obstruction while doing their jobs, seeing their rights to obtain and publish information violated. These forms of obstruction range from threats of violence or imprisonment, through state surveillance, to denial of access to information. Newsrooms have been raided and material confiscated, and journalists have been subjected to smear campaigns and other attacks on their professional credibility. The threats come not just from organised crime, but also from white-collar businesses and from the authorities.

To encourage reporters, writers and artists to speak out and expose these difficulties, now the newly established European Centre for Press and Media Freedom offers a grant of ten thousand euros (€10,000) to teams or individual journalists from any European country.

Dr Lutz Muekke, manager of the Leipzig-based newly established European Centre for Press and Media Freedom, says: “Unfortunately media freedom issues are extremely underreported although the media is going through tremendous changes and there are plenty of important cases and stories. The grant is a opportunity to do in-depth investigations on this important theme.” Muekke himself is an investigative journalist who grew up in the German Democratic Republic and recently published the results of his research on journalists’ links with the security services in the Cold War.

How to apply?
The material that is being censored or withheld can be about any subject. To win a share of the grant you must first set out the real facts of the case or the opinions that are being expressed. Then you must show how the story has been suppressed (the ‘working hypothesis’), and explain how you will prove that this is what happened. In addition you must attach a detailed work plan and a budget for how you will spend the grant (for example, your time spent in researching, travel expenses, buying specialist equipment or software and so on.) Each section in the application has a maximum word count of just 500 words, so you need to write clearly and succinctly. Finally you need to identify a media outlet that will publish or broadcast your Freedom of Expression story, and provide a ‘Letter of Intent’ signed by the editor to show that your investigation will be published ‘subject to normal editorial processes’. Planned publication should be no later than the end of January 2016. A template is provided at the Journalismfund.eu website, so you can just copy and paste it, including your own publication details. All information received during the grant application process will be kept strictly confidential.
Judges from the Journalismfund and the European Centre for Press and Media Freedom will assess the entries, based on their many years of experience. The deadline for completed entries is 11.59pm on September 15th 2015, and winners will be notified by October 10th 2015.

Journalismfund, based in Belgium, was created in 2008 to promote and finance investigative journalism in Flanders and beyond. It is one of six partners in the EU-funded European Centre for Press and Media Freedom 2015-16 project which aims to kickstart pan-European initiatives and create a lasting legacy of professional networks, online resources and support systems for journalists under threat across the whole of Europe (not only the EU member states).

Applying for a grant via Journalismfund: http://www.journalismfund.eu/FoX
Press Photos

For printing version pls. contact press@ecpmf.eu

ECPMF meeting with President of the European Parliament, 30th June 2015, Brussels

Dr. Lutz Mükke, Hans-Ulrich Jörges, Maria Laura Franciosi, Martin Schulz, Luisa Chiodi, Dr. Harald Langenfeld, Margo Smit, Ides Debruyne, Stephan Seeger (from left to right)

Credits: European Parliament
Board members at the ECPMF founding assembly, 24th June 2015

Credit: ECPMF; from left to right: Naser Selmani (ECPMF Supervisory Board), Dr. Lutz Mükke (ECPMF Project Manager), Balázs Nagy Navarro (Chair ECPMF Supervisory Board), Gavin MacFadyen (ECPMF Supervisory Board), Vesselin Dimitrov (ECPMF Supervisory Board), Esad Hecimovic (ECPMF Supervisory Board), Ljiljana Smajlović (ECPMF Executive Board), Stephan Seeger (ECPMF Executive Board), Henrik Kaufholz (Chair ECPMF Executive Board), Hans-Ulrich Jörges (Vice-Chair ECPMF Executive Board).
European Centre for Press and Media Freedom

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