

CIJI awards 75.000 EUR to three regional media hubs to support ‘Collaborative and Investigative Journalism in Europe’

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OBC Transeuropa from Italy, the Baltic Center for Investigative Journalism Re:Baltica from Latvia, and Fundacja Reporterow (FR) from Poland have been awarded a combined total of 75.000 EUR to enhance collaborative and investigative journalism in the Baltic States, Visegrád Four and Southern Europe.

The grants are part of the “Collaborative and Investigative Journalism Initiative” (CIJI), which aims to equip independent media outlets and individual journalists with resources, innovative networking infrastructure and standards-based methods that enable them to practice high-quality, ethical and accountable collaborative and investigative journalism.

Run in partnership by Reporters Without Borders (RSF), Free Press Unlimited (FPU) and Tactical Tech (TT), CIJI will offer a collaborative environment across borders and serve as a single access point to a variety of tools and resources.

“We believe in the power of collaboration and strong networks in journalism. With these grants we recognise media innovators which can inspire and empower a new culture of collaborative and investigative journalism in the region. This does not only benefit the journalism community, but the public at large, as accountable journalism is essential to drive positive change in society.”, said Leon Willems, FPU Director Policy and Programmes.

“Trust of audiences is the reward of ethical journalism, but it is also a condition to work together in the first place. This is especially the case for investigative projects and across borders. For that reason we have put a values-based approach at the heart of the CIJI.”, said Christophe Deloire, RSF’s Director General. *“Through our Journalism Trust Initiative we can provide a framework for media outlets and for individual journalists to commit to shared professional norms, to collaborate on these grounds and to make that visible.”*

“Collaboration is what drives positive change. Collaboration between investigative journalists, researchers, citizens is essential and exchanges of best practices, tools and methods are fundamental. This is what CIJI is about.”, mentioned Christy Lange, Programme Director, Tactical Tech.

An independent jury, consisting of renowned media professionals and academics, chose the winning organisations, based on their track record in regional collaborative and/or investigative journalism training, capacity building as well as their potential to engage a vast array of media actors on a regional level.

These are the grant recipients:

OBC Transeuropa will act as regional media hub for Southern Europe (Greece, Italy and Spain)

OBC Transeuropa (OBCT) is a think-tank based in Trento, Italy. By running the news site www.balcanicaucaso.org, it has a strong focus on South-East Europe but also covers European issues more in general. Its core mission is to strengthen the transnational public sphere in Europe, by letting unheard stories emerge, favouring cross-border journalism, and defending media freedom. Its target audience is a transnational community of actors primarily based in the Adriatic-Ionian region. It offers content in Italian, English and BChS, drawing an average of 215,000 monthly page views.

"We believe it is critical to empower independent organisations which produce quality journalism in Southern Europe, and to improve the media ecosystem in the region. This award will enable us to contribute further to the emergence of a European public sphere – transnational collaborations can be just so effective for journalism.", said Luisa Chiodi, OBCT's Director.

The Baltic Center for Investigative Journalism Re:Baltica will act as CIJI regional media hub for the Baltic States (Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania)

The Baltic Center for Investigative Journalism Re:Baltica is a non-profit organisation that produces investigative journalism in the public interest. Founded in August 2011, it focuses on socially important issues in the Baltic region, such as corruption, domestic violence, social inequality, human rights, transparency and disinformation. Re:Baltica is based in Riga, but work all over Baltics and beyond. It publishes in Latvian, English and Russian.

"We are known as a team which regularly trains and brings together various Baltic media outlets into joint investigations of regional importance, be it China's influence attempts, building of large EU infrastructure objects or disinformation patterns. This grant will allow more local media have experience of joint investigations and hopefully form lasting ties.", said Sanita Jemberga, Executive Director and Editor of Re:Baltica.

Fundacja Reporterow (FR) will act as regional media hub for Visegrád Four (Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, Slovakia)

Fundacja Reporterow is a Warsaw-based nonprofit journalistic organisation focused on independent, investigative, cross-border journalism in Poland and Central Europe. The organisation's mission is the development of investigative journalism and publishing of high-quality stories in the public interest. Fundacja runs vsquare.org, a regional platform providing cross-border stories from the Visegrád region.

"We believe that a joint effort of journalists from different media organisations and countries of the region can better serve our societies. The award will help FR and its V4 partners to strengthen collaboration between journalists from the Visegrád region", said Anna Gielewska, FR's vice-chairman and Vsquare's Head of investigations and partnerships.

The three media hubs will act as an informal "network of networks" and will support ethical, collaborative and investigative journalism by promoting and implementing a common set of ethical codes, professional principles and guidelines in line with the [Journalism Trust Initiative](#) (JTI).

Along with funds, the winning organisations will benefit from training, resource sharing and exchange of best practices, collaborations, access to innovative methods and techniques - all following established journalism standards. The hubs' networks will have access to an accelerator for start-ups, including the availability of seed financing and micro grants to explore innovative ideas in the field.

The [call for applications](#) to select regional media hubs ran between 1-15 November 2021. More information about CIJI is available at <https://www.ciji.eu>.

Free Press Unlimited (FPU) is a non-profit organisation based in Amsterdam, the Netherlands, that works to make independent news and information available to everyone, particularly in countries with limited (press) freedom. FPU helps journalists and media professionals with emergency support, advice, training and capacity building in more than 40 countries, together with over 90 local media partners worldwide.

Reporters Without Borders (RSF) is a Paris-based non-profit organisation that promotes journalistic freedom, pluralism and independence. This includes defending those who embody these ideals. RSF provides information about the media freedom situation throughout the world and provides journalists with concrete support by means of campaigns, advocacy, litigation, legal aid and material assistance. RSF has also launched initiatives designed to promote the right to reliable news and information, especially in the digital domain.

Tactical Tech (TT) is an international non-profit organisation that engages with citizens and civil-society organisations to explore and mitigate the impacts of technology on society. Through their work they aim to educate, advocate and create practical solutions that contribute to the wider socio-political debate around digital security, privacy and the ethics of data. TT runs the [Exposing the Invisible](#) project that develops resources, training and collaborations promoting investigation as one of the most important forms of public engagement.

This project is co-funded by the European Commission under the Pilot Project: Supporting investigative journalism and media freedom in the EU (DG CONNECT).

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