

Grants awarded under the call: **Support to 'Western Balkans 6' for Strengthening Media Freedom and Fighting Domestic and Gender-Based Violence**

1. Balkan Investigative Reporting Network, BIRN Serbia - **Digital Rights Action: Enabling Free Flow of Information and Media Integrity**; €100,000
(national, applicant based in Serbia)
The project aims to contribute to the creation of an enabling online environment for the free flow of information, in line with the standards of digital rights and media freedoms. The project is to implement three activity packages: informing, advocacy, and capacity building. It targets three main groups of stakeholders/beneficiaries: the general public, policymakers, and media/journalists.
2. Citizens Association MOST – F2N2 – **Fighting COVID-19 Disinformation through Regional Cooperation**; €59,441
(regional, applicant based in North Macedonia, implemented in: North Macedonia, Montenegro, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Serbia)
The project aims to contribute to rebuilding citizens' trust in democracy by combating disinformation and fake news through in-depth research and media monitoring, creating and sharing fact-based narratives. Additionally, the project will provide awareness-raising targeting key stakeholders and the general public in the Balkan region about malign disinformation with foreign influence, with an emphasis on pandemic-related disinformation.
3. Novi Sad School of Journalism – **Ringling for the MIL - Strengthening of the Media and Information Literacy Education within the Formal Serbian School Systems**; €21,680
(regional, applicant based in Serbia, implemented in Serbia and Montenegro)
The main focus of the project is on strengthening the media and information literacy education within the formal Serbian school system as a form of functional literacy of citizens in a democratic society in the 21st century. The project will offer creative educational solutions, materials, and curricula for the stimulation and introduction of innovative teaching methods through media and information literacy. Also, high school teachers' capacities will be increased, and they will be encouraged to use media and information literacy (MIL) tools within the education system and disclose and prevent disinformation, falsified information, and propaganda.
4. Media Diversity Institute Western Balkans – **Reporting Diversity Network 2.0**; €124,639
(regional, applicant based in Serbia, implemented in all WB6 countries)
The project aims to activate the role of civil society in counter measuring divisive media narratives and replacing them with much needed positive discourse contributing to the

value of good neighboring relations and respect for diversity. The project will empower a regional network of CSOs to work together with the aim to influence the quality of media messages affecting portrayals of ethnicity, religion, and gender as pressing thematic areas relevant for overall levels of understanding and tolerance. The Reporting Diversity Network (RDN) will provide tools, resources, and much needed evidence for the entire civil society to move towards more inclusive media, and effective legislation and policymaking in the areas promoting tolerance both nationally and regionally in all six Western Balkans countries.

5. Centre for Civic Education - **Media for ME**; €21,700

(national, applicant based in Montenegro)

The objective of the action is to enhance sustainability of media and professional, independent, and investigative journalism. The specific objective is to strengthen the Montenegro's legal and practical framework. Main activities include research on the perception of independence and professionalism of the Montenegrin media, reporting on public funding of media, support to media and journalists in implementing new media legislation, monitoring of the implementation of the new legislation with advocacy for further improvements, shadow report on public funding of media in 2020, strengthening capacities of students in media literacy and promoting investigative and analytical journalism.

6. Trade Union of Media of Montenegro – **Support to the Freedom of Media and Journalistic Standards**; €89,800

(national, applicant based in Montenegro)

The project focuses on monitoring the implementation of media legislation, capacity building of journalists on ethical reporting and human rights standards, as well as addressing the issues of safety of journalists and their rights. The main objectives are: monitoring the implementation of media legislation, strengthened ethical media reporting with a specific focus on the socially vulnerable groups, and improved safety of journalists. Court monitoring report and the analysis of the state of affairs concerning labor rights of journalists will result in a series of policy recommendations, as the basis of a public advocacy campaign and public debate.

7. Association of Roma Women Osvit – **Roma Women for a Society without Gender-based Violence**; €49,990

(national, applicant based in Serbia)

The project contributes to the fight against domestic and gender-based violence by empowering women victims of violence and providing support, raising awareness of public officials in institutions working with victims of violence, raising public awareness as well as drafting recommendations for the improvement of local policies and budgeting.

The project entails: SOS telephone service provision, seminars with representatives of local institutions, monitoring of the implementation of local policies for the protection of women from violence, drafting and presenting recommendations, as well as public advocacy.

8. Association of Journalists of Macedonia - **Safer Media Workers for Quality Journalism in North Macedonia**; €73,063

(national, applicant based in North Macedonia)

The project is to contribute to the creation of an enabling environment for meaningful participation of media associations and trade unions as influential actors in the society in order to achieve the advancement of media freedom and journalists' safety. The project's specific objectives are to advocate for and raise awareness of the necessity for improving the safety and socio-economic environment for journalists and media workers, with a focus on gender specific issues, as a precondition for free and independent media and democratic development of society. In-depth research on media freedoms, freedom of expression, labour rights, working conditions in the newsrooms, and other problems faced by media professionals, especially research that identifies gender-specific issues, serves as a basic instrument for preparing a legal analysis and policy papers that will be the main advocacy tool in lobbying for changes of the legal framework. Awareness-raising activities will focus on freedom of expression and gender issues in North Macedonian newsrooms. This activity will also target media owners and managers to help them understand the importance of diversity in the newsrooms for professional reporting.

9. Investigative Reporting Regional Network (BIRN Hub Bosnia and Herzegovina) - **Countering and Mapping Digital Abuses of Violence against Girls and Women**; €89,984

(regional, applicant based in Bosnia and Herzegovina, implemented in all WB6 countries)

The project will detect the trends and the most frequent types of online violence against women and girls in the 'Western Balkans 6' countries. Collected data will serve to create a comprehensive report addressing gender-based violence (GBV) and exploitation happening in the digital environment. A set of recommendations for protection and prevention will be produced, disseminated online, and shared with relevant stakeholders in each country and the public. The cross-regional report, compiling the mapped trends and patterns on gender-based violence in the online environment will be issued at the end of the project period. A specialised programme for journalists on how to report on gender-sensitive issues will enhance the capacity of journalists to understand the complexity of gender-based violence and exploitation, empowering them to engage in covering gender-related issues. A set of recommendations for the women survivors from the region will be prepared based on the inputs from the regional women networks and findings of the

monitoring process. Finally, a campaign will be conducted to raise the awareness of violence against women in the online sphere.

10. **“Vatra” Psycho-Social Center - Systemic Interventions to Fight Gender Based Violence in Albania;** €80,760

(national, applicant based in Albania)

The project uses a systemic approach for the improvement of access to and quality of services to victims of domestic and gender-based violence in all regions of Albania. It aims to improve the institutional response, coordination, and quality of victim protection services, as well as provide direct support services to victims and foster their social re-integration. Decision-makers will be targeted via evidence-based policy recommendations for an improved and well-functioning system of victim protection. Service-providers will be targeted by capacity-building activities, which will raise the overall level of the quality of services available to victims. Victims of violence will also receive direct support services (medical, legal, psychological, socio-economic, educational etc.). A public campaign is to raise overall social awareness on the issues of domestic and gender-based violence, including trafficking, as a community-level preventative approach.