

EUROPEAN CENTRE
FOR **PRESS & MEDIA**
FREEDOM

ECPMF



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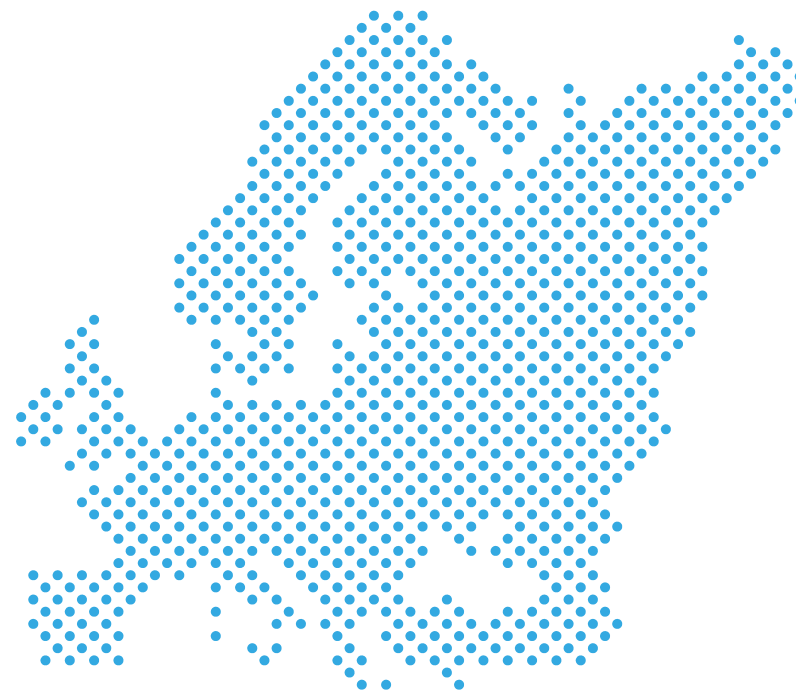
YEAR STRATEGY

2020-24

ABOUT ECPMF

The European Centre for Press and Media Freedom (ECPMF) was founded on 24 June 2015 by twenty-five organisations from sixteen countries as an independent European Co-operative Society (SCE). Its DNA is the [European Charter on Freedom of the Press](#), ten paragraphs defining what is required in order to protect a democratic public sphere, initiated and signed by 48 editors-in-chief and leading journalists from all over Europe. Upholding the principles of this Charter, together with the [Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union](#) (EU), is at the core of ECPMF's approach. From its headquarters in Leipzig, Germany, the organisation works to promote, preserve and defend press and media freedom as well as to reinforce citizens' right to impartial information across Europe.

Embedded within a pan-European network of freedom of expression organisations, ECPMF predominately works in coalition to conceptualise and deliver major EU funded projects, such as the [Media Freedom Rapid Response \(MFRR\)](#) mechanism and the [Investigative Journalism for Europe \(IJ4EU\)](#) grant. The European Commission, the Free State of Saxony, the City of Leipzig and the Media Foundation of the Sparkasse Leipzig have provided continued financial support since the organisation's inception. Individual projects or initiatives also receive support from other donors, including the National Endowment for Democracy, Open Society Foundations, the German Foreign Office and the Federal Commissioner for Culture and Media. As a co-operative society, ECPMF is a non-profit body owned by its, now almost forty, members. Our team currently consists of around twelve full and part-time staff.





THERE IS **NO FREEDOM**
WITHOUT MEDIA FREEDOM

INTRODUCTION

"ECPMF has become a Europe-wide recognized actor for press and media freedom within five years. This strategy guides us into the future and commits us to take the fight further. Our conviction is: if you want to live as a free citizen you need media freedom."

Dr Lutz Kinkel, ECPMF's Managing Director

June 2020 marks the European Centre for Press and Media Freedom's 5th Anniversary. There are many successes to celebrate. Since 2015, the organisation has rapidly grown to become a key player in the press and media freedom sphere. We have provided journalists and other media professionals with direct practical and legal support to help them continue their work in the face of significant hardships. We have comprehensively monitored violations, put recommendations in the hands of decision makers and successfully campaigned for change. We have championed cross-border investigative journalism and promoted media literacy and open dialogue. Our impact has been tangible.

ECPMF is recognised as a uniquely placed organisation specifically serving Europe. Our region is experiencing an undeniable deterioration of press and media freedom. The number of threats and attacks against journalists and media workers is rising. The gap between the principles enshrined in the EU Charter on Fundamental Rights and the reality on the ground grows ever wider. Not only in authoritarian states such as Belarus, and countries in transition like Northern Macedonia, but also in places with strong democratic constitutions like Germany, and long democratic traditions such as the United Kingdom. We need to respond by working **fiercer**, **faster** and **louder** than ever.

This document sets out ECPMF's strategic approach to tackle the existing and emerging challenges over the next five years. Starting in September 2019, the creation of this plan is the result of several stages of research, feedback from staff and board members as well as partners and beneficiaries across Europe. It clearly articulates ECPMF's vision, mission and organisational values, as well as the three core strands of the organisation's work to 'Monitor', 'Support' and 'Engage'. Our short term 2020-21 targets reflect ECPMF's current top-line project commitments, including through the newly launched Media Freedom Rapid Response (MFRR). These concrete activity based targets will be reviewed year on year, in line with ECPMF's overarching key strategic priorities that we have mapped out for the organisation to achieve by 2024.

A robust defence of press and media freedom needs everyone. Our strategy also outlines a fourth internal strand 'Resource', which seeks to ensure ECPMF has the necessary means to develop in a sustainable way to deliver on our mission. We cannot, however, achieve our ambitions alone. We plan to engage greater support from both donors as well as the wider public across Europe. We invite you to join with us to realise a society where media freedom enables open discourse and everyone can seek, receive and impart information.

CONTEXT

"There is no question to my mind that the existence of ECPMF is crucial. We have to fight the destruction of quality journalism which, in the bigger picture, leads to the demolition of democracy."

Henrik Kaufholz, Chair of ECPMF's Executive Board

Until a few years ago Western European countries were often heralded as beacons of democracy – examples to be followed by the rest of the world. We just had to look at their constitutions and study the practice of the European Court of Human Rights. Press and media freedom seemed a solid cornerstone of democracy. But recent events have shown us such foundations are not as secure as they seemed. /

Journalists have been murdered in two EU Member states. Other governments across Europe mould public service TV and radio to their own political taste. Even in countries with long democratic histories, media professionals are under pressure. Local journalism is particularly vulnerable. The collapse of traditional business models has led to news deserts cropping up across Europe. Self-censorship – once seen as the preserve of dictatorships – can be seen as a direct result of economic concerns and criminal intimidation as much as political forces.

Politics too has changed, with a notable rise of right wing populism across Europe, coming hand in hand with the digital age and the spread of misinformation online. Unscrupulous politicians openly cite journalists as targets and the concept of 'fake news' has been used to try to legitimise restrictions on press and media freedom. There has been an erosion of informed debate and mistrust in the mainstream media has climbed to an all time high in society.

Nevertheless it is possible to find hope even in surprising places. The reaction from some governments to the on-going global pandemic has been to further erode fundamental freedoms and evade questions aimed at holding them to account. Yet the health crisis has underscored the value of reliable publically accessible information like never before. People stuck under lockdowns have watched, listened and read the news probably more than they ever have previously in their lives. It will take time to rebuild, but there is a chance to engage more people in the defence of press and media freedom and lead important debates about how we want our society to look in the future.

ECPMF's Theory of Change: Press and media freedom is essential to a democratic society. It ensures that citizens have access to information, are able to engage in debates, make informed decisions and ensure power is held to account. By monitoring and highlighting violations, providing swift practical and legal support to media professionals and engaging diverse stakeholders across Europe to speak out together with a shared voice, ECPMF strengthens the protection of media freedom and defends against its deterioration. Press and media across Europe will be better able to effectively perform their vital function and ensure the free flow of information in an open society.

ECPMF'S VISION, MISSION AND VALUES

Our **vision** is a society where media freedom enables open discourse and everyone can seek, receive and impart information.

ECPMF's mission is to promote, preserve and defend media freedom.

We do this by **monitoring** violations, providing practical **support** and **engaging** diverse stakeholders across Europe.

Our activities are therefore encompassed into **three core strands**:

1 - MONITOR

2 - SUPPORT

3 - ENGAGE

Supported by an internal cross-cutting strand:

RESOURCE

Forming the framework of ECPMF's 2020-24 strategic plan, all of ECPMF's sub-aims, activities, corresponding short term targets and key priorities, are grouped under these four strands as outlined overleaf.

ECPMF's organisational values are integral to its approach to promote, preserve and defend media freedom:

1. **Commitment** – we pledge our continued and engaged support to those who need us.
2. **Accountability** – we are answerable for our actions and approaches.
3. **Sustainability** – we make decisions and invest in partnerships with a long-term view.
4. **Transparency** – we work in an open, responsible and transparent way.
5. **Equality** – we promote an equal, diverse and respectful working environment.

1 - MONITOR

Aim: To monitor violations of press and media freedom, and provide a detailed picture of media threats and trends across Europe, which can inform accurate and timely responses.

2 - SUPPORT

Aim: To support journalists, media workers and press freedom advocates to continue their work in the face of threats or harassment, through the provision of practical and legal assistance.

3 - ENGAGE

Aim: To engage diverse stakeholders and the public across Europe in the robust protection of press and media freedom, to challenge violations and to promote best practice.

UNDERPINNING THE REALISATION OF ECPMF'S THREE CORE STRANDS OF WORK IS A CROSS CUTTING INTERNAL STRAND:

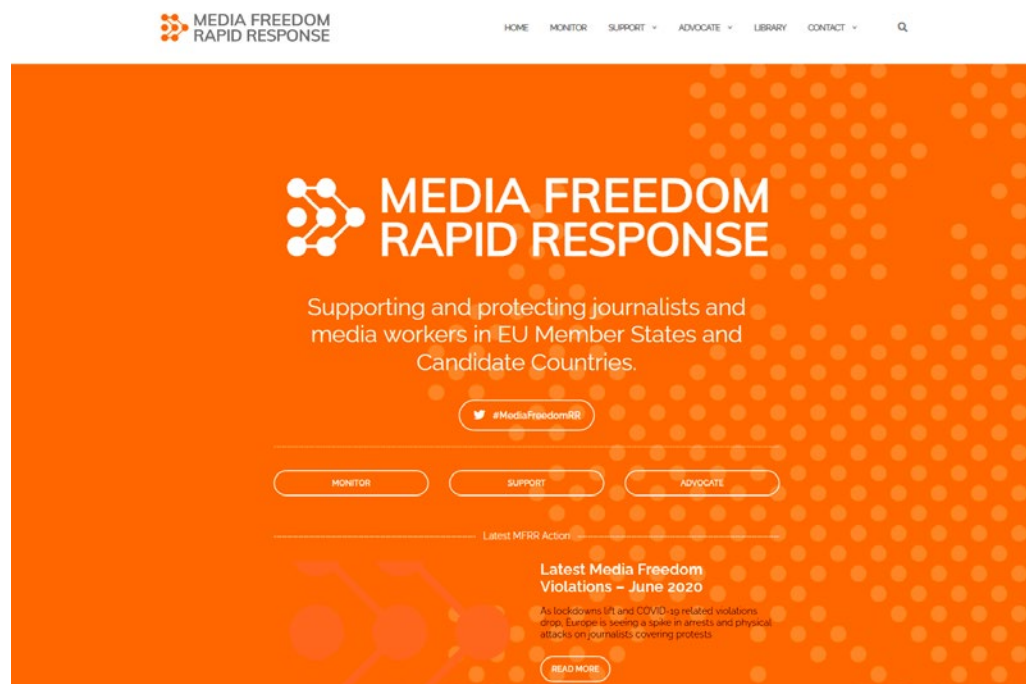
RESOURCE

Aim: To ensure ECPMF's organisational sustainability and impact, by strengthening its financial health, human resources and internal practices as well as engagement with supporters.

The Media Freedom Rapid Response (MFRR)

In March 2020, ECPMF marked a new chapter in the support for journalists under threat through the creation of a Europe-wide media freedom rapid response mechanism (MFRR) for violations of press and media freedom. [The MFRR is led by ECPMF with a consortium of partners](#) – ARTICLE 19, the European Federation of Journalists (EFJ), Free Press Unlimited (FPU), the Institute for Applied Informatics at the University of Leipzig (InfAI), International Press Institute (IPI) and CCI/Osservatorio Balcani e Caucaso Transeuropa (OBCT).

The MFRR is designed to mitigate the consequences of the deterioration of media freedom in the EU and Candidate Countries. Thematic focal points include: the consequences of the COVID19 crisis; online harassment, especially against female journalists; legal threats like SLAPP (Strategic Litigation Against Public Participation) lawsuits; the fight against impunity for crimes against journalists; and the press and media freedom situation in specific countries. The MFRR encompasses activities under every strand of ECPMF's new strategic framework (to [monitor](#), [support](#) and [engage](#)) and the organisation will seek to continue the MFRR beyond its pilot year.



OVERVIEW OF ECPMF ACTIVITIES BY STRAND

1 - MONITOR	2 - SUPPORT	3 - ENGAGE
A.1.1 – Mapping Media Freedom (MapMF)	A.2.1 – Journalists-in-Residence (JiR)	A.3.1 – In-country advocacy missions
A.1.2 – Reporting to the Council of Europe (CoE) Media Alert Platform	A.2.2 – Legal Advice and Support	A.3.2 – Advocacy at relevant regional and international fora
A.1.3 – Trial monitoring	A.2.3 – Guidance and Practical Assistance (including the Helpdesk for foreign and exiled media professionals)	A.3.3 – Campaigns (including joint actions)
A.1.4 – Fact finding missions	A.2.4 – Capacity development (including trainings for lawyers, journalists, other stakeholders)	A.3.4 – Flagship ECPMF Events on Media Freedom issues
A.1.5 – Media Freedom Resource Database for journalists and researchers	A.2.5 – Supporting Investigative Journalism	A.3.5 – Promotion of Media Literacy
A.1.6 – Publication of Special Dossiers		A.3.6 – Public communication, visibility and engagement on media issues

1 – MONITOR

Aim: To monitor violations of press and media freedom and provide a detailed picture of media threats and trends across Europe, which can inform accurate and timely responses.

ECPMF is at the cutting edge of monitoring violations of press and media freedom through its Mapping Media Freedom Project (MapMF). After taking over the leadership of this initiative in 2019, we began developing technology to automatically monitor and generate alerts, which are then checked by experts. This vastly increases the volume of alerts that can be identified and the speed at which they can be tracked and verified.

We are able to further highlight violations through the Council of Europe (CoE) Platform for the Protection of Journalism and Safety of Journalists, since becoming an official partner in September 2019. Combined with ad hoc on the ground fact-finding missions and trial monitoring, ECPMF is able to produce highly detailed statistical based analysis of media trends across Europe, which serves as an invaluable starting point for remedy and redress.

These are published on the Media Freedom Resource Centre, which contains more than 1,500 other relevant, freely accessible publications, including special dossiers on key topics.

“Mapping media freedom is essential for getting to the bottom of the two biggest issues that plague media today: violence against members of the media and impunity for prosecution of their assailants.”

Dunja Mijatovic – Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights

SHORT TERM TARGETS FOR 2020-21:

- **Implementation of the new MapMF automatic technique** in English and Hungarian and publication of quarterly collated statistics and trend analysis.
- At least **6 alerts annually** to the CoE Platform, generating a response from 15% of member states.
- Contribute **a chapter** to the annual CoE report.
- At least **3 court hearings** monitored yearly.
- At least **2 fact-finding missions** annually: findings cited in at least 2 local media and 1 debate in EP or CoE.
- At least **8 items published monthly** on the Resource Centre and **5 factsheets** produced yearly.
- At least **1 special dossier** annually on a pressing topic.

KEY PRIORITIES FOR DEVELOPMENT BY 2024:

- Development of MapMF into the most comprehensive database of thoroughly verified information on media violations.
- Publication of expert analysis on press and media freedom trends that is widely accessible and utilised.
- Deployment of more rapid responses to situations of concern for press and media on the ground.
- Findings from ECPMF's monitoring reach broader resonance with local and international stakeholders.

2 – SUPPORT

Aim: To support journalists, media workers and press freedom advocates to continue their work in the face of threats or harassment, through the provision of practical and legal assistance.

Changing the system might take a long time but helping the individual can have an immediate effect. ECPMF provides practical and legal assistance to journalists, media workers and press freedom advocates across Europe, supporting their ability to continue working in the face of threats or harassment.

Since 2015, the Journalists-in- Residence (JiR) Programme has provided temporary shelter to 17 journalists from 9 different countries facing harassment and intimidation as a direct result of their work. We also offer guidance and practical assistance to those in need of support, including foreign and exiled media professionals.

In addition, legal support is offered on matters related to free speech for individuals and organisations working in countries located geographically in Europe. The almost 50 cases supported to date have been selected with the help of an external expert committee, comprised of leading media lawyers and specialists.

"I regained my strength and continued my reporting from the safety of Leipzig. For the first time in many years, I experienced something like a normal life."

Former JiR from Slovenia,
who wishes to remain unnamed due to on-going threats.

SHORT TERM TARGETS FOR 2020-21:

- At least **12 JiR Fellows**, from **4** member states, are supported in Leipzig, **50%** of whom are able to continue their work afterwards.
- **Legal support** will be provided to at least **12 individuals or organisations** per year.
- At least **30 media professionals in exile** in Germany will have received practical assistance or guidance per year.
- Launch of a **resource portal for journalists** in English, highlighting development opportunities and tools.
- Design and **development of capacity development initiatives** to launch in mid-2021.
- Launch of a **new award for cross-border investigative journalism** in Europe through IJ4EU.

KEY PRIORITIES FOR DEVELOPMENT BY 2024:

- Respite services for journalists at risk are made more accessible with partners supported to act as hosts.
- Legal and practical support is increased and more routinely followed up, improving sustainability.
- Resources to support media professionals working both in their home country and in exile are more available and accessible in a range of formats and languages.
- Direct support for press and media is both more widely and locally available through the capacity development of key groups (for instance media lawyers).

3 – ENGAGE

Aim: To engage diverse stakeholders and the public across Europe in the robust protection of press and media freedom, to challenge violations and to promote best practice.

ECPMF engages a diverse range of stakeholders in the active defence and promotion of press and media freedom. We undertake around 3-4 in-country advocacy missions a year, often in partnership with other international and local organisations.

Our approach ensures that the findings and concerns are raised to regional and international level. In Slovakia, our work paved the way for the opening of an impendent criminal into the murder of Jan Kuciak and his finance. In Malta, we contributed to the immense international media coverage and the launch of a public inquiry the murder of Daphne Caruana Galizia. In Turkey, our advocacy put pressure on the local judiciary to refrain from political interference, and many journalists were released.

Through flagship events - such as the popular annual Newsocracy conference - ECPMF shines a spotlight on, and brings together experts to tackle key media freedom issues such as the news deserts in the countryside. The organisation also promotes media literacy and further engages with the wider public through active and visible communications on media freedom developments.

"I thought that they could deport me and hand me over to Erdogan's government in Turkey. Then, the rest of my life at best would be spent in jail. But your solidarity work stopped them."

Turkish-Swedish journalist **Hamza Yalcin**
in his 'thank you' letter to ECPMF in 2017

SHORT TERM TARGETS FOR 2020-21:

- At least **3 in country missions annually**, with findings shared with **8-10 local and international stakeholders**, garnering **6 items of media coverage** minimum.
- At least **2 recommendations adopted** yearly at national or regional level as a result of ECPMF's advocacy.
- Successful delivery of at least **1 ECPMF led campaign** and **support to 3-4 partner campaigns** annually.
- Host at least **1 large conference, 1 roundtable** and **2 plug-ins at other relevant events** a year.
- Deliver at least **12 Lie Detector sessions** a year.
- At least **100 blogs and articles a year**, with ECPMF's **social media followers increasingly annually by 10%**.

KEY PRIORITIES FOR DEVELOPMENT BY 2024:

- Increased capacity to deliver advocacy missions and to amplify their findings amongst relevant stakeholders.
- Advocacy recommendations are more systematically tracked and followed upon, to ensure implementation.
- Greater public engagement, through effective communications and campaigns, as well as media literacy training, creates larger momentum for positive impact.
- ECPMF continues to develop its reputation for high quality, relevant and informative events, drawing together key stakeholders leading to concrete steps or strategies.
- Engage experts on how to stimulate and innovate local journalism as well as support efforts to find sustainable funding to overcome the rise of news deserts.

RESOURCE

Aim: To ensure ECPMF's organisational sustainability and impact, by strengthening its financial health, human resources and internal practices as well as engagement with supporters..

ECPMF is currently reliant on project based funding from a few key donors. Diversifying funding streams will help protect against any potential funding gaps and more effectively implement our long-term targets. Increased flexible, funding would open up the scope to which we are able to react to unpredictable events. Nobody foresaw either the murder of Daphne Caruana Galizia or that of Jan Kuciak. But we were able to send our legal advisor to the scene of the crimes and continue to work closely with both families. In the future we want to be able to do more, react faster and stronger, based on circumstances as they arise.

Despite our reach, we are a relatively small organisation with around 12 full and part time staff, which we aim to further grow to meet the needs. Our team is made up of journalists, editors, lawyers, human rights advocates, events specialists, finance staff – the common thread running through all of us is the desire to realise our joint mission to protect press and media freedom. We want to spread this passion, by inviting others to get more actively involved - whether that is through participating in our campaigns, attending our events or contributing donations.

"This swift reaction is a rare quality in any organisation dealing with human rights."

Aleksei Bobrovnikov – Ukrainian journalist

SHORT TERM TARGETS FOR 2020-21:

- Addition of at least **1 new funding stream** and **2 new donors** per year.
- Recruitment of at least **two new staff** members.
- All staff members participate in at least **one training** annually to develop their skills and/or expertise.
- Implementation of a **quarterly and annual monitoring, evaluation and learning** process, which will feed into the publication of ECPMF's first annual report in 2021.
- Development, launch and expansion of an **ECPMF supporters network**.

KEY PRIORITIES FOR DEVELOPMENT BY 2024:

- Diversification of ECPMF's funding streams and increasing flexible funding.
- Ensuring ECPMF is fully staffed with skilled experts, who are supported to deliver the organisation's work.
- Strengthening of ECPMF's internal practices, especially monitoring and evaluation and learning to ensure the right impact is being delivered in the right places.
- Actively engage the wider public in the support of ECPMF's mission and the defence of press and media freedom across Europe.

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