

Albanian and Belarusian journalists win CEI SEEMO Award for Outstanding Merits in Investigative Journalism 2016



Presentation of the CEI SEEMO Investigative Journalism Award 2016

Trieste/Vienna/Sofia 18 November 2016

The Central European Initiative ([CEI](#)) and the South East Europe Media Organisation ([SEEMO](#)), in special partnership with the Media Program South East Europe of the Konrad Adenauer Stiftung ([KAS](#)), have announced the winners of the “CEI SEEMO Award for Outstanding Merits in Investigative Journalism 2016”:

Lindita Çela in the section “Professional Journalists” and Artsiom Harbatsevich in the section “Young Professional Journalists”.

Lindita Çela, an investigative journalist at the Balkan Investigative Reporting Network (BIRN) in Albania, has been awarded for her overall professional achievements and hard-hitting investigations exposing corruption scandals in the highest levels of power as well as revelations on Albania’s

organised crime networks, stretching from the Accursed Mountains to the streets of Brussels. For over more than 15 years of experience as a reporter, she has been covering complex stories with a huge impact in Albanian society, showing impressive courage and determination.

Artsiom Harbatsevich, a young journalist from Minsk, Belarus, with working experiences at Intex - press and Nasha Niva, has been awarded for his activity as investigative reporter producing some works having great impact and repercussions in his country. In particular, in one investigation, he examined the pro-Russian paramilitary groups receiving support from Russian funds, while in another work he exposed the channel through which Belarusian teenagers from a border region were taken to military training in Russia.

Çela and Harbatsevich will officially receive the awards offered by the CEI (4,000 EUR and 1,000 EUR respectively) on the occasion of the **X South East Europe Media Forum (SEEMF) in Belgrade, Serbia, on 21-22 November 2016.**

A **Special Mention** has been assigned to **Iurie Sănduță**, director of RISE Moldova and member of the Organized Crime and Corruption Reporting Project (OCCRP). As a specialist in cross-border investigations, coordinating the investigation department at Ziarul de Gardă in Chișinău, his work is also well-known in the Romanian media, especially in recent years, when he revealed several high-level corruption schemes, disclosing the criminal organisation and making connections in offshore areas. He is the co-author of the investigative border projects "A Murderer's Trail" and "The Russian Laundromat".

35 nominations, covering 12 countries, have been submitted this year, confirming the region-wide impact and relevance of the Award.

The independent international jury, who decides by majority voting, included: Aleksandra Bogdani (Albania), editor for Balkan Investigative Reporting Network (BIRN); Saša Leković (Croatia), investigative journalist, trainer and media advisor in SEE countries, president of Investigative Journalism Center, president of Croatian Journalists' Association; Luka Zanoni (Italy), editor-in-chief, Osservatorio Balcani e Caucaso; Marina Constantinoiu (Romania), journalist/editor-in-chief, miscareaderezistentă.ro; Anna Babinets (Ukraine), editor of the Organized Crime and Corruption Reporting Project (OCCRP) and co-founder of Slidstvo.info.

The overall Award coordination was managed by Barbara Fabro (CEI) and Oliver Vujovic (SEEMO).

CEI SEEMO Award for Outstanding Merits in Investigative Journalism

CALL FOR APPLICATIONS 2016

Trieste/Vienna/Sofia, 8 April 2016

The Central European Initiative (CEI) and the South East Europe Media Organisation (SEEMO), in special partnership with the Media Program South East Europe of the Konrad Adenauer Stiftung (KAS), have opened the *Call for Applications 2016 of the CEI SEEMO Award for Outstanding Merits in Investigative Journalism*. The Call is divided into two categories:

1	PROFESSIONAL JOURNALISTS	4.000 EUR
2	YOUNG PROFESSIONAL JOURNALISTS (born on or after 1/1/1986)	1.000 EUR

The Award, launched in 2008, aims to honour the work carried out by investigative journalists and their contribution to investigative reporting despite the difficult conditions under which they often have to operate.

Applications will be examined by an international jury made up of distinguished journalists and media experts from the region, which may also include winners of previous editions of the Award.

The awarding ceremony will take place during the South East Europe Media Forum (SEEMF) in Belgrade, Serbia, on 21-22 November 2016.

ADMISSION CRITERIA

Eligibility

The Call is open to nationals of the 18 CEI Member States: Albania, Austria, Belarus, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Italy, Macedonia, Moldova, Montenegro, Poland, Romania, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia and Ukraine.

Print, Radio, TV, news agencies and Internet media are admitted.

For Category 1, candidates should have been actively engaged in investigative reporting over the last two years and should still be active in journalism. Two samples of journalistic work will be relevant for the evaluation by the jury.

For Category 2, candidates should have been actively involved in investigative reporting, even in the context of training activities organised by schools/universities/NGOs and, as a result, should have published at least one investigative story meeting all professional standards. One sample of journalistic work will be relevant for the evaluation by the jury.

Submission modalities

Candidates have to be recommended by trustworthy individuals, journalism and media organisations, media companies, civil society organisations, journalism schools or universities, trade unions or other

social organisations from the target countries. The nominator should write a recommendation letter and make it available to the nominee/candidate.

The nominees/candidates have to go through an online application procedure and provide all necessary documents for the application in digital form (see details below).

HOW TO APPLY

Candidates shall fill in an Online Application Form available here: www.cei.int/CEI-SEEMO-award-2016.

The following documents in PDF format shall be uploaded:

1. Curriculum Vitae (personal and professional data sheet according to Europass format or similar);
2. A recommendation letter;
3. Up to three samples of journalistic work in a single PDF document (minimum two samples in Category 1, one sample in Category 2). For online work samples, insert hyperlinks in a PDF document, or print out online articles in a PDF file. Hyperlinks need to be accessible at least until 30 June 2016. In case of audio/video material, please upload the files making use of file-sharing services (e.g. WeTransfer or Dropbox) including a script or scenario.

Material prepared in local languages should be accompanied by a short summary in English.

SELECTION CRITERIA

The jury will take into account the relevance of the matters covered by the reports, which should have a focus on the target countries, as well as the quality of reporting in terms of documentation, data, writing and production. The personal risks taken while performing the duties as well as the impact on society of the messages conveyed will also be evaluated.

CLOSING DATE

Applications shall be submitted by **Tuesday, 31 May 2016** (23.59 CEST).

For further information: press@cei.int

PAST AWARD RECIPIENTS

- 2015 Aleksandra Bogdani (Albania) in the section “Professional Journalists”; Nadia Burdey (Ukraine) in the section “Young Professional Journalists” - Special mention to Mirko Boskovic, Vlado Otasevic and Ana Komatina (Montenegro)
- 2014 Brankica Stanković (Serbia) in the section “Professional Journalists”; Sadeta Fišić, Jovana Kljajić and Maida Salkanović (Bosnia and Herzegovina) in the section “Young Professional Journalists” – Special mention to Anna Babinets (Ukraine)
- 2013 Mahir Šahinović (Bosnia and Herzegovina) and Rosen Tsvetkov (Bulgaria) - Special mention to Investigative Reporting Project Italy (IRPI)
- 2012 Matej Surc and Blaz Zgaga (Slovenia) - Special investigative diploma to Telnis Skuqi (Albania) and special mention to CIN Sarajevo
- 2011 Włodzimir Kalicki (Poland) - Special investigative journalism diploma to Artan Hoxha (Albania), Dijana Subotički (Serbia) and to Matej Surc and Blaz Zgaga (Slovenia)
- 2010 Adrian Mogoș (Romania) - Special mention to Iryna Khalip (Belarus) and Lydia Pavlova (Bulgaria)
- 2009 Besar Likmeta (Albania) - Special mention to Esad Hecimovic (Bosnia and Herzegovina) and Stefan Candea (Romania)
- 2008 Drago Hedl (Croatia)

ORGANISING INSTITUTIONS

Central European Initiative (CEI) - www.cei.int

The CEI is a regional intergovernmental forum committed to supporting European integration through cooperation between and among its Member States and with the European Union, other interested public institutions or private and non-governmental organisations, as well as international and regional organisations. In order to offer a solid contribution to European integration the CEI combines multilateral diplomacy and project management, both as donor and recipient, while also bridging European macro-regions. The CEI, whose Headquarters is located in Trieste, is composed of 18 Member States: 10 EU members (Austria, Bulgaria, Croatia, Czech Republic, Hungary, Italy, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia) and 8 non-EU members (Albania, Belarus, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Macedonia, Moldova, Montenegro, Serbia, Ukraine). In December 2011, the CEI was granted the Observer Status in the General Assembly of the United Nations.

South East Europe Media Organisation (SEEMO) - www.seemo.org

The SEEMO is a regional non-governmental, non-profit network of editors, media executives and leading journalists from newspapers, magazines, radio and TV stations, news agencies and news media in South East and Central Europe. With its committees, the SEEMO aims to create a bridge between international media activities and the media developments in the region. One of SEEMO's main activities is protecting press freedom by helping journalists and media outlets in South East and Central Europe. Over 60 percent of SEEMO's press releases and letters of protest to governmental and other officials have had positive results. The SEEMO works in cooperation with the International Academy - International Media Center (IA-IMC) and the South East and Central Europe PR Organisation (SECEPRO).

Konrad Adenauer Stiftung (KAS) - www.kas.de/medien-europa/en/

With 80 offices and projects in more than 100 countries worldwide, the KAS contributes to promoting democracy, the rule of law and social market economy. An essential part of this work is the promotion of free and independent media and the support of professional and ethical media coverage.

The Media Program South East Europe, established in 2007, is part of the global media programme of the KAS. It concentrates its efforts in this field in three main directions – education and trainings for journalists, who recognise their social, political, informational and watch-dog role; media policy and media ethics for an independent and multifaceted media landscape; and a professional and value-oriented political communication serving for a better understanding between citizens, politicians and civil society.