

<b>Project Name: CRIS/OPSYS No:</b>	Strengthening Quality News and Independent Journalism in the Western Balkans and Turkey II OPSYS No: INTV_21425
<b>Project Value:</b>	2,199,959,01 Euro
<b>Zone/benefitting countries:</b>	Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Serbia and Turkey.
<b>Duration:</b>	01.01.2023- 31.12.2025
<b>Implementing Agency/ Contractor:</b>	Balkan Investigative Reporting Regional Network- BIRN Hub
<b>Target Group(s):</b>	Up to 600 journalists (young and mid-career) from Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Turkey and Serbia; 6 mainstream media outlets; 6 public service media; 7 universities.
<b>Final beneficiary/ies:</b>	Wider journalist community; Mainstream (MM) and Public Service Media (PSM) in targeted countries; Journalism schools in targeted countries; General public / citizens (20 million).
<b>Partners:</b>	Central European University (CEU), Budapest, Hungary Association of Journalists (AJ), Ankara, Turkey Thomson Media (TM), Berlin, Germany University Goce Delcev Stip (UGD), North Macedonia The Independent Union of Journalists and Media Workers (SSNM), Skopje, North Macedonia Media Association of South-East Europe (MASE), Podgorica, Montenegro Balkan Investigative Reporting Network -BIRN Kosovo, Prishtina, Kosovo
<b>Short description of the project:</b>	The consortium of organizations, gathered around the Balkan Investigative Reporting Network (BIRN Hub), aims to provide systemic support to improve the quality and professionalism of journalism in the Western Balkans and Turkey. The consortium has in-depth understanding of the region and extensive expertise in developing quality journalism and includes local partners to increase sustainability and local ownership. The project is designed to strengthen trust-based engagement between citizens and media, provide resources and support for high-quality content production through education, training, mentoring, and editorial support. The activities include training and editorial support for journalists, support for mainstream and public service media, and a focus on content production through cross-border collaborations. The project will also continue to promote high standards in investigative journalism through advanced EU Awards Scheme and a new regional award.
<b>Objectives:</b>	The <b>overall objective</b> of the project is to provide systemic support to improve quality and professionalism in journalism in the Western Balkans and Turkey. The <b>specific objective</b> of the action is to strengthen trust-based engagement of citizens and media, provide resources and establish conditions for media and journalists to

	<p>produce high quality content through education, training, mentoring and editorial support, technical and financial support, publishing and promoting outstanding achievements in quality and investigative journalism. <b>Main outcome of the project</b> is boosted skills of young and mid-career journalists in quality news and investigative reporting through increased opportunities for journalism training, funds for content production and awards for merits in investigative reporting.</p>
<p><b>Results/outputs:</b></p>	<p>The following outputs are expected to be achieved through the project:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-13 national training sessions with 195+ participants</li> <li>-8 rounds of e-learning and 2 in-person training for journalists</li> <li>-3 e-learning courses, 2 training camps for young journalists, 15 micro-projects granted, 30 journalists mentored for fact-checking</li> <li>-20 fact-checking stories and 30 journalists in Summer School of Investigative Reporting</li> <li>-45 WB journalists trained in legally safe and crisis reporting, 20 cross-border investigations/analyses</li> <li>-6 host media selected and 12 journalists participated in regional exchange program</li> <li>-24 in-depth stories published, 500 journalists supported through Digital Security Scheme</li> <li>-600 quality news and 12 TV stories produced through production grants, 1 cross-border documentary</li> <li>-60 journalists received on-the-job training, 15 cross-regional multimedia stories</li> <li>-Cooperation with 6 universities, research and roadmap for Investigative Journalism MA program</li> <li>-Curriculum for investigative journalism academic training program developed and piloted</li> <li>-72 EU Prizes awarded for 72 award-winning investigations.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Activities:</b></p>	<p>The project focused its activities in the following working packages:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Administration and Coordination of the Action</li> <li>2. National and regional training scheme</li> <li>3. Regional exchange programme:</li> <li>4. Digital Security Scheme</li> <li>6. Production and publishing of quality news and investigative stories in MM and PSM</li> <li>7. Production of cross-border investigations;</li> <li>8. Development of pilot programme for investigative journalism academic training</li> <li>9. EU Award Scheme</li> </ol>
<p><b>Cross-cutting issues</b></p>	<p>The project will work to increase the quality of reporting focused on human rights violations, including violations in the digital sphere, and provide space for voices of underreported, marginalised and vulnerable groups to be heard, and be more visible in their societies. Gender based violence, human trafficking and other topics will be also covered through the capacity-building activities, thus influencing necessary policy changes and improving the overall position of women in the Balkan societies. Beside this, Gender Equality is a cross-cutting issue throughout all BIRN's programmes. All the target groups, disaggregated by gender, age, ability, ethnicity, and location are</p>

regularly tracked and records kept. Through the raising capacities in investigative reporting, issues related to the rule of law, corruption, environment and green transformation will become more visible among the general public contributing to the better democratic governance, as well as to the improved conditions for accountability and increased transparency.