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Year Report
2026



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Reflecting and responding: conversations that mattered

This past season at the European Press Prize, we focused on taking a step back and reflecting – and developments in the journalism sector as well as turbulent global affairs gave us plenty to reflect on.

The Reuters Institute's latest [Digital News Report](#) states that 2026 represents a significant milestone: for the first time, social media and video network consumption is most widely used source of news globally. Audiences' use of traditional news sources continues to decline, interest in news keeps falling, and trust in news has dropped to the lowest level the Reuters Institute has recorded since they started measuring in 2015. Use of AI chatbots for news is growing quickly and is more concentrated among younger audiences. Roughly a quarter of respondents globally now get some of their news from news-focused individual creators.

These are developments we as an organisation need to follow closely – alongside trends across the sector generally – and bring into our internal conversations; letting them inform our choices as we think about the future.

During our 2026 season, we have had a lot of constructive conversations with people involved in all facets of our organisation: our Board, members of our judging bodies, Partner representatives, and Laureates.

These conversations ranged from the state of journalism in Europe (and beyond) to journalistic values and the role of quality journalism in serving democracy – and how we, as an organisation, relate to this. We took our lessons learned from past seasons into account and reflected on where we stand, what we need, and where we want to be a few years from now.

Through conversations like these, together with our Board, we came to the conclusion that this moment called for an updated organisational strategy; one that builds on the conversations we have internally, and that also creates more room for broader dialogue on a European level. We strongly felt that this should be part of where we are heading in the coming years as we develop further as an organisation.

I am delighted to share the updated strategic framework that came out of this

process in this Year Report. And that is not all: flowing from the strategic framework we also worked on further improving our overall governance, as well as some of our internal strategies; resulting in an updated fundraising strategy, as well as a communications strategy.

Alongside this strategic work, we of course also ran our 'regular' operations, resulting in the [2026 Shortlist](#). Be ready to be amazed by the best of European journalism from the past year: extraordinary and necessary, vulnerable and heartbreaking, devastating and honest.

In this Year Report, you will find more highlights and accomplishments from our past 2026 season – alongside honest reflections on how we can improve moving forward.

And finally: next year marks our 15th anniversary... Stay tuned for everything that comes with that!

Jennifer Athanasion-Prins

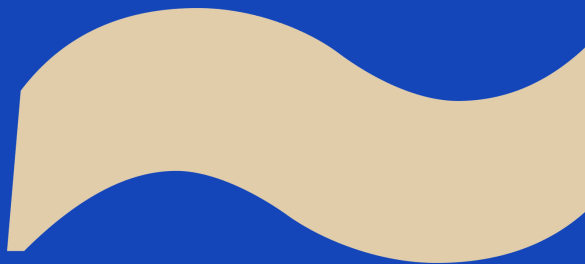
Executive Director

Why is there a European Press Prize?

The European Press Prize exists to recognise, honour, and encourage quality journalism across Europe – empowering journalists to uphold journalistic standards, contributing to reinforcing trust in media and strengthening democratic values.

Quality journalism is vital to healthy democracies, especially under the pressure of a transforming media landscape. We offer a network of solidarity for journalists in Europe. In a fragmented and oversaturated information environment, we aim to be a trusted reference point for journalism.

A new strategic framework for 2026-2030



Our Partners & Peers Meeting in Athens in September 2025, designed to mobilise the collective networks of our Partners and peers to secure urgent support the Prize needs, was one of the driving factors behind the decision to engage in a strategy trajectory. During this meeting, we had open and reflective conversations about the focus and direction of our organisation.

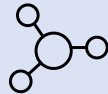
After Athens, the Board set the process of revamping the strategy in motion: a focused effort to make concrete choices and set clear directions based on the valuable input that we have received from our stakeholders over the past years. With the support of [Stichting Democratie en Media](#), we have collaborated with the [Argumentenfabriek](#), an independent bureau in Amsterdam that guided us through this process. The strategic framework that resulted from this is designed to steer the organisation's development in the years ahead.

After three intensive sessions with our Executive Director and the Board members who are based in the Netherlands, the updated strategic framework was finalised. Two main roles for our organisation have been distinguished: the role of [steward of quality journalism in Europe](#), and the role of [catalyst for connection in the European media landscape](#).

The strategic framework serves as our organisational compass and should lead all decisions we make as an organisation. Building on that foundation, a [multi-annual plan](#) that sets out results for the updated strategic goals and activities from the strategic framework has since been developed, as well as an updated [fundraising strategy](#) and a new [communications strategy](#). All of these strategic developments also serve as a starting point for the further development of certain governance-related matters, such as an ethical funding policy, new Partner contracts, an internal AI policy, and more.

Strategic framework: Roles and goals

Catalyst



The European Press Prize is a catalyst for connection in the European media landscape

- A clearer understanding of what quality journalism in Europe is.
- More acknowledgement of the role of journalism in European democracy.
- Greater resilience of journalistic standards in a changing political and media landscape.

Steward



The European Press Prize is a widely recognised steward of quality journalism in Europe

- Greater exchange of ideas in the European media landscape.
- A larger community of European journalists with shared democratic values.
- Stronger representation of European journalistic values in the wider media ecosystem.

Strategic framework: Activities

Catalyst



- We connect journalists throughout Europe who share our mission.
- We encourage our community of Laureates and judging bodies to be ambassadors of the European Press Prize.
- We are engaged and visible through participation in key events.
- We build and maintain relationships with strategic partners.

Steward



- We define, communicate, and showcase what we mean by quality journalism in Europe.
- We identify how political and technological trends affect the role of quality journalism in democracy and adapt as needed.
- We uphold and refine judging standards for quality journalism, with respect for differences in context and scale.
- We map the field of quality journalism in Europe by conducting fair, independent peer review of submitted work.
- We honour quality journalism in its role to serve democracy in Europe.
- We follow and facilitate a European conversation on quality journalism and its role in democracy.
- We develop formats by which we increase the visibility of the European Press Prize.

Our Board

The European Press Prize Foundation is managed and represented by its Board, which shall be made up of no fewer than three members and currently has six members.



From left to right:

Nienke Venema (Chair) (NL), Jens Bruun (DK), Maïke Olij (NL), Beata Balogová (SK),
Ronald Ockhuysen (NL), and Rasmus Kleis Nielsen (DK)

Two Board members stepped down this season: Yoeri Albrecht – one of our founding members – in July 2025 and Majka Nemcova in February 2026. We thank them both for their invaluable contributions to the organisation. We were honoured to welcome two new Board members in their place: Ronald Ockhuysen in September 2025 and Rasmus Kleis Nielsen in March 2026.



We were **so honoured** to have won the prize; it truly means a lot to me personally. I am very happy that our article is **reaching the world again**, thanks to the attention of the European Press Prize. So thank you for all the **care and effort** you put into making the event happen.

— Maud Effting, Winner of the 2026 Distinguished Reporting Award alongside her colleague Willem Feenstra

Milestones of our 2026 season

Our 2026 season was one for the books: here are some important **milestones** that marked the year.

We started off our judging season with our **biggest ever PrepCom: 22 members**, five of which joined this season. For the first time, the Shortlist meeting – which was held in Amsterdam this year – was extended to 1.5 days of meetings. This change was a big success: it made the meeting more substantial and made space for an important discussion on judging developments and conversations about the future. Thanks go out to Winny for arranging drinks at the NRC offices, and Stichting Democratie en Media for hosting us!

While we asked applicants for the first time this season to hand in an (AI) translation of their work, we were still **happy to work with kompreno for final edits** of all judging procedure translations that were published on our website.

Our presence at the **International Journalism Festival** is ever growing: this year, ahead of the 2026 Shortlist announcement, we held a panel with members of our judging bodies. “You heard it here first: the judges of the European Press Prize on where the profession is headed” proved to be a big success and filled the room.

Similarly filled rooms could be found during the **European Press Prize Lisbon 2026 on 3 June**. Thanks to our wonderful local partner, the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation, we were hosted in a showstopping location in the middle of the city of Lisbon.

Additionally, we are proud of the **local partnerships that we established in Portugal** that made our presence in Lisbon such a success. Our event would not have been the same without support from the Bartholomäus-Brüderschaft, the Embassy of the Netherlands in Lisbon, Turismo de Lisboa, Centro de Informação Europa Criativa, and Universidade Lusófona.

During the day in Lisbon, our **programme “Collective conscience”** convinced 100+ people about why human perspective matters now more than ever in journalism. A full summary of the programme can be read on our website.

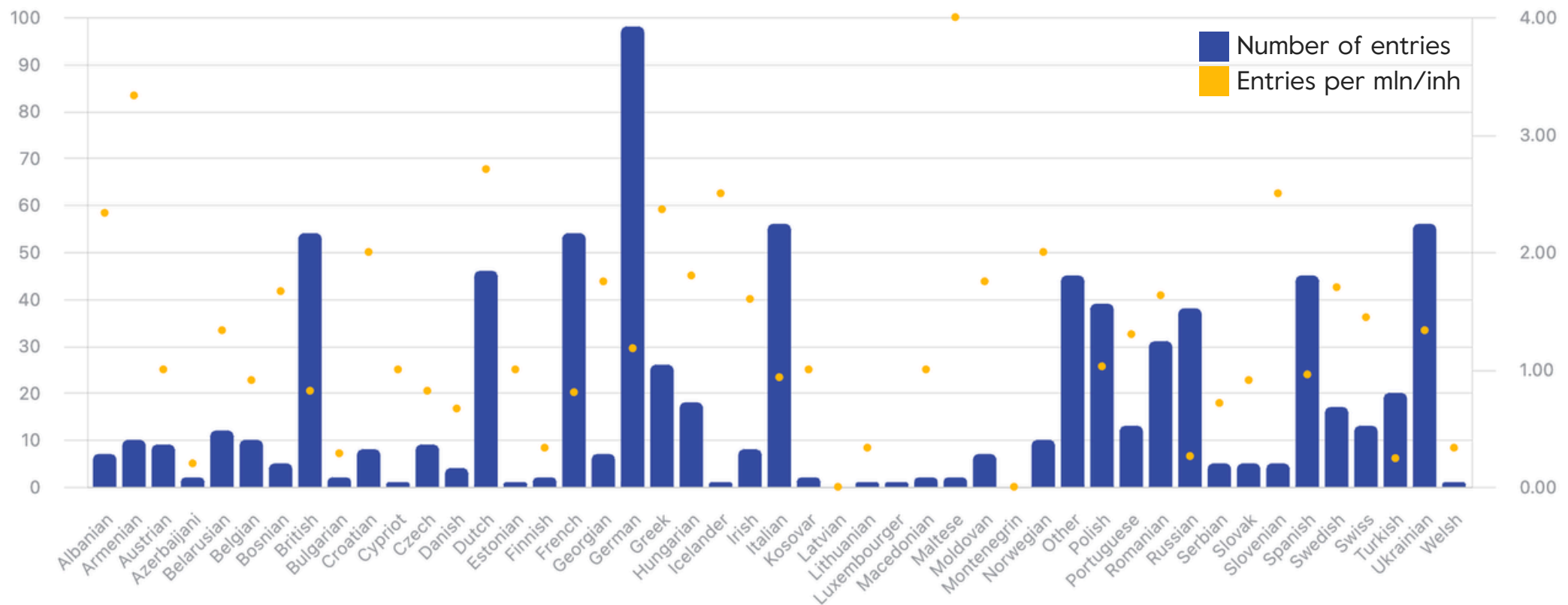
In the evening, we welcomed over 200 guests for a beautiful **live journalism performance** about Lisbon by Mensagem de Lisboa. Afterwards, we honoured the Winners and Runners-up of our 2026 season and celebrated our 80+ Nominees present this year. A truly memorable day, and **the highlight of our season!**

We have already spoken to **IJF Perugia** about the continuation of our partnership and we are excited to reveal that we will be announcing our **Shortlist in Perugia again in 2027**.

Speaking of next season, this will be a special one: we will celebrate **15 years of the European Press Prize!**

European Press Prize 2026 in numbers

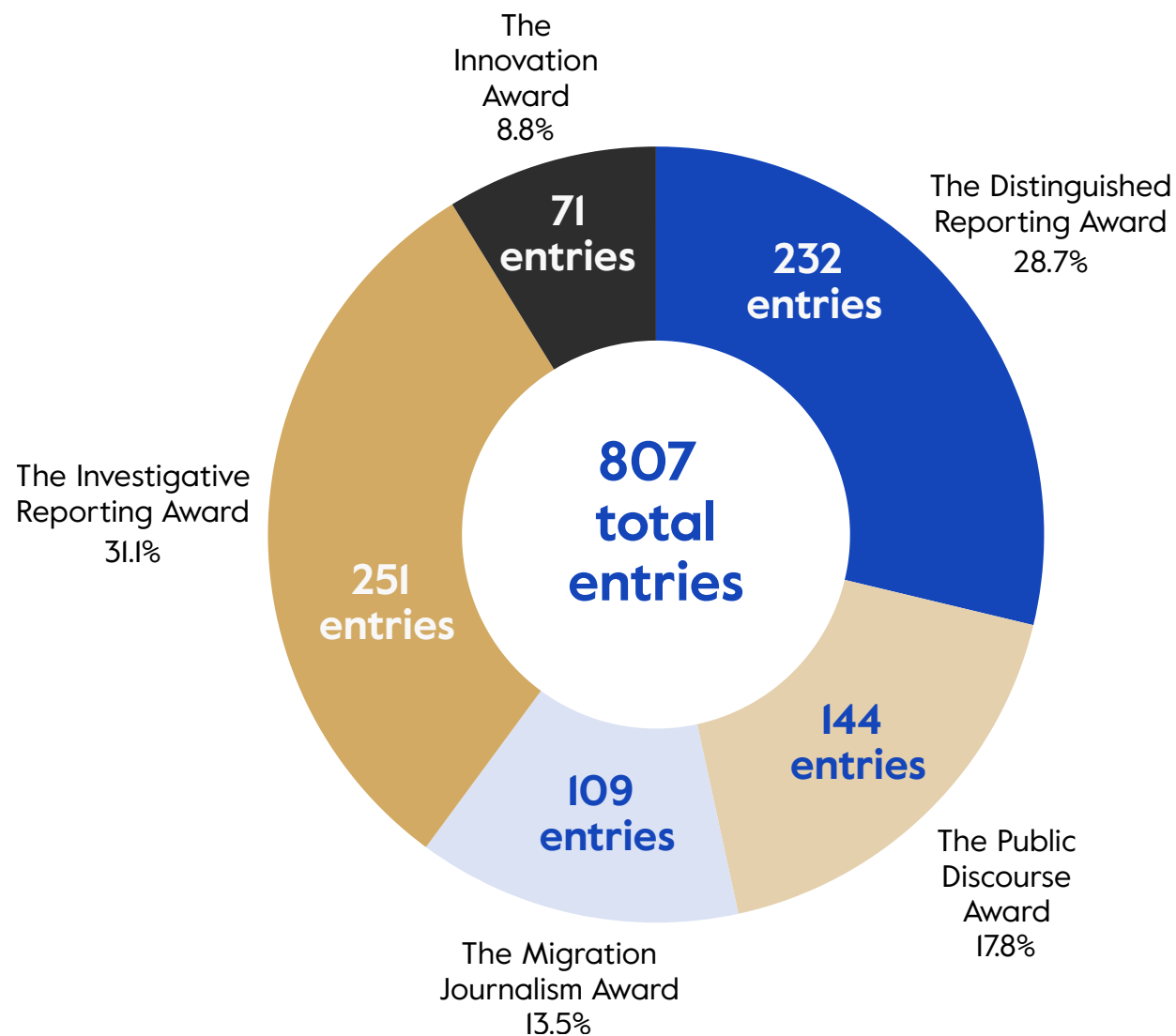
Nationalities of submitting journalists



The graph above illustrates an overview of the diversity in nationalities of our 2026 entrants.

European Press Prize 2026 in numbers

Entries per Category



The graph above illustrates the breakdown of the 2026 entries per Award Category.

European Press Prize 2026 in numbers

over **800** entries
more than **44** countries
at least **45** nationalities
35 different languages

25 shortlisted projects
almost **100** outlets
6 collaborations
13 nationalities in single projects

Our judging procedure

Our elaborate judging procedure consists of four separate rounds of judging – three rounds for our Preparatory Committee (which this year consisted of 22 members who read 28 languages) and a final round for our Panel of Judges (five members from five countries). During each round, our judging bodies take our category criteria into consideration while engaging in in-depth conversations to make sure to level the playing field as much as possible for all submissions.

1 Longlist Meetings

In the first round of judging, PrepCom members mostly read submissions in their original project language, providing national and regional contexts on work from their respective countries/regions. As of this judging season, applicants were asked to supply the English (AI) translation to distribute some projects across the committee. After this first round, the PrepCom decides on a first Longlist in a series of meetings. This Longlist is made up of around 150 projects.

2 Category Meetings

In the second phase of assessing, PrepCom members are divided into groups per Award Category and all members in a category group read the same articles within that category. The division is made based on areas of expertise of PrepCom members and personal preferences. In their second rounds of meetings in February, the Preparatory Committee selects a Shortlist of around 10 projects per Award Category to form a preliminary Shortlist.

3 The Shortlist Meeting

A third round – and the final round for our Preparatory Committee – of assessing then takes place: during an in-person meeting that lasts a full day, the PrepCom decides on the Shortlist. In this meeting, the PrepCom narrows the contenders in all categories down by half to five projects per category, which then make up our official Shortlist. Additionally, the Preparatory Committee discusses their suggestions for the Special Award and writes a recommendation to the Judges.

4 Judges Meeting

Finally, the work of the PrepCom is over and the Shortlist is communicated to the Panel of Judges. The Panel of Judges makes the final selection and decides on Winners and Runners-up in all five categories. The Panel of Judges also chooses the recipient of the Special Award, after consideration of potential suggestions from the Preparatory Committee's side. Up next: the Winners and Runners-up will be announced during the annual Award Ceremony.

2026 Preparatory Committee



From left to right, by first names in alphabetical order:

Cristian Lupşa (Chair) (RO), Agnieszka Wądołowska (PL), Cláudia Marques Santos (PT), Daniele Grasso (IT), Daria Badior (UA), Denis Džidić (BA), Gaby Khazalová (CZ), Hendrik Lehmann (DE), Jacopo Ottaviani (IT), Juliette Garside (UK), Just Vervaart (NL), Lucila Rodríguez-Alarcón (ES), Mathias Friis (DK), Nabeelah Shabbir (UK), Oleg Khomenok (UA), Preethi Nallu (IN), Prune Antoine (FR), Şebnem Arsu (TR), Slawek Blich (PL), Tanja Stelzer (DE), Veronika Munk (HU), and Winny de Jong (NL).

A reflection on the PrepCom's 2026 judging process

by Cristian Lupşa, Chair of the Preparatory Committee

What stood out once again this year is the incredible **quality of journalism** being produced all around Europe, in newsrooms large and small, **often under pressure and with limited resources**. This continues to be astounding. It was also a particularly strong year for the PrepCom itself. We rotated members and **brought in new colleagues who added energy, attentiveness, and different ways of reading and evaluating stories**. We also formalised more criteria for each category, and spelled them out more clearly. While much of the spirit of the European Press Prize still lies in the conversations we have together, those conversations became even richer because they were grounded in a more complex way of evaluating the work. Everyone came prepared, everyone had done the reading, and that allowed us to spend our time truly engaging with the stories.

What emerges from this process is, again, **a picture of a profession that continues to do essential work in difficult conditions**. The range of entries shows that **all stories have a place here**: from large, cross-border collaborations to deeply reported local pieces that matter enormously to the communities they serve. Across categories, we keep returning to the same **core questions: is this a well-told story, is it relevant, does it have impact?** Innovation or data alone are not enough without clarity, structure, and a strong connection to the reader. And we are increasingly attentive to how that connection actually happens: how stories are experienced on a phone, how accessible and understandable they are, how they meet readers where they are.

In terms of **themes**, this year's entries also say something important about the **pressures shaping Europe** and the role journalism continues to play in making sense of them. **Environmental stories** were strikingly present – from climate migration to the use and abuse of natural resources – reminding us that even if climate coverage may feel less visible in some parts of the media, it remains urgent and deeply reported. **War** is also ever-present, with careful, diligent reporting on both Gaza and Ukraine, often carried out in the face of fatigue, risk, and an emotional toll. What these stories show is that **journalism still holds space for complexity, for context, and for human experience**, and remains a source of understanding, accountability, and, in many ways, hope.



Photo: Bárbara Monteiro

What it actually takes to judge European journalism

Every year, before the European Press Prize Shortlist is announced, something less visible happens. A group of journalists and media professionals from across Europe spends months reading. Hundreds of submissions, in dozens of languages, covering stories from war zones, courtrooms, hospital wards, and street corners. They argue, reconsider, and argue again. Then they decide.



Ahead of the 2026 Shortlist announcement, we asked members of our Preparatory Committee to share what the judging process actually looks like from the inside. What they look for. Where the hard calls are. What separates a powerful story from a piece of excellent journalism. Their answers say as much about the state of European journalism as anything on the Shortlist itself.

All stories have a chance

The European Press Prize receives submissions from newsrooms of every size, in every corner of Europe. One of the things that makes the judging process distinct is that scale is not a criterion. Cristian Lupşa, Chair of the Preparatory Committee, puts it plainly: “All stories have a chance in this competition. And by that I mean stories from large outlets, small outlets, big international cross-border collaborations, but also poignant, well-written, and relevant stories that are of local importance to the place they’re told in. That came up again and again in the discussions and it will be something visible in the Shortlist, too.”

Emotional impact is not the same as journalistic excellence

Şebnem Arsu, a member of the Preparatory Committee, describes how she navigates that distinction: “Figures and statistics can be a dazzler but only up to a certain point. Data should serve to enhance a story, not replace it. I seek a balanced narrative that weaves rich datasets together with a strong human perspective. Achieving such balance requires a deliberate effort on the side of the journalists, constantly reminding themselves why their story mattered to the readership.”

Reading across languages and cultures

Veronika Munk, director of innovation at Denník N and a PrepCom member, has thought carefully about how to judge fairly across linguistic borders: “Great journalism has a specific heartbeat that translation cannot quiet. To judge fairly across cultures, I focus on structural integrity: does the narrative architecture hold up? I look at how the journalist handles evidence, the pacing of the reveals, and the logic of the argument. Good thinking is universal.”

The full text with more deliberations from our 2026 PrepCom [can be found here](#).

“My job is mostly like being a coal miner underground. I dig away in my own hole but never get to see those digging just as hard in the other shafts around me. So it was great to meet so many other colleagues from all over the place for a change. I’m sure some of these contacts will lead to fruitful collaborations.”

- Michael O’Farrell, Winner of the 2026 Investigative Reporting Award



Photo: Bárbara Monteiro

“You heard it here first” at IJF Perugia 2026

At this year’s International Journalism Festival in Perugia, we held a star-studded panel in line with our updated strategy (view more on [page 6](#)) before the annual Shortlist announcement. Under the title “You heard it here first: the judges of the European Press Prize on where the profession is headed” we put our esteemed judges front and centre: Clara Jiménez Cruz and Paul Radu from our Panel of Judges, and Cristian Lupşa and Veronika Munk from our PrepCom. As members of the two judging bodies of the European Press Prize, and as people whose perspectives carry real weight in conversations about journalism, our panel offered timely reflections and new ideas about the state of the profession and where it's headed.

Moderated by our Executive Director, Jennifer Athanasiou-Prins, the panel opened with a question about pressure: [is journalism adapting fast enough to the forces pulling at it from all sides?](#)

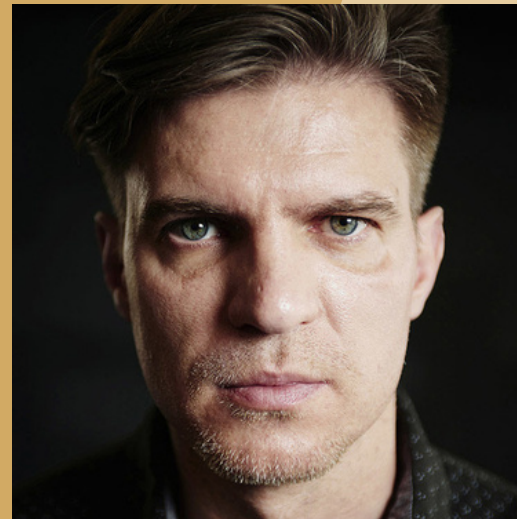
Our four panelists had different, but not inconsolable answers about this. Cristian would like to see journalism optimising for [solidarity and sharing](#) rather than survival, while Veronika – based on her experience of working in Hungary – said sticking to the [core values of journalism](#) is the way to go. Paul added that journalism’s main problem these days is [reach; to connect investigative reporting to film, television, gaming](#), to inspire more people to become investigators and to build infrastructure others can use. Finally, Clara shed light on her angle as a [fact-checker](#) and stated that journalism may need to do [more advocacy](#), to work with prosecutors and legislators in ways that the profession has traditionally resisted.

The second part of the conversation focused on the backbone of the European Press Prize: fair judging. As journalism changes, [who decides what good journalism looks like?](#) And what does that mean for how we judge it? Answers here deliberated on cultural [adaptability](#), (platform) [flexibility](#), [innovation](#), and what the [back-end](#) in journalism is.

A more detailed summary on the panel can be read in [this blog post published on the panel](#), while the complete panel can also still be watched [here](#).



2026 Panel of Judges



From left to right:
Natalie Nougayrède (Chair) (FR), Can Dündar (TR), Clara Jiménez Cruz (ES),
Natalia Antelava (GE), and Paul Radu (RO).

2026 Judges Meeting in Perugia

For the fifth consecutive year, our time at the IJF 2026 ended with the most important part of our trip to Perugia: the **Judges Meeting**. This year, all Judges were present in person.

Each Award Category – and its five shortlisted works – was discussed in detail. As in previous years, some categories required more discussion than others. After four hours of deliberation, the Judges ultimately reached an agreement on the **2026 Winners and Runners-up**. They also decided on a **Special Award**, which was selected from the 25 shortlisted works this year as opposed to a separate recommendation from the PrepCom. After a final deliberation on bigger picture developments and the general judging procedure, the Judges closed the 2026 judging season.

After six years of chairing of the Panel of Judges by Alan Rusbridger, this year's Panel saw **a new Chair: Natalie Nougayrède**. A seasoned French journalist now residing in Ukraine, she supports civil society initiatives in Europe's eastern regions. She is a former editor-in-chief of Le Monde and worked at The Guardian. She was a reporter in Central Europe, Ukraine, the Caucasus, and Russia, and was Le Monde's diplomatic correspondent.

“Choosing the winning pieces is both difficult and exciting, and what I value most is that it is a truly collective endeavour, with each Jury member bringing their own perspective and sensibility to the discussion. What makes the selection process especially valuable is the way it brings together a wide range of expertise, experience, and passion from across Europe.”

— Natalie Nougayrède

European Press Prize Lisbon 2026



European Press Prize Lisbon 2026

Our 14th edition of the European Press Prize in Lisbon boasted plenty of **records**: we welcomed **most Nominees** (around 80), hosted our **biggest day programme** (with over 100 participants), and had **more than 200 attendees** for our evening programme!

Thanks to our wonderful **local partner**, the **Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation**, the day was spent in one of Lisbon's most impressive buildings. The Foundation sits in a brutalist building surrounded by a stunning garden, which made for a unique location for our 2026 edition.

This year, we decided to centre our day programme around a theme that established itself through conclusion from our 2026 judging procedure. With '**Collective conscience: A case for the human perspective**', journalists from across Europe gathered to share experiences, challenge assumptions, and reflect on the responsibilities their work carries in a time of political uncertainty, technological change, and growing pressure on public trust. During four programme elements, **18 of our 2026 Nominees** and our 2024 Nominee Ana Patrícia Silva from Portugal shared their experiences: with a live **journalism performance** about a cross-border investigation decades in the making, a **panel** on how journalists collaborate across different scales and formats, a **case study** exploring the relationship between technology and human creativity, and **talks** which confronted the human toll of some of the most difficult stories of our time. An in-depth summary of our day programme can be [read here](#).



Photo: Bárbara Monteiro

Our evening programme started with a beautiful **live journalism journey** by **Mensagem de Lisboa** through Lisbon's history, flavour and some of the challenges the city faces. Led by **Catarina Carvalho**, six Lisbonans shared their experiences with living in a rapidly changing city and country; through poems, talks, and music. What a start to the evening!

Afterwards, our 2026 Award ceremony kicked off, **moderated** brilliantly by local journalist **Vânia Maia**, who infected the room with her energy and enthusiasm. This year's **keynote** was held by no other than **Veronika Munk**, who shared what it is like to be a Hungarian journalist in this day and age. You can read an excerpt of her impressive speech [on page 24](#). The awarding of our **2026 Winners and Runners-up** followed, and we rounded off a truly unforgettable evening with bites and drinks under the roof of Gulbenkian's modern art museum.

The European Press Prize 2026 Winners



Michael O'Farrell,
The Investigative Reporting Award



Mauf Effting & Willem Feenstra,
The Distinguished Reporting Award



Ángela Bernardo, María Álvarez del Vayo, Carmen Torrecillas, & Adrián Maqueda, The Innovation Award



Kerstin Kohleberg,
The Public Discourse Award



The Unaccompanied Minors team,
The Migration Journalism Award

For our 2026 season, we received **more than 800 entries**. The shortlist of this year was made up of projects from **over 100 different media outlets**. Across categories and countries, this year's Shortlist was a portrait of institutions failing the people they exist to protect and of the journalists who held them to account. It reflects what we mean by quality journalism: independent, in the public interest, and committed to serving democracy in Europe.

From those 25 outstanding works, the judges selected projects from journalists who, amidst world crises, **refused to look away**: from an investigative reporter who spent **decades pursuing a single story** to a team documenting what a war looks like **through the eyes of the doctors treating its youngest victims**. From uncovering the harrowing conditions **unaccompanied migrant children** are forced to sleep, to ex-

Photos: Bárbara Monteiro



Barbara Matejčić,
The Special Award

posing that a **public health cancer-detection algorithm** missed one in three melanomas. From shedding light on the **similarities between US and German far-right voters** to revisiting questions and controversies surrounding **a key execution photograph** from the Bosnian war in 1993.

What **connects** these projects is not their method or their subject matter but **what they were willing to do**: look closely, verify rigorously, and publish regardless. These pieces are grounded in the human experience, told with care and thoughtfulness.

The full 2026 Shortlist can be found [here](#). The photos above include links to the corresponding articles.

The aftermovie of the Award Ceremony can be watched [via this link](#).

Veronika Munk at the European Press Prize 2026



At this year's European Press Prize, we had the honour to listen to Veronika Munk, PrepCom member and Director of Innovation and New Markets at Denník N, as she delivered the evening's keynote. Being from Hungary, her speech revolved around what it means to work in countries where political power increasingly sees independent reporting as an obstacle rather than a public service. Here is an excerpt of her inspiring keynote:

I grew up and live in Hungary. Until my teenage years, I lived in a country where, under the communist regime, the idea of receiving information from a free press simply did not exist. Perhaps that is why, and because I was blessed with a somewhat stronger sense of justice than average, it felt completely natural to me that as an adult I wanted to be where things happen, to understand how the world works. (...)

In recent years, I have been working in Slovakia. The situation there is not yet as severe as it became in Hungary, but the pattern feels familiar. The Prime Minister labels journalists and newsrooms as enemies – including the newsroom where I work – while simultaneously seeking to reshape public media for political purposes. And yet, they have not succeeded in silencing critical voices or quality journalism. (...)

May the courage of independent journalists in these countries serve as an example across our entire continent. Hungary and Slovakia are not the first examples in history to demonstrate that when power seeks to silence criticism, excellent journalism still finds a way forward. It finds new platforms. It finds new formats. And it finds the people who need it. Our profession has a simple but essential task: to show reality. Independent journalism is not important because it can always change the course of history. It is important because it documents history. It preserves facts. It bears witness to what is happening around us. (...)

We often speak these days about journalistic resilience. But the truth is – and I say this from personal experience – that journalists do not actually want to be resilient. We want to write good stories. We want to ask important questions. To uncover facts. To explain. To make complex realities understandable and engaging. And perhaps that is why I believe that when we talk about resilience, we are not really talking about heroism. We are not talking about whether we can survive one more attack, one more smear campaign, one more financial crisis. Resilience is something quieter than that.

All Hands on Deck Meeting

Fall 2025

At the beginning of the 2026 season, we swapped out our annual Community Event at iMedD's Forum for something more urgent; a day-long Partners & Peers meeting titled '[All Hands on Deck](#)'. The reason for this meeting was clear: To guarantee the long-term sustainability and wellbeing of our organisation and to define a shared horizon.

Due to iMedD's generous support, we were able to [gather our Board, funding Partners, and parts of our judging bodies](#) on 25 September at the 2026 iMedD International Journalism Forum. The meeting was [facilitated](#) by the wonderful [Aylin Özalp](#), a former Bureau member of the European Press Prize.

Initially, the meeting was kicked off by underlining the urgency of a sustainable financial future for the European Press Prize. This was done by an [in-depth presentation of the current state of affairs of the organisation](#), and thereof resulting needs.

Afterwards, all attendees were invited to brainstorm and produce [concrete input](#) to secure the financial future of the organisation. Through different stations within the room, we gathered [funding](#) leads, received [fundraising expertise](#), discussed ideas for the [diversification](#) of funding, and received offers of [in-kind support](#) by the attendees.

At the end of the day, participants had concrete commitments to follow-up on, and the room showed a [shared understanding that the European Press Prize is as urgent and needed now as it was in its founding year](#).

Partners & Peers Meeting

Lisbon 2026

The Partners & Peers Meeting was established to give our Partner organisations and members of our judging bodies a dedicated space to share input and advice on the general direction and development of the European Press Prize. During the in-person edition around our annual event, the Bureau also provides an update on the organisation's development and the progress of the running season. Our Partners' and Peers' insights are essential in shaping the future of our organisation, and the agenda for the meeting is designed to ensure that their input guides our next steps.

Over the past months, the Bureau and Board have been having conversations around the potential development of an internal AI policy; covering when and how AI use is appropriate across all levels of our organisation. As this is a current topic of conversation for the organisation, our gathering in Lisbon felt like a natural moment to solicit our Partners' and Peers' input and advice on this topic.

After some editions of the Partners & Peers Meeting, we have gained much from bringing together representatives from our different organisational bodies around a shared agenda. At the same time, these experiences have also shown us that certain topics lend themselves better to more focused conversations within smaller, more targeted groups. With this in mind, we will explore a new format for future editions. One that allows each group of representatives to engage more deeply with the subjects most relevant to their role, and to contribute most meaningfully to the organisation's direction.

Social media overview

This year's communications at the European Press Prize came with notable changes to the team.

Jordan Higgins, who had been a great asset to our team, left the organisation. In October, during the entries season, Olga Komarova stepped into the role, taking on the main task of developing our communications strategy and working on the general outreach.

To support our written outputs around the announcement of the Shortlist, and in preparation for Lisbon 2026, we also brought Deniz Gulsoken on board. Her contribution was a valuable addition to the team during a particularly busy stretch of the year.

With this new setup in place, we head into the next chapter of the Prize's communications with a clearer strategy and strong support across social output.

Social Media Followers

	2024	2025	2026
	3,804	4,135	4,833
	1,725	2,597	3,672
	-	542	666
	12,300	12,286	12,165
	5,849	-	-

On Instagram, views **reached 295.3K** this year, with reach up 108.4% to 71.4K and content interactions **doubling** to 7.6K. This growth was driven by a richer content mix – interactive carousels, reels, a live Q&A, and engaging graphics – including coverage of our 2026 Shortlist and Winners announcements, which consistently outperformed static content.

Instagram and LinkedIn both saw follower growth, reinforcing their position as our **strongest channels**, with LinkedIn continuing the momentum it built in 2025 through consistent posting. Bluesky kept growing steadily too, helped by ongoing interaction with our Laureates and Community members, though as a **newly emerged platform** it remains behind our top channels. Meanwhile, Facebook continues to see a gradual decline in followers, reflecting our move away from the platform as a priority.



Newsletter Performance

12 newsletters sent
3,416 subscribers
42% average open rate

Website traffic

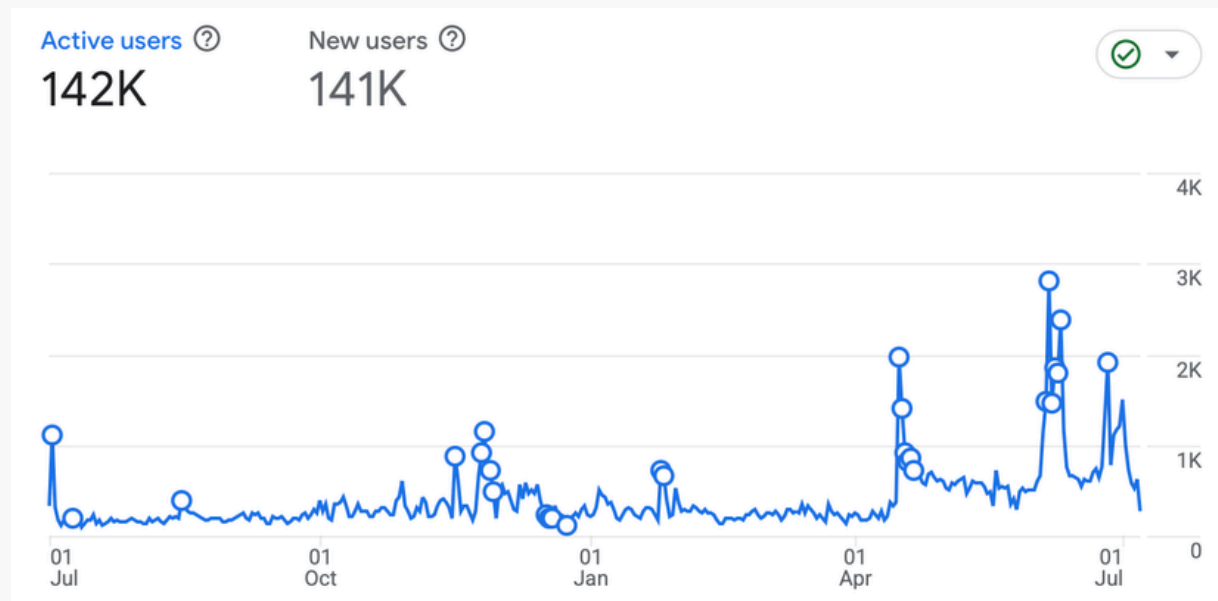
Over the past year, the European Press Prize website attracted 142K active users, generating 231K page views. Traffic remained relatively steady for much of the year, with several pronounced peaks in April, June, and early July, reflecting heightened interest around key announcements, shortlisted projects and award-related milestones.

Direct traffic was the largest acquisition channel, followed by organic search, demonstrating strong brand recognition and continued discoverability through search engines, while organic social also made a meaningful contribution to new visitors. The website's most viewed content centred on the winning projects, the homepage, shortlisted entries, and information for entrants.

Overall, the data suggests that the website successfully engaged a broad international audience throughout the year, with major moments driving significant increases in visitor activity.

	Page title and screen class	Views	Active users
☒	Total	231,048 100% of total	141,895 100% of total
☐	1 What the wounds are telling us - European Press Prize	19,056 (8.25%)	14,009 (9.87%)
☐	2 - European Press Prize	14,597 (6.32%)	14,639 (10.32%)
☐	3 European Press Prize	14,063 (6.09%)	8,592 (6.06%)
☐	4 Putin's Bodyguards Rewarded with Land and Power - European Press Prize	9,416 (4.08%)	8,450 (5.96%)
☐	5 Before you enter - European Press Prize	7,416 (3.21%)	3,987 (2.81%)
☐	6 European Press Prize Shortlist 2026	7,060 (3.06%)	4,533 (3.19%)
☐	7 Categories - European Press Prize	6,127 (2.65%)	3,608 (2.54%)
☐	8 2025 - European Press Prize	3,972 (1.72%)	2,598 (1.83%)
☐	9 Submit your article — European Press Prize 2026 - European Press Prize	3,859 (1.67%)	1,055 (0.74%)
☐	10 Timetable and procedure - European Press Prize	3,500 (1.51%)	2,181 (1.54%)

The five most visited pages over the past year were the 2026 Winning Project, "What the wounds are telling us" (19,056 views), the homepage (14,597 views), the European Press Prize overview page (14,063 views), the 2019 nominated project "Putin's Bodyguards Rewarded with Land and Power" (9,416 views), and the "Before you enter" guide (7,416 views).



Media attention

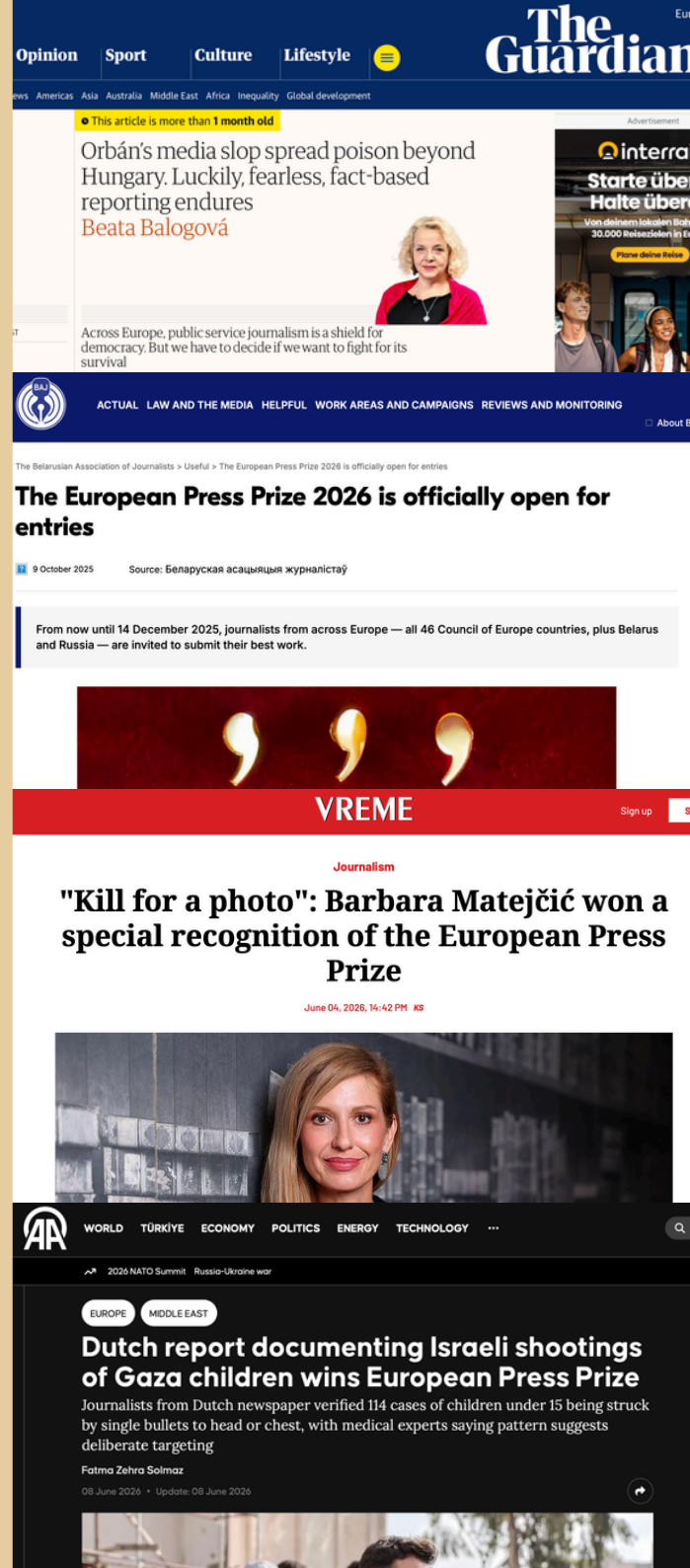
Media coverage of the European Press Prize continued to expand across European outlets, reflecting the relevance of the awarded stories and the wider conversations around press freedom and independent journalism. Coverage ranged from national media highlighting Laureates and their achievements to broader discussions on the role of journalism in society.

Press mentions demonstrate that the Prize continues to provide visibility beyond the Award Ceremony, encouraging further discussion around the issues covered by Laureates and Nominees.

A particularly notable highlight this year was the publication of a commentary by European Press Prize Board Member Beata Balogová in The Guardian. The piece explored the challenges facing independent journalism in Europe and emphasised the continued importance of fearless, fact-based reporting. Its publication in one of the world's leading media outlets provided significant visibility for our Community and the values it represents.

To have a better idea of the press mentions and to be able to conduct thorough analysis of the visibility of the Prize, the communications team will start tracking and collecting press mentions regularly in the upcoming season.

Click the screenshot to read the article.



What comes in

Our total income for 2026 was €340,010, consisting of core funding from Stichting Democratie en Media, Stichting Veronica, Politiken Fonden, Jyllands-Posten Fonden, iMedD, The Scott Trust, and The Irish Times Trust Ltd. We received earmarked financial support for the Migration Journalism Award from the Robert Bosch Foundation. Additional funding came from **Stichting Democratie en Media** for our strategy trajectory and from the **Robert Bosch Foundation** for fundraising consultancy. We have also received earmarked funding from various **Portuguese local partners** for the European Press Prize Lisbon 2026.

The importance of local support

Since the end of our 2023 season we have lost €100,000 in core funding that we haven't been able to supplement yet. This puts us under financial strain. Had we not managed to successfully fundraise specifically for the European Press Prize Lisbon 2026, we would not have been able to host our annual event on the scale on which we have managed to organise it this year, nor to provide financial support to so many of our community members to ensure that as many of them as possible could attend in Lisbon.

Additional (in-kind) support

A special thank you to **Stichting Democratie en Media** for the additional funding for our strategy trajectory as well as their grantee support, to **Stichting Veronica** for very generously offering us an office space in De Balie, and to **iMedD** for hosting us for our Partners & Peers Meeting in Athens in September 2025.

Income 2026 season	Amount
Stichting Democratie en Media ¹	€125,410
Stichting Veronica	€80,000
Politiken Fonden ²	€27,500
Jyllands-Posten Fonden ²	€27,500
iMedD ³	n/a
The Scott Trust	€15,000
The Irish Times Trust Ltd.	€5,000
Robert Bosch Foundation (earmarked) ⁴	€43,100
Local Lisbon 2026 funding (earmarked) ⁵	€16,500
Reserve balance	€31,800
Total	€371,810

¹ Additional earmarked support of €25,410 for strategy trajectory

² Additional €2,500 from both Politiken and Jyllands-Posten Fonden for fundraising trajectory and development

³ Due to a change in payment schedule, iMedD's contribution has been allocated to our 2027 season

⁴ Additional earmarked support of ~€16,000 for fundraising consultancy and €5,500 reserves from last season

⁵ Local Lisbon 2026 support came from the Bartholomäus-Brüderschaft, the Embassy of the Netherlands in Lisbon, Turismo de Lisboa, Centro de Informação Europa Criativa and Universidade Lusófona

What goes out

Our financial book year runs from 1 July to 30 June. During the 2026 season, we employed two Bureau members, and worked with different freelancers. Total personnel costs and dedicated freelance costs related to the Bureaus operations amounted to €147,620. These costs have been classified under miscellaneous budget categories as illustrated in the realisation for 2025/26. Some of the biggest costs in our organisation, related to the bigger amounts realised per budget category, are:

Fundraising and development: Because of dedicated earmarked funding to spend on our strategy trajectory as well as on a fundraising consultant, expenses for this budget category have increased significantly this season.

Our six awards, worth €10,000 each. Five set categories and one Special Award chosen by our PrepCom and Judges.

Supporting bodies: PrepCom, Panel of Judges, Board, and Bureau. These are the bodies that make the important decisions and are invaluable to the organisation's core operations. We try to support all of them as much and as well as we can. Part of the travel costs for the members of our judging bodies are also allocated here.

Our annual event, where we invite Nominees, present the Winners and Runners-up, and most importantly: facilitate exchange between our community members. We combine this with our Partners & Peers Meeting, during which the overall direction and development of the organisation are discussed. We managed to secure earmarked, local funding and therefore could increase expenses related to the European Press Prize Lisbon 2026.

Overhead: HR, financial administration, organisational improvement operations and legal administration, and governance fall within this category.

Communications: Communication remains central to our work. The lower realisation for the 2026 season is the result of a budget-driven shift from a salaried Bureau member to freelance support.

We need to prioritise fundraising in the year ahead. We have a **tight budget** as we have not been able to replace lost funding yet. In order to grow and further professionalise, we should aim for an annual budget of approximately €600,000. In order to take our organisation to this next step, we need to diversify our income – which is what we will focus on starting our 2027 season.

Budget category	Realisation 2025/26
Supporting bodies	€58,250
Overhead	€30,286
Communications	€31,743
Prizes	€60,000
Translations	€5,493
Annual event	€62,440
Travel and lodging	€13,238
Website and design	€1,606
Office	€10,087
PR	€0
Fundraising and development	€73,227
Total	€346,370



When judging I am looking for **work that stands out**. Either through fine writing, or a subject that feels relevant, urgent or surprising, or a powerful narrative. Hopefully all three. But above all, I look for **reading that draws me in and absorbs me**, for stories I want to share and retell.”

— Juliette Garside, PrepCom member and European financial affairs editor at the Guardian about the judging process

What will we further develop moving forward?

Overall operations

Bureau:

Stabilising the Bureau's overall activities, in particular by allocating more hours to communications. Initially on a freelance basis, but in the longer term, once fundraising efforts begin to bear fruit, by hiring a third Bureau member.

Judging process:

Some big changes ahead with a focus on becoming platform neutral, which will be implemented step-by-step starting with Investigative Reporting for the 2027 season.

Entries:

A strong focus on communicating the new changes (see above) and focusing on establishing partnerships that complement those changes.

Events:

Starting to implement a recurring rotating scheme for our annual event, securing trusted local partners in 3 or 4 locations.

Communications

Communications strategy:

We established a new communications strategy, giving us a clearer framework to prioritise our goals and reach our audiences more effectively. For 2027, the strategy sets two priorities: establishing an Ambassadors programme, and making sure everyone speaking on behalf of the Prize tells the same story, guided by a shared reference for all stakeholders.

Offline visibility:

We should be invited to more events, and start working on thought leadership. We are still being invited to the same events. We need to increase our visibility in other events and start being considered a credible voice that adds value.

PR:

Limited resources, planning, and preparation still holds back our PR efforts. With our new communications strategy now in place, we're better positioned to attract relevant figures and secure stronger press coverage.

Governance

Funds:

We couldn't prioritise fundraising as much as we wanted during the 2026 season due to a lack of capacity. With an updated fundraising strategy and support in place, we will prioritise fundraising from the early start of our 2027 season.

Governance code:

Further building a robust governance structure is something that we will actively work towards, culminating in a public Good Governance Code that includes our judging procedure and ethics handbook, guiding principles, code of conduct, an ethical funding policy, as well as other internal policies (e.g. AI).

Partnerships:

We will endeavour to further solidify our (new and existing) partnerships more effectively, e.g. by drawing up memorandums of understanding.

Thank you

We would like to take the opportunity to thank a few people. These are some of the people whose time and brilliance we need and lean on and who made our amazing 2026 season possible.

To our Board, thank you to **Nienke Venema** for being a hands-on Chairperson, and for being a valuable sparring partner for Jennifer and always eager to think along. To **Jens Bruun**, for your continuous support. To **Maike Olij** for your responsiveness and willingness to step in when needed. Thank you **Beata Balogová** for your listening ear and always being available for advice. To **Ronald Ockhuysen** for your enthusiasm and words of support. And lastly, to **Rasmus Kleis Nielsen**, for asking the right questions and for sharing your expertise with us.

A special thank you goes out to **Majka Nemcova**, whom we have said goodbye to in February. Thank you Majka for your unwavering support, and for being such an invaluable driving force behind the European Press Prize Prague 2024.

To our PrepCom, thank you to **Cristian Lupsa** for your flawless continued chairmanship and supporting us throughout with brainstorming whenever needed – we cannot imagine the Press Prize without you.

Agnieszka Wądołowska for your vocal contributions to our PrepCom. **Cláudia Marques Santos** for joining on short notice and for your keen reflections. **Daniele Grasso** for bringing fresh perspectives and a calming presence to our meetings. **Daria Badior** for not shying away to speak up and ask the uncomfortable questions. **Denis Džidić** for exploring potential partnerships. **Gaby Khazalová** for always trying to let people see things from a different perspective. **Hendrik Lehmann** for your openness to discuss perspectives that aren't your own. **Jacopo Ottaviani** for your long-term commitment. **Juliette Garside** for verbalising your conclusions – and general reflections – beautifully. **Just Vervaart** for making sure that fairness is front and centre throughout the judging. **Lucila Rodríguez-Alarcón** for being the biggest cheerleader of the Prize. **Mathias Friis** for your eagerness to think along strategically. **Nabeelah Shabbir** for your thoroughness, spirit and humour. **Oleg Khomenok** for being with us every step of the way. **Preethi Nallu** for connecting to calls in the midst of crises. **Prune Antoine** for sparking meaningful discussions and digging deeper. **Şebnem Arsu** for still being as engaged in your eighth year as your first. **Slawek Blich** for advocating tirelessly for otherwise overlooked work. **Tanja Stelzer** for your honest reflections and flexibility. **Veronika Munk** for being as brilliant of a keynote speaker as a PrepCom member. **Winny de Jong** for being of great help when we had to make arrangements in Amsterdam on short notice.

Thank you

To our Judges, thank you to **Natalie Nougayrède** for taking up crazy train journeys to be with us and contribute constructively as our Chairperson. **Can Dündar** for remaining to be passionate about your picks. **Clara Jiménez Cruz** for speaking up and keeping us on our toes. To **Natalia Antelava** for not shying away from important discussions. And to **Paul Radu** for being an engaged and thoughtful member – both in the Jury meeting and beyond.

A big thank you to two of our funding Partners for additional in-kind support: **Stichting Veronica** for offering us a place to work from, and **Stichting Democratie en Media** for hosting our PrepCom.

Muito obrigada to **Elisabete Caramelo**, **Inês Rapazote** and **Paulo Madruga** from **Fundação Calouste Gulbenkian** who made the European Press Prize Lisbon 2026 an unforgettable one – your warmth and expertise really made a difference. A big thank you also to **all speakers** that contributed to our Lisbon programme. To **Catarina Carvalho** for being an invaluable local connection in Lisbon and for a breathtaking opening performance.

Thank you to **Vânia Maia** for moderating the Ceremony flawlessly, your passion and enthusiasm are contagious. **Bárbara Monteiro** for a wonderful collaboration and gorgeous visual material.



Photo: Bárbara Monteiro

Thank you **Olga Komarova** for going above and beyond with Communications: both strategically and visually – and being a joy to work with. And thank you, **Shalini Arias**, for graciously volunteering.

And last but definitely not least, a special thank you to **all our (funding) Partners** – without whom the Press Prize wouldn't have been possible. Thank you for honouring journalism together with us. Thank you for being there, for supporting us in visible and less visible ways; for helping us, guiding us, and steering us in the right direction.

We had a great season,
Jennifer & Ella



SAVE THE DATES

Deadline for entries 10 December 2026

Shortlist announcement 14-17 April 2027 (IJF Perugia)

European Press Prize 2027 TBA

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