

European
Press
Prize

JURY
REPORT
2026

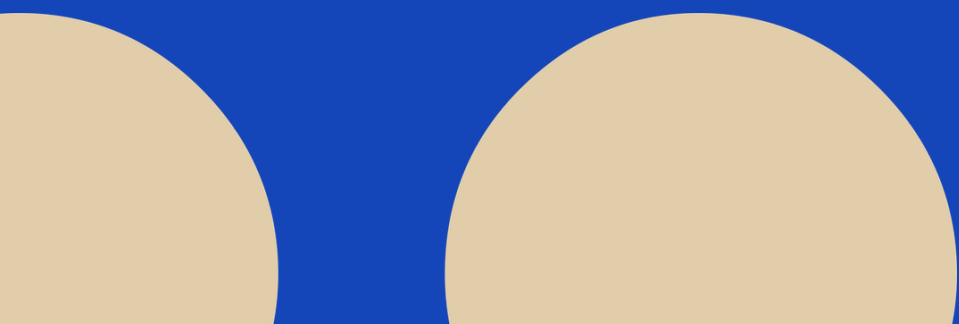


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Our Judging Procedure

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 26 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 ~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 of assessing then takes place: during an in-person meeting, the PrepCom decides on the Shortlist. In this meeting, the PrepCom narrows the contenders in all categories down to five projects per category. Additionally, the Preparatory Committee may suggest recipients of the Special Award 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. The Winners and Runners-up are announced during the annual Award Ceremony.

The 2026 Preparatory Committee

“This year’s winners reflect something we kept returning to throughout the judging process: journalism’s ability to make difficult realities understandable, human, and impossible to ignore. Many of the shortlisted stories open complicated conversations, reveal injustices that demand attention, and uphold the principles of public service journalism. They do so often under difficult conditions and with limited resources.”

— **Cristian Lupşa**

Chair of the European Press Prize 2026 Preparatory Committee

This year’s European Press Prize Preparatory Committee consisted of Cristian Lupşa, Agnieszka Wądołowska, Cláudia Marques Santos, Daniele Grasso, Daria Badior, Denis Džidić, Gaby Khazalová, Hendrik Lehmann, Jacopo Ottanviani, Juliette Garside, Just Vervaart,



Lucila Rodríguez-Alarcón, Mathias Friis, Nabeelah Shabbir, Oleg Khomenok, Preethi Nallu, Prune Antoine, Şebnem Arsu, Slawek Blich, Tanja Stelzer, Veronika Munk, and Winny de Jong.

“What also continues to matter deeply to us is the breadth of work that finds a place here, from major cross-border collaborations to local reporting that can profoundly shape the communities it serves. Reading hundreds of stories is not easy work, but it remains one of the most rewarding parts of being in the PrepCom, because it reminds us, year after year, of the care, rigor, and humanity that still exist in this profession.”

— **Cristian Lupşa**

The 2026 Panel of Judges

"This year's Awards offer an inspiring showcase of tenacious and civic-minded reporting, celebrating journalists who dive deep into complex realities and help us connect dots at a time of dizzying shocks and transformations. Many of these pieces are grounded in the human experience, told with care and thoughtfulness. Together, they serve as a reminder of what vibrant, determined journalism can achieve, and of how the European Press Prize can help build a sense of shared awareness across our continent."

— **Natalie Nougayrède**

Chair of the European Press Prize 2026 Panel of Judges

This year's European Press Prize Panel of Judges consisted of Natalie Nougayrède, Can Dündar, Clara Jiménez Cruz, Natalia Antelava, and Paul Radu.



"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 European Press Prize selection process especially valuable is the way it brings together a wide range of expertise, experience, and passion from across the continent."

— **Natalie Nougayrède**

Natalie Nougayrède at the European Press Prize Lisbon 2026

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 and courtrooms and 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, 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, 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](#).

The 2026 Distinguished Reporting Award

WINNER

What the wounds are telling us

Maud Effting & Willem Feenstra
De Volkskrant, the Netherlands



“A damning piece on the horrors of the war in Gaza. Doctors describe treating horrific injuries in appalling conditions, as well as the intentional killing of children. The methodology is transparent, the fact-checking diligent, and the reporting-from-afar is strong, with many sources and a clear moral foundation. An important story.”

“This is not only an impressive piece; it is a historical record. It could serve as judicial evidence before a future international criminal tribunal, should Israel ultimately be prosecuted for crimes against humanity. For me, it is essential journalism: detailed, necessary and impactful.”

“What a powerful, shocking, important piece of journalism! This article lets the facts and accounts of the doctors speak for themselves in all their brutality and the authors refrain from expressing their outrage. They have everything they hear from the doctors double-checked by experts. The professionalism of the journalists is incredibly valuable in this minefield of reporting.”

The 2026 Distinguished Reporting Award

RUNNER-UP

Dying for gold: Who killed the miners of Buffelsfontein?

Liam Taylor

The Economist's 1843, United Kingdom



“A gripping story about illegal gold miners in South Africa and how the government left them to die. Famous gangs seized the mines by force. The mine owners failed to take action to seal the pits. The government delayed rescue efforts. The police deliberately starved the miners and falsely suggested that they could easily leave if they wanted to. A gripping style and an unputdownable read. The scrollytelling used here it is very effective and appropriate, helping the reader to understand.”

“A heartbreaking piece, blending intimacy and context seamlessly. Great reporting and writing. A fantastic story with incredible details that stay with you.”

The 2026 Distinguished Reporting Award

Lost generation: Russia's mephedrone teen crisis

Anastasiia Platonova

BBC News Russian, BBC Eye, International

“The best drugs investigations follow the trail from the production of raw materials through the chemists, dealers and the victims. This investigation delivers, with the added complexity of reporting from within Russia, a region off limits to most European journalists. Platonova worked online from Latvia, building what she says were strong relationships with her protagonists. The writing is vivid, and touching because the main characters – a victim, Olya, and a dealer and producer, Maxim – are so young.”

“The story fully captures the grim reality of drug use in a closed community like Russia. The lead characters are powerful and truly amazing that they were so open to share their experience, including personal diaries. Prison details, the experience with the law enforcement, nightlife, predators chasing teenage girls – they’re all in there, wrapped around a new-age drug community. It’s a chilling, disturbing account with great access.”



The 2026 Distinguished Reporting Award

One day in Gaza

Andrea Backhaus, Bastian Berbner, Jannis Carmesin, Simone Gaul, Constanze Kainz, Alicia Kleer, Mounia Meiborg, Pia Rauschenberger, Marlon Saadi, Helena Schmidt and Annabel Wahba
DIE ZEIT, Germany

“A striking piece built around a powerful narrative device: 24 hours in the lives of people in Gaza. The structure follows the hours of a single day, moving chronologically through the lives of a cybercafé owner, a medical student, and ordinary residents. Notably, the piece derives much of its strength from its refusal to be sentimental. What emerges instead is a sense of necessity, urgency and raw survival instinct: finding food, seeking shelter, staying alive. In a context where the presence of foreign journalists in Gaza is impossible, the reporting methodology is remarkably rigorous.”



“If the Distinguished Reporting Award is ‘for exceptional reporting, telling a story in the best possible way’, then this is definitely it. The journalists keeping in touch with a perfectly selected group of interviewees, faithfully presenting their stories to us. It’s truly deserving of the Shortlist.”

The 2026 Innovation Award

WINNER

Mole or cancer? The algorithm that gets one in three melanomas wrong and erases patients with dark skin

Ángela Bernardo, María Álvarez del Vayo, Carmen Torrecillas, Adrián Maqueda

Civio, Spain



“This is great work which combines innovation and research. It is usually hard to follow a medical investigation and the team here makes it reader friendly, even using popular figures like Ed Sheeran, Taylor Swift, to ground the reader.”

“This project examines an algorithm that misdiagnoses melanomas, sometimes getting one in three cases wrong. It investigates how authorities paid for AI diagnostic tools that can fail, and clearly explains false positives, false negatives, and how to evaluate medical AI. It’s presented in an entertaining and accessible format, showing both the promise and the perils of AI, especially its biases regarding skin color. A strong public service piece and a project that should be on the Shortlist.”

The 2026 Innovation Award

RUNNER-UP

How companies avoid inclusion – and even save money by doing it

Kristina Kobl, Nikolai Prodöhl, Lisa Kreutzer, Emilia Garbsch, Natalie Sablowski, Sabrina Winter, Sabrina Ebitsch & Theodor Ahrens
andererseits, Süddeutsche Zeitung, FragDenStaat, Austria & Germany



“This is my favourite media initiative in Austria, and possibly one of the best in the CEE region, where people with and without disabilities work together on equal footing. They don’t just write about accessibility; they embody it and show that the “expert” doesn’t always have to be a non-disabled white male academic.”

“A story about how people with disabilities are often not hired in Germany, Austria, and other German-speaking countries, as employers prefer to pay into workshops rather than employ them directly. The real innovation lies less in the individual story and more in the platform itself, which features an accessible newsroom created by and for people with disabilities, promoting accessible language and inclusive hiring in journalism. Their voice shapes and frames the content. It’s innovative for the field and offers an important lesson in inclusion that deserves attention.”

The 2026 Innovation Award

The Forever Lobbying Project

Stéphane Horel, Raphaëlle Aubert, Luc Martinon, Sarah Pilz, Daniel Drepper, Catharina Felke, Johannes Edelhoff, Nadja Tausche, Jana Heck, Andrea Hoferichter, Lea Busch, Gianluca Liva, Elisabetta Tola, Marco Boscolo, Anna Violato, Marta Frigerio, Laura Fazzini, Eurydice Bersi, Ana Tudela, Antonio Delgado, Staffan Dahllöf, Zuzana Vlasatá, Tiina Lundell, Rachel Salvidge, Leana Hosea, Maj-Britt Horlacher, Felicitas Flohr, Emilie Rosso, Romane Bonnemé, Emiel Woutersen, Bijou van der Borst, Simon Dequeker, Lisa van der Velden, Jasper Been, Matej Zwitter, Samo Demsar, Daniel Värjö, Aleksandra Pogorzelska, Tarjei Leer-Salvesen, Zeynep Sentek, Craig Shaw, Cemre Demircioglu, Jose Miguel Calatayud, Leopold Salzenstein, Brigitte Alfter,

Le Monde, RTBF, Denik Referendum, Investigative Reporting Denmark, Yle, France télévisions, NDR, WDR, Süddeutsche Zeitung, MIT Technology Review Germany, Reporters United, Radar Magazine, L'Espresso, Facta.eu, Il Bo Live, Lavalibera, Investico, De Groene Amsterdammer, Financieele Dagblad, Arena for Journalism in Europe, Klassekampen, Ostro, Datadista, Sveriges Radio, Dagens ETC, SRF, The Black Sea, The Guardian



“A project on PFAS “forever chemicals” and lobbying at the EU level by chemical and pharmaceutical companies to keep producing them. Coordinated by Le Monde, it represents a long-term collaboration between journalists and academics. The innovation lies primarily in the method and coordination. The story builds on a multi-year investigation and reflects a dogged, sustained pursuit of an important story that deserves recognition.”

“The size of the investigation is mind blowing. The story shows how collective action makes a difference and brings impact. What is the innovation here is the rediscovery of that common cause and action. Additionally, the work they put in to pin down narratives of lobby groups to spread fear mongering through disinformation is highly valuable.”

The 2026 Innovation Award

Inside the everyday Facebook networks where far-right ideas grow

Pamela Duncan, Raphael Hernandez, Elena Morresi, Pablo Gutiérrez, Garry Blight, Lydia McMullan, Robyn Vinter

The Guardian, United Kingdom



“A very neat approach to document how social media outlets like Facebook become the breeding and recruitment platforms of far-right. A notion that we all are familiar with and highly concerned about is well documented here based on an AI based analysis. A fine example of how data journalism intertwines with actual reporting. The writers’ detailed account on data selection and research process supports internet literacy and accountability.”

“A Guardian investigation into the rise of far-right discourse in the UK and how Facebook groups contribute to it. The transparency of the methods stands out, especially the clear explanation of how GPT-4.1 and other AI tools were used, and how accuracy was strengthened when cataloguing AI-derived information. It’s presented in an accessible story about the narratives far-right groups spread on Facebook. Useful, smart, and innovative.”

The 2026 Innovation Award

Looking for love and sex on Tinder, soldiers endanger national security

Dimitri Tokmetzis, Martijn Reuvers, Sebastiaan Brommersma

Follow the Money, the Netherlands



“This is a meticulous investigation that demonstrates how creativity and knowledge of available tools and loopholes can lead anyone – forces of good or evil alike – to the most sensitive information imaginable. The way the material is presented is also remarkable: encyclopaedic in methodologies and investigative intricacies, with a clarity that makes even complex techniques feel almost too easy.”

“I like stories where innovation lies in the methodology used, and this is a perfect example. Journalists created fake profiles on Tinder to show how easy it is to gather information about military personnel, revealing potentially sensitive information. They do so not only in a clever way and with (relatively) simple technologies, but also by constantly taking into account the safety of the military personnel they have encountered in their story.”

The 2026 Investigative Reporting Award

WINNER

The Brother D conspiracy - Exposing an international child abuse cover-up that left children in Africa exposed to a predator for decades

Michael O'Farrell

The Irish Mail on Sunday, Ireland



“This is terrific reporting and investigative journalism at its very finest. It manages to do what the court system did not: it refused to let the story stop at the national borders. While the abuse happened many years ago, I think they have done an impressive job cross-referencing victims’ accounts in order to verify them as far as possible. I also find the lack of anonymous sources impressive. Having grown men in both Ireland and Malawi come forward publicly about their abuse is a strong example of patient and trust-based reporting.”

“The investigation is significant because of its wide impact and historical value; in covering a case where “no African abuse victim had ever before sought recompense for abuse in an Irish court”, and in the newspaper’s role in making sure it helped victims with that.”

The 2026 Investigative Reporting Award

RUNNER-UP

DNA for sale? The untold story of Greece's newborn screening scandal

Christoforos Kasdaglis and Despina Papageorgiou

Reporters United, Efimerida ton Syntakton, Greece



“Wow. This is the kind of investigative journalism that I want to read as a juror. It is a big explosive story that reveals a real scandal, and leads to real change. The piece is well illustrated and important evidence is visually presented.”

“This is a total public interest story! And a great case of trying to ‘follow the money’. It is engaging in its immediacy and I think there is far more nightmare in this kind of story than we can ever know about. This is in my top five.”

“This belongs on the Shortlist. The investigation is perfectly executed, straight to the point, solid and detailed with a narrative grip. The revelations had a massive impact: the withdrawal of the project. That is rare enough in a country where press freedom is sharply threatened. For me, excellent both in relevance, treatment and reach.”

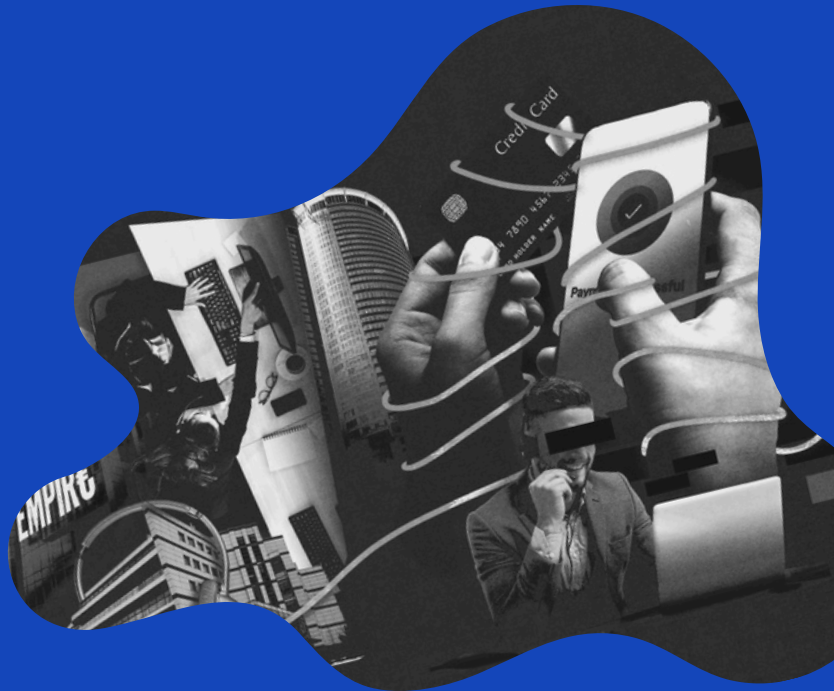
The 2026 Investigative Reporting Award

Scam empire

coordinated by Joachim Dyfvermark, Antonio Baquero, Kelly Bloss, Lawrence Marzouk and 60+ journalists

The Organized Crime and Corruption Reporting Project, SVT, AmaBhungane Centre for Investigative Journalism, Amphora Media, Berlingske, Bird, CBC/Radio-Canada, CIREN, Context.ro, Delfi, Der Spiegel, Der Standard, Follow The Money, Infolibre, Investico, IrpiMedia, iFact, Le Monde, Paper Trail Media, Qurium, Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty Ukrainian service, Re:Baltica, Reporter.lu, Siena.lt, Studio Monitori, De Tijd, The Guardian, Times of Malta, The Governance Monitoring Center, VG, YLE, ZDF

“This one left me speechless. Seamless storytelling, amazing research, collaboration, evidence, visuals, effort. It is a solid yes – both in terms of public interest, journalistic quality and impact, which all was as impressive as the research itself.



“A thrilling topic and incredible research work. It is very well documented and very human driven with a narration that is flawless. The collaborative work is impressive – you understand the whole process of scammers from A to Z. For a reader, it is a real pleasure to read the reconstitution and to understand the challenges faced by the victim and the scammers.”

The 2026 Investigative Reporting Award

Scrap wars: How child labour and conflict feed Turkey steel boom

Sofia Cherici, Andrés Mourenza, Mohammed Bassiki, Doğu Eroğlu
The New Arab, SIRAJ, El País, United Kingdom, France, Spain



“This is a great piece about recycled steel business done in war economies and the human abuses of it. Well structured and told, very human, with good scenes and showing an impressive level of data and research.”

“This is a really good investigation in which the authors expertly explain a complex topic. They use a great combination of OSINT, on the ground reporting and data. It also had an impressive impact: the reporting led Lebanon to ban scrap metal imports. I loved it.”

The 2026 Investigative Reporting Award

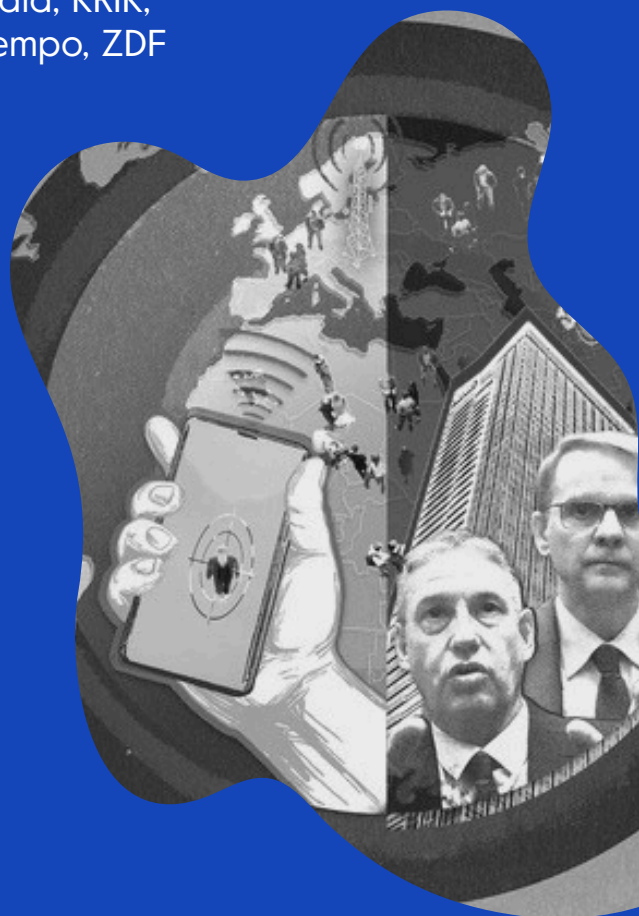
Surveillance secrets

Gabriel Geiger, Emmanuel Freudenthal, Crofton Black, Riccardo Coluccini, Bastian Obermayer, Elisa Simantke, Sophia Bauman, Maria Retter, Hannes Munzinger, Lea Hruschka, Lorenzo Bagnoli, Omer Benjakob, Peter Berger, Christian Nicolai Bjørke, Christo Buschek, Branislav Grković, Bojana Jovanović, Damien Leloup, Laurin Lorenz, Michael Montgomery, Michael Nikbakhsh, Kjersti Nipen, Bernhard Odehnal, Andreas Proschofsky, Raymundus Rikang, Christian Rohde, Marcel Rosenbach, Daniel Sager, Fabian Schmid, Zuzana Šotová, Martin Untersinger, Oliver Zihlmann

Lighthouse Reports, Paper Trail Media, Der Spiegel, Der Standard, Die Dunkelkammer, Haaretz, Investigace.cz, IrpiMedia, KRIK, Le Monde, NRK, Reveal/Mother Jones, Tamedia, Tempo, ZDF

“This is a really good investigation which is both easy to read and easy to follow – especially considering how disturbing the findings are. What stands out is also the impact on the reader of this breathtaking invasion of privacy and people’s rights to it, and the breathtaking impunity of the corporate suits behind this activity. We are undercover in a booth in Prague, and then we are speaking to high-profile corporate actors targeted by the surveillance, and we are also privy to a story of possibly-related contract killings... it’s good! It’s scary.”

“Their methodology (70 journalists from 16 outlets) is an example of transnational public-interest journalism at its best. Exceptional scope, based on a massive dataset and a high-risk undercover infiltration. Its strength is how the narrative mixes technical evidence, human testimonies, and vividly rendered scenes such as the Vatileaks scandal.”



The 2026 Migration Journalism Award

WINNER

Unaccompanied children sleep on the floor in shifts in Greece's 'Model Camps'. The EU is aware

Lydia Emmanouilidou, Corina Petridi, Luděk Stavinoha, Stavros Malichudis, May Bulman, Iliana Papangeli, Galatia Iatraki, Lorenz Naegeli, Osama Abdullah, Lukas Haeuptli

Solomon, Republik, WAV Recherchekollektiv, Greece & Switzerland



“This is an extremely good piece. An impressive investigation which is very nicely presented allowing several ways of reading it. The story features deep research and analysis, but also great storytelling. Its impact also needs to be emphasised.”

“This was one of the strongest pieces for me. It flows very well, is devastating in its accounts, and is revelatory in understanding so many ways asylum seeking children can be failed. There is this strange benefactor in the Swiss government who fund the camps, and the Greek government who have allowed this safe haven to fall into disarray – and caught in the middle are the innocent children, a group which has doubled twice in number. Just as the article details from FOI requests, you can feel how bloated and torn apart the capacity of these safe spaces are for the children, somehow.”

The 2026 Migration Journalism Award

RUNNER-UP

Hamshika's puzzle

Hamshika Krishnamoorthy, Hannah Kirmes-Daly, Leon Spring, Benja Zehr

Al Jazeera, International



“I really like how the story is told. It combines a personal story told in the first person with documentation and research on a system and a migration route. The way design is at the service of the story, is like a movie but written.”

“This is a journey story, but tied up in the policy complication, and rooted in the own drawings of the main character, who I think is empowered through the reporting in this way.”

“The story and its display are gripping and extremely well put together. It is visual journalism at its finest — the story draws on multiple visual and storytelling resources to support the reporting.”

The 2026 Migration Journalism Award

A daring escape from China to the U.S. via the Darién Gap

Marian Blasberg and Christoph Giesen

Der Spiegel, Germany



“This story is a personal take on the migration story, of a marriage caught between the immigration fray, and gives us insight into why some might be leaving China for a better future. It is also quite strong for its reporting from China which seems to have been done by a local reporter, which I think adds a lot to this story.”

“It manages to tell a global story through the small details of a personal story. And I think it does so by making it seem simple, when clearly a lot of work has gone into it. It also tells a story that is not often told in the media.”

“A very good reportage set in various locations in South America, the USA, and China that was researched with great effort. Small details and observations tell the bigger picture. The dramaturgy is very thoughtful.”

The 2026 Migration Journalism Award

Mines, memory, and migration on Bosnia's perilous border

Nidžara Ahmetašević, Andrew Connelly, Maryam Ashrafi

Inkstick Media, International



“This is a very good example of how EU migration policy forces people to take senseless journeys – or practically straight to their deaths. Well written, without unnecessary literature, and documented, with author’s own photographs. It certainly deserves to be on the Shortlist.”

“A very thorough reportage with many characters. The dramatic conditions on the Balkan route – where old landmines put refugees in danger – are illustrated through the case of a Cuban family. A great deal of work: the author has found an enormous number of people who were involved with the case or similar cases and experienced the events on the ground firsthand. Overall, it is a very meticulous piece of reporting and a well-told story.”

The 2026 Migration Journalism Award

My parents, my heroes

Kim Son Hoang

Der Standard, Austria



“I loved it. This story is told in a lovely manner, and the fact that it is almost biographic is a plus – outstanding narration! It is also innovative as it talks about a case of migration and its effect on each member in the same family, which helps to understand past and present.”

“A dramatic escape story from fifty years ago, told by the later-born son of a Vietnamese family who came to Austria back then. Great material—and the personal perspective adds an extra layer that really wins me over”

“This is a very sweet piece – and about such an important event in history. I think it’s an important piece, particularly as it reflects on the lived reality of so much of the Vietnamese diaspora in Europe. And honestly I feel not too much is known about them as migrants, or well understood. The personable tone made it a very readable article.”

The 2026 Public Discourse Award

WINNER

Not again!

Kerstin Kohlenberg

DIE ZEIT, Germany



“This piece is an exemplary fit for the Public Discourse category, as it recognises a ‘remarkable textual interpretation of the world we live in’ and the use of arguments to interpret society from the ‘author’s perspective’. Kohlenberg achieves this by leveraging her seven years of experience as a U.S. correspondent to provide a comparative analysis of populist rises in both America and Germany, effectively turning her personal observations into a broader sociological reflection.”

“This is exactly the kind of story that should be promoted. It does not project the author’s righteousness, fear or class predisposition on the readers. Instead, it shows the complex nature of today’s far-right spirit.”

“I loved the piece: Super well written and built, the author has a marvelous eye for details when describing the characters – you can see them and hear them. The angle is relevant and great comparing America and Germany, as a lab of the future for European politics. The piece is full of humour and also extremely accurate about what is happening in Germany right now. Without judgement she is a bit like an oracle, using her previous experience to precisely describe a political dynamic that no one seems to be able to stop.”

The 2026 Public Discourse Award

RUNNER-UP

Am I allowed to grieve my self-chosen abortion?

Anne Grietje Franssen

NRC, the Netherlands



“This is a powerful piece that belongs on the Shortlist. It’s about the complicated notion of grief, the female body, and choices that we make and feelings that we feel (which might not correspond at some points in our lives). And it is written in a gripping, sad and beautiful way.”

“This piece is neither obvious nor dogmatic; it is filled with humanity, dignity and vulnerability. It’s both necessary and difficult to read, yet fantastically written. It’s probably the strongest opinion piece I’ve read this year.”

“A very powerful text – and brave. Uncomfortable, in the best sense. The author describes her own abortion and grapples with the grief she feels afterward. She criticises the pigeonholing: either you’re pro-life, or you glorify abortion as female self-assertion (my words). She supports the right to abortion – and yet she feels pain over the lost baby, apparently also guilt. I find her honesty in admitting that to herself and writing about it remarkable.”

The 2026 Public Discourse Award

RUNNER-UP

Unhappy, lonely, and unable to talk about it: Why men are losing friends

Filip Struhárik

Denník N, Slovakia



“A wonderful exploration of male loneliness – or, more accurately, of the need for men to socialise with each other in productive ways. A solid public discourse piece that asks insightful questions and provides useful context.”

“This is a beautiful piece because of the rarity of someone writing so openly about their feeling of loneliness. It is honest and straightforward, and at the same time not overly nostalgic.”

The 2026 Public Discourse Award

The major crime of USSR was ‘the Soviet occupation of Central and Eastern Europe’

Sergei Lebedev

Voxeurop, The Guardian, Blätter, Denník N, Europe, United Kingdom, Germany, Slovakia



“A brilliant historical and geopolitical essay challenging the dominant narrative in Europe of Russia as Europe’s liberator from Nazism. Smart, documented, and enriched by personal biographical elements of the author, a Russian writer in exile living in Berlin whom the grand fathers fought during the “Patriotic War”, the text brings a courageous perspective on history (and collective memory).”

“A very smart and very impressive piece because of its personal tone. I find the build-up clever – intelligent and rousing. It is an especially powerful message from the Eastern European (former USSR) countries perspective.”

“A wonderful essay arguing that Europe – especially Western Europe -- needs to understand Russia as an aggressor not only in the context of Ukraine today, but over the past 80 years since World War II. It’s very strong and close to an ideal public discourse piece.”

The 2026 Public Discourse Award

When I met Craig he was 13 and homeless. I still thought his life might turn around. I was tragically wrong

Pamela Gordon

The Guardian, United Kingdom



“Craig’s story moves me to tears. A sensitive long-term portrait – it’s incredible how the author followed Craig’s life over years and decades, from the age of 13 until his death at 41. The text brings the story of this outcast close to us and, in just a few words, conveys what may have been the reason he kept running away from the children’s home and thus ended up on the street and repeatedly in prison. Magnificently told material, and it is certainly our job as journalists to pursue stories like this, to direct attention to those overlooked on the margins of society.”

“Definitely worthy of being shortlisted. A gripping, tragic personal story about homelessness, childhood sexual abuse, helping others, unusual human relationships, and solidarity. This text had a profound effect on me.”

“It is a well-written and empathetic piece, also acknowledging that the system of “correction” is so broken, it cannot be repaired neither with documentaries, nor with the kindness of one people towards others.”

The 2026 Special Award

WINNER

Killing for the photo

Barbara Matejčić

Novosti, BIRN, Croatia, Serbia



“A stirring account of how one of the most important photographs from the Yugoslav war and what it reveals about truth, journalistic ethics, and justice. Reported over many years and written gracefully, this is a memorable story. It is also one of those rare writing projects that could be considered for a Special Award.”

“A fantastic piece of reporting with perfect dramaturgy. The text reads like a thriller. A major piece about the ethics of our profession, about the representation of reality. A profoundly relevant work of journalism. It absolutely must make the Shortlist.”

“The writer’s tiresome research serves a great purpose, reminding the audience as well as the members of this profession the importance of fact-checking. Especially today that we try to rescue journalism from the clutches of disinformation and rebuild public trust, such forensic work stands invaluable. Brilliant reporting and storytelling.”

European
Press
Prize

JURY
REPORT
2026

