

Balkan Fellowship for Journalistic Excellence

An initiative of the Robert Bosch Stiftung and ERSTE Stiftung, in cooperation with the Balkan Investigative Reporting Network.

fellowship.birn.eu.com

APPLICATION GUIDELINES 2010

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Balkan Fellowship for Journalistic Excellence – Background and Aims

The Balkan news media are increasingly required to report on complex reform issues with regional and Europe-wide dimensions. Journalists, however, are under-prepared to tackle these, lacking resources for appropriate training and foreign travel.

To encourage regional networking among journalists and advance balanced coverage on topics that are central to the region as well as to the EU, the Robert Bosch Stiftung and ERSTE Foundation have initiated a fellowship programme in cooperation with the Balkan Investigative Reporting Network, BIRN.

The Programme

Ten fellows from Albania, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Kosovo, Macedonia, Montenegro, Romania and Serbia will be selected on the basis of applications submitted. The fellowship will run from **April** until **December 2010**, at which time a winners shall be selected.

Fellows are expected during this period to produce one in-depth journalistic article of approximately 2,000 words, based on the research proposal they submit. Editorial guidance and control shall be provided by BIRN.

The fellowship programme involves the following elements:

- i. fellowship fund of 2,000 EUR
- ii. introductory training seminar in Berlin, with regional and international expert trainers (scheduled for **April 27 - May 01, 2010**)
- iii. ongoing mentoring and support from BIRN representatives in fellows' own country
- iv. grant of up to 2,000 EUR for research expenses, including at least one regional trip and one trip within the EU, with guidance and organisational support provided by programme partners
- v. final evaluation seminar and award ceremony in Vienna (scheduled for **November 2010**)
- vi. publication of reports in all local languages and English (October -December)
- vii. promotional events to mark book launch in countries of Southeast Europe (December)
- viii. membership of Fellowship alumni network

Award:

The selection committee judges the quality of the reports awarding top prizes to three fellows. The best article will win 4,000 Euros, the second-ranked 3,000 Euros and the third 1,000 Euros.

Rules of the Call for Fellows

1. Eligibility Criteria

1.1. Who can participate?

Individuals from Albania, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Kosovo, Macedonia, Montenegro, Romania and Serbia with a demonstrable journalistic experience are eligible to apply for the Balkan Fellowship for Journalistic Excellence. Applicants should be proficient in English (speaking, reading and understanding), although reports may be written in local languages.

1.2 Employer Agreement

Applicants must be able to dedicate adequate time to the fellowship, in terms of research, research trips, attending two seminars (in Vienna and Berlin), writing and attending publicity events upon launch of the reports.

To that end, any necessary permission from the applicant's employer to participate in the Fellowship Programme should be secured in advance.

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2. Theme of the Fellowship Call 2010: TABOO

We invite candidates for the Balkan Fellowship for Journalistic Excellence in 2010 to identify, explore and demystify taboo issues about which there is little serious discussion in the media in South East Europe, and to strip away the clichés surrounding them.

Taboos change – rapidly. Homosexuality was once a taboo in Western Europe, as was “living in sin”, [i.e. outside marriage], abortion, childlessness, physical disabilities, atheism and suicide.

No longer. But new taboos have arisen. The Europe of our ancestors was in some ways more accepting of depression, virginity, celibacy, getting old, illness and death than we are in our more youth-centred and health-orientated society.

Other once popular habits are becoming social sins and taboos, like smoking or cruelty to animals. To have a boring, uninteresting job is increasingly a taboo – an offence against the US-driven cult of fulfillment. So is obesity – once a sign of prosperity.

Candidates might consider not only obvious taboo areas like gay marriage but family issues like arranged marriages and marital violence. Churches and other religious communities are increasingly shielded from real scrutiny. Do they merit this exemption from probing? The legacy of the wars of the 1990s is another field that might repay deeper exploration.

Candidates should not feel limited by these suggestions, but should feel free to propose other topics related to ideas surrounded by prejudice, silence and shame.

Proposals should include plans for cross-border research, involving at least two countries in the Balkans and one EU member state. They should unearth fresh information or adopt original perspectives that will attract a wide readership in the Balkans and the EU. Completed articles should be 2,000 words in length.

3. Eligible & Compulsory Activities

3.1 Project idea and implementation:

The theme of the Balkan Fellowship for Journalistic Excellence 2010 is “TABOO”, as elaborated above in section 2. The submitted project proposal must refer to this theme, suggesting an original approach to researching and reporting an important aspect of it. The project should also aim at the enhancement of information and dialogue among the countries of Southeast Europe, SEE, and between SEE and the European Union.

Research should be conducted towards production of a 2,000 word journalistic report. The report should feature fresh information and interviews, and be analytical in nature.

The report may be written in a local language or English, at the fellows’ discretion. Editorial support, likewise, will be available in the local language.

Applicants’ proposals should refer primarily to the country where they normally reside, but include plans to conduct useful research in at least one other country of the region and at least one country of the European Union. Fellows should meet with their counterparts when visiting another country in the region.

Research costs provided by this programme shall not exceed 2,000 EUR. Practical support shall be provided by programme partners to organise research trips and access information and sources.

Fellows may carry out all forms of journalistic research necessary to further their approved project. Illegal forms of gathering information may not be carried out, nor may trips which have no relevance to the fellowship.

Fellows must attend both programme seminars, and work cooperatively with the BIRN editor/trainers throughout the research, reporting and editorial phases. Fellows must meet at least once per month during the programme with appointed local BIRN editor/trainers.

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Research and training should result in the timely submission of an article of around 2,000 words (see schedule below, section 3.4). Fellows must cooperate with the programme's editorial team throughout the editorial phase to resolve outstanding issues and prepare the submitted report for publication.

3.2 Editorial control:

BIRN editors shall edit all fellows' reports. While fellows retain the right to approve the version of the report which is published, BIRN editing shall be compulsory.

The English-language edition shall be the definitive version, with other language versions provided by translating it.

Guidance and training in editorial style and standards shall be provided at the introductory seminar, and supplemented by the BIRN programme team throughout the project phase.

3.3 Publication:

Reports shall be published exclusively by BIRN. Following the launch of the reports, further media outlets shall be encouraged to republish them, providing they inform BIRN and accredit the fellow-author, the Robert Bosch Stiftung, ERSTE Foundation and BIRN.

BIRN shall retain all rights to the reports, in all language versions and formats in which they are published.

Fellows may not use, promote or publish versions of the reports other than the approved BIRN edit.

3.4 Duration & Location:

The fellowship programme begins in **April 2010** with a 5-day seminar in Berlin. The research phase, during which time at least one trip to another country in the Balkan region and one country in the European Union must be completed, lasts until the end of **August 2010**. First drafts of reports must be submitted by **September 1, 2010**. The editorial phase shall last from **September 1** to **October 15, 2010**. The final seminar shall take place in **November** in Vienna, running for 5 days. Report launch and promotion shall take place in the region during **December**.

3.5 Number of applications:

Applicants should complete and submit only one application with one research proposal. Multiple applications by individual and joint applications by more than one individual are not eligible.

4. Award

The winning fellows shall receive 4,000 EUR for the first, 3,000 EUR for the second and 1,000 EUR for the third place. Winning articles will be selected by members of the Selection Committee, based on transparent evaluation criteria.

5. Financial Terms & Conditions:

- Fellows shall receive their 2,000 EUR fellowship funding at the project's outset;
- Research and travel expenses of up to 1,000 EUR shall be given in advance;
- Research and travel expenses of up to 1,000 EUR shall be reimbursed in arrears
- Research expenses shall only be reimbursed upon provision of adequate receipts and approval by BIRN;
- Eligible expenses include: travel costs incurred on the basis of BIRN-approved travel plans; per diem costs according to BIRN's scale; reasonable accommodation costs; reasonable telecommunications costs; costs incurred to access databases; reasonable representation costs. Further details of eligible costs and receipts shall be provided to fellows at the programme's introductory seminar;
- Fellows should include the cost of travel insurance as a research expense. The Robert Bosch Stiftung, ERSTE Foundation and BIRN shall not be held liable for fellows' health, safety or security during the programme;
- Should research costs amount to less than 2,000 EUR, the balance shall not be provided to fellows;
- Should any fellow fail to make appropriate efforts to participate in the programme and complete his/her report, the award and travel expenses shall be returned to BIRN.

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6. How to apply?

6.1. Application Form

The proposal for a fellowship reporting project must be submitted using the "Balkan Fellowship for Journalistic Excellence Application Form". It must be accompanied by the signed declaration of the applicant.

For a proper assessment, all parts of the application form should be filled in as carefully and clearly as possible.

Any additional information attached to the application must be clearly marked and included in the same email in which the application is submitted.

The application must be in English.

6.2. Example of Applicant's Work

Applicants shall provide at least one relevant example of their writing.

Samples may be provided in local languages.

6.3. Deadline for Applications

The deadline for applications of the call is **01 March 2010**.

BIRN will advise applicants if they have any questions up to this date.

6.4. Where and how to send the application?

Completed applications should be sent as electronic files by e-mail to: fellowship@birn.eu.com.

Or by post to:

Balkan Fellowship for Journalistic Excellence - Application

c/o BIRN

Ul. Kneginje Ljubice 12

11000 Beograd

Serbia

Applicants will receive an e-mail acknowledging receipt.

7. Evaluation and Selection of Applications

An international Selection Committee will assess the submitted proposals according to the **eligibility and quality criteria of the "Fellow Selection Grid" (point system, see Annex A)**. Up to 10 of the best applications for research and reporting projects will be awarded.

8. Notification on Awarded Project Proposals

Successful candidates will be informed by e-mail about the results of the evaluation and awarded project proposals by **25 March 2010**.

Information and Co-ordination

Online information on the fellowship and the Call for Projects (application documents) is at fellowship.birn.eu.com.

Information on the Robert Bosch Stiftung - www.bosch-stiftung.de

Information on ERSTE Foundation- www.erstestiftung.org

Information on BIRN – www.birn.eu.com

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Guidelines - Annex A

BIRN – Fellow Selection Grid

To be able to assess the submitted applications in a transparent way, BIRN and the Fellowship Committee will use the following evaluation grid and, depending on the quality of the respective proposal, will assign points to the applications. The maximum score of this evaluation point **system is 120 points, and Fellowships will be awarded to applicants with the highest scores.**

Fellow Selection	Reference to questions of the Application Form	Maximum Score
PROJECT PROPOSAL CONTENT <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Relevance• Feasibility• Originality		60 20 20 20
CANDIDATE <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Professional qualifications• Motivation• Journalistic approach		60 20 20 20
Maximum total score		