

# Competition rules

## Introduction

The purpose of this regulation is to define the rules and conditions of participation in the journalistic competition entitled "Coverage of European Topics and the Berlin Process within the Framework of the European Integration of the Balkans." This competition aims to promote transnational collaboration among young journalism students and to encourage the creation of innovative, high-quality journalistic content that highlights key aspects of the European integration process in the Balkans. The following articles outline the eligibility criteria, competition process, and requirements to ensure fair and transparent participation for all candidates.

## Objectives of the Competition

The journalistic competition titled "Crossing Borders: Journalism Competition - Coverage of European Topics within the Framework of the European Integration of the Balkans" has the following objectives:

- To encourage journalism students to develop a nuanced understanding of the European integration process as it pertains to the Balkan region, with a specific focus on the Berlin Process.
- To foster cross-border collaboration and the exchange of perspectives among young journalists from different Balkan countries.
- To produce high-quality, innovative journalistic content that explores the challenges, opportunities, and realities of European integration in the Balkans.
- To raise awareness among Balkan youth about the importance of European integration and the role of journalism in promoting informed public discourse on this subject.

## Target Audience

This competition is open to journalism students who meet the following criteria:

- Hold nationality from one of the six Western Balkan countries (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Serbia).
- Are enrolled in a journalism program in one of the participating countries.
- Are under the age of 30 at the time of application.
- Demonstrate proficiency in English at a C1 level or higher.

## Competition Process

The competition consists of two main stages: an individual selection phase and a collaborative team phase. Participants first apply individually and are selected based on their motivation, journalistic skills, teamwork experience, and knowledge of European integration topics. Once selected, they join transnational teams to produce collaborative journalistic content.

## Timeline

- 13 January 2025: Call for individual applications opens.
- 17 February 2025: Deadline for submission of applications.
- 3 March 2025: Announcement of selected participants.
- 15 March 2025: Virtual Training Session and composition of the teams.

- Mid-April 2025: Submission Deadline for Final Projects.
- May 2025: Announcement of the winning team

## **Training**

Selected participants will undergo a one-day online training session the 15 March 2025, covering:

- An introduction to the Berlin Process and its relevance to European integration.
- Best practices in transnational journalism and collaborative techniques.
- Tools to combat misinformation in the context of European integration.
- Use of multimedia and collaborative tools for journalistic production.

## **Content Production**

Participants will be organized into transnational teams of six, with one representative from each Balkan country. Teams will collaborate to produce journalistic content on the theme "Coverage of European Topics and the Berlin Process."

Accepted formats include written articles, podcasts/audio productions and video reports. Productions must reflect transnational perspectives and be submitted between mid-March and mid-April 2025.

## **Selection and Evaluation Criteria**

The selection and evaluation of candidates and projects will follow a structured process to ensure fairness and transparency:

### Candidate Selection Criteria

- Motivation: applicants must demonstrate their genuine interest in the competition through a letter or video. This should highlight their understanding of the competition's theme, their enthusiasm for cross-border collaboration, and their commitment to journalistic excellence. (30 points)
- Journalistic skills: submissions will be assessed based on the quality of previous work, including writing, research, and multimedia production skills. Candidates are expected to provide compelling examples that reflect their abilities. (30 points)
- Teamwork Experience: candidates should illustrate prior experience in collaborative projects, particularly in multicultural or international settings. Their capacity to work effectively in a team will be considered a significant asset. (20 points)
- A demonstrated understanding or interest in European integration, the Berlin Process, or relevant challenges in the Balkans will enhance the candidate's application. (20 points)

### Project Evaluation Criteria

If the candidates are selected, they will work in team on a journalistic project. Once projects are submitted, the jury will evaluate them according to the following criteria:

- Relevance to the theme: entries must clearly align with the theme of the Berlin Process and European integration, showcasing depth and understanding of the subject (25 points)
- The quality of storytelling, factual accuracy, technical execution, and adherence to journalistic standards will be rigorously assessed (25 points)

- Transnational Collaboration: projects should reflect the collaborative efforts of team members from diverse backgrounds, emphasizing shared perspectives and teamwork. (20 points)
- Impact and Creativity: Entries will be judged on their potential to inform and engage audiences, as well as the originality of their approach to the topic (20 points)
- Innovation The jury will also look for unique and creative use of multimedia or storytelling techniques that enhance the narrative. (10 points)

## **Required Documents**

Participants must submit the following documents to complete their application:

- Motivation Letter or Video: a written letter (maximum two pages) or a video (maximum two minutes) explaining why they want to participate, their interest in European topics, and what they hope to contribute to the team.
- An updated CV outlining their academic and professional background in journalism.
- A Portfolio of work: at least one example of previous journalistic work, such as articles, podcasts, or videos.
- Proof of English Proficiency (optional): a certificate or evidence of their English language skills, if available.
- A signed commitment Letter (a document (template provided) affirming the availability for the competition timeline and their willingness to adhere to the competition rules.)

## **Mentorship and Support**

Each team will be assigned a mentor, who will provide weekly check-ins with the team to monitor progress and offer guidance, review drafts of the teams' projects and provide constructive feedback and assist with problem-solving and facilitate collaboration among team members.

Mentors will play a critical role in ensuring the quality and timeliness of the projects.

## **Awards**

Members of the top-performing team will participate in a study visit to France to explore media institutions and network with journalism professionals. All expenses will be fully covered, including accommodation, meals (based on the per diem rate), and both international (flight) and local transportation. Personal expenses will not be included.