WAN-FRA joins Stars4Media, a new European programme for young media professionals.

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WAN-IFRA joins Stars4Media.eu, an exchange programme for young media professionals to boost media innovation and cross-border cooperation in Europe. A media-driven, pilot project co-funded by the European Union, Stars4Media will support 100 promising young news media professionals working together around collaborative innovative project-based initiatives.

Stars4Media.eu will be led by a consortium formed by VUB (Vrije Universiteit Brussel), Fondation Euractiv, the European Federation Journalists and WAN-IFRA, the World Association of News Publishers. Participants in the programme will be young media professionals with 2-10 years of media experience.

The objective of Stars4Media is to enhance media innovation and cross-border cooperation in the European media industry by implementing a sustainable framework for innovation. A European leadership training programme for 100 young media professionals, Stars4Media will develop project-based sustainable Initiatives between European media outlets.

The project calls on the participation of professionals coming from different areas of expertise (journalists, graphic designers, social media managers, technology and product developers, marketing experts). With this interdisciplinary approach, Satrs4Media wants to speed up the careers of "media rising stars" , and break down the functional “silos” that often hinder new ideas. Young media professionals will be asked to submit projects in one of the four following themes related to trust in media and the use of data in media: Constructive journalism, Data-journalism, Artificial Intelligence, Language technologies

> *“Over the next year, about 100 media professionals across Europe will learn new skills through paid placements in media organisations from other countries. In an ever more complex media landscape, this should trigger increased innovation and cross-border coverage. This is a pilot project and I very much look forward to the lessons learned to understand if and how this scheme should be scaled up. In the meantime, I invite interested candidates to watch for the forthcoming launch of the call for interest by “Stars for Media”. All the best!”*
> ***Mariya Gabriel, Commissioner for Youth, Innovation, Education & Culture, European Commission***

> *"Journalism is at a crossroads, more important than ever and more fragile than ever. We urgently need to invest in innovation, new ways of engaging with diverse audiences and stimulating trust. Empowering young media professionals to experience best practice outside their newsroom, is a beautiful chance, we hope many apply for."* ***European Federation of Journalists***

> *“We are addressing two of the key challenges that still hinder the processes of press transformation in the digital age: project-based product management and culture. With its unique European-wide twinning programme, Stars4media will help participating companies to truly rethink their relationship to innovation and embed experience innovation into our culture and organisation.”* ***Vincent Peyrègne, CEO WAN-IFRA***

> ***Christophe Leclercq, founder of the EURACTIV Media Network****, explained the context: “This pilot project was conceived with and for the media sector, working for the general interest of democracy. 45 media stakeholders expressed their support, then relayed by 15 MEPs from the 4 main political groups, and voted by the Parliament for two years around ‘rising stars’, the first one being implemented. Public support for journalistic cooperation or press freedom are useful, this one is different: it’s about innovation across border and economic sustainability.”*

APPLICATION AND PROCESS

The call for expression of interest and initiatives will be launched in the upcoming days on www.stars4media.eu

After a pre-selection phase, the match-making event (“Europe’s media lab” planned from 3 to 6 March 2020in Brussels) will help perfect the initiative proposed and when necessary pair professionals from like-minded media outlets around innovation initiatives. Selected teams will benefit from ad-hoc training and will then implement joint concrete cooperation. This core on-the-ground exchange will involve both geographic mobility and virtual teamwork.

Media company-internal support will then come from senior mentors to ensure efficiency, impact and sustainability of the initiatives. Participating media outlets will encourage investment later on, based on the best Initiatives, stimulate cooperation between European media and help develop new business models for legacy media.

Independent media experts on the Stars4Media Advisory Committee will provide overall strategic guidance, informal advice to ‘lone stars’ (un-paired candidates), as well as jury service to select the participants.
Independence of the jury: the members of the jury committed to declaring at that time any conflict of interest and abstain from voting on such applications.

Stars4Media is co-funded by the European Union (grant agreement number: LC-01337350).

ABOUT THE CONSORTIUM

The consortium is coordinated by VUB (Vrije Universiteit Brussel), a university with one of Europe’s leading media innovation departments (imec-SMIT) and experience with exchange programmes, in cooperation with Fondation EURACTIV, the initiator of the project.

The consortium’s partners will reach a wide network of journalists, publishers and media technology leaders through their membership communities and professional gatherings. The consortium's partners will call on the application of candidates for pre-selection under the 4 topical segments of the programme. The best initiatives will be awarded during a series of conferences planned in June 2020 by WAN-IFRA, and in fall 2020 by Fondation EURACTIV in autumn 2020.

- SMIT stands for Studies in Media, Innovation and Technology. SMIT is a research group part of the Vrije Universiteit Brussel and IMEC. VUB’s SMIT is the consortium leader.
- Fondation EURACTIV is a think-and-do tank for the health of the media sector in Europe. It contributes to a healthy democracy and the emergence of a European public sphere.
- The European Federation of Journalists (EFJ) is the largest organisation of journalists in Europe, representing over 320,000 journalists in 72 journalists’ organisations, across 45 countries.

Company Contact:

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WAN-IFRA

E. andrew.heslop@wan-ifra.org
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