



НАГРАДА ОД ЕВРОПСКАТА УНИЈА ЗА
ИСТРАЖУВАЧКОТО НОВИНАРСТВО

ЏМИМИ I BASHKIMIT EVROPIAN PËR
GAZETARINË HULUMTUESE

Report of the jury for selection of the best stories in the "EU Award for Investigative Journalism" contest for 2016

As part of the procedure for selection of best investigative stories in the "EU award for Investigative Journalism" contest for 2016", the five-member jury composed of:

Marina Tuneva, Executive Director of the Council of Media Ethics of Macedonia

Arta Tahiri, Editor in Alsat – M TV

Lirim Dulovi, Owner of the "Koha" daily

Boris Georgievski, journalist in the Macedonian news desk of Deutsche Welle

Fatmir Aliu, Editor – in – Chief of TV 21

DECIDED

To award the **first prize** of the competition for investigative stories published in 2016 to **Aleksandar Dimitrievski for his investigations of the subsidies for crop and livestock production**, published at the Internet page "Prizma".

Through an online database and a series of articles, this research reveals comprehensive and systematized data on the allocation of about 3% of the state budget on the basis of subsidies for crop and livestock production. The articles and the data also reveal the manners in which subsidies were allocated, analyze potential links among part of the beneficiaries of subsidies, the issue of questionable ownership of certain companies receiving subsidies and so on.

The jury considers that the author courageously, tirelessly and devotedly processed an exceptionally important topic of public interest, in circumstances when the program for agricultural subsidies absorbs a huge amount of budget resources, while farmers increasingly express anger and remarks on the program implementation. This research brings to light significant facts, through a series of methods to study the problem and a proficient narrative. The journalist demonstrated an exceptional journalistic and research effort through a lengthy process of collecting, processing and systematizing of numerous data provided by different institutions. The award for this story is recognition of the excellent mix of investigative journalism and demonstrated commitment to contribute to the fight against corruption in the society. The story is a good reminder of the essential features of investigative journalism: throwing light on injustice, that otherwise would not be sufficiently known to the public, it analyzes the topic in a systematic and comprehensive manner, while applying highest standards of journalism in the quest for the truth.

The **second prize** is awarded to Zoran Jovanoski for the story "**Ashes of death**", published in the show "360 degrees" on "Alsat - M" television.

The story focuses on an environmental catastrophe which is associated with the phenomenon of dramatically increased mortality rate among citizens in the region of Kicevo, due to the operation of the thermal power plant Oslomej and the improper treatment of the ashes from coal combustion. The journalist managed to provide relevant information for the growing numbers of ill people suffering from malignant and respiratory diseases in the region and he also pointed out to the great danger looming the local population from the artificially created "mountain" of millions of tons of radioactive ash.

The jury concluded that the story is an exceptionally relevant research of public interest and the journalist offers quality and authentic information from various sources, comparing the way this problem is addressed with examples from other countries while indicating its potential solutions.

In the opinion of the jury, this topic implies the issue of similar problems faced by many regions in the country due to dilapidated facilities for electricity production, exploitation of minerals, plants for solid fuels treatment, etc. Thus the analysis of the problem, through the prism of its impact and consequences on the population and the surrounding, additionally raises the awareness about the need for its broader elaboration, indicating the responsibility of the competent institutions and bodies in its resolving.

The award for a "**best investigative story of a young journalist**" is given to **Slavica Filipovska** for her story "**Bulgarian passport for a 'clean' Macedonia**", published in the show "360 degrees" on "Alsat - M" Television.

The story, in an authentic and original way for the general public, reveals how, in fact, citizens in an effort to rapidly enter countries - members of the European Union find their way through the procedure to get a passport for Bulgarian citizenship.

The jury concluded that it is a theme that persists for years, but the way the subject is treated and presented is exceptionally original and the journalist does this with a high level of professional integrity, consistency and commitment to the topic. By the narrative used and the selection of segments of individual stories, the journalist explores the trend of mass applying for passports. She connects this problem with important social phenomena, such as unemployment and mass emigration of young people, questions that deserve further thorough research and a motivation for their elaboration. In fact, she describes the story of the "little" man who has no choice but flee from the lack of prospects in the country.

At the competition for the "2016 EU Award for Investigative Journalism" **26 authors took part with 32 applications/stories** published in print, electronic and Internet media.

According to the methodology and the criteria for selection of the best investigative stories, which apply to all countries in the Western Balkans and Turkey, part of the jury members were excluded from voting on stories that were broadcast/published in the media where they work as journalists/editors. The stories were evaluated in relation to their relevance, quality, originality, dedication and professional integrity of journalists and by the impact that they had on the public opinion.

The jury is satisfied with the number and quality of stories in the contest. The members of the jury highlight that many stories are distinguished in terms of the demonstrated journalistic engagement, quality of research, the relevance of the topics and influence to the public.

The jury encourages editors to support the process of producing investigative stories, especially when journalists discover themes and issues related to corruption that deserve deep and comprehensive treatment. Regardless of the fact that their immediate impact will not be immediately noticed, perseverance in exposing the truth itself would be a success for journalists and newsrooms.

Given that several stories of high quality entered the narrow competition which addresses extremely important issues of public interest, the jury decided to award the maximum number of awards, i.e. a total of three. The winning story is awarded with an amount of EUR 4,000, while the prize for the second place for best investigative story of a young journalist amounts 3,000 euros. The jury worked in accordance with a unified methodology and guidelines formulated by the European Union, in order to get to a selection of award-winning stories of high quality.

The awards represent recognition for the previous work but also an incentive for journalists to affirm their role as guardians of the public interest, through continuous review of the work of institutions and officials, which will consequently contribute to the promotion of democratic processes in the society.

Skopje, May 19, 2017