

Dr. Blerjana Bino, with a professional background in the intersection between civil society development and research, currently leads the Centre Science and Innovation for Development (SCiDEV), a Tirana-based think tank working on democratic development, media and democracy, research-to-society collaborations, and digital transformation. She is a member of the Safe Journalists Network in the Western Balkans, conducting research and advocacy for media freedom and the safety of journalists. She collaborates with Thomson Foundation for media development in the Western Balkans and Central Europe. She is the author of the annual reports on the Level of Media Freedom and Safety of Journalists in Albania and the Safe Journalists' Index in Albania since 2020.

Paolo Borrrometi, graduated in Law, started working at 'Giornale di Sicilia' and then founded the information and investigation website 'La Spia'. Under police escort for ten years, he is now co-director of the AGI news agency, after having worked for Tv2000. He has received the 'motu proprio' honour from the Italian President of the Republic. He is responsible for legality at the National Press Federation, president of 'Articolo 21', and collaborates with Libera. He has published *Un morto ogni tanto* (2018), *Il sogno di Antonio* (2019) and *Traditori* (2023) with Solferino. With Mondadori he published *Siate rompiscatole - La storia di Padre Pino Puglisi* (2023).

Serena Epis is a master's graduate in European and International Studies from the University of Trento. Since June 2021 she has been working as a research assistant for OBC Transeuropa on projects related to enlargement and civil society engagement. She was selected as a student of the Honours Programme Talete, an advanced training programme on the themes of global interdependence and international cooperation. Since January 2023 she has been working on the Media Freedom Rapid Response project as editor and researcher.

Srdan Kosović is the Digital Director of Vijesti, the biggest media in Montenegro. He has been with Vijesti for his entire career so far, starting in 2010 as a journalist, then moving to editor of the website position in 2012 and he became editor-in-chief in 2018 where he stayed until October 2023. He was also a member of the Steering board for Centre for investigative journalism in Montenegro. He covers mostly politics and writes columns for Vijesti.

Emilia Şerkan is a Romanian investigative journalist, author and senior lecturer at the Faculty of Journalism and Communication Science within the University of Bucharest. She has a BA in Journalism, a MA in Sociology and a PhD in Communication Science. With more than 25 years of experience as an investigative journalist, she has spent the last eight years systematically exposing academic fraud and imposture in the Romanian academia. She also uncovered dozens of plagiarism cases in doctoral

dissertations of Romanian top politicians and senior state officials in the judiciary, law enforcement, military and the intelligence community. Her investigative work, turned into a public mission, unveiled a vast, intricate mechanism of trading political power and influence through plagiarism and academic fraud. Emilia Șercan published three books, *The cult of secrecy. The Censorship Mechanisms in the Communist Press* (2015); *Doctorates Factory or How to Ruin a Nation's Fundamentals* (2017); *Ponta Case. The Reenactment of the Most Infamous Plagiarism in Romania's History* (2022).

Guusje Somer works in Free Press Unlimited's Policy & Advocacy team, based in the Netherlands. She has a background in international relations and human rights. At FPU, she focuses on the safety of journalists and protection mechanisms.