



# Global Forum for Media Development General Assembly

30 September 2021

Meeting room Antigonea 2, Rogner Hotel, Bulevardi Dëshmorët e Kombit, Tirana

## Attendance

### In-person participants

1. Alastair King-Smith British Ambassador to Albania, UK Foreign, Commonwealth, and Development Office
2. Anisa Curaj, Albania Coordinator, Thomson Foundation
3. Bill Orme, Author, editor, and independent consultant
4. David Quin, Development Director, Thomson Foundation
5. Davor Marko, Balkans Programme Manager, Thomson Foundation
6. Guy Berger, Director for Strategies and Policies in the Field of Communication and Information, UNESCO
7. James Deane, Director for Policy and Learning, BBC Media Action
8. Jan Lublinski, Head of Department, Policy and Learning, DW Akademie
9. Jesper Højberg, Executive Director, International Media Support (IMS)
10. Jodie Ginsberg, Chief Executive Director, Internews
11. Lars Tallert, Head of Policy and International Development at Fojo / Sweden's representative to UNESCO's IPDC Intergovernmental Council, Fojo Media Institute
12. Laurence Burckel, Responsable développement et partenariats – Afrique, Canal France International
13. Leon Willems, Director for Policy and Programmes, Free Press Unlimited
14. Marija Ristic, Regional Director, Balkan Investigative Reporting Network (BIRN)
15. Marvin Hokstam, Journalist, Association of Caribbean Media Workers
16. Mary O'Shea, Senior Technical Advisor – Information & Media, International Research & Exchanges Board (IREX)
17. Milka Domanovic, Head of Business and Partnership, Balkan Investigative Reporting Network - BIRN
18. Mira Milosevic, Executive Director, Global Forum for Media Development (GFMD)
19. Nayla Abdelnour, Project Manager, Samir Kassir Foundation/ Skeyes Center for Media and Cultural Freedom
20. Nona Majidi, Deputy Chief of Party, Balkan Media Assistance Program
21. Rebecca Stringer, Deputy Head, Global Democracy & Media Freedom Department, Open Societies and Human Rights Directorate | Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office
22. Remzi Lani, Executive Director, Albanian Media Institute
23. Ricardo Corredor Cure, outgoing GFMD Chairperson, Fundación Gabo
24. Ruth Kronenburg, Director of Operations, Free Press Unlimited
25. Susan Abbott, Co-Chair of the Media Development Working Group, International Association for Media and Communication Research (IAMCR)
26. Tabani Moyo, Acting Regional Director, MISA Zimbabwe

27. Thierry Vallat, Chairman and Managing Director, Canal France International

In addition to GFMD's Executive Director, Mira Milosevic, the eight members of the [GFMD Secretariat](#) attended the General Assembly in person.

1. Anne Marie Hammer, Programmes and Project Manager
2. Biba Klomp, International Partnerships Manager
3. Fiona Nzingo, Membership and Engagement Manager
4. Ivana Bjelic Vucinic, Programmes and Project Manager
5. Jordan Higgins, Advocacy and Policy Manager
6. Klea Trbovic Zivkovic, Financial Manager
7. Olga Komarova, Communications Manager
8. Tom Law, Media Policy Advisor

### **Online only participants**

43 GFMD members and partners that registered/attended via Zoom:

1. Ayman Mhanna, Executive Director, Skyes Centre for Media and Cultural Freedom
2. Birgitte Jallof, President, Community Media Forum Europe (CMFE)
3. Caroline Vuillemin, Director, Fondation Hirondelle
4. Courtney Radsch, Freelance, Media policy expert
5. Cristina Zahar, Executive Director, ABRAJI
6. Cyprien Ndikumana, Director, Institute Panos Grands Lacs
7. Denis Chabrol, Senior Vice President, Association of Caribbean Media Workers (ACM)
8. Drew Sullivan, Editor, Organized Crime and Corruption Reporting Project (OCCRP)
9. Ehsan Ahmed Khan Sehar, President, Rural Media Network Pakistan
10. Fatemah Farag, Director, Welad Elbalad
11. Francesca Silvani, Key Expert, Freedom of Expression Technical Assistance to EU Delegations, Media for Democracy (M4D)
12. Haron Mwangi, Director, Programmes and Resource Mobilization, Panos Institute Great Lakes – IPGL
13. Ines Drefs, Employee, Media Development Assistance in the 21st Century (MEDAS 21)
14. J.Y. Hoh, Legal Officer, Centre for Law and Democracy (CLD)
15. Jaime Abello Banfi, Director-General, Fundación Gabo
16. Jeanne Bourgault, President and CEO, Internews
17. Jeremy Druker, Executive Director, Transitions Online (TOL)
18. Joyce Barnathan, Former President, International Center for Journalists (ICFJ)
19. Kiran Maharaj, President, Media Institute of the Caribbean
20. Lars Boering, Director, European Journalism Centre (EJC)
21. Layla Bahnman, Program Manager, Maharat Foundation
22. Malcolm Joseph, Executive Director, CEMESP Liberia
23. Mark Nelson, Former Director, Center for International Media Assistance (CIMA)
24. Maryam Barre/ Maryan Seylac, Executive Director, Somali Media Women Association (SOMWA)

25. Mijal Iastrebnier, Co-founder, SembraMedia
26. Milica Pesic, Executive Director, Media Diversity Institute
27. Mogens Schmidt, Senior Advisor on Press Freedom and Media Development
28. Olumide Ogunlade, Editor-in-chief, Acclaim Nigeria Magazine
29. Owais Aslam Ali, Executive Director, Pakistan Press Foundation (PPF)
30. Prue Clarke, Co-founder & Executive Director, New Narratives
31. Rawan Damen, Director-General, Arab Reporters for Investigative Journalism – ARIJ
32. Robin Backer, Founder, Media Development Collective (MDC)
33. Roula Mikhael, Executive Director, Maharat Foundation
34. Sameer Padania, Lead Rapporteur, Sustainability of Journalism, Forum for Information & Democracy / Macroscope London
35. Sharon Moshavi, President, International Center for Journalists (ICFJ)
36. Susan Angle, Director, Media for Democracy
37. Tihomir Loza, Executive Director, South-East European Network for Professionalization of Media (SEENPM)
38. Toby Mendel, Director, Centre for Law and Democracy (CLD)
39. Vusumuzi Sifile, Executive Director, Panos Institute Southern Africa
40. Werner Eggert, Director, Interlink Academy for International Dialog and Journalism
41. Wesley Gibbings, Executive Member, Association of Caribbean Media Workers (ACM)
42. Yahye Mohamed, Executive Director, Somaliland Journalists Association
43. Zoe Titus, Director, Namibia Media Trust

## 1. Welcome

### Welcome from Ricardo Corredor, outgoing Chairperson of GFMD

The outgoing Chair:

- *Reminded* members that they had voted at GFMD’s 15-year anniversary celebration last year to postpone the General Assembly until at least some members were able to meet in person.
- *Thanked* the Albanian Media Institute, especially its Director, outgoing Steering Committee member Remzi Lani, for helping organise the General Assembly in Tirana.
- *Reported* that GFMD is in better shape to contribute to overcoming the challenges faced by the sector, highlighting four main improvements over the last five years; financial stability; providing better services to our members; a more solid Secretariat – “We have a staff of 9 wonderful professionals from different parts of the world”; and finally, that GFMD is more influential in the sector.
- *Thanked* the [outgoing Steering Committee](#) and Jaime Abello, General Director of the Fundacion Gabo for their support over the last five years.

### Welcome from Mira Milosevic, Executive Director GFMD

The GFMD Executive Director:

- *Outlined* the trends that are not working in favour of professional journalism; lack of international development and international cooperation; securitised responses to multiple crises; freedom of expression and media freedom is often an add on, an afterthought and not human rights by design.
- *Explained* that GFMD's response has been to make the case as to why investing in journalism and media is important.
- *Warned* of the challenges in the digital sphere, where small, non-profit, community, investigative, and similar newsrooms and media are not recognised by the system and have experienced removal of their content and accounts.
- *Expressed* caution that while the media development and journalism support community have an extraordinary track record in freedom of expression policy and advocacy, there are very few organisations that have the resources and expertise to be effective in media and journalism sustainability policy areas as there is a resource, knowledge, and expertise gap.
- *Called* for more global voices bringing information, evidence, and local solutions to these debates.
- *Thanked* members for their dedication and loyalty to GFMD; seeing value in information and knowledge exchange, policy and decision-making support, and networking.
- *Highlighted* the three most challenging issues identified about the media support sector in general; securing funding; working in environments hostile to independent journalism; an inability to diversify revenue.
- *Explained* how members could contribute to GFMD's 5-year strategy by using the spaces GFMD has created to talk, share knowledge and experiences, and act together.

*“As we go forward every organisation and every project in our network should think about contributing to securing the future of journalism, with less competition and more working together. This means that without policies that envisage new public funding, regulation of digital markets, and enhanced international support systems for non-profit media, independent professional journalism is in danger of becoming an expensive luxury rather than a universal public good. Over the last five years, GFMD members, Steering Committee, our Secretariat team with generous support from our partners have succeeded in making GFMD a trusted partner and strong organisation.”*

Mira and Ricardo gave a tribute to the outgoing Steering Committee.

Special thanks and was given to:

- Joyce Barnathan – outgoing president of the International Center for Journalists (ICFJ) and Chair of GFMD from 2008-2012.
- Mark Nelson – outgoing senior director at the Centre for International Media Assistance (CIMA)

## **2. Adoption of the new GFMD Constitution**

The Chair confirmed that:

- The voting Commission – himself, Mira Milosevic, and Remzi Lani – had met to verify the results.
- Out of GFMD’s 103 members, 81 were up to date on their fees and eligible to vote. Of those, 60 general members voted.
- The votes were cast anonymously and there was no possibility of any member being able to cast more than one vote.
- The new Constitution was approved by over 96% of general members.

As this exceeded the two-thirds threshold outlined in [the previous GFMD constitution](#), the Chair declared the new Constitution adopted, adding: *“I hope that you will all agree that the new constitution will make GFMD a much more efficient and effective organisation but also makes our Steering Committee more representative and diverse and therefore better able to work on behalf of the sector.”*

The General Assembly agreed that:

- The Steering Committee and Executive Committee will be registered in Belgium as Administrators of GFMD.
- That the new constitution, once reviewed by GFMD’s lawyers, will be registered as the organisation’s new statute.

The Executive Director:

- *Informed* the General Assembly of a new Belgium law that regulates the operations of companies and associations which was adopted in 2019. As GFMD is registered in Brussels this new law requires all an organisation’s members to meet once per year to adopt both activity and financial reports but also to approve the choice of auditor for the financial audit;
- *Shared* details of the auditors that GFMD has been using over the last two years.

The GFMD Secretariat has used two auditors in recent years:

VRC REGISTERED AUDITORS

West Point Park, 't Hofveld 6 C3, 1702 Groot-Bijgaarden

TVA: BE0462836191

Auditor - Yves Christiaen

CHRISTIAN MISSANTE SRL

Avenue du Martin Pecheur, 56 bte 26 - 1170 Watermael-Boitsfort, RPM Bruxelles

TVA: BE0466163093

Auditor - Christian Missante

Both auditors were approved by the General Assembly.

CHRISTIAN MISSANTE SRL was approved as the auditor for the GFMD accounts for 2021.

The Executive Director noted that annual General Assembly meetings will take place online, with every fourth taking place in person unless the Steering Committee decides that circumstances allow for more frequent in-person meetings.

## **Adoption of activity and financial reports 2016-2021**

### **Activity reports**

GFMD's full activity reports<sup>1</sup> and strategic reports<sup>2</sup> were shared ahead of the meeting and can be downloaded on the GFMD Strategy and Governance online workspace.<sup>3</sup>

The GFMD Executive Director presented brief highlights from the 2016-2021 period.

Members of the GFMD Secretariat gave an in-depth briefing of activities and achievements.

- Fiona Nzingo – Membership and Engagement Manager – spoke about the GFMD's recruitment and retention of members.
- Anne Marie Hammer – Programmes and Project Manager – spoke about the launch of the GFMD MediaDev Fundraising Guide.
- Ivana Bjelic Vucinic – Programmes and Project Manager – who spoke about GFMD's coordination activities in Lebanon and elsewhere.
- Tom Law – Head of Policy and Learning – spoke about the launch of the International Media Policy and Advisory Centre (GFMD IMPACT).
- Biba Klomp – International Partnerships Manager – spoke about the results of a network analysis of GFMD's membership.
- Olga Komorova – Communications Manager – spoke about improvements to GFMD's communications including the launch of the new GFMD website.

### **Financial report**

Full financial reports<sup>4</sup> were made available ahead of the meeting and can be downloaded from the GFMD Strategy and Governance online workspace.<sup>5</sup>

GFMD Finance Manager, Klea Trbovic Zivkovic, informed the meeting that over the past five years, GFMD has received core and programmatic grants from institutional and private donors for specific activities including from; the National Endowment for Democracy (NED); Open Society Foundations (OSF); Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC); UK Foreign Commonwealth and Development Office (UK FCDO); International Media Support (IMS); Free Press Unlimited (FPU); DW Akademie; UNESCO; and BBC Media Action (BBC MA).

The Executive Director:

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<sup>1</sup> <https://strategy.gfmd.info/reports/2016-2021/activity>

<sup>2</sup> <https://strategy.gfmd.info/reports/2016-2021/strategic>

<sup>3</sup> <https://strategy.gfmd.info/>

<sup>4</sup> <https://strategy.gfmd.info/reports/2016-2021/finance>

<sup>5</sup> <https://strategy.gfmd.info/reports/2016-2021/finance>

- *Reported* that the Steering Committee has approved GFMD’s financial reports and audits over the last four years.
- *Noted* that GFMD was in negative equity in 2017 and 2018 but with careful collaboration between GFMD’s members and partners and financial support from some members such as Free Press Unlimited, the organisation is now in a good position administratively, programmatically, and financially.
- *Explained* that GFMD now has a diverse revenue stream. As well as programmatic and core support from donors and funders, membership fees provide between 35% to 38% of GFMD’s revenues.
  - *“This is really important to make us a credible partner and also to have some independence and do things that are sometimes urgent, but we don’t have funding for them. As we progress, we will think about how to diversify the revenue stream even further and to work with both members and partners to make GFMD an even more strong and stable organisation.”*
- *Predicted* that the GFMD Secretariat will not grow much larger than it is.
  - *“We are planning to provide better conditions for our staff that have been with us for more than two years and to also invest more in the capacity of our members around the world to join us in doing joint policy and advocacy.”*

## Discussion

Jan Lublinski, Head of Department, Policy and Learning, Deutsche Welle Akademie:

*“I think this presentation of Mira and the team she’s built is quite impressive because it has shown what GFMD can do with the content work that we needed to do. And it can do it on many different domains. [...] The fact that this team is active and [...] dealing with all these things is quite an extraordinary achievement of Mira but also of her team.”*

Jesper Højberg, Executive Director, International Media Support (IMS):

*“It is important to discuss priorities [...] because the team is not big. [...] It’s actually overwhelming how much you have been able to achieve. So, of course, all praise for that. But I think when we look forward to having an impact on some of these very, very complex issues that you also brought up Mira so well, I think we need to discuss what it is that we expect from the Secretariat. [...] I don’t think we should leave without having somehow clarified some of those key priorities that will allow us, all of us in particular the Secretariat, to not end up being overstretched.”*

## Adoption

The GFMD activity reports and GFMD financial reports were adopted unanimously by general members present in Tirana and those who attended via Zoom.

It was noted that the adoption and approval of the audit was provisional to allow members unable to attend in person or by Zoom to vote. Recordings of the presentations will be shared with all members on 11th October. The final deadline for objections and/or questions and voting will be 22nd October.

## Announcement of new GFMD Steering Committee

Tom Law from the GFMD Secretariat explained the nomination and voting process:

- 2 Aug. - 10 Sept. – Members were invited to submit their candidacy for the Steering Committee.
- 21 - 28 Sept. – A full list of [candidates for the Steering Committee](#) was shared with the CEO, Director or designated GFMD representative of each general member with a secure link that tracked who had voted but not who they had voted for.
- 29 Sept. – The voting commission met to verify that the votes have been cast and counted fairly.

The outgoing Chairperson Ricardo Corredor informed the meeting that:

- Out of GFMD's 103 general members, 81 were eligible to cast a vote (as per the Constitution, only members who are up to date on membership fees are able to vote at the General Assembly).
- 60 votes were cast. There were no invalid votes.

The outgoing Chairperson Ricardo Corredor announced the duly elected members of the new Steering Committee.

### Asia, Pacific and Oceania (2 members)

- Owais Aslam Ali, Secretary-General, [Pakistan Press Foundation](#)
- Prue Clarke, Co-founder, Executive Director, Editor, [New Narratives](#)

### Eastern Europe, the Caucuses, and Central Asia (2 members)

- Drew Sullivan, Co-founder and Publisher, [Journalism Development Network/OCCRP](#)
- Marija Ristic, Regional Director, [Balkan Investigative Reporting Network - BIRN](#)

### Europe (Western, Central, Northern, and Southern) (1 member)

- Lars Boering, Director, [European Journalism Centre - EJC](#)

### Latin America and the Caribbean (2 members)

- Mijal Iastrebnier, Co-founder and Managing Director, [SembraMedia](#)
- Wesley Gibbings, Executive Member, [Association of Caribbean Media Workers](#)

### Middle East and North Africa (2 members)

- Ayman Mhanna, Executive Director, [Samir Kassir Foundation – Skeyes Center for Media and Cultural Freedom](#)
- Roula Mikhael, Executive Director, [Maharat Foundation](#)

### North America (1 member)

- Sharon Moshavi, President, [International Center for Journalists - ICFJ](#)

### Sub-Saharan Africa (2 members)



- Vusumuzi Sifile, Executive Director, [Panos Institute Southern Africa](#)
- Zoe Titus, Director, [Namibia Media Trust](#)

### **Global (3 members)**

- Caroline Vuillemin, General Director, [Fondation Hironnelle](#)
- Jan Lublinski, Head of Department, Policy and Learning, [Deutsche Welle Akademie](#)
- Ruth Kronenburg, Director of Operations, [FreePress Unlimited](#)

### **Topical & policy (2 members)**

- Tabani Moyo, Acting Regional Director, [Media Institute of Southern Africa - MISA](#)
- Toby Mendel, Executive Director, [Centre for Law and Democracy](#)

The outgoing Chair thanked all those who had put themselves forward as a candidate.

*“It is really heartening to see such enthusiasm for the work of GFMD and your willingness to contribute to the future of our network. I am sure that we will find constructive ways to engage you all in our work over the next few years. It is also very welcome to see that 8 of the 17 members are women. This is a vast improvement from the 5 out of 19 women who served on the previous Steering Committee.”*

The GFMD Executive Director extended “warm congratulations to the members of our new steering committee. All of us at the Secretariat are really looking forward to working with you.”

## **Conclusion**

Tributes were paid to Ricardo Corredor, Outgoing Chairperson of GFMD by Mira Milosevic, Ayman Mhanna, and Jaime Abello.

The Chair brought the 2021 GFMD General Assembly to close.

**-- ENDS --**

Additional note: The announcement of the new Steering Committee marked the official end of the GFMD General Assembly. All members were invited to attend the first meeting of the new [GFMD Steering Committee](#) which was held following a short break in proceedings. The first meeting of the new GFMD Steering Committee voted for a new Chairperson, Deputy Chairperson and Treasurer.

Signed:

Mira Milosevic  
Executive Director, GFMD

Zoe Titus  
Chair, GFMD

