

Secretary General Annual Report 2019 and update 2020

Due to the special circumstances of this Annual Assembly after its postponement to November 2020, this Report spans over 2019 and in an additional section, gives the update until this October.

Annual Report 2019

CIRCOM Regional worked in 2019 as an efficient cooperative mainly based on knowledge sharing. We worked hard on serving our members with diverse vocational trainings for journalists and technicians.

Our organization is an extraordinary network that helps all regional public service media to adapt to the current change in users' habits. We are learning new ways of approaching our audience beyond traditional TV broadcasting. We do discuss formats, storytelling and even what journalism is nowadays.

We are also focused on making coproductions and encouraging the exchange of regional programme. In order to stimulate achievements in regional media, we award the Prix CIRCOM Regional to the best regional programmes in Europe.

Nominations and Membership

Jyri Kataja-Rahko, Yle, Finland, has been re-elected President of CR Regional at the Annual Assembly on 29 May 2019 in Novi Sad and this is his second term of Presidency.

Lís Ní Dhalaiigh, Director of Marketing, TG4, has been appointed on 29 May 2019 the Vice President of CR since TG4 is the host of the next Annual Conference.

Eivind Undrum Jacobsen, NRK, Norway, became National Coordinator for Norway in November 2019. Maja Smiljanić, RTV, Vojvodina, Serbia, became National Coordinator for Vojvodina, Serbia, in October 2019.

Teresa Azcona, CARTV, Spain, became National Coordinator for Spain in November 2019.

Josefin Zeigler, SVT, Sweden, became National Coordinator for Sweden in December 2019.

Neil Bennett, BBC, UK, became National Coordinator for UK in October 2019.

Five new Members of the Executive Committee were elected in November 2019: Neil Bennet, BBC; Jean-Mark Dubois, FTV; Eivind Undrum Jacobsen, NRK; Ildiko Komaromi, MTVA; Gordana Škaljac-Narančić, HRT.

Zoran Medved, RTVSLO, has been approved as Internal Auditor in November 2019.

MG ALBA, media public service company providing content to BBC Alba in Gaelic, was accepted as a new Member of CR in November 2019, coming into effect in January 2020.

Budget

The budget plan for 2019 is taking into consideration the subscription fees applicable for 2019 and the confirmed Prix CIRCOM sponsorships. Because of the increased number of trainings and workshops, the training budget has been increased for €3,750 in accordance with the training plan.

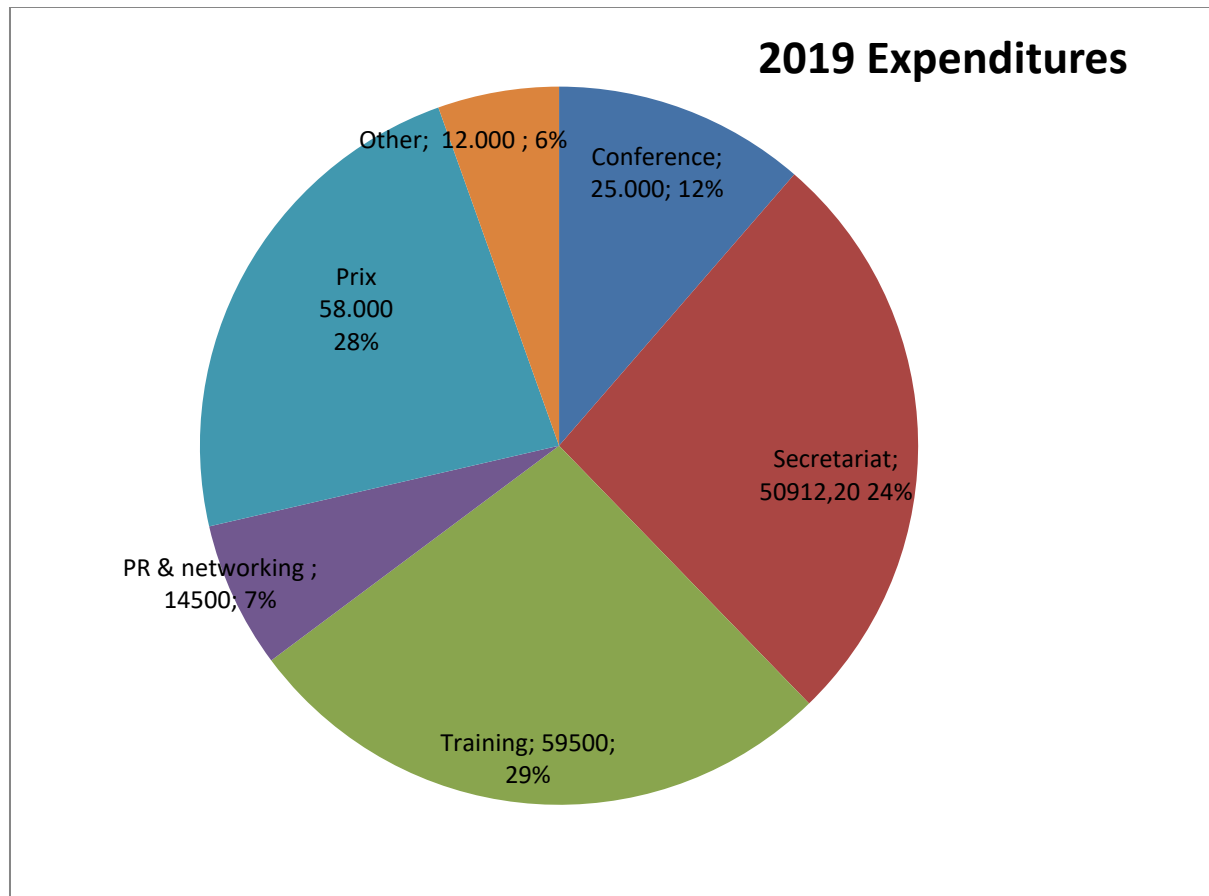
The outline budget for 2019 is approved at the Annual Assembly on 23 May 2018 in Leeuwarden, The Netherlands.

Financing

The revenues and expenditures were within the budget and there were no unexpected events.

The realisation of budget up to 31 December 2019 was:

Membership fees	138.837,84
Sponsor Prix	58.000,00
Other	0,00
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	196.837,84
Expenditures	
Conference	24.728,56
Prix CIRCOM	47.233,47
Training	37.243,67
Public relations and networking	5.424,74
Secretariat	38.309,48
Other	3.831,60
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	156.771,52
Result regular activities	40.066,32



Internal auditors concluded that based on the information provided, facts and figures in CR financial books were accurate and truthful to a faithful image of CR revenues and expenditures. CR took good care of its expenditures and the activities were performed to the benefit of the association to preserve its regular activities, to promote the association to the European institutions and partners. There was still a delay in paying a membership fee by some members.

The Annual Conference

The 37th Annual Conference of CIRCUM Regional, with the theme FoRM – The Future of Regional Media, was held on 30 and 31 May 2019 in Novi Sad, Vojvodina, Serbia, hosted by RTV/Radio Television of Vojvodina.

Over 200 participants attended sessions held by 25 speakers on topics related to quality of programme, interaction with the audience, digital technologies of the future. It was a very good Conference with a well-balanced selection of sessions getting first-hand information on advanced technology developments applicable in journalism. We were led through 50 ways to make better content and communicating it effectively to our audiences, about impacts of 5G and artificial intelligence. The constructive journalism session struck a positive note and added to the ongoing conversation about new formats in storytelling. There was also a demonstration of media content manipulation presented by the BBC Blue Room team. Additional room was provided for “Watch the Winners” where participants could watch all the winning entries of Prix CR 2019, each introduced by one of the judges.

Prix CIRCUM Regional

Prix CIRCUM 2019 had 218 entries in 11 categories: Documentary, Entertainment and Drama, Europe, Investigative Journalism, Minorities in Society, Most Original and Innovative, Music and Arts, News Programme, News Report, Video Journalism, Young Onscreen Talent, and Grand Prix. There was also Citizenship Coproduction Special Award with 37 entries.

Prix CIRCUM judging with 14 judges, was in April in Delden, the Netherlands, hosted by RTV Oost.

The circulation of winner and commended programmes has been going well, some 27 programmes being circulated until November and there have been announcements that different stations would like to use non-winners as well.

Training

The training programme has been going according to the yearly plan.

Attendance was good with all the places in trainings being filled up. New topics for training, such as climate change and global warming were discussed.

“New formats for storytelling” was held on 20-25 May 2019 in Novi Sad with 14 journalists from 13 countries and 5 expert trainers. The training was to help journalists change their mindset about their coverage of the news and get out of their TV-only news production habits. The feedback was very good.

Senior managers’ forum “Structure and strategy for a strong future” was on 14 June 2019 at the BBC Yorkshire in Leeds, with 17 delegates from 10 countries. Among the topics discussed were the strategy leading to the launch of the new BBC Scotland channel, the BBC’s move to the Media City in Salford. The feedback was extremely positive.

The innovative workshop “Formats for a successful future: how to attract new generations to public media”, on 4 October 2019 in Barcelona, had 14 participants from 8 countries. It was assessed positively by the participants.

The interactive training “Leading through change”, on 16-18 October 2019 at EYC in Budapest, had 15 participants from 9 countries.

“Life after TV”, on 25-29 November 2019, at EYC in Budapest, for 9 journalists/content producers and 3 editors/newsroom managers was the last one under this form. A new concept has been under discussion.

In 2019 there were 13 trainings with 131 delegates from 27 countries.

Coproductions

Citizenship 6 project started in September 2018, ended in June 2019. Final report was sent on 30 September 2019 and the final grant was 150,000 €. 42 commissioned stories and 66 free basket stories were produced, in total 108 stories. The stories reached 19 million viewers.

EU project *Citizen Heroes* with 15 CR members, started in summer 2019. Each member produced one story about a common theme related to a European topic "EU protect". The stories were uploaded on CR exchange platform to allow other members to broadcast them. Each member received a fixed sum for the production of the story plus 1,000 € for the editorial coordination of the project inside the participating company. There was also a financial incentive to broadcast the stories made by other members.

All the members produced and broadcast their stories before 30 September 2019 and 10 members broadcast also the stories made by the others. Until mid-November there were about 5.4 million viewers.

Public Affairs and Networking

The DSG met the Head of the Audiovisual Unit of the European Parliament on 2 July and on 23 October 2019 in Strasbourg who confirmed the EP cooperation in launching trainings about climate change. CR representatives, the SG of CR and J.M. Dubois, FTV, attended the Annual Conference of Public Broadcasting International (PBI) in Helsinki.

The Council of Europe Human Rights Documentary festival asked for a range of previous Prix winners in Investigative journalism to be screened in Chisinau, Moldova, in October 2019.

We addressed several universities that in the past had collaboration with CR in different projects, to become partners with CR and develop a relationship. The Dundalk Institute of Technology was the first to react in a positive way asking for more information.

CR Newsletters are sent out monthly.

Update 2020

The year 2020 started normally and then, with the beginning of spring, changed drastically with the coronavirus crisis. The massive lockdowns and travel bans, imposed on a wide scale, coincided with the months when the CIRCOM community is usually busiest. The training programme was gathering momentum and preparations were underway for the most important annual events – the Annual Conference, the Prix CIRCOM competition and the Gala, and the Annual Assembly preceded by the Executive Committee and the European Board meetings. This has been a critical situation for an organization like ours, with networking and exchange of knowledge in a multinational background being one of our main assets.

CIRCOM had to adapt rapidly its core activity to new circumstances and had to do it in a complicated atmosphere of uncertainty.

The Secretary General, Fernando Ojea, explained the first measures to be approved in an informal online meeting of the Executive Committee on 25 March 2020. The ordinary September meeting of the Executive Committee was held online too.

The regular meetings of the Executive Committee, the European Board and the Annual Assembly and Prix CIRCOM Gala Award that were scheduled in May, were not held. The November meetings of the Executive Committee, the European Board that were initially scheduled to be held in Zaragoza-Aragon, Spain, are now held online, together with the Annual Assembly.

Triadafilos Stangos, ERT3 became National Coordinator for Greece in February 2020.

Fernando Ojea, CRTVG, became National Coordinator for Spain in July 2020. Francisco Querol, CARTV, took over as the National Coordinator for Spain in October 2020.

Tallina TV, Estonia, announced ceasing its CIRCOM membership with the end of 2020.

The Annual Conference 2020

The 38th Annual Conference with the theme Creative Regions – Creative Economy, was scheduled for 28 and 29 May 2020 in Galway, Ireland, hosted by TG4. The Conference key topics: Creative economy, Public value and trust and Developing skills and talent.

Due to coronavirus crisis the Conference was postponed to 2021 when, circumstances permitting, it will also be held in the city of Galway.

Prix CIRCUM Regional

Prix CIRCUM 2020 had almost 200 entries in 11 categories: Documentary, Entertainment and Drama, Europe, Investigative Journalism, Minorities in Society, Most Original and Innovative, Music and Arts, News Programme, News Report, Video Journalism, Young Onscreen Talent, and Grand Prix. There were no Citizenship Coproductions entries this year.

Prix CIRCUM 2020 judging was to be held in Sitgès near Barcelona, hosted by CCMA-Catalonia. Because of the coronavirus situation the judging was first postponed to October and then it was decided to hold the judging online from the end of August during three weeks.

The Prix CIRCUM 2020 Winners and Commended were announced online on 8 October, the Grand Prix was announced in an online Gala event in the evening of 14 October.

The Winners received the trophy and the certificate by post and the cash prize. The Commended received the certificates by post.

Travel and accommodation to the next CIRCUM Conference and Prix Gala receive two people representing the winning production or station. Category Commended receive travel and accommodation to the next CIRCUM Conference and Prix Gala for one person representing the winning production or station.

During the months of the COVID-19 crisis, it has been difficult to produce new programmes and to meet current programming needs. So, CR came up with a programme exchange initiative to help each other. The database created consists of Prix CIRCUM entries, both winners and commended programmes and other entries from 2018 and 2019 which are available for broadcasting. At least one regional transmission and one repeat of these programmes by any CR member station is available until 31 December 2020.

Training

Train the Trainers, EYC in Budapest, 3-5 February 2020 with Mia Costello as the trainer, had 8 delegates.

During the past 5 years about 10 countries are still making use of this particular training.

In March 2020 began a time for intensive rethinking of our established practices and newsroom workflows. Responding to drastic changes in everyday life and restrictions in travel and contacts due to the COVID-19 crisis we had to adjust our activities on the go. The priority was reshaping the extensive year-round training programme. Therefore, we have been moving online. The workshops that were planned for March, April and May were postponed. The focus of the content changed from pre-coronavirus themes to issues that we are facing in COVID times.

“Climate Crisis” workshop to be held on 27-29 April at the European Parliament in Brussels was postponed.

“Building resilience in uncertain times”, on 28 April, a webinar for 14 editors from 11 countries with Mia Costello and Resilience expert Zuzanna Ziomecka.

“Newsrooms in a Pandemic - Sharing how life is changing”, on 15 June, a webinar with 18 participants from 11 countries, led by Mia Costello.

“How did we do?” – What we can learn from covering the pandemic, on 15 July, a webinar with 13 participants from 7 countries, led by Mia Costello and joined by David Tracz, Head of Social Media for BBC England.

“Fact-checking at the regional scale – Good practices and toolbox for fact-checking in the regions”, on 7 September, a 90 mins webinar with 10 participants from 8 countries and 3 speakers: Marie Bohner, “Best practices”, Denis Teyssou, InVid, an open-source verification tool and Guillaume Kuster, Organisation patterns.

“Future funding of PSM - Impacts on the regional output”, a 3-hour webinar, RTVSLO on 24 September, with 13 participants from 8 countries. Speakers were Zoran Medved, RTVSlo, Florence Harmann, EBU, and Ulrika von Celsing, SVT.

“Applications of Artificial Intelligence in Media Industry”, RAI half-day webinar was held on 21 October. One-day Senior managers’ forum is postponed to 2021.

Apart from webinars we turned inwards and looked for new expertise among colleagues. Journalists from TeleMadrid, RAI Naples, BBC Points West, RAI News24 and ČT Ostrava talked on camera about how the COVID-19 outbreak changed the way they work.

Public Affairs and Networking

Our cooperation with the Dundalk Institute of Technology within the framework of the UNI project was just gaining impetus as we signed the bilateral Memorandum of Understanding and the Letter of Intent for Cooperation, when we had to curtail this activity in hope that CIRCOM comes back to its regular activity.