



erim



Equal Rights
& Independent
Media

Annual Report

2020





Dear Friends of ERIM

What a year of change and challenge. First, we have changed our name to Equal Rights and Independent Media (ERIM) to better reflect who we are, and what we do. This is a “doing business as” name change and as a result all our branding, logo and website have changed too. We hope you like the new name and look.

Second... COVID. Fortunately, we at ERIM have not been adversely affected as individuals or as an organization. We have been able to maintain our programmes, albeit with difficulty and a lot of hard, creative and flexible work by our team and our partners. Our donors have maintained their trust in us and for that we thank them, and as a result, as the following pages will show, we have been able to provide vital support to communities in this time of tremendous stress, challenge and deprivation.

Our support has ranged from core and institutional support to civil society, activists and independent media to emergency evacuation support for activists and journalists at risk. We’ve provided legal support and, for example in Albania, food and sustenance support to those who desperately need it.

ERIM itself has grown, building on the solid work we do in Eurasia, Middle East and North Africa (MENA) and Central Asia. We’ve moved into bigger premises in Lyon and expanded our teams and partnerships in the countries where we work. Our team in Lyon is now more than 20 dedicated professionals.

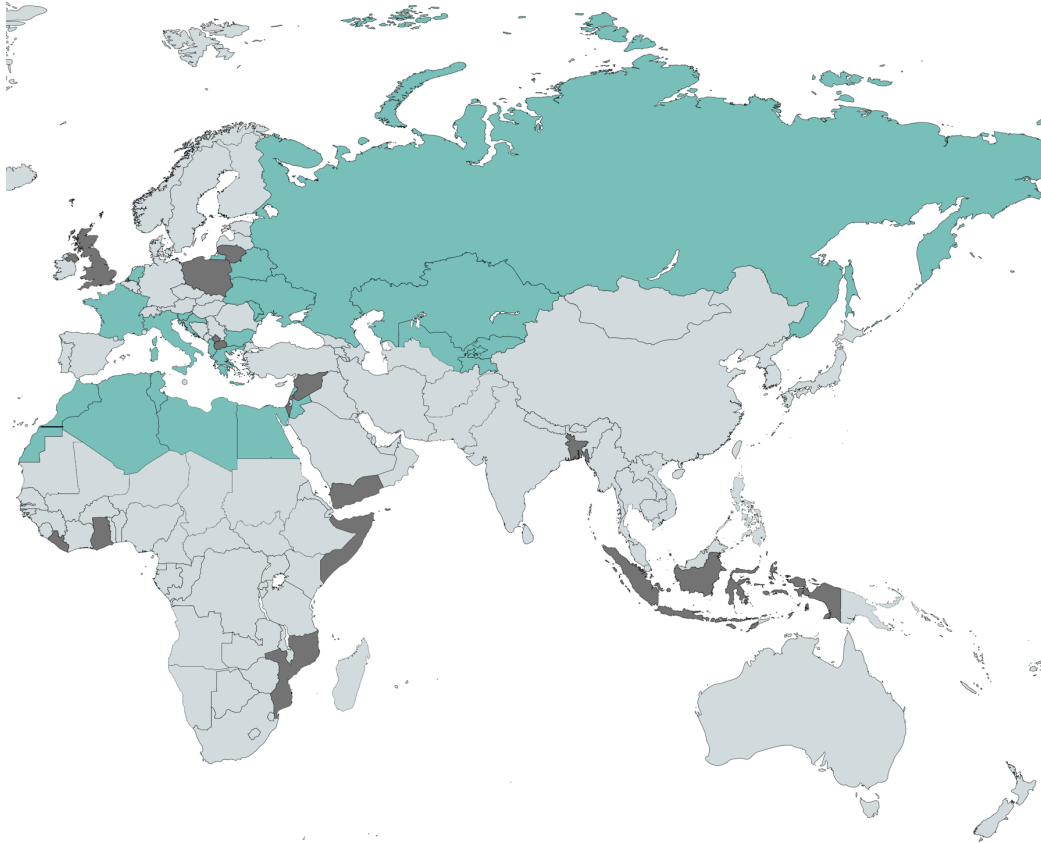
Our approach remains the same though, working in close and equal partnership with civil society, human rights activists and independent media wherever we work.

We salute their courage and determination to help their communities and seek a better future in the face of sometimes life-threatening personal risk. We salute the courage of those we have worked with for years now, who in 2020 stood up to power to fight for change. Some were beaten and some went to prison, and some have had to flee their countries, we hope only temporarily. In our small way we stand with you.

Mark Whitehouse
President, ERIM

Mike de Villiers
Director, ERIM

Where we work



2020 Countries

- Albania
- Algeria
- Armenia
- Azerbaijan
- Belarus
- Bulgaria
- Croatia
- Egypt
- France
- Georgia
- Greece
- Hungary
- Italy
- Jordan
- Kazakhstan
- Kosovo
- Kyrgyzstan
- Lebanon
- Libya
- Moldova
- Morocco
- The Netherlands
- OPT
- Russia
- Slovenia
- Tajikistan
- Tunisia
- Ukraine
- Uzbekistan

Past countries

- Bangladesh
- Ghana
- Indonesia
- Kenya
- Liberia
- Lithuania
- Republic of North Macedonia
- Nigeria
- Poland
- Somalia
- Syria
- United Kingdom
- Yemen
- Mozambique

About us

Equal Rights and Independent Media (ERIM) was founded in 2004, in Lyon, France. Our mission is to promote human rights, strengthen independent media and civil society and empower individuals through developing critical thinking skills, enabling them to take informed decisions and to claim their rights. Over the past sixteen years we've worked in 43 countries, mainly in Eurasia, the Middle East and North Africa (MENA), Europe and Central Asia.

ERIM is a non-profit, non-governmental organisation with an annual turnover of over 4 million EUR and funding support from multiple donors.

Our two main areas of action

MEDIA AND MEDIA EDUCATION

Strengthening local and independent media, by improving the sustainability, quality and accuracy of reporting.

Developing Media and Information Literacy (MIL) by empowering citizens so they can critically engage with what they read and by increasing their ability to access accurate and objective information.

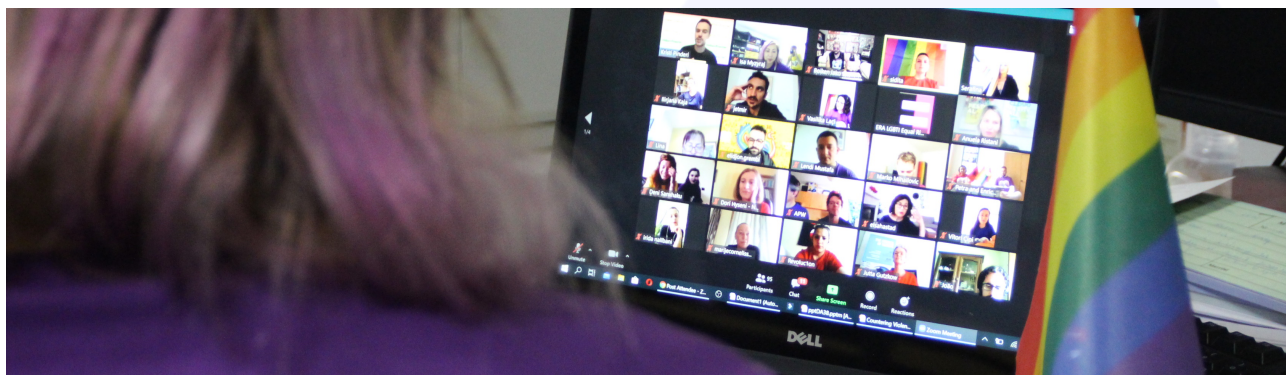
HUMAN RIGHTS

Promoting fundamental human rights with a particular focus on women's rights, LGBTIQ+ rights and freedom of opinion and expression. Working with civil society organisations, human rights defenders, media, journalists and media lawyers, to provide capacity building; emergency and legal support to victims of repression; and national and international networking opportunities.

Our partnership approach

We believe that the way we work sets us apart from others in our field. This is due to our partnership approach which is hands-on, in depth and participative. Our project team is constantly involved at every level of our projects' implementation and we strive to help our partners grow throughout the process.

We seek to build long-standing close relationships with local partners founded on trust, equal partnership, and local ownership.



An online meeting for the PRIDE team in Albania

COVID-19 Response

No annual report for 2020 could be published without a mention of COVID-19. It has been an extremely challenging year for everyone but thanks to the excellent work of our partners and the flexibility of our donors we have continued working with our beneficiaries and provided support to communities in the countries where we work.

Eastern Partnership

In July 2020 we launched our [COVID19: Civil Society Resilience and Sustainability](#) project, in partnership with Human Rights House Tbilisi, Human Rights House Yerevan, Human Rights House Foundation and the Transatlantic Foundation. Funded by the European Union, the project aims to support civil society organisations and independent media across the Eastern Partnership region and to build their resilience to keep working in the aftermath of the pandemic. In 2020 we provided 99 CSOs and media with emergency financial support to cover core costs, technical training, equipment and psychosocial anti-burnout support.



Online training to assist vulnerable groups during the pandemic, Kharkiv regional charitable fund

MENA

Through [Jamil.Net](#) in Tunisia, we provided emergency grants to support community media resist the crisis. Our local partner Alternative Media also organised online activities with young Tunisians to empower them to counter fake news about the pandemic that has been spread on social media.

Supporting Women's and LGBT rights in the time of COVID

In 2020 many of our partners working to promote women's and LGBTIQ+ rights found themselves struggling financially and unable to host meetings or deliver support due to COVID-19, leaving their communities, already disproportionately hard-hit by the crisis, even more vulnerable

In Albania, the crisis left many members of the LGBTIQ+ community without work and food. With the support of the EU Delegation in Albania and the Agence française de développement, we distributed 700 emergency food packages between March to November to at-risk members of the local community. With our partner ProLGBT, we also organised the online awareness raising campaign #Queerantine, and the first ever European online Pride Parade (#PrideON) in May 2020. Despite the pandemic, the event brought together 100 Albanian LGBTIQ+ community members and reached thousands on social media. ProLGBT said: *"We turned the 'quarantine' into 'queerantine' – highlighting the fact that queer people in Albania feel locked down all the time because of their sexual orientation and/or gender identity."*

In Moldova, with our partners, GenderdocM and Gender Centru, we created an emergency fund for at-risk beneficiaries. Approximately, 220 women, children and LGBTIQ+ people in critical situations received financial aid or emergency items such as medication, school kits, food and baskets of essential items. The support was provided as part of our Moldova Against All Discrimination project funded by the European Union.

Media Development

OUR OBJECTIVES

ERIM works to strengthen independent media and help ensure access to alternative sources of information. We support media through core support and capacity building, helping independent media remain competitive where they are increasingly shut out of local markets, and helping them deal with the impact of the fast-changing digital world. Our aim is to support the production quality content which promotes critical thinking and deals with important human rights issues.

WHAT WE DO

- Training and mentoring for journalists and journalism students in content production; video and radio production; multimedia production; issue-based journalism; investigative journalism; in-depth reporting, social media and mobile reporting.
- Training and support for media in management; ensure financial sustainability to activists and media professionals; strategic development training and support.
- Training and support for media lawyers including legal analysis of editorial content, legal defence before local courts and bringing cases before the European Court of Human Rights (ECHR).
- Emergency core support to independent media to support them through the COVID-19 pandemic
- Small grants for media projects and strategy implementation.
- Audience research surveys to provide statistically valid data for small regional and local media as well as national media
- Support independent media's access to increase their competitiveness the media market and improve their sustainability

Key figures

52 independent media supported
1255 media outputs produced
140 individuals trained in media



Presenting the Moldova media audience research

Moldova Independent Media Marketing Mechanism

In 2020, our independent mechanism to support advertising income for independent media became fully operational. We also ran the largest ever audience survey in the country: 10,000 persons provided data for local, regional and national media.

Our marketing mechanism is a locally registered independent NGO called Independent Media House, IMH. As of October 2020, it has started securing advertising campaigns for local businesses to run in independent media. Our aim is to help rebalance the advertising market and work with the media to better develop their marketing and sales strategies.

MEDIA & INFORMATION LITERACY

OUR OBJECTIVES

ERIM works to empower citizens to engage critically with what they watch, hear and read – increasing their resistance to fake news and helping them access accurate and objective information. We seek to institutionalise Media and Information Literacy (MIL) wherever we work, building a cadre of trained educators and supporting organisations to promote MIL education in the long term.

WHAT WE DO

ERIM has developed a package of MIL tools and activities adaptable to local circumstances including:

- MIL and hate speech awareness training of trainers' workshops in libraries, universities, schools, youth and community centres.
- Developing MIL courses, teaching manuals and curricula for different target groups.
- Creating online platforms for MIL resources and online educational games (website and App) to build resistance among young people to hate speech and misinformation.
- Media corners in libraries to increase access to independent information.
- Events such as public discussions, hackathons, MIL summer fairs and media tours to share good practices among stakeholders and raise awareness about how the media works and promote media literacy.
- Media monitoring to identify country-specific misinformation, hate-speech, fake news and propaganda.



A filmmaking workshop for young people in The Netherlands as part of our Speak Up! project.



Media training in The Netherlands as part of our Speak Up! project.

Key figures

- 83** librarians, teachers and educators took part in training of trainers in MIL
- 5275** individuals trained in MIL
- 137** journalists trained
- 108** events/public discussions (online and offline)

Media & information literacy

Gaming for media literacy

QLEVER, launched in August 2020, is a media literacy game platform for young people across Central Asia. Hosting 4 educational games (with more to be added soon), QLEVER is available on smartphones and computers and translated in Kazakh, Kyrgyz, Russian, Tajik and Uzbek. Young players can win prizes, from mobile phone credit and t-shirts to smart phones and laptops. Players win points if they provide correct answers to questions linked to media literacy.

More than 17,000 young players had registered by the end of 2020, including nearly 5,000 girls. 76% of the players come from rural and marginalized communities and over 5% have already received prizes in return for gaining critical thinking and media literacy skills. Artyom, a 19-year-old player from Kazakhstan, won a backpack after a week of playing. He is one of 14,000 users registered in Kazakhstan. *"I gained media literacy and learned to identify fake news and hate speech", he said.* Artyom likes the multiplayer quiz and shared his secret for winning; *"The more you play, the better you get, you develop skills."*



The QR code to join our MIL game Qlever

Improving marketing skills for community radios

Marwa is the marketing officer for the community radio Cillium FM (Kasserine, Tunisia) and is particularly energetic and enthusiastic about her work. Marwa runs marketing training as part of the JAMIL.Net project, which aims to strengthen the financial viability of community radio stations in Tunisia.



Media training in our JAMIL.NET project

She has improved the marketing tools available to the radio stations, including in how to approach new advertisers., and used social networks and innovative ways to improve the radio stations' online content, increasing the number of views and engagement with publications.

Through her work, Marwa seeks above all to make citizens aware of their rights, to involve them in the democratic transition and to emphasize the importance of youth in this process.

Freedom of Expression

OUR OBJECTIVES

ERIM provides assistance and capacity building to media organisations, journalists, media lawyers and civil society organisations (CSOs) focused on media freedom and freedom of expression. We seek to improve freedom of expression and media-related legislation and its implementation. We also provide emergency support and legal support to media and media professionals in need.

WHAT WE DO

- Review and analyse key media legislation and produce recommendation reports and white papers
- Organise policy-dialogue meetings with decision-makers.
- Support for media coverage and monitoring of human rights and social issues by journalists and bloggers.
- Legal training for media lawyers in local and international media law, in particular ECHR case law.
- Training for journalists and media organisations in media law and legal support such as legal analysis pre-publication, as well as legal defence before the courts.
- Support for joint initiatives between media, local communities, youth and civil society.
- Thematic training workshops on the Right to Information (RTI)
- Regional and international peer-to-peer exchanges to promote sharing of best practices.
- Emergency assistance to media workers.



Key figures

- 47** journalists, media professionals and CSOs trained
- 149** human rights defenders supported
- 37** independent media supported
- 130** journalists and bloggers supported

Monitoring fundamental rights and freedoms in Morocco

Our Moroccan partner Adala is one of the founding members of an Observatory group to promote fundamental freedoms and human rights in Morocco. This group monitors fundamental freedoms violations and work on legal reforms, in order to promote freedom of expression, association and assembly and access to information. In order to build their capacities on these different subjects, the founders took part in many project trainings and workshops and participated in various advocacy meetings held with national public authorities and institutional bodies. Today, the Observatory group has 10 CSO members and adopted an ethical charter in 2020. ERIM is working hand by hand with its local partners to structure the Observatory group in order to ensure its sustainability.

Human rights

OUR OBJECTIVES

We aim to promote a community of human rights supporters and advocates united by shared values through supporting human rights defenders, activists and organisations so that they can better serve their communities and better advocate for their rights. Our actions are sustainable, building capacity and resilience through training and psychosocial support.

We also work to strengthen international human rights support coordination in France.

WHAT WE DO

- Emergency support to human rights defenders and activists including legal, psychosocial and relocation support.
- Mapping and needs assessments of human rights and civil society organisations
- Capacity building for local CSOs including training and mentorship in strategic planning, leadership and financial management, communications, technical support and digitalization, fundraising and outreach etc.
- Core support for organisations in need.
- Small grants support for regional events, advocacy and campaigns.

Key figures

10 events organised
40 HRDs supported
120 CSOs supported
50 small grants to promote HR

Plateforme des droits humains (PDH)

ERIM is a founding member of the French NGO network: The Human Rights Platform/Plateforme des Droits Humains (PDH). The Platform has 21 French NGO members and works to improve coordination and advocacy on human rights at the national and international level.

www.plateformedh.fr/

**IOI La plateforme
IOI des droits humains**



The NGO Projector are working to combat discrimination in Ukraine under our COVID19: Civil Society Resilience and Sustainability Project

Anti-burnout psychosocial support

In many countries where we work, activists, CSO's and independent media face intimidation for their civic activity from society and are often on the frontline of government repression.

An external assessment of our EU funded WOMEN project highlighted that anti-burnout support and resilience building for such groups were essential and recommended these activities should be included in all future projects.

We have acted on this recommendation and have continued to include emergency psychosocial, legal and medical support wherever possible in our work.

Gender equality

OUR OBJECTIVES

ERIM works with organisations, human rights defenders and activists promoting gender equality, women's and LGBTIQ+ rights. We aim to combat gender-based discrimination and protect vulnerable members of the community in the long term.

WHAT WE DO

- International and regional events for women human rights defenders including leadership academies for young women activists and advocacy events linked to the 8th of March International Women's Rights Day.
- Core support for key services such as LGBTI and women's shelters.
- Support for media campaigns promoting inclusion and events such as film festivals
- Organisational assessments and capacity development for LGBTIQ+ and women's rights organisations
- Small grants support for regional advocacy and outreach.
- Training for media professionals in how to better report on minority issues.
- Public discussions on women's rights rural communities and local libraries.
- Psychosocial, anti-burnout and resilience building support to women's and LGBTIQ+ rights defenders.
- Development and broadcast of the Moldovan Women's and minorities focused TV talk show "Optmart SRL"



Natalia Bukhta in Strasbourg

Levchuk v. Ukraine

In 2020, Attorney Natalia Bukhta won a groundbreaking domestic violence case before the European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR).

In her preparation for the case, Ms Bukhta received one-to-one mentor support and attended training in Strasbourg organized by ERIM and Ukrainian Women's Fund. This was part of a regional women's rights project aiming to support and promote the emerging role of women human rights defenders in five Eurasian countries. One aspect of the project focused on improving lawyers understanding of international mechanisms to protect women's and girls' rights, including national and regional training sessions with experienced lawyers in ECtHR procedures and mentoring in writing applications and third-party interventions.

Key figures

35 women's rights organisations supported
65 women HRD's and CSO representatives that receiving training
1,203 LGBTIQ+ people supported
38 female social entrepreneurs trained

Gender equality

Supporting the LGBTIQ Community in Albania

Our PRIDE project supporting the LGBTIQ community in Albania is now in its 3rd year. With our partners Aleanca Community Centre we supported a total of 150 LGBTIQ+ youth in Albania in 2020. This included psychosocial and legal support, free STD testing, medication, clothes, hygiene products, and access to vocational courses. 16 people were also housed at the Streha Shelter and took part in reintegration services which covered life skills training, housing and accommodation, financial support, cultural activities, vocational and foreign language courses among others.

Supporting women entrepreneurs

Under our COVID19: Civil Society Resilience and Sustainability project we are supporting Women's Rights House in Shirak, one of the poorest regions in Armenia. Shirak was hit hard by COVID-19 and many women lost their livelihoods. As a response, the project promotes women's entrepreneurship, gathering a group of 30 women and girls with handicraft skills for training and supporting 13 of their business projects with grants, including the production of handmade eco toys and bags, beekeeping and honey production. This project was financed by the European Union, and implemented with Human Rights House Yerevan.

Working with young people in Moldova

In Moldova, Youth of Gagauzia runs workshops, concerts, film screenings and informal meetings for young people on gender equality, gender stereotypes, and the empowerment of women and girls. This is done the framework of our Civil Society Organisations Capacity Development project, funded by the European Union. In 2020 they trained over 100 young people from the region on gender equality and women's rights.



The 'Fight like a girl' team, running self defence classes in Georgia and Ukraine

Supporting women human rights defenders

After two years of collaboration with Human Rights House Tbilisi and Ukrainian Women's Fund, our regional project 'Promoting new women leaders and invisible women human rights activists' across the Eastern Partnership and Eurasia came to an end in 2020.

The project included a whole host of events organised across the region from National Leadership Academies for young women human rights defenders, feminist stand-up comedy nights, self-defence classes for women and LGBTIQ+ people and workshops with young people on gender based violence. Our media campaigns also reached over 6 million people on topics from sexual harassment in Universities, women's homelessness, women in prisons, and gender violence.

Our donors

- Agence française de développement
- Drosos Foundation
- European Endowment for Democracy
- European Union
- Fondation de France
- Métropole de Lyon
- National Endowment for Democracy
- Agence française du service civique
- United Kingdom Foreign and Commonwealth Office
- United State Department of State
- Ville de Lyon

Our partners

Eastern Partnership & Eurasia

- Asociatia Bibliotecarilor din Republica, Moldova
- Gender Centru, Moldova
- GENDERDOC-M Information Centre, Moldova
- Global Forum for Media Development
- Human Rights House Tbilisi, Georgia
- Human Rights House Yerevan, Armenia
- Independent Media House (IMH), Moldova
- MediaNet, Kazakhstan
- Media Support Center Foundation, Kyrgyzstan
- Modern Journalism Development Center, Uzbekistan
- Moldovan Association of Librarians, Moldova
- Public Organisation "Gurdofarid", Tajikistan
- Ukrainian Women's Fund, Ukraine

Europe/International

- Aleanca LGBT Community Centre, Albania
- Canal France International, France
- CEL Kosova, Kosovo
- Centre for Peace, Non-Violence and Human Rights, Croatia
- Common Frames, The Netherlands
- DZZD "Obuchenie", Bulgaria
- East European Center for Democracy, Poland
- FORMA.Azione Srl, Italy
- Global Forum for Media Development
- Human Rights House Foundation, Norway
- ITET Perugia, Italy
- Karpos, Greece
- Next Step, Hungary
- PRIZMA Foundation, Slovenia
- Pro LGBT, Albania
- Sofia Development Association, Bulgaria
- Streha Shelter, Albania
- Transatlantic Foundation, Belgium
- UNESCO

MENA

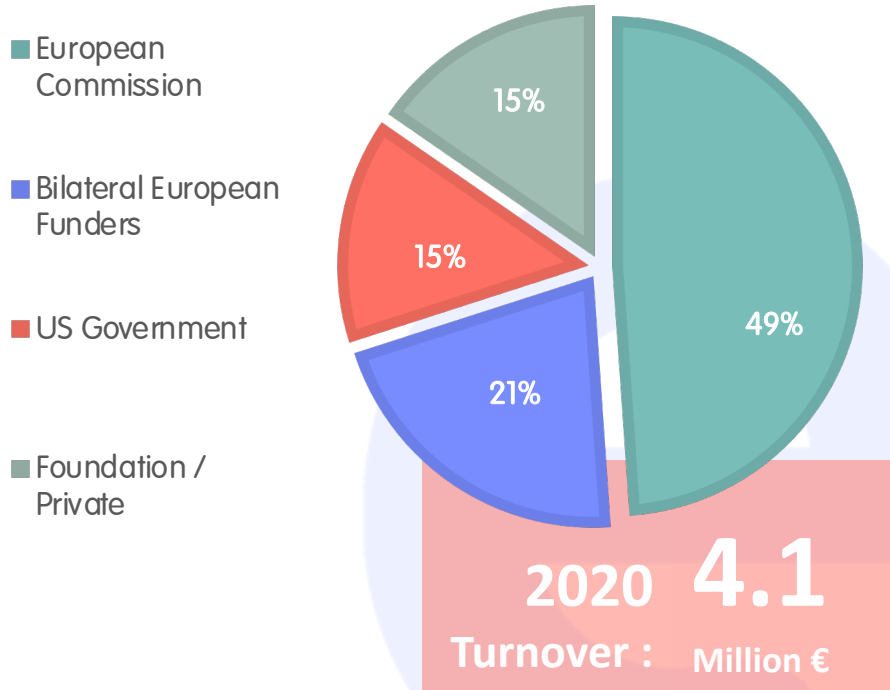
- ADALA pour le droit à un procès équitable, Morocco
- Alternative Media (ATMA), Tunisia
- Association Initiatives Citoyennes (AIC), Morocco
- ARTICLE 19 MENA, Tunisia
- Forum des Alternatives Maroc (FMAS), Morocco
- Forum Marocain des Jeunes Journalistes (FMJJ), Morocco
- Go Act, Tunisia
- UNESCO regional office for Maghreb countries, Morocco
- Samir Kassir Foundation, Lebanon
- Union Tunisienne des Médias Associatifs (UTMA), Tunisia

Our networks

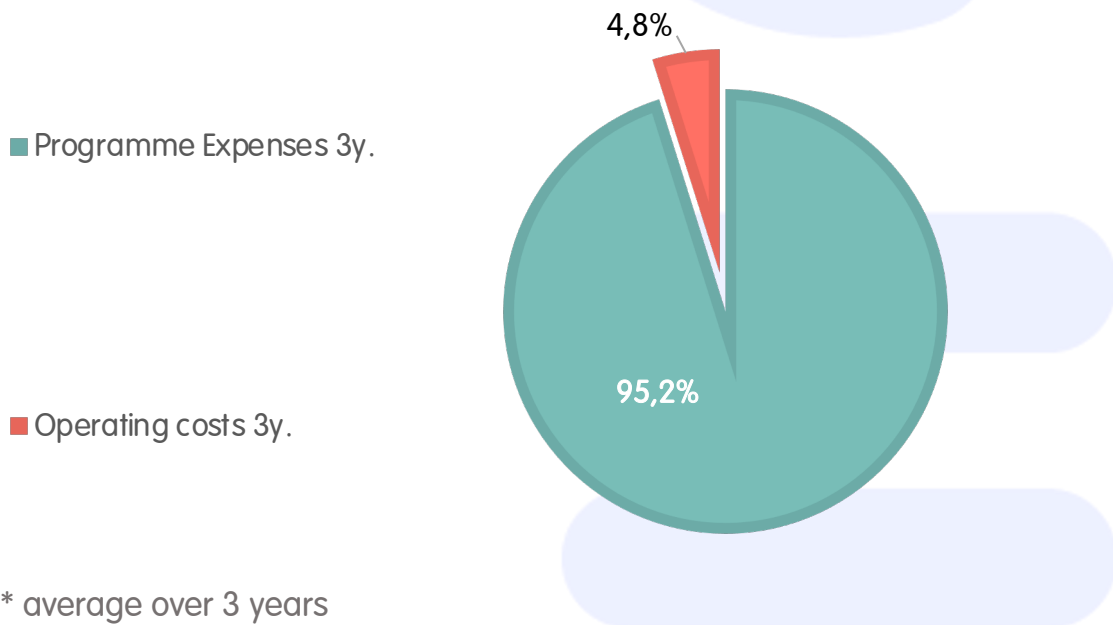
- Anna Lindh Foundation
- Eastern Partnership Civil Society Forum
- EU-Russia Civil Society Forum
- European Citizen Action Service (ECAS)
- PCPA Soyons Active-Actifs
- Plateforme des Droits Humains - France (PDH)
- TRACES

Figures and finance

ERIM PROJECTS BY FUNDERS

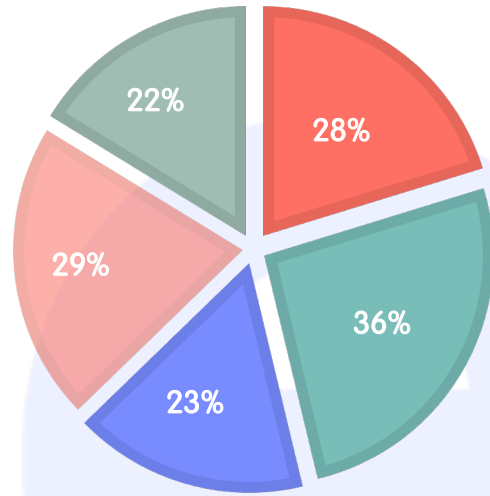


ERIM EXPENDITURES



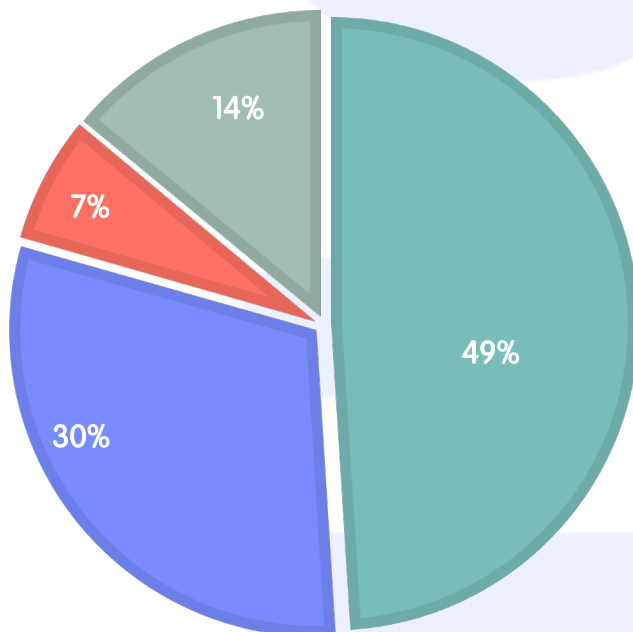
ERIM PROJECT BY FOCUS AREA

- MEDIA LITERACY
- MEDIA SUPPORT
- FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION
- HUMAN RIGHTS
- GENDER



ERIM PROJECT BY REGION

- EaP Countries
- Eurasia
- Europe
- MENA



erim

**Equal Rights
& Independent
Media**

MART
BRL



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