

# Annual Report

2022





## Dear Friends of ERIM

2022 may well go down as a pivotal year in modern history. The full scale Russian invasion of Ukraine not only was devastating for Ukraine (and Russia, in particular civil society and human rights activists) but has far reaching impact globally. The invasion sparked a rapid return of inflation globally, and impacted supply chains already weak from COVID. Prices spiked in rich and poor countries, and food shortages threatened the poor the most.

Ukraine meanwhile surprised the Kremlin and pretty much everyone else by withstanding the initial Russian onslaught and then turning back Russian forces. Kyiv was not taken and Russia's efforts to focus on taking the Donbas region in Eastern Ukraine began seriously going wrong in September. Russia however continued to rain missiles and drones across Ukraine, and the human cost of the fighting has been appalling on both sides.

The Ukraine conflict though, has to an extent drawn at least Western attention away from other areas of conflict and crisis. Ukraine is only a part of the reason that there are now 32 million refugees around the world. When the internally displaced are included that number balloons to more than 100 million. The humanitarian situation in countries like Syria, Afghanistan, South Sudan and Yemen remain desperate with little sign of resolution.

In synch with the worsening humanitarian situation is an ongoing shrinking in space for civil society. This is seen in many of the countries where ERIM works, not least in Tunisia where a new constitution and a range of new laws has given sweeping powers to the President, threatening the reforms and progress made in the country since the 2014 Spring revolution.

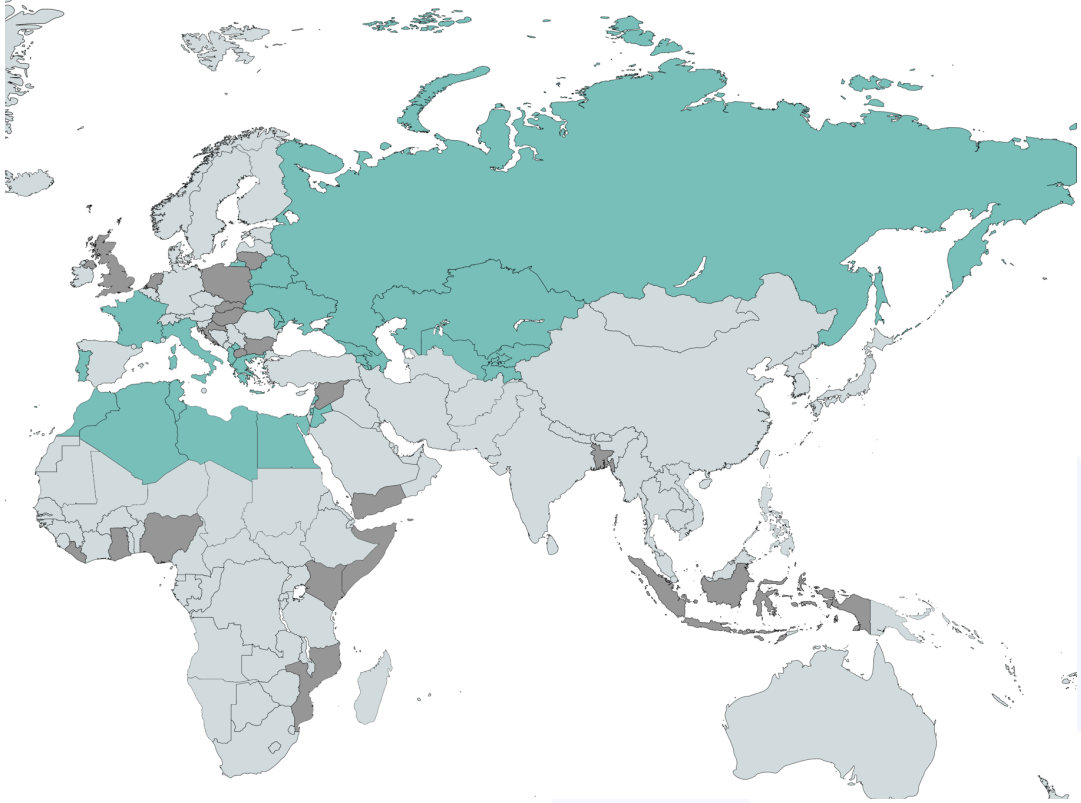
Amidst all this change the ERIM team has continued to grow, as has our programming. A great deal of our attention has focused on dealing with the Ukraine war and its impact in the region on civil society, independent media and human rights activists. We have provided significant emergency funding to Ukrainians, Belarusians and Russians fleeing conflict and repression, whilst providing support as much as we can to civil society inside Ukraine. Likewise in Tunisia and Lebanon and the MENA region we have focused on strengthening efforts to reverse the crackdown on civil society and growing authoritarianism.

As an organisation it has been challenging for ERIM, but as every year, the real challenges have been faced by our partners and beneficiaries, not least those in Ukraine who's courage and resistance have played such a significant part of Ukraine's ability to resist Russia's aggression.

**Mark Whitehouse**  
President, ERIM

**Mike de Villiers**  
Director, ERIM

## Where we work



## 2022 Countries

- Albania
- Algeria
- Armenia
- Azerbaijan
- Belarus
- Egypt
- France
- Georgia
- Greece
- Italy
- Jordan
- Kazakhstan
- Kosovo
- Kyrgyzstan
- Latvia
- Lebanon
- Libya
- Lithuania
- Moldova
- Morocco
- Occupied Palestinian Territory
- Poland
- Portugal
- Russia
- Tajikistan
- Tunisia
- Ukraine
- Uzbekistan

## Past countries

- Bangladesh
- Bulgaria
- Croatia
- Ghana
- Hungary
- Indonesia
- Kenya
- Liberia
- Lithuania
- The Netherlands
- Republic of North Macedonia
- Mozambique
- Nigeria
- Slovenia
- Somalia
- Syria
- United Kingdom
- Yemen



## 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 18 years we've worked in 44 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 €7.3 million 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

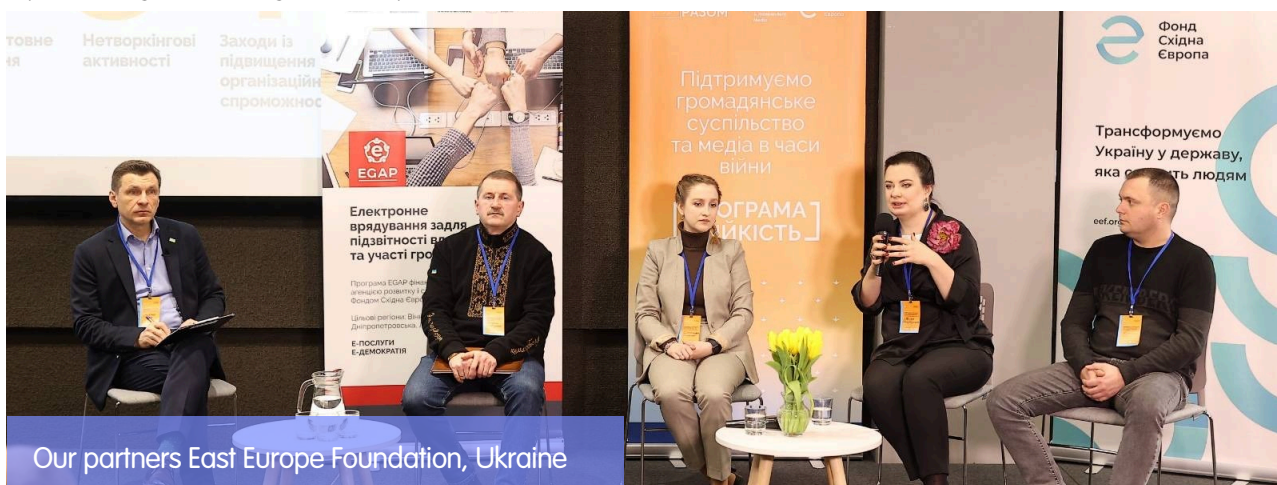
Promoting fundamental human rights with a particular focus on women's rights, LGBTIQ+ rights and freedom of opinion and expression.

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

Our project team is involved at every level of our projects' implementation and we strive to help our partners grow throughout the process.



Our partners East Europe Foundation, Ukraine

## The War in Ukraine

As for many organisations, no event has impacted our year like the Russian full-scale invasion of Ukraine. Since February 2022 we have reorganised our programmes and put in place new projects and partnerships in order to show our solidarity with our colleagues in Ukraine and in the region.

In June 2022 we launched our Emergency Support to Civil Society and Media in Response to the Ukraine War project, funded by the European Union. Working in partnership with East Europe Foundation (Ukraine), the Institute of Economic Research (Ukraine), Human Rights House Foundation (Norway), Human Rights House Tbilisi (Georgia), Belarusian Human Rights House (Lithuania) and the Black Sea Trust (Romania) this is an €8 million programme for Civil Society and Independent Media. The programme includes emergency support for organisations and individuals, capacity development and advocacy activities.

As we saw in the COVID-19 pandemic, at times of crisis it is civil society which steps in first to organise support in their communities. Almost all organisations have been forced to adjust their work and some have completely changed their focus and are now working full time to support IDPs and refugees.



ALD Enerhodar

### Emergency grants

As part of the project we provided emergency grants to organisations affected by the war, in order to help them to continue or adapt their work.

One example is our grantee ALD Enerhodar who had been working for many years with a focus on the development of their city. After the Russian invasion, Enerhodar was occupied, forcing the organisation to relocate to Vinnytsia region (central Ukraine). They have now transformed their work and are organising activities for IDPs such as events for children and digital literacy classes for older people.



Renaissance Citizens

The organisation 'Renaissance Citizens' from Avdiivka in Donetsk also moved their work to Kyiv and created a humanitarian hub for IDPs. From here they have been providing legal and administrative support to those who have been forced to move because of the war and running classes and art therapy for children, including orphans.



## Anti-burnout and resilience support

2022 was a very difficult year for Civil Society, in particular in Eurasia and the Eastern Partnership countries, but also across Europe and the MENA region. ERIM has longstanding experience providing anti-burnout psychosocial support in these circumstances and since 2020 we have included such activities in all our programmes.

This support comes in many forms – our support for individuals includes sessions with specialised psychologists, or grants for a whole range of activities from yoga and massage to creating spaces for exercise in the office.

### Relaxation Retreats

In 2022 we organised relaxation retreats in Georgia and Moldova for CSOs and independent media faced with government repression. These included individual and group sessions run by psychologists to better understand the first signs of emotional burnout and practical steps that can be taken both individually and within the organization in order to prevent it.



A relaxation retreat in North Moldova



Streha Shelter, Albania

### Risk Management Protocols

In order to stop burnout before it starts we have also developed risk-management protocols for staff, volunteers and beneficiaries. In Albania we worked with our long-standing partners Streha Shelter for LGBTIQ+ people to write a protocol for psychological support to the beneficiaries who are most at-risk, in particular from suicide. This is the first protocol of its kind in the region and was accredited by the Albanian Ministry of Health in January 2023.

### Team Retreats

In times of crisis, war or political upheaval CSOs are at high risk of burnout. Following the Russian invasion of Ukraine, Moldova for Peace was one of the first initiatives in Moldova to provide assistance to refugees and coordinate the different types of support available. Working tirelessly for months meant the staff become exhausted and ERIM provided them with an anti-burnout grant to bring the team together, relax and plan for the future.



Moldova for Peace

## Support to Civil Society Organisations

ERIM works with many different types of NGOs, initiative groups and other civil society organisations to build their skills and experience. This includes a range of different activities from in-house training and consultancy to small grants for events or buying new equipment.



### Capacity Development for Civil Society in Moldova

In November 2022 ERIM organised a Civil Society networking event in Moldova to celebrate three years of our regional project Civil Society Organisations Capacity Development (CSO CD), financed by the European Union. As part of the two-year project, six Moldovan organisations were selected for individual organisational capacity assessments, followed by training, mentoring and consultancy that was adapted to their needs. The CSOs and the ERIM team presented the results of the project (all six organisations increased their capacities, including one by 101%), the strengths of the collaboration and the lessons learned. They also identified best practices and recommendations to be taken into account in future civil society programmes.



CSO CD Networking Event

## Exchange of experience for Tunisian and Moroccan Activists

In December 2022, ERIM organised a peer-to-peer study visit in Paris for eight Tunisian and Moroccan activists, journalists and members of independent public institutions (including the Tunisian Access to Information Authority, the Moroccan National Control Commission for the Protection of Personal Data and Ministry of Digital Transformation and Administrative Reform).

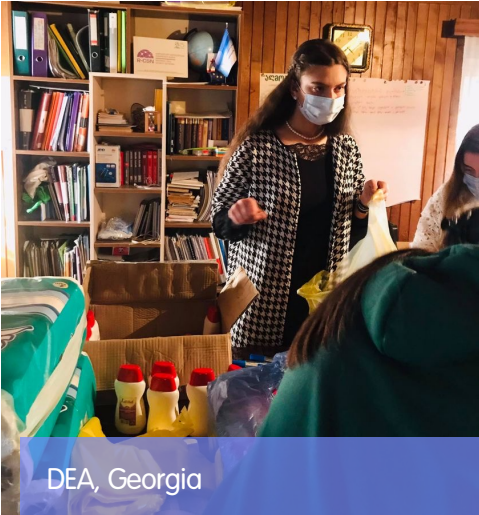
The visit focused on the right of access to information and included opportunities to meet with international organizations and French institutions such as UNESCO, the OECD, the CNIL (the French National Commission for Information Technology and Civil Liberties), ETALAB (the French Department for Digital Public Data), the French Ministry of Justice, Transparency International and Reporters Without Borders. It was a joint activity, combining two of our projects, one from Morocco and one from Tunisia, Houqouq wa Moussawat and SAIFE - Supporting Access to Information and Freedom of Expression.



Experience Exchange in Paris



## Promoting Gender Equality



DEA, Georgia

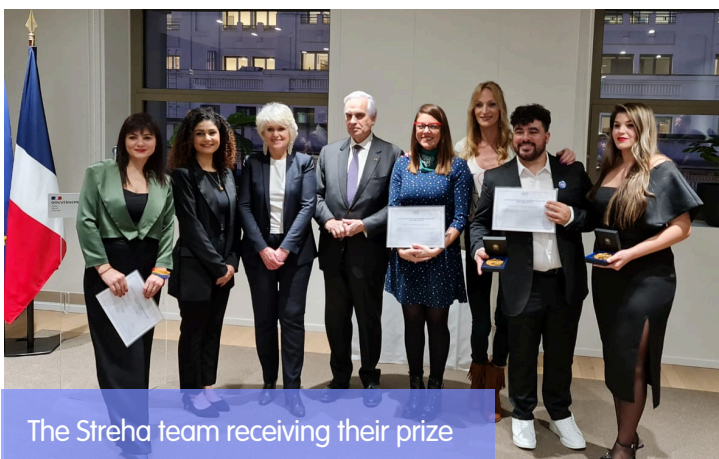
### Training and Small Grants

In 2022 we provided support to **124 organisations promoting women's and LGBTQI+ rights**. For example, in Georgia, with our long-standing partners Human Rights House Tbilisi, we gave grants to help small organisations keep working in the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic. We supported organisations like DEA Senaki Municipality, Georgia, who advocate for women's rights and ecology. With the grant, financed by the European Union, DEA worked with 125 women, many of whom were victims of domestic violence or in difficult economic circumstances. They offered free professional courses and consultations with psychologists and psychotherapists, alongside basic supplies such as food or personal hygiene products.

## Collaboration between CSOs and Media in Lebanon

In the framework of ERIM's Market Innovation for Independent Media (MIIM) project, a new collaboration was established between Megaphone (a Lebanese independent media) and Helem, the first LGBTQIA+ rights non-governmental organization in the Arab world, founded in Beirut, Lebanon, in 2001.

Megaphone have published an explainer video and four card series on Instagram on key indicators on LGBTQI+ rights violations in Lebanon and in the work place based on Helem's findings



The Streha team receiving their prize

## Human Rights Prize for our Partner Streha

In December 2022, our long-standing partners in Albania, the Streha Shelter for LGBTQI+ people, received the Human Rights Prize of the French Republic, awarded annually by the National Consultative Commission for Human Rights (CNCDDH) with the support of the Ministry of Europe and Foreign Affairs.



## Supporting Independent Media

### Innovative Advertising for Independent Media



ERIM is introducing an innovative approach to helping build the sustainability of independent media. This involves addressing the fact that local media markets are all too often skewed against independent media, with sales houses and advertising agencies largely or entirely blocking access to media markets and selling only media that they consider “friendly”. In Moldova, ERIM is running a pilot project and has set up the Independent Media House (IMH) which serves as a sales house/advertising agency uniquely for independent media. Initially advertising campaigns have

been subsidised with donor funds but we are gradually decreasing the subsidy and introducing traditional (but below market rate) fees on sales with the aim of seeing IMH fully sustainable on the local market. IMH started its sales in 2021, and by end 2022 had sold 1,3 million EUR of advertising. That’s 1.3 million EUR of revenue for independent media. We’ve built a client list of 140 businesses and our target for 2024 is 2 million at which point IMH will be self-sufficient. IMH has been set up and run with funding from EED and NED.

In collaboration with Lebanon-based Samir Kassir Foundation, ERIM has expanded the IMH model, establishing the Agency for Equality (AE), an advertising agency serving independent online media in Lebanon. Our model has been fully adapted to the challenging Lebanese environment. Since sales started in January 2022, we have run five campaigns, bringing 20,400 USD of advertising revenue directly to the independent media, 61% of that is provided by private businesses. These campaigns together resulted in more than 250,000 “views” on social media platforms (Facebook and Instagram) and more than 75,000 online views of campaign videos. As with Moldova, our aim is for AE to be self-sustainable. AE is also established as an NGO but run like a business – with a mandate to only serve independent media, increasing their access to the Lebanese, and potentially the regional media market. Our work with AE is funded by DRL.

### A North African Network of Community Radios

As part of our project Strengthening Community Radios 2, ERIM has been working with the Association Initiatives Citoyennes (AIC), in Morocco, the Tunisian union for associative Media (UTMA), in Tunisia, and 17 community radio stations from Tunisia, Morocco, Algeria and Libya to build a regional network of sustainable community radios.

In 2022 the radio stations in the network worked together for the first time to produce joint content and created Radio Grand Maghreb to air this material, including panel discussions and interviews.



## Media and Information Literacy

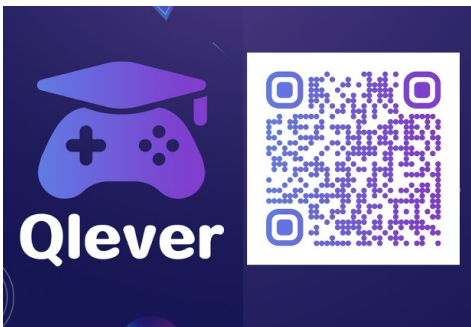


### QLEVER at the Paris Peace Forum

QLEVER is an online educational game that targets marginalised youth across Central Asia. Funded by the European Union, the game focuses on building critical thinking and resilience to fake news, misinformation and hate speech. We use targeted marketing, including social media influencers, and prizes to motivate young people to play.

The educational games are designed to address key current issues identified by trained media monitors in the 4 target countries (Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan). Since the launch of the platform in August 2020, 24 educational games have been developed and there are almost 130,000 registered and active users, with at least 32% of these being girls, 43% from rural and deprived urban communities and 88% vulnerable young people.

In 2022, the QLEVER platform was selected as one of the 60 projects worldwide to be presented at the Paris Peace Forum and was nominated in the category of addressing hate speech online.



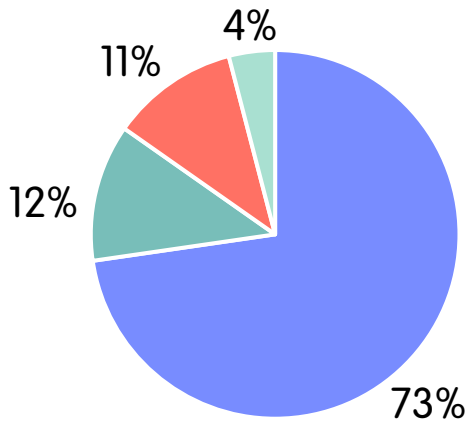
### Media Literacy Across Europe

Team Up! is a cross-European project aimed at fostering adults' digital and Media and Information Literacy (MIL). From October to December 2022, seven training workshops took place in France, Greece, Portugal and Italy for a total of 83 participants from many fields including teachers, librarians and social workers. The training was on MIL with a focus on fake news and disinformation, critical thinking, hate speech, discrimination and stereotypes and safety online. This was taught through the prism of video and photo production and participants worked in small groups with the support of MIL experts. The project partners also produced manuals of MIL tools, training good practice, a MIL curriculum and a dissemination guide for media production.



## Figures and finance

### ERIM PROJECTS BY FUNDER

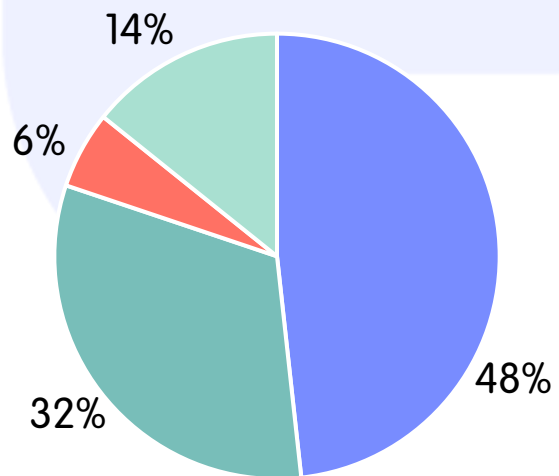


2022 Turnover :  
€ 7.3 million

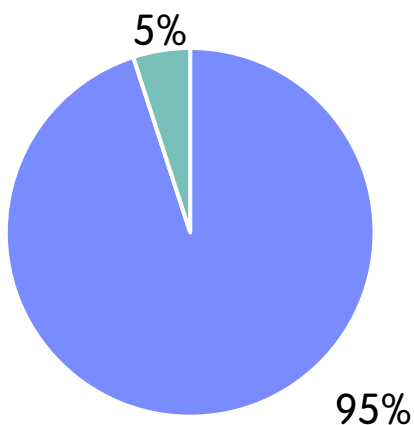
- European Commission
- Bilateral European Funders
- US Government
- Foundation/Private

### ERIM PROJECTS BY REGION

- Eastern Partnership
- Eurasia
- Europe
- MENA



### ERIM EXPENDITURES



- Programme expenses
- Operating costs



**erim**

**Equal Rights  
& Independent  
Media**



**ERIM**

11 rue Aimé Collomb  
69003 Lyon  
France

+ 33 (0) 980 727 829  
info@erim.ngo