

Secretary General Annual Report 2016

*Yearly report submitted by Fernando R. Ojea, Secretary General.
This report describes the operations of CIRCOM Regional during 2016.*

Nominations

New Secretary General, Fernando Ojea, CRTVG, Galicia, Spain is elected on 6th November 2015, thus starting the 6-month succession period. It is a good practice to have the possibility to gradually learn about the operations for the SG elect, as well as it is good to gradually take a step back for the retiring SG. The two SGs have taken this seriously, constantly having an exchange of views and keeping each other in the mail loop. Both SGs are taking part in weekly video meetings with the secretariat staff and having external meetings together.

Fernando Ojea takes over the position of the Secretary General after the Annual Conference, on 21st May 2016.

New President, Tone Kunst, NRK, Norway is elected at the Annual Assembly on 18th May 2016 and the official changeover is on 21st May.

Two new members of the Executive Committee, Jean-Marc Dubois, FTV, France and Jyri Kataja-Rahko, YLE, Finland are elected at the European Board in May 2016.

Another two members of the Executive Committee, Jane Birch, the BBC, UK and Zoran Medved, RTVSLO, Slovenia are elected at the European Board in November 2016.

Johan Lindén, SVT, Sweden, is nominated and confirmed as Individual member of the European Board in May 2016.

Micaela Panella, RAI, Italy and Gerard Schuiteman, ROOS, the Netherlands are confirmed as Internal Auditors in November 2016.

Budget

The budget for 2016 is a reflection of the planned activities.

The outline budget for 2017 is approved at the Annual Assembly on 18th May 2016.

A comparison between the budgets presented some years ago and the budget presented in May shows that CR is active, has changed and has several new budget posts that indicate development in activities. CR has modernized the website and developed a functional exchange server that is used by members on a daily basis. The jury work in Prix CIRCOM is fully file based and the new website is both a more efficient hub of information about CIRCOM Regional and a tool for National Coordinators to interact with CR.

The Secretariat has put aside resources for the coordination of co-production, server cost and other cost related to infrastructure. This is to secure the possibilities for all the members to take part in the activities also outside the framework of institutional funding. It is also important to note that the majority of resources we devote to co-production activities are obtained through grants and institutional funding.

The training and development activities are allocated. Since training is a CR priority, the resources for training consultancy and training contingency are allocated. The strategy is to work with lead trainers that are specialized in particular areas of the industry fit for the training at hand.

Financing

Internal auditors conclude that based on the information provided, facts and figures in the CR financial books are accurate and truthful to a faithful image of CR revenues and expenditures. There are invoices or receipts for payments on bank statements. CR has taken good care of its expenditures for the variable costs of the general activities, training and Prix. CR activities have been performed for the benefit of the association, to preserve its regular activities, to promote the association to the European institutions and partners.

There is still a delay in paying a membership fee by some members. More discipline is required.

There has been a review of guidelines for finances and accountability. A focus group suggested some directions for a financial and administration framework and to update the bookkeeping.

The Annual Conference

The planning of the Annual Conference sessions in year 2016 is a joint effort between the host BNT and the CR Secretariat. The coordination is done online and with a series of online video meetings.

All National Coordinators are asked to suggest topics and sessions that would fit with the three main themes: Public service's contribution to society, Constructive journalism and Refugee crisis. The Secretariat developed an online tool into which the basic facts and outline of individual sessions could be entered. With the tool at hand it is possible to keep track of speakers, producers and content for both the Secretariat and BNT. Three weeks before the Conference confusion occurs when new or alterations to existing sessions are suggested. Some quick changes back to the original intentions with sessions are done since the schedule is to be published.

As CR is an organisation built on knowledge sharing, the main principle is that CR members contribute to the sessions in developing content and sending key note speakers and panellists without charging a fee or demanding reimbursement. A conference organiser can rely on CR members to suggest relevant sessions which will be done by the online tool provided by the CR secretariat enabling the host and the CR secretariat to have an informed discussion and decision making.

The host has the right to get financial support from CR to organise the conference of up to €25,000 to be used on external speakers and some logistics.

Other CR sources of income can be used for a financial support of training prior to the Conference. It is within the mandate of the Directorate to find a proper balance between the direct financial support to the conference and other financial sources that will have a positive effect on the overall conference budget

At the same time as the planning for the upcoming Conference is progressing, the Secretary General is happy to report that conferences in 2017, in Ponta Delgada, the Azores, Portugal and in 2018 in Leeuwarden, the Netherlands are settled.

An online evaluation form for conference evaluations and for training and workshop have been developed and implemented, as well as an online form for Conference session suggestions.

Annual Conference 2016 hosted by BNT was again the most outstanding yearly event in CR's life, where colleagues share their best ideas and most of the delegates leave with some good ideas which they can use back home. The three main themes, Public Service Media, Constructive Journalism and Refugee and Migration Flows in Europe offered interesting sessions. The attendance of 175 delegates was average. The Prix CIRCOM Gala was probably the best in the last several years and it was broadcast live on BNT.

The arrangements for the Annual Conference 2017 in Ponta Delgada are developing.

Some major themes of the Conference will be: how to attract young audiences to regional television; the future of journalism in digitalized market; experts developing new platforms that can be useful for broadcasters; a session about Data-journalism.

Prix CIRCOM Regional

Prix CR Judging 2016 is held in RTV, Vojvodina, Serbia. It is very well organised. Prix CIRCOM Jury report has been made.

Prix CIRCOM Jury report includes reviews of all the programmes submitted into the Prix in a particular year. This is a valuable document for any producer in any region to see what sort of programmes people are making and how they are reviewed by their colleagues. This document will be expanded with more information on CR.

Prix CIRCOM Gala is on 19th May 2016 in Plovdiv, Bulgaria, during the Annual Conference. It is produced by BNT and is an excellent event.

The Meet the Winners sessions are competent and useful.

There will be some changes in the Prix CIRCOM 2017 categories and requirements for entrants. Prix CR Judging 2017 will be hosted by TV2/Fynn in Odense, Denmark, beginning of April 2017.

Training

Training activity is developing in four ways: workshops demanded by CR members, such as MoJo Workshop in May in Sofia and MoJo Challenge in Budapest; one-day high-profile workshops, such as Senior Managers workshops; workshops upon agreement with the institutions, such as European Commission / DG Regio on European funds and PADOR on immigrants' issue.

National Coordinators are asked to suggest themes for new one-day workshops on a specific topic.

In November 2015 it was decided for CR to submit the application for Erasmus+ project, a 3 year project, in partnership with the Leeds Beckett University. One of major contribution was that CR and LBU would be able to offer training that could be transferred to academic credits, enter a master programme in journalism and make it possible to provide online training. The content would circle around MoJo, Data journalism and ethics in journalism and would be based on a major survey on a European level.

At the same time it would be important for CR to keep the vocational and practical approach with specialised workshops.

When the results were announced in June 2016, CR realised it did not acquire enough points. Unfortunately the Erasmus+ project initiative that was envisaged to bring a high-profile three-year training programme for CR members, didn't meet the expected results as we didn't get the grant from the EU.

A renewal of the training strategy had to be done keeping the training as one of the core activities of CR. There will be no training in fundamental, basic journalism. CR training will give extras, add new skills, and provide something more than our journalists get back home. It has to be cost effective and the best people from our own organisations will educate and train the colleagues from member stations.

Training for middle management and content management on new platforms is to start and to develop, focusing more on mind-set and content rather than technical skills.

The format of trainings will vary from regular trainings of one or several days to 3-4 one-day workshops every year for various groups of staff and management.

CR discussed with the European Commission/DG Regio about their sponsoring a Workshop in 3 modules of 3 days for 20 trainees. The theme will cover Europe and the regions – where does the EU-money go, how is it used and how does it benefit the citizens. 2 modules will be held in Brussels and one somewhere in Europe. CR will have total editorial freedom. Trainees costs will be fully covered by the institution and CR will pay the trainers. Training like this would give CR ample opportunity to attach editorial training to the already planned more technical MoJo training. The course is aimed to start in June, but due to the terrorist attacks the course is postponed until after the summer holidays.

There has been a generation shift with the trainers. New lead trainer for MoJo training in Sofia is Darko Flajpan, HRT, after Glen Mulcahy, RTE, cancelled his participation, and the trainers are Guillaume Kuster, FTV, Olga Michalec Chlebik, TVP, and Ivica Grudicek, HRT. The administration is done by Brigitte Waltsburger, DSG Office Strasbourg. John Inge Johansen, NRK, will continue to be a trainer and other member broadcasters will contribute the names to the List of trainers/experts who would be willing to take part in training.

The trainings and workshops in 2016 are:

One-day workshop for Senior Managers "Strategies for Regional Broadcasters" on 5th February in Amsterdam, the Netherlands, hosted by ROOS, attended by 15 participants from 9 countries. The Workshop is very successful.

Training the Trainers Workshop, 8th to 11th March in Bristol, UK, attended by 9 delegates from 7 countries. It is very successful.

ROOS Dagen Social Media Workshop, 16th and 17th March in Ermelo, the Netherlands, attended by 11 journalists from 9 countries. The Workshop is successful. (CR contributed 50% of the cost).

MoJo training, 13th to 18th May in Sofia, Bulgaria, attended by 12 trainees from 8 countries.

One-day Workshop for Senior Managers "Innovation and Challenges for Regional Broadcasters", 26th August in Oslo, Norway, hosted by NRK, brings together 11 senior managers from 8 countries. Innovation is the key word for this workshop. Presentations by NRK Innovation Head from the Strategy division and DG of NRK are made. There are no conclusions, but the ideas are shared.

Data Journalism Workshop on Data-journalism, crowdsourcing and social media in practise, hosted by the BBC and SVT, 21st October in London, UK, attended by 22 registered participants from 13 countries. It is well-appreciated.

MoJo Challenge, 23rd to 30th October in European Youth Centre in Budapest, Hungary, hosted by MTVA, with 10 trainees in the Beginners group and 10 trainees in the Advanced group from 11 countries, and 5 trainers from 6 countries. The general appreciation of the Challenge is 4.5.

First workshop of CIRCOM - DG Regio 3-stage training is held from 21st to 23rd November in Brussels, Belgium with 16 participants from 11 countries. The second will on 16th and 17th January 2017 and the third is planned for May in Ponta Delgada.

Coproductions

Citizenship project 3 finishes on 4/4/2016 with 10 active members. An extension until 30/6/16 is granted by the European Parliament in order to organize the Citizenship Category of the Prix CR 2016.

Thanks to Citizenship project grants, CR is producing more than 300 stories available to all CR members for free. This coproduction across Europe reaches over 30 million viewers and supports other CR activities such as the Prix, the MoJo, and the new exchange platform.

The European Parliament launches a new call for partnership to which CR submits the partnership application. After getting a positive answer, CR is now able to answer to the EP specific action calls between 2016 and 2019.

CR applies for the Citizenship 4 project and is successful. The budget is slightly reduced. 13 partners (BNT, FTV, HRT, MTVA, RAI, RTBF, RTP, RTPA, RTVS, TG4, TVP, TVR, TVSLO) will produce 3 stories each related to 3 themes decided in common in total editorial independence within the editorial coordination from 15/11/16 to 30/6/2017.

A new project is submitted in September to the European Commission DG Connect in the field of "Data-driven media" news production, on the model of Citizenship project, with a new dimension of Data Journalism. It didn't get the grant as it was known in April 2017.

Strategy

The Strategic plan of CR is under consideration in November in order to be refit, if needed, and it is to be presented at the European Board in May 2017.

Lobbying

The lobby developments that have been taking place one or two years ago are still bringing positive effects to CIRCOM. CoR is sponsoring a category of Prix CR and DG Regio is supporting three 2-day workshops. CIRCOM Regional is currently growing in terms of acknowledgement in those EU institutions that have European regions in their scope.

The Secretary General is having several external meetings and phone conversations. It is very clear that CIRCOM is mentioned by many important bodies to be a reliable partner and important voice of regional public media.

CIRCOM Regional is submitting the CIRCOM Regional answer to the European Commission consultation on the refit of the AVMS directive - which is the foundation of the broadcasting legislation in Europe. During the year there are several meetings with MEPs of the European Parliament and a productive dialogue is started with the EU Committee of Regions and European Commission DG Regio.

Public relations

CIRCOM Regional policy is to develop current and potential partnership with institutions under the condition that it gives a positive output to CR, that this output is worthy of personal or financial cost that it implies, that CR has a necessary team to deal with the institutions and that there is no limitation to CR independency.

CR President Tone Kunst and Jean-Marc Dubois, FTV, are meeting CoR President Markku Markkula and Secretary General Jiri Burianek in Brussels on 23rd November.

Ukraine

CIRCOM Regional has been asked by the EBU to assist in a possible project with training for regional teams in Ukraine, so CR team went to Kiev and a couple of regional stations. The desperate need and interest and enthusiasm from all those regional journalists were seen for training support and support for regional public broadcasting. As the situation in Ukraine is very tricky, it is difficult to establish some funding for that training which has to be from external sources. Ulf Morten Davidsen, NRK, is leading the project.

The Council of Europe formally invited CIRCOM to support the first seminar on regional journalism in Ukraine, initially announced for November 2016 but then moved to 2017, in spite of the country's uncertain situation.

CIRCOM Regional awarded

On the 3rd of May, 2016 CIRCOM Regional is awarded the XX International Prize Grupo Compostela-Xunta de Galicia by Compostela Group of Universities (CGU) and the Xunta de Galicia as an acknowledgment for our support to diversity and regional development in Europe. President Jean-Marc Dubois and Secretary general Fernando Ojea attended a press conference in Spain where this was announced. The new President, Tone Kunst, and the SG collected the award in September in the Spanish city of Castelló.

CIRCOM Regional

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