

Strengthening EU neighborhood journalism after US AID freezing



Dear friends in the European media community,

We are delighted to share this second newsletter on **Maison du MédiaLab**, which continues to flourish as a dynamic hub for journalists from Eastern Europe. The programme aims at helping correspondents from Georgia, Moldova, Ukraine and soon Armenia to establish themselves in the Brussels corps. You can find below the two main challenges of the journalists.

Over the past month, our journalists have been actively engaging with EU and NATO institutions, reporting on key political and security developments, and strengthening their collaboration with Brussels-based media. Regular mentorship and visits are further enhancing their ability to navigate the EU & NATO affairs and media landscape.

March promises to be equally eventful, with new editorial projects, high-profile meetings, and our weekly **Evening Apéro**, fostering discussions and networking opportunities among media professionals.

If you would like further details about our activities, please do not hesitate to get in touch. Stay connected with us on LinkedIn: [Europe MédiaLab \(Stars4Media\)](#) and [Christophe Leclercq](#).

Warm regards,

Europe MédiaLab Team

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Residents challenges

Our resident journalists and their sending media face two sets of challenges:

1) Fast-changing geopolitics: Europe at the core

It seems that every week brings a bundle of bad news from Washington. This is widely covered in the press, so we shall not delve here into the mishandling of President Zelensky, the freeze of US military and foreign aid, or the parallel trade wars. Suffice to say that Europe needs to step up, which is hopefully happening. In this context, covering EU & NATO affairs in depth is more crucial than ever, particularly for Eastern European countries on the frontline of the fight against disinformation and in defence of international law.

2) Sustaining Brussels correspondents: money matters

The recent geopolitical developments have had a tremendous impact on the financial sustainability of media outlets in Eastern Europe. Many media outlets have had to cut their budgets and reduce the number of employed journalists. While MediaLab is providing housing, training, financial, and visa advisory services, it can not commit to paying the wages of Brussels correspondents.

Despite the “Maison du MédiaLab” participating media being selected among financially sustainable organisations, they are currently facing **substantial challenges**:

- USAID and NED funds freezing and, in the case of Georgia, stringent new media censoring laws that ban foreign financing,
- Correspondents' low wages and the Belgian legal minimum income to receive the necessary work and residency permit beyond the participation in the programme.

MediaLab is committed to the contribution of its programme and the correspondents' professional success. Hence, it considers direct help to participating media and/or resident correspondents and welcomes possible leads and recommendations.

Weekly event: Maison du MédiaLab - Thursday Apéro 17:30 to 19:30

Organised by the **resident journalists** with the support of the **Europe MédiaLab team**, is a new **weekly gathering** designed to encourage connections among journalists and media professionals in Brussels. This initiative, led by **six senior journalists from Georgia, Moldova, and Ukraine**, aims to create a welcoming and informal space for meaningful conversations about **journalism, media challenges, and cross-border collaboration**.

As a **weekly event**, the Maison du MédiaLab team encourages attendees to drop by whenever they can, between 17:30 and 19:30 strengthening an ongoing **community of journalists and media professionals**. Join us to exchange ideas, expand your network, and be part of this growing initiative.



Resident's selection Process and RSF as new partner

The **next selection of resident journalists** for **Maison du MédiaLab** has started, building on the experience of the first wave and reinforcing our commitment to **independent journalism and European media collaboration**. Unlike a training programme, **Maison du MédiaLab serves as a launchpad for journalists looking to establish themselves as correspondents in Brussels**, offering access to key institutions, networks, and professional opportunities.

This selection process is conducted in partnership with **EFJ (European Federation of Journalistes)**, **IPA (International Press Association)**, and, **for the first time, RSF (Reporters Without Borders)**, ensuring strong support for **press freedom and media resilience across Europe**. RSF's arrival in the selection committee further strengthens it, bringing its expertise in defending press freedom and supporting independent journalism.

The insights of our **current residents** are instrumental in refining the programme, helping us better assist journalists for press accreditation, newsroom connections, and collaboration opportunities.

We look forward to welcoming the **next wave of residents** and expanding this growing community of European correspondents.



Journalists Updates

Tetyana Vysotska
European Pravda/ Expresso TV



This month, our senior resident **Tetyana Vysotska** has been closely following key developments in **EU-Ukraine relations**, reporting on high-level diplomatic engagements, security discussions, and economic policies shaping the European agenda. Her coverage includes the [informal EU leaders' summit on defence](#), which saw the participation of [UK Prime Minister Keir Starmer and NATO Secretary General Mark Rutte](#), reflecting Europe's evolving security strategy. She also provided in-depth reporting on the [Core Group's efforts to establish a special tribunal for Russian aggression](#), including discussions on [a compensation mechanism for Ukrainians affected by the war](#).

Her analysis extended to critical economic and geopolitical shifts, such as the [European Commission's new trade rules for low-cost goods entering the EU](#), as well as the [EU's complete disconnection from Russian fossil fuels](#), a significant step in European energy independence. Tetyana also covered [off-the-record meetings between EU and US officials](#), shedding light on **transatlantic cooperation and policy alignments**.

Her reporting on [the Ukraine Defense Contact Group \(Ramstein format\) at NATO Headquarters](#), along with [ministerial-level NATO and EU meetings](#), provided firsthand insights into military and strategic discussions impacting Ukraine and Europe. Additionally, she covered [the visit of General Keith Kellogg, the U.S. President's](#)

Beka Beriashvili
Interepressnews/ Palitra News



This month, **Beka Beriashvili** has been covering **Georgia-EU relations, European security, and key political developments in Brussels**, with a strong focus on **exclusive interviews and in-depth analysis**.

His reporting highlighted the [European Parliament's upcoming vote](#) on Georgia's political situation and featured an [interview with Petras Auštrevičius](#), where the MEP criticized **Georgia's government for taking a pro-Russian path**. He also spoke with [Guillaume Mercier](#) on Georgia's stalled EU accession and [Gabrielius Landsbergis](#), who warned of the **"Stalinization" of Georgia**.

Beka also reported on [EU concerns over press freedom and political intimidation](#), covering calls from Brussels for the **Georgian government to stop targeting journalists and civil society**. Meanwhile, his coverage of [Mark Rutte's speech](#) reinforced Europe's **strong stance against Russian aggression**.

His reporting extended to broader European security issues, including [U.S. Special Representative General Keith Kellogg's visit](#) and high-level meetings in Brussels. Additionally, he provided updates on [mass protests](#) in Georgia and [EU sanctions discussions](#).

In addition to political coverage, Beka closely followed economic and security matters. His reporting on [EU Foreign Ministers' discussions on Georgia](#) shed light on Brussels' stance toward the country's political trajectory. He also covered [Belgium's mass transport](#)

[Special Representative for Ukraine and Russia](#), and his meetings with [EU Commission President Ursula von der Leyen](#) and [European Council President António Costa](#), highlighting the US-EU coordination on Ukraine policy.

Tetyana's work this month offers **exclusive insights into diplomatic decision-making, security policies, and geopolitical dynamics**, bringing a critical **Eastern European perspective** to Brussels-based reporting. Her coverage continues to shape discussions on **Europe's role in global security and its response to ongoing challenges in Ukraine**.

Visit to DG ENEST



The [Maison du MédiaLab resident journalists](#) visited **DG ENEST** (Directorate-General for Enlargement and Eastern Neighbourhood) on **20 February**, gaining key insights into the **EU enlargement process** and the latest developments concerning **Georgia, Moldova, and Ukraine**. The session provided an **overview of accession dynamics**, followed by **specific updates on each country's progress and challenges** within the [Eastern Partnership framework](#). Journalists also had the opportunity to discuss **working with the European Commission's spokesperson service**, learning about access to information and official communication channels. The visit was interactive and followed by **Q&A session**, allowing residents to deepen their understanding of the **EU's integration logics going on in their region**.

strikes, analyzing their impact on both **domestic and European mobility**. Meanwhile, his [coverage of the Brussels metro shooting](#) provided essential updates on security concerns in the EU capital.

Beka's work this month provides **exclusive insights into Georgia's European future, EU politics, and security challenges**, bringing an **essential Eastern European perspective** to Brussels-based journalism. His **in-depth interviews, real-time political analysis, and investigative coverage** offer a crucial look at the **intersection of Georgia and the European Union** at a time of heightened geopolitical tensions.

Visit to the EU Council



On **27 February 2025**, the [Maison du MédiaLab resident journalists](#) visited the [Council of the European Union](#) for an in-depth session on **press engagement, access to information, and the organization of media briefings**.

The visit included a meeting with a **Council press officer**, who provided insights into the **role of the press office, how journalists can obtain official information, and the best practices for engaging with EU institutions**. The session also covered the **organization of press briefings, accreditation procedures, and how to access Council documents, background briefings, and restricted information available to accredited journalists**.

Journalists gained practical knowledge on how to **secure interviews, attend high-level meetings, and effectively navigate the Council's media facilities**. This visit strengthened their understanding of how the **Council communicates with the press**, ensuring they can better cover **EU decision-making and diplomatic discussions** from Brussels.

