

# From Chişinău to Brussels: Strengthening Democracy Through Independent Media

September 2025



Dear friends in the European media community,

We are pleased to share four highlights for Europe MédiaLab this month. First, a lively “Maison du MédiaLab” event in Brussels welcomed new correspondents and a new Chairman. Second, reflections on the State of the Union speech highlighted its main gap: Trusted European Platforms. Third, Moldova confirmed its pro-European choice also thanks to media presence from Brussels. Finally, the Stars4Media-DEMOCRACY consortium submitted its application under Horizon Europe.

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Warm regards,

From Europe MédiaLab Team

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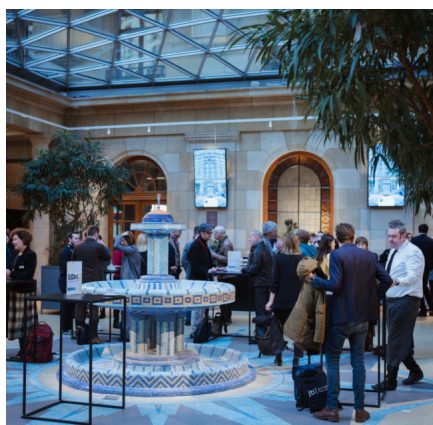
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Please get in touch and stay connected with us on LinkedIn: [Europe MédiaLab \(Stars4Media\)](#) and [Christophe Leclercq](#).

Do visit us! At Residence Palace .. include nice restaurant!



## “Maison du MédiaLab Garden Party”: became a House Party, given Belgium's weather and crew...

On Wednesday, 24th, [we celebrated the integration of six new correspondents from Eastern Europe in the Brussels](#) Press Corps, Europe MédiaLab's new Chairman: Radovan Geist, from Euractiv Slovakia and Comenius University was introduced.



The event gathered EU officials, ambassadors, partners, and media stakeholders for a lively evening with opening remarks from Radovan Geist and Aliaksandr Babiy, contributions from MEP Lucia Yar, Hans Hack FTI Brussels, and Tinatin Tsertsvadze OSF Brussels, and insights from Mykola Chernotytskyi (Suspilne Ukraine) and Cristina Pohilenco (Jurnal TV, Moldova).

Christophe Leclercq closed by underlining our future priorities: building [Trusted European Platforms \(TEPs\)](#) within the “Democracy Shield” and advancing our [Stars4Media-DEMOCRACY Horizon Europe](#) application. More than a celebration, it was a moment to reaffirm our collective commitment to this Democracy infrastructure.

## Moldova: Media, Democracy and Europe



At the beginning of September, in Chişinău, Aliaksandr Babiy [Europe MédiaLab Deputy CEO, presented the Maison du MédiaLab programme](#) to media leaders, foundations, and EU Embassies.

The event came just before Moldova chose again a pro-European path in its parliamentary elections, a milestone for democracy and integration. Thanks to the programme, Moldovan outlets now have four Brussels-based correspondents, where there were none a year ago, ensuring direct coverage of the EU and NATO for audiences back home. Ambassador Evert Maréchal (Belgium), Andrei Zapsa (Teleradio-Moldova) and Dumitru Mişin (Jurnal TV) shared valuable perspectives.

Founder Christophe Leclercq reminds that the programme began with private sector funding and depends on continued support. Media and Journalist selection carried out in partnership with the European Federation of Journalists and the International Press Association.

More than a residency, the [Maison du MédiaLab is a democracy infrastructure](#): preparing permanent Brussels correspondents, therefore also fact-based media across Eastern Europe.







## Maison du MédiaLab presented at the EBM Annual Meeting in Istanbul

At the recent [European Broadcasting \(EBM\) meeting](#), Yulia Bankova, [LIGA.net](#) editor-in-chief, delivered an excellent presentation on the [Maison du MédiaLab programme](#). Her intervention, warmly received by participants, underlined how the initiative is integrating permanent correspondents from across Europe, including one from Liga.net, to strengthen cross-border collaboration and independent reporting.

## State of the Union 2025: Defence, Data... what about DEMOCRACY?

In her SOTEU speech, Ursula von der Leyen focused on defence, technology and energy. On democracy, [she announced funding for media resilience and efforts against news deserts](#), plus commitments on the rule of law, media literacy and fact-checking.

These are welcome, but Europe's weakness is structural: we still lack [Trusted European Platforms \(TEPs\)](#). Regulation such as the DSA and DMA addresses behaviour, but not structure. Without EU-level action, citizens remain dependent on US tech giants or small national ventures.

Democracy needs its sovereign infrastructure not only US platforms. More may come under the **Democracy Shield** on 12 November.



## ... DEMOCRACY indeed: Stars4Media Consortium ready

A pluridisciplinary and multicountry [Stars4Media-DEMOCRACY consortium](#) submitted application under the EU's Horizon Europe programme to address one of Europe's challenges: disinformation and its impact on democracy. The partnership brings together eight members from seven EU countries and Ukraine, as well as five partners, including universities, think tanks, innovators, and citizen engagement platforms. The project would test Trust Indicators (reward trustworthy content) and Trusted European Platforms (TEPs) as citizen-centred, sovereign alternatives to toxic networks. By adding incentives to current regulation, the aim is to strengthen Europe's information resilience ahead of the 2029 European elections. We look forward to the Commission's response, we also welcome inquiries and speaking slots.

## Journalists' updates

**Zaza Abashidze**

[Civil Georgia](#)/[Real Politika](#) (Georgia)



As Brussels correspondent, Zaza Abashidze has reported on the [EU's warning to "Georgian Dream" over the 4 October elections](#), the nomination of Mzia Amaghlobeli for the Sakharov Prize, and debates on the possible suspension of Georgia's visa-free regime.

**Luka Khachidze**

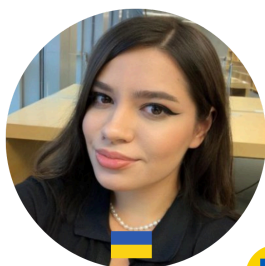
[TV Formula](#) (Georgia)



As Brussels correspondent, Luka Khachidze has reported on the EU's warning to "[Georgian Dream](#)" over the 4 October elections, [the nomination of Mzia Amaghlobeli](#) for the Sakharov Prize, and debates [on the possible suspension of Georgia's visa-free regime](#).



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