

PRIX EUROPA winners 2021

15 European Media Awards went to 12 countries

On Friday evening the Best European Digital Media, Radio and TV Productions of the Year were awarded at PRIX EUROPA in Potsdam. A highlight was honouring two imprisoned young Belarusian journalists with the title European Journalist of the Year.

Germany won the award for the best TV Investigation with the production "Planet without Apes" about the illegal trade with human apes. The best TV-Movie was the French social drama "Nobody's Child" about a small child left behind by its foster parents. The award for the best Fiction series goes to Belgium for "Albatros" about 10 overweight people in a diet camp. "Shadow Game", the best documentary of the year, is from the Netherlands. The filmmakers accompanied teenage refugees on their journey across Europe and their "Game" of trying to cross borders against all odds. Teenagers are also the theme of the best documentary series from Denmark "Absolute Beginners", which portrays more privileged youngsters on their journey into a new boarding school. In the best film about cultural diversity "Faith Can Move Mountains" from Norway, a group of Greek orthodox nuns tries to build a convent on a Fjord against some resistance by locals.

The award for the best radio investigation went to the BBC production "Blood Lands"; it investigates the effects on a community of the murder of two black rural workers by a mob of white farmers. The award for the best radio fiction series also went to the BBC for "The System". The protagonist signs up for a mysterious programme which promises to transform losers into alpha males. The Croatian production "Fly or Die" tells the story of a unique love affair between two storks and was honoured as best radio documentary. The best documentary series was the Swedish "Manipulator" about online sexual abuse. Decidedly more light-hearted is the French radio fiction winner "Godcast" which takes an ironic look at the general podcast trend. The award for the best radio music programme went to Czech radio for its piece "Concert for animals" where orchestra musicians communicate with animals through music.

The prize for digital media went to the Finnish radio for the audio campaign "Donate your Speech". It collects examples of Finnish speech to improve Artificial Intelligence applications in Finnish language. The best Online production "The Cycle Club" from the Netherlands uses the messenger service Telegram to exchange information with users about the menstrual cycle.

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The last prize was awarded in absentia. The 27-year old journalist Katsiaryna Andreyeva and her 23-year old camera woman Darya Chultsova, both detained in a Belarusian labour colony, were honoured with the title European Journalist of the Year. Both were sentenced to two years in a correctional labor colony because they live-streamed for five hours a protest against the Belarusian president, Alexander Lukashenko. The laudatory speech was held by the Turkish journalist in exile Can Dündar, who was honoured with the same title in 2017 and who was also imprisoned in Turkey for his work as a journalist. Due to a lifetime prison sentence in his home country he is living in exile in Berlin.

With the Awards Ceremony the departing ORF-Director General Alexander Wrabetz is also taking his leave as the President of PRIX EUROPA. The General Director of Bayerischer Rundfunk Katja Wildermuth will take his place. "Prix Europa is a showcase for outstanding programmes and a forum for exchange across borders. The media world is changing, the number of competitors - some with global budgets - is increasing. All the more important for European broadcasters to network and to highlight their quality content together. I am very much looking forward to supporting and shaping this unique festival as President in the future."

Every year PRIX EUROPA gathers media professionals from all over Europe. After last year's virtual edition, the competition brought 400 participants to Potsdam this year despite Corona measures, to watch, listen and discuss the 209 nominated productions from 26 countries for a week.

"The closure of borders due to the pandemic struck at the heart of Europe", Patricia Schlesinger, Director General of RBB, commented in the run-up to the Awards Ceremony. Co-host Mike Schubert, Mayor of Potsdam, underlined the importance of the event in this context. "In times of crisis, when people are looking for orientation, responsible journalism becomes all the more important. Especially the public broadcasters with their programme diversity, quality standards and independence are able to help audiences find it."

PRIX EUROPA is currently supported by a strong alliance of 26 members, European public broadcasters and European organisations. The competition has since its founding in 1987 become an important point of reference for European media-makers and young talent. It is under the High Patronage of the European Parliament. The festival has so far been hosted by the City of Amsterdam, Strasbourg, Barcelona, Porto, Reykjavik, Marseille and time and again Berlin. In 2019 the competition moved to Potsdam, the RBB remains host of the event, together with the City of Potsdam and the Land Brandenburg. This year's motto "Changing Europe – diverse and united!" wants to encourage more diversity in the European media landscape.

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The Awarding Ceremony has been live streamed and will be available as video-on-demand on the PRIX EUROPA website.

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