

Voices – The European Festival of Journalism and Media Freedom returns for three new editions

Brussels — 21 October 2025

Voices, the European Festival of Journalism and Media Freedom, returns to Florence at **Teatro del Maggio Musicale** on **10–12 March 2026**. Following the success of its debut in [Florence](#) and the second edition in [Zagreb](#), which drew more than 2,000 participants, the festival returns with renewed energy, building on what worked, sharpening its focus on **media freedom**, and raising the bar with new partners and formats. Following the new Florence edition, **Voices will tour two more European cities**, bringing the conversation closer to local communities.

“What began as an ambitious idea — to create the First European Festival of Journalism and Media Freedom — is now a reality,” said **Giovanni Melogli** (Centre for Media Pluralism and Media Freedom), coordinator of the project. “After two powerful editions, a growing consortium and strong backing from civil-society organisations across the continent, Voices has proven that when truly European organisations come together to foster bottom-up dialogue, the effort is worth it. Voices is a Festival by Europeans, for Europeans.”

Why it matters — now more than ever

Across Europe, democratic values are under strain. **Free, independent media**, shielded from commercial and political interference, is essential to keep power accountable. Equally vital are **informed citizens** who are resilient to disinformation and manipulative discourse, equipped with the critical skills to spot and resist misinformation and fake news. Voices is where these two forces meet, reinforce each other, and defend what they share.

These two forces need more space to get closer, and that space can’t be another platform — they deserve a place to meet face-to-face, with real rooms for insightful and inspiring conversations. This is what Voices has built over the past two years - and that is what we will continue doing.

What Voices does

In a society that too often makes us feel disconnected, Voices brings people back together. Journalists, media professionals, scholars, students, and citizens meet in an informal, hands-on setting to learn, exchange, and experience: workshops that teach verification and storytelling; public debates that surface hard questions; screenings, exhibitions, and live performances that turn complex issues into cultural and festive experiences, creating a shared understanding of what journalism and media freedom mean for our societies.

Locally rooted, European in spirit

European in scope, Voices is **rooted in the local**. Each edition is **locally coordinated** and built **with partners on the ground**—from associations and community outlets to students and young professionals—so that conversations land where they matter most: in neighbourhoods, classrooms, newsrooms, and town halls. The 2026 return to Florence, where the festival began, is both a homecoming and a fresh start: **the same, and more**.

“Voices is a place where young and local journalists are given the space they deserve to showcase their work, share experiences, and together shape the story of what kind of journalism we want and need. In Zagreb, we witnessed the energy that drives the future of journalism. Young people showed that they know how to ask questions, build bridges, and tell stories that connect communities. In Florence, we continue the journey,” said **Maja Sever**, President of the Trade Union of Croatian Journalists (TUCJ) and European Federation of Journalists (EFJ).

Project consortium

Behind Voices stands a varied consortium of European organisations committed to protecting media freedom. These are the [Centre for Media Pluralism and Media Freedom](#) (lead partner based at the [European University Institute](#)), the [European Federation of Journalists](#), the [European Centre for Press and Media Freedom \(ECPMF\)](#), the [AISBL EBU-UER](#), the [European Association for Viewers Interests, Lie Detectors, Savoir Devenir](#), and [Deutsche Welle](#). [The Journalists' Union of Macedonia and Thrace \(ESIEMTH\)](#) is an affiliated partner of the project.

Voices is co-funded by the European Union.

Full programme, speakers, and registration details will be announced in November 2025.

For updates, visit **voicesfestival.eu** and follow our channels:

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