

# Secretary General Annual Report 2020

The year 2020 started normally and then, with the beginning of spring, changed drastically with the coronavirus crisis. The massive lockdowns and travel bans, imposed on a wide scale, coincided with the months when the CIRCOM community is usually busiest. The training programme was gathering momentum and preparations were underway for the most important annual events – the Annual Conference, the Prix CIRCOM competition and the Gala, and the Annual Assembly preceded by the Executive Committee and the European Board meetings. This has been a critical situation for an organization like ours, with networking and exchange of knowledge in a multinational background being one of our main assets.

CIRCOM had to adapt rapidly its core activity to new circumstances and had to do it in a complicated atmosphere of uncertainty.

The Secretary General, Fernando Ojea, explained the first measures to be approved in an informal online meeting of the Executive Committee on 25 March 2020. The ordinary September meeting of the Executive Committee was held online too.

The regular meetings of the Executive Committee, the European Board and the Annual Assembly and Prix CIRCOM Gala Award that were scheduled in May, were not held. The November meetings of the Executive Committee and the European Board that were initially scheduled to be held in Zaragoza-Aragon, Spain were held online, together with the Annual Assembly.

## Nominations and Membership

Triadafilos Stangos, ERT3, became National Coordinator for Greece in February 2020.

Fernando Ojea, CRTVG, became National Coordinator for Spain in July 2020.

Francisco Querol, CARTV, took over as the National Coordinator for Spain in October 2020.

Jose Lopes de Araujo, RTP, became National Coordinator for Portugal in November 2020.

Tone Kunst, Norway, became Individual Member in November 2020.

Tallina TV, Estonia, ended its CIRCOM membership with the end of 2020.

## Budget

The budget plan for 2020 took into consideration the subscription fees applicable for 2020 and the confirmed Prix CIRCOM sponsorships. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the on-site activities were not held and there were not predicted expenses.

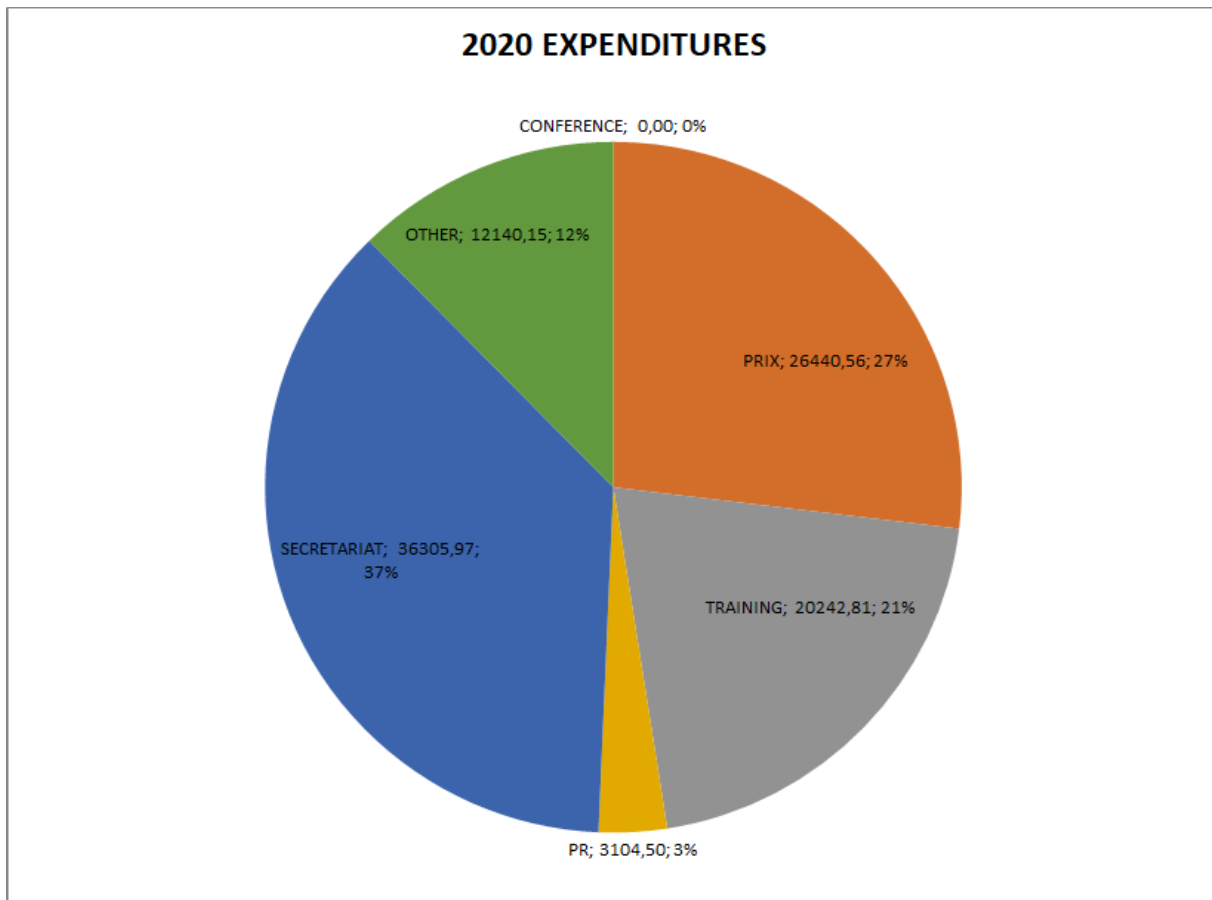
The outline budget for 2020 was approved at the Annual Assembly on 29 May 2019 in Novi Sad, Vojvodina, Serbia.

## Financing

The revenues and expenditures were within the budget and there were no unexpected events.

The realisation of budget up to 31 December 2020 was:

Membership fees	140.287,16
Sponsor Prix	58.000,00
Other	<u>709,81</u>
	<b>198.996,97</b>
<b>Expenditures</b>	
Conference	0,00
Prix CIRCOM	26.440,56
Training	20.242,81
Public relations and networking	3.104,50
Secretariat	36.305,97
Other	<u>12.140,15</u>
	<b>98.233,99</b>
<b>Result regular activities</b>	<b>100.762,98</b>



Internal auditors concluded that based on the information provided, facts and figures in CR financial books were accurate and truthful to a faithful image of CR revenues and expenditures. CR took good care of its expenditures and the activities were performed to the benefit of the association to preserve its regular activities, to promote the association to the European institutions and partners.

## The Annual Conference 2020

The 38<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference with the theme Creative Regions – Creative Economy, was scheduled for 28 and 29 May 2020 in Galway, Ireland, hosted by TG4. The Conference key topics: Creative economy, Public value and trust and Developing skills and talent.

Due to coronavirus crisis the Conference was postponed to 2021 and then to 2022 when, circumstances permitting, it will also be held in the city of Galway.

## Prix CIRCOM Regional

Prix CIRCOM 2020 had 194 entries in 11 categories: Documentary, Entertainment and Drama, Europe, Investigative Journalism, Minorities in Society, Most Original and Innovative, Music and Arts, News Programme, News Report, Video Journalism, Young Onscreen Talent, and Grand Prix. There were no Citizenship Coproductions entries this year.

Prix CIRCOM 2020 judging was to be held in April in Sitgès near Barcelona, hosted by CCMA-Catalonia. Because of the coronavirus situation the judging was first postponed to October and then it was decided to hold the judging online from the end of August during three weeks.

The Prix CIRCOM 2020 Winners and Commended were announced online on 8 October, the Grand Prix was announced in an online Gala event in the evening of 14 October.

The Winners received the trophy and the certificate by post and the cash prize. The Commended received the certificates by post.

Travel and accommodation to the next CIRCOM Conference and Prix Gala receive two people representing the winning production or station. Category Commended receive travel and accommodation to the next CIRCOM Conference and Prix Gala for one person representing the winning production or station.

The circulation of winner and commended programmes has been going well, even some non-winners were used.

During the months of the COVID-19 crisis, it has been difficult to produce new programmes and to meet current programming needs. So, CR came up with a programme exchange initiative to help each other. The database created consisted of Prix CIRCOM entries, both winners and commended programmes and other entries from 2018 and 2019 which are available for broadcasting. At least one regional transmission and one repeat of these programmes by any CR member station was available until 31 December 2020.

## Training

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic situation, the training program of 2020 was changed; some training workshops were postponed to 2021 and some were modified to a Webinar format.

There were 10 trainings: 1 workshop with physical presence of participants and 9 online. 121 participants from all over Europe filled up all the places in workshops.

**“Train the trainers”** at the EYC in Budapest, 3-5 February 2020, the only training with physical presence of participants, led by Mia Costello, with 8 delegates from 3 countries, an all-female group for the first time.

This interactive training was designed for anyone wanting to develop his or her confidence and skills as a trainer. Feedback from the delegates was very good.

**“Building Resilience in uncertain times”**, 28 April, Mia Costello and Zusanna Ziomecka, Warsaw based resilience expert, led 1-hour webinar for 14 regional television editors from 11 countries on how to share experiences and to learn the tools and techniques of building resilience.

**“Newsrooms in a Pandemic, sharing how life is changing”**, 15 June, 1-hour webinar for 18 participants from 12 countries. Mia Costello invited leading regional news teams to share their experience on how life in our regional newsrooms has changed during the Coronavirus outbreak. Designed as a forum for editors to share the challenges they have been facing, it provided an opportunity to hear about the different solutions teams have been trying to put in place. The general feedback from the trainees indicated a significant level of satisfaction.

**“How did we do?” – What we can learn from covering the pandemic...**, 15 July, 1-hour webinar led by Mia Costello and joined by David Tracz, Head of Social Media for BBC England. 13 Regional editors from 7 countries discussed how regional broadcasting has covered the pandemic, how well the stations served audiences on digital platforms and what they have learned from their experiences covering the pandemic. The general feedback from the trainees was very positive.

**“Fact-checking at the regional scale, good practices and toolbox for fact-checking in the regions”**, 7 September, 90-minutes webinar led by Guillaume Kuster (CIRCOM, Checkfirst) with Marie Bohner (FirstDraft) and Denis Teyssou (AFP), for 10 participants from 8 countries. The aim was to give guidance and a toolbox to journalists and editors willing to implement or strengthen fact-checking of their practices, with a focus on manipulated or misused video content circulating on social media. The feedback was very good.

**“Future funding of PSM – Impacts on the regional output”**, 24 September, 3-hour webinar for 13 participants from 8 countries, hosted by Dr. Zoran Medved, RTVSLO. Dr. David Fernandez Quijada, Head of EBU Media Intelligence Service talked about EBU research of license-fees, financial mix and funding of PSM and Ulrika von Celsing, Strategic advisor, talked about SVT Strategy, the Swedish model of tax funding for PSM. The attendees found it “extremely useful, informative, interesting and engaging“.

**“Applications of Artificial Intelligence in Media Industry”**, 21 October, for 15 participants from 6 countries. 3-hour webinar hosted by RAI CRITS (RAI Centre for Research, Technological innovation and experimentation on Broadcasting) on the use of AI based technologies and their application in media. They talked about the application of AI in various stages of the production chain, from archiving and retrieving content to usage of AI in video compression, to programme subtitling and to recommendation systems and personal assistants. The feedback was good, it was very interesting and useful with very good speakers.

**“Leading Change”**, 2-3 and 5-6 November, online Zoom workshop for 12 participants from 6 countries, divided in 2 groups. Mia Costello led this two half-day online workshop twice in a week, focused on the tools and techniques leaders need to get the best from their teams in these changing times. The workshop was designed for anyone leading an editorial team whether in radio, TV, online or social media.

The feedback was extremely positive with a high level of appreciation.

**“Reaching young audience with the news”**, 24 - 26 November, for 7 journalists from 5 countries, including social media specialists. An interactive 3-day online training hosted by CIRCOM Trainer Guillaume Kuster with Kulwant Sohal (BBC, UK) and Johannes Kardell (SVT, Sweden).

They learned about adapted storytelling techniques to reach narrow target audiences and dissemination and distribution models. The delegates worked in smaller groups to design and execute new video formats with the help and the advice of the trainers.

The feedback was good, people found it very interesting and useful with very good trainers.

**EuropCom 2020: Time for Communica[c]tion**, 7- 8 December. This 2-day online conference organized by the European Committee of the Regions, looked at the opportunities and challenges in communication around three key themes: Citizens, Green and Digital.

CIRCOM Regional delivered one half-day online workshop on 8 December, hosted by CIRCOM Trainer Guillaume Kuster, on reaching audiences through entertaining conversation with them about climate action and citizen engagement.

It was assessed positively by 11 participants.

## Coproduction

This COVID-19 period in 2020 coincided with the period of the renew of policies of EU institutions funding. CIRCOM decided to renew its coproduction projects as well, and started reflexions about content, format, sharing of funds, among other new approaches. Various online meetings were held, as well as online discussions during trainings sessions, EC and EB. New project was envisaged, especially in the field of fact checking. This work in progress is still ongoing in 2021. Concrete conclusions and actions are foreseen for the end of 2021, hopefully in physical meetings.

## Public Affairs and Networking

The pandemic slowed down activities in this area.

European Committee of the Regions organized the conference EuropCom 2020: **Time for Communica[c]tion** on 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> December (after cancelling it in June). Two days fully online. CIRCOM

regional proposed a workshop during this event around three key themes: Citizens, Green and Digital. It was led by Guillaume Kuster.

On 10 December the DSG participated at the video-conference for the election of a new chairperson of the Advisory Committee of the European Audiovisual Observatory.

The newsletter was distributed monthly during the whole year. The idea is to complement the communication in support of key CR activities – the Annual Conference and the Prix CIRCOM, the Training programme and to enhance promotion of the usage of co-productions materials. The September and October issues reflected the work on the Prix and the training programme. Our cooperation with the Dundalk Institute of Technology within the framework of the UNI project was just gaining impetus as we signed the bilateral Memorandum of Understanding and the Letter of Intent for Cooperation, when we had to curtail this activity in hope that CIRCOM comes back to its regular activity.