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BLOG

What do you do for a living?

Mari Heikkilä



What do you do for a living? My daughter asks me that sometimes. I work from home, and she just sees me sitting at my computer. She knows that I work as a freelance-journalist. However, her question about what I do for a living is indeed a valid one, and it's not a quick answer. As a freelance science journalist, my livelihood comes from various sources, or rather, small streams.

I identify as a science journalist, creating science stories for both print and radio. However, like many other freelancers, my

work extends beyond "pure journalism." I also draft press releases for a non-profit foundation funding research and play a small role as a science communication expert in a university research project. Additionally, I occasionally apply for grants, using them to produce science podcasts, for instance. On average, I work with about ten clients each year, making me somewhat of a jack-of-all-trades in science journalism and communication.

Why not exclusively focus on radio programs or science articles for magazines? The answer lies in the difficulty of earning a sufficient income solely from science journalism. Payment rates for articles have remained stagnant or even decreased, despite the constant rise in living costs.

I fear that in an increasingly entertainment-driven reality TV world, the value placed on quality science journalism is diminishing. It's disheartening. I know many individuals who have switched careers, moving into roles like university communications. Could the future entail funding science journalism through grants? Currently, our national science journalist's association provides opportunities to apply for grants for in-depth exploration of a scientific topic and writing a story about it—because the fees paid by magazine freelancers don't allow for proper research time. In-depth science reporting cannot be accomplished by just scratching the surface—it requires thorough investigation.

How do you see the future of science journalism? Will science journalists become grant-dependent individuals like many writers? What is the state of science journalism in your country? I eagerly anticipate our GA and study trip meeting in



March in Helsinki, where we can discuss science journalism together. I believe we share common issues. It would be great to hear if you've discovered any solutions.

I'm pleased to see that we will have participants at least from ten countries in Helsinki EUJA meeting. It indicates a desire to connect with others, and international events still hold appeal. There's still an opportunity to apply for the study trip; a few spots are available. We offer accommodation and a program for the participants. See details below. I hope that after receiving this email, you'll share information about this letter and the event in your country. You are a crucial link between your country's science journalists and EUSJA.

Wishing you a fantastic start to the year! Hope to see you in Helsinki!

Mari Heikkilä

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President of Finnish Association of Science Editors and Journalists (FASEJ)

President of EUSJA



EUSJA study trip in Helsinki 13.-15.3.2024 – apply now!

Mari Heikkilä

The EUSJA GA 2024 and a study trip will be held in Helsinki 13.-15.3., welcome! **If you are the EUSJA delegate or representative of your national association but you haven't registered yourself yet to the Helsinki-GA-meeting, do it immediately** (send email to me: maripheikkila@gmail.com). So far we have got registrations from ten countries/national EUSJA member organizations. Thank you, if you have already registered! There is no need to get registered again.

We still have few places left for the study trip for EUSJA members. Could you, please, forward email to your national association members and tell about the possibility to take part to the study trip in Helsinki 13.-15.3.

We ask you to fill in this registration form:

<https://forms.gle/HQ1XKMEKXjFhjBMeA>

before 31.1.2023 - Do it NOW, because the number of participants will be limited! If there will be many registrations, we will select the participants based on the association (we aim to have participants from different national associations/countries) and individual justifications (See below the question: "Why this study trip would be useful to you?"). GA and study trip will be organized by FASEJ (The Finnish Association of Science Editors and Journalists). Note: we will send you a confirmation email before 2.2.2024. However, we try to send the confirmation email as soon as possible after your registration (so that you'll have time to arrange the travel to Finland).

Preliminary program (changes are possible):

Wednesday 13.3. Arriving to Helsinki, depending how the flights are booked. Each participant will organize and pay his/her own travel costs to Helsinki -> hotel Klaus K, address: Bulevardi 2-4, 00120 Helsinki. FASEJ will pay the hotel accommodation for two nights (Wednesday to Friday).

Thursday 14.3.

9:30-13:00 EUSJA GA Meeting, which is for EUSJA delegates/representatives. For study trip participants this is time for your own program, maybe sightseeing in Helsinki?

14:00-17:00 The study trip part begins with a visit to Aalto University

(<https://www.aalto.fi/en>) and VTT.

18:30-21:00 Dinner. (offered by FASEJ)

Friday 15.3.

9:30-13:00 Visit to Public Service Media Company Yleisradio (<https://yle.fi/aihe/about-yle>), lunch (offered by Research Council of Finland)

14:00-16:00 Visit to University of Helsinki.

Official program ends at 16:00 (back to hotel about 17:00).

Unofficial program:

18:00 Those who would like to have a Finnish experience of sauna: Allas Sea Pool

(<https://allasseapool.fi/?lang=en>) (self-funded)

20:00 Dinner (self-funded)

Saturday 16.3.

11:00-13:00 If you stay in Helsinki for a weekend, FASEJ has organized a group visit the home of well-known Finnish architect Alvar Aalto (<https://www.alvaraalto.fi/en/location/the-aalto-house/>) and studio Aalto (<https://www.alvaraalto.fi/en/location/studio-aalto/>) on Saturday. Pre-registration is needed (see below). FASEJ will pay the entrance fee to study trip participants and EUSJA delegates.

Other places to visit (no guided tours arranged, self-funded): Heureka science center (<https://www.heureka.fi/?lang=en>), Natural History museum (<https://www.luomus.fi/en/natural-history-museum>), Ateneum art museum (<https://ateneum.fi/en/>)



EUSJA Membership Fees

EUSJA hasn't collected membership fees for few years, but now it is time to start to collect them again. We need money to organize activities in the future.

Currently EUSJA Board is trying to find a good solution for a new bank account. After that we will start to collect the membership fees.

The membership fee for the national association is 4 euros per member, but the maximum is 600 euros per association.

We will later send you the information how to pay the membership fee.

Information about your national association is needed

Before the General Assembly meeting we kindly ask you to send us information/introduction about your national association. You may also forward this request to the president or secretary of your national association. One answer per association is enough. We will ask this information from all our national member associations and we will add the information to our annual report.

The form of introduction is free, but we hope you could answer the following questions. **Please, send the information via email: maripheikkila@gmail.com before end of February:**

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- Name of your national association?
- How many members your national association has? What kind of members you have (science journalists, others?)?
- Name and email-address of the EUSJA delegate/representative of your national association?
- How active is your national association? (meetings/events per year)
- What kind of activities your national association has had during the year 2023?

Why? We will make for the GA meeting an annual report including information about our member associations. This is valuable information for other EUSJA member associations. It helps members to contact a colleague in other countries (for example to find an interviewee or to find statistics).

EUSJA is an umbrella organization connecting different national associations of science journalists. It is founded in 1971 in Belgium by seven national associations of science journalists. Today EUSJA represents around 3000 science journalists from different countries.



EUSJA GA Meeting Agenda

EUSJA GA meeting will be held in Helsinki 14.3.2024 at 9.30-13.00.

Below, please, find the agenda of the meeting. It will be sent to the delegates also by email.

EUSJA GA Meeting 2024

Date: 14.03.2024

Time: 9.30-13.00

Place: Hotel Klaus K, Bulevardi 2-4, Helsinki, Finland

Host: Mari Heikkilä, president of EUSJA, president of FASEJ

Attendees: EUSJA delegates

1. Opening and Welcome
 - 1.1. Call to order, attendance, votes, proxies
 - 1.2. Confirmation of quorum
2. Approval of the Agenda
3. Minutes of the Previous meeting
4. President's annual Report 2023
5. Financial report 2023
6. Updates from Member associations
7. Minor modification to the Constitution

Current situation: In the EUSJA constitution (24.3.2018) item 1.2. it is written: "The seat of EUSJA is in Strasbourg (France), 1 quai Lezay-Marmesia."

Proposal: item 1.2. will be modified as follows: "The headquarters of the EUSJA is determined and can be changed by a decision of the Board."

Reasoning: The association does not have fixed premises, so it makes sense that the board can decide on the location of the headquarters.

Discussion and voting

8. Any Other Business
Open floor for additional items.
9. Announcements
10. Closing



Upcoming events for Science journalists

Please send email (maripheikkila@gmail.com) if you know some event or webinar which could be of interest for other EUSJA members.

13.-15.3.2024 EUSJA Study trip, Helsinki. See program and more information above.

12.-15.6.2024 EuroScience Open Forum 2024 – Life changes science

Katowice (Poland) will host the EuroScience Open Forum 2024. More information will be available at: <https://www.esof.eu>

22.-27.9.2024 The 11th Heidelberg Laureate Forum. Applications for journalist travel grants are accepted from February 19 to April 28, 2024: <https://www.heidelberg-laureate-forum.org/journalists-bloggers.html>

24.-27.9. The European Health Forum Gastein (EHFG): <https://www.ehfg.org>.

2025 The World Conference of Science Journalists. The next World Conference of Science Journalists in 2025 will be held in Pretoria, administrative Capital of South Africa, carrying the theme Science Journalism and Social Justice – our role in promoting resilience. See more information on WFSJ webpages: <https://wfsj.org/world-conference-on-science-journalists/>.



News from EUSJA member associations

What is happening in your national association? Do you have some news to tell others? Or did you have some interesting event? If you have some news/issues/events/happenings/articles which would be interesting also for other EUSJA member associations, you can write a report and send email maripheikkila@gmail.com. I will attach your report to EUSJA Newsletter. Thank you!

EU calls

Cinzia Boschiero

There are open several EU calls and we, as EUSJA, can apply as partners. Hereby some details:

- As part of the Creative Europe program - Trans-sectoral Section, the 2024 "News - Media Literacy" call has been published, which remains open until 7 March 2024. The call makes 2 million euros available to finance collaborative projects in the field of media literacy.
- - Call for European Networks and Operators Video on Demand (CREA-MEDIA-2024-VODNET) - deadline 9 April
- - European audiovisual festival networks call (CREA-MEDIA-2024-FESTNET) - deadline 11 April 2024
- Announcement "TV and online content" (CREA-MEDIA-2024-TVONLINE) - deadline 14 May 2024.

You can contact Italian EUSJA delegate Cynthia Boschiero cinziaboschiero@gmail.com (www.ecpartners.it), if you have for example editorial media contact and you would like to participate to some of these EU calls. She has partners from other states who want to proceed.