

Ms. Elfa Ýr Gylfadóttir
Chair
Steering Committee on Media and Information Society (CDMSI)
Avenue de l'Europe
67075 Strasbourg Cedex
France

April, 10 2017

Your Excellency:

Attached is the application by IFEX for observer status at the Steering Committee on Media and Information Society (CDMSI).

We trust that this application meets with your approval and look forward to the opportunity to work with the CMDSI in the future.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Anne Game". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Anne" and the last name "Game" clearly distinguishable.

Anne Game, Executive Director

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Chair
Steering Committee on Media and Information Society (CDMSI)
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France

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Your Excellency:

IFEX wishes to apply for observer status at the CDMSI. For this purpose, we are pleased to provide the following information:

1. The Official Name of the Organization:	IFEX
IFEX was established on:	November 27, 2014
The IFEX Secretariat's office address is:	555 Richmond Street West, Suite 1101, Toronto, Ontario, M5V 3B1 Canada
Phone number:	+1 416 515 9622
Website:	www.ifex.org
Email:	ifex@ifex.org

IFEX Council Members are:

- IFEX Convenor: Omar Rábago Vital – Centro Nacional de Comunicacion Social (CENCOS), Mexico
- Deputy IFEX Convenor: Roula Mikhael – Maharat Foundation, Lebanon
- Treasurer: Wesley Gibbings – Association of Caribbean MediaWorkers (ACM)
- Ioana Avadani – Centre for Independent Journalism – Romania (CIJ-Romania)
- Jillian York – Electronic Frontier Foundation (EFF)
- Jodie Ginsberg – Index on Censorship
- Erol Onderoglu – IPS Communication Foundation – bianet, Turkey
- Benita Izemengia – Journaliste en danger (JED), Democratic Republic of Congo
- Zoe Titus – Media Institute of Southern Africa (MISA), Namibia
- Edetaen Ojo – Media Rights Agenda (MRA), Nigeria
- Owais Aslam Ali – Pakistan Press Foundation (PPF), Pakistan
- Karin D. Karlekar - PEN American Centre, United States
- Ed Legaspi – Southeast Asian Press Alliance (SEAPA), Thailand

IFEX Executive Director, Anne Game
IFEX Deputy Executive Director, Rachael Kay

2. Background

IFEX was founded in Montreal (Canada) in 1992 when a dozen leading free expression organizations came together to create a coordinated mechanism to rapidly expose free expression violations around the world. Today, with over 100 members in 67 countries – 28 of them in 16 countries that are members of the Council of Europe – IFEX is recognized as the leading global network of organisations defending and promoting the right to freedom of expression and information, and is respected for its effectiveness and credibility. IFEX turns 25 in 2017 and advocacy efforts by IFEX members are clearly gaining visibility and influence regionally and at UN multilateral processes.

IFEX members must be independent, nonprofit, non-governmental organizations with a focus on promoting freedom of expression. Every two years, a face-to-face General Meeting of members is convened to discuss, consider and vote on proposals related to strategy, policies and regulations pertaining to the activities or affairs of IFEX. IFEX is governed by a Council, made up of 13 individuals from network members elected at the biannual IFEX General Meeting. IFEX's 20-person Secretariat operates from Toronto, Canada, with a global advocacy strategist working from Europe.

3. Primary areas of IFEX activity

The IFEX network of organizations is connected by a shared commitment to defend and promote freedom of expression as a fundamental human right.

IFEX's work springs from the key directions articulated by the network's members in the IFEX 2015-2019 Strategic Plan:

- **Combining Our Voices** in advocacy spaces where supporting our members can have the most collective and measurable impact – on key issues like impunity and freedom of expression online, and on issues identified as critical by the network, including defense of our members under threat.
- **Speaking Out** and bringing attention to key stories, issues and events concerning freedom of expression to engage an informed, committed and global audience supporting the right to freedom of expression and information.
- **Building Our Strength** by reinforcing the work of members through planning, funding strategy, digital security, campaigning and communications support.

IFEX's primary activities are:

- Raising awareness on the importance of the right to freedom of expression and information for democracy, development and human rights in general.
- Engaging the public in actions to promote and defend the right to freedom of expression and information, for example in cases of attacks against journalists.
- Advocating and campaigning to promote and protect the right to freedom of expression and information at the international, regional and national level.
- Sharing information and good practices in relation to the promotion of the right to freedom of expression and information, including Internet governance and safety of journalists.
- Building capacities among civil organizations to better protect and promote the right to freedom of expression and information.

- Convening creative and innovative spaces for debating and engaging target audiences in actions to address emerging challenges in the field of freedom of expression.
- Monitoring and follow-up international and regional commitments by States on issues related to freedom of expression and information.

4. Reasons why IFEX is applying for CDMSI observer status

IFEX's work in the following areas we believe would contribute to CDMSI's goals:

- IFEX and IFEX members' frontline work in raising awareness can support the CDMSI main pillars: freedom of expression, safety of journalists, independence, pluralism and diversity of media protection and promotion of human rights in the information society, in particular freedom of expression on the Internet.
- The extensive IFEX network can provide information, data and advice to the CDMSI and its members on issues related to these fundamental rights, which can support, for example, the standard-setting CDMSI work.
- Because they are locally based, IFEX members produce reports, studies and research that can contribute to informed decision-making at the CDMSI and promote dialogue on relevant issues related to freedom of expression and information, and can provide recommendations to the CDMSI on policies and measures to be taken to better protect the right to freedom of expression and information in the region or in a particular country.
- The work of IFEX facilitates and promotes cooperation among European civil society organizations. This could contribute to develop common policies and monitoring its implementation. The work of IFEX also facilitates cooperation among European civil society organizations and civil society organizations around the world.
- IFEX engagement with its network and with the public can contribute to disseminating information on the actions taken by the CDMSI, on issues related to the right to freedom of expression and information. This will also help to reinforce civil society participation within the Council of Europe system.
- IFEX website and social media provide daily updates on emerging issues related to freedom of expression that can support the CDMSI as it develops debates and positions for addressing new challenges.
- IFEX capacity building work contributes to strengthening civil society organizations in Europe working on freedom of expression and information, which, in turn, contributes towards the CDMSI goal of strengthening democratic values.
- IFEX expertise would allow IFEX members to be resource people in conferences and courses related to freedom of expression and information. IFEX members have extensive expertise on these issues and could provide speakers to these seminars.

5. This application is accompanied by:

- A copy of the IFEX Certificate of Incorporation.
- A copy of the most recent IFEX one-year activity report.
- List of IFEX members.