

# EU-funded 'Samir Kassir Award for Press Freedom' improves journalists' lives

■ Samir Kassir

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*Text by* **ANSA/ENPI Info Centre**

*Photos by* **EU Delegation in Lebanon/Samir Kassir Award**

Winning last year's edition of the EU-sponsored 'Samir Kassir Award for Press Freedom' has improved the life of young Lebanese freelance journalist Carole Kerbage, as she told ANSA news agency.

"With the prize money (12,500 euros), I have improved my life. I've become more independent economically and I have gained more confidence in my abilities," says Kerbage, who is planning on carrying on her journalism studies abroad.

"I will use part of the prize money to continue to study and to educate myself in an independent way," she says with pride.

The deadline for entries to the fifth edition of the 'Samir Kassir Award for Freedom of the Press', that takes the name of the Lebanese journalist, historian and intellectual who was assassinated in Beirut in June 2005, is March 30. The two categories for which 12,500 euros will be given by the EU for each are: best investigative reporting article and best opinion article.

Kerbage won an award for a reportage dedicated to the underground world of sex for money in Lebanon published last year by the supplement for young people in the Lebanese daily newspaper, An Nahar. It was the result of three years of work, during which this young woman had to face the difficult task of entering brothels.

The aim of the Award is to promote the right to freedom of the press and expression in North Africa, the Middle East and the



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**ENPI Info Centre – Feature no. 11**

This is a series of features on projects funded by the EU's Regional Programme, prepared by journalists and photographers on the ground or the ENPI Info Centre. ENPI Info Centre/EU 2010©

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**“Freedom of the press is key to advancement of a country not only as a free and democratic society, but also in terms of development in all its dimensions: political, economic, social and cultural”**

*Patrick Laurent*

Gulf regions. The initiative, established by the EU Delegation in Lebanon in collaboration with the Samir Kassir Foundation, is open to articles on issues of human rights and the rule of law.

“In my opinion freedom of the press is key to advancement of a country not only as a free and democratic society, but also in terms of development in all its dimensions: political, economic, social and cultural,” says Patrick Laurent, Head of the EU Delegation to Lebanon. The popularity of the award has definitely increased since it was launched. “In 2006 there were some 25 contest applicants, whilst this year we have reached over 150 participants, six times more than in the first edition,” Sebastien Brabant, head of the initiative for the EU Delegation in Beirut and observer member of the jury since last year, told ANSA news agency.

Whilst the competition was initially only open to journalists from the nine Mediterranean countries (Algeria, Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, Syria, Palestinian Territories and Tunisia), since 2008 writers from Iraq, Yemen and the seven Gulf countries have been admitted. In this same edition, it was also decided to restrict the award to journalists only, in order to give prominence to

the profession that is so often threatened. The jury is made up of eight members, one observer from the EU Delegation and seven with voting rights, who include Arab journalists who work in their own countries or abroad and two academics, as well as a member of the Samir Kassir Foundation. Apart from Kerbage who won last year for her investigative reporting, Egyptian journalist Mona Eltahawi was awarded the prize for the best opinion article and her piece denouncing the various forms of racism present not only in Egypt but in a large number of the Arab countries.

“They were chosen because, as well as being well written, they are two articles that deal with important issues which are at the same time taboo in Arab societies,” said Brabant.

The ‘Samir Kassir Award’ is open to all print journalists (newspapers, weeklies, monthlies and online) citizens in 18 countries: Algeria, Bahrain, Egypt, Iraq, Israel, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, Oman, the Palestinian Territories, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Syria, Tunisia, the United Arab Emirates and Yemen.

The prize will be awarded at a ceremony in Beirut on June 2, anniversary of Kassir's death.



■ From left to right: Carole Kerbage, Patrick Laurent, Mona Eltahawy

■ Samir Kassir



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**“Here is the grand lesson of this adventure: it is rewarding to address people’s intelligence.”**  
*Samir Kassir,*  
*12 November 1996*

**“I will use part of the prize money to continue to study and to educate myself in an independent way”**

*Carole Kerbage*

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■ Carole Kerbage



## SAMIR KASSIR AWARD REGULATIONS

2010 competition deadline: March 30th

<http://prixsamirkassir.org/>

Two awards will be granted:

- **Best opinion article**
- **Best investigative reporting article**

The contest is open to all print journalists (daily, weekly, monthly and online press), regardless of age, who are citizens of the following countries: **Algeria, Bahrain, Egypt, Iraq, Israel, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, Oman, Palestinian Territories, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Syria, Tunisia, United Arab Emirates, and Yemen.**

Candidates must submit an opinion article or an investigative article related to the rule of law or human rights (good governance, fight against corruption, freedom of expression, etc.), published in the media of one of the countries listed above or one of the **European Union member states.** The submitted articles must not exceed 25,000 signs and must have been published between 15 March 2009 and 15 March 2010.

Candidates can only apply for one category and on an individual basis (jointly-produced work will not be accepted). The winner of each of the two categories will be awarded €12,500.

The European Union may reproduce and publish the awarded article or report in its own publications (non-commercial) and in other publications related to the Samir Kassir Award for Freedom of the Press.

### Find out more

For any questions, a telephone line and an e-mail address are available to candidates:

Hotline: + 961 70 14 17 19

E-mail: [coordination@prixsamirkassir.org](mailto:coordination@prixsamirkassir.org)

<http://www.dellbn.ec.europa.eu/fr/index.htm>

### Samir Kassir, Journalist and Professor

1960: Born in Lebanon.

1980: Publishes his first article in French periodical *Le Monde Diplomatique*. Begins his Journalistic career. Contributes in several dailies, weeklies and periodicals including Lebanon's leading *An-Nahar* daily, the pan-Arab London based *Al-Hayat*, and the Lebanese francophone daily *L'Orient Le Jour*.

1984: Graduates in Philosophy and Political Philosophy from the Sorbonne University in Paris.

1990: Obtains PhD in Modern History also from the Sorbonne University in Paris. Joins Department of Political Studies at the Université Saint Joseph in Beirut as a Lecturer.

1992: Publishes his first book (see bibliography).

1995: His weekly editorial in *An-Nahar's* Friday edition begins to draw a lot of attention on him due to his political side-taking, particularly against the Syrian regime's supremacy in Lebanon.

1995: Release of the first of 27 issues of the magazine *L'Orient-Express*, of which he is the Chief Editor.

2002: Appointed Professor at the Institute of Political Sciences of the Saint-Joseph University, Beirut.

2004: Co-founds the Democratic Left Movement.

2005: Murdered on the 2nd of June. His assassination brings to 28 the total number of journalists to be murdered since the hanging of several Lebanese and Syrian pro-independence journalists and activists in 1918 at the hands of the Ottoman Regime. His death triggers outrage both in Lebanon and throughout the world.

### Articles by Samir Kassir

<http://prixsamirkassir.org/samirkassir4-ENG.htm>

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