

AFP UNVEILS PHOTOGRAPHY EXHIBITION CELEBRATING THE REAL LIVES OF BALKAN WOMEN

Agence France-Presse (AFP), with the support of the L'Oréal Group, announces the launch of a new photography exhibition and dialogue series, “Unbounded Voices”, showcasing the lives of different women across the Balkans. Opening on May 19, 2026, at the French Institute in Belgrade, the exhibition aims to capture the everyday realities of women from Tirana to Banja Luka.

Born from a gap between perception and reality, this project aims to stimulate debate and show the reality far from the stereotypical images too often projected onto the region, portraying the pride, joys, power and strength of women who have long claimed their own space, even when history tried to deny them.

Entirely curated and driven by AFP journalists, the exhibition is a completely independent editorial project. The essential backing of the L'Oréal Group helped bring it to the public, allowing these uncompromising narratives to be shown without altering AFP's journalistic vision.

Captured through the lenses of AFP photographers and journalists across the entire region, the project features nine women photographed in their own surroundings. It is a deeply collaborative effort by AFP's local contributors across the Balkans, united by a shared commitment to documenting these intimate realities on their own terms.



The physical exhibition comes with a special multilingual website featuring extensive photo galleries, written narratives, and immersive audio content, offering a comprehensive exploration of these women's worlds and words.

Camille Bouissou, AFP Balkans bureau chief, conducted the interviews and curated the exhibition:

"After a few months in the region, I realised that all the images I had in my head about Balkan women, shaped by the media, culture, and other influences, clashed with what I was seeing every day. It became essential for me to find a way to counter a sombre narrative and to highlight the strength, joy, and universality of women from this region. We often say that our work is about giving people a voice. In this case, I wanted to emphasise that we should not place ourselves in the position of 'giving' a voice, because these women already have one and do not need us to speak for them. What we should do is listen".

Andrej Isakovic, AFP's photo chief for the Balkans, directed the visual identity of the project:

"Growing up and working across the Balkans, I have seen how often women's stories are filtered through someone else's perspective. Behind each portrait is a life shaped by strength, compromise, and resilience. I felt a responsibility to step back and create space, to listen, to observe, and to help bring forward voices that are rarely heard in their full complexity".

The exhibition will run in Belgrade until 6 June, accompanied by roundtables on themes including female diplomacy, beauty standards, and the politics of representation. It will then travel to Tirana and Sarajevo in autumn 2026.

About AFP

Agence France-Presse (AFP) is a global news agency that provides reliable, comprehensive, real-time coverage of the stories that shape our daily lives. Employing more than 2,600 staff from 135 different nationalities, AFP is always on the ground where the news happens, producing multimedia content in six languages: French, English, German, Spanish, Portuguese and Arabic. Our globally recognised expertise in video, text, photo and datajournalism is rewarded every year with several international prizes. AFP is at the cutting edge of digital investigation, with dedicated teams for fact-checking and in-depth analysis of online content.

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