



Building stories that matter and a (cartoon-driven) company that can last

The Erasmus for Young Entrepreneurs programme is often associated with business development, market expansion, and entrepreneurial exchange. For Muzir's Asli Alpar and investigative journalist Michele Calamaio, it has also become an opportunity to reflect on how visual storytelling can evolve into a sustainable editorial practice while tackling some of today's most pressing environmental and social challenges.

Over the past three months, Muzir has hosted Italian multimedia investigative reporter and misinformation analyst Michele Calamaio as part of the Erasmus exchange. Rather than focusing exclusively on illustration or journalism, the mentorship has explored the intersection between editorial production, creative entrepreneurship, and business management.

At the centre of this collaboration is the development of a new long-form scrollytelling model that combines investigative reporting, illustration, photography, maps, archival material, and multimedia elements into immersive digital narratives.

From an editorial idea to a sustainable company

One of the main objectives of the exchange has been understanding what it takes to transform a creative idea into a long-term organisation.

Through regular mentoring sessions, discussions have been (and will) be focused on topics that often remain invisible behind successful creative studios: company ownership, decision-making, creative leadership, project management, budgeting, client relationships, and the systems required to coordinate multidisciplinary teams working across journalism, illustration, design, and development.

Special attention has also been given to balancing editorial independence with collaborations involving institutions, grant funders, and international partners while preserving a clear creative identity.

Building a new environmental storytelling model

The entrepreneurial component of the programme has been developed alongside the design of a new international reporting project centred on Dersim (Tunceli), Türkiye.

The project explores how Indigenous Alevi communities are preserving ancestral food systems, indigenous seeds, and women-led ecological initiatives in response to environmental degradation and extractive development. The reporting combines environmental journalism, anthropology, and visual storytelling to investigate the concept of sacred ecology, examining how spiritual relationships with landscapes influence environmental stewardship and climate resilience.

The collaboration has included work on editorial planning, narrative architecture, budgeting, grant strategy, production logistics, and the development of a visual language capable of translating complex environmental issues into an engaging reading experience.

Learning entrepreneurship through real projects

Rather than approaching entrepreneurship through theory alone, the exchange has used an active production process as a learning environment.

Every stage of the Dersim project has become an opportunity to discuss broader questions facing creative companies:

- How should multidisciplinary teams be organised?
- Which projects deserve investment?
- How can a visual storytelling studio remain financially sustainable beyond grants?
- How can a single reporting project evolve into exhibitions, educational resources, live journalism performances, or other editorial products?
- What makes a creative company recognisable beyond the work it produces?

These discussions are helping shape a practical framework for building editorial organisations capable of combining journalistic quality with long-term sustainability.

Looking ahead

The collaboration will continue during the second phase of the Erasmus mobility later this year, from October to December 2026.

Upcoming activities will focus on leadership, governance, international growth, fundraising strategies, intellectual property management, audience development, and the creation of the digital platform that will host the scrolltelling experience.

The experience is laying the foundations for a new generation of multimedia storytelling, where editorial innovation is developed alongside the organisational and business structures needed to ensure long-term impact. Very much in line with Michele and Asli's vision for this Erasmus exchange...