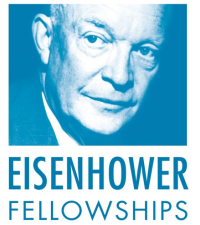


2023

## EISENHOWER FELLOWS



### EASTERN EUROPE PROGRAM



**Kamila Zlatušková** | CZECH REPUBLIC

Founder, Chief Executive Officer • Television Institute / Serial Killer Festival

Kamila Zlatušková is founder of The Television Institute, a training center for innovative broadcasters. In 2017 she created The Serial Killer Festival, an international conference of TV-industry professionals, academics and viewers determined to “kill” media stereotypes about Central and Eastern Europe. Held annually in Brno, the festival is supported by the city and regional governments, the Czech Ministry of Culture and the Czech Film Fund. On fellowship she wants to raise awareness about the high quality of TV production in Eastern Europe and explore potential co-productions with American television networks.



**Kalle Nieminen** | FINLAND

Leading Expert • Finnish Innovation Fund SITRA

Kalle Nieminen heads the Finnish Innovation Fund, an independent public foundation, think tank and investment company that operates under the supervision of the Finnish Parliament. It offers a leadership course for policymakers covering such topics as innovation strategies, design thinking, entrepreneurship and digital transformation. In his current role, Nieminen leads a course on sustainable economic policy. On fellowship he wants to build Business4Democracy, a “think-and-do tank” designed to enlist five corporations as pilot partners in the work of promoting democratic values and practices.



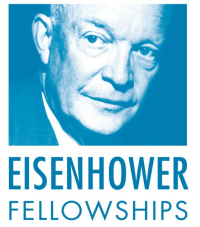
**Sandor Esik** | HUNGARY

Independent Attorney

Sandor Esik is a lawyer whose Facebook blog, “Muse on a Hungarian Diet,” blends political commentary and posts about human rights designed to counter Hungary’s autocratic leadership and the proliferation of Russian propaganda in public discourse. The blog’s title, a pun, derives from “Muse of the Hungarian Diet,” a journal published in 1796 for members of the Diet, Hungary’s National Assembly. Its 18th-Century publisher aimed to bring the ideas of the Enlightenment to Hungary’s ruling class, a vision Esik shares in contemporary form with a larger target audience of 44,000 online followers. On fellowship he wants to meet with prominent people in alternative, grass-roots media to learn how to expand the influence of his blog.

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## EISENHOWER FELLOWS



### **Tamás Fazekas** | HUNGARY

Staff Attorney · Hungarian Helsinki Committee

Tamás Fazekas is a human rights attorney with the Hungarian Helsinki Committee, founded in 1989 to ensure that Hungary upholds the 1975 Helsinki Accords binding North America and Europe to respect fundamental human rights. The Hungarian Helsinki Committee provides legal assistance to asylum seekers and refugees. In 2006, during street riots in Budapest, the Committee provided representation for victims of police brutality. Fazekas joined the organization that year and has specialized in data protection requests, complaints about police procedures and freedom of assembly cases. On fellowship he wants to explore the patchwork quilt of U.S. state laws about cannabis consumption for insights he can apply in Hungary, where he believes the laws against cannabis consumption are the harshest in the European Union.



### **Zane Vagnere** | LATVIA

Deputy State Secretary for International Affairs, Integration and Media Policy · Ministry of Culture

Leading a team of 30 professionals across five departments and divisions, Zane Vagnere is responsible for international cooperation on cultural affairs, social integration and media policy for the Latvian Ministry of Culture. She facilitated the establishment of an independent media ethics council to promote self-regulation. Her responsibilities include the integration of Ukrainian refugees in a welcoming and inclusive environment. Fluent in four languages and proficient in two more, she spent eight years in Brussels as Counselor at the Permanent Representation of Latvia to the EU. On fellowship she wants to develop Latvia's first coordinated Media Literacy Strategy to counter propaganda principally emanating from Russia.



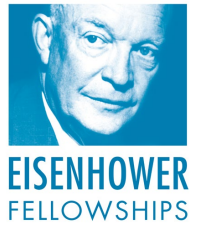
### **Viktorija Rusinaite** | LITHUANIA

Director of Research and Analysis · The European Center of Excellence for Countering Hybrid Threats

Viktorija Rusinaite works with policy practitioners in the 33 participating states of the Hybrid CoE to support combating hybrid threats, those that occur below the threshold of conventional warfare, often used by authoritarian states to politically destabilize their adversaries. In her work she convenes academics and policy practitioners to rethink and innovate approaches to whole-of-society security. In the Hybrid CoE, an autonomous, network-based international organization, Rusinaite leads a team analyzing adversarial cultures and new security trends. She oversees publication of findings and disseminates them at seminars and table-top exercises for practitioners. On fellowship she wants to draft a "Policy Manual of Proactive Deterrence Tools" to address misperceptions in security affairs.

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### Lukas Trakimavicius | LITHUANIA

Subject Matter Expert · NATO Energy Security Center of Excellence

From his base in Vilnius, Lukas Trakimavicius advises NATO and its member nations on energy dependence, energy security and environmental sustainability in the context of military infrastructure. In November 2023, he will convene more than 100 energy-security stakeholders for a multinational tabletop exercise on maritime threats to energy infrastructure in the Baltic Sea region. Previously he served with the Lithuanian Ministry of Foreign Affairs fostering closer cooperation with the U.S. State Department. On fellowship he wants to develop a platform to help drive the transition from legacy forms of power generation to modern technologies that promote decarbonization and adaptation to climate change.



### Cristina Gherasimov | MOLDOVA

Senior Adviser · Office of the President of the Republic of Moldova

In a country strongly affected by the war next door in Ukraine, Cristina Gherasimov advises Moldovan President Maia Sandu on foreign policy, national security, diplomatic relations and Moldova's candidature to join the European Union. A political scientist with a doctorate from Rutgers University, on fellowship she wants to study the policy planning processes of major American government institutions and Cabinet-level agencies. Her objective: Strengthen democratic governance in Moldova and streamline the bureaucracy by updating outmoded systems of governance inherited from the former Soviet Union.



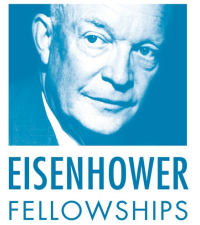
### Stella Jemna | MOLDOVA

Country Representative · Western NIS Enterprise Fund

Stella Jemna is country representative at the Western NIS Enterprise Fund, a \$285 million regional fund and pioneer in Ukraine and Moldova with more than 29 years of successful experience in investing in small and medium-sized companies. Previously, she coordinated with cabinet ministers and government agencies and oversaw strategic initiatives, communications and planning as chief of staff to Moldova's former Prime Minister Natalia Gavrilita. A Fulbright Scholar with a master's degree in public administration, she has designed and managed projects for the United States Agency for International Development, the United Nations Development Program, the European Union and the German development agency GIZ. Active in the feminist movement, she is the co-author of the children's book *Wonder Women in Science, Art and Sports*, which teaches children about the lives of notable women in history. On fellowship she wants to exchange ideas with prominent government, business and civic leaders to make her better prepared for the fast-changing threats and false narratives that undermine efforts at systematic reforms in her country.

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## EISENHOWER FELLOWS



### **Joanna Kaminska** | POLAND

Advisor • The European Parliament Mediation and Dialogue Support Unit, Verkhovna Rada and Jean Monnet Dialogue Program for Ukraine

For more than a decade, Joanna Kaminska advised the European Parliament and its president, Italy's David Maria Sassoli, until his death from cancer in 2022. An expert on intra-European relations, Kaminska since then has advised the parliament's Mediation and Support Unit on Democracy, Capacity Building and Dialogue on Ukraine. Since the start of Russian leader Vladimir Putin's war against Ukraine, she has been responsible for facilitating dialogue between the different factions of Ukraine's parliament, the Verkhovna Rada. On fellowship she wants to meet with U.S. experts to study best practices in conflict mediation.



### **Patrycja Tocka** | POLAND

Head of Office • Members of the Polish Parliament and Senate

With a master's degree in international relations, and postgraduate studies in accounting, finance and cybersecurity, Patrycja Tocka heads the chambers of two senior elected officials in Poland's bicameral legislature. One is in the upper house, or Senate; the other in the lower house, called the Sejm. Managing a staff of eight in the Sejm, and 15 in the Senate, she handles all administrative and organizational matters with a focus on issues related to education, social policy, support for people with disabilities and international affairs. On fellowship she wants to study how American educational institutions, from elementary school through college, are financed and function, with the goal of creating a platform for joint research between U.S. and Polish universities. Her secondary objective is to meet with government and nonprofit leaders to examine best practices to support women and people with disabilities that she can bring back and implement on the ground in Poland.



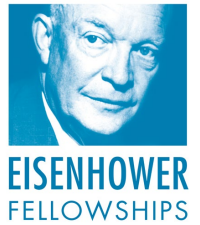
### **Ioana Ciocan** | ROMANIA

Chief Executive Officer, Shareholder • Art Safari

Ioana Ciocan is responsible for strategic planning, financial management, sponsorships and donor communications at Art Safari, a cultural organization that promotes the visual arts through curated retrospectives, guided tours, museum visits, exhibitions in unconventional spaces and workshops for children. For most of the 20th century, Romania's communist regime acquired private museums, demolished them and scattered their collections. On fellowship, Ciocan wants to meet with the directors of prominent museums in the U.S. to learn techniques for building new museums, attracting exhibitions and growing audiences. Against the backdrop of her country's turbulent past, she aims to recover and re-energize its legacy values.

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## EISENHOWER FELLOWS



**Marius Mitroi** | ROMANIA

Advisor • Executive Agency for Higher Education, Research Development and Innovation Funding

Working through his government’s Ministry of Education, Marius Mitroi and his team started “Accelerate Romania,” a platform to foster entrepreneurship by helping researchers bring their innovations from lab to market. On fellowship he wants to build on that technology-transfer initiative. He seeks to design a national program to further facilitate tech-transfers by offering grants to researchers to improve their skills through intensive training programs and establish new global connections by “twinning” Romanian universities with prominent international research institutes.



**Dana Pirtoc** | ROMANIA

Chief Executive Officer • Association for Community Relations (ARC)

Striving to protect and nurture democratic values after years of Communist rule that had squelched civic engagement, Dana Pirtoc oversees a network of 20 philanthropic foundations that have generated \$78 million in giving across Romania since 2003. On fellowship she will explore the question of what comes next in her country. In an interconnected world of increasing complexity and blurred boundaries, she wants to learn and apply ways that community philanthropy and strengthened civil society can improve the quality of life in Romania and more widely across Eastern Europe.



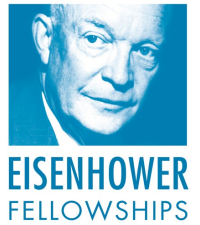
**Olexia Besaraba** | SLOVAKIA

Head • Ukrainian House Žilina

Olexia Besaraba heads Ukrainian House, a grant-funded nonprofit that provides humanitarian aid and resettlement services for Ukrainian refugees from the war in Slovakia. The assistance includes clothing, household and hygiene items, healthcare, school and job placements, psychological support and food-bank access. Besaraba, a former researcher and freelance journalist, works to support her fellow Ukrainian expatriates. On fellowship she wants to study the best practices in refugee adaptation and bring recommendations back to her city and regional administrations.

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### **Janka Debreceniova** | SLOVAKIA

Analyst, Trainer, Deputy Director • Citizen, Democracy and Accountability (CDA)

Janka Debreceniova is a supervisor at Citizen, Democracy and Accountability, a nongovernmental organization established in 1992 to promote human rights, accountability, good governance and the rule of law. Debreceniova mentors younger staff and drafts policy reports and model legislation barring unlawful discrimination and other human rights violations. In 2021, the women's association Zivena gave her an award for her activities in the field of women's rights. On fellowship she wants to study the 1964 U.S. Civil Rights Act and subsequent anti-discrimination legislation with the goal of designing a basic model for implementing policies on equality, restorative justice and reproductive rights in her nation.



### **Martin Klus** | SLOVAKIA

Member of Parliament • National Council of the Slovak Republic

Elected to the Slovakian National Council in 2016, Martin Klus is a member of its foreign affairs committee and former deputy speaker of the 150-delegate body. He has worked at several universities as a professor and at one Slovakian institution of higher learning as its vice rector. From 2005 to 2010 he was chairman of two nongovernmental organizations. On fellowship he wants to build a network of volunteers to fight the proliferation of digital disinformation, misinformation and hoaxes, particularly in regard to public health and democracy, many of them emanating from Russia since its invasion of Slovakia's neighbor, Ukraine.



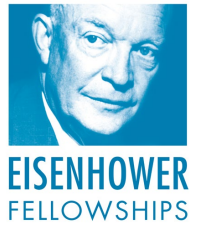
### **Sona Muzikarova** | SLOVAKIA

Senior Economic Advisor to the Secretary of State • Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Sona Muzikarova is a political economist, author and expert on Central and Eastern Europe, whose career as an economic advisor and analyst spans prominent leadership roles in central banking, international development and diplomacy at Eastern Europe's largest think tank and several nongovernmental organizations. Her published articles have appeared in Politico Europe, Al Jazeera English, Euronews, Project Syndicate and other media. She is an editorial contributor to the Economist Intelligence Unit. On fellowship she wants to explore strategies for improving democratic literacy and governance in Eastern Europe, which she hopes will lead toward more sensible policy choices and advance economic progress in the region.

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### **Okan Yardimci** | TURKEY

Head of Group • Energy Market Regulatory Authority (EMRA)

Okan Yardimci leads the Digital Transformation Group at Turkey’s Energy Market Regulatory Authority, similar to the U.S. Federal Energy Regulatory Commission. In this role, he is responsible for supporting research and development and decarbonization and promoting hydrogen and other alternative fuels at EMRA, established in 2001 to license and regulate the electricity, natural gas, oil, LPG and EV charging service markets in Turkey. Since 2017 he has been a visiting and part-time instructor on oil and gas and basic concepts of energy economics. On fellowship he wants to study electrification of transportation in the U.S. Turkey currently has 15,000 electric vehicles and anticipates having 1.6 million by 2030. The U.S., by contrast, has three million electric vehicles and, he believes, much to offer in terms of lessons learned.



### **Mustafa Ali Yurdupak** | TURKEY

Portfolio Manager • United Nations Development Program (UNDP)

As manager of the Inclusive Sustainable Growth Portfolio for Turkey at the United Nations Development Program, Mustafa Ali Yurdupak oversees outreach activities, resource mobilization, policy development and responses to the refugee crisis caused by the civil war in neighboring Syria. With offices in 170 countries, UNDP helps combat poverty and drive sustainable economic growth and human development. Eleven years into the Syria crisis, many young refugees grew up as bilingual speakers in Turkey, attended Turkish schools and likely will remain in Turkey, making their integration an important issue along with other demographic changes. In the aftermath of the devastating earthquakes that struck Turkey in February 2023, Yurdupak wants to use his fellowship to develop policy recommendations for inclusive and sustainable socioeconomic recovery measures that address the immediate needs of victims and strengthen resilience in the affected regions.