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(Announcements)

ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURES

EUROPEAN COMMISSION

Call for proposals — COMM-C2/01/13**Structural support for European public policy research organisations (think tanks) and for civil society organisations at European level — ‘Europe for citizens’ programme (2014-20)**

(2013/C 335/03)

WARNING:

The present call for proposals is subject to:

- the final adoption of the Regulation establishing the ‘Europe for citizens’ programme (2014-20), hereafter referred to as ‘the programme’ by the legislative authority without significant modification,
- a positive opinion or lack of objection by the committee established in the Regulation establishing the ‘Europe for citizens’ programme,
- the availability of the appropriations provided for in the draft budget for 2014 after the adoption of the budget for 2014 by the budgetary authority or as provided for in the system of provisional twelfths.

The programme constitutes the legal basis for this call for proposals.

1. OBJECTIVES**1.1. General programme objectives**

Under the global objective of bringing the Union closer to its citizens, the general objectives of the programme are:

- to contribute to citizens’ understanding of the Union, its history and diversity,
- to foster European citizenship and to improve conditions for civic and democratic participation at Union level.

1.2. Specific programme objectives

The specific objectives of the programme are:

- to raise awareness of remembrance, common history and values and the Union’s aim that is to promote peace, its values and the well-being of its peoples by stimulating debate, reflection and development of networks,
- to encourage democratic and civic participation of citizens at Union level, by developing citizens’ understanding of the Union policy making-process and promoting opportunities for societal and inter-cultural engagement and volunteering at Union level.

1.3. Thematic priorities

For 2014, the following thematic priorities have been adopted:

Strand 1: European remembrance

According to Article 3 of the Treaty of the European Union, the EU's aim is to promote peace, its values and the well-being of its peoples.

In this context, the 'Europe for citizens' programme supports organisations reflecting on causes of totalitarian regimes in Europe's modern history as well as on other defining moments and reference points in recent European history. Historical moments which are to be commemorated in particular in 2014 will be the 100th anniversary of the beginning of World War I, the 25th anniversary of the Fall of the Berlin Wall and the 10 years of enlargement of the European Union to Central and Eastern Europe.

Strand 2: Democratic engagement and civic participation

Elections to the European Parliament will be held in all Member States from 22 to 25 May 2014. These elections will be the first to be held under the Lisbon Treaty enhancing the role of EU citizens as political actors through Article 11 TEU.

In this context, the 'Europe for citizens' programme under its strand 2 will support organisations working on citizens' participation in the democratic life of the EU, ranging from local democracy to the empowerment of citizens to play a full part in EU policy.

2. PURPOSE OF THE CALL

The aim of the present call is to select organisations with European outreach which, through their permanent, usual and regular activities, make a tangible contribution to the objectives of the 'Europe for citizens' programme defined under points 1.1 and 1.2 above.

The call for proposals concerns structural support, referred to as operating grants, to bodies pursuing an aim of general Union interest, to raise awareness on European remembrance (strand 1) or to encourage democratic and civic participation (strand 2). It is intended to co-finance the operating expenses that enable a body to have an independent existence and to implement a range of activities envisaged in its annual work programme. These activities should correspond to the pursuit of the organisation's statutory objectives and must contribute to the development and implementation of one or several of the objectives pursued by the programme.

Support is granted to organisations in the form of framework partnerships for four years (2014-17) awarded further to this call for proposals. Framework partnerships are cooperation mechanisms established between a particular organisation and the Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency ⁽¹⁾.

Under these framework partnerships annual operating grants will be awarded every year.

3. ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

Applications which comply with the following criteria will be the subject of an in-depth evaluation.

3.1. Formal criteria

Only proposals submitted in one of the EU official language, using the official online application form, completed in full, signed and submitted by the specified deadline, will be considered.

The application form must be accompanied by all other documents referred to in the application form.

⁽¹⁾ Subject to the adoption of the Commission decision re-establishing the Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency with a new mandate for the period 2014-20.

Applications shall be considered eligible if they:

- (a) meet the conditions defined under points 4 and 5 of this call;
- (b) were submitted before 20 December 2013 at 12.00 (noon, Brussels time);
- (c) were submitted using the official application form (see point 13) duly completed;
- (d) were signed by the organisation's legal representative;
- (e) have a balanced budget in terms of expenditure and income;
- (f) fulfil the financial conditions of the call under point 5.

3.2. Eligible countries

Applications from legal entities established in one of the following countries are eligible:

- (a) EU Member States: Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, United Kingdom;
- (b) applications from other countries (namely the EFTA countries, the acceding countries, candidate countries and potential candidate countries) are eligible, provided that these countries have signed a memorandum of understanding with the European Commission during 2014. In this case, applicants from these countries may apply for a framework partnership for three years from 2015 to 2017 by 31 December 2014.

3.3. Eligible applicants

3.3.1. Categories of organisations

To be eligible for a framework partnership, the organisations must belong to one of the following categories:

A. Civil society organisations for European remembrance (strand 1):

Organisations carrying activities reflecting on causes of totalitarian regimes in Europe's modern history (specially but not exclusively Nazism that led to the Holocaust, Fascism, Stalinism and totalitarian communist regimes) and commemorating the victims of their crimes.

Organisations implementing activities concerning other defining moments and reference points in recent European history.

Organisations focusing on the common values of the EU: raising citizens' awareness on the importance of maintaining and promoting democratic values in Europe i.e. through the memory of European personalities such as the founding fathers of the European project or others who have made a significant contribution to later stages of European construction.

B. Civil society organisations working at European level (strand 2):

Umbrella organisations, networks and other CSOs aiming to encourage democratic and civic participation of citizens at Union level, by developing citizens' understanding of the Union policy making-process and promoting opportunities for civic engagement at Union level.

C. European public policy research organisations (think tanks) (strand 1 and 2):

These organisations provide a link between research and policy-making at European level. They help to find solutions to problems and facilitate interaction between scientists, intellectuals and decision-makers. The call targets think tanks that essentially focus on the objectives and priorities of the 'Europe for citizens' programme, performing activities that go beyond mere research and are not aimed exclusively at specialist groups. Both strands are concerned.

D. Platforms of pan-European organisations (strand 2):

The specificity of such platforms is that their members are themselves umbrella organisations (platforms) on a European level. These pan-European platforms represent a very large number of European citizens and cover a wide range of policy domains.

3.3.2. *Eligible organisations*

To be eligible for an operating grant, organisations pursuing an aim of general European interest must:

- (a) be a non-profit organisation;
- (b) play an active role in the field of European citizenship (European remembrance and democratic engagement and civic participation) as defined in their articles of association or mission statement and correspond to one of the categories mentioned above;
- (c) have been established legally and have had a legal personality for at least four years (on the date of submission of their application) in an eligible country.
- (d) perform their activities in eligible countries;
- (e) have the following geographical coverage:
 - civil society organisations at European level (category B) and civil society organisations for European remembrance (category A) must have members or activities in at least 12 eligible countries,
 - platforms of pan-European organisations (D) must have at least 20 umbrella member organisations, who must each have members in at least 15 Member States, and which, taken as a whole, cover the 28 Member States,
 - European public policy research organisations (think tanks) do not need to have any specific geographical coverage in order to be eligible.

Private individuals and public bodies are not eligible to apply within this call for proposals.

3.4. Eligible activities

The activities of the applicant must make a tangible contribution to the development and implementation of the general and specific programme objectives.

The applicants must provide:

- a strategic work programme for a period of four years starting in 2014, and
- a detailed annual work programme for a period of 12 months starting in 2014.

The applicant organisation's strategic work programme should cover its statutory activities, including conferences, seminars, round tables, representation, communication and valorisation, and their other recurrent European activities related to the activities of the 'Europe for citizens' programme.

3.5. Eligibility period

The framework partnership has a duration of four years. For its specific annual grants, the period of eligibility must correspond to the applicants' budget year, as evidenced by the organisation's certified accounts.

For applicants with a budget year that differs from the calendar year, the period of eligibility will have the starting date of their budget year in 2014.

4. AWARD CRITERIA

The following award criteria will be applied to assess the applications:

- **Consistency with the objectives of the programme and programme strand:** 30 %
 - appropriateness of the proposed work programme with regard to the objectives of the Europe for 'Europe for citizens' programme,
 - the organisation's work programme should contribute to the achievement of the objectives of the 'Europe for citizens' programme,
 - the mission of the applicant must be in consistency with the objectives of the 'Europe for citizens' programme.
- **Quality of the activity plan/work programme:** 30 %
 - the proposed work programme must be appropriate to reach the organisation's objectives,
 - coherence: correspondence between the different objectives of the proposed activities and adaption of the proposed inputs and resources to the objectives,
 - effectiveness: effects should be obtained at reasonable cost,
 - work programmes have to present a clearly elaborated European dimension,
 - priority is given to organisations using new working methods or proposing innovative activities.
- **Dissemination:** 15 %
 - organisations receiving operating grants must make the necessary efforts for ensuring the exploitation and dissemination of its results,
 - the proposed work programme must create a multiplier effect among a wider audience than that directly participating in the activities,
 - a realistic and practical dissemination plan should be in place in order to allow an effective transfer and exchange of the results foreseen by the work programme.
- **Impact and citizen involvement:** 15 %
 - the number of partners, participants, policy inputs and countries involved should be large enough to ensure a real European outreach of the proposed work programme,
 - impact: the work programme should aim at reaching its objectives, notably as regards concrete inputs to policy making,
 - sustainability: proposed work programme should aim at reaching long-term effects,
 - the proposed work programme should give participants the possibility to engage actively in the activities and with the issues raised,
 - a balance should be sought between citizens who are already active within organisations/institutions and citizens who are not yet involved,
 - priority will be given to organisations involving citizens from underrepresented groups or with fewer opportunities.
- **The extent to which lack of access to finance is holding back the implementation of the work programme:** 10 %
 - in the work plan, detailed analysis needs to be given on the progression of expenses and of all co-funding schemes over the past three years,

- proposals have to demonstrate that there are insufficient other sources of financing available that would allow them to implement the work programme,
- proposals have to demonstrate to what extent the requested amount is necessary for the implementation of the work programme,
- proposals have to demonstrate to what extent it is necessary to implement this work programme now in order to reach the call's objectives and/or to what extent a delay would be harmful in this respect.

5. FUNDING CONDITIONS

An EU grant is an incentive to carry out activities that would not be possible without the support of the Union. It is based on the principle of co-financing. The EU grant supplements the applicant organisation's own financial involvement and/or any national, regional or private support it may have obtained.

Acceptance of an application does not constitute an undertaking to award a grant equal to the amount requested by the beneficiary. Furthermore, under no circumstances may the amount awarded exceed the amount requested. The award of a grant does not establish an entitlement for subsequent years.

Union financial aid may not exceed 70 % of the eligible provisional expenses for all categories of organisations except for platforms of pan-European organisations (see point 3.3.1) for which the ceiling is set at 90 %.

Moreover, the maximum grant awarded by category is set as follows:

Type	Minimum amount	Maximum amount	Maximum co-financing rate
A. Civil society organisations for European remembrance (strand 1)	EUR 60 000	EUR 200 000	70 %
B. Civil society organisations working at European level (strand 2)	EUR 60 000	EUR 200 000	70 %
C. European public policy research organisations (think thanks) (strand 1 and 2)	EUR 60 000	EUR 350 000	70 %
D. Platforms of pan-European organisations (strand 2)	EUR 60 000	EUR 600 000	90 %

The aim is to select approximately 8 organisations under strand 1 'European remembrance' and 26 organisations under strand 2 'Democratic engagement and civic participation' of the 'Europe for citizens' programme.

5.1. Contractual conditions

When an application is approved, the beneficiary receives either a framework partnership decision and a grant decision, or a framework partnership agreement and a grant agreement, depending on the place where it is legally established.

- **The framework partnership:** formalises a long-term cooperation mechanism between the Commission and its partners (see point 3.1). It may take the form of a framework partnership decision (FPD) or of a framework partnership agreement (FPA).
- Based on the FPD/FPA, specific annual grants are awarded which may take the form of:

- *grant decision*: is a unilateral act awarding a subsidy to a beneficiary. Contrary to the grant agreement, the beneficiary does not have to sign the grant decision and can start the action immediately upon receipt/notification. The grant decision will thus speed up the process. The grant decision applies to the beneficiaries established within the EU.
- *grant agreement*: must be signed by the beneficiary and returned to the EACEA immediately. The EACEA will be the last party to sign. The grant agreement applies to the beneficiaries established outside of the EU.

A model of the grant decision and grant agreement will be available on the following website: http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/citizenship/index_en.php

The general conditions applicable to the grant decision/grant agreement are available in the 'Documents register' of the EACEA website <http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/index.htm>

6. BUDGET

The total budget available for framework partnerships of four years (2014-17) will be of EUR 27,04 million. Approximately one third will be dedicated to European public policy research organisations (think tanks).

The total budget available for specific annual grants to be concluded for 2014 will be of EUR 6,76 million for 2014. The European Commission intends to finance around 34 organisations under this call.

The structural support will be awarded under item 16.02.01 of the General Budget of the European Union.

The European Commission reserves the right not to distribute all the funds available.

7. DEADLINE FOR SUBMISSION/SUBMISSION PROCEDURE

The deadline for submission of applications is **20 December 2013 at 12.00 (noon, Brussels time)**.

Detailed information regarding the submission procedure is available at the following address: http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/citizenship/index_en.php

The applications have to be submitted using only the currently available grant application electronic form (eForm). All data fields of the eForm have to be completed.

In addition, the following documents have to be attached to the eForm:

- declaration of honour signed by the person authorised to enter into legally binding commitments on behalf of the applicant organisation,
- completed budget,
- completed legal entity form,
- financial identification form.

Applications submitted on paper by post, fax or e-mail will not be accepted for further evaluation.

The European Commission and the Executive Agency reserve the right to request any additional information they may require.

All documents have to be sent/uploaded electronically to the following address:

http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/citizenship/index_en.php

Only applications that fulfil the eligibility criteria will be considered for a grant. If an application is deemed ineligible, a letter indicating the reasons will be sent to the applicant.

No information on the outcome of individual applications will be given before the end of the selection procedure. The outcome of the selection results will be published in spring 2014 at the following address:

http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/citizenship/funding/2014/index_en.php

Applicants selected to receive funding will be sent an EU grant agreement/decision. Applicants whose applications have not been selected will be informed in writing. Applications will not be returned to applicants.

Checklist of documents to be submitted by applicants:

1. completed application form (eForm);
 2. completed budget form (to be attached to the eForm);
 3. signed declaration of honour (to be attached to the eForm);
 4. completed legal entity form (available at the following address: http://ec.europa.eu/budget/contracts_grants/info_contracts/legal_entities/legal_entities_en.cfm#en (to be attached to the eForm));
 5. financial identification form (available at the following address: http://ec.europa.eu/budget/library/contracts_grants/info_contracts/financial_id/fich_sign_ba_gb_en.pdf (to be attached to the eForm));
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