



European Economic and Social Committee

2014 EESC CIVIL SOCIETY PRIZE

Rewarding excellence in civil society initiatives

ELIGIBILITY, ENTRY AND SELECTION CRITERIA

A) *Aim and overall objective of the Civil Society Prize*

The **aim** of the prize, which is awarded annually, is to reward and encourage initiatives of civil society organisations and/or individuals which have made a significant contribution to promoting European identity and integration.

The **overall objective** of the prize is to raise awareness of the contribution that civil society organisations and/or individuals can make to the creation of a European identity and citizenship in a way that underpins the common values that shore up European integration.

B) *Eligibility criteria*

1. Theme of the 2014 EESC Civil Society Prize

The integration of Roma

Over the years, the European Union and international organisations such as the Council of Europe and the World Bank have taken numerous initiatives to improve the situation of the Roma, the biggest ethnic minority in Europe. Still, the Roma population largely remains socially excluded. In spite of being EU citizens and in spite of national Roma integration strategies, Roma often have to overcome cultural and socio-economic barriers and are more strongly confronted with prejudice and problems of acceptance exacerbated by the economic crisis and the rise of particularism – which is not compatible with European values and principles. On the other hand, Roma organisations, for various reasons, seem to experience problems with getting themselves heard.

With the 2014 Civil Society Prize, the EESC wishes to reward initiatives carried out by officially registered civil society organisations and/or individuals. The initiatives shall be aimed at improving the economic and social inclusion of Roma.

The theme of this year's prize is closely linked to the work of the newly set up EESC exploratory coordination group on better inclusion of the Roma community through civil society initiatives.

The total value of the prize is EUR 30 000. This amount may be shared between three winners as follows: EUR 20 000 for the first prize, EUR 5 000 for the second prize and EUR 5 000 for the third prize.

The prize will be launched in March 2014 and awarded on **16 October 2014**.

2. **Eligible initiatives**

Considering that civil society actors play a major role in tackling discrimination and prejudice against Roma and in fostering their integration, the specific objective of the prize is to reward initiatives which:

- combat racism, discrimination and prejudice against Roma;
- raise awareness of the rights and obligations of Roma;
- raise awareness among non-Roma communities – including local authorities and service providers – about the reality of Roma communities; promote tolerance; improve the perception and acceptance of Roma and their image in the media;
- facilitate an open-minded attitude and mutual knowledge between Roma and other EU citizens;
- promote fair treatment of and equal opportunities for Roma in the workplace;
- facilitate social inclusion of Roma and foster their empowerment and participation in the social, economic, political and cultural life of their home country;
- raise awareness, exchange information and spread best practices on the integration and inclusion of Roma;
- offer practical support and advice as regards administrative procedures and services available and help Roma overcome practical hurdles related for example to access to housing, health services, education and employment.

C) **Entry criteria**

3. **Eligible candidates**

The EESC Civil Society Prize is open to civil society organisations¹ officially registered within the European Union and acting at local, national, regional or European level. It is furthermore open to individuals.

¹

Civil society organisations include: the so-called labour-market players, i.e. the social partners; organisations representing social and economic players, which are not social partners in the strict sense of the term; NGOs (non-governmental organisations) which bring people together in a common cause, such as environmental organisations, human rights organisations, consumer associations, charitable organisations, educational and training organisations, etc.; CBOs (community-based organisations, i.e. organisations set up within society at grassroots level which pursue member-oriented objectives), e.g. youth organisations, family associations and all organisations through which citizens participate in local and municipal life; and religious communities. (Opinion of the Economic and Social Committee on *The role and contribution of civil society organisations in the building of Europe* – CESE 851/1999 of 22 September 1999).

Civil society organisations are private-initiative non-state organisations which are actively involved in shaping public affairs on the basis of their own concerns, drawing on their own specific knowledge, abilities and scope for action. They act autonomously and membership entails a voluntary commitment by members of the general public to take part in the work and activities of those organisations.

This definition excludes bodies and structures set up by a legislative or regulatory act and to which affiliation is partially or totally mandatory.

Individuals are natural persons. Third-country nationals are also eligible, provided they are legally resident in the territory of the EU.

Candidates for the prize (both organisations and individuals) must be nominated by:

- one or several members of the European Economic and Social Committee; or
- one or several national Economic and Social Councils (ESCs) or similar institutions; or
- one or several European civil society organisations and networks.

European civil society organisations and individuals are not allowed to nominate themselves.

"European organisations" means organisations which have members and associates in several Member States and which coordinate their activities at European level.

Applications sent **directly** to the EESC will not be considered.

To ensure full transparency of the nomination and selection process, members of the selection board are not allowed to nominate candidates for the prize.

4. Nomination procedure

Nominations are to be made by filling in the application form which is available on the EESC website at the following address:

www.eesc.europa.eu/civilsocietyprize

The application form must contain all the information the selection board requires in order:

- firstly, to ascertain that the civil society organisations or the individuals concerned fulfil the formal entry criteria; and
- secondly, to evaluate the substantive merits of each civil society organisation or individual in relation to the theme and objectives of the prize.

In order to facilitate the selection board's work, application forms and any accompanying documentation should be sent in French or English, wherever possible.

D) Selection criteria

The selection board will assess the applications that meet the criteria set out under points B (eligibility criteria) and C (entry criteria), taking into account:

- 1) The **aim and overall objective** of the prize as set out under point A;
- 2) The **impact** of the initiatives in terms of:
 - their target audience (categories of beneficiaries of the initiative and number of people concerned);
 - the nature of their contribution to the well-being of the community;
 - their long-term impact;
 - their sustainability;
 - their European dimension (geographical coverage).
- 3) The **degree of excellence** of the initiatives in terms of:
 - innovation;
 - creativity;
 - uniqueness.

The selection board currently comprises the president and the two vice-presidents of the EESC, the presidents of the three groups (Employers, Workers, Various Interests), and the EESC secretary-general.

The selection board is responsible for the final selection of the winners, taking into account the results of the evaluation carried out by a three-member group of assessors which includes at least one external independent evaluator.

5. Deadlines

The final deadline for sending nominations is **15 June 2014**.

Winners will be notified by **15 September 2014**.

The prize-giving ceremony will be held on **16 October 2014**.

6. Submission of nominations

The duly completed application form shall be sent to the EESC secretariat either by email to the following address:

civilsocietyprize@eesc.europa.eu

OR by post to:

European Economic and Social Committee (EESC)
Communication Department
Rue Belliard/Belliardstraat 99
Office VMA2 5/52
1040 Bruxelles/Brussel
BELGIQUE/BELGIË

For further information, please contact:

Mr Peter Lindvald Nielsen, Head of Communication
Tel.: + 32 (0)2 546 92 99

or

Ms Anna Comi, Communication officer
Tel.: + 32 (0)2 546 93 67

You may also send an email to civilsocietyprize@eesc.europa.eu.

Proposers and nominees will receive confirmation by email that the application has been received on time and has been duly registered. They will also be informed of the deadline for the selection of the winners.

If relevant for other potential candidates, replies to emails will be published on the Civil Society Prize page of the EESC website, as indicated above, under Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ).

7. Prize money

The total value of the prize is EUR 30 000 and it may be shared between a maximum of three winners as follows:

First prize: EUR 20 000;
Second prize: EUR 5 000;
Third prize: EUR 5 000.

The Committee is not bound to award all three prizes.