



European Heritage Days  
Journées européennes  
du patrimoine

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## ***European Heritage Days***

# ***Call for European Heritage Days Stories 2026***

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# ***Call for European Heritage Days Stories***

## ***Competitive Grant Award Procedure***

***An EHD initiative created especially for European Heritage Days communities,  
European Heritage Award/Europa Nostra Award winners  
European Heritage Label sites<sup>1</sup> and the Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe<sup>2</sup>  
for the funding of activity-focused community projects***

### **Terms and Conditions for the submission of Stories and Grant Project Proposals**

The [European Heritage Days](#) (EHD) are the most widely celebrated participatory cultural events shared by people living in Europe. With over 50 000 events organised each year in the programme's 48 participating signatories to the [European Cultural Convention](#), the EHD, as a joint action of the Council of Europe and the European Commission, represent a unique example of a grass-roots initiative which is organised and shared by tens of millions of people.

Since their launch, the EHD have grown and evolved, not only in terms of the increasing number of participating countries and cultural heritage events organised every year, but also in their role in the development of cultural networks that stretch across Europe. In recent years, the focus of the European Heritage Days has been on community heritage and the extraordinary significance of a common vision to protect, promote and enhance shared heritage and common European values. The focus on the people behind the places has allowed the Programme to highlight the importance of the role of individuals in cultural heritage and the work communities are undertaking on local, regional, national and European levels.

Each EHD event and every visitor to those events represents a unique European Story. The events are organised to celebrate shared heritage, enable access for everyone, create an opportunity for inter-generational exchange and strengthen the communities involved in them.

It is with the aim of recognising the role of people within the framework of the European Heritage Days that the Council of Europe, the European Commission and the network of EHD National Coordinators decided to set up the Call for European Heritage Days Stories.

The initiative aims to highlight the Stories behind EHD events, and to give a voice to the passionate individuals, organisations and associations who wish to share their Story. The Call for European Heritage Days Stories was launched during the 2018 European Year of Cultural Heritage, the successes of which it continues to build on through supporting the [European Framework for Action on Cultural Heritage](#), adopted in December 2018 to secure the long term impact of the European Year of Cultural Heritage.

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<sup>1</sup> European Heritage Label sites designated under the designated under the European Union action for the European Heritage Label, established through Decision No 1194/2011/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 16 November 2011. There are currently 60 European Heritage Label sites.

<sup>2</sup> The Cultural Routes programme was launched by the Council of Europe in 1987 with the Declaration of Santiago de Compostela. There are currently 49 Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe certified by the Governing Board of the Enlarged Partial Agreement on Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe based on criteria established by its Committee of Ministers Resolution CM/Res(2023)2.

## WHO CAN APPLY?

The Call for European Heritage Days Stories is open to:

- (1) European Heritage Days event organisers in the programme's 48 participating signatories to the [European Cultural Convention](#);<sup>3</sup>
- (2) [European Heritage Award/Europa Nostra Award winners](#);
- (3) [European Heritage Label](#) sites
- (4) [Cultural Routes](#) of the Council of Europe.

All applicants must have hosted or organised at least one European Heritage Days event during at least one of the past four EHD seasons (that is, between )13 August 2022 and 30 November 2025.

It is also expected that applicants will plan to host or organise a European Heritage Days event during 2026.

Are you an organiser of a project involving European cultural heritage that you would like to share with the rest of Europe? Then we would like to hear your Story!

Simply fill in the application form and, subject to the conditions outlined below, your Story will be published on the EHD website. Any individual or legal entity can submit an entry.

If the Story has the potential to be developed into a specific one-off project, organisations will be invited to apply for a grant through a second round of applications.

Detailed information on geographical scope and eligibility can be found in Appendix I: Legal Conditions.

## HOW CAN COMMUNITIES APPLY?

You can submit your Story through the online application form which will be available on the EHD website between **12 January 2026 and 27 February 2026**. Please visit the [European Heritage Days Stories](#) page to find out more information.

To be eligible to apply for the competitive award procedure for a grant of up to €10 000, a maximum of ONE project proposal per community can also be submitted along with your Story.

## WHAT IS IT?

The ***European Heritage Days (EHD)*** [Call for European Heritage Days Stories](#) initiative intends to identify the European Dimension of heritage sites and heritage work undertaken by communities in Europe. It refers to past or existing "Stories" of European heritage that communities would like to share and to potentially develop into a specific project to further contribute to their communities. The Call for European Heritage Days Stories was launched as one of the key initiatives within the [European Year of Cultural Heritage \(EYCH\) 2018](#), organised under the two slogans: "European Year of Cultural Heritage: The Art of Sharing" and "Our heritage: where the past meets the future".

The objectives of the initiative are:

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<sup>3</sup> The 48 European States participating in the European Heritage Days programme in 2023 are listed under Article 3 of Appendix I: Legal Conditions

- (1) To encourage people to engage with Europe's cultural heritage and to reinforce a sense of belonging to the European common space.
- (2) To collect testimonies/stories that give an insight into how communities understand the European dimension of local heritage.
- (3) To identify and promote communities working with heritage in line with European values and with a long-term perspective of collaboration.
- (4) To reward communities for their efforts and to encourage them to develop their Stories further.
- (5) To motivate and encourage communities, European Heritage Awards/Europa Nostra Award winners, European Heritage Label Sites and the Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe to participate in the European Heritage Days.

## HOW DOES IT WORK?

One of the main objectives of the Call for European Heritage Days Stories is to empower communities and provide for an open space where multiple narratives co-exist. The European Heritage Days therefore invites storytellers to outline their own vision of the European Dimension and what the European values referenced in their heritage sites and work are. Trends identified in this and future Calls will be included in the updated definition of the European Dimension on a European level.

### Telling your European Heritage Story

We ask for Stories about your community's place in Europe's heritage.

You are welcome to make your Story as informative, serious, amusing, passionate or original as you wish. But most of all, we welcome interesting and well-written real-life histories and stories for you to share with all European Heritage Days communities.

When submitting your Story, you will also be asked to indicate the category of your **heritage/heritage work**:

- (1) Tangible heritage (physical objects - buildings and historic places, monuments and artefacts);
- (2) Intangible heritage (practices, representations, expressions, knowledge and skills);
- (3) Natural heritage;
- (4) Digital heritage.

You will then be invited to tell your Story and the European Dimension of it.

### European Dimension

Priority will be given to projects with a strong European Dimension, which could be defined as having one or more of the following characteristics:

- a. **Collaboration on multiple levels** (local, regional, national and international, cross-frontier, transnational initiatives).
- b. **A focus on cultural diversity**, according to the texts adopted by the Council of Europe, the European Commission, and UNESCO. There should be an emphasis on accessibility in its widest sense.
- c. Promotion of **cultural exchange of ideas, information, goods and services and the sharing of resources** between different partners in European countries.
- d. **Active participation / engagement / cooperation between visitors and the local community in the event.**
- e. Focus on **a people-centred activity**, rather than a place or object-oriented activities.
- f. Focus on links **between heritage, history and culture.**

- g. Vision of **cultural heritage as a resource**, rather than an end or goal in itself.
- h. **Principle of sustainable development** where resources can be developed from within.
- i. Attention to the **inclusion of youth**.
- j. **Cross-frontier cooperation** between **cultural** and/or **educational** structures.
- k. **Cultural cooperation** as a value.
- l. **Networking and cooperation through use of technology** to enable a broader reach for smaller communities, to engage with new and wider audiences and to provide access for all.

This list is non-exhaustive, and applicants are invited to propose their own examples to demonstrate their own understanding of the European Dimension.

## Submitting your project idea

The final stage of the application form requests details of your project idea should you wish to be considered for the competitive grant award procedure.

Completion of this section is not obligatory as you may wish to submit your Story without any request for financial support at this time. Only those communities that have declared an interest in the grant procedure will have their Stories and project proposals entered into the pre-selection stage.

## WHAT ARE THE CRITERIA?

### Eligibility criteria for the Call

The storyteller should:

- Be a European Heritage Days community and/or be a winner of the European Heritage Award/Europa Nostra Award/or a European Heritage Label site which has hosted and/or organised at least one EHD event during at least one of the past four EHD seasons.
- Be a private individual or a legal entity, as defined in Article 4 of Appendix I: Legal Conditions.
- Submit their Story **in English or French**.
- Declare that they have the right to submit the Story, as outlined in Article 8 of Appendix I: Legal Conditions.
- Not be subject to exclusion criteria as outlined in Article 8 of Appendix I: Legal Conditions or Article 4 of Appendix II: Rule No. 1374 of 16 December 2015 on the grant award procedures of the Council of Europe.

### Publication of the Stories

All of the Stories that have passed the eligibility criteria will be published as European Heritage Days Stories and promoted at European level. The Stories will be published as written by the storyteller. All eligible communities which have declared an expression of interest in the grant award procedure will also be considered for the pre-selection stage.

## WHO IS ELIGIBLE TO RECEIVE A GRANT?

In order to be eligible to apply for a grant, applicants must be legally recognised entities as defined in Appendix I: Legal Conditions. The person submitting the Story and the draft project proposal must be a representative of that legal entity. Previous recipients of a European Heritage Days Stories grant are welcome to submit a Story, but will not be eligible to apply for another grant for up to five years after the previous grant was awarded. Stories and grant applications that were submitted in a previous edition of the Call, but who were unsuccessful in their grant application, are welcome to submit a revised application. **Please note that individuals are not eligible to receive a grant.**

However, any individuals may submit their Story and have it promoted as a European Story, as outlined the selection criteria.

### **Ineligible costs**

In addition to the ineligible costs as referred to in Article 7 of the *Rule No. 1374 of 16 December 2015 on the grant award procedures of the Council of Europe* (Appendix II), applicants must acknowledge that the grant cannot be spent entirely or to a large extent on permanent staff/permanent equipment or core running costs of the applicant.

**You will find the full list of exclusion and eligibility criteria in Article 8 of Appendix I: Legal Conditions of this Call.**

## **GRANT SELECTION CRITERIA**

Through the competitive grants of up to €10,000, we are able to fund activity-focused projects that will benefit people and communities.

When assessing your application, we will consider whether the project is relevant to heritage in Europe, whether its outcome will achieve this, how capable your community is of delivering the project and the overall technical and qualitative value of the project proposal.

We ask applicants to define their own understanding of European heritage. It might include intangible, tangible, digital and natural heritage. Examples include archaeological sites, collections and museums, historic buildings, natural and man-made landscapes, memories, festivals, music, dance, or any history that is valued by a community. Examples of project outputs may include publications, performances, events, restoration work, exhibitions, interactive digital apps, virtual tours, DVDs, or educational resources (list non-exhaustive).

### **1. Pre-selection stage**

**The pre-selection of the project proposals will be based on the following criteria:**

- (1) Submission of an informative and interesting well-written Story (*max. 10 points*);
- (2) European Dimension of the Story and project idea and to what extent it can serve as an example of good practice for other countries and communities (*max. 15 points*);
- (3) Linkage of the Story and accompanying project idea with the European Heritage Days priorities of diversity, education, community participation and engagement, environmental protection, gender equality and/or youth orientation as well as the alignment with the European Heritage Days 2026 pan-European annual theme of [Heritage at Risk: Revive, Resist, Reimagine](#) (*max. 20 points*);
- (4) Originality and creativity of the project idea (*max. 10 points*);
- (5) Feasibility of the project idea to be completed within a clearly defined timeframe and within the maximum grant allocation available (*max. 20 points*);
- (6) Potential of the proposed project to have positive outcomes for the community (*max. 15 points*);

Any ONE of the following criteria will be considered as an added benefit (*max. 10 points in total*):

- 1) Long-term potential of the project (sustainability) including strategies for maintaining activities, partnerships, or outcomes beyond the grant period;
- 2) Transnational dimension of the project through joint storytelling, co-creation, or exchange across borders;
- 3) Inclusion of vulnerable and minority groups;

- 4) Active engagement of young people (ages 11-35) in heritage interpretation, storytelling, or preservation;
- 5) Fostering of intergenerational dialogue and knowledge transfer;
- 6) Engagement with European Heritage Label sites, Europa Nostra Award winners, and Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe.

## **MAXIMUM POINTS AVAILABLE = 100**

The 16 highest ranking project ideas will then be invited to submit detailed project proposals and budgets to be considered for the next stage of the grant award procedure.

## **2. Final selection stage**

**The final selection of the project proposals will be based on the following criteria:**

- (1) Submission of an informative and interesting well-written Story (*max. 10 points*);
- (2) Quality of the project proposal – is the project thoroughly planned, and does the applicant appear able to deliver the proposed project within the necessary timeframe, in line with the budget breakdown? (*max. 20 points*);
- (3) Linkage of the project proposal with the European Heritage Days priorities of diversity, education, community engagement and/or youth orientation as well as the connection with the European Heritage Days 2026 pan-European annual theme of [Heritage at Risk: Revive, Resist, Reimagine](#) (*max. 20 points*);
- (4) European Dimension of the project proposal (*max. 10 points*);
- (5) Quality and sustainability of the expected results and sustainability of the project (*max. 10 points*);
- (6) Outcomes of the project for the community, including long-term benefits (*max. 10 points*);
- (7) Potential for the project to enable the community, at both local and European levels, to engage with the heritage in new and improved ways (*max. 10 points*);
- (8) Budget breakdown: eligibility of costs and appropriate use of grant funds (*max. 10 points*).

## **MAXIMUM POINTS AVAILABLE = 100**

The 8 highest ranking **eligible** project proposals will then be offered a grant award.

## **WHAT ARE THE IMPORTANT DATES?**

The Call for European Heritage Days Stories was initiated within the framework of the [European Year of Cultural Heritage 2018](#) and is now set to be continued on a regular basis. The Call consists of two parts - the Call for European Heritage Days Stories and the two-stage grant application procedure (pre-selection and selection stage).

### **12 January 2026:** Launch of the Call

As of 12 January 2026, Stories can be submitted using [an online application form which will be available on the EHD website](#). In addition, in order to be eligible for the competitive grant award procedure (maximum €10 000) Storytellers may submit a maximum of ONE project proposal connected to their Story within their online application.

### **27 February 2026:** Deadline for submission



The application form will be closed at midnight CET on Friday, 27 February 2026.<sup>4</sup> Submissions entered after this date will not be eligible for the Call. Applications will be assessed for eligibility by the EHD Secretariat in order of their submission, in consultation with the network of EHD National Coordinators, and the European Commission. Only the first 120 eligible requests will be considered for the grant award procedure.

All of the eligible Stories will be published on the [EHD website](#) and promoted as European Heritage Days Stories. Please note that the Stories will be published as submitted, with no major editorial changes to their content or language.

### **28 February – 31 March 2026: Pre-selection of the Stories eligible to receive a grant**

Following the closing of the Call, final assessment of eligibility and online publication of the Stories, a Committee of members composed of the EHD Secretariat, assisted by two international experts, will consider the proposals for a pre-selection of the 16 most compelling Stories which declared their interest in the grant award procedure.

The two international experts will be appointed by the Council of Europe and the European Commission. All Stories and project proposals will be examined in detail by all three Committee members, following which their final average score will be ranked in order to determine the 16 highest scoring eligible entries.

### **13 April – 12 May 2026: Second stage of the grant procedures**

On 12 April a maximum of 16 pre-selected eligible Stories will be invited to develop and submit a more detailed project proposal and budget breakdown. This is in accordance with *Rule No. 1374 of 16 December 2015 on the grant award procedures of the Council of Europe* (Appendix II), The final deadline to deliver the necessary documentation is set at Tuesday 12 May 2026.

### **13 May - 16 June 2026: Final selection of project proposals**

Taking into account the detailed project proposal, total budget breakdown and selection and award criteria, the European panel will assess the 16 applications in the period between 13 May and 16 June 2026 with a view to selecting a minimum of 8 eligible European Stories to receive a grant of a maximum of €10 000 each.

The total budget of the declared action is €80 000, which allows for the award of 8 grants of €10 000. If the project proposals outline smaller amounts, there is the possibility to select more than 8 European Stories, up to the maximum total budget of the action.

The European panel ('Evaluation Committee') is established by the EHD Programme and consists of a minimum of three members including: one coordinator appointed by the Council of Europe; one representative appointed by the European Commission; and one representative appointed by the EHD National Coordinators.

### **22 June 2026: Notification of selection**

Selected Stories that have been nominated to receive a grant will be notified in June 2026.

All grant-selected projects will be published in the EHD newsletter as well as on the [EHD website](#) and through [Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#).

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<sup>4</sup> If the number of the submitted eligible grant requests exceeds 120, the Council of Europe reserves the right to close the Call earlier than foreseen.

### **1 August 2026: Start of the project activities**

All project actions proposed in the submitted application can start as from 1 August 2026 and must start no later than 31 October 2026. Costs incurred under such actions are eligible for the grant justification as of the start date of the grant agreement. The grant recipients are required to keep all original invoices and justifications for the amount spent within the grant. Any unspent amount will be returned to the EHD Programme budget at the end of the implementation period.

### **September 2026: Online ceremony and workshop on reporting for grantees**

All grant-selected projects will be invited to sign the grant agreements. An online ceremony will be held in September and the explanation of the requirements for the narrative and financial reporting will be provided during an interactive online workshop.

### **August - December 2026: Monitoring stage**

The selected grant recipients will work with the Council of Europe to ensure monitoring of the project and to deliver a mid-action draft narrative and financial report on the implementation of the grant. All grant-selected projects must include the logo of the [European Heritage Days](#) as well as the logo of [the European Union - Council of Europe Joint programmes](#) on their produced material and activities.

### **31 March 2027: End of the implementation stage**

All project actions proposed in the submitted application must end before 31 March 2027. Costs incurred after this date will not be eligible for the justification of the grant.

### **30 April 2027: Reporting and evaluation**

Following the end of the implementation stage, the grant recipients must submit the final narrative and financial report for the justification of the grant. Templates for such reports will be provided by the EHD Secretariat along with the grant agreement.

## ***European Heritage Days Call for European Heritage Days Stories***

***European Heritage Days (EHD) initiative oriented towards  
European Heritage Days communities,  
European Heritage Award/Europa Nostra Award winners, European Heritage Label sites and  
the Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe***

## Article 1 Definitions

For the purposes of this Call, the following definitions will apply:

- (1) **Cultural Heritage**, as defined by the [Council of Europe Framework Convention on the Value of Cultural Heritage for Society](#), is a group of resources inherited from the past which people identify, independently of ownership, as a reflection and expression of their constantly evolving values, beliefs, knowledge and traditions. It includes all aspects of the environment resulting from the interaction between people and places through time;
- (2) **Heritage Community** consists of people who value specific aspects of cultural heritage which they wish, within the framework of public action, to sustain and transmit to future generations.
- (3) **European Heritage Days Stories** are stories told by European citizens and communities that aim to increase understanding of the shared history of Europe through one of the characteristics of the European Dimension, the pan-European nature of their heritage sites/work, the links with key European events and movements, or the role of heritage in the development and promotion of common European values.
- (4) As stipulated by the European Heritage Days programme, the concept **European Dimension** could be defined as having one or more of the following characteristics:
  - a. **Collaboration on multiple levels** (local, regional, national and international, cross-frontier, transnational initiatives, including cooperation with the EHD National Coordinators network).
  - b. **A focus on cultural diversity**, according to the texts adopted by the Council of Europe, the European Commission and UNESCO. There should be an emphasis on accessibility in its widest sense.
  - c. Promotion of **cultural exchange of ideas, information, goods and services and the sharing of resources** between different partners in European countries.
  - d. **Active participation / engagement / cooperation between visitors and the local community in the event.**
  - e. Focus on **a people-centred activity**, rather than a place or object-oriented activities.
  - f. Focus on links **between heritage, history and culture.**
  - g. Vision of **cultural heritage as a resource**, rather than an end or goal in itself.
  - h. **Principle of sustainable development** where resources can be developed from within.
  - i. Attention to **inclusion of youth.**
  - j. **Transnational cooperation between cultural and/or educational structures.**
  - k. **Cultural Cooperation** as a value.
  - l. **Networking and cooperation through use of technology** to enable a broader reach for smaller communities, to engage with new and wider audiences and to provide access for all.

It should be noted that one of the objectives of the Call for European Stories is to empower communities and provide for an open space where multiple narratives could and should exist. Therefore, the Council of Europe and the European Commission invite the storytellers to outline their own visions of European Dimension and what the European values are that are

referenced in their heritage sites and work. Trends identified in this and future Calls will be included in the updated definition of the European Dimension on a European level.

## *Article 2* **Objectives**

The **objectives of the Call for European Heritage Days Stories** are:

- (1) To encourage people to engage with Europe's cultural heritage and to reinforce a sense of belonging to the European common space.
- (2) To collect testimonies/stories and good practices on how communities understand the European dimension of local heritage.
- (3) To identify and promote communities working with heritage in line with European values and with a long-term perspective of collaboration.
- (4) To reward communities for their efforts and encourage them to develop their Stories further.
- (5) To motivate and encourage communities to participate in the EHD.

## *Article 3* **Geographical scope**

The communities from the following 48 signatories to the European Cultural Convention are eligible to apply: Albania, Andorra, Armenia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Holy See, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Kazakhstan, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Republic of Moldova, Monaco, Montenegro, Netherlands, North Macedonia, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, San Marino, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Türkiye, Ukraine, United Kingdom.

## *Article 4* **Participation in the call**

The Call for European Stories is open to:

- (1) European Heritage Days communities from the 48 signatories to the [European Cultural Convention](#) participating in the EHD programme in 2026 as listed under Article 3;
- (2) [European Heritage Award/Europa Nostra Award winners](#);
- (3) The [European Heritage Label sites](#)<sup>5</sup>;
- (4) The [Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe](#)<sup>6</sup>.

All applicants must have hosted or organised at least one European Heritage Days event during at least one of the past four EHD seasons (that is, between 13 August 2022 and 30 November 2025).

In order to have the European Story received and promoted as such, any individual or legally recognised entity such as not-for-profit associations or organisations, schools, scientific or academic institutes, towns, provinces, communities, regions or national authorities of a country

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<sup>5</sup> European Heritage Label sites designated under the designated under the European Union action for the European Heritage Label, established through Decision No 1194/2011/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 16 November 2011. There are currently 67 European Heritage Label sites.

<sup>6</sup> The Cultural Routes programme was launched by the Council of Europe in 1987 with the Declaration of Santiago de Compostela. There are currently 49 Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe certified by the Governing Board of the Enlarged Partial Agreement on Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe based on criteria established by its Committee of Ministers Resolution CM/Res(2023)2.

participating in the EHD may submit their Story. Different rules apply for the participation in the grant procedure (Article 5).

#### *Article 5*

### **Participation in the grant procedure**

In order to be able to be eligible for a grant, applicants must be legally recognised entities (see examples above). The person submitting the Story and the draft project proposal must be a representative of that legal entity. Please note that individuals are not eligible to receive a grant. However, any individuals may submit their Story and have it promoted as a European Story, as outlined in Article 4.

#### *Article 6*

### **Application form**

Any Stories intended for inclusion in this Call must be submitted to the EHD Programme by means of the application form, typed in English. The official application form is available on the EHD website page "[European Heritage Days Stories](#)" as of 12 January 2026. The application process is open until midnight CET on 27 February 2026. Applications submitted after this date will not be taken into consideration for this Call.

Storytellers may submit one Story per Call combined with one optional project proposal to be eligible for the grant procedure (maximum €10 000) connected with one of the submitted Stories.

#### *Article 7*

### **European panel**

The European panel ('Evaluation Committee') comprises a minimum of three members: one coordinator appointed by the Council of Europe; one representative appointed by the European Commission; and one representative appointed by the EHD National Coordinators. Following the pre-selection stage, the European Panel will select a minimum of 8 European Stories to receive a grant of a maximum of €10 000 each.

To avoid any risk of conflict of interest, it is not permitted for the storytellers to contact a member of the panel directly on any issue linked to the Call for European Heritage Days Stories without going through the Council of Europe. For any questions you may refer to the European Heritage Days website or by email to [Stories.EHD@coe.int](mailto:Stories.EHD@coe.int).

#### *Article 8*

### **Selection of the Stories to be promoted as European Heritage Days Stories**

Eligibility criteria for the Call are as follows:

- (1) In order to have the European Story received and promoted as such, any individual or legally recognised entity may submit their entry. By submitting the Story, the applicant testifies that their Story comes from a community participating in the European Heritage Days (EHD) in one of the 48 signatories to the [European Cultural Convention](#) participating in the EHD Programme in 2025 and/or they are a European Heritage Award/Europa Nostra Award winner and/or one of the European Heritage Label sites and/or one of the Certified Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe.
- (2) The applicant must have hosted and/or organised at least one EHD event during at least one of the past four EHD seasons (that is, between 13 August 2022 and 30 November 2025) and should declare this in the application form.

- (3) The storytellers must declare that they have written the Story themselves. If the storytellers did not author the Story, it is their responsibility to ensure they have secured permission from the author(s) before submission. Should the Story contain personal data the data subject's consent must have been sought. The Council of Europe and European Commission do not bear responsibility for the Story or its content.
- (4) The storytellers must declare that they have the right to use any image files submitted with the Story for the intended purpose. If the storyteller is not the owner of the rights over the image(s), it is their responsibility to ensure they have secured permission to use the image(s) for the intended purpose from the owner before submission. The Council of Europe reserves the right to request proof of the owner's permission. They must submit information on the credits to be published with the image on the EHD website.
- (5) The facts presented in the submitted Story/project proposal must be accurate and the Story's content or its presentation must not violate the law of the storyteller's country of residence or the law of the country where the Story takes place. The Story's content or its presentation must not be contrary to the Council of Europe's values and principles.

The Council of Europe and the European Commission reserve the right to exclude the Story and to remove it from the EHD website if there are reasonable doubts as to whether the above eligibility criteria are met. In particular, the Stories may be excluded from the Call and removed from the EHD website if:

- (1) they are not in line with the Council of Europe's expressed values on human rights, democracy and the rule of law;
- (2) they use hate speech or other forms of offensive language;
- (3) and/or evidence is received after the Call that the information provided has not been accurate or that there are copyright infringements.

#### **The community:**

- (1) The applicant must have organised and/or hosted at least one event as part of the European Heritage Days during at least one of the past four EHD seasons (that is, between 13 August 2022 and 30 November 2025).
- (2) Must be able to demonstrate experience of project management and budget management.
- (3) If applying on behalf of a partnership, must be able to demonstrate proof of partnership funding or contributions in kind.

#### **The heritage:**

- (1) If the project is focused on tangible heritage, the applicant must be able to provide proof of ownership of the heritage asset, or the relevant permissions secured from the owner of the heritage asset (if applicable).
- (2) If an element of the project involves capital works, the applicant must submit a condition survey with the application in line with current best practice in the area of heritage to which the work applies.

The Stories may be excluded or removed from the grant procedure if:

- (1) They have been excluded from the Call based on the criteria mentioned in Article 8.
- (2) They are not submitted by a legal entity.
- (3) They have not declared that they wish to be eligible for the pre-selection process for the grant procedure.
- (4) The submitted project proposal is unable to secure co-funding resources (financial, in-kind, staff, equipment). These can be from partner organisations, or from the organisation's own reserves. There is no outlined minimum of co-funding at this stage.

- (5) The applicant did not acknowledge that the grant cannot be spent entirely or to a large extent on the following costs: staff/permanent equipment/core running costs. For the sake of clarification, such costs can be declared as co-funding costs in support of the application.
- (6) The applicant has already received a grant through the Call for European Heritage Days Stories competitive grant award procedure.

All Stories that are eligible will be uploaded on the EHD website ([www.europeanheritagedays.com](http://www.europeanheritagedays.com)) and the EHD Programme will promote them as such. Eligible Stories that have outlined their interest in being interested in receiving a grant shall be considered in the pre-selection stage of the grant procedure.

#### *Article 9*

#### **Pre-selection of the eligible Stories for the grant procedure**

The pre-selection of the eligible Stories will be carried out by the EHD Secretariat assisted by two international experts appointed by the Council of Europe and the European Commission. All of the Stories eligible for a grant will be assessed based on the selection criteria.

A maximum of 16 of the most compelling Stories shall be pre-selected and presented to the European panel for final selection. Pre-selected Stories shall be asked to provide detailed project proposals, budget breakdown and proof of their ability to implement and evaluate the project proposal, if they are chosen by the European panel.

The **pre-selection** of the project proposals will be based on the following criteria:

- (1) Submission of an informative and interesting well-written Story (*max. 10 points*);
- (2) European Dimension<sup>7</sup> of the Story and project idea and to what extent it can serve as an example of good practice for other countries and communities (*max. 15 points*);
- (3) Linkage of the Story and accompanying project idea with the European Heritage Days priorities of diversity, education, community participation and engagement, environmental protection, gender equality and/or youth orientation as well as the alignment with the European Heritage Days 2026 pan-European annual theme of [Heritage at Risk: – Revive, Resist, Reimagine](#) (*max. 20 points*);
- (4) Originality and creativity of the project idea (*max. 10 points*);
- (5) Feasibility of the project idea to be completed within a clearly defined timeframe and within the maximum grant allocation available (*max. 20 points*);
- (6) Potential of the proposed project to have positive outcomes for the community (*max. 15 points*);

Any ONE of the following criteria will be considered as an added benefit (*max. 10 points in total*):

- (1) Long-term potential of the project (sustainability);
- (2) Transnational dimension of the project;
- (3) Inclusion of vulnerable and minority groups, young people and children.

**MAXIMUM POINTS AVAILABLE = 100**

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<sup>7</sup> See Article 1 – Paragraph 4 for further information on the concept of the European Dimension



*Article 10*  
**Selection criteria**

The final selection of the project proposals will be based on the following criteria:

- (1) Submission of an informative and interesting well-written Story (*max. 10 points*);
- (2) Quality of the project proposal – is the project thoroughly planned, and does the applicant appear able to deliver the proposed project within the necessary timeframe, in line with the budget breakdown? (*max. 20 points*);
- (3) Linkage of the project proposal with the European Heritage Days priorities of diversity, education, community engagement and/or youth orientation as well as the alignment with the European Heritage Days 2026 pan-European annual theme of [Heritage at Risk: Revive, Resist, Reimagine](#) (*max. 20 points*);
- (4) European Dimension of the project proposal (*max. 10 points*);
- (5) Quality and sustainability of the expected results and sustainability of the project (*max. 10 points*);
- (6) Outcomes of the project for the community, including long-term benefits (*max. 10 points*);
- (7) Potential for the project to enable the community, at both local and European levels, to engage with the heritage in new and improved ways (*max. 10 points*);
- (8) Budget breakdown: eligibility of costs and appropriate use of grant funds (*max. 10 points*).

**MAXIMUM POINTS AVAILABLE = 100**

*Article 11*  
**Selection of the grant recipients**

The selection of the grant recipients shall be carried out by the European panel under the responsibility of the Council of Europe.

The European panel shall evaluate the pre-selected Stories and shall select 8 European Stories that will be given a grant of maximum €10 000 each. If the project proposals outline smaller amounts, there is the possibility to select more than 8 European Stories, up to the maximum total budget of the action. The selection shall be based on the detailed project proposal and budget breakdown. If necessary, further information may be requested at the selection stage.

Applicants that are not selected may submit a new application for pre-selection in the following years.

*Article 12*  
**Award of the grants**

An official grant agreement will be signed between the Council of Europe and the grant recipient.

Grant recipients will be responsible for the management of the grant delivery of the proposed activities and will ensure proper monitoring and reporting. The grant agreement will stipulate, among other things, the payment of 80% of the grant upon signature.

*Article 13*  
**Implementation period**

All project actions proposed in the submitted application can start from 1 August 2026 and must start no later than 31 October 2026. Costs incurred under such actions are eligible for the grant justification as of the start date of the grant agreement.

The grant recipients are required to keep all the original invoices and proof of expenditure for the amount spent within the grant. Any unspent amount will be returned to the EHD Programme budget at the end of the implementation period.

All project actions proposed in the submitted application must end before 31 March 2027. Costs incurred after this date will not be eligible for the justification of the grant.

*Article 14*  
**Ineligible costs**

In addition to the ineligible costs as referred to in Article 7 of Appendix II: Rule No. 1374 of 16 December 2015 on the grant award procedures of the Council of Europe, applicants must acknowledge that the grant cannot be spent on permanent staff/permanent equipment/core running costs of the applicant. These costs can be declared as the co-funding costs in support of the application.

*Article 15*  
**Publicity**

Beneficiaries must clearly acknowledge the European Union's and the Council of Europe's contribution in all publications or in conjunction with activities for which the grant is used.

In this respect, beneficiaries are required to give prominence to the names and logo of the European Heritage Days<sup>8</sup> as well as the logo of the European Union - Council of Europe Joint programmes<sup>9</sup> as well as on all their publications, posters, programmes and other products realised under the co-financed project.

If this requirement is not fully complied with, the beneficiary's grant may be reduced in accordance with the provisions of the grant agreement.

*Article 16*  
**Monitoring**

The selected grants recipients shall work with the Council of Europe to ensure monitoring of the project and deliver a mid-action draft narrative and financial report on the implementation of the grant by 31 December 2026 if requested.

*Article 17*  
**Reporting and evaluation**

The selected grant recipients will submit a final report of the project, together with all the original invoices and proof of expenditure made within the framework of the grant by 30 April 2027.

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<sup>8</sup> <https://www.europeanheritagedays.com/about/press-corner>

<sup>9</sup> [https://www.coe.int/en/web/about-us/joint-programmes-logos#portlet\\_com\\_liferay\\_journal\\_content\\_web\\_portlet\\_JournalContentPortlet\\_INSTANCE\\_ZDHRlpwAemgH](https://www.coe.int/en/web/about-us/joint-programmes-logos#portlet_com_liferay_journal_content_web_portlet_JournalContentPortlet_INSTANCE_ZDHRlpwAemgH)

The Council of Europe will establish, in cooperation with the European Commission, common indicators and templates for the grant recipients to ensure a coherent approach to the reporting and evaluation procedure.

*Article 18*  
**Financial provisions**

The total budget of the declared action is €80 000, which gives scope for 8 grants of €10 000 each. If the project proposals in the pre-selection stage outline amounts of less than €10 000, the Council of Europe reserves the right to select more than 8 European Stories, up to the maximum of total budget of the action.

*Article 19*  
**Acceptance of the Terms and Conditions**

The very act of submitting the application to the EHD Call for European Heritage Days Stories within the framework of the present call implies complete acceptance of the following terms and conditions in decreasing legal value:

- 1) These Legal Conditions in Appendix I as well as any rules contained in the Terms and Conditions;
- 2) Rule n°1374 of 16 December 2015 on the grant award procedures of the Europe in Appendix II;
- 3) The terms and conditions for the use of the [EHD website](#).

*Article 20*  
**Cancellation of the Call for European Stories**

The Council of Europe reserves the right to cancel the Call for European Stories at any point without any further justification.

If the number of the submitted eligible grant requests exceeds 120, the Council of Europe reserves the right to close the Call earlier than foreseen.

*Article 21*  
**Dispute Settlement**

Any disputes as to the application or interpretation of any of the terms, conditions or legal instruments listed in Article 19 shall be settled amicably without recourse to any form of national legal process.



## **Rule No. 1374 of 16 December 2015 on the grant award procedures of the Council of Europe<sup>10</sup>**

The Secretary General of the Council of Europe,

HAVING REGARD to the Financial Regulations, in particular its Article 36, and Supplementary Provisions of the Council of Europe, adopted by the Committee of Ministers on 29 June 2011 at the 1117<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Ministers' Deputies, as amended (hereinafter referred to as "Financial Regulations");

HAVING REGARD to Rule No. 1282 of 18 October 2007 on the declaration of interests in the context of procurement;

HAVING REGARD to Rule No. 1296 of 18 December 2008 on the acceptance of fees, gifts, decorations or honours, invitations and other advantages from third parties;

HAVING REGARD to Rule No. 1327 of 10 January 2011 on awareness and prevention of fraud and corruption;

HAVING REGARD to the underlying principles of grant award procedures, which are transparency, non-retroactivity, non-cumulative awards, not-for-profit, co-financing and non-discrimination;

CONSIDERING that a Rule should lay down in detail procedures for the award of grants by the Council of Europe;

### **D E C I D E S:**

## **PART I – GENERAL PROVISIONS**

### **Article 1 – Scope of the Rule**

1.1 This Rule lays down the procedures for the award of grants by the Council of Europe.

1.2 For the purposes of this Rule, a grant shall constitute a provision of financial assistance by the Council of Europe to a grantee which is intended to:

- a. assist the grantee achieve its goals or objectives; and
- b. promote the values or policies of the Council of Europe.

1.3 A grant by the Council of Europe may finance an action or a project by the grantee or its operational expenditures.

1.4 The following, *inter alia*, do not constitute grants within the meaning of this Rule:

- a. administrative arrangements as defined in Article 40, paragraph 1bis, of the Financial Regulations;

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<sup>10</sup> Note: as amended by Rule No. 1405 of 15 December 2020, with effect from 1 January 2021.

- b. contracts for the supply of goods, services and works to the Council of Europe governed by Rule No. 1333 of 29 June 2011 on the procurement procedures of the Council of Europe;
- c. reimbursement of travel and subsistence expenses incurred by, or where appropriate any other indemnities paid to, persons invited or mandated by the Council of Europe;
- d. prizes given as rewards for contests.

1.5 This Rule shall not apply to the grant award procedures by Eurimages and European Youth Foundation programmes which are governed by specific regulations.

## **Article 2 – General principles**

Grant award procedures in the Council of Europe shall be based on the principles of transparency, non-retroactivity, non-cumulative awards, not-for-profit, co-financing and non-discrimination as described below.

### **2.1 Principle of transparency**

2.1.1 Grants shall not be awarded without a call for proposals, as referred to in Article 8 of the present Rule.

2.1.2 Notwithstanding the provisions of Article 2.1.1 above, when the total value of grants to be awarded is less than<sup>11</sup> 15,000 euros, grants may be awarded directly to a particular grantee without a call for proposals.

2.1.3 Grants may also exceptionally be awarded directly to a particular grantee without a call for proposals where, for unforeseen reasons of urgency not attributable to the administrative entity awarding a grant, a call for proposals cannot be followed or where the characteristics of the grantee or of the action or project leave no choice.

2.1.4 Information about awarded grants shall be published annually, excepted when specific confidentiality measures shall be taken by the Council of Europe to preserve the vital interests of the grantee.

### **2.2 Principle of non-retroactivity**

2.2.1 No grant may be awarded for an action or a project already completed.

2.2.2 When a grant is awarded for an action or a project which has already begun, costs eligible for financing shall not have been incurred prior to the date of submission of the grant application.

### **2.3 Principle of co-financing**

2.3.1 The Council of Europe shall finance only part of the action or of the project referred to in Article 1.2 and 1.3 of the present Rule.

2.3.2. The grantee shall contribute to the action or the project either by way of its own resources or by contribution from third parties. Co-financing may take the form of financial or human resources, in-kind contributions or income generated by the action or project.

### **2.4 Principle of non-cumulative awards**

2.4.1 Each action or project shall give rise to the award by the Council of Europe of only one grant per grantee.

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<sup>11</sup> *Note: modified to ensure linguistic consistency with the French version.*

2.4.2 Under no circumstances a grant by the Council of Europe may finance part of an action, or part of a project which is already financed by any other resources.

## **2.5 Principle of no-profit**

Grants shall not have the purpose or effect of producing a surplus over the eligible costs incurred by the grantee as defined in Article 6 of the present Rule.

## **2.6 Principle of non-discrimination**

Grant award procedures shall comply with the Council of Europe's policy on non-discrimination on grounds of gender, disability, age, marital or parental status, colour, ethnic origin, religion, belief, citizenship, nationality, sexual orientation, language, political or other opinion, social origin, association with a national minority, property, birth or other status.

# **PART II - GRANT AWARD PROCEDURE**

## **Article 3 – Responsibility for the grant award procedure**

3.1 Commitments officers, as referred to in Article 31 of Financial Regulations, shall be responsible for grant award procedures. They shall ensure compliance of each procedure with the provisions of the present Rule. They shall in particular:

- a. decide whether conditions for a direct award referred to in Article 2.1 are met;
- b. approve the call for proposals, including appropriate publication means and the arrangements for the submission of applications;
- c. appoint a staff member (hereinafter “Coordinator”) who shall be responsible for the smooth running of the grant award procedure, including overall planning and organisation of the applications’ reception and evaluation process;
- d. appoint an Evaluation Committee, as referred to in Article 13 of the present Rule;
- e. decide to award grants on the conditions laid down in Articles 9.2, 14.5 and 14.7 of the present Rule;
- f. inform applicants of the decision on their application;
- g. sign the grant agreement;
- h. decide, when appropriate, on specific confidentiality measures to be taken to preserve the vital interests of the grantee in accordance with Article 2.1.4;
- i. where appropriate, suspend implementation of the grant agreement;
- j. where appropriate, terminate the grant agreement;
- k. where appropriate, reduce grant amounts or recover them in full or part.

3.2 Commitments officers may, as necessary, delegate in writing any of the responsibilities referred to in paragraph 1 above to a cost center manager in his or her administrative entity.

## **Article 4 – Exclusion grounds**

### **4.1 General exclusion criteria<sup>12</sup>**

4.1.1 Applicants shall be excluded from the grant award procedure where they:

- a. have been sentenced by final judgment on one or more of the following charges: participation in a criminal organisation, corruption, fraud, money laundering, terrorist financing, terrorist offences or offences linked to terrorist activities, child labour or trafficking in human beings;
- b. are in a situation of bankruptcy, liquidation, termination of activity, insolvency or arrangement with creditors or any like situation arising from a procedure of the same kind, or are subject to a procedure of the same kind;
- c. have received a judgment with res judicata force, finding an offence that affects their professional integrity or constitutes a serious professional misconduct;
- d. do not comply with their obligations as regards payment of social security contributions, taxes and dues, according to the statutory provisions of the country where they are established;
- e. are an entity created to circumvent tax, social or other legal obligations (empty shell company), have ever created or are in the process of creation of such an entity;
- f. have been involved in mismanagement of the Council of Europe funds or public funds.

4.1.2 Applicants shall deliver, when submitting their application, a declaration on their honour certifying that they are not in any of the above-mentioned situations.

4.1.3 The Council of Europe reserves the right to ask applicants to supply the following supporting documents:

- a. for the items set out in paragraphs 4.1.1. a), b), c) and f), an extract from the record of convictions or failing that an equivalent document issued by the competent judicial or administrative authority of the country where the applicant is established, indicating that these requirements are met;
- b. for the items set out in paragraph 4.1.1. d), a certificate issued by the competent authority of the country of establishment.

### **4.2 Other exclusion grounds**

Applicants shall be excluded from the grant award procedure:

- a. if they fail to comply with the arrangements for the submission of their applications as set out in the call for proposals;
- b. if they are subject to a conflict of interests;
- c. in case of misrepresentation.

## **Article 5 – Eligibility and award criteria**

5.1 The eligibility criteria set out in the call for proposals shall be such as to make it possible to assess the applicant's ability to complete the proposed action or project.

5.2 The award criteria set out in the call for proposals shall be such as to make it possible to assess the quality of the applications submitted in the light of the objectives and priorities set. Award criteria shall be weighted.

5.3 The eligibility and award criteria shall be objective, in the sense that they shall not confer any unfair advantage on an applicant and shall not constitute an unjustified obstacle to competition. Social and environmental criteria may also be taken into account.

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<sup>12</sup> Note: as amended by Rule No. 1405 of 15 December 2020, with effect from 1 January 2021.

5.4 The criteria, once made public, shall not be changed. The same rule applies to the weighting of each of the award criteria.

## **Article 6 – Eligible costs**

6.1 Grants shall not exceed an overall ceiling expressed in terms of an absolute value which shall be established on the basis of estimated eligible costs. Grants shall not exceed the eligible costs.

6.2 To be eligible, direct costs must:

- a. be necessary for the purpose of the grant;
- b. comply with the principles of sound financial management, in particular best value for money and cost-effectiveness;
- c. have actually been incurred by the grantee during the implementation period as defined in the grant agreement;
- d. be identifiable and verifiable, in particular being recorded in the grantee's accounts and determined according to the accounting standards applicable to the grantee;
- e. comply with the requirements of applicable tax and social security legislation;
- f. be backed up by originals or certified copies of supporting documents; and
- g. have been indicated in the estimated overall budget of the action or project.

6.3 Costs which cannot be identified as direct costs necessary for implementing the action or project may nevertheless be considered as eligible when they are incurred by the grantee in connection with the action or project concerned. These costs may not include ineligible costs as referred to in Article 7 or costs already declared under another cost item or heading of the estimated budget. These costs shall be covered by a flat-rate laid down in the grant agreement, which shall not exceed 7% of the total eligible costs.

## **Article 7 - Ineligible costs**

7.1 The following costs shall not be considered eligible:

- a. expenditure already financed by other sources;
- b. debts and provisions for losses or debts incurred prior to the award;
- c. costs incurred outside the implementation period as defined in the grant agreement;
- d. expenditures unrelated to the project or action;
- e. interest owed;
- f. purchases of land or buildings;
- g. currency exchange losses;
- h. loans to third parties.



7.2 Costs for refurbishment (office renovation, restoration) of current premises are not eligible costs unless they are directly related to project activities.

7.3 Additional ineligible costs may be defined in a grant agreement to satisfy the contractual obligations of the Council of Europe, in particular with regard to its donors.

## **Article 8 – Publication of calls for proposals**

8.1 Subject to the provisions of Article 2.1.2 and 2.1.3, calls for proposals shall be published.

8.2 The means of publication chosen shall target relevant audience, be non-discriminatory in nature and shall not have the effect of restricting the access of applicants to the award procedure.

8.3 The call for proposals shall specify:

- a. the objectives pursued by the action or project to be implemented;
- b. the co-financing requirements;
- c. the arrangements for the submission of applications;
- d. an email address to which potential applicants may request, in writing, supplementary information;
- e. the planned date by which all applicants shall have been informed of the outcome of the evaluation of their application and the indicative date for the signature of the related grant agreements;
- f. the indicative timetable for the action/project implementation;
- g. the exclusion and eligibility criteria, and the list of relevant supporting documents to be submitted by applicants, as may be appropriate given the nature of the grant to be awarded;
- h. the award criteria, their respective weighting and the relevant supporting documents to be submitted by applicants, as may be appropriate given the nature of the grant to be awarded;
- i. the number of potential grantees and the total value of grants to be awarded;
- j. the terms of the grant agreement to be concluded with the potential grantee, drawn up on the basis of the standard template established by the Council of Europe for this purpose and including, in particular,
  - i. the arrangements for financing and fund transfer terms;
  - ii. the financial guarantee that the Organisation may require; as well as
  - iii. any specific clauses to be included in the grant agreement in addition to those set out in the standard template.

8.4 When a potential applicant requests supplementary information, in accordance with the conditions specified in the call for proposals, the information given to that applicant shall be made available to all potential applicants.

## **Article 9 – Direct award**

9.1 When the conditions set out in Article 2.1.2 and 2.1.3 are met, the competent Commitments Officer may decide to directly award a grant to a particular grantee.

9.2 The Commitments Officer's decision must be duly substantiated, in light of the criteria set out in Article 2.1.2 and 2.1.3.

## **Article 10 – Submissions of applications**

10.1 Applications shall be submitted in accordance with the requirements of the call for proposals.

10.2 An estimated budget for the action or project shall be attached to the application, indicating the estimated eligible costs of the action or project.

10.3 Applicants shall further be required to indicate whether they have received or applied for any additional funding from the Council of Europe or other sources in respect of the same action or project or for its operational expenditure and what the respective amounts of additional funding are.

10.4 Applicants may be asked to submit their proposals in two stages. In this case, they shall be first asked to submit a concept note. The applicants whose concept notes successfully pass the first-stage evaluation shall be asked to develop their respective concept notes and to submit a detailed proposal for the second-stage evaluation.

10.5 Applications submitted after the deadline shall automatically be excluded from the procedure, unless the applicant proves that his/her application could not be submitted in time because of *force majeure*. The Evaluation Committee shall indicate in its consensus report to the Commitment Officer concerned whether it considers that there has been a situation of *force majeure* or not.

## **Article 11 – Receipt of applications**

11.1 The reception process shall ensure that the integrity of data, the confidentiality of applications and the protection of personal data in accordance with the requirements of Council of Europe legal framework concerning data protection are observed.

11.2 Applications shall only be opened after the deadline for their submission. They shall be opened by the Coordinator of the procedure in the presence of a member of the Evaluation Committee. A record of the applications shall be established and signed by those present.

11.3 The applications shall be given identification numbers.

## **Article 12 – Exclusion and eligibility check**

12.1 The Coordinator shall make a preliminary evaluation of the applications against the exclusion and eligibility criteria set out in the call for proposals. A draft report shall be drawn up.

12.2 The Coordinator may ask an applicant to provide additional information or to clarify the supporting documents submitted in connection with the application, provided that such information or clarification does not substantially change the application. Records of such contacts shall be kept.

12.3 All applications together with the draft report referred to in paragraph 1 above shall be handed over to the Evaluation Committee.

## **Article 13 - Evaluation Committee**

13.1 The Evaluation Committee shall be made up of at least three persons including at least one member of the Secretariat of the Council of Europe. Only members of the Secretariat with no hierarchical link between them may be appointed to sit in the Evaluation Committee.

13.2 Members of Evaluation Committee who are not members of the Secretariat of the Council of Europe shall be appointed only with a view to contribute with specific technical expertise or to comply with the obligations of the Council of Europe, in particular with regard to its donors.

13.3 Members of the Evaluation Committee shall:

- a. act objectively and impartially and shall treat all applicants equally;
- b. not disclose any information other than that intended to be made available to applicants;
- c. protect the confidentiality of the information imparted by applicants;
- d. declare any conflict of interests and withdraw in case of such a conflict.

13.4 They shall be considered as faced with a conflict of interest if they are in particular in any of the following situations:

- a. were involved in the preparation of a proposal;
- b. benefit directly or indirectly if a proposal is accepted;
- c. have a family or personal relationship with an applicant;
- d. are involved in the management of an applicant;
- e. are employed or contracted by an applicant or any of its subcontractors.

13.5 All members of the Evaluation Committee shall sign a declaration on the absence of any conflict of interests. Members of the Evaluation Committee who are not members of the Secretariat of the Council of Europe shall in addition sign a declaration of confidentiality.

13.6 The Evaluation Committee may seek advice from competent Council of Europe entities on the conduct and fairness of the evaluation and/or the application of the exclusion, eligibility or award criteria.

#### **Article 14 – Evaluation of applications**

14.1 The Evaluation Committee shall adopt the report on exclusion and eligibility criteria referred to in Article 12.1.

14.2 Only applications considered eligible shall be evaluated against the announced award criteria.

14.3 Each member of the Evaluation Committee shall give scores and elaborate on their attribution of points to each proposal. Members' individual reports shall be communicated to the Coordinator.

14.4 On the basis of members' individual reports the Coordinator shall prepare a draft consensus report representing the view of the Evaluation Committee. The draft consensus report shall contain an assessment of each proposal and rank the proposals according to the scores obtained and announced weighting. An arithmetic average (median value) of the individual scores shall be taken as the final score for each application. If necessary, a meeting of the Evaluation Committee may be organized to agree on the final score and comments.

14.5 Once adopted by the Evaluation Committee, the consensus report shall be transmitted to the competent Commitments Officer who shall take a decision on:

- a. The overall amount of funding;
- b. The list of selected proposals;
- c. The list of non-selected proposals.

14.6 The decision of the Commitments Officer shall provide for reasons of his/her choices and shall be based on whether:

- a. The grant(s) is(are) in line with the objectives pursued;
- b. The costs and other aspects appear reasonable;
- c. That sufficient funds are available;
- d. The consensus report is fully justified and documented.

14.7 If a call for proposals has elicited no applications or if, in the opinion of the Evaluation Committee, no application meets the minimum required standards, the Commitments Officer may decide that the grant shall not be awarded, that the grant shall be awarded directly, or that a new call for proposals shall be launched.

14.8 The Commitments Officer shall inform the successful applicant(s) of the award in writing.

14.9 The Commitments Officer shall inform in writing the unsuccessful applicants within 15 (fifteen) calendar days after information has been sent to the successful applicant(s). The letter shall indicate the reasons for their rejections, and modalities for enquiries by the unsuccessful applicants. The deadline for the introduction of such an enquiry shall not be shorter than 7 (seven) calendar days after reception of the abovementioned letter.

## **Article 15 - Enquiries and complaints procedure**

15.1 Unsuccessful applicants shall submit their enquiries before the deadline indicated in the information letter referred to in Article 14.9.

15.2 The answer to an enquiry shall be sent without delay, address the issues raised by the unsuccessful applicant and include information on the complaints procedure as well as on modalities for the submission of a complaint.

15.3 If the applicant is not satisfied with the given answer, and believes that there have been shortcomings in the handling of his or her proposal, and that these shortcomings have jeopardised the outcome of the evaluation process, the applicant may submit a written complaint within 30 (thirty) calendar days after receiving the answer to the inquiry referred to in Article 15.2. The complaint shall indicate the reference of the call, the identification number of the proposal, and shall be duly substantiated.

15.4 The Coordinator shall acknowledge receipt of the complaint and shall promptly examine it. If the Coordinator concludes that a manifest error was committed during the evaluation procedure, the issue shall be brought to the attention of the Evaluation Committee. The Evaluation Committee shall re-evaluate the application and make a recommendation to the Commitments Officer who shall decide on the appropriate means of redress.

15.5 In all other cases the Coordinator shall refer the complaint to the internal evaluation Review Board without delay. A meeting of the Review Board shall be convened within 30 (thirty) calendar days following the receipt of the complaint. Complaints that do not deal with the exclusion or eligibility checking or with the evaluation of a specific proposal against award criteria will not be considered.

15.6 The Review Board shall be composed of the Director of Internal Oversight, the Director of Legal Advice and Public International Law and the Treasurer or their respectively appointed representative(s).

15.7 The Review Board shall work independently. It shall provide opinions on the implementation of the evaluation process on the basis of all the available information related to the proposal and its evaluation. The Review Board shall not evaluate the proposal but shall ensure a coherent interpretation of exclusion, eligibility and award criteria and equal treatment of applicants. If the Review Board considers that there has been a failing in the exclusion or eligibility checking or in the evaluation process that is likely to have jeopardised the decision not to fund the proposal, it may recommend a re-evaluation of the proposal by the Evaluation Committee which should be made aware of the initial evaluation's shortcomings. The opinion of the Review Board and, where relevant, the results of re-evaluation by the

Evaluation Committee shall be submitted to the Commitments Officer concerned who shall decide on the appropriate means of redress.

15.8 The Commitments Officer's decision referred to in Articles 15.4 or 15.7 above shall be notified to the complainant.

#### **Article 16 – Allegations of fraud, corruption or misconduct**

Article 15 shall not be interpreted as preventing applicants from reporting to the competent Council of Europe entities any allegation of fraud, corruption or misconduct of a person involved in the grant award procedures in accordance with Rule No. 1327 of 10 January 2011 on awareness and prevention of fraud and corruption.

#### **Article 17 – Grant agreement**

17.1 Grants shall be covered by a written agreement concluded between the Council of Europe and the grantee.

17.2 The Council of Europe and the grantee(s) shall enter into a grant agreement drawn up on the basis of the standard template established by the Council of Europe for this purpose.

17.3 The grant agreement shall allow for the action or project to be clearly identified and specify at least the subject, the grantee(s), the implementation period, the duration, the maximum amount of funding, a detailed provisional budget and the obligations of the grantee.

17.4 The grant agreement shall, *inter alia*, contain provisions stipulating that third parties with whom the grantee may enter into contracts for the purposes of implementation of the grant shall have no rights vis-à-vis the Council of Europe under those contracts.

#### **Article 18 – Record-keeping**

The administrative entity concerned shall establish a file in respect of each grant award procedure in which it shall store all documents mentioned in this Rule. These documents shall be kept by the administrative entity concerned, for a minimum of ten years.

### **PART III - FINAL PROVISIONS**

#### **Article 19 – Interpretation**

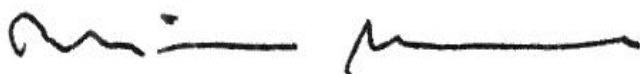
The Rule shall be interpreted in good faith, in accordance with the ordinary meaning to be given to the terms used in the Rule and in the light of its preamble. A Practical Guide and templates shall support the implementation of the legal framework established by the present Rule.

#### **Article 20 – Entry into force**

This Rule shall enter into force on the day of its signature by the Secretary General.

Strasbourg, 16 December 2015

The Secretary General



Thorbjørn JAGLAND