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***European Economic and Social Committee***

**RULES GOVERNING THE 2019**

**EESC CIVIL SOCIETY PRIZE**

***Rewarding excellence in civil society initiatives***

**MORE WOMEN IN EUROPE'S SOCIETY AND ECONOMY**

# **Aim and overall objective of the Civil Society Prize**

For the European Economic and Social Committee (the "EESC" or the "Committee"), the **aim** of the prize, which is awarded annually, is to reward and encourage initiatives by civil society organisations and/or individuals that have made a significant contribution to promoting European identity and integration.

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

# **Theme of the 2019 EESC Civil Society Prize: More women in Europe's society and economy**

Equality between women and men is an internationally agreed sustainable development goal[[1]](#footnote-2) as well as a fundamental value and principle of the European Union[[2]](#footnote-3). It is also a driver for economic growth, and the economic loss due to the gender employment gap is estimated at EUR 370 billion per year[[3]](#footnote-4).

However, according to the latest available data, women account for 51% of the EU population[[4]](#footnote-5), but the percentage of women in employment is 67%[[5]](#footnote-6) (with only 55% of women with 3 or more children employed against 85% of men)[[6]](#footnote-7); 32% of women work part-time[[7]](#footnote-8) compared to only 8% of men, and the average gender pay gap is still around 16%[[8]](#footnote-9), leading to an average gender pension gap of over 38%[[9]](#footnote-10). Moreover, several factors make precarious jobs more prevalent among women (27%) than among men (15%)[[10]](#footnote-11). Women represent the biggest untapped entrepreneurial potential, making up only 31% of entrepreneurs[[11]](#footnote-12), 46% of PhD degree holders, 33% of researchers and 20% of the highest academic staff [[12]](#footnote-13). Only 6.3% of CEO positions in major publicly listed companies in the EU are held by women and only 26.7% of board members of these companies are women[[13]](#footnote-14). Finally, only 13% of elected mayors and 29% of members of regional governments and assemblies are women[[14]](#footnote-15) and, on average, the percentage of women in national parliaments and governments is estimated at no more than 30%[[15]](#footnote-16), against 36.4% in the European Parliament[[16]](#footnote-17).

Europeans feel strongly about promoting gender equality: a special Eurobarometer survey on gender equality released in 2017 shows that 84% of the respondents considered that gender equality was important for them personally (including 80% of men)[[17]](#footnote-18).

Over the course of the last sixty years, the EU has made great progress by adopting a series of equality and anti-discrimination directives, policy programmes and funding instruments to promote gender equality in the European Union[[18]](#footnote-19). The EU is aware that efforts aimed at closing the gender gaps need to be stepped up. In fact, the European Commission has estimated that, at the current rate of progress, it will take 70 years to split domestic tasks equally between men and women, 30 years before the female employment rate reaches 70% and 20 years to reach policy parity[[19]](#footnote-20). The Joint Trio Declaration on gender equality signed in July 2017 by the Estonian, Bulgarian and Austrian Presidencies gave a commitment to put gender equality back on the EU's list of priorities[[20]](#footnote-21).

The EESC attaches great importance to gender equality. Article 1 of its Rules of Procedure entered into force on 15 March 2019 states that "the Committee shall ensure compliance with the principle of gender equality and non-discrimination, as defined by European Union law, in all its policies".

In its recent opinion on *Gender equality issues*, the EESC called for "a strong commitment to gender equality by the EU institutions, governments, civil society and the private sector"[[21]](#footnote-22). This is why, in the EU election year 2019 the EESC has decided to award its civil society prize to organisations or individuals which/who have taken action in domains that empower and enable women in economic and social terms. This also corresponds to the first three priority areas of the "[*Strategic Engagement for Gender Equality 2016-2019*](https://ec.europa.eu/anti-trafficking/sites/antitrafficking/files/strategic_engagement_for_gender_equality_en.pdf)"[[22]](#footnote-23) which still in force, namely:

* increasing female labour-market participation and the equal economic independence of women and men;
* reducing the gender pay, earnings and pension gaps and thus fighting poverty among women; and
* promoting equality between women and men in decision making.

# **Eligibility**

## **Eligible candidates**

The EESC Civil Society Prize is open to all civil society organisations (hereafter: "CSOs") officially registered within the European Union and acting at local, national, regional or European level. It is also open to individuals.

Civil society organisations as defined in the EESC opinion on *The role and contribution of civil society organisations in the building of Europe* are "organisational structures whose members have objectives and responsibilities that are of general interest and who also act as mediators between the public authorities and citizens"[[23]](#footnote-24). They 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 commitment by members of the general public to take part in the work and activities of those organisations. This definition includes the so-called labour-market players, i.e. the social partners, organisations representing social and economic players, non-governmental organisations which bring people together in a common cause, such as environmental organisations, human rights organisations, consumer associations, charitable organisations, cultural organisations, and educational and training organisations, etc.; 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; religious communities. Civil society organisations set up by a legislative or regulatory act and/or to which affiliation is partially or totally mandatory (e.g. professional associations)[[24]](#footnote-25) are also eligible.

Individuals are natural persons. EU citizens are eligible, regardless of their country of residence. Third-country nationals are also eligible, provided they are legally resident in the territory of the EU. EESC members, CCMI delegates, staff of the EESC, members of the evaluation panel and their relatives are not eligible to submit an entry.

## **Eligible initiatives**

The specific objective of the 2019 Civil Society Prize is to reward innovative initiatives carried out on the territory of the EU which aim to **raise awareness of and fight for gender equality in the EU. In the context of this prize, gender equality is understood to mean not only equal rights, but also equal opportunities, responsibility, empowerment and participation in all spheres of economic and social life.**

These initiatives must have already been implemented or be still ongoing. **Initiatives which are planned but which have not begun implementation by 6 September 2019 (closing date for submission of applications) are excluded.**

To be eligible, activities/initiatives must cover at least one of the following areas:

* Combating gender stereotypes, discriminatory social behaviours and prejudices in all spheres of economic and social life, included those which can limit the development of the natural talents of women and men and those linked to their educational and professional choices;
* Raising awareness of the consequences of gender stereotypes produced by media content;
* Combating horizontal segregation in the labour market both as regards fields with a predominantly male workforce, such as science and technology, and those with a strong female presence and often lower remuneration, such as education, healthcare and welfare;
* Combating vertical segregation in the labour market, promoting equal opportunities for the participation of women in highly skilled jobs and leading positions on corporate boards;
* Combating gender segregation patterns in education and training;
* Promoting female entrepreneurship, especially in non-traditional sectors, strengthening women's access to finance and addressing the challenges faced by female entrepreneurs;
* Raising awareness of the importance of women's economic independence;
* Combating gender pay and pension gaps;
* Promoting gender equality in decision making;
* Tackling the specific needs of women with family responsibilities (children and adult dependents), promoting gender-related work-life balance, for instance through initiatives to split care and domestic tasks fairly and through the development of an affordable and accessible social and economic infrastructure for the exercise of equal rights (care facilities, work patterns, etc.);
* Addressing the specific challenges facing vulnerable women, such as women with low qualifications, single mothers, female workers re-entering the labour market, women with disabilities, migrants, ethnic minorities;
* Raising awareness, promoting mutual learning and disseminating good practices concerning the above.

# **Application procedure and deadline**

Applications are to be made by filling in the online application form ([www.eesc.europa.eu/civilsocietyprize](http://www.eesc.europa.eu/civilsocietyprize)). In duly justified cases linked to documented technical problems, the EESC may allow candidates to apply by e-mail, fax or post.

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

* ascertain that the civil society organisations or the individuals concerned fulfil the formal entry criteria;
* ascertain that the civil society organisations or the individuals concerned comply with the exclusion criteria;
* ascertain that the civil society organisations or the individuals concerned accept the provisions concerning liability, checks, audits and applicable law;
* evaluate the substantive merits of each entry in relation to the award criteria.

To this end, each application must include the duly filled in and signed Declaration on honour on exclusion criteria and eligibility criteria (Appendix 1).

Before the prize is awarded, candidates will be asked to return the duly completed and signed Legal Entity Form and Financial Identification Form as well as the relevant supporting documents. The forms are available at:

<https://ec.europa.eu/info/publications/legal-entities_en>

and the

<https://ec.europa.eu/info/publications/financial-identification_en>.

Applications can be drafted in any official EU language. However, to speed up the evaluation process, the EESC would appreciate receiving the application form in English or French.

Submission of an application implies acceptance of all the terms and conditions set out in the contest documents and, where appropriate, waiver of the candidate's own general or specific terms and conditions.

The final deadline for sending applications is **Friday 6 September 2019, at 10:00 (CEST)**.

To avoid system overloading, **we recommend that candidates send their applications in advance**.

Candidates can submit only one entry. Entering the competition is free of charge. If preparing and sending the application entails costs for a specific candidate, these will not be reimbursed.

Candidates will see a message on the screen confirming that the application has been successfully sent.

# **Evaluation and award**

## **Evaluation steps**

The evaluation will be carried out by a panel of experts composed of 10 members (the "evaluation panel"), who are subject to the requirements on conflict of interests laid down in the Financial Regulation[[25]](#footnote-26). The evaluation will be based solely on the information provided in the submitted application form.

The EESC reserves the right not to disclose the identity of the members of the evaluation panel; however, this may be disclosed post award.

Participants should not contact the members of the evaluation panel for any reason related to the prize throughout the whole procedure. Any such attempt will result in disqualification.

The decisions of the evaluation panel are final, binding and not subject to challenge.

The procedure will take place in five steps:

1. verification of eligibility of candidates;
2. verification of eligibility of the initiatives proposed for the prize;
3. verification of non-exclusion of candidates;
4. evaluation of the quality of the initiatives proposed for the prize on the basis of the award criteria;
5. award of the prize.

The EESC will assess eligibility, non-exclusion and quality in no particular order. The applicants must pass all steps to be awarded the prize. No feedback will be provided to candidates until the end of the procedure. Results will be notified to all candidates as soon as possible and in any case within 15 calendar days after the award decision has been taken by the authorising officer (step 5), provisionally at the end of November 2019.

### **Verification of eligibility of candidates**

To be eligible, candidates must fulfil the requirements of point 3.1 above.

All candidates must provide a declaration on honour (Appendix 1), duly signed and dated (by an authorised representative in the case of CSOs), stating that they are eligible for the prize. This declaration is part of the declaration used for the exclusion criteria (see point 5.1.3 below). Therefore, only one declaration covering both aspects should be provided by each candidate.

The EESC will evaluate the eligibility of candidates on the basis of the declaration on honour. Before awarding the prize, it will ask the candidates to provide a duly completed and signed Legal Entity Form with its supporting evidence (see point 4 above).

The EESC reserves the right to require the above-mentioned form and supporting evidence from any candidate at any time during the evaluation procedure. In this case, the candidate must provide the form and the supporting evidence without delay. The EESC may reject the application if the form and the supporting evidence are not provided in due time.

### **Verification of eligibility of initiatives**

Eligibility of the initiatives proposed for the prize will be checked on the basis of the online application form. To be eligible, the initiatives proposed for the prize must fulfil the requirements of point 3.2 above. Other activities carried out by the candidate will not be taken into consideration.

### **Verification of non-exclusion**

All candidates must provide a declaration on honour (Appendix 1), duly signed and dated (by an authorised representative in the case of CSOs), stating that they are not in one of the situations of exclusion referred to in Articles 136 and 141 of the Financial Regulation and listed in that declaration on honour.

The EESC reserves the right to verify whether the candidates are in one of the situations of exclusion by requiring the supporting documents listed in the declaration on honour. In this case, the candidate must provide the documents required within the deadline given by the EESC. The EESC may reject the application if the requested documents are not provided in due time.

A candidate is not required to submit a specific document if he/she/it informs the EESC that the document in question can be accessed on a public database free of charge.

### **Evaluation of quality**

The evaluation panel will assess the quality of the applications on the basis of the award criteria set out below. The evaluators will consider only the initiatives proposed for the prize, not the candidate's other activities. There is no minimum threshold for each individual criterion. However, candidates that fail to obtain at least 50% of the maximum total score will be eliminated.

| **Prize award criteria** | **Points** |
| --- | --- |
| **Criterion 1 – Sustainability**This criterion will assess the potential of the proposed initiative to have a long-term impact and to inspire others in Europe, i.e. to be applied or adapted to the same category of beneficiaries or to another category of beneficiaries elsewhere in the same or in another Member State of the EU. | **35 points** |
| **Criterion 2 – Participation and collaboration**This criterion will assess, on the one hand, how far the proposed initiative actively involves beneficiaries and, on the other hand, its ability to share good practice and raise awareness on issues related to the theme for which the civil society prize is awarded. In this context both intersectionality and the collaborative approach with other relevant actors will also be taken into consideration. | **35 points** |
| **Criterion 3 – Innovation**This criterion will assess the creativity of the proposed initiative, its uniqueness and degree of innovation in its specific context. To this end, innovation is understood to mean both new ideas and new or improved ways to implement an existing solution or approach or to adapt it to a different context or target group. | **30 points** |
| **Total points** | **100 points (minimum 50 points)** |

### **Award of the prize**

The prize will be awarded by the Committee, on the basis of the evaluation provided by the evaluation panel, who will be free to decide whether to recommend that prizes be awarded, depending on their appraisal of the quality of the entries.

The EESC may award a maximum of 5 prizes to the 5 top ranked candidates.

# **Prize money**

The Committee plans to award a maximum of five prizes. The first prize has a value of EUR 14 000. The amount of the second, third, fourth and fifth prize is EUR 9 000. If place one is shared among more than one winner *ex aequo*, the amount of each of the first prizes is respectively EUR 11 500 for two first prizes, EUR 10 600 for three first prizes, EUR 10 250 for four first prizes and EUR 10 000 for five first prizes. The Committee is not bound to award all five prizes. The EESC may decide not to award the Civil Society Prize.

The prize award ceremony will take place during the EESC plenary session on **11-12 December 2019**. Two representatives per winner will be invited to the ceremony, with travel and accommodation organised by the EESC according to the rules which will be notified to winners in due time.

Prizes will be paid by bank transfer within 30 days of the award ceremony, provided the winners have submitted all the requested documents. Winners are responsible for the payment of taxes and charges applicable when using the prize money.

# **Personal data**

Personal data contained in the application documents (such as name and address) will be processed pursuant to Regulation (EU) 2018/1725 on the protection of natural persons with regard to the processing of personal data by the Union institutions, bodies, offices and agencies and on the free movement of such data[[26]](#footnote-27). Unless indicated otherwise, the replies to the questions and any personal data requested to evaluate the application in accordance with the contest rules will be processed solely for that purpose by the Communication Department. Details concerning the processing of personal data are attached (Appendix 2).

The candidate's personal data may be registered in the Early Detection and Exclusion System (EDES) if the candidate is in one of the situations mentioned in Article 136 of the Financial Regulation and indicated in the declaration on honour. For more information, see the Privacy Statement on <http://ec.europa.eu/budget/explained/management/protecting/protect_en.cfm>

# **Disclosure requirements**

Without prejudice to point 7 above, the candidates grant the EESC the right to communicate to the public in any language and by any medium and any kind of technique, the name of the candidates, their activities and the amount of the prizes awarded to the winners.

Any communication or publication by the winners about the activity for which the prize was awarded must indicate that the activity has been awarded the EESC Civil Society Prize. This obligation applies for one year from the date of the prize award.

# **Liability**

Candidates have sole liability in the event of a claim relating to the activities carried out in the framework of the prize.

# **Checks and audits**

The winners must accept the checks and audits by the EESC, the European Anti-Fraud Office (OLAF) and the Court of Auditors referred to in Article 129 of the Financial Regulation and the publicity obligations in relation to the contest and the received prize, as detailed in point 8 above.

# **Law applicable, complaints and competent court**

The Civil Society Prize is governed by EU law, complemented, where necessary, by the national law of Belgium.

Observations concerning the prize award procedure may be submitted to the authority awarding the prize using the contact details indicated in point 13 below.

If candidates believe that maladministration has occurred, they may lodge a complaint with the European Ombudsman within two years of the date when they become aware of the facts which form the basis for the complaint (see <http://www.ombudsman.europa.eu>).

The court responsible for matters relating to this prize is the General Court of the European Union:

General Court of the European Union

Rue du Fort Niedergrünewald

L-2925 Luxembourg

Tel.: +352 43031 Fax.: +352 4303 2100

Email: GeneralCourt.Registry@curia.europa.eu

URL: [http://curia.europa.eu](http://curia.europa.eu/)

Information about the lodging of appeals may be obtained at the address indicated above.

# **Penalties**

Financial penalties of 2 to 10% of the value of the prize and exclusion decisions from all contracts, grants and contests financed by the Union budget may be imposed on participants who have made false declarations (Declaration on honour, Appendix 1), or committed irregularities or fraud, in accordance with the conditions laid down in Article 136 of the Financial Regulation.

# **Further information**

For more information, please contact:

Ms Anna Comi, secretariat of the EESC Communication Department

Tel.: +32 2 546 93 67

or

Ms Chantal Hocquet, secretariat of the EESC Communication Department

Tel.: +32 2 546 92 99

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

If relevant to other potential candidates, questions and answers will be published on the Civil Society Prize page of the EESC website ([www.eesc.europa.eu/civilsocietyprize](http://www.eesc.europa.eu/civilsocietyprize)). The EESC recommends that candidates check the prize website regularly in order to get the most up-to-date information.

1. UN sustainable development goal No 5: achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
2. Articles 2 and 3 TEU; 8, 19 and 153 TFEU; 23 of the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the EU. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
3. Eurofound (2016): [The gender employment gap: Challenges and solutions](https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/cros/system/files/43-2015-the_gender_employment_gap-challenges_and_solutions.pdf). [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
4. <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php/Gender_statistics#Earnings>. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
5. Idem. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
6. <https://eige.europa.eu/publications/poverty-gender-and-intersecting-inequalities-in-the-eu>. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
7. <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php/Employment_statistics#Rise_of_part-time_and_temporary_work>. [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
8. <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php/Gender_pay_gap_statistics>. [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
9. <https://www.equalpayday.be/europa/>. [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
10. <https://eige.europa.eu/resources/ti_pubpdf_mh0217250enn_pdfweb_20170503163908.pdf>. [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
11. <http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-17-481_en.htm>. [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
12. <https://www.schooleducationgateway.eu/en/pub/experts/role_models_leading_girls_into.htm>. [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
13. <http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-19-1495_en.htm>. [↑](#footnote-ref-14)
14. <https://cor.europa.eu/en/events/Pages/europe-for-her.aspx>. [↑](#footnote-ref-15)
15. <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/products-eurostat-news/-/EDN-20190306-2>. [↑](#footnote-ref-16)
16. <http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-19-1495_en.htm>. [↑](#footnote-ref-17)
17. <http://ec.europa.eu/newsroom/just/document.cfm?doc_id=50074>. [↑](#footnote-ref-18)
18. See, for instance, Directives 2006/54/EC; 2014/124/EU; 79/7/EEC; 2004/113/EEC; 92/85/EEC; and 2010/18/EU. [↑](#footnote-ref-19)
19. <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/A-8-2017-0046_EN.html?redirect>. [↑](#footnote-ref-20)
20. Trio Presidency Declaration on Equality Between Women and Men, available at: <https://www.eu2017.ee/sites/default/files/inline-files/EU2017EE%20Trio%20Presidency%20Declaration%20on%20Equality%20Between%20Women%20and%20Men_0.pdf> [↑](#footnote-ref-21)
21. Opinion of the European Economic and Social Committee on *Gender equality issues* (SOC/610), adopted on 15 May 2019, pt. 1.3. [↑](#footnote-ref-22)
22. European Commission, [*Strategic Engagement for Gender Equality 2016-2019*](https://ec.europa.eu/anti-trafficking/sites/antitrafficking/files/strategic_engagement_for_gender_equality_en.pdf) (SWD (2015) 278 final of 3.12.2015, ISBN 978-92-79-53451-5), p. 9. [↑](#footnote-ref-23)
23. 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 ([OJ C 329, 17.11.1999, p. 30](https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A51999IE0851)). [↑](#footnote-ref-24)
24. This applies for instance to Austrian labour-market players. [↑](#footnote-ref-25)
25. Regulation (EU, Euratom) 2018/1046 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 18 July 2018 on the financial rules applicable to the general budget of the Union, amending Regulations (EU) No 1296/2013, (EU) No 1301/2013, (EU) No 1303/2013, (EU) No 1304/2013, (EU) No 1309/2013, (EU) No 1316/2013, (EU) No 223/2014, (EU) No 283/2014, and Decision No 541/2014/EU and repealing Regulation (EU, Euratom) No 966/2012 ([OJ L 193, 30.7.2018, p. 1](https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=uriserv:OJ.L_.2018.193.01.0001.01.ENG&toc=OJ:L:2018:193:TOC)). [↑](#footnote-ref-26)
26. Regulation (EU) 2018/1725 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 23 October 2018 on the protection of natural persons with regard to the processing of personal data by the Union institutions, bodies, offices and agencies and on the free movement of such data, and repealing Regulation (EC) No 45/2001 and Decision No 1247/2002/EC ([OJ l 295, 21.11.2018, p. 93](https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32018R1725&from=EN)). [↑](#footnote-ref-27)