

Europe for Citizens programme 2014-2020

2011/0436(APP) - 06/04/2018 - Follow-up document

In accordance with Council Regulation No 390/2014, the Commission presents a report on the mid-term evaluation of the implementation of the Europe for Citizens programme 2014-2020, which is based on the findings of an externally run evaluation. The report discusses the qualitative and quantitative aspects of the implementation of the programme, and builds on a [European Parliament report](#) of March 2017.

The programme supports a wide range of activities and organisations that promote active

European citizenship, with the programme's two strands - European remembrance and democratic engagement and civic participation – being complemented by a cross-cutting measure (valorisation) for analysis and dissemination. The report notes that while most EU funding programmes directly relate to specific EU policies, the Europe for Citizens programme fills a gap by addressing the Commission's overall objective of bringing citizens closer to the EU.

Budget: the total budget for the programme for the 2014-2020 period is EUR 187 718 000. The programme **used all of its commitment and payment allocations** during the reporting period, divided as follows:

- EUR 9.46 million: European remembrance projects;
- EUR 12.21 million: town twinning projects;
- EUR 12.71 million: networks of towns;
- EUR 10.32 million: civil society projects;
- EUR 3.64 million: structural support for European remembrance organisations;
- EUR 16.65 million: think tanks and European civil society organisations active in the area of civic participation;
- EUR 2.8 million: funding for cross-cutting activities, including making best use of the programme's results.

Applications received and projects selected: between 2014 and 2016, more than 7 000 grant applications were submitted. Grants were awarded to support more than 1 000 projects in the 33 participating countries. Compared to the previous programme, **fewer projects received a grant** due to the larger size of the projects that did receive grants and larger number of participants in the projects. On average, less than 10 % of projects submitted in 2014-2016 were funded, except for town twinning projects. The **high demand from grant applicants** shows that there is scope for additional funding, since a significant number of projects could not be funded due to budget limitations. Stakeholders have stressed that this situation may discourage applicants from reapplying in future years. In its 2017 resolution, Parliament called for a total budget of approximately EUR 500 million for the successor programme.

Hungary has the largest number of beneficiaries, having been awarded approximately 15 % of the total number of project grants between 2014 and 2016, followed by Slovakia and Italy, with approximately 13 % and 11 % of grants awarded respectively.

Achievements: the report states that the programme is performing generally well at mid-term for both strands with regard to its specific objectives. Compared to the previous programme, the stronger focus on European historical memory in the current programme has encouraged reflections on Europe's cultural diversity and has been essential to achieving its objectives. In the area of town twinning, the programme achieves results by increasing and encouraging mutual understanding and friendship between citizens at a local level. Networks of town grants allowed beneficiaries to develop more thematic and policy-related

projects and forge lasting links with partner organisations. Overall, the programme's current structure has contributed to a debate on the future of the EU, based on lessons learned from its past. Both operating and action grants have helped deliver the desired outcomes.

Improvements needed: the report notes that the Commission has identified the following areas for improvement:

Revision of monitoring indicators: one of the simplifications implemented in the current programme was the introduction of only two strands accompanied by a horizontal action. Whilst the new structure has proved to be clearer to applicants, the monitoring process was challenging, as there were different sets of indicators in the Regulation which were not directly comparable with the indicators used in the impact assessment.

Visibility: while dissemination activities have broadly helped raise awareness about the programme, it would be beneficial to develop a more strategic approach to further improve the visibility of the activities and the transferability and sustainability of the projects' results.

Synergies: these are developed in some areas, such as in the establishment of the [VALOR platform](#) for dissemination of project results, or through occasional cooperation of Europe for Citizens Contact Points, the Creative Europe Desks and Erasmus+ National Agencies. However, the mid-term evaluation shows that the programme can further benefit more coordinated approach with other relevant programmes in the future.