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ANNEX

**ANNEX**

*to the*

**Commission Implementing Decision**

**on the financing of the Citizens, Equality, Rights and Values programme and the  
adoption of the work programme for 2023-2024**

## ANNEX

### **Citizens, Equality, Rights and Values multiannual work programme for 2023-2024**

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## **Citizens,**

*“I want Europeans to build the future of our Union.”*

*“But if we are to shape our Union in their mould, young people must be able to shape Europe’s future. Our Union needs a soul and a vision they can connect to”*

## **Equality,**

*“We need equality for all and equality in all of its senses.”*

*“We must give women and men equal legal rights across all life decisions.”*

## **Rights**

*“Freedom to be who you are, freedom to say what's on your mind, freedom to love whoever  
you want”*

*“During the pandemic, too many women were deprived of that freedom.... those women must  
have their freedom and their self-determination back”*

## **& Values**

*“Societies that build on democracy and common values stand on stable ground.”*

*“Our values are part of our soul, part of what defines us today.”*

*“Defending our values is also defending freedom.”*

*“But imperfect as it might be, our Union is both beautifully unique and uniquely beautiful. It is a Union where we strengthen our individual liberty through the strength of our community. A Union shaped as much by our shared history and values as by our different cultures and perspectives.”*

- President Ursula von der Leyen

Political Guidelines

State of the Union Address 2021

## 1. INTRODUCTION

The 2021-2027 Citizens, Equality, Rights and Values (CERV) programme<sup>1</sup> provides funding for citizens' engagement, promoting equality for all and implementing EU rights and values.

It aims to protect and promote the rights and values enshrined in the EU Treaties, in the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union (the 'Charter') and in the applicable international human rights conventions. It does this by supporting civil society organisations (CSOs) and other stakeholders active at local, regional, national and transnational level and by encouraging civic and democratic participation. This helps to sustain and further develop open, rights-based, democratic, equal and inclusive societies based on the rule of law. It pays particular attention to encouraging the participation of national, regional and local civil society organisations.

Organised around four strands of activity, the programme seeks to:

- protect and promote Union values (Union values strand);
- promote rights, non-discrimination and equality, including gender equality, and advance gender mainstreaming and the mainstreaming of non-discrimination (equality, rights and gender equality strand);
- promote citizens' engagement and participation in the democratic life of the Union and exchanges between people of different Member States, and raise awareness of their common European history (citizens' engagement and participation strand);
- prevent and combat gender-based violence and violence against children (Daphne strand).

CERV works through two-year work programmes to ensure continuity of funding priorities and maximum transparency. The 2021-2022 work programme ensured the transition between the multiannual financial framework for 2014-2020 and the one for 2021-2027. Although 2021 was an extremely challenging year, due especially to COVID-19, the programme's activities were implemented promptly.

Thanks to increased funding in some policy areas compared with the predecessor programmes and given the ambition to reach civil society from the transnational to the local level, the 2021-2022 work programme had a number of new priorities and innovative funding mechanisms (e.g. financial support to third parties, commonly known also as the cascading grants to intermediaries<sup>2</sup> to build the capacity of and regrant funds to local civil society which took place in 2022 and is planned again for 2024 as part of the 2023-2024 work programme). Another novelty was the successful call to promote capacity building and awareness on the Charter in response to real needs on the ground. It will be further reinforced with additional priorities in the 2023-2024 work programme.

The Russian aggression against Ukraine and all the issues deriving from it demonstrate more than ever the need to protect democratic freedom and the enjoyment of fundamental rights for all and in particular for people in the most vulnerable situations, such as women and children. Democracy needs to be sustained and supported through a strong and free civil society, which

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<sup>1</sup> REGULATION (EU) 2021/692 OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL of 28 April 2021 establishing the Citizens, Equality, Rights and Values Programme and repealing Regulation (EU) No 1381/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council and Council Regulation (EU) No 390/2014.

<sup>2</sup> Article 204 of Regulation (EU, Euratom) 2018/1046.

has the room and necessary conditions to act, as well as through civic engagement and participation.

Such developments also emphasise the importance of a critical reflection on the past and the transmission of memory to future generations to tackle historical distortion and ensure European remembrance to avoid repeating past mistakes. Despite every effort to stop violence and hatred against groups at risk, vulnerable groups and women and children, continue to be the first to suffer.

The 2023-2024 work programme has therefore been adapted to respond to this situation. The Commission will encourage projects that link to the policymaking process and offer citizens concrete opportunities to engage. We will specifically target children and young people so that they know how to exercise their right to take part in the democratic life of the Union and thus help protect our democracies. We have expanded the priorities of European remembrance to take into account various facets of the 20<sup>th</sup> century European experience, including overcoming dictatorships and authoritarian regimes, democratic transition and (re-)building society based on the rule of law, democracy and fundamental rights. Tackling historical distortion and encouraging intergenerational work will be a key focus.

Another focus of the work programme will be on solidarity, responding to societal challenges such as inclusion of refugees and other migrants, and upholding the rights of people, including children fleeing from the war in Ukraine and seeking protection in the EU. Because solidarity is a shared value, it opens the way to more engagement in society and ultimately to an active involvement in the democratic life of the Union, including for those who may not have taken part before.

A new cascading call to prevent and combat gender-based violence will reach out to grassroots organisations to address the urgent need to protect women and girls, including those who fled from violence due to the war in Ukraine. On the protection of children against violence, the call for proposals will also aim to enhance integrated child protection systems.

### **1.1. Union values**

Full respect and promotion of fundamental rights, the rule of law and democracy are the foundations on which the EU is built. They are at the core of its action and are key to building people's trust in the EU and ensuring mutual trust among Member States.

Funding under the programme will support entities that help to make the EU's common values and rights alive and vibrant. Such entities mainly include civil society organisations, such as civil society platforms and EU networks, but also their members and local grassroots organisations reached through regranting schemes.

As part of the Commission's action to promote the values enshrined in Article 2 of the Treaty on European Union ('TEU'), the 2023-2024 work programme extends the range of activities to build CSOs capacity to ensure that the Charter is upheld. This includes activities to protect fundamental rights in the digital age, to build capacity on whistleblower protection, to promote rights and values by empowering the civic space and to combat hate speech and hate crime.

The ultimate goal is to nurture and sustain a rights-based, equal, open, pluralist, inclusive and democratic society. This includes supporting a strong and empowered civil society and further developing the diversity of European society based on rights and on our common values, history and memory. It also includes protecting society against hate crime and hate speech, which affect not only individual victims but also society as a whole.

Actions will help to implement EU priorities, in particular in the area of fundamental rights, the rule of law and democracy, as highlighted in the Rule of Law report<sup>3</sup>, the Communication on ‘A more inclusive and protective Europe: extending the list of EU crimes to hate speech and hate crime’<sup>4</sup>, the EU citizenship Reports, the European democracy action plan<sup>5</sup>, the Commission Recommendation on protecting journalists and human rights defenders who engage in public participation from manifestly unfounded or abusive court proceedings (‘Strategic lawsuits against public participation’)<sup>6</sup> and the strategy to strengthen the application of the Charter of Fundamental Rights in the EU<sup>7</sup>.

## 1.2. Equality, rights and gender equality

This work programme will build on the progress achieved in the EU, funding actions to promote equality, tackle discrimination and improve responses to racism, antisemitism and xenophobia. It will support a comprehensive, gender-sensitive and intersectional approach and fund actions to address the disadvantages faced by specific groups and communities particularly affected by discrimination. It will support the implementation of the EU anti-racism action plan for 2020-2025<sup>8</sup>, the LGBTIQ Equality Strategy 2020-2025<sup>9</sup>, the EU Roma strategic framework on equality, inclusion and participation<sup>10</sup>, the EU Strategy on combating antisemitism and fostering Jewish Life 2021-2030<sup>11</sup>, 2020-2025 Gender Equality Strategy<sup>12</sup> and 2021-2030 strategy for the rights of persons with disabilities<sup>13</sup>.

Funding priorities also include promoting diversity management, particularly at the workplace, monitoring and enforcing non-discrimination legislation, strengthening stakeholder dialogue on Roma equality and inclusion and LGBTIQ equality at European and national levels, and advancing the work of the Commission’s coordinators on combating racism and antisemitism. Funding will support the activities of Member States and equality bodies on promoting and protecting rights and implementing the EU anti-discrimination legislation, including the Commission Recommendation on standards for equality bodies<sup>14</sup> and on improving the collection of equality data. It will also support Member State authorities to develop national and local strategies and action plans against racism and antisemitism.

The Commission promotes gender equality for a Europe where women and men, girls and boys, in all their diversity are equal. Gender equality is a key principle of the European Pillar of Social Rights<sup>15</sup>. In order to help achieve it, CERV supports implementation of the 2020-2025 Gender Equality Strategy, by ensuring equality of treatment between women and men and promoting equal opportunities. This work programme will focus on promoting a better sharing care responsibilities between women and men and challenging gender stereotypes to

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<sup>3</sup> European rule of law mechanism - [2022 Rule of Law report](#).

<sup>4</sup> [Extending EU crimes to hate speech and hate crime | European Commission \(europa.eu\)](#).

<sup>5</sup> [European democracy action plan](#).

<sup>6</sup> [Commission Recommendation on protecting journalists and human rights defenders who engage in public participation from manifestly unfounded or abusive court proceedings \("Strategic lawsuits against public participation"\)](#).

<sup>7</sup> [Strategy to strengthen the application of the Charter of Fundamental Rights in the EU](#).

<sup>8</sup> A Union of Equality: [EU anti-racism Action Plan 2020-2025](#).

<sup>9</sup> Union of Equality: [LGBTIQ Equality Strategy 2020-2025](#).

<sup>10</sup> A Union of Equality: [EU Roma strategic framework on equality, inclusion and participation](#).

<sup>11</sup> [EU Strategy on combating antisemitism and fostering Jewish life \(2021-2030\)](#).

<sup>12</sup> [2020-2025 Gender Equality Strategy](#).

<sup>13</sup> Union of Equality: [Strategy for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities 2021-2030](#).

<sup>14</sup> [Commission Recommendation](#) on standards for equality bodies.

<sup>15</sup> [European Pillar of Social Rights](#).

tackle the root causes of the gender care gap. It will also support Member States in implementing the Pay Transparency Directive.

In line with the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD)<sup>16</sup>, the programme is also funding actions aimed at the full participation of persons with disabilities and enjoyment of their rights on an equal basis with others. Such actions will support the implementation of the 2021-2030 strategy for the rights of persons with disabilities<sup>17</sup>. This includes raising awareness of good practices in removing barriers faced by persons with disabilities, supporting civil society networks, improving knowledge on the situation of persons with disabilities, and sharing experiences on European and national achievements and on meeting commitments under the UNCRPD.

The programme will continue raise awareness of people about their rights as EU citizens, following the entry into force of the Maastricht Treaty on 1 November 1993. In line with the democracy action plan, the EU citizenship report 2020<sup>18</sup> and the Communication of 25 November 2021 on protecting election integrity and promoting democratic participation, the programme will also continue to increase people's awareness and knowledge of democracy in the EU as well as other EU values associated to EU citizenship. In this respect, it is also important to bear in mind the context of strategic lawsuits against public participation, addressing in particular human rights defenders and journalists who engage in public participation. This is crucial to an inclusive democratic debate. Fostering the successful inclusion and political participation of EU citizens in all their diversity, including mobile EU citizens, in democratic and political life is also essential.

The right to the protection of personal data is a key element in delivering the 'European way for the digital society' which is human-centred and ensures full respect of fundamental rights. National data protection authorities play a central role in supervising, advising and raising awareness of issues concerning the application of the General Data Protection Regulation. Therefore, the programme will continue to provide funding to national data protection authorities to reach out to stakeholders. It will also continue to support studies and reports and possible communication campaigns, feeding into the implementation of the EU data protection framework.

### **1.3. Citizens' engagement and participation**

It is important to give citizens the opportunity to take part in the debate on Europe and its past and to play an active role in advancing the EU integration project. Through the 'Citizens' engagement and participation' strand, the work programme will help people make their voices heard and increase inclusion and democratic participation, in line with the Commission's political priorities (particularly, 'A new push for European democracy' priority). The programme will support priorities specified in the EU Citizenship Report 2020 and the forthcoming EU Citizenship Report 2023 as well as the priorities laid out in the European democracy action plan and the Commission Recommendation on protecting journalists and human rights defenders who engage in public participation from manifestly unfounded or abusive court proceedings ('Strategic lawsuits against public participation').

The legacy of recent European history is a crucial pillar of the values the EU stands for. At a time marked by historical distortion and revisionism and a return of war in Europe, the

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<sup>16</sup> UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities [A/RES/61/106](#).

<sup>17</sup> Union of Equality: [Strategy for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities 2021-2030](#).

<sup>18</sup> [EU Citizenship Report 2020](#) - Empowering citizens and protecting their rights.



remembrance and education of common 20<sup>th</sup> century European experiences become even more pertinent for all of society, especially young people and people in positions of power.

For European remembrance, the programme will support projects that commemorate and educate about defining experiences in modern European history. These include the causes and consequences of authoritarian and totalitarian regimes, resistance against these regimes, the Holocaust and other mass crimes, democratic transition and (re)-building democratic institutions, the legacy of colonialism, transnational migration and European integration. The programme will also support projects in line with the EU anti-racism action plan, the EU strategy on combating antisemitism and fostering Jewish life and the EU Roma strategic framework on equality, inclusion and participation. Activities will aim to raise Europeans' awareness of their common historical experience, culture, cultural heritage and values and help them better understand the EU, its origins, purpose, diversity and achievements and the importance of fundamental rights, democracy and the rule of law. Across the different priorities, an overarching aim is to highlight the role, representation and perspective of women in these important historical events and developments to allow a more gender-balanced understanding of history.

For citizen participation, activities will focus in particular on debating the future of Europe, on citizens' societal engagement, independent election observation, including monitoring by citizens, and innovative approaches and tools to help citizens make their voices heard and publicly exchange views on all areas of EU action. The programme will particularly encourage projects that collect citizens' views but also ensure a practical link with the policymaking process, thus showing citizens how to engage in practice. The results of the Conference on the Future of Europe<sup>19</sup> could be a starting point for activities under the call.

A particular focus will be on encouraging civic engagement for children. A comprehensive call will be dedicated to the policies focused on the rights of the child in line with the EU Strategy on the Rights of the Child<sup>20</sup>. This call will support projects aiming at the promotion and protection of the rights of the child, by focusing on the implementation of the actions and recommendations at EU, national and local levels established in the EU Strategy on the rights of the child. The call will also encourage children's engagement and participation in the political and democratic life. In addition, the work programme will fund the EU Child Participation Platform (CPP) that the Commission is establishing jointly with the European Parliament and child rights organisations.

The work programme will also continue providing technical support at EU level to the European Citizens' Initiative.

For town twinning and networks of towns, the work programme will promote exchanges between people from different countries to reinforce mutual understanding and tolerance and give them the opportunity to broaden their perspective and develop a sense of European belonging and identity. While maintaining a bottom-up approach, the programme will also provide, in particular to networks of towns, an opportunity to focus on EU priorities. This means, for example, improving local knowledge on the rights deriving from EU citizenship or building knowledge and sharing best practices on the benefits of diversity as well as effective measures on how to tackle discrimination and racism at local level. The work programme will also enable towns to engage citizens and communities in discussions and actions on the climate and the environment, including energy-related issues, and on solidarity and

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<sup>19</sup> <https://futureu.europa.eu/?locale=en>.

<sup>20</sup> EU strategy on the [rights of the child](#).

migration. Finally, the European Capitals of Inclusion and Diversity award will recognise the role that cities and local authorities play in fostering diversity and inclusion.

#### **1.4. Daphne: preventing and combatting gender-based violence and violence against children**

The work programme will finance activities on preventing and combating gender-based violence, including where such violence is committed online or in the context of people fleeing from the Russian aggression against Ukraine. Violence against children<sup>21</sup> will be specifically addressed to help strengthen integrated child protection systems. In 2023, a new call for proposals with a cascading scheme is specifically planned for tackling gender-based violence, violence against children and victim support. The call will allow CERV funding to reach small, local organisations so they can benefit from EU funding under a simplified framework. The call will enable specific policy needs to be addressed in a structured manner. In 2024, actions specifically supporting victims and survivors and further developing integrated child protection systems will be funded.

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<sup>21</sup> Violence, as defined in Article 19 of the [UN Convention on the rights of the child \(1989\)](#): ‘all forms of physical or mental violence, injury or abuse, neglect or negligent treatment, maltreatment or exploitation, including sexual abuse’ and in [General comment No 13](#) of the UN Committee on the rights of the child (2011) on the right of the child to freedom from all forms of violence.

## 2. BUDGET OVERVIEW FOR 2023-2024

Based on the objectives in Regulation (EU) 2021/692 of the European Parliament and of the Council establishing the Citizens, Equality, Rights and Values programme, this work programme presents the actions to be financed and the budget breakdown for 2023-2024 as indicated in the table below.

<b>Budget lines</b>	<b>2023 (€)</b>	<b>2024 (€)</b>
Budget line 07 06 04: Protect and promote Union values	108 683 873	88 151 507
Budget line 07 06 01: Promote equality and rights	36 863 099	36 019 970
Budget line 07 06 02: Promote citizens' engagement and participation in the democratic life of the Union	32 154 085	55 671 418
Budget line 07 06 03: Daphne	25 257 735	25 146 869
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>202 958 792</b>	<b>204 989 764</b>

Funds committed in the work programme are deployed through direct management (grants, procurement and by awarding prizes) and indirect management for activities implemented with the support of international organisations, in compliance with the rules set out in the Financial Regulation.

Procurement is the acquisition of a service by the Commission from an economic operator<sup>22</sup>, selected following a 'call for tenders' procedure.

Grants are financial contributions by way of donation by the Commission in order to finance one of the following: (i) an action intended to help achieve an EU policy objective (action grants), or; (ii) the functioning of a body which has an objective forming part of, and supporting, an EU policy (operating grants)<sup>23</sup>. The award of a grant follows, in general, a call for proposals' procedure.

Under the indirect management mode, the Commission delegates budget implementation tasks to third entities to achieve a set of EU objectives.

Prizes are financial contributions given by the Commission as a reward following a contest. They promote the achievement of policy objectives of the Union<sup>24</sup>.

<b>Funding</b>	<b>2023 (€)</b>	<b>allocation</b>	<b>2024 (€)</b>	<b>allocation</b>
Grants	171 827 779	84.7%	180 272 222	87.9%
Prizes	350 000	0.2%	350 000	0.2%
Procurement	26 881 013	13.2%	23 717 542	11.6%
Indirect management	3 250 000	1.6%	0	0.0%

<sup>22</sup> Article 2(49) of the Financial Regulation.

<sup>23</sup> Article 2(33) and 180(2) of the Financial Regulation.

<sup>24</sup> Article 2(48) and 206(1) of the Financial Regulation.

Other expenditures	650 000	0.3%	650 000	0.3%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>202 958 792</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>204 989 764</b>	<b>100 %</b>

The Commission's Directorate-General for Justice and Consumers (DG JUST) will directly manage the implementation of actions, unless specified otherwise.

The implementation of actions under the specific objective to protect and promote the rights of persons with disabilities will be co-delegated to the Directorate-General for Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion (DG EMPL). The European Citizens' Initiative will be co-delegated to the Secretariat-General (SG).

The Commission delegates powers<sup>25</sup> to implement actions in the Citizens' engagement and participation strand and the Union values strand to the European and Culture, Executive Agency (EACEA)<sup>26</sup>. In addition, EUR 4 391 394 from the Equality, rights and gender equality strand will be co-delegated to EACEA for the call for proposals to enhance children's engagement and participation and children's rights.

EU values are at the core of the CERV programme. Therefore, all beneficiaries and activities implemented under this work programme must respect EU values based on Article 2 of the Treaty on European Union<sup>27</sup> and the rights and principles enshrined in the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union, particularly Article 21<sup>28</sup>. The Commission will systematically enforce the respect for EU values throughout the lifecycle of all projects, from application to evaluation and monitoring. Entities and activities not respecting EU values are not eligible for support.

A child protection policy must frame all activities funded under the work programme directly involving children.

In compliance with the EU Treaty and as also provided by Recital 18 of the CERV Regulation, gender equality and non-discrimination should be an integral part of all activities implemented under this work programme. This means integrating gender equality and non-discrimination considerations in the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of all activities. The activities should be pro-active and contribute to the equal empowerment of women and men, girls and boys, in all their diversity<sup>29</sup>, ensuring that they achieve their full potential and enjoy the same rights and opportunities. Gender and non-discrimination mainstreaming are key mechanisms for achieving gender equality and combating multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination. In this context and while taking into account the different nature and size of the activities of the different strands of the programme, it will be important for individual data collected by project promoters to be broken down by sex whenever possible. It will also be important that the requested tasks are systematically implemented with a gender perspective. The activities must also seek to reduce levels of discrimination suffered by particular groups (as well as those at risk of multiple

<sup>25</sup> Article 69 of the Financial Regulation.

<sup>26</sup> Implementation by the European Education and Culture Executive Agency is subject to the applicability of the establishment and delegation acts entrusting the agency with management of the programme and will only become effective subject to and from the moment of adoption of the programme's basic act.

<sup>27</sup> [Treaty on European Union](#)

<sup>28</sup> [Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union](#)

<sup>29</sup> The expression 'in all their diversity' is used here to express that, where women or men are mentioned, these are heterogeneous categories, including in relation to their sex, gender identity, gender expression or sex characteristics. It affirms the commitment to leave no one behind and achieve a gender equal Europe for everyone, regardless of their sex, racial or ethnic origin, religion or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation.

discrimination) and improve equality outcomes for individuals. Gender balance should also be ensured when consulting experts and stakeholders.

At present, only EU Member States participate in the Citizens, Equality, Rights and Values programme. Should any non-EU countries conclude an agreement with the EU to participate in the programme, this will be announced in the relevant call for proposals<sup>30</sup>.

The programme will finance actions with European added value<sup>31</sup>. This added value, including that of small-scale and national actions, will be assessed in the light of criteria such as: (i) contribution to the consistent implementation of EU legal and policy instruments, and to increasing public awareness of related rights and benefits; (ii) contribution to the reinforcement of the rule of law, democracy, and fundamental rights; (iii) potential to develop mutual trust among Member States and to improve cooperation across borders; (iv) contribution to the development, implementation and dissemination of good practices, and; (v) potential to contribute to the creation of minimum standards and solutions addressing challenges across borders or EU-wide.

Activities implemented under this work programme will ensure consistency, complementarity and synergies with funding programmes supporting policy areas closely linked to the Citizens, Equality, Rights and Values programme. These include: the Justice programme, the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund, the Internal Security Fund, the European Regional Development Fund, the Creative Europe programme and Erasmus+, which realise the potential of cultural crossovers in the fields of culture, media, arts, education and creativity; the European Social Fund+ for employment and the fight against social exclusion and deinstitutionalisation; and Horizon Europe – the Framework Programme for Research and Innovation, in particular under its Cluster 2 on Culture, creativity and inclusive society with its intervention areas on democracy and governance, and social and economic transformations.

For external action, complementary programmes include the Instrument for Pre-accession Assistance and the Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument. Coordination will also be ensured with funding instruments addressing the EU's legal and policy framework on trafficking in human beings under Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund and the Internal Security Fund.

## **2.1. Essential eligibility, selection and award criteria for action grants**

The essential **eligibility** criteria for action grants are specified in the respective calls for proposals.

Grant applicants and partners must meet the following **selection criteria**:

- (a) Lead applicants and co-applicants must have stable and sufficient sources of funding to maintain their activity throughout the duration of the grant and to participate in its funding ('financial capacity');
- (b) Lead applicants and co-applicants must have sufficient operational and professional capacities to implement the activities for which co-funding is requested ('operational capacity').

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<sup>30</sup> Citizens, Equality, Rights and Values programme on the 'Funding & tender opportunities' portal.

<sup>31</sup> Recital 25 of REGULATION (EU) 2021/692 OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL of 28 April 2021 establishing the Citizens, Equality, Rights and Values Programme and repealing Regulation (EU) No 1381/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council and Council Regulation (EU) No 390/2014.

Organisations participating in several projects must have sufficient financial and operational capacity to implement multiple projects.

The verification of financial capacity does not apply to international organisations and public bodies<sup>32</sup>.

Proposals will be assessed based on the following **award criteria**:

- (a) relevance to the priorities of the call for proposals;
- (b) quality of the proposed action;
- (c) impact of the proposed action.

Grants will involve co-financing<sup>33</sup>. The maximum possible rate of EU co-financing is 90% of the total eligible costs of the action.

All actions are implemented on the legal basis of Regulation (EU) 2021/692 of the European Parliament and of the Council establishing the Citizens, Equality, Rights and Values programme.

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<sup>32</sup> Article 198(5)(6) of the Financial Regulation.

<sup>33</sup> Article 190(1) of the Financial Regulation.

### 3. GRANTS

The global budgetary envelope reserved for grants under this work programme is indicatively EUR 171 827 779 in 2023 and EUR 180 272 222 in 2024.

<b>SPECIFIC OBJECTIVE</b>	<b>2023 (€)</b>	<b>2024 (€)</b>
Protect and promote Union values	104 100 000	84 800 000
Promote equality and rights	18 607 779	21 883 617
Promote citizens' engagement and participation in the democratic life of the Union	25 720 000	48 788 605
Daphne	23 400 000	24 800 000
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>171 827 779</b>	<b>180 272 222</b>

### 3.1. Call for proposals for civil society organisations active on protecting and promoting Union values: call to intermediaries (giving financial support to third parties)

#### LEGAL BASIS

Article 3 of Regulation (EU) 2021/692

#### BUDGET LINE

Budget line 07 06 04: Protect and promote Union values

#### OBJECTIVES

*Protecting, promoting and raising awareness of rights by providing financial support to civil society organisations, which are active at local, regional, national and transnational level in promoting and cultivating those rights, thereby also strengthening the protection and promotion of Union values and respect for the rule of law and contributing to the construction of a more democratic Union, democratic dialogue, transparency and good governance.*

Policy initiatives supported: European democracy action plan, EU Citizenship Reports, Rule of law report, Strategy to strengthen the application of the Charter of Fundamental Rights in the EU, Communication on “A more inclusive and protective Europe: extending the list of EU crimes to hate speech and hate crime”, Gender Equality Strategy, EU anti-racism action plan, EU Roma strategic framework on equality, inclusion and participation, LGBTIQ Equality Strategy, Commission Recommendation on protecting journalists and human rights defenders who engage in public participation from manifestly unfounded or abusive court proceedings (“Strategic lawsuits against public participation”), Communication of 25 November 2021 on protecting election integrity and promoting democratic participation, Strategy for the rights of persons with disabilities, EU Strategy on the rights of the child, EU strategy on combating antisemitism and fostering Jewish life.

#### TYPE OF APPLICANTS TARGETED

Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) active in promoting and protecting the rule of law, fundamental rights and democracy.

#### POLICY PRIORITIES

##### **2024**

Civil society has a key role to play in upholding the common values on which the EU is founded: the rule of law, fundamental rights and democracy. In particular, civil society organisations act as watchdogs to monitor the upholding of democratic values in the EU



and contribute to checks and balances, together with independent courts and media.

Many civil society organisations face growing difficulties in securing the necessary funding to develop and perform their activities independently and effectively<sup>34</sup>. These challenges are also recognised by the European Parliament which voiced its concerns in the recently published report on the ‘Shrinking space for civil society in Europe’, as well as by several international organisations, and by CSOs themselves. Some of the challenges faced by CSOs have been further exacerbated by the social and economic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic or by national measures taken in this context. Recent developments in some Member States have shown that respect for EU values and fundamental rights cannot be taken for granted.

The CERV programme contributes to the EU’s effort to uphold the rule of law, strengthen judicial independence and protect fundamental rights and democracy. The Commission monitors respect of the rule of law, including the framework for civil society, in its annual rule of law report and respect of fundamental rights, including by reporting about it in its annual report on application of the Charter. It also uses the possibilities provided for by the Treaty to ensure the respect of EU law in the area of fundamental rights and the rule of law. Dedicated measures to strengthen the resilience of European democracies are listed in the European democracy action plan, including measures on protecting journalists and civil society from strategic lawsuits against public participation (SLAPP). The Commission has also taken action to improve the protection of such groups through a Recommendation to Member States on protecting journalists and human rights defenders who engage in public participation from manifestly unfounded or abusive court proceedings.

Not addressing persisting gaps and new challenges faced by civil society organisations could jeopardise the rule of law, fundamental rights and democracy.

The **overall aim** of this call for proposals is therefore to protect, promote and raise awareness of fundamental rights and of EU values by supporting local, regional and/or national civil society organisations and increasing their capacity.

**A limited number of intermediaries in the Member States will be selected and supported under this call. The selected intermediaries should be capable of building the capacities of a large number of CSOs active at local, regional and/or national level in the fields covered by the CERV programme, including through providing them with financial support.**

The EU funding should help to support, empower and build the capacity of independent civil society organisations active in the promotion of values and rights and whose activities help strategically enforce rights under EU law and the Charter (including through advocacy and watchdog activities and support activities for the proper functioning of a healthy democracy) and help promote, safeguard and raise awareness of rights and Union’s values at local, regional, national and transnational level. The EU funding should also support civil society organisations in promoting the implementation of court judgments (European Court of Justice, European Court of Human Rights, national courts).

## DESCRIPTION OF ACTIVITIES

<sup>34</sup> [European Parliament resolution of 19 April 2018](#) on the need to establish a European Values Instrument to support civil society organisations that promote fundamental values within the EU at local and national level (2018/2619(RSP)) and Regulation (EU) 2021/692 of the European Parliament and of the Council establishing the Citizens, Equality, Rights and Values Programme.

Activities must respect the rule of law, fundamental rights and democracy. The following list of activities is not exhaustive and other relevant and innovative activities may be considered:

- Financial support to third parties (CSOs), including the publication of calls for proposals, the definition of selection and award criteria, the evaluation of applications and the monitoring of implementation. Financial support to third parties is considered essential to achieve the objective of this Call for proposals and should represent a significant part of projects' budget.
- Capacity building for CSOs:
  - technical and methodological support in the preparation and implementation of activities of CSOs (for instance, helpdesk during application phase, support on monitoring and reporting, etc);
  - training and building the capacity and sustainability of CSOs (for instance, with coaching to strengthen the strategic thinking and managerial capacities of CSOs, training sessions on fundraising, seminars on communication, including through social media and video-making, on gender mainstreaming or on strengthening policy research and analysis);
  - thematic training for CSOs on EU law and policies to promote and protect rights and values as enshrined in the Treaties, the Charter and in the applicable international human rights conventions; thematic training can also include dedicated measures to strengthen the resilience of European democracies, such as on protecting journalists and human rights defenders who engage in public participation from manifestly unfounded or abusive court proceedings (Strategic lawsuits against public participation);
  - awareness-raising for CSOs on the rule of law culture in the EU and its Member States;
  - promoting and facilitating networking among CSOs and with relevant stakeholders, including National Human Rights Institutions (NHRIs) and Equality bodies.

The expected duration of the action should not exceed **36 months**.

## EXPECTED RESULTS

- Increased promotion and public awareness of EU rights and values, including at local level;
- Strengthened capacity of CSOs to protect and promote EU rights and values, including at local level;
- A more supportive environment for CSOs;
- More effective, accountable and sustainable CSOs;
- A better developed advocacy and watchdog role for CSOs;
- Increased involvement of CSOs in policy and decision-making processes with local, regional, and national governments;
- Strengthened regional cooperation within civil society.

## IMPLEMENTATION

Direct management by EACEA (co-delegation type II).

### 3.2. Call for proposals to promote civil society organisations' awareness of, capacity building and implementation of the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights

#### LEGAL BASIS

Article 3 of Regulation (EU) 2021/692

#### BUDGET LINE

Budget line 07 06 04: Protect and promote Union values

#### OBJECTIVES

*Protecting, promoting and raising awareness of rights by providing financial support to civil society organisations which are active at local, regional, national and transnational level in promoting and cultivating those rights, thereby also strengthening the protection and promotion of Union values and respect for the rule of law and contributing to the construction of a more democratic Union, democratic dialogue, transparency and good governance.*

Policy initiatives supported: European democracy action plan, Communication on 'A more inclusive and protective Europe: extending the list of EU crimes to hate speech and hate crime', Rule of law report, Strategy to strengthen the application of the Charter of Fundamental Rights in the EU, Commission Recommendation on protecting journalists and human rights defenders who engage in public participation from manifestly unfounded or abusive court proceedings ('Strategic lawsuits against public participation').

#### TYPE OF APPLICANTS TARGETED

Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) active in promoting and protecting the rule of law, fundamental rights and democracy, as well as National Human Rights Institutions, Equality bodies, Ombuds Institutions, public authorities (if in partnership with CSO).

#### POLICY PRIORITIES

##### **2023 and 2024**

This call for proposals will promote right and values by building primarily civil society organisations capacity and awareness on the Charter and by carrying out activities to ensure that the Charter is upheld. Projects will be selected to ensure a balanced representation of the five priorities. Projects can be national or transnational. Transnational projects are particularly encouraged.

##### **1. Capacity building and awareness raising on the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights**

Proclaimed 20 years ago and legally binding since 2009, the Charter was a quantum leap for European integration. It reaffirmed that the EU is built on fundamental rights, democracy and the rule of law. However, the Charter is not used to its full potential and awareness remains low, which hinders the full enjoyment of rights. The Commission's strategy to strengthen the application of the Charter of Fundamental Rights in the EU underlines the importance of strengthening the application of the Charter in the Member States, in particular through awareness raising and capacity building initiatives.

The projects funded under this priority can address the needs on capacity building and awareness raising on the EU Charter **in general**, or they can focus on **one or several** of the topics below:

- *Rights enshrined in the Charter and awareness of the Charter's scope of application*<sup>35</sup>. In accordance with its Article 51, the Charter is applicable to Member States only when they are implementing EU law. Given the specific nature of this instrument, in comparison with other international Treaties protecting fundamental rights, and taking into account the increasing number of references to the Charter in the case law of the Court of Justice of the EU, there is a specific need to promote a good understanding both of the rights enshrined in the Charter and of the situations in which the Charter applies, i.e. when EU law is being implemented;
- *Protecting fundamental rights in the digital age*. To follow up on the Annual Charter Report 2021<sup>36</sup>, the aim of the priority is to protect fundamental rights by strengthening accountability for the use of automation where rights are at stake, including through approaches for addressing and combatting bias and multiple/intersectional discrimination based on gender and on other grounds including ethnic and racial origin, caused or intensified by the use of **artificial intelligence systems**. Projects will aim to develop guidelines, technical benchmarks and tools, including for algorithm-audits<sup>37</sup>. Projects which could also contribute to the effective application on the ground of the AI act<sup>38</sup> once adopted, are expected to develop a concrete tool or a benchmark process in an area of the applicant's choice with demonstrated relevance for fundamental rights, without prescribing the area or the type of the tool (e.g. it could be software, a benchmark data set, a simulation environment, a procedure).

## 2. Promoting rights and values by empowering the civic space

In line with the Charter strategy and following up to the 2022 report on the application of the Charter of fundamental rights dedicated to the civic space, projects under this priority aim to promote rights and values by empowering civil society actors to work together at the local, regional and national levels on the fields covered by the programme and create a channel of communication with the EU level to report on the state of the civic space in their countries and voice their concerns.

The projects should aim at the creation of a systematic and comprehensive monitoring system to regularly and consistently monitor the environment in which civil society organisations work in the national contexts, building on the Fundamental Rights Agency indicators about the shrinking civic space<sup>39</sup> and of internal organisations' data<sup>40</sup>, and in particular of breaches of CSOs and rights defenders' fundamental rights. The projects should also support and enhance the protection of CSOs, their members and rights defenders working to protect and promote EU values under attack. Transnational partnerships with mutual learning possibilities for partners in several EU Member States

<sup>35</sup> Projects addressing Article 45 may also cover 'Freedom of movement and of residence', as grandfathered in the Agreement on the withdrawal of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland from the European Union and the European Atomic Energy Community.

<sup>36</sup> [https://ec.europa.eu/info/files/2021-annual-report-application-charter-fundamental-rights\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/info/files/2021-annual-report-application-charter-fundamental-rights_en)

<sup>37</sup> An explanation of the objectives and certain approaches to algorithm-audits can be found here: <https://foundation.mozilla.org/en/blog/its-time-to-develop-the-tools-we-need-to-hold-algorithms-accountable/>.

<sup>38</sup> [Proposal for a Regulation laying down harmonised rules on artificial intelligence.](https://fra.europa.eu/en/themes/civil-society)

<sup>39</sup> <https://fra.europa.eu/en/themes/civil-society>

<sup>40</sup> <https://monitor.civicus.org/>

are particularly encouraged as well as connections with relevant actors at national level such as NHRIs, Equality bodies, and Ombuds-institution and the national Charter Focal Points.

### **3. Strategic litigation**

As highlighted in the Charter Strategy, people need to be aware of their rights and need help to receive effective judicial protection in case their fundamental rights are breached. Such protection also includes strategic litigation involving rights enshrined in the Charter, which contributes to a more coherent implementation and application of EU law and to the enforcement of individuals' rights.

Strategic litigators are key to fostering the promotion and protection of Charter rights and support should be given to strengthening their capacity and specialised knowledge on the Charter and on how to develop a strategic approach to cases. In this context, the support and assistance to the victims provided by civil society organisations, National Human Rights Institutions (NHRIs) and Equality Bodies is instrumental.

Projects under this priority should, through training, knowledge sharing and exchange of good practices, strengthen the knowledge and ability of civil society organisations as well as of practitioners, legal professionals and independent human rights bodies to effectively engage in litigation practices at national and European level and to improve access to justice and enforcement of rights under EU law, including the Charter.

Projects under this priority can also include a focus on countering manifestly unfounded or abusive court proceedings against journalists and human rights defenders who engage in public participation (**Strategic lawsuits against public participation**).

### **4. Protecting EU values and rights by combating hate crime and hate speech**

All forms and manifestations of hatred are incompatible with the EU values and the fundamental rights enshrined in Article 2 of the Treaty and the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights. Hatred affects the individual victims and the groups they belong to, and generates societal polarisation and silences wide sectors of the population, weakening pluralism and undermining respectful public democratic debates. The online world has amplified the negative effects of hate speech. Hate crimes are a direct violation of the victims' fundamental right to dignity, to equality and non-discrimination. Combating hate speech and hate crime is therefore a key part of the Commission's action to promote EU values and to ensure that the Charter is upheld.

At EU level, the 2008 Council Framework Decision requires the criminalisation of certain forms of hate speech and hate crimes. Also, the Commission adopted a Communication in December 2021 inviting the Council of the European Union to extend the legal basis for EU-level criminalisation to other forms of hate speech and hate crime beyond the racist and xenophobic grounds already covered by the Framework Decision.

Civil society organisations play a crucial role in combating hate speech and hate crime, thereby safeguarding and promoting fundamental rights. Projects under this priority aim to enable civil society organisations to establish mechanisms of cooperation with public authorities to support the reporting of episodes of hate crime and hate speech; to ensure support to victims of hate speech and hate crime; and to support law enforcement, including through training or data collection methodologies and tools. Projects will also focus on activities that tackle hate speech online, including reporting content to IT companies, designing countering narrative and awareness raising campaigns, and educational activities to address the societal challenges of hate speech online.

## **5. Supporting an enabling environment for the protection of whistleblowers**

A Union of values and rights, is also based on effective enforcement systems and the effective detection, investigation and prosecution of breaches of Union law. Support should be given to creating an enabling environment for reporting and informing on breaches of the Union law, in particular by building capacity on the application of the **Directive on whistleblower protection** (Directive (EU) 2019/1937). This Directive provides for high standards of protection from retaliation for whistleblowers who report on breaches of EU law in a wide range of key policy areas, thus promoting the fundamental values of the rule of law and democracy as well as the right to freedom of expression, enshrined in Article 11 of the Charter.

### **DESCRIPTION OF ACTIVITIES**

The following activities can be covered:

#### **1. Capacity-building and awareness raising on the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights**

- Capacity building of civil society organisations and awareness raising activities aiming to increase the knowledge and the use of the EU Charter, especially on its scope of application;
- Facilitating cooperation between civil society organisations and other key actors in enforcing the Charter, such as National Human Rights Institutions, Equality bodies, Ombuds Institutions and Member State authorities (at national, regional and local level);
- Training and train-the-trainer activities for professionals (such as experts, lawyers and legal advisers, communicators, policy and advocacy advisers), including through operational guidance and learning tools;
- Mutual learning, exchange of good practices, development of working and learning methods, including mentoring programmes that may be transferable to other countries;
- Analytical activities, such as data collection and research, and the creation of tools or data bases (e.g. thematic databases of jurisprudence);
- Communication activities, including dissemination of information and awareness raising about rights and redress mechanisms, relevant to the priorities of the call;
- Development of procedures, guidelines, technical benchmarks and tools, including for algorithm-audits, to help to protect fundamental rights, including gender equality and non-discrimination, where automation is used.

#### **2. Promoting rights and values by empowering the civic space**

- Analytical activities and creation of the method to monitor the civic space in EU Member States;
- Mutual learning, exchange of good practices, including those that may be transferable to other countries;
- Communication activities, including dissemination of information and awareness raising about the state of play on civic space;

- Capacity building in civil society organisations on monitoring the civic space;
- Development of synergies among the actors working to protect the civic space at local, regional, national and European level and between them and the national and European authorities.

### **3. Strategic litigation**

- Activities to increase the ability of civil society organisations, including legal practitioners working for them, NHRIs, equality bodies and Ombuds Institutions and other rights defenders to develop skills and capacity in the area of strategic litigation on fundamental rights under the Charter, including by deepening their knowledge about the preliminary ruling mechanism (under Article 267 TFEU) and the opportunities of legal protection available under EU law;
- Analytical activities, such as data collection and research, and the creation of tools or data bases (e.g. thematic databases of jurisprudence);
- Communication activities, including dissemination of information and awareness raising about rights, redress mechanisms, and strategic cases;
- Capacity building and awareness raising activities to counter manifestly unfounded or abusive court proceedings against journalists and human rights defenders who engage in public participation (Strategic lawsuits against public participation).

*N.B.: Under this priority, **the litigation fees will not be funded.***

### **4. Protecting EU values and rights by combating hate speech and hate crime**

- Activities to enable civil society organisations to report episodes of hate, to ensure support to victims of hate speech and hate crime, encouraging reporting, providing practical help in seeking redress and psycho-social support; to support the enforcement of existing legislation prohibiting hate speech and hate crime, including through joint training for law enforcement and data collection mechanisms on hate crime and hate speech;
- Activities to establish or reinforce mechanisms of cooperation, including between civil society organisations and public authorities to report, record and collect data on episodes of hate crime and hate speech as well as to support investigation and prosecution and to protect victims and to provide guidance on the effective implementation of national laws criminalising hate speech and hate crime;
- Activities to tackle hate speech online, including reporting content to IT companies, counter narrative and awareness raising initiatives, and educational activities to address the societal challenges of hate speech online.

### **5. Supporting an enabling environment for the protection of whistleblowers**

- Capacity building for civil society organisations and, in partnership with these, for public authorities and private organisations active in the field of implementation of the Directive on whistleblower protection;
- Awareness raising and communication activities to increase the public's knowledge and understanding of the Directive, of the reporting channels and the protection available;
- Analytical activities, such as data collection and research, and the creation of tools or databases (e.g. thematic databases of jurisprudence on whistleblower retaliation cases);



- Mutual learning and exchange of good practices on the implementation of the Directive, in particular as regards the reporting channels and procedures and the protection and support measures for whistleblowers;
- Facilitating cooperation between national authorities and civil society organisations.

The maximum duration of the project should not exceed **24 months**.

## EXPECTED RESULTS

### **1. Capacity building and awareness raising on the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights**

- Increased awareness and better use of the Charter by CSOs, NHRIs, equality bodies, Ombuds Institutions, other rights defenders, and Member State authorities;
- Improved knowledge of available redress mechanisms under national and EU law, and how to make the best use of them for the benefit of rights holders;
- Improved cooperation between CSOs, NHRIs, Equality bodies, Ombuds Institutions, other rights defenders and Member State authorities on Charter-related issues;
- Increased ability of CSOs, NHRIs, equality bodies and Ombuds Institutions and other rights defenders to develop a litigation strategy and communicate and advocate around it and to bring strategic litigation cases before national courts and the European Court of Justice;
- Increased prevention, mitigation, detection of and redress for breaches of fundamental rights, including algorithmic discrimination;
- Improved accountability of the development and use of automated systems, including specific algorithms and their output;
- Increased capacities to mitigate or otherwise address discriminatory biases in automated systems;
- Improved knowledge of fundamental rights, including gender equality and non-discrimination law, the legal requirements associated with the development and use of automated systems, and of practical approaches to ensure compliance.

### **2. Promoting rights and values by empowering the civic space**

- Increased awareness about the state of play on civic space in the EU Member States based on sound evidences and comparable indicators;
- Strengthened relations and creation of networks among the actors protecting the civic space at local, national and European level, and between them and the national and European authorities;
- Increased dialogue on the situation of the civic space, with an increment of public attention to it, and developed positive narratives towards CSOs and rights defenders protecting and promoting fundamental rights, rule of law and democracy.
- More protected CSOs, their members and rights defenders working in a safe environment;
- Increased reporting of attacks faced by the targeted actors and more prompt and

targeted response.

### **3. Strategic litigation**

- Increased awareness and knowledge by legal professionals and practitioners in CSOs, NHRIs, Equality bodies, Ombuds-institutions and other rights defenders about EU law, including the Charter and existing remedies and redress mechanisms to enforce them at national and European level;
- Increased awareness and knowledge by the general public of their rights under EU law, including the Charter, existing remedies and redress mechanisms to enforce them at national and European level as well as awareness and knowledge of available support by legal professionals and practitioners;
- Strengthened abilities of legal professionals and practitioners to cooperate and engage in litigation practices to assist individuals in making effective use of available remedies to enforce their rights under EU law, including the Charter, before national and European courts;
- Increased awareness on the use of manifestly unfounded or abusive court proceedings against journalists and human rights defenders who engage in public participation (Strategic lawsuits against public participation);
- Improved knowledge of safeguards and strategic protection against manifestly unfounded or abusive court proceedings for journalists and human rights defenders who engage in public participation.

### **4. Protecting EU values and rights by combating hate speech and hate crime**

- More effective outreach to individuals and groups at risk of hate victimisation, thereby raising awareness of their rights, including through schools and educational activities;
- Increased knowledge of EU and national hate crime and hate speech legislation as well as national actions to enhance the capacity of law enforcement to detect bias indicators and to effectively investigate and prosecute offenses, including through multi-stakeholder cooperation;
- More effective mechanisms to report hate speech and hate crimes and to empower victims and witnesses to come forward; enhanced assistance to victims to access specialist support, providing both victims and witnesses with emotional support, practical help and information;
- Enhanced hate crime recording and data collection methodologies;
- Increased effectiveness of mechanisms by IT companies to review hate speech notices and increased awareness among the general population about hate speech and its negative effects on democracy and pluralism;
- Enhanced resilience of civil society organisations to carry out their work against hateful groups and greater capacity to respond to attacks.

### **5. Supporting an enabling environment for the protection of whistleblowers**

- Increased awareness and understanding by the public, including by potential whistleblowers, of the procedures and rights provided under the Directive on whistleblower protection and better use of whistleblowing;
- Greater capacity to correctly apply the Directive's rules for the private

organisations and public entities concerned and for civil society organisations involved in the Directive's implementation;

- Improved effectiveness and coherence of the Directive's application;
- Improved cooperation between national authorities and CSOs and between national authorities in applying the Directive.

#### **IMPLEMENTATION**

Direct management by EACEA (co-delegation type II).



### 3.3. Call for proposals to promote equality and to fight against racism, xenophobia and discrimination

#### LEGAL BASIS

Article 4 of Regulation (EU) 2021/692

#### BUDGET LINE

Budget line 07 06 01: Promote equality and rights

#### OBJECTIVES

*Promoting equality and preventing and combating inequalities and discrimination on grounds of sex, racial or ethnic origin, religion or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation and respecting the principle of non-discrimination on the grounds provided for in Article 21 of the Charter.*

Supporting, advancing and implementing comprehensive policies to combat racism, xenophobia, antigypsyism, antisemitism, and all forms of discrimination and intolerance, including LGBTIQ-phobia

Policy initiatives supported: EU anti-racism action plan, EU LGBTIQ Equality Strategy, EU Strategy on combating antisemitism and fostering Jewish life, EU Roma strategic framework on equality, inclusion and participation, EU Strategy on victims' rights.

#### TYPE OF APPLICANTS TARGETED

Member States' public authorities, at all levels, equality bodies and civil society organisations.

#### POLICY PRIORITIES

##### **2023**

The objective is to support a comprehensive and intersectional approach, funding specific actions to prevent and fight against discrimination and combat intolerance, racism and xenophobia, in particular on grounds of racial or ethnic origin, colour, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity, including when this manifests itself in the form of antigypsyism, anti-black racism, antisemitism, anti-Muslim hatred, and LGBTIQ phobia<sup>41</sup>. Projects can be national or transnational. Transnational projects are particularly encouraged.

With this aim, the following priorities will be financed:

- 1. Fighting against discrimination and combating racism, xenophobia and other forms of intolerance, including antigypsyism, anti-black racism, antisemitism and anti-Muslim hatred**

This priority supports holistic responses to intolerance and discrimination, in particular on grounds of racial or ethnic origin, colour and religion, as well as racism and xenophobia,

<sup>41</sup> Taking into account also other relevant instruments such as the European Convention on Human Rights and the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination.

including their manifestations on the ground and from an intersectional perspective. The priority will support projects contributing to the EU **Anti-racism action plan**, which aims to combat structural forms of racism faced in particular by people of colour and people of African descent, Muslims or people perceived as such and Roma. This includes activities to prevent and fight xenophobia and anti-migrant intolerance, including by building trust between individuals, communities and national authorities, and activities to increase reporting. Projects to respond to the vulnerabilities of individuals and specific groups affected by intolerance, racism, xenophobia and discrimination, are particularly encouraged. Finally, the priority will support initiatives to **empower and support** the role of civil society organisations and activists working in these areas and improve reporting, rights-awareness, protection, advocacy and interest representation of victims, thus contributing to the effective implementation of the Racial Equality Directive (Council Directive 2000/43/EC).

The priority will also support projects that help to implement the EU **Roma strategic framework** on equality, inclusion and participation, namely by addressing antigypsyism and the discrimination of Roma in (access to) education, employment, health and housing. This includes projects fostering rights awareness and the reporting of discrimination, promoting societal support for Roma inclusion and promoting the political, social and cultural participation of Roma people. The priority will also cover the diversity of Roma, with a specific focus on Roma women, youth, children and EU mobile Roma.

The priority will support projects that help to implement the **EU Strategy on combating antisemitism and fostering Jewish life**. Antisemitism is incompatible with Europe's core values. It represents a threat not only to Jewish people and communities, but to an open and diverse society, to democracy and the European way of life. It will specifically help civil society organisations to prevent and combat all forms of antisemitism as described in the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance non-legally binding working definition of antisemitism. Actions supported include raising awareness of the phenomenon and its impact, supporting victims of antisemitism, improving the collection of antisemitic incidents data, encouraging reporting of such incidents, combating antisemitism in employment, education and sports, raising public awareness about the diversity of Jewish life and culture, and strengthening resilience of Jewish communities against discrimination and intolerance.

Moreover, the call will support the fight against **anti-Muslim racism and discrimination**, and therefore support actions to raise the awareness of public authorities, foster reporting by victims and address negative stereotypes and intolerance against Muslims.

## **2. Promoting diversity management and inclusion at the workplace, both in the public and private sector**

This priority aims to increase the number of Diversity Charters in EU Member States, the number of signatories of these Charters and the specific actions that promote diversity and inclusion at the workplace, with regard in particular to the six grounds for discrimination in Article 19 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union or their intersection.

## **3. Fighting discrimination against LGBTIQ people and promoting LGBTIQ equality through the implementation of the LGBTIQ Equality Strategy**

This priority supports key policy objectives set out in the LGBTIQ Equality Strategy 2020-2025. It includes initiatives to address intersectional discrimination and inequality experienced on grounds of sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression and sex characteristics in employment, education and health. The focus is on people of the

LGBTIQ community in the most vulnerable situations, such as transgender and intersex people, and includes the training of relevant professionals. Priority will be given to actions that seek to tackle gender and sexuality stereotypes in and through education, provide support to rainbow families and raise awareness of the challenges they face, and prevent and combat LGBTIQ-phobia.

**4. Call for public authorities to improve their responses to (intersectional) discrimination, racism, antisemitism, anti-Muslim hatred and xenophobia, LGBTIQ-phobia and all other forms of intolerance**

This priority is restricted to public authorities and bodies at national, regional and local level as lead applicant. It should help them improve the implementation of the Racial Equality Directive and of the Framework Decision on combating certain forms and expressions of racism and xenophobia, Commission Recommendation C(2018) 3850 on standards for equality bodies as well as develop and implement national action plans to combat racism, xenophobia, LGBTIQ-phobia and all other forms of intolerance, including strategies against antisemitism. In particular, in the Council Conclusions on Combating Racism and Antisemitism of 4 March 2022, Member States have committed to developing national action plans against racism and strategies against antisemitism by the end of 2022.

Activities could include: issuing action plans or strategies; training law enforcement officials and/or authorities at national, regional or local level; improving recording and equality data collection practices in Member States, in particular building on the work of the Subgroup on equality data and the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights work on equality data; improving support for victims of (intersectional) discrimination, in particular on the basis of racial or ethnic origin, religion or colour, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression or sex characteristics, at national, regional or local level; addressing underreporting; building trust between communities and public authorities.

**DESCRIPTION OF ACTIVITIES**

Activities will include:

- Coalition and capacity building, training of professionals and victims of (intersectional) discrimination;
- Mutual learning, exchange of good practices, cooperation, including identifying best practices which may be transferable to other participating countries;
- Dissemination and awareness-raising, including social media or press campaigns;
- Promotion of digital skills and critical thinking;
- Data recording, data collection, surveys, monitoring and reporting of incidents of discrimination;
- Gender and age sensitive victim empowerment and support;
- Designing and implementing strategies or plans of action;
- Capacity building and training activities for national, regional and local authorities.

**EXPECTED RESULTS**

- 1. Fighting against discrimination and combating racism, xenophobia and other**

**forms of intolerance, including antigypsyism, anti-black racism, antisemitism and anti-Muslim hatred:**

- Increased knowledge of EU and national non-discrimination legislation as well as administrative practices in the non-discrimination field, including practices and policies covering multiple discrimination;
- Increased rights-awareness, protection and interest representation of victims of discrimination based on racial or ethnic origin, religion or colour (possibly intersecting with other grounds for discrimination);
- More effective implementation and enforcement of the legislation on non-discrimination, as well as improved independent monitoring and reporting;
- Increased knowledge and awareness of biases and stereotypes, in particular among school, staff and journalists;
- Empowered and increased protection for groups, communities and individuals affected by manifestations of intolerance and racism, with a particular focus on antigypsyism, anti-black hatred, antisemitism and anti-Muslim hatred;
- Improved knowledge and awareness of and capacity to react to all forms of antisemitism experienced by Jewish people among the population in general and key groups in particular such as decision-makers, law enforcement and judiciary, and young people.

**2. Promoting diversity management and inclusion:**

- Increased number of Diversity Charters and of companies affiliated to a charter;
- Increased diversity in business, supported by stronger links between the academic/research community and the business world;
- More inclusive workplaces and societies;
- Increased Europe-wide tools measuring diversity and inclusion at the workplace.

**3. Fighting discrimination against LGBTIQ people and promoting LGBTIQ equality through the implementation of the LGBTIQ equality strategy:**

- Improved knowledge and awareness of the intersectional discrimination and inequality experienced by LGBTIQ people, in particular by transgender and intersex people, in employment, education and health, as well as solutions on how to tackle this;
- Increased awareness and improvement of skills of relevant professionals, including health, media and business professionals and school staff, to counter stereotyping, stigmatisation, pathologisation, discrimination, harassment and bullying affecting LGBTIQ people;
- Increased support for LGBTIQ people and their families, including through information campaigns, support groups, counselling and other means, and improved knowledge and awareness of the challenges they face;
- Better guidance for national authorities and schools on how to prevent and combat school violence and bullying against LGBTIQ students, include positive representations of LGBTIQ diversity in education, tackle gender and sexuality stereotypes in education and accommodate the needs of transgender, intersex and



non-binary children in educational settings.

**4. Call for public authorities to improve their responses to (intersectional) discrimination, racism, antisemitism and xenophobia, LGBTIQ-phobia and all other forms of intolerance**

- Improved skills of public authorities to effectively investigate, prosecute and adequately sentence incidents of discrimination;
- Improved support to victims, better public awareness of rights and increased number of reported incidents;
- Improved cooperation and exchange of information among public authorities (in particular municipal and regional administrations), as well as between public authorities and other actors such as civil society organisations and community representatives, to improve responses to discrimination, racism, xenophobia and other forms of intolerance;
- Improved knowledge and awareness among public and law enforcement authorities of the impact of discrimination, racism, xenophobia and other forms of intolerance and current trends, and better understanding of the various forms of intolerance and of the legal framework;
- Improved system of recording discrimination and collecting data, an improved methodological approach and better inter-institutional cooperation on data collection;
- Effective development and implementation of comprehensive frameworks, strategies or plans of action to prevent and combat, racism, antisemitism, xenophobia, LGBTIQ phobia and other forms of intolerance.

**IMPLEMENTATION**

Direct management by DG JUST

### 3.4. Call for proposals to National Roma Contact Points for Roma equality, inclusion and participation

#### LEGAL BASIS

Article 4 of Regulation (EU) 2021/692

#### BUDGET LINE

Budget line 07 06 01: Promote equality and rights

#### OBJECTIVE

*Promoting equality and preventing and combating inequalities and discrimination on grounds of sex, racial or ethnic origin, religion or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation and respecting the principle of non-discrimination on the grounds provided for in Article 21 of the Charter.*

Policy initiative supported: EU Roma strategic framework on equality, inclusion and participation.

#### TYPE OF APPLICANTS TARGETED

National Roma Contact Points.

#### POLICY PRIORITIES

##### **2024**

The aim is to support reinforcing of national consultation processes in the Member States through National Roma Platforms convened and managed by National Roma Contact Points (NRCPs).

National Roma Platforms aim to promote and facilitate dialogue, mutual learning, cooperation and policy review among all national stakeholders. They also boost the representation of Roma in platform structures, particularly women and youth, including by nominating a Roma representative to ensure a link between the National and European Roma Platforms.

#### DESCRIPTION OF ACTIVITIES

Activities will include:

- Actions to set up and reinforce national Roma platforms, involving all relevant stakeholders, with a focus on implementing and monitoring National Strategies for Roma equality, inclusion and participation;
- Meetings, working groups, seminars, events at national, regional or local levels, with discussion on topics such as education, employment, health, housing and representation;
- Awareness-raising, dedicated discussion of the results of civil monitoring of the implementation of National Strategies for Roma equality, inclusion and participation;
- Transnational exchange between different National Roma Platforms to promote policy

learning and transfer of good practices.

#### **EXPECTED RESULTS**

- Increased number of national Roma platforms seen as an integral component of coordination and monitoring activities carried out by the national Roma contact points to foster stakeholder dialogue, cooperation and coordination;
- Increased capacity of national experts and stakeholders to address issues related to Roma equality, inclusion and participation, including legislative and administrative practises;
- Strengthened cooperation and exchange of information between competent national authorities in relation to Roma equality, inclusion and participation;
- Increased sustainability of Roma participation in policy processes.

#### **IMPLEMENTATION**

Direct management by DG JUST

### 3.5. Call for proposals to promote gender equality

#### LEGAL BASIS

Article 4 of Regulation (EU) 2021/692

#### BUDGET LINE

Budget line 07 06 01: Promote equality and rights

#### OBJECTIVE

*Supporting, advancing and implementing comprehensive policies to promote women's full enjoyment of rights, gender equality, including work-life balance, women's empowerment and gender mainstreaming.*

Policy initiative supported:

- Gender Equality Strategy 2020-2025;
- European Care Strategy<sup>42</sup>;
- Directive (EU) 2019/1158 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 20 June 2019 on work-life balance for parents and carers;
- Council Directive 2004/113/EC of 13 December 2004 implementing the principle of equal treatment between men and women in the access to and supply of goods and services;
- Digital Education Action Plan (2021-27), Pay Transparency Directive;
- Proposal for a directive on pay transparency to strengthen the principle of equal pay COM(2021) 93 final;
- Directive 2006/54/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 5 July 2006 on the implementation of the principle of equal opportunities and equal treatment of men and women in matters of employment and occupation (recast);
- Commission Recommendation of 7 March 2014 on strengthening the principle of equal pay between men and women through transparency.

#### TYPE OF APPLICANTS TARGETED

Member State governments, local and regional authorities and their associations, social partners (workers or business representatives), labour inspectorates, equality bodies, civil society organisations, in particular women's rights organisations.

#### POLICY PRIORITIES

##### **2024**

- 1. Tackling the root causes of the gender care gap by promoting a gender-transformative approach and challenging gender stereotypes**

<sup>42</sup> A European Care Strategy for caregivers and care receivers - Employment, Social Affairs & Inclusion - European Commission (europa.eu).

The Gender Equality Strategy identifies tackling the gender care gap as one of the key actions to enhance equal economic participation of women and men. So far, women still shoulder the biggest share of care responsibilities.

The Work-Life Balance Directive aims at encouraging a better sharing of care responsibilities between women and men. It foresees rights to family leaves, including paternity leave, non-transferable parental leave and carers' leave as well as the right to request flexible working time arrangements. Member States have to implement the Directive by August 2022.

The European Care Strategy will highlight the importance of affordable, accessible and high quality care services, with a view to enhancing women's labour market participation and gender equality and encouraging sustainable working conditions of those in care jobs, so far predominantly women. The accompanying proposal for a Council recommendations on the revision of the Barcelona targets on early childhood education and care aims at ensuring upward convergence across Member States in this area.

The aim of this priority is to support:

- Promotion of family-friendly practices in companies encouraging the take up of the new rights under the Work-life Balance Directive by both women and men (including family leaves, new ways of work organisation, telework and hybrid working, flexibility of hours, shorter working week, job sharing ...);
- Prevention and protection against any form of unfavourable treatment and discrimination of women during and after pregnancy as well as of women and men who took family leave (maternity/paternity/parental/carer leave) and flexible work arrangements;
- Raising awareness of the value of care work by reflecting on the appreciation of skills needed for care work, including soft skills, the intensity of the work and other aspects of working conditions in care jobs;
- Challenging gender stereotypes that perpetuate the traditional division of labour with the objectives to:
  - Encourage equal sharing of informal care work (care of their children, housework and care of dependents...) to ensure better reconciliation of private/work life;
  - Promote the role of men in care and family responsibilities and encourage men to take parental and paternity leave;
  - Promote the value of paid care work;
  - Encourage the involvement of men in care work (formal and informal), both in child care and long-term care.

Projects can be national or transnational. Transnational projects are particularly encouraged.

## **2. Supporting the implementation of the provisions of the (proposal for a) Pay Transparency Directive**

The aim of this priority is to support Member States in developing national guidance and/or tools for gender-sensitive job evaluation and classification systems and in raising awareness of this guidance and/or tools among employers and workers representatives in

their respective countries.

In line with the Gender Equality Strategy<sup>43</sup> and to address the root causes of the gender pay gap, the Commission proposed, in March 2021, binding pay transparency measures to strengthen the principle of equal pay between men and women for equal work or work of equal value. This proposal is designed to strengthen the rights of employees to get more information about pay levels making it easier to detect gaps and discrimination.

This complements the legal framework on equal pay already in place comprising of the 2006 Directive ([Directive 2006/54/EC](#)) and the 2014 [Commission Recommendation on pay transparency](#). Among others, Member States obligations involve the establishment of tools or methodologies to assess and compare the value of work. These may include gender-neutral job evaluation and classification systems.<sup>44</sup>

Job evaluation systems are a tool for assessing the value of jobs against factors such as the level of skill, effort, responsibility, or working conditions. They may, if not used in a gender-neutral manner, contribute to the accrued discrimination by evaluating male and female dominated jobs differently and in a biased way.

## DESCRIPTION OF ACTIVITIES

### **1. Tackling the root causes of the gender care gap through a gender-transformative approach and challenging gender stereotypes:**

- Design of new approaches to encourage a dual earner dual carer model and to tackle gender stereotypes;
- Capacity building and training, including of human resource managers, representatives of authorities, social partners and other concerned stakeholders including from civil society organisations;
- Mutual learning, exchange of good practices, cooperation between different actors;
- Dissemination of information and awareness raising, including via social media or press campaigns.

### **2. Supporting the implementation of the provisions of the (proposal for a) Pay Transparency Directive**

- Development of guidance, tools, and checklists for the implementation of gender-neutral job evaluation and classification systems for the use of public and private employers and more generally social partners in the context of collective bargaining;
- Development and conduct of training programmes to assist employers and social partners in implementing gender-neutral job evaluation and classification systems;
- Promotion of gender-neutral job evaluation and classification systems;
- Monitoring via the assessment of job evaluation systems and pay classification schemes in place and recommendation for amendment when necessary to comply with gender-neutral criteria.

## EXPECTED RESULTS

<sup>43</sup> A Union of Equality: Gender Equality Strategy 2020-2025.

<sup>44</sup> Commission Recommendation of 7 March 2014 on strengthening the principle of equal pay between men and women through transparency and Directive 2006/54/EC, Article 4.

### **1. Tackling the root causes of the gender care gap through a gender-transformative approach and challenging gender stereotypes**

- Improved knowledge of the gender care gap and of ways to tackle gender stereotypes with regard to care and work;
- Improved knowledge and awareness of potential hindrances to gender equality, including obstacles to equal sharing of care and domestic work, and to obstacles to take up of family leaves and family friendly working time arrangements;
- Increased awareness of policy measures and good practice examples that are leading to more gender equality in the workplace as well as more work-life balance for both working women and men throughout the life course, as well a good practice examples by companies and authorities;
- Increased knowledge about working conditions in care work and about value of care work;
- Improved awareness of policy measures and good practice examples that lead to more sustainable working conditions in care work and that address gender segregation in the care sector;
- Ultimately, leading to better work-life balance for women and men over the life course, reducing the gender care gap and provide more gender equality.

### **2. Supporting the implementation of the provisions of the (proposal for a) Pay Transparency Directive**

- Establishment of transparent pay systems and detection of indirect pay discrimination related to the undervaluation of jobs typically done by women and correction;
- Increased awareness of gender-neutral job evaluation and classification systems' purpose and benefit;
- Increased knowledge and expertise to negotiate on gender-neutral job classification systems;
- Challenge of traditional, outdated, non-transparent criteria, which are not gender neutral and thus reinforce occupational segregation and inequality in pay.

## **IMPLEMENTATION**

Direct management by DG JUST

### 3.6. Call for proposals to national data protection authorities on reaching out to stakeholders in data protection legislation

#### LEGAL BASIS

Article 4 of Regulation (EU) 2021/692

#### BUDGET LINE

Budget line 07 06 01: Promote equality and rights

#### OBJECTIVE

*Protecting and promoting the right to the protection of personal data.*

#### TYPE OF APPLICANTS TARGETED

National data protection authorities in the Member States.

#### POLICY PRIORITIES

##### **2024**

The report<sup>45</sup> on the first two years of application of Regulation (EU) 2016/679 (General Data Protection Regulation - GDPR) issued on 24 June 2020 highlights that the GDPR is an important component of an area of justice and fundamental rights based on mutual trust and of the human-centric approach to technology in the twin green and digital transitions.

Since the GDPR entered into application on 25 May 2018, the Commission has been working with European Economic Area data protection authorities and stakeholders to assess the evolving context and needs of the various actors involved.

Building on experience gained from the calls for proposals launched in 2017, 2019, 2020 and 2021, and in view of implementing the conclusions of the above-mentioned report on the GDPR, actions under this priority should aim to further support activities carried out by national data protection authorities in Member States to facilitate the implementation of GDPR obligations by small and medium-sized enterprises, and to raise awareness about the GDPR among the general public.

#### DESCRIPTION OF ACTIVITIES

Helping national data protection authorities in Member States reach out to businesses and the general public by:

- Supporting activities carried out by national data protection authorities to facilitate the implementation of GDPR obligations by small and medium-sized enterprises; these activities should in particular include providing practical guidance, templates, or digital tools aimed at small and medium-sized enterprises that can be replicated in other Member States; or

<sup>45</sup> Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament and the Council - Data protection as a pillar of citizens' empowerment and the EU's approach to the digital transition - two years of application of the General Data Protection Regulation, COM/2020/264 final



- Supporting activities carried out by data protection authorities to make the general public better aware of their data protection rights and possible remedies under the GDPR.

#### **EXPECTED RESULTS**

- Better implementation of GDPR obligations by small and medium-sized enterprises;
- Increased awareness of data protection among the general public;
- Enhanced exchange and uptake of good practices among national data protection authorities.

#### **IMPLEMENTATION**

Direct management by DG JUST

### 3.7. Call for proposals on European remembrance

#### LEGAL BASIS

Article 5 of Regulation (EU) 2021/692

#### BUDGET LINE

Budget line 07 06 02: Promote citizens' engagement and participation in the democratic life of the Union

#### OBJECTIVE

*Supporting projects aimed at commemorating defining events in modern European history, including the causes and consequences of authoritarian and totalitarian regimes, and at raising awareness among European citizens, of their common history, culture, cultural heritage and values, thereby enhancing their understanding of the Union, its origins, purpose, diversity and achievements and of the importance of mutual understanding and tolerance.*

Policy initiatives supported: EU Strategy on combating antisemitism and fostering Jewish life 2021-2030, EU anti-racism action plan for 2020-2025, EU Roma strategic framework on equality, inclusion and participation.

#### TYPE OF APPLICANTS TARGETED

Public authorities and bodies, civil society organisations, memorial and heritage sites, museums and archives, survivors' associations, and cultural, youth, educational and research organisations.

#### POLICY PRIORITIES

##### **2023 and 2024**

European Remembrance is fundamentally linked to the realisation and protection of EU values and rights today. The European experience of the 20th century, including totalitarian and authoritarian regimes and their crimes, as well as the democratic transition based on the rule of law, migration, de-colonisation and European integration all contribute to encouraging Europeans to be vigilant and to defend fundamental rights, democracy and the rule of law particularly the rights of minorities.

Across the different priorities, an overarching aim is to highlight the role, representation and perspective of women in these important historical events and developments to **allow a more gender-balanced understanding of history**. Projects can be national or transnational. Transnational projects are particularly encouraged.

##### **1. Democratic transition, (re-)building and strengthening society based on the rule of law, democracy and fundamental rights**

Europe's 20th century experience shows the fragility of democracy and the continuous need for people to engage and defend democratic institutions and values. Historical experience such as in the 1920s and 1930s, when newly established democracies declined due to internal or external attacks, are stark reminders of this vulnerability. Today's achievements come again under pressure with rising populism, extremism and societal

divisions. Equally, the democratic transition from authoritarian or totalitarian rule needed the (re-)building of democratic institutions based on the rule of law, which protect fundamental rights for all members of society, such as the period after WWII and post-1989. The EU is a community of values and all its Member States are based on these values. While democratic transition and consolidation prepared the ground for democratic society, providing historical justice after the end of totalitarian and authoritarian regimes for victims and affected communities **can contribute to a healing of society**.

Projects under this priority should focus on the transition from authoritarian and totalitarian rule to democracy in different European countries, their similarities and differences and the lessons retained for the future about how to defend and sustain EU values such as democracy, rule of law and fundamental rights. At the same time, projects can also explore the means of historical justice, be it through trials, restitution or amnesty.

## **2. Strengthening the remembrance of the Holocaust, genocide, war crimes and crimes against humanity to reinforce democracy in the EU**

Europe's 20th century was marked by horrific crimes such as the Holocaust and crimes committed by authoritarian and totalitarian regimes. The legacy of these crimes requires continuous sharing and remembering as well as research to curb distortion. Education targeting all generations on the importance of safeguarding democracy and fundamental rights should draw on the lessons from these crimes. The testimonies of the witnesses of these crimes are particularly valuable in educating young people, especially since there are fewer and fewer of these witnesses. This also implies countering distortion, denial and trivialisation of the historical facts. In upholding EU values, the memory of these crimes, teaching about fundamental rights and the active engagement of people to learn from them are necessary, particularly for actors in the frontline of defending rights such as fundamental right-defenders, civil servants, members of the judiciary, law enforcement officials and policymakers.

Moreover, suppressing fundamental rights such as freedom of speech, assembly, thought, conscience and religion is an integral characteristic of totalitarian and authoritarian regimes. Organised opposition and/or resistance from within society played a key role in fighting foreign occupation and/or overthrowing totalitarian and authoritarian regimes. It remains crucial to remember and educate actors and groups about these events, as examples to defend fundamental rights for today and the future.

Project under this priority should focus on specific crimes such as the Holocaust, totalitarian crimes or other 20th century crimes like genocides, war crimes and crimes against humanity. Projects under this priority are encouraged to find new ways of remembering and educating about these crimes to protect society against resurging threats of hatred, discrimination, racism, antisemitism, antigypsyism and LGBTIQ-phobia. Projects can focus on countering Holocaust distortion, trivialization and denial as well as digitalising historical material and testimonies of witnesses for education and training purposes. These projects are encouraged to work as well with young people, together with other generations, in order to transmit the memory of events. Additionally, projects under this priority can also analyse and highlight resistance and/or organised opposition to totalitarian rule.

## **3. Migration, de-colonisation and multicultural European societies**

Migration, de-colonisation, slavery and imperialism are embedded in the European history and all have profound consequences for society today.

Migration has a long and varied history in Europe, but is often treated solely as a present-

day phenomenon. However, population movements in Europe, from economic migration to expulsion and deportation, from fleeing violence and persecution to migration after EU accession have marked recent European history. Migration is multi-faceted and the experiences of migration into, out of or within Europe are lessons for future generations.

Forced migration, internal displacement and expulsion is an experience shared by many Europeans during the period of war, as visible again due to the Russian aggression against Ukraine.

Colonialism, slavery and imperialism have left a mark on global history. Prejudices and stereotypes can be addressed by acknowledging the historical roots of racism. De-colonisation, the dismantlement of colonial empires particularly in the 20th century and the emerging post-colonial European societies are shaped by this experience until today. While for many, colonialism is considered a chapter in history, the consequences of imperialistic rule inside and outside Europe are felt still today and are intertwined with structural racism and discrimination. However, these debates have been absent for far too long from and need a firmly embedding in a European narrative. Ensuring remembrance is an important part of encouraging inclusion and understanding.

Projects under this priority should explore the legacy of colonialism, inside and outside Europe, and its impact on contemporary multicultural European societies. Topics such as discrimination and racism are still linked with these experiences and play a major role in European memory throughout most of EU's societies.

Projects under this priority can also deal with common European experiences of migration that can be linked to a multitude of events such as wars, transition moments, colonisation and de-colonisation, economic impacts, persecution or others.

#### **4. European integration and its defining achievements**

European integration has substantially transformed the life of Europeans. While it has provided new opportunities for cross border travel, study and work, it has also affected the identities of people who more and more feel European as part of their identity. European integration has progressively advanced and protected the rights of individuals in all EU countries, rights that are often taken for granted today. However, apart from being an institutional process, European integration has been built and advanced by different people and movements at different moments. From the Ventotene manifesto to the Congress of Europe, the foundation for European integration has a long history.

The projects under this priority should explore and promote to all generations the defining moments and reference points of European integration, its history, and how these changes have in practice affected the daily lives of Europeans. Projects can focus on specific rights granted in the European Union such as freedom of movement, on specific achievements such as a common currency, or on defining moments such as accession of countries. Testimonies of witnesses could be a particular valuable resource for making the experience tangible, and provide an intergenerational perspective.

#### **DESCRIPTION OF ACTIVITIES**

This call supports activities that concern defining moments and developments in recent European history, including their link to the European project. The aim of these activities is to reflect on European diversity and EU values to enhance tolerance and respect, mutual understanding, intercultural dialogue and reconciliation.

Projects are expected to:

- Link different types of organisations to create synergies (between non-profit, local, regional and national administration, academia and memorial and learning site with educational institutions),
- Develop different types of activities (training activities, publications, online tools, (provenance) research, non-formal education, public debates, exhibitions, awareness-rising, collection and digitisation of testimonies, innovative and creative actions, etc.),
- Provide opportunities for inter-generational exchanges between witnesses and future generations;
- Involve people from different target groups, including, where possible, people facing racism, antisemitism, antigypsyism or other forms of discrimination and intolerance.

Projects should have a European dimension and preferably be implemented on a transnational level (involving the creation and operation of transnational partnerships and networks).

The maximum duration of the project should not exceed **24 months**.

### EXPECTED RESULTS

- Engagement of Europeans from different backgrounds – including young people and people who are multipliers (state administrators, law enforcement officials, members of the judiciary, policymakers, right-defenders,...etc) in advocating, strengthening and supporting democratic institutions and structures based on the rule of law;
- Digitisation of historical material and testimonies of eyewitnesses for education and training purposes;
- Inclusion of a European dimension in relevant national and international debates on important historical events and moments of recent European history;
- Identification, safeguarding and availability in particular online, of archival material, testimonies and authentic sites for education purposes, commemoration and research;
- Better awareness of rights and achievements of European integration. Anchoring a sense of belonging among Europeans towards the European project;
- Engagement of Europeans in combating racism, antisemitism and all types of intolerance;
- Building of transnational coalitions on European memory;
- Combating of historical distortion, revisionism and negationism.

### IMPLEMENTATION

Direct management by EACEA (co-delegation type II).

### 3.8. Call for proposals to foster Citizens' engagement and participation

#### LEGAL BASIS

Article 5 of Regulation (EU) 2021/692

#### BUDGET LINE

Budget line 07 06 02: Promote citizens engagement and participation in the democratic life of the Union

#### OBJECTIVE

*Promoting citizens' and representative associations' participation in and contribution to the democratic and civic life of the Union by making known and publicly exchanging their views in all areas on Union action.*

Among the policy initiatives supported: European democracy action plan, EU Citizenship report 2020, Strategy to strengthen the application of the Charter of Fundamental Rights in the EU, Commission Recommendation on protecting journalists and human rights defenders who engage in public participation from manifestly unfounded or abusive court proceedings ("Strategic lawsuits against public participation"), Communication of 25 November 2021 on protecting election integrity and promoting democratic participation.

#### TYPE OF APPLICANTS TARGETED

Private non-profit organisations, including civil society organisations, educational, cultural or research institutions and universities.

#### POLICY PRIORITIES

##### **2023**

This call aims to support projects promoted by transnational partnerships and networks directly involving citizens. These projects will gather a diverse range of people from different backgrounds in activities directly linked to EU policies, giving them an opportunity to actively participate in the EU policymaking process and thus contribute to the democratic and civic life of the Union. The projects will encourage citizens', including young persons, understanding of the policymaking process, showing in practice how to engage in the democratic life of the EU and enabling them to make known and publicly exchange their views in all areas of Union action.

The call provides an opportunity to broadly cover a variety of policy areas and contribute to the promotion of EU values, the rule of law, fundamental rights and democracy.

Projects should support democratic participation, including by stimulating and organising reflection, debates or other activities. They should also propose practical solutions that can be implemented through cooperation or coordination at European level, support the sharing of good practices, and ensure a practical link with the policymaking process.

While maintaining a bottom-up approach, there will be a specific focus on the priorities outlined below:

##### **1. Promoting democratic participation through debating the future of Europe**

Under this priority, citizens will be given an opportunity to express what kind of Europe they want and to outline their long term vision for the future of European integration. The ultimate aim of the projects will be to **promote a greater sense of belonging to the European Union and of Union values**. The outcome of the Conference on future of Europe<sup>46</sup> and the collection of people's ideas discussed and shared across Europe could be a starting point for activities under this priority.

**What:** Citizens are invited to take part in this debate through projects or through their active engagement to reflect on a new narrative for Europe, citizen-oriented, forward-looking and constructive, that would be more engaging for the younger generation in particular.

**How:** The aim of this priority is to boost citizens' empowerment to get involved in decision-making from local to EU levels by identifying ways to further enhance the European dimension and the democratic legitimacy of the EU decision-making process. Projects should show to participating citizens how to make their voices heard by the relevant political authorities and decision makers, thus helping them make an impact in practice. This could be achieved through exchanges of citizens' views using existing democratic participation tools (social platforms, forums, public conferences). But it could also be achieved through the exchange of practices between Member States as well as mutual learning about the tools and strategies to be deployed to bring about the change (i.e. how to campaign on the issue, how to maximise the impact of the decisions to be taken).

Projects may also address the question of how to reach voters (including first time/young voters) and support their participation in elections. This includes supporting accessibility for people with disabilities and underrepresented groups, such as women or voters living in remote areas, and building a momentum for their active democratic participation in the EU at all levels. The projects could also support citizen engagement in supporting free and fair elections and a fair democratic debate, raise awareness about and support the European democracy action plan and the EU Citizenship Reports, and raise awareness of the democracy package of November 2021, which includes the transparency of political advertising and the rights of EU mobile citizens.

Projects developing innovative democratic approaches and tools (notably digital 'e-democracy' tools) to help citizens make their voices heard and publicly exchange views on all areas of EU action are also encouraged.

## **2. Engaging citizens and communities in discussions and action related to our climate and environment**

This priority should boost citizens' and communities' engagement in discussions and action related to our climate and environment. Switching to a 'green' way of living can only work if citizens are fully involved in designing the new policies. People are concerned about jobs, heating their homes and making ends meet. Therefore, they have to be able to engage in the policymaking process if the Green Deal is to succeed and deliver lasting change.

Civil society and associations should promote citizens' dialogues that bring together citizens in all their diversity to discuss climate and green issues and propose solutions to decision makers.

## **3. Engaging citizens and communities in discussions and action related to solidarity**

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<sup>46</sup> <https://futureu.europa.eu/?locale=en>

The European Union is built on solidarity: solidarity between people, solidarity across borders between its Member States, and solidarity through support actions in and beyond the Union. Solidarity is a shared value which creates cohesion and responds to societal challenges such as recent mass influxes of refugees and other migrants. It opens a door to more citizens' engagement in society and ultimately to their active involvement in the democratic life of the Union, including those who may not have actively taken part before.

Under this priority, projects will give citizens the opportunity to discuss the topic of solidarity in response to societal challenges (i.e. the refugee crisis, the fight against poverty and social exclusion) and explore existing solidarity mechanisms in the EU. People in need of solidarity and suffering from vulnerable situations shall be part of the discussion. In view to boost citizens participation in the solidarity activities, projects will reflect on policy areas where such common mechanisms could be useful and developed while considering other possible channels of European solidarity like volunteering, donations, foundations, civil society organisations, charities, crowdfunding, etc. Projects are expected to promote solidarity work carried out by civil society sector directly involving citizens in the reflection and activities addressing current societal challenges and to encourage exchange of the best practices.

#### **4. Countering disinformation and other forms of interference in the democratic debate and promoting media literacy**

Citizens should be able to access a variety of verifiable information in order to be able to participate in an informed way in public debates and express their will through free and fair democratic processes. The spread of online disinformation and misinformation can have a range of consequences, such as threatening our democracies, polarising debates, and putting the health, security and environment of EU citizens at risk. The EU is tackling the spread of online disinformation and misinformation to ensure the protection of European values and democratic systems<sup>47</sup>.

The aim of this priority is to fund projects tackling disinformation and other forms of interference in the democratic debate, empowering citizens to make informed decisions by helping them to identify disinformation and promoting media literacy. These will also help fight against fake news, hate speech and populist discourse in media, including social media. Projects include dedicated activities for young people (current and future voters).

**This list of priorities is not exhaustive. Applicants may address other priorities in all areas of Union action as long as these priorities are in line with the call objective to promote citizens engagement and participation.**

Each project can address several of the priorities above. Projects which not only collect citizens' views but also ensure they are known and are impactful are particularly encouraged.

The projects are expected to have diversified partnerships, with the civil society sector playing a prominent role.

#### **DESCRIPTION OF ACTIVITIES**

Projects should gather people from different countries and different backgrounds in activities directly linked to EU policies. The projects should provide an opportunity for direct participation in the policymaking process and thus create the conditions for a

<sup>47</sup> [https://eeas.europa.eu/sites/default/files/action\\_plan\\_against\\_disinformation.pdf](https://eeas.europa.eu/sites/default/files/action_plan_against_disinformation.pdf)



stronger bottom-up approach and a more inclusive policymaking process, fostering civic and democratic engagement. Projects are expected to: (i) include different organisation types (i.e. non-profit organisations, including civil society organisations, educational, cultural or research institutions, public local/regional authorities or universities); and (ii) include events such as debates, conferences, seminars, campaigns, workshops and cultural activities.

This call for proposals supports activities that help to foster democracy, inclusion and democratic participation in the EU. These are activities that include, for example: (i) promoting societal engagement through debates, campaigns, awareness-raising, conferences, workshops etc. on the themes relevant to call priorities and providing a link to the European political agenda and policy making process; (ii) gathering the opinions of individuals through a bottom-up approach (including use of social networks, webinars etc.) and media literacy; (iii) promoting exchanges between EU citizens on EU-related topics to foster a better understanding of different perspectives; and (iv) identifying possible solutions and recommendations to be submitted to the relevant local political authorities and decision makers. **Activities that support specific political parties will not be funded, regardless of their grounds for applying or their objectives.**

The maximum duration of the project should not exceed **24 months**.

#### **EXPECTED RESULTS**

- Boosting citizens' awareness of rights and EU values and increasing their engagement in society and with the EU;
- Enabling people to deepen their knowledge of EU institutions and policies and better understand the EU's achievements and benefits;
- Strengthening democratic participation, with a special focus on inclusion of younger and older people, women in all their diversity, mobile EU citizens and people with disabilities;
- Reaching those citizens not active in civic participation in their everyday life;
- Making it possible for citizens to communicate their views and concerns to policy makers at all levels.

#### **IMPLEMENTATION**

Direct management by EACEA (co-delegation type II).

### 3.9. Call on rights of the child and children's participation

#### LEGAL BASIS

Articles 4 and 5 of Regulation (EU) 2021/692

#### BUDGET LINES

Budget line 07 06 01: Promote equality and rights

Budget line 07 06 02: Promote citizens engagement and participation in the democratic life of the Union

#### OBJECTIVE

*Supporting, advancing and implementing comprehensive policies to protect and promote the rights of the child, including the right to participate.*

Policy initiatives supported: EU strategy on the rights of the child.

#### TYPE OF APPLICANTS TARGETED

Civil society organisations, including international and civil society organisations and academia whose work is relevant in the area of the rights of the child, national and local authorities

#### POLICY PRIORITIES

##### **2024**

This call for proposals will aim at responding to children's current needs and challenges in the EU. This call will pay specific attention to the rights of children with specific needs and in vulnerable situations, including those who fled the Russian aggression against Ukraine.

This call will focus on implementation of the actions and recommendations at the EU, national and local level established in the relevant strands of the EU Strategy on the rights of the child<sup>48</sup>. Projects can be national or transnational. Transnational projects are particularly encouraged.

##### **1. Children's mental health**

This priority will aim at addressing mental health disorders experienced by children, which could be linked for instance to family circumstances, socio-economic vulnerabilities exacerbated during crisis, children in alternative care, victims of violence or of discrimination. This will also cover activities addressing the mental health problems affecting migrant and refugee children, notably unaccompanied and separated children, including those who fled the war in Ukraine. Projects will not address the health dimension itself (e.g. diagnosis, treatment of mental health problems), but prevention, protection, support of children with mental health issues and in connection to the other areas on the rights of the child. Projects will refer to the causes of mental health issues and the consequences these issues have for other areas related to the rights of the child (e.g. digital

<sup>48</sup> EU strategy on the [rights of the child](#).

environment, education, social inclusion, poverty, among others).

## **2. Embedding a rights of the child perspective in actions at national and local level**

A children's rights perspective needs to be mainstreamed in all relevant policies, legislation and funding programmes as part of the mainstreaming of the rights of the child; it is part of efforts to create a child-friendly culture in policymaking.

As mentioned in the EU Strategy on the rights of the child, for real progress to be made on the ground, this strategy needs to be accompanied by commitments and investments at national level. The Commission calls on EU Member States to develop, where not yet available, robust and evidence-based national strategies on the rights of the child, in cooperation with all relevant stakeholders, including children, and in synergy with other relevant national strategies and plans. Besides, reliable and comparable data are needed to develop evidence-based policies.

This priority will focus on implementing mainstreaming tools for the rights of the child at national and local level, such as data gathering on children, child-rights budgeting and development of relevant strategies on the rights of the child at national, including at local level.

## **3. Children's engagement and participation**

Too many children feel left out of decision-making<sup>49</sup>. Under this priority, the Commission aims to promote an inclusive and systemic participation of children at the local, national and EU level to ensure that children's voices are heard and listened to, especially in matters that affect them. This is in line with the EU Strategy on the Rights of the Child – notably the establishment of the Child Participation Platform (CPP). The implementation and activities of the CCP could be a starting point for activities under this priority.

Projects will aim to establish or strengthen inclusive and systemic mechanisms for child participation at local and national level and may include specifically children who may be underrepresented in existing child participation mechanisms. This may focus on children with a disadvantaged background, children in vulnerable situations, migrant children, children from minority groups, children from rural areas, from institutions, among others. Activities may include training and the production of training material for professionals, the design and implementation of child participation mechanisms in schools, city councils, children advisory boards, and the establishment of consultation mechanisms with children at local level. Projects will endeavour to strengthen education on citizenship, equality and participation in democratic processes, engage children in policy discussions, and increase the awareness of the general public on children's rights. Projects should also aim at increasing awareness and knowledge among children of their rights, as a precondition to make children's voice heard.

## **4. Understanding democratic rights, which starts in childhood**

Another priority will focus on enhancing the understanding of democratic rights, which starts in childhood. Citizens need a good understanding of democratic processes to be able to participate in them. Educational toolkits explaining the notions of democracy, the rule of law, fundamental rights and their interdependence would be important to that effect. Creative learning methods, including digital games, apps or story-telling could complement traditional pedagogical tools, making abstract notions more relatable for

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<sup>49</sup> The Europe Kids Want survey, *Sharing the view of children and young people across Europe*, UNICEF and Eurochild, 2019.

children of different age groups.

#### DESCRIPTION OF ACTIVITIES

Activities may include:

- Mutual learning, trainings, exchange of good practices, cooperation, including identifying good practices;
- Dissemination and awareness raising, including social media or press campaigns;
- Capacity building and training activities of national, regional and local authorities;
- Design and implementation of protocols, development of working methods and tools;
- Analytical activities, such as data collection and research, and the creation of tools or data bases.

The maximum duration of the action should not exceed **24 months**.

#### EXPECTED RESULTS

- Making children aware of their right to participate and have their voices heard;
- Making child participation mechanisms inclusive and systemic;
- Implementing actions and recommendations of the EU Strategy on the rights of the child;
- Improving capacity building, the exchange of good practice, training on the rights and needs of children, defining guidelines and guidance and improving data collection;
- Providing adequate support to children with specific in vulnerabilities.

#### IMPLEMENTATION

Direct management by EACEA (co-delegation type II).

### 3.10. Call for proposals for Town-Twinning

#### LEGAL BASIS

Article 5 of the Regulation (EU) 2021/692

#### BUDGET LINE

Budget line 07 06 02: Promote citizens engagement and participation in the democratic life of the Union

#### OBJECTIVE

*Promoting exchanges between citizens of different countries, in particular through town twinning, to give them practical experience of the wealth and diversity of the common heritage of the Union and to make them aware that these constitute the foundation for a common future*

Policy initiatives supported: European democracy action plan, EU Roma strategic framework on equality, inclusion and participation, Strategy to strengthen the application of the Charter of Fundamental Rights in the EU, EU Citizenship Report 2020.

#### **TYPE OF APPLICANTS TARGETED**

Towns/municipalities or their twinning committees or networks; other levels of local/regional authorities; federations/associations of local authorities; non-profit organisations representing local authorities.

#### **POLICY PRIORITIES**

##### **2023 and 2024**

The programme helps to promote intercultural dialogue by bringing people of different nationalities and different languages together and giving them the opportunity to participate in common activities. In this context, Town-Twinning projects will raise awareness of the richness of Europe's cultural and linguistic environment and promote mutual understanding and respect, contributing to the development of a respectful, dynamic and multifaceted European identity and the respect of common values, democracy and fundamental rights.

In view of this overall objective, the projects may address the following topics (the list is not exhaustive):

- The EU is built on solidarity: solidarity between its citizens, solidarity across borders between its Member States, and solidarity through support actions in and beyond the EU. Solidarity is a shared value that creates cohesion and responds to societal challenges. Town-Twinning projects will help to overcome national perceptions by fostering mutual understanding and by creating fora where common solutions can be discussed in a constructive way. Their aim should be to raise awareness of the importance of reinforcing the European integration process based on solidarity and EU values;
- Town-Twinning projects will give citizens the opportunity to express what kind of Europe they want. Debates supported under the Town-Twinning measure should be based on the EU's specific achievements and on lessons learnt from history and from European integration. They should also reflect on current trends, and enable participants to challenge euroscepticism and to suggest possible actions that the EU could take to foster a sense of belonging to Europe, to increase an understanding of the benefits of the EU and to reinforce the EU's social and political cohesion.

Projects aiming at benefiting not only the direct participants but also the citizens of the participating towns are particularly encouraged, as these can help to multiply the practical experience of the richness and diversity of the common heritage of the Union. Also, there may be a general, but not exclusive, reflection on any impact the COVID-19 pandemic may have had on life within the applicants' local communities, on the way in which their communities function and on the forms that civic participation and solidarity took in the applicants' towns under the COVID-19 crisis and how these forms could become sustainable in the future. Projects may also draw inspiration from or be related to the New European Bauhaus initiative.

#### **DESCRIPTION OF ACTIVITIES**

Activities related to Town-Twinning may include workshops, seminars, conferences, training activities, expert meetings, webinars, awareness-raising activities, cultural events, festivals, exhibitions, data gathering and consultation, development, exchanges and dissemination of good practices among public authorities and civil society organisations, development of communication tools and the use of social media.

This measure aims to support projects that bring together a wide range of people from twinned towns around topics related to the programme's objectives. By mobilising members of the public at the local and EU levels to debate specific issues on the European political agenda, this measure will seek to promote mutual understanding, inclusion and cultural diversity and develop opportunities for civic engagement at the EU level.

The maximum duration of the project should not exceed **12 months**.

#### **EXPECTED RESULTS**

- An increase in and encouragement of mutual understanding and friendship between citizens at a local level;
- Support for citizens from local communities to experience and recognise the added value that the EU provides through a grassroots approach;
- An increased sense of belonging to the EU;
- Encouragement of a long-lasting bond between municipalities and between citizens.

#### **IMPLEMENTATION**

Direct management by EACEA (co-delegation type II)

### 3.11. Call for proposals for Networks of Towns

#### LEGAL BASIS

Article 5 of Regulation (EU) 2021/692

#### BUDGET LINE

Budget line 07 06 02: Promote citizens engagement and participation in the democratic life of the Union

#### OBJECTIVES

*Promoting exchanges between citizens of different countries, in particular through networks of towns, to give them practical experience of the wealth and diversity of the common heritage of the Union and to make them aware that these constitute the foundation for a common future.*

Policy initiatives supported: European democracy action plan, EU Roma strategic framework on equality, inclusion and participation, EU anti-racism action plan, LGBTIQ Equality Strategy, EU Citizenship Reports.

#### TYPE OF APPLICANTS TARGETED

Towns/municipalities or their twinning committees or networks; other levels of local/regional authorities; federations/associations of local authorities; non-profit organisations representing local authorities.

#### POLICY PRIORITIES

Networks of Towns will give towns and municipalities the possibility to deepen and intensify their cooperation and debate, develop sustainable networks and outline their long-term vision for the future of European integration.

The Commission expects Networks of Towns to reflect on a holistic narrative for Europe, one that is people-oriented, forward-looking and constructive, and that would be more engaging for the younger generation in particular. Projects may be based on the outcome of citizens' consultations and may lead to debates about specific ways to create a more democratic EU, to encourage citizens to re-engage with the EU and help them develop a stronger sense of ownership of the European project.

While maintaining a bottom-up approach, there could be a specific focus on:

##### **In 2023**

- Promoting awareness and building knowledge of EU citizenship rights and associated European common values and common democratic standards, ensuring the provision of information to mobile EU citizens, including those in a precarious situation and EU citizens with a migrant background, and their family members, and encouraging the inclusion and democratic participation of mobile EU citizens and under-represented groups;
- Promoting awareness and building knowledge of the 30th anniversary of the entry into force of the Maastricht Treaty (1 November 2023) which introduced the concept of

European Union citizenship and of the adoption of the electoral directives;

- Promoting awareness, building knowledge and sharing best practice on the benefits of diversity as well as effective measures on how to tackle discrimination and racism at local level;
- Bringing citizens together to discuss actions on the climate and the environment, including energy-related issues, solidarity and sharing best practices, and thus helping to increase citizens' engagement in society and ultimately to their active involvement in the democratic life of the Union.

#### **In 2024**

- Promoting awareness and building knowledge of the role of minorities, such as people with a minority racial or ethnic background (for instance Roma and migrants), in European society and their contribution to Europe's cultural development;
- Identifying ways to further strengthen the European dimension and democratic legitimacy of the EU decision-making process and fostering free, open and healthy democratic governance in an era of low turnout in elections, populism, disinformation and challenges facing civil society, by supporting citizens' active involvement in European political life and the exercise of their electoral rights;
- Bringing citizens together to discuss actions on the climate and the environment, including energy-related issues, solidarity and sharing best practices, and thus contributing to increasing citizens' engagement in society and ultimately to their active involvement in the democratic life of the Union.

In addition to this specific focus, Networks of Towns projects may also more generally, but not exclusively, reflect on any impact the COVID-19 pandemic may have had on life within their local communities, on the way in which their communities function and on the forms that civic participation and solidarity took under the COVID-19 crisis and how these forms could become sustainable in the future. Projects may also draw inspiration from or be related to the New European Bauhaus initiative.

#### **DESCRIPTION OF ACTIVITIES**

Activities related to Networks of Towns may include workshops, seminars, conferences, training activities, expert meetings, webinars, awareness-raising activities, high-visibility events, data gathering and consultation, development, exchanges and dissemination of good practices among public authorities and civil society organisations, development of communication tools and the use of social media.

Under this measure, municipalities or regions and associations working together in a long-term perspective are invited to develop networks of towns to make their cooperation more sustainable and to exchange good practice.

Networks of Towns are expected to integrate a range of activities around subjects of common interest related to the programme's objectives, to involve community members active in the subject area and to aim for sustainability.

The maximum duration of the project should not exceed **24 months**.



## EXPECTED RESULTS

- An opportunity for towns and municipalities to develop larger-scale projects with the aim of increasing their projects' impact and sustainability;
- Possibility for beneficiaries to develop more thematic and policy-related projects;
- Increasing citizens' engagement in society and ultimately their active involvement in the democratic life of the Union;
- Raising awareness and building knowledge on the 30th anniversary of the entry into force of the Maastricht Treaty and the adoption of the electoral directives, including through high-visibility events;
- Lasting links with partner organisations;
- Raised awareness of the benefits of diversity and the tackling of discrimination and racism;
- Increase in and encouragement of mutual understanding and acceptance of European minorities, such as Roma;
- Better information on the rights conferred by EU citizenship and their improved implementation in Member States;
- Raised awareness and better provision of information to mobile EU citizens and their family members on their EU citizenship rights.

## IMPLEMENTATION

Direct management by EACEA (co-delegation type II)

### 3.12. Call for proposals to prevent and combat gender-based violence and violence against children

#### LEGAL BASIS

Article 6 of Regulation (EU) 2021/692

#### BUDGET LINE

Budget line 07 06 03: Daphne

#### OBJECTIVES

*To fight violence, including gender-based violence and violence against children by:*

- *Preventing and combating at all levels all forms of gender-based violence against women and girls in all their diversity and domestic violence, including by promoting the standards laid down in the Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence;*
- *Preventing and combating all forms of violence against children, young people and other groups at risk, such as LGBTIQ persons and persons with disabilities;*
- *Supporting and protecting all direct and indirect victims of the forms of violence referred to in points (1) and (2), such as the victims of domestic violence perpetrated within the family or within intimate relationships, including children orphaned as a result of domestic crimes, and supporting and ensuring the same level of protection throughout the Union for victims of gender-based violence.*

Policy initiatives supported: EU Gender Equality Strategy, EU strategy on the rights of the child, EU Strategy on victims' rights, Proposal for the EU's accession to the Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence (Istanbul Convention), Proposal for a Directive on combating violence against women and domestic violence, Victim's Rights Directive, Recommendation on harmful practices (planned for December 2022), LGBTIQ Strategy, EU Anti-racism action plan 2020-2025, EU Roma Strategic Framework for Equality, Participation and Inclusion (2020-2030).

#### TYPE OF APPLICANTS TARGETED

Member States' public authorities, support services, civil society organisations.

#### POLICY PRIORITIES

##### **2023**

##### **Call for proposals to prevent and combat gender-based violence and violence against children: call to intermediaries (giving financial support to third-party civil society organisations)**

Gender-based violence and violence against children remains pervasive throughout the EU, and the COVID-19 crisis exacerbated this situation.

Recently, the Russian invasion of Ukraine has added a new dimension to gender-based violence in situations of conflict, with numerous reports in particular of women and girls,

but also men and boys, being raped by the armed forces. **Sexual violence** against civilians is a war crime and a violation of international criminal law. International organisations and previous research stress that women and girls fleeing armed conflict as well as unaccompanied children and children from institutions, are particularly vulnerable to all forms of gender-based violence and human trafficking, both in their home country, in countries of transit and where they seek shelter, and require particular support.

With the increased use of the internet and social media, **cyber violence** is highly prevalent and particularly affects girls as well as women active in public life, such as politicians, journalists and human rights defenders. It has the effect of silencing them and hindering their societal participation.

Another heinous form of gender-based violence are **harmful practices** such as female genital mutilation, forced sterilisation and forced abortion, forced and child marriage as well as honour-related violence, which affect a considerable number of victims living in the EU. Eradicating these practices requires special measures and training which takes into account the cultural, social and/or religious context.

Tackling **gender stereotypes** as the root causes of gender-based violence remains key. Awareness raising campaigns and comprehensive sexuality education are important to strengthen socio-emotional competencies, empathy and develop healthy and respectful relationships, in particular for young people and vulnerable groups such as women with disabilities, homeless women or migrant women and LGBTIQ persons.

To tackle **violence against children** in all its forms, it is necessary to strengthen integrated child protection systems. Exposure to children to violence severely affects a child's physical, psychological and emotional development. It may affect their ability to go to school, to interact socially and to thrive. It can lead to mental health issues, chronic diseases, self-harm tendencies, even suicide. Children in vulnerable situations can be particularly affected.

Civil society plays a key role in preventing and combating gender-based violence and violence against children. **The overall aim of this call is to support, empower and build the capacity of independent civil society organisations active at local, regional, national and transnational level in combating gender-based violence and violence against children. This is to be done through financial support granted by an intermediary.**

The call will finance a limited number of transnational, national or regional actors/intermediaries which will build the capacities of and re-grant (i.e. further disburse the grant) to civil society organisations (CSOs) active at local, regional, national level.

Through this mechanism, EU funding should help to support, empower and build the capacity of independent civil society organisations active in preventing and combatting all forms of **gender-based violence** against women and girls and all forms of gender-based violence, including against LGBTIQ people, women and children in the migration context, as well as different forms of violence against children, in particular by:

- Providing victim support tailored to the specific needs of victims, including specific medical and psychological support, victim-centred and trauma-informed services, access to national helplines, access to justice, increased accessibility of shelters, including comprehensive support for victims of sexual harassment at work;
- Preventing violence, including by raising awareness, training professionals who are likely to come in contact with victims, and working with offenders;

- Tackling gender stereotypes as root causes of gender-based violence;
- Strengthening child protection system by improving prevention, protection and support services for (potential) children victims/witnesses of violence and those in need of protection, including multi-disciplinary cooperation.

## **2024**

### **Call for proposals to prevent and combat gender-based violence and violence against children**

#### **1. Large-scale and long-term transnational actions on tackling gender-based violence**

In line with the Gender Equality Strategy, this priority aims to support the development of large-scale, integrated actions to combat gender-based violence and achieve long-term and structural changes with a wide geographical coverage.

All forms of gender-based violence can be addressed under this priority through prevention, protection and support to victims. The objective is to achieve balanced coverage of actions across different areas of intervention in line with the priorities of the Gender Equality Strategy.

In order to ensure on-the-ground interventions and wide coverage, the partnership should ensure collaboration with actors in different sectors and organisations guaranteeing a multiplier effect. Proposals will have to develop a long-term programme of intervention aimed at achieving changes in attitudes and behaviour, guaranteeing impact and reaching out to a large number of participants in different geographical areas of the EU and covered by the programme. They must include an effective and detailed monitoring and evaluation system, which will enable partners to evaluate the impact of their intervention.

#### **2. Targeted actions for the protection of and support for victims and survivors of gender-based violence**

This priority will focus on the protection of and support for victims of gender-based violence, including children. This includes:

- Targeted protection and support for groups at a heightened risk of violence (e.g. people with a migrant background, asylum-seekers, refugees, LGBTIQ persons, racial or ethnic minorities which include Roma people, women with disabilities, pregnant women, women in detention, women living in rural areas, women living and/or working on the street, persons in prostitution, elderly women), including through tackling under-reporting;
- Targeted support to victims of sexual violence (including sexual exploitation/trafficking for the purposes of sexual exploitation, and in the context of armed conflict) and other specific forms of harm;
- Promoting multi-disciplinary cooperation, including online, among relevant professionals. Strengthening referrals between relevant national actors (e.g. law enforcement, the judiciary, support service providers, health and social service professionals); and
- Provision of support through national helplines dedicated to victims of violence against women (support to initial establishment of such helplines in Member States where these are not yet available, awareness-raising of available support through helplines).

Projects can be national or transnational. Transnational projects are particularly encouraged.

### **3. Targeted actions for the prevention of gender-based violence, in the domestic sphere, in intimate relationships, and online, including through targeted actions with perpetrators**

Under this priority, gender-based violence will be prevented through:

- The development of tools for the prevention of domestic violence that help recognise and address early signs of violence, including less visible forms of violence such as coercive control and psychological violence. This is done, for example, through assessing existing screening methods and enhancing the development and utilisation of evidence-based systematic screening methods for signs of domestic violence by medical practitioners (or other practitioners in services not directly linked to domestic violence support, for example social or educational services).
- The development of measures for the prevention of violence in intimate relationship that promote equal relationships, address harmful stereotypes and give tools for peaceful conflict resolution in relationships. Actions will include (but are not limited to): education and awareness raising, training and practical activities to tackle prejudices and gender stereotypes, norms, attitudes and behaviours that encourage, condone or minimise violence, in particular in relationships; activities that promote, respectful and conscious choices regarding all aspects of relationships and reduce the risk of violence.
- Measures for the prevention of gender-based cyber violence that strengthen the media literacy of online users and reinforce positive narratives on gender equality and the role of women in public decision-making roles such as in politics and journalism, as well as measures for the prevention of cyber intimate partner violence, empowering non-governmental organisations and other relevant actors to prevent and address gender-based cyber violence, including as trusted flaggers on online platforms.
- Perpetrator programmes to prevent (re)offending, with a victim-centred approach and a focus on harmful stereotypes, peaceful conflict resolution in relationships and toxic masculinities.

Projects can be national or transnational. Transnational projects are particularly encouraged.

### **4. Targeted actions making integrated child protection systems work in practice**

Children may face different forms of violence. The overall aim of this priority will be to contribute to systemic changes to prevention, protection and support to children in cases of violence through integrated child protection systems<sup>50</sup>.

Taking into consideration the overall framework on integrated child protection systems, this priority will help to prevent and combat two specific forms of violence against children: (i) harassment and sexual violence, with a specific focus on violence happening in the formal and informal educational context, in leisure, cultural, sportive, or any community or recreational activities, where children might be in specific situations of vulnerability; and (ii) online and offline bullying, notably at school or in leisure activities, and affecting children with specific vulnerabilities (e.g. children with disabilities, including

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<sup>50</sup> Integrated child protection systems are multi-disciplinary cooperation between relevant cross-border/national/regional/local authorities (for example judicial authorities) and child protection, support and social services, health care professionals, care professionals and educators, among others.

mental disabilities, Roma children, children with a migrant background), or link to their religion, belief, gender or sexual orientation.

Projects can be national or transnational. Transnational projects are particularly encouraged.

## DESCRIPTION OF ACTIVITIES

### **2023 call to intermediaries (giving financial support to third-party civil society organisations):**

The following list of activities is not exhaustive and other relevant and innovative activities may be considered:

- Financial support to third parties (CSOs), including the publication of calls for proposals, the definition of selection and award criteria, the evaluation of applications and the monitoring of implementation;
- Technical and methodological support for the preparation and implementation of activities of CSOs (for instance helpdesk during their application phase, support on monitoring and reporting, etc);
- Training and building the capacity and sustainability of CSOs (for instance with coaching to strengthen the strategic thinking and managerial capacities of CSOs, fundraising training sessions, training on advocacy methods, seminars on communication, including through social media and video-making, or strengthening policy research and analysis);
- Knowledge building and thematic training for CSOs on EU law and policies on preventing and combating gender-based violence and violence against children; fostering and facilitating networking among CSOs and with relevant stakeholders with a view to promoting and protecting fundamental rights and values in the EU.

### **Call for proposals to prevent and combat gender-based violence and violence against children (2024):**

- Development of tools to help recognise and address early signs of domestic violence and violence against children;
- Awareness-raising, including social media or press campaigns, outreach and empowerment activities, including communication activities and dissemination of information;
- Capacity building and training for professionals and relevant stakeholders, in particular train-the-trainer programmes, training activities of national, regional and local authorities;
- Design and implementation of strategies, protocols, development of transferable working methods and tools, coordination platforms and groups;
- Design of services and measures improving access to victim support services;
- Identification and exchange of good practices, cooperation, mutual learning, development of working and learning methods, including transferable mentoring programmes;
- Development of guidelines and manuals for specialised support services (e.g. in the

work place, schools, universities, online);

- Analytical activities, such as data collection and research, and the creation and implementation of tools or data bases/data collection strategies and systems.

## EXPECTED RESULTS

### **2023 call to intermediaries (giving financial support to third-party civil society organisations):**

- Increased prevention of all forms of gender-based violence against women and girls and domestic violence, increased prevention of situations of violence against children and better protection and support for victims of such violence;
- Increased public awareness of gender-based violence and violence against children;
- Increased multi-agency response to combat gender-based violence;
- Strengthened protection and support to child suffering violence and in need of protection; Strengthened integrated child protection systems;
- Reinforced capacity of professionals to prevent, detect and respond to violence against children and increased capacity and cooperation of and among relevant services;

Strengthened capacity of CSOs that tackle these issues; More supportive environment for CSOs; More effective, accountable and sustainable CSOs; A better developed advocacy role for CSOs; Increased involvement of CSOs in policy and decision-making processes with local, regional, and national governments and other relevant actors;

- Strengthened regional cooperation within civil society.

### **Call for proposals to prevent and combat gender-based violence and violence against children (2024) :**

#### **1. Large-scale and long-term transnational actions on tackling gender-based violence**

- Systemic changes through e.g. structural reforms, explicit commitments and changes of processes, protocols, policies and practices of organisations/companies/structures etc;
- Increased capacity of stakeholders and relevant professionals to address issues related to gender-based violence, including through strengthened multi-agency cooperation;
- As well as expected results mentioned for the other priorities below (corresponding to the form of gender-based violence addressed).

#### **2. Targeted actions for the protection of and support for victims and survivors of gender-based violence**

- Victims from particularly vulnerable groups can better access protection and support services that address their specific needs;
- Increased capacity of stakeholders and relevant professionals in contact with these groups to address issues related to gender-based violence, including through

strengthened multi-disciplinary cooperation;

- Increased reporting of violence to the police and other services, with appropriate mechanisms in place to facilitate this;
- Increased quality of victim support services, including those providing for targeted and integrated support for victims with specific needs, such as victims of sexual violence, victims of violence in close-relationships, providing for trauma support and counselling;
- Increased awareness of gender-based violence, including gender-based sexual violence, including in the context of migration and/or in the context of armed conflict;
- Structures for the prevention of and responses to violence against women, children and other groups particularly targeted are extended or adapted to also include refugees and other migrants; improved protection and support standards for victims of gender-based violence including people in migration;
- Strengthened cooperation and exchange of information between competent European/national/regional/local authorities in relation to sexual and gender-based violence and to violence against children, including in cross-border situations;
- Cross-border cases of violence are properly addressed, through the application of Directive 2011/99/EU on the European protection order.

### **3. Targeted actions for the prevention of gender-based violence, in the domestic sphere, in intimate relationships, and online, including through targeted actions with perpetrators**

- Increased promotion and support of gender-sensitive prevention of violence in close relationships through awareness raising, sharing of information and knowledge and the creation and dissemination of training opportunities
- Increased awareness of prejudices, gender stereotypes and norms that contribute to the tolerance of gender-based violence;
- Increased awareness and engagement of men and boys in tackling gender-based violence against women;
- Increased capacity of stakeholders and relevant professionals to address issues related to gender-based violence and engagement of men and boys, illegal online content, including through strengthened multi-agency cooperation;
- Increased capacity of professionals not directly linked to domestic violence to recognise and address issues related to gender-based violence;
- Increased empowerment of (potential) victims of violence to claim their rights and to stand up to violence;
- Changed attitude and behaviour as regards the issue of gender-based violence, (including lower tolerance and decreased victim-blaming):
  - among the general population and particular groups, e.g. relevant professionals, witnesses and bystanders, vulnerable groups, etc.
  - among men and boys.
- Changed attitudes and behaviour as regards the issue of illegal online content



targeting women and girls among the general population and particular groups, e.g. relevant professionals, witnesses and bystanders, vulnerable groups;

- Early signs of violence are detected and reported; increased reporting of violence to the police and other services, with appropriate mechanisms in place to facilitate this.
- Increased treatment of perpetrators of violence;
- Increased attention to, support and treatment for female prisoners as a vulnerable group, who may be perpetrators, witnesses and victims of violence;
- Violence including online is prevented before it happens; reduced risk of violence escalating; increased safety of women and their children and others at risk from violence in close relationships and online violence.

#### **4. Targeted actions making integrated child protection systems work in practice**

- Strengthened integrated child protection systems;
- Strengthened prevention, protection and support to children suffering violence and in need of protection;
- Reinforced capacity of professionals to prevent, detect and respond to violence against children and child protection, including increased cooperation among relevant services.

#### **IMPLEMENTATION**

Direct management by DG JUST

### 3.13. Operating grants to framework partners active in the area of Union values

#### LEGAL BASIS

Article 3 of Regulation (EU) 2021/692

#### BUDGET LINES

Budget line 07 06 04: Protect and promote Union values

#### OBJECTIVES

*Protecting, promoting and raising awareness of rights by providing financial support to civil society organisations which are active at local, regional, national and transnational level in promoting and cultivating those rights, thereby also strengthening the protection and promotion of Union values and respect for the rule of law and contributing to the construction of a more democratic Union, democratic dialogue, transparency and good governance.*

Policy initiatives supported: European democracy action plan, EU Citizenship Reports, Rule of law report, Strategy to strengthen the application of the Charter of Fundamental Rights in the EU, Gender Equality Strategy, EU anti-racism action plan, EU Roma strategic framework on equality, inclusion and participation, LGBTIQ Equality Strategy, EU Strategy on the rights of the child, EU Strategy on combating antisemitism and fostering Jewish life, Strategy for the rights of persons with disabilities 2021-2030, Commission Recommendation on protecting journalists and human rights defenders who engage in public participation from manifestly unfounded or abusive court proceedings ('Strategic lawsuits against public participation').

#### TYPE OF APPLICANTS TARGETED

Framework partners of the European Commission under the CERV programme.

#### POLICY PRIORITIES

##### **2023 and 2024**

These grants aim to support the annual work programmes of organisations which have signed framework partnership agreements (under the work programme for 2021-2022) and are active in one of the following areas: non-discrimination, gender equality, combating racism, xenophobia and all forms of intolerance, rights of the child, rights of persons with disabilities, preventing and combating gender-based violence, violence against children, European remembrance and citizens' engagement and participation. Framework partners will be invited to submit their proposal presenting their annual priorities.

#### DESCRIPTION OF ACTIVITIES

These grants will fund the organisations' operating costs and those activities which have EU added value and contribute to the implementation of programme objectives, including: analytical activities, training and capacity building activities, conferences, mutual learning, cooperation, awareness-raising, communication and dissemination activities. Applicants must provide a detailed annual work programme for a period of 12 months.

If foreseen in the call, framework partner organisations that qualify as European networks will have the possibility to re-grant (i.e. financial support to third parties) to their member organisations.

## EXPECTED RESULTS

**Framework partners** are expected to help to achieve at least one of the following objectives:

- Building the capacity of national or regional organisations working in the areas covered by the grant;
- Building and increasing the capacity of network partners to develop coherent and coordinated activities that promote the relevant policy objectives;
- Expansion of the network's reach, including new partners;
- A measurable increase in the impact of the network's activities in the relevant policy areas;
- Providing a link between research and policymaking at European level, which helps find solutions to problems;
- Facilitating interaction between scientists, academia and decision-makers.

Under the re-granting option, network member organisations that receive a grant from a framework partner are expected to help to achieve at least one of the following objectives:

- Strengthened capacity to protect and promote rights and EU values;
- A more supportive environment for CSOs and rights defenders such as national human rights institutions;
- A better developed advocacy and watchdog role for CSOs;
- Increased involvement of CSOs in policy- and decision-making processes with local, regional, and national governments;
- Increased citizen awareness of EU rights and values;
- Strengthened regional cooperation within civil society.

## IMPLEMENTATION

Direct management by DG EMPL (co-delegation type I) and EACEA (co-delegation type II)

### 3.14. Award of a grant without a call for proposals to EQUINET

#### LEGAL BASIS

Article 4 of Regulation (EU) 2021/692

#### BUDGET LINE

Budget line 07 06 01: Promote equality and rights

#### OBJECTIVES

*Promoting equality and preventing and combating inequalities and discrimination based on sex, racial or ethnic origin, religion or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation and respecting the principle of non-discrimination on the grounds provided for in Article 21 of the Charter.*

Legal basis: Article 14(3) of Regulation (EU) 2021/692 of the European Parliament and of the Council establishing the Citizens, Equality, Rights and Values programme and Article 195(d) of the Financial Regulation.

#### POLICY PRIORITIES

##### **2023 and 2024**

In accordance with EU acts on equal treatment, Member States set up independent bodies for the promotion of equal treatment, commonly known as 'equality bodies', in order to combat discrimination and promote equality for all.

Equality bodies play a key role in promoting equality and ensuring effective application of equal treatment legislation. They do this, in particular, by providing independent assistance to victims of discrimination, conducting independent surveys on discrimination, publishing independent reports and making recommendations on any issue relating to discrimination in their country. It is essential that the work of equality bodies is coordinated at EU level.

EQUINET, the European Network of Equality Bodies, was created in 2007. Its members are the national bodies for the promotion of equal treatment created under: (i) Article 13 of the Racial Equality Directive 2000/43/EC, (ii) Article 12 of Directive 2004/113/EC on equal treatment between men and women in goods and services, (iii) Article 20 of Directive 2006/54/EC on equal treatment between men and women in employment, or (iv) Article 11 of Directive 2010/41/EU on equal treatment between men and women in self-employment.

EQUINET is the only entity that ensures coordination of activities between equality bodies. This coordination is key for the proper implementation of EU anti-discrimination law in Member States.

The Commission will invite EQUINET in writing to submit its proposal presenting its annual policy priorities.

## **DESCRIPTION OF ACTIVITIES**

This grant aims to support activities implemented in 2024 and 2025 by the European Network of the Equality Bodies, specifically for sharing experiences and good practices, trainings, awareness raising and studies.

EQUINET can make use of the possibility to re-grant funds (i.e. financial support to third parties) to its network member organisations.

## **EXPECTED RESULTS**

- Increased capacity of experts from national equality bodies to address issues related to non-discrimination and the implementation of EU legislation in the field;
- Strengthened cooperation and exchange of information between equality bodies;
- Improved knowledge of the legislation and administrative practices related to non-discrimination.

## **IMPLEMENTATION**

Direct management by DG JUST

### 3.15. Award of a grant without a call for proposals to Programme Contact Points

#### LEGAL BASIS

Article 3 of Regulation (EU) 2021/692  
Article 195 (d) of Regulation (EU, Euratom) 2018/1046

#### BUDGET LINE

Budget line 07 06 04: Protect and promote Union values  
Budget line 07 06 02: Promote citizens engagement and participation in the democratic life of the Union

#### OBJECTIVES

*Every country participating to the programme may establish Programme contact points with responsibility for providing impartial guidance, practical information and assistance to applicants, stakeholders and beneficiaries of the Programme with respect to all the aspects thereof, including in relation to the application procedure, dissemination of user-friendly information and Programme results, inquiries for partners, training and formalities.*

#### TYPE OF APPLICANTS TARGETED

Bodies designated as Programme Contact Points, namely: organisations officially designated by the participating countries and formally accepted by the European Commission.

#### POLICY PRIORITIES

Each country participating to the programme can receive funding to support the activities of a decentralised structure that it has designated to be in charge of information and dissemination activities related to the Citizens, Equality, Rights and Values programme (Programme Contact Point). The aim of these Contact Points is to promote European initiatives in areas covered by the programme and to facilitate the participation of programme stakeholders. In addition to their information and dissemination role, these Contact Points also play an important role in other areas such as providing advice to applicants, supporting partner searches and providing information about national or regional initiatives in the areas covered by the programme at the European level.

#### DESCRIPTION OF ACTIVITIES

- Information: providing information about the programme and policy initiatives in the areas covered by the programme;
- Dissemination of best practice projects: increasing knowledge and awareness of programme results;
- Advice: facilitating the participation of stakeholders and giving advice to applicants;
- Supporting the Commission and EACEA in programme implementation.

The maximum duration of the action should not exceed **24 months**.

#### **EXPECTED RESULTS**

- Informing a large number of people about the programme and its achievements;
- Attracting new organisations/reaching new regions;
- Facilitating participation in the programme of the largest possible number of potential applicants;
- Improved dissemination activities to promote programme results (promotion at national/regional level of the transnational cooperation);
- Increased capacity of contact points to address issues related to the areas covered by the programme;
- Strengthened cooperation and exchange of information between Contact Points in relation to the areas covered by the programme;
- Increased quality of project applications submitted.

#### **IMPLEMENTATION**

Direct management by EACEA (co-delegation type II).

#### 4. PRIZES

The global budgetary envelope reserved for contests under this work programme is EUR 350 000 in 2023 and EUR 350 000 in 2024.

<b>SPECIFIC OBJECTIVE</b>	<b>2023 (€)</b>	<b>2024 (€)</b>
<b>Equality, rights and gender equality</b>	<b>350 000</b>	<b>350 000</b>
<i>Supporting, advancing and implementing comprehensive policies to protect and promote the rights of persons with disabilities</i>	350 000	350 000
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>350 000</b>	<b>350 000</b>

##### 4.1. Prizes for winners of the Access City Award

###### LEGAL BASIS

Article 4 of Regulation (EU) 2021/692

###### BUDGET LINE

Budget line 07 06 01: Promote equality and rights

###### OBJECTIVE

*Supporting, advancing and implementing comprehensive policies to protect and promote the rights of persons with disabilities*

###### TYPE OF PARTICIPANTS TARGETED BY THE CONTEST

EU cities (see eligibility conditions below).

###### DESCRIPTION OF THE ACTIVITIES

###### **2023 and again in 2024**

The Access City Award, launched in 2010, recognises and celebrates cities' willingness, capability and efforts to ensure accessibility, promoting and contributing to inclusion in society of persons with disabilities on equal basis with others.

The award celebrates cities that take exemplary steps to improve accessibility in the urban environment to the benefit of all, and in particular of persons with disabilities and older people. Since its 10th edition, the Access City Award includes financial prizes for the winners.

###### EXPECTED RESULTS

The expected results of the Access City Award prizes are to:

- Support winning cities in their accessibility and inclusion efforts;
- Encourage eligible cities to take part in the Access City Award competition,



therefore boosting their interest and efforts in accessibility;

- Increase interest in the Access City Award and the number of applications;
- Increase visibility of the award and of accessible cities.

The overall expected results of the Access City Award are to:

- Showcase local initiatives strongly contributing to EU policy objectives related to accessibility and the full inclusion of persons with disabilities;
- Raise awareness on accessibility issues in cities;
- Support a network of accessible cities, to facilitate the sharing of best practices;
- Inspire cities to improve their accessibility.

#### **IMPLEMENTATION**

Direct management by DG EMPL (co-delegation type I).

## 5. PROCUREMENT

The global budgetary envelope reserved for procurement contracts is EUR 26 881 013 in 2023 and EUR 23 717 542 in 2024.

<b>SPECIFIC OBJECTIVE</b>	<b>2023 (€)</b>	<b>2024 (€)</b>
Union values	3 933 872	3 351 507
Equality, rights and gender equality	16 055 321	13 786 354
Citizens' engagement and participation	6 234 085	6 232 812
Daphne	657 735	346 869
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>26 881 013</b>	<b>23 717 542</b>

### 5.1. Procurement activities in Union Values

#### LEGAL BASIS

Article 3 of Regulation (EU) 2021/692

#### BUDGET LINE

Budget line 07 06 04: Protect and promote Union values

#### OBJECTIVES

*Protecting, promoting and raising awareness of rights by providing financial support to civil society organisations which are active at local, regional, national and transnational level in promoting and cultivating those rights, thereby also strengthening the protection and promotion of Union values and respect for the rule of law and contributing to the construction of a more democratic Union, democratic dialogue, transparency and good governance.*

#### DESCRIPTION OF THE ACTIVITIES AND CONTRACTS

Actions will be financed through contracts following public procurement (open calls for tender and framework contracts). Along with existing, new framework contracts may be envisaged especially in support to the organisation of workshops and policy meetings, on evaluation, impact assessment and related policy support services. The types of activities funded may include, for example, the following: awareness raising, information and dissemination, analytical activities, organisation of conferences, expert meetings, seminars, communication activities, development and maintenance of IT platforms and systems, preparation of surveys and studies (including Eurobarometer), evaluations and impact assessments.

## **EXPECTED RESULTS**

Increased awareness of the rule of law and democratic dialogue, transparency and good governance. Increased public trust in the EU and mutual trust among Member States. Increased awareness about the CERV programme and about its underlying policies. Increased effectiveness of the CERV programme.

## **IMPLEMENTATION**

Direct management by DG JUST.

## 5.2. Procurement activities in equality and rights

### LEGAL BASIS

Article 4 of Regulation (EU) 2021/692

### BUDGET LINE

Budget line 07 06 01: Promote equality and rights

### OBJECTIVES

- *Promoting equality and preventing and combating inequalities and discrimination based on sex, racial or ethnic origin, religion or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation and respecting the principle of non-discrimination on the grounds provided for in Article 21 of the Charter.*
- *Supporting, advancing and implementing comprehensive policies to promote women's full enjoyment of rights, gender equality, including work-life balance, women's empowerment and gender mainstreaming.*
- *Supporting, advancing and implementing comprehensive policies to combat racism, xenophobia and all forms of intolerance including homophobia, biphobia, transphobia and interphobia and intolerance on the basis of gender identity, both online and offline.*
- *Supporting, advancing and implementing comprehensive policies to protect and promote the rights of the child.*
- *Supporting, advancing and implementing comprehensive policies to protect and promote the rights of persons with disabilities*
- *Protecting and promoting Union citizenship rights and the right to the protection of personal data.*

### DESCRIPTION OF THE ACTIVITIES AND CONTRACTS

Actions will be financed through contracts following public procurement (open calls for tender and framework contracts). Along with existing, new framework contracts may be envisaged especially in support to the organisation of workshops and policy meetings, on evaluation, impact assessment and related policy support services as well as of policy work on anti-Semitism, hate crime and hate speech. The types of activities funded may include, for example, the following: training, mutual learning and exchange of good practices, awareness raising, information and dissemination, analytical activities, organisation of conferences, expert meetings, seminars, communication activities, development and maintenance of IT platforms and systems, preparation of surveys and studies (including Eurobarometer), evaluations and impact assessments, in particular to monitor the correct implementation of existing legislation, accompany new legislation or respond to policy changes in the areas covered by the programme.

### EXPECTED RESULTS

Increased awareness of existing EU action and more Commission initiatives on (gender) equality, children's rights, data protection, rights of persons with disabilities and EU

citizenship rights. Improved responses to discrimination, racism, anti-Semitism, hate speech and hate crime, both on- and offline.

#### **IMPLEMENTATION**

Direct management by DG JUST and DG EMPL (co-delegation type I).

### 5.3. Procurement activities in citizens engagement

#### LEGAL BASIS

Article 5 of Regulation (EU) 2021/692

#### BUDGET LINE

Budget line 07 06 02: Promote citizens engagement and participation in the democratic life of the Union

#### OBJECTIVES

- *Supporting projects aimed at commemorating defining moments in modern European history, such as the coming to power of authoritarian and totalitarian regimes, including the causes and consequences thereof, and projects aimed at raising awareness among European citizens of their common history, culture, cultural heritage and values, thereby enhancing their understanding of the Union, of its origins, purpose, diversity and achievements and of the importance of mutual understanding and tolerance;*
- *Promoting citizens' and representative associations' participation in and contribution to the democratic and civic life of the Union by enabling them to make known and publicly exchange their views in all areas of Union action;*
- *Promoting exchanges between citizens of different countries, in particular through town-twinning and networks of towns, so as to afford them practical experience of the richness and diversity of the common heritage of the Union and to make them aware that such richness and diversity constitute a solid foundation for a common future.*

#### DESCRIPTION OF THE ACTIVITIES AND CONTRACTS

Actions will be financed through contracts following public procurement (open calls for tender and framework contracts). Along with existing, new framework contracts may be envisaged especially in support to the organisation of workshops and policy meetings, on evaluation, impact assessment and related policy support services as well as of policy work on remembrance. The types of activities funded may include, for example, the following: training, mutual learning and exchange of good practices, awareness raising, information and dissemination, analytical activities, organisation of conferences, expert meetings, seminars, communication activities, development and maintenance of IT platforms and systems, preparation of surveys and studies, support to European Citizens' Initiatives, to be implemented by the Commission's Secretariat-General.

#### EXPECTED RESULTS

Increased public trust in the EU and mutual trust among Member States, more engagement and participation of members of the public in the EU's democratic life to support a rights-based, open, pluralist, inclusive society.

#### IMPLEMENTATION

Direct management by DG JUST and SG (co-delegation type I and cross-subdelegation).

## 5.4. Procurement activities in Daphne

### LEGAL BASIS

Article 6 of Regulation (EU) 2021/692

### BUDGET LINE

Budget line 07 06 03: Daphne

### OBJECTIVES

- *Preventing and combating at all levels all forms of gender-based violence against women and girls and domestic violence, including by promoting the standards laid down in the Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence;*
- *Preventing and combating all forms of violence against children, young people and other groups at risk, such as LGBTQI persons and persons with disabilities;*
- *Supporting and protecting all direct and indirect victims of the forms of violence referred to in first two points, such as the victims of domestic violence perpetrated within the family or within intimate relationships, including children orphaned as a result of domestic crimes, and supporting and ensuring the same level of protection throughout the Union for victims of gender-based violence.*

### DESCRIPTION OF THE ACTIVITIES AND CONTRACTS

Actions will be financed through contracts following public procurement (open calls for tender and framework contracts). Along with existing, new framework contracts may be envisaged especially in support to the organisation of workshops and policy meetings, on evaluation, impact assessment and related policy support services. The types of activities funded may include, for example, the following: training, mutual learning and exchange of good practices, awareness raising, information and dissemination, organisation of conferences, expert meetings, seminars, communication activities, development and maintenance of IT platforms and systems, preparation of surveys and studies and impact assessments, in particular to monitor the correct implementation of existing legislation, accompany new legislation or respond to policy changes in the areas covered by the programme.

### EXPECTED RESULTS

Increased awareness of existing EU action and more Commission initiatives on gender equality and children's rights. Improved responses to gender-based violence, violence against children and other groups at risk.

### IMPLEMENTATION

Direct management by DG JUST.



## 6. ACTIONS IMPLEMENTED IN INDIRECT MANAGEMENT

The budget reserved for indirect management actions is EUR 3 250 000 in 2023 and EUR 0 in 2024.

### 6.1. Support to the OECD for a study on future steps for gender equality and equal economic empowerment of women and men in the EU

#### LEGAL BASIS

Article 4 of Regulation (EU) 2021/692

#### BUDGET LINE

Budget line 07 06 01: Promote equality and rights

#### IMPLEMENTING ENTITY

OECD

#### OBJECTIVES PURSUED

*The overall objective of the Action is to contribute to the reflection on future steps towards gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls in the EU. This will feed into the preparation of the Commission's future gender equality initiatives. The action will focus on elements that would speed up progress towards gender equality based on evidence and strengthened analytical tools and mainstreaming. The results of the study will help in guiding existing and future gender equality initiatives towards the appropriate direction.*

#### DESCRIPTION

Progress towards gender equality remains very slow. The 2021 Gender Equality Index by the European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE) shows it will take nearly three generations to achieve gender equality at the current pace. The long-term effects of the COVID-19 pandemic are likely to slow down progress even further.

The EU Gender Equality Strategy 2020-2025 presented a number of policy and legislative actions towards gender equality. While these actions are in the process of being implemented, more work will need to be done going forward after 2025 to achieve full gender equality. In this context, the aim of the study is to identify new ways to address some of the structural inequalities that need to be tackled in future policies related to gender equality and economic empowerment of women in the EU, based on the conceptual work of EIGE.

The study will explore possible gaps and the main weaknesses of the existing legal and policy frameworks with regard to gender transformative systems in the EU Member States and will provide ideas for future actions at EU level.

Due to its established experience, competence and authority in this field, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) would be the most appropriate body to carry out the study. The OECD can bring policy makers, policy shapers and analysts together to exchange on policy choices, their outcomes and implications. The OECD also brings together different policy areas and perspectives making multi-disciplinary assessments. For this study it is recommended that the OECD will work closely and

interact with key other players in this field at EU level, including EIGE, as well as other relevant EU agencies and international organisations, who have a long track record on working on gender equality issues.

This contribution agreement will cover the following research and analytical activities:

Activity 1: Mapping out of the gender equality situation in all EU Member States, using relevant data from existing surveys and administrative data as well as the Gender Equality Index by EIGE.

Activity 2: Review of the factors and organisational aspects of national systems in particular that hinder gender equality and the economic empowerment of women and their impact on society as a whole, building upon EIGE's work. Organisation of workshops with academic experts, researchers and representatives from EU agencies, including EIGE and Eurofound, and international organisations and agreement on the key dimensions that need to be addressed in this framework.

Activity 3: Based on qualitative analysis and questionnaire to the Member States, identification of success stories and good practices that could underpin EU action to address and enhance gender equality and equal economic empowerment of women and men.

Activity 4: Based on the qualitative analysis undertaken under Activity 3, identification of possible gaps and weaknesses in national systems and policy measures across all EU Member States.

Activity 5: Development of a conceptual framework to assess the gender equality impact of legislative and policy frameworks, for instance on gender employment, care, pay and pensions gaps.

Activity 6: Formulation of a list of recommendations of possible actions at EU level that would further enhance gender equality and the empowerment of women in a future-looking perspective.

## EXPECTED RESULTS

- An improved general understanding and awareness of the current, factual state of gender equality in the EU.
- An in-depth assessment on the impact of the current level of equal economic empowerment of women and men on society.
- A tracking of the most efficient and effective measures to promote gender equality and empowerment of women and girls and to close the existing gaps.
- Development of a tool that helps to assess and understand the gender equality impact of policy, legal and budgetary initiatives in different policy fields.
- Contribution to the preparation of forthcoming Commission gender equality initiatives.
- Identification of good practices to be used as inspiration for effective and efficient policymaking.

## 6.2. Support to the OSCE / ODIHR for knowledge sharing and standard setting on hate crime including hate crime victims support

### LEGAL BASIS

Article 4 of Regulation (EU) 2021/692

### BUDGET LINE

Budget line 07 06 01: Promote equality and rights

### IMPLEMENTING ENTITY

OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR)

### OBJECTIVES PURSUED

Enhance the support to victims of hate speech and hate crime in the EU by sharing knowledge and good practices, supporting stakeholders on the ground, and developing standards and capacities on hate crime and hate crime victim support.

### DESCRIPTION

The OSCE / ODIHR will undertake dedicated work on standard setting and guidance on effective hate crime response and how to support hate crime victims in the EU. This work will contribute to the activities of the working group on hate crime victim support under the High Level Group on combating hate speech and hate crime. The working group is composed of representatives of civil society organisations and national authorities and is entrusted to advance towards effective support to victims of hate. OSCE/ODIHR will work in cooperation with EU agencies, such as in particular the Fundamental Rights Agency to ensure synergies with the FRA-led Working Group on hate crime reporting, recording and data collection.

The OSCE ODIHR implemented the Commission funded Enhancing Stakeholder Awareness and Resources for Hate Crime Victim Support (EStAR) project, which developed practical tools to enhance the specialist support available, and victim support and criminal justice structures' responses to victims of hate crimes.

OSCE / ODIHR will:

- Enhance the awareness of existing commitments and standards on hate crime and hate crime victim support among law enforcement, criminal justice and victim support experts, civil society organisations, practitioners, and policy makers;
- Identify, collect, and exchange good practice in hate crime and hate crime victim support among civil society organisations, law enforcement, criminal justice and victim support experts;
- Provide support and guidance to stakeholders on the ground enhancing the existing hate crime and victim support structures, and/or developing structural co-operation frameworks to protect and support hate crime victims, in cooperation with civil society organisations.

OSCE / ODIHR plays a unique role in the EU (and beyond). It is the only international organisation which every year compiles and publishes records on hate crimes, including a

breakdown of hate crime episodes per ground and countries. It has developed standards, methodologies and guidance on several dimensions of hate crime and possesses a unique set of tools and knowledge which can ensure the relevance and impact on a better protection of hate crime victims.

This contribution agreement will cover the following research and analytical activities:

Activity 1: Based on the results of the EStAR project, continuing to ensure that national law enforcement, criminal justice professionals and civil society structures are better able to protect and support victims of hate crime through enhanced capacity to respond to hate crime.

Activity 2: Based on qualitative analysis and support to the Member States, identifying success stories and good practices to address and combat hate crime.

Activity 3: Organisation of workshops focused on the key dimensions that need to be addressed in this framework, involving experts from academia, civil society organisations, national authorities in the EU Member States, international organisations and EU agencies, including in particular FRA.

#### **EXPECTED RESULTS**

- Enhanced support mechanisms for victims of hate crime, taking into account their specificities;
- Better awareness by civil society organisations and public authorities of standards, good practices and tools available on hate crime victims support;
- Empowered civil society organisations to enhance their role of support to victims and first legal aid and guidance.

### **6.3. Support to the Council of Europe to increase civil society organisations' knowledge and capacity to tackle hate speech online**

#### **LEGAL BASIS**

Article 4 of Regulation (EU) 2021/692

#### **BUDGET LINE**

Budget line 07 06 01: Promote equality and rights

#### **IMPLEMENTING ENTITY**

Council of Europe

#### **OBJECTIVES PURSUED**

Enhance the response to the societal challenges of hate speech online to help foster vibrant and pluralistic democracies

Enhance the capacity of civil society organisations to cooperate with peers across the EU on use of counter narrative, education and awareness raising tools to tackle hate speech online.

#### **DESCRIPTION**

The Commission has a long standing policy on combating hate speech online, in line with the Council Framework Decision on combating certain forms and expression of racism and xenophobia. In 2016, the Commission initiated a Code of conduct on countering illegal hate speech online with major online platforms. The Code of conduct is built on two pillars: 1) effective systems to quickly review hate speech notices by users, and remove content when necessary; 2) mechanisms of cooperation between IT Companies and civil society organisations to foster partnerships, including in areas such as awareness raising, education and counter-narrative.

On the second pillar, considerable work has been done over the years by the Council of Europe, in particular coordinating the No Hate Speech Movement and its follow-up, which focused on tools to design effective counter narrative and awareness raising initiatives. While reporting and removing hatred online is important, there is a need also to address the societal challenges of hate speech and its root causes through prevention, education activities and awareness raising initiatives. With a view to ensure effective and impactful activities in this area, support to civil society organisations operating on the ground must be ensured, in particular by collecting and sharing the tools and knowledge developed over the years. Capacity building activities and platforms for cooperation of civil society organisations in different Member States should be fostered.

In this context, the Council of Europe will:

- Create and feed a knowledge platform open to civil society organisations as well as to relevant academic organisations to share existing and new tools, guidance and good practices on how to respond to hate speech online in particular to address its root causes at societal level.
- Create spaces of collaboration for civil society organisations active at national and local levels in the Member States, to enable connections and joint actions with a view

to implement awareness raising and counter narrative initiatives.

- Collect and make available data and information on the effectiveness, risks and mitigation measures when using counter narratives to address hate speech online.
- Organise workshops focused on the key dimensions that need to be addressed in this framework, involving experts from academia, civil society organisations, national authorities in the EU Member States, international organisations and EU agencies, including in particular FRA.

The Council of Europe's anti-discrimination division has been a front runner on organising civil society organisations efforts against hate speech, as a follow up of the No Hate Speech Movement made up of non-governmental organisations from many countries in the EU and beyond. The No Hate Speech Movement was the initiator of the first ever campaigns on counter speech and counter narratives in Europe. The Council of Europe has been an active member and stakeholder in the High Level Group on combating hate speech and hate crime. It has also recently adopted a recommendation on Combating Hate Speech which aims to encourage national authorities, civil society organisations and online platforms to come together and cooperate to counter the online manifestations of hate speech, including through awareness raising and education activities. The Council of Europe will work in cooperation with EU agencies, such as in particular the Fundamental Rights Agency to ensure synergies with the FRA-led Working Group on hate crime reporting, recording and data collection.

#### **EXPECTED RESULTS**

- Increased capacity of civil society organisation to design and implement effective cross-border counter narrative, education and awareness campaigns against hate speech online;
- Increased availability of knowledge, tools and guidance for stakeholders, including civil society organisations, semi-public bodies (e.g. equality bodies or national human rights institutions), practitioners, business partners as well as competent national authorities.

#### 6.4. Support to the OECD to develop a framework for monitoring and assessing the impact of the National Action Plans against Racism

##### LEGAL BASIS

Article 4 of Regulation (EU) 2021/692

##### BUDGET LINE

Budget line 07 06 01: Promote equality and rights

##### IMPLEMENTING ENTITY

OECD

##### OBJECTIVES PURSUED

Help step up the fight against racism and discrimination by supporting Member States in the effective implementation of their action plans against racism and their impact.

##### DESCRIPTION

National action plans against racism have proven to be a successful way for Member States to offer a targeted and effective response to racism and racial discrimination but also a critical first step towards achieving equality and diversity. To support Member States in their efforts, the European Commission established a ‘subgroup on the national implementation of the EU anti-racism action plan’ tasked to develop common guiding principles for national action plans by the end of 2021. These non-binding guiding principles are intended to provide useful suggestions to facilitate the process and serve as a basis for Member States to develop and implement a national action plan against racism and racial discrimination.

When in the implementation phase and upon completion, it is essential that national action plans against racism undergo close monitoring and evaluation to ensure that the concrete measures to tackle racism that Member States set out in their plans are actually and properly implemented within the committed timelines. To this end, a monitoring and evaluation framework will be developed to further assist Member States in their efforts. Due to established experience, competence and authority in this field, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) would be the most appropriate body to develop the framework. The OECD is one of the world’s most wide-ranging, trusted and appreciated sources of comparative socio-economic data and analysis. The OECD has decades of experience in policy monitoring and evaluation through indicators. Its work is based on uniquely solid methodological competence and rigour.

This contribution agreement will cover the following research and analytical activity:

**Activity 1: An assessment of different indicators to monitor and evaluate the progress made by Member States on their national action plans against racism.**

This activity would devise a comprehensive monitoring and evaluation framework based on a thorough analysis of the pros and cons of various indicators that could be used to measure the extent to which the objectives outlined in the NAPARs have been met, under each critical policy area established in the common guiding principles (enforcement of

laws aimed at fostering zero-tolerance for racial discrimination and violence, preventive policies to create a culture of equal treatment of racial or ethnic minorities in key areas of life (including education), better data collection, etc.)

#### **EXPECTED RESULTS**

- Increased capacity of MSs competent national authorities to implement a monitoring and evaluation framework to measure the extent to which the objectives outlined under each critical policy area in the national action plans against racism and racial discrimination have been met;
- Enhanced knowledge of gaps and needs in key policy areas of the national action plans against racism and racial discrimination, and thus increased capacity to deal with them;
- Increased availability of data and knowledge for competent national authorities, civil society organisations, as well as other relevant stakeholders.



## **6.5. Support to the Council of Europe to develop a series of seminars on racial and ethnic stereotypes bringing together journalists, civil society organisations and representatives of people with a minority racial or ethnic background**

### **LEGAL BASIS**

Article 4 of Regulation (EU) 2021/692

### **BUDGET LINE**

Budget line 07 06 01: Promote equality and rights

### **IMPLEMENTING ENTITY**

Council of Europe

### **OBJECTIVES PURSUED**

Advance the fight against discrimination and antigypsyism which is a key objective and cross cutting priority in the EU Roma Strategic Framework

Policy initiatives supported: EU anti-racism action plan and EU Roma strategic framework on equality, inclusion and participation.

### **DESCRIPTION**

In July 2020, the Council of Europe adopted a recommendation calling for the inclusion of the history of Roma people and/or Travellers in school curricula and teaching materials. In addition, the EU Action plan against racism 2020-2025 stipulates that as part of EU action in the area of culture and values the Citizens, Equality, Rights and Values programme will offer support for projects that seek to remove barriers and that encourage the social inclusion and participation of underrepresented and disadvantaged groups, including aspects such as the place of minorities in European society.

The way in which people with a minority racial or ethnic background are portrayed in the media, and whether they are represented at all, can reinforce negative stereotypes, with their under-representation in media professions further reinforcing this trend. Stereotypes and prejudices about Roma people in the media, demonstrate that public perception of Roma people is still largely negative. The fear engendered by the COVID-19 pandemic has often fuelled anti-Roma rhetoric across the media and social networks, sometimes also echoed by the public authorities themselves.

While Member States are on the front line to drive real change for Roma people, which requires a strengthened political commitment, the EU can help them to shape an effective approach and equip them with the right tools.

To deliver on these key priorities, the Commission will conclude a contribution agreement with the Council of Europe to develop specific activities. These will include seminars on racial and ethnic stereotypes, bringing together journalists, civil society and representatives of people with a minority background, as well as awareness-raising events to fight stereotypes, promote cultural diversity, empower young people and women as role models. To this end, the European Commission will build on its strong cooperation and ensure synergies with the Council of Europe's work in this area.

Fighting against racism, antigypsyism and exclusion of Roma communities across the EU and beyond, is a political priority for both the Commission and the Council of Europe. The Council of Europe has provided an outstanding contribution to and impact on the work of Roma inclusion, equality and participation at all levels and it has built a large network of relevant stakeholders. Partnering-up with the Council of Europe in this particular area is therefore of clear added value in order to maximize the impact and ensure complementarity and synergy of interventions as well as to avoid duplication.

This contribution agreement will cover the following awareness raising and training activities:

- In close cooperation with Roma and pro-Roma civil society and members of Roma communities, and following a co-creation approach, develop and implement a broad communication campaign to fight antigypsyism and anti-Roma discrimination, promote Roma role models and raise awareness about Roma history and culture, and experience of the Roma as part of the Holocaust, including on the matters of gender equality and diversity dimension;
- Develop and implement a series of seminars and workshops on racial and ethnic stereotypes bringing together journalists, media representatives and representatives of public authorities focussed on different ethnic/racial groups, and in particular on Roma, in close cooperation with civil society organisations, including with Roma and pro-Roma civil society and representatives of Roma communities, with the aim of working together to combatting stereotypes and biased portrayal in and by the mass media, including on the social media platforms;
- In partnership with Roma and pro-Roma civil society, Roma communities, and public authorities in particular at local and regional level, develop and implement a series of awareness-raising campaigns and events to fight stereotypes and prejudice, antigypsyism and discrimination, promote cultural diversity and mutual understanding, and raise awareness of broad audience about Roma history and culture and the Roma Holocaust.

## EXPECTED RESULTS

- Closer cooperation and mutual understanding between civil society, Roma communities and individuals, journalists and media, and representatives of public authorities, including at local and regional level, as well as a strong partnership in achieving equality for Roma, starting at the level of individual commitment and continued with corresponding institutional mandates for all the actors involved. Improved standards for media reporting, especially with regards to Roma communities.
- Improved knowledge on the applicable legislation and policy initiatives on Roma equality, inclusion and participation.
- Increase the awareness of Roma history, arts and culture in the Member States and help deepen the understanding of the impact of the consequences, with regards to stereotypes and biased portrayal in and by the mass media, including on the social media platforms.

## 6.6. Support to UNESCO to combat racism and discrimination

### LEGAL BASIS

Article 4 of Regulation (EU) 2021/692

### BUDGET LINE

Budget line 07 06 01: Promote equality and rights

### IMPLEMENTING ENTITY

UNESCO

### OBJECTIVES PURSUED

The concrete objectives of the Action are:

- 1) Increase rights awareness of those particularly at risk of discrimination about their rights as well as existing support mechanisms.
- 2) Shifting the social norms of bystanders around situations of discrimination.

### DESCRIPTION

The [Racial Equality Directive application report](#), published in March 2021, pointed out that there is a need to raise awareness among those particularly at risk of discrimination about their rights as well as existing support mechanisms. In the EU Anti-racism action plan 2020-2025 the Commission has committed to promote awareness raising on anti-racism through targeted communication activities. This could include reaching out to high-level figures of the political, sport, business or cultural world and inviting organisations with a large outreach to lend their support. The key role of young people in fighting against racism and related awareness raising has been stressed during the second EU Anti-racism summit in March 2022 as well as in a follow-up citizen's dialogue in May 2022.

To address the worrying increase in dangerous disinformation, hate speech and violence against racialized groups, exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic, UNESCO has launched important initiatives to address the '[Global Call against Racism](#)' targeting in particular young people. In this context, and building on previous successful projects including the Finnish [Olen Antirasisti](#) (I Am Antiracist) campaign, UNESCO would partner with UEFA, equality bodies and the private sector to adapt successful smaller scale initiatives to the EU scale to further disseminate the good practices and contribute to the common European benefit.

The proposed joint action aims to advocate against racism and discrimination, increase rights awareness, bystander intervention and shift the social norms around situations of discrimination. In addition the project would encourage all to contribute to a creation of an antiracist society based on EU values using storytelling and social media. It will aim at increasing an anti-racist engagement of young people (aged 15 to 24 years old) from around the EU through creations of short video clips depicting what an anti-racist interventions could look like and how everybody can be part of building an antiracist society as well as raise awareness about right of victims of discrimination. With the guidance provided by the Finnish campaign on how to tackle racism, young people can be

inspired to create stories on how to proactively work against racism in everyday situations (see [How to tackle racism - Equality.fi \(yhdenvertaisuus.fi\)](https://yhdenvertaisuus.fi)). By making strong social media messages created directly by youth, this project will contribute to changing mindsets and behaviors to foster inclusive societies.

This contribution agreement will cover the following activities:

Activity 1: An antiracism social media campaign that advocates against racism and discrimination, increases rights awareness and shifts social norms around situations of discrimination.

Activity 2: An event building on the campaign materials focusing on rights awareness and existing support mechanisms.

#### **EXPECTED RESULTS**

- Increased rights awareness and understanding of anti-racism; capacity-building of education and media stakeholders.
- Increased availability of knowledge, tools and guidance for educators, media, stakeholders, including civil society organisations.

## 6.7. Support to UNESCO to combat Holocaust distortion

### LEGAL BASIS

Article 5 of Regulation (EU) 2021/692

### BUDGET LINE

Budget line 07 06 02: Citizens engagement

### IMPLEMENTING ENTITY

UNESCO

### OBJECTIVES PURSUED

The overall objective is to help combat Holocaust distortion and trivialisation. The results of the action will reach the general public, educators, media and stakeholders and inform them about how to recognise and counter Holocaust distortion and trivialisation.

The concrete objectives of the Action are:

- To reach the general public on the danger of Holocaust distortion and trivialisation;
- To train European educators, influencers, media, civil society organisations and stakeholders to recognise and counter Holocaust distortion and trivialisation.

### DESCRIPTION

Combating Holocaust denial, distortion and trivialisation is a priority in the EU Strategy on combating antisemitism and fostering Jewish life. Holocaust denial and distortion nourish antisemitism, polarisation and distort the historic truth. It has a corrosive effect for collective historic memory and for the resilience and cohesion of our democratic societies. Understanding Holocaust denial, distortion and trivialisation is crucial to countering these dangerous trends and to protecting democracy.

Hate speech relating to the condoning, denial or gross trivialisation of the Holocaust is prohibited under the 2008 Framework Decision on combating racism and xenophobia.

The Commission cooperates with the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance through its Permanent International Partnership and uses the IHRA definition of Holocaust denial and distortion. In 2020 the Commission, together with the UN and UNESCO, launched the awareness-raising campaign #ProtectTheFacts, which focuses on countering Holocaust distortion.

UNESCO's Section of Global Citizenship and Peace Education has been a front runner in organising civil society organisations efforts against Holocaust distortion, e.g. by participating in the #ProtectTheFact campaign on countering Holocaust distortion together with IHRA and the UN, and by initiating and leading a research project to assess the scope of Holocaust denial and distortion online. This research was supplemented with detailed recommendations for policymakers, educators, Holocaust organisations and social media firms, grounded in UNESCO's mandate to promote the transparency of social media. It also guides educators on how to address Holocaust denial, distortion and trivialisation. These documents can serve as a basis for building the capacity of education and media

stakeholders to tackle these problems in their respective environments.

This contribution agreement will cover the following activities:

Activity 1: Awareness raising campaign on countering Holocaust distortion and trivialisation

Activity 2: Workshops and trainings for European educators, media, civil society organisations and influencers on countering Holocaust distortion and trivialisation.

#### **EXPECTED RESULTS**

- Increased capacity of education and media stakeholders to tackle Holocaust denial, distortion and trivialisation in their respective environments.
- Increased availability of knowledge, tools and guidance for educators, media, stakeholders, including civil society organisations, to identify the threat posed by Holocaust distortion to our democracies and counter it effectively.

## 6.8. Support to UNESCO ‘Routes of Enslaved Peoples: Resistance, Liberty and Heritage’ project

### LEGAL BASIS

Article 5 of Regulation (EU) 2021/692

### BUDGET LINE

Budget line 07 06 02: Citizens engagement

### IMPLEMENTING ENTITY

UNESCO

### OBJECTIVES PURSUED

The overall objective is to help **‘break’ the silence surrounding the history of slavery and place it in the universal memory**. The results of the action will reach the general public, educators, media and stakeholders.

The concrete objectives are:

- To promote the contributions of people of African descent to the general progress of humanity;
- To question the social, cultural and economic inequalities inherited from slavery.

### DESCRIPTION

It is estimated that several million people of African descent live in Europe. Whether as descendants of victims of the transatlantic slave trade and slavery or as migrants facing racism, they are much more exposed and vulnerable to social exclusion and inequalities, particularly in terms of access to education, employment, health and justice. This worrying trend is at the heart of the United Nations agenda, which has launched The International Decade for People of African Descent (2015-2024).

The Citizens, Equality, Rights and Values (CERV) programme offers support for projects that encourage the social inclusion and participation of underrepresented and disadvantaged groups, including aspects such as the place of minorities in European society and the historical legacy of slavery and colonialism. CERV also supports the remembrance, education and research on recent European history and will prioritise projects in 2023-2024 on the legacy of colonialism, inside and outside Europe, and its impact on contemporary multicultural European societies. It will also support projects that deal with common European experiences of migration that can be linked to a multitude of events such as wars, transition moments, colonisation and de-colonisation, economic impacts, persecution or others.

As indicated in the EU anti-racism Action Plan 2020-2025, colonialism and slavery are embedded in our history and have profound consequences for society today. To understand the major contemporary challenges of the fight against racism and all forms of discrimination, we should address the history and processes that have shaped and legitimised such practices.

Ensuring remembrance is thus an important part of encouraging inclusion and understanding.

Over the past 25 years, the UNESCO's project '**Routes of Enslaved Peoples: Resistance, Liberty, Heritage**<sup>51</sup>' has largely contributed to 'breaking the silence surrounding slavery'. It has produced knowledge, developed scientific networks and supported educational and memorial initiatives on this matter at both national and international levels. Today, the issues related to slavery and its consequences for contemporary societies have dramatically changed. Slavery and colonialism have generated profound social injustices that continue to affect our world today.

Through the staging of shows and collaboration on books and films, the 'Routes of Enslaved Peoples' Project works to promote and recognise the history of black peoples with a view to consolidating the values of tolerance and respect in the minds of young people.

UNESCO actively fights **against prejudice, racism and discrimination** and for the **defence of human rights** and the **protection of cultural heritage**. The organisation has adopted an integrated strategy to combat racism, discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance, and designated Africa as one of its global priorities. Its participation in the **International Decade for People of African Descent** is a statutory and integral part of UNESCO's programme.

UNESCO has expertise and experience with researching the slavery and its consequences for contemporary societies, a wide network relevant for this topic and experience with awareness raising among many different types of stakeholders.

UNESCO should collaborate with the European Coalition of Cities Against Racism, one of the Commission's framework partner. In 2021, ECCAR launched a working group on United Nations Decade for People of African Descent (UNPAD) and Colonial Heritage. The working group aims to support local governments who want to take action during the UNPAD Decade, showcase cities' best practices and engage young people, media and cultural institutions around these topics.

The EU-UNESCO cooperation will strengthen the international dimension of the EU anti-racism policy work and help to assist EU Member States with the educational dimension of their strategies against racism, building on UNESCO's Slave Route project.

The contribution agreement will cover the following activities:

Activity 1: Awareness raising activities to encourage Member States to promote the contributions of people of African descent to the general progress of humanity and to acknowledge the consequences of slavery for contemporary societies.

Activity 2: Educational activities and development of pedagogic material accurately reflecting the historical facts about the slave trade, slavery and colonialism to prevent attitudes and stereotypes derived from this history.

## EXPECTED RESULTS

- Increased capacity building of education and media stakeholders.
- Increased availability of knowledge, tools and guidance for educators, media,

<sup>51</sup> <https://en.unesco.org/themes/fostering-rights-inclusion/slave-route>.



stakeholders, including civil society organisations.

## 6.9. Support to the Council of Europe for a project combating anti-LGBTIQ violence and hate speech and strengthening awareness-raising and fact-based narratives about LGBTIQ persons

### LEGAL BASIS

Article 6 of Regulation (EU) 2021/692

### BUDGET LINE

Budget line 07 06 03: Daphne

### IMPLEMENTING ENTITY

Council of Europe

### OBJECTIVES PURSUED

The project will:

- **Create and support a European coalition** of civil society organisations and other stakeholders, as well as public authorities at the national and local levels, in creating and implementing strategies to achieve effective, coherent and coordinated responses in combatting violence against LGBTIQ people, hate speech and intolerant discourse towards LGBTIQ persons across Europe;
- **Identify relevant national and international legal and policy measures and examples of best practices** representing effective and quick responses to violence against LGBTIQ people and to hate speech; and
- **Support both public authorities at different levels and relevant civil society organisations involved in the development and dissemination of tools** based on the respect of human rights and European values to counter violence against LGBTIQ people, hate speech and intolerant discourse.

### DESCRIPTION

Over the years, the Council of Europe, the European Union and their Member States have developed a solid set of standards, rules and policies to advance LGBTIQ equality and have made important progress to protect people from discrimination. However, in its 2019 survey, the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA) found that experiences of discrimination against LGBTI people have actually increased by 7 percentage points in the EU compared to 2012<sup>52</sup>.

The EU's first ever LGBTIQ equality strategy<sup>53</sup>, adopted on 12 November 2020, strives to build a Union where diversity is celebrated as part of collective richness, where all people can be themselves without risk of discrimination, exclusion or violence. It sets out a series of measures to step up action to integrate LGBTIQ equality in all policy areas and to help

<sup>52</sup> FRA, [EU-LGBTI II - A long way to go for LGBTI equality](#) (14 May 2020).

<sup>53</sup> COM(2020) 698 final.

lift the voices of LGBTIQ minorities. In this context, this project aims to address the situation and to help the Member States to ensure effective protection of LGBTIQ people's rights and in particular to combat violence against LGBTIQ people. The project will bring together relevant stakeholders, including representatives of civil society, religious organisations, academia, equality bodies and public authorities at different levels and across sectors.

The Council of Europe coordinates the European LGBTI Governmental Focal Points Network which supports the project and brings a high commitment from national authorities to participate meaningfully in it. In 2021, the Council of Europe also established a new Working Group on sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression and sex characteristics to complete the work of the network.

The Council of Europe will bring on board relevant expertise and a diverse range of stakeholders to successfully implement this project. It will do this through its role as a human rights organisation, its strong connections with its Member States, civil society organisations and equality bodies, with Parliaments and local authorities, its ability to organise effective, targeted training based on human rights-oriented narratives, the success of the No Hate speech movement and other initiatives such as the joint CoE/EU project "WE CAN for human rights speech" and the ongoing work with the faith-based institutions in combatting hate speech.

This contribution agreement will cover the following activities:

**Research activities:**

- Analysis and better understanding of causes contributing to anti-LGBTIQ violence and hate speech;
- Analysis of advocacy and lobbying activities of national/European LGBTIQ organisations to examine their potential and effectiveness against 'anti-LGBTIQ' narratives and find the most effective solutions in order to support positive and fact based communication to prevent violence against LGBTIQ people and enhance LGBTIQ equality;
- Updated reviews of hate speech legislation, measures and of best practice examples, providing recommendations for good practices to address in particular 'non punishable' hate speech.

**Capacity building activities** through peer-to-peer exchanges, workshops and seminars bringing together relevant stakeholders and representatives of civils society organisations, public authorities at various levels, equality bodies, academia to:

- Share examples of practices and measures used in Europe and elsewhere to address violence against LGBTIQ people and LGBTIQ hate speech and identify appropriate strategies and ways to have maximum impact;
- Develop a toolkit with communication tools as well as training (training for trainers; online training) including in cooperation with faith-based institutions with common human rights-based narratives and communication strategies that can be tailor-made for particular country contexts;

Develop a Guide and training module for public authorities (institutes of public administration, government officials, national and local authorities, press councils, professional associations) to better tailor their interventions to address 'anti-LGBTIQ' narratives and hate speech against LGBTIQ persons without restricting the right to

freedom of expression.

Promote the newly created project tools, including through city hall discussions on LGBTIQ equality.

#### **EXPECTED RESULTS**

- A wide range of stakeholders, including in particular civil society organisations and public authorities, engage and contribute to developing an effective and coherent fact-based narrative to counter the negative impact of hate speech and violence targeting LGBTIQ persons.
- Strengthened capacities of state actors (law and policymakers, local authorities, local government officials, associations of local authorities, equality bodies, ombudspersons and NHRI, the judiciary, bodies in charge of monitoring media, education sector) to tailor actions and interventions, as a part of the joint efforts to combat violence against LGBTIQ people and hate speech.

## **7. OTHER EXPENDITURES**

### **7.1. Experts**

#### **AMOUNT**

The budget reserved for other expenditures is EUR 650 000 in 2023 under budget line 07 06 04: Protect and promote Union values) and EUR 650 000 in 2024 under budget line 07 06 02: Promote citizens engagement and participation in the democratic life of the Union.

#### **DESCRIPTION**

The Commission and/or EACEA may select external experts to assist in the evaluation of applications or the monitoring of actions. In particular, external experts with the relevant expertise, having the appropriate profile, as registered in the Funding & Tenders Portal Expert Database<sup>54</sup>, may assist the Evaluation Committees. Their tasks include, for instance, the evaluation of proposals following award criteria or of the operational capacity, drafting Individual Evaluation Reports or Consensus Reports.

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<sup>54</sup> Funding & tender opportunities – [work as an expert](#).