

Call for proposals DG EAC/29/2007

European political foundations
Pilot projects

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1. INTRODUCTION

In 2006, the European Parliament drafted an amendment to the 2007 EU budget proposing a "Pilot project – European political foundations"¹ to support the development of the European political foundations and their activities (Item 15 06 07).

The initiative is linked to the exercise to create a permanent funding mechanism for European political foundations in the context of the revision of the 2004/2003 Regulation on European political parties, for which the legal basis is the article 191 of the Treaty. The Commission's proposal for revised Regulation is foreseen for summer 2007 in view of putting the new system in place in due time to contribute to the campaign phase before 2009 elections.

The Directorate General for Education and Culture (DG EAC) of the Commission will be responsible for implementing this call for proposals.

2. DESCRIPTION AND OBJECTIVES

This call for proposals targets European political foundations that are formally affiliated with the political parties at European level.

The European political foundations are currently mainly under creation. The grants awarded under this call for proposals will in this respect support the establishment, development and functioning of the foundations as well as the activities developed by them to underpin and facilitate the European political parties' efforts on political information and debate.

In the justification for the budget line in question, the European Parliament underlined that given the current crisis of confidence in the European Union, it needs to reach out to its citizens through all possible channels. In cooperation with national political foundations, European political foundations can play an active role in re-building the confidence of citizens in the European project.

In a joint endeavour, political foundations serve to promote greater understanding, debate and new thinking, as well constituting a channel through which a greater number of citizens can actively participate in European democracy. Providing a space for debate for national political foundations, think tanks and academics connected to a political movement, European political foundations are as such linked to European political parties.

¹ This pilot project has been proposed within the meaning of Article 49(2) of Council Regulation (EC, Euratom) N° 1605/2002 of 25 June 2002 on the Financial Regulation applicable to the general budget of the European Communities (OJ L 248, 16.9.2002, p.1).

The European political foundations support and strengthen the existing networks of national political foundations and think tanks in order to better reconnect the citizens with their national and European political sphere.

3. TIMETABLE AND ELIGIBILITY PERIOD

Deadline for submitting applications is **28 September 2007**.

The intention is to inform applicants of the attribution of grants in November 2007. It is planned that beneficiaries will receive their agreements for signing in November 2007.

The period of eligibility of costs will start on the day the contract is signed by the Commission. If a beneficiary can demonstrate the need to start the action before the agreement is signed, expenditure may be authorised before the agreement is signed. In such cases, expenditure eligible for financing may not have been incurred prior to the date of submission of the grant application.

The eligibility period will end on 31 August 2008.

The European Commission reserves the right to extend the period of eligibility.

4. BUDGET AVAILABLE

The budget available is **€1 million**.

As an indication, the financial envelope shall be distributed on the basis of the same distribution key which applies for the European political parties according to the 2004/2003 Regulation on European political parties. This Regulation foresees that:

- 15% will be distributed in equal shares;
- 85% will be distributed among those which have elected members in the European Parliament, in proportion to the number of elected numbers.

EU co-financing will be provided to a maximum of **90%** of the total costs. The external co-financing can be partly or entirely made up of contributions in kind.

The European Commission reserves the right not to distribute all the funds available.

5. ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

5.1. Eligible establishments/bodies/types of applicant

5.1.1 Participation in this call focuses on European political foundations affiliated to a European political party and limited to one foundation per party.

5.1.2 To be eligible for a grant, the applicant shall satisfy the following requirements:

- a) To be formally designated as a European political foundation by one of the European political parties recognised on the basis of Regulation (EC) n° 2004/2003 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 4 November 2003 relating to the statute and to the political party financing at European level²;
- b) To be non-profit-making organisation;
- c) To be endowed with a legal status or justify duly that this condition will be met at the time of the signature of the grant agreement;
- d) To have their seat in one of the Member States of the European Union.

5.1.3 There should be an appropriate degree of separation between the daily management as well as the governing structures of the political foundation at European level on the one hand, and on the other hand the political party at European level with which the former is affiliated. It remains for each political party and foundation at European level to define the specific modalities for their relationship.

The foundations may be organised on a centralised or network base, as appropriate. They may be associated with any comparable work being undertaken by political groups in the European Parliament, provided that their funding is kept strictly distinct.

5.2. Eligible countries

European Union Member States:

Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Romania, the Slovak Republic, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, United Kingdom.

² On the date of the publication of this call for proposals, there are 10 political parties at European level, namely: Alliance of Independent Democrats in Europe (ADIE), Alliance for a Europe of the Nations (AEN), European Free Alliance (EFA), European Liberal Democrats Party (ELDR), European Left Party (ELP), European Peoples Party (EPP), Party of European Socialists (PES), European Green Party (EGP), EU Democrats (EUD) and European Democratic Party (EDP)

5.3. Eligible activities

5.3.1 To be eligible the proposed activities must correspond to the objectives of this call for proposals. All activities developed must take place in eligible countries.

5.3.2 Amongst the activities that political foundations shall undertake, the following could be highlighted:

- a) Observing, analysing and contributing to the debate on European public policy issues and the process of European integration;
- b) Supporting European seminars, training, conferences and studies on the aforementioned issues;
- c) Serving as a framework for national think tanks, political foundations and academics to work together at European level.

The list of the aforementioned activities could however be completed by each applicant.

5.4. Eligible applications

5.4.1 The applications should be submitted in two copies, using the **official application form** (original signatures required).

5.4.2 The application form should be accompanied by an **official attestation concerning the applicant's affiliation to a European political party**. The attestation has to be signed on behalf of the European political party to which the applicant is affiliated.

5.4.3 The applications must contain:³

- a) The official application form completed in full, dated and signed (original signature required), (Annex I);
- b) The action plan including a detailed description of the proposed activities;
- c) A detailed estimated budget in euros using the table provided (Annex II). The applicants must submit a budget that is balanced in terms of expenditure and revenue and must comply with the ceiling for Community cofinancing, set at 90% of the total budget;
- d) The profit and loss accounts and the balance sheet of the applicant for the latest year for which the accounts have been closed. This is not

³ See Checklist part of the application form

applicable if the foundation was established during the current year (see point 7.2 of this call for proposals);

- e) The financial capacity form duly completed by the applicant (Annex III);
- f) The financial identification (bank details) form (Annex IV), completed by the applicant and, as required, certified by the bank. The form can be found on the Europa website at:
http://www.ec.europa.eu/budget/execution/ftiers_en.htm
- g) The legal entities form (Annex V), duly completed by the applicant. The legal entities form can be found on Europa website at:
http://www.ec.europa.eu/budget/execution/legal_entities_en.htm
- h) A model of attestation concerning the applicant's affiliation to a European political party (Annex VI).

5.4.4 Applications should be written in one of the official languages of the European Union. However, for practical reasons and to speed up the assessment procedure, it is recommended that applications be submitted in one of the three working languages of the European Commission (English, French or German).

The Commission reserves the right to request additional information necessary to take a final decision on the award of financial support in case proposals are incomplete by the deadline.

6. EXCLUSION CRITERIA

Applicants must state using the declaration on honour, included in the application form, that they are not in any of the situations described in Articles 93 and 94 of the Financial Regulation applicable to the general budget of the European Communities (Council Regulation (EC, Euratom) No 1605/2002 of 25 June 2002), which are listed below.⁴

Applicants in any of the following situations will be excluded from participating:

- a) They are bankrupt or being wound up, are having their affairs administered by the courts, have entered into an arrangement with creditors, have suspended business activities, are the subject of proceedings concerning those matters, or are in any analogous situation arising from a similar procedure provided for in national legislation or regulations;
- b) They have been convicted of an offence concerning their professional conduct by a judgment which has the force of *res judicata*;

⁴ Standard text used in all calls for proposals

- c) They have been guilty of grave professional misconduct proven by any means which the contracting authority can justify;
- d) They have not fulfilled their obligations with regard to the payment of social security contributions or the payment of taxes in accordance with the legal provisions of the country in which they are established or with those of the country of the contracting authority or those of the country where the contract is to be performed;
- e) They have been the subject of a judgment which has the force of *res judicata* for fraud, corruption, involvement in a criminal organisation or any other illegal activity detrimental to the Communities' financial interests;
- f) A contract shall not be awarded to candidates who, during the procurement procedure for this contract 1) are subject to a conflict of interest, 2) are guilty of misrepresentation in supplying the information required by the contracting authority as a condition of participation in the procurement procedure or fail to supply this information; 3) find themselves in one of the situations of exclusion.

Applicants will not be granted financial assistance if, at the time of the grant award procedure, they:

- (a) Are subject to a conflict of interests;
- (b) Are guilty of misrepresentation in supplying the information required by the contracting authority as a condition for participation in the grant award procedure, or fail to supply this information.

In accordance with Articles 93 to 96 of the Financial Regulation, administrative and financial penalties may be imposed on applicants who are guilty of misrepresentation or are found to have seriously failed to meet their contractual obligations under a previous contract award procedure.

The application form includes a declaration on honour. By signing the declaration, applicants certify that they are not in any of the situations referred to in Articles 93 and 94 of the Financial Regulation.

7. VERIFICATION OF OPERATIONAL AND FINANCIAL CAPACITIES

Applicants must have stable and sufficient sources of funding to maintain their activities throughout the period during which the action is being carried out and to participate in its funding. They must have the professional competencies and qualifications required to complete the proposed activities described in the action plan successfully.

The applicant's ability to implement successfully the proposed action plan will be assessed on the basis of the following criteria.

7.1. Operational capacity

The application form includes a declaration on honour. By signing this declaration, the applicants certify that they have the necessary operational capacity to implement the action plan successfully.

7.2. Financial capacity

In order to permit an assessment of the financial capacity, the applicants must submit, with their application:

- A bank identification form (Annex IV) duly filled out by the applicant foundation and certified by the bank (original signatures required). The bank identification form can be found at the following address: http://ec.europa.eu/budget/execution/ftiers_en.htm;
- The profit and loss accounts and the balance sheet of the applicant for the latest year for which the accounts have been closed. The information on annual accounts is not applicable if the foundation was established during the current year. In such case, the financial capacity is considered weak.

If, on the basis of the document submitted, the Commission is of the opinion that the financial capacity has not been proven or is unsatisfactory, there will be two options:

- The Commission can propose a grant agreement without pre-financing;
- The Commission can ask for a bank guarantee or a "joint responsible guarantee" signed by European political parties in place of a bank guarantee in order to allow the payment of pre-financing (see paragraph 9.3).

8. EVALUATION AND AWARD CRITERIA

8.1. Evaluation

The Commission will establish an evaluation committee which will evaluate the eligible applications. This committee will be composed of members from different Commission services.

The activities proposed in the action plans should present a satisfactory level against the following criteria:

8.1.1 Adequacy of the plan of action to the objectives of alignment of the citizens to the European Union

The action plan should aim to inform the actors at European level on priorities, interests and activities of the citizens and/or to inform the citizens on the European policy.

8.1.2 Consistency of the action plan

The evaluation concerns, on the one hand, consistency between the foreseen results and the developed activities and, on the other hand, consistency between the administrative expenditures and the expenditure related to the other developed activities.

8.1.3 Visibility/communication of the activities envisaged

Means of communication envisaged in order to meet the objectives of the action plan: Internet sites, booklets, communication campaigns, etc.

8.1.4 Geographical radiation of the activities undertaken

The action plan shall have a real European dimension.

8.1.5 Multiplier effect of the activities

In addition to persons directly reached by the activities, the action plan shall have a multiplier effect on the citizens via key multipliers (members of European Parliament, political representatives at the local, regional and national level, academicians).

8.2. Selection

Grants will be awarded taking into account:

- the results of the evaluation based on the criteria identified above;
- the available financial resources as described in point 4 of this call for proposals.

9. FINANCIAL CONDITIONS

Acceptance of an application by the Commission does not constitute an undertaking to award a financial contribution equal to the amount requested by the applicant.

Community grants are incentives to carry out activities which would not be feasible without the European Commission's financial support, and which are based on the principle of co-financing. Such grants complement the beneficiary's

own financial contribution and/or national, regional or private funding that has been obtained elsewhere.

The amount allocated cannot exceed the amount requested.

Grant applications must include a detailed estimate budget in which all prices are given in euro. Applicants from countries outside the "euro zone" must use the conversion rates published in the Official Journal of the European Union, C series.

Information available at this address:

<http://eur-lex.europa.eu/JOIndex.do?ihmlang=en>

The budget attached to the application must have income and expenditure in balance, and clearly show the costs that may lay claim to financing from the Community budget.

The applicant must indicate the sources and amounts of any other funding received or applied for in the same financial year for the same activities or for any other activities. The beneficiary shall supply evidence of the co-financing provided, either by way of own resources, or in the form of financial transfers from third parties, or in kind, save in cases of contributions of a flat-rate amount and scales of unit costs.

The Community grant must not have the purpose or effect of producing a profit for the beneficiary. Profit is defined as a surplus of revenue over costs. Any surplus will result in a proportional reduction of the amount of the grant

The bank account or sub-account indicated by the beneficiary must make it possible to identify the funds transferred by the Commission. If the funds paid into this account give rise to interest or equivalent profits in accordance with the legislation of the country where the account is held, such profit or interest resulting from the pre-financing payment will be recovered by the Commission.

9.1. Payment Modalities

In the event of definitive approval by the Commission, a grant agreement, made out in euro and setting out the conditions and level of financing, will be concluded between the Commission and the beneficiary. The agreement will come into effect on the day on which it is signed by the last of the two parties, namely the Commission.

Three payments are foreseen:

- A pre-financing payment of 40% of the amount of the grant will be transferred to the beneficiary within 45 calendar days of the date when the last of the two parties signs the agreement and all the possible guarantees received. Pre-financing is intended to provide the beneficiary with a float;
- The Commission will establish the amount of the second pre-financing payment for 40% maximum based on the intermediary reports;

- The Commission will establish the amount of the final payment on the basis of the final reports. If the eligible costs actually incurred by the organisation during the project are lower than anticipated, the Commission will apply its rate of funding to the actual costs, and the beneficiary will, where applicable, be required to repay any excess amounts already transferred by the Commission under the pre-financing payment.

9.2. Audit

The co-financed activities may be subject to audits and to ex ante and ex post evaluations. The responsible person in the organisation undertakes, with his or her signature, to provide proof that the grant has been used correctly. The Commission and the Court of Auditors of the European Communities may check the use made of the subsidy, at any time during the term of the agreement and during a period of five years following expiry of the agreement.

9.3. Guarantee

The Commission may require any beneficiary which has been awarded a grant to provide a bank guarantee or a "joint responsible guarantee", in advance, in order to limit the financial risks linked to the pre-financing payment. The "joint responsible guarantee" can be provided by the European political parties.

The purpose of these guarantees is to make the organisation (bank or European political party) who issues the guarantee to stand as irrevocable collateral security for, or first-call guarantor of, the grant beneficiary's obligations.

9.4. Double financing

The beneficiaries cannot receive any other form of Community financing for the same activities.

9.5. Eligible costs

To be eligible under this call for proposals, costs must:

- Be necessary for implementing the activities, be included in the estimate budget attached to the grant agreement, be reasonable, and comply with the principles of sound financial management, and in particular with principles of economy and the principle of cost/effectiveness;
- Be incurred during the lifetime of the activities as defined in the grant agreement;
- Actually be incurred by the beneficiary as defined in the grant agreement and be recorded in the beneficiary's accounts in accordance with the applicable accounting principles, and be declared as required under the applicable tax and social security legislation;

- Be identifiable, verifiable and backed up by original supporting documents.

The beneficiary's internal accounting and auditing procedures must permit direct reconciliation of the costs and income declared in respect of the activities with the corresponding accounting statements and supporting documents.

Eligible direct costs:

The eligible direct costs are those costs which, in accordance with the eligibility conditions set out in the previous paragraph, can be identified as specific costs directly linked to the implementation of the proposed activities.

In particular, the following direct costs actually incurred by the beneficiary are eligible, provided that they satisfy the criteria set out above:

- a) The cost of staff assigned to the activities comprising actual salaries plus social security payments and other statutory costs included in remuneration, provided that this does not exceed the average rates under the beneficiary's usual policy on remuneration.

<p>These costs must be real costs incurred by the beneficiaries; costs relating to staff from other organisations are not eligible unless they are directly paid or refunded by the beneficiary and unless the staff concerned are directly and exclusively assigned to the activities; if they are only partly involved in the activity, then only the percentage of the allocated time is eligible. The participation of this staff in the activity has to be proven by secondment contracts, job descriptions, attendance records or any other evidence.</p>

- b) Travel and subsistence allowances for staff participating in the activities (for European seminars, training, conferences, etc.), provided that they are in line with the beneficiary's usual practice on travel costs. If these costs are considered to be extravagant, they will be revised downwards and capped in accordance with the scales approved annually by the European Commission.

- c) Other direct costs associated with projects:

- Costs of events and campaigns (organisation costs, room and equipment hire, travelling and subsistence costs for participants and speakers, interpreting costs, fees for external speakers, local transport costs);
- Administrative costs and costs linked to technical support: information/production costs (publication, books, CD-ROMs, videos, Internet, etc.), translation, dissemination and distribution costs;

- Other running costs necessary for the implementation of the action plan;
- Costs of consumables and supplies to the extent that they are identifiable and assigned to the activities;
- Costs arising from other contracts awarded by the beneficiary for the purposes of carrying out the activities, provided that the conditions laid down in Article II.9 of the grant agreement are met;
- Costs arising directly from requirements imposed by the implementation of the activities, including, where applicable, the costs of any financial services especially the cost of financial guarantees;

9.6. Ineligible costs

The following costs are not considered eligible:

- Return on capital;
- Debts and debt service charges;
- Provisions for losses or possible future liabilities;
- Doubtful debts
- Interest owed;
- Exchange losses;
- VAT, unless the beneficiaries show that they are unable to recover it;
- Costs covered by another activities or action plan receiving a Community grant;
- Inordinate or ill-considered costs;
- Excessive or reckless expenditure;
- Purchases of equipment;
- Substitution costs for replacing persons involved in the activities;
- Expenses related to participants of non-eligible countries;
- Expenses related to use of experts/speakers from non-eligible countries, unless explicit prior authorization is granted by the Commission;
- Travel expenses to and from non-eligible countries, unless explicit prior authorization is granted by the Commission.

9.7. Legal entity

The Commission will propose a grant agreement only on the basis of acceptance of documents which make it possible to define the beneficiary's legal status.

N.B.: This condition will be taken into account at the time of the signature of the grant agreement as described under section 5.1.2 of this call for proposals.

Therefore, applicants must provide the Commission with official documents allowing the assessment of the foundation's legal status (non-profit organisation, etc.).

Consequently, the bank details form (Annex IV) and the legal entities form (Annex V) should be submitted, duly completed and signed, together with a copy of the resolution, law, decree, or decision establishing the entity in question, or, failing that, any other official document attesting to the establishment of the entity, or attesting that the respective procedure has been started (see point 5.4).

Applicants can find the forms at the following addresses:

http://www.ec.europa.eu/budget/execution/ftiers_en.htm

http://www.ec.europa.eu/budget/execution/legal_entities_en.htm

9.8. Subcontracting and award of procurement contract

Where implementation of the activities requires sub-contracting or the awarding of a procurement contract, the beneficiary must obtain competitive tenders from prospective contractors and award the contract to the economically most advantageous tender, namely the tender with the best quality/price ratio, observing the principles of transparency and equal treatment of potential contractors and taking care to avoid conflicts of interests.

The beneficiary must clearly document the competitive tendering procedure, keep the Commission informed, and retain these documents in case there should be an audit.

10. PROCEDURE FOR THE SUBMISSION OF PROPOSALS

10.1. Publication

The text of the call for proposals, the grant application forms, the financial identification forms, the legal entities forms and, for information purposes, a copy of the standard agreement and a copy of the guarantees are being published on the Internet site of the Education and Culture DG (DG EAC) at the following address:

http://ec.europa.eu/citizenship/index_en.html

A notice of publication of the call for proposals is also being published in the Official Journal of the European Communities.

10.2. Application forms

Application should be submitted using the grant application forms for "pilot project – European political foundations". These forms can be downloaded from the above internet address.

Applications should be:

- Typed;
- Duly dated, filled in and signed by the person authorized to enter into legally binding commitments on behalf of the applicant organisation;

- Sent in two copies (the original being identified as such, plus one copy).

10.3. Submission of applications

Deadline for submission of applications: 28.09.2007

The Commission reserves the right to request additional information necessary to take a final decision on the award of financial support in case proposals are incomplete by the deadline.

The applicants are invited to send their application by post to the following address:

**European Commission
Directorate General for Education and Culture
Civil society – Partnerships and Visits Unit – D4
EAC/29/2007 Applications
MADOU – 20/046
1049 Brussels
Belgium**

For security reasons, applications by hand-delivery or by a courier service can only be delivered to the central post service of the European Commission:

**European Commission
Avenue du Bourget, 1
1140 Brussels
Belgium**

Applications sent by fax or e-mail will not be accepted.

10.4 Notification procedure

Applicants will be informed in writing of the receipt of their application.

If an application is deemed ineligible, a letter indicating the reasons will be sent to the beneficiary. Applicants will be informed of the Commission's final decision concerning their grant application in writing.

10.5 Publicity

All grants awarded in the framework of this call for proposals will be published on the Internet site of the DG EAC.

With the agreement of the beneficiary (unless this information is such that it will jeopardise its security or prejudice its financial interests), the services of the European Commission will publish the following information:

- Name and address of the beneficiary;
- Subject of the grant;

- Amount awarded and the rate of funding.

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

Furthermore, beneficiaries are required to give prominence to the name and logo of the European Commission on all their publications, posters, programmes and other products realised under the co-financed activities.

Failure to comply with this obligation may result in the grant award being reduced.

10.6. Rules applicable

- Council Regulation (EC, Euratom) No 1605/2002 of 25 June 2002 on the Financial Regulation applicable to the general budget of the European Communities⁵, as last amended by Council Regulation (CE, Euratom) No 1995/2006 of 13 December 2006
- Commission Regulation (EC, Euratom) No 2342/2002 of 23 December 2002 laying down detailed rules for the implementation of Council Regulation (EC, Euratom) No 1605/2002 on the Financial Regulation applicable to the general budget of the European Communities⁶, as last amended by Commission Regulation (EC, Euratom) No 478/2007 of 23 April 2007⁷

11. CONTACT

The Commission service responsible for implementing and managing the call for proposals DG EAC/29/2007 is the unit *Civil Society: Partnerships and Visits of the Education and Culture (EAC) Directorate-General.*

All relevant information can be obtained from:

European Commission
Directorate General for Education and Culture
Civil Society – Partnerships and Visits Unit – D4
EAC-29/2007 Applications
MADOU (office 20/058)
1049 Brussels
Belgium

E-mail: sara.wilmet@ec.europa.eu

Tel: +32 2 299.27.81

⁵ OJ L 248, 16.9.2002

⁶ OJ L 357, 31.12.2002

⁷ OJ L 111, 28.4.2007

ANNEXES:

- Annex I - Official application form**
- Annex II - Detailed estimated budget**
- Annex III - Financial capacity form**
- Annex IV - Financial identification form**
- Annex V - Legal entities form**
- Annex VI - Model of attestation concerning the applicant's affiliation to a European party**