



EUROPEAN COMMISSION  
DIRECTORATE-GENERAL COMMUNICATION

Representation & Communication in Member States  
**Representation in Ireland**

## CALL FOR PROPOSALS ED-IRELAND-2022

### SELECTION OF PARTNERS TO CARRY OUT *EUROPE DIRECT* ACTIVITIES

(2022-2025)

IN IRELAND

#### Key facts

Overall amount allocated to Ireland for 2022: €336,400,

Annual grant for co-financing *EUROPE DIRECT* for the years 2022-2025:  
€45,600.00

Grant for 2022: €3,800

One-off extra grant in 2022 for an event promoting *EUROPE DIRECT*: €4,800.00

Deadline for applications: 13/10/2022

The call aims to establish at least 1 (one) *EUROPE DIRECT* in each of the following regions/areas (according to the methodology set out in section 9.1 and provided there are applications in each region/area that meet the minimum quality levels set in section 9):

Cork and Limerick.

## 1. INTRODUCTION – BACKGROUND

The European Commission (hereafter ‘the Commission’), via its Representation in Ireland, is launching a call for proposals to select partners to run *EUROPE DIRECT* in 2022-2025.

This call is launched in accordance with the 2020 work programme<sup>1</sup> of the Directorate-General for Communication of the Commission.

The current network was launched with some 424 centres across 27 EU countries. By launching the next generation, the Commission wishes to support eligible entities (see

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<sup>1</sup> [https://ec.europa.eu/info/publications/work-programme-2020-communication-activities\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/info/publications/work-programme-2020-communication-activities_en)

section 6.1) that commit to carrying out a set of information and engagement activities as *EUROPE DIRECT*<sup>2</sup>.

The successful applicants will be called “*partners*” of the Commission and of the European Parliament (hereafter ‘the Parliament’) and will sign a Framework Partnership Agreement with the Commission Representation in Ireland. The Framework Partnership Agreement establishes a legal commitment between the parties without creating obligations related to the implementation of a concrete Annual Communication Plan or to the payment of a determined financial contribution. The Framework Partnership Agreement will be implemented by signing Specific Grant Agreements. A partner may be awarded an annual grant each year via a Specific Grant Agreement, provided that the conditions set out in section 10 are complied with.

The annual grant<sup>3</sup> amounts to €45,600 per year. Exceptionally, the grant for 2022 will amount to €3800 as it will start on 1 December and thus will cover 1 month of *EUROPE DIRECT* operations. In addition, a one-off extra grant in 2022 for an event promoting *EUROPE DIRECT* amounts to €4,800. It does not finance the entire costs of the activities of a *EUROPE DIRECT*. This means that partners must secure sufficient funding from other sources in order to carry out *EUROPE DIRECT* activities.

In addition to the grant, the Commission and the Parliament will provide *EUROPE DIRECT* with timely information on topical EU issues, training, publications and networking opportunities.

The *EUROPE DIRECT* network is managed by the Commission and its Representation in Ireland.

## **2. *EUROPE DIRECT* – DEFINITION**

### **2.1 MISSION**

*EUROPE DIRECT* engage with citizens on a pro-active and continuous basis to ensure greater ownership of the European project. By organizing information and engagement activities, *EUROPE DIRECT* enable citizens to make informed choices about the future of the EU by fully participating in the European democratic process.

By cultivating a better understanding of how the EU and its parliamentary democracy work and which issues fall under the EU responsibility, *EUROPE DIRECT* raise citizens’ awareness of how they benefit from the EU on a daily basis, while also highlighting its added value.

*EUROPE DIRECT* help identify the aspects of EU policies that are important at local level and can frame messages and activities to match local needs. Through outreach and citizen engagement activities, *EUROPE DIRECT* help prepare the ground for the strategic political priorities of the Commission and of the Parliament.

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<sup>2</sup> Under this call for proposals, the name changes from *Europe Direct Information Centres* to *EUROPE DIRECT*: [https://europa.eu/european-union/contact/meet-us\\_en](https://europa.eu/european-union/contact/meet-us_en)

<sup>3</sup> Grants will be awarded based on the procedures set out in Title VIII of the EU Financial Regulation.

*EUROPE DIRECT* also listen to citizens' expectations and enable feedback to the EU institutions.

*EUROPE DIRECT* work closely with the Commission Representations and with the European Parliament Liaison Offices (hereafter 'the EPLOs') in the respective Member States. They also seek cooperation with other EU outreach networks and local contact points, including relevant local networks (where these exist), and promote exchanges and coordination between them.

## **2.2 FIVE CORE TASKS**

*EUROPE DIRECT* must perform the following tasks:

### **Task 1: Information and engagement with citizens**

*EUROPE DIRECT* address the public on EU issues by organizing *information* and *engagement* activities such as events, workshops, citizens' dialogues and any other form of offline or online interaction.

*EUROPE DIRECT* provide *information* both as a basic service and as a pre-condition for meaningful *engagement* with citizens. This takes place via targeted information activities prior to proper engagement with citizens, such as relevant readings, infographics and useful explanations of EU competences, policies and priorities.

### **Task 2: Relations with local media and multipliers**

*EUROPE DIRECT* establish regular contacts and strive to conclude *solid partnerships* with local media and multipliers such as:

- a) local press and their journalists;
- b) local TV channels and their editorial boards;
- c) local radio channels and broadcasters;
- d) social media influencers active in the given region or involved in topics deemed sensitive for the region;
- e) bloggers and vloggers active in the given region or involved in topics deemed sensitive for the region;
- f) other local multipliers or opinion leaders.

*EUROPE DIRECT* regularly provide local media and multipliers with relevant information and content on EU policies and priorities and involve them in their activities with the public.

### **Task 3: Awareness about sensitive EU topics at local level**

*EUROPE DIRECT* flag to the Commission Representation any significant concerns and local perception of EU policies or projects on the ground that are likely to negatively affect local public opinion of the EU. This includes distorted or inaccurate information about the EU with a particular local angle (i.e. different to the rest of the country) that gives rise to such concerns.

In case the inaccurate information is related to the Parliament, its work and its members, *EUROPE DIRECT* flag it to the EPLO.

Ahead of a Commissioner's visit or similar high-level visit, the Commission Representation may ask *EUROPE DIRECT* about specific sensitivities on the ground, and *EUROPE DIRECT* must be able to provide a concise overview.

**Task 4: The EU in schools**

*EUROPE DIRECT* connect with schools in their catchment area<sup>4</sup> and promote official EU learning material, such as that contained in the Learning Corner<sup>5</sup>, the Parliament's Education and learning webpage<sup>6</sup> and any other official material produced by the EU institutions.

With a focus on students older than 12, *EUROPE DIRECT* may also be involved in direct activities in schools and in training teachers.

*EUROPE DIRECT* will also cooperate with EPLO in the implementation of activities targeting the youth community, such as the ones related to the European Youth Event<sup>7</sup>, the European Parliament Ambassador School Programme and Euroscola<sup>8</sup>.

In addition, *EUROPE DIRECT* support the 'Back to school' and 'Back to university'<sup>9</sup> initiatives by making it easier for participating EU staff to access educational institutions.

However, direct activities in schools may not represent the majority of a *EUROPE DIRECT* activities.

**Task 5: Promoting a regional network of networks**

*EUROPE DIRECT* acquire a clear overview of the presence and mission of other EU outreach or information networks<sup>10</sup> in their region, area or catchment area they

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<sup>4</sup> The area where the *EUROPE DIRECT* activities will take place.

<sup>5</sup> [https://europa.eu/learning-corner/home\\_en](https://europa.eu/learning-corner/home_en)

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.europarl.europa.eu/visiting/en/education-learning>

<sup>7</sup> <https://www.europarl.europa.eu/european-youth-event/en/take-part!.html>

<sup>8</sup> <https://www.europarl.europa.eu/euroscola/en/home.html>

<sup>9</sup> 'Back to school/Back to university' is an inter-institutional initiative, launched in 2004 and 2018 respectively, which aims to give young people the chance to get to know the European project from close up as EU staff become the 'face' of the EU for a day. From talking about their lives and career paths, to explaining how the EU advocates sustainability and democracy in the world, EU staff from 14 EU institutions and agencies host interactive discussions with young people all over Europe. For students, this is a unique opportunity to ask questions – from youth and education opportunities, to working and living abroad and the use of languages in the EU. It offers young people an opportunity to openly discuss a variety of cross-border topics with someone 'on the inside', take part in a debate about the European project, freely express their views and to be heard.

<sup>10</sup> Annex 3 contains a non-exhaustive list of the EU outreach or information networks.

cover<sup>11</sup>. By promoting regular contacts among networks, *EUROPE DIRECT*, together with other networks on the ground, jointly organise signposting and cross-referencing with each other to provide a better and simpler service for citizens and better coverage of the area.

### 2.3 EU STRATEGIC CONTEXT

*EUROPE DIRECT* carry out their activities taking into account the EU strategic priorities as they emerge, for the years 2022 to 2024, from the political guidelines of the Commission President: [https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/default/files/political-guidelines-next-commission\\_en\\_0.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/default/files/political-guidelines-next-commission_en_0.pdf) and from possible inter-institutional common initiatives on the political priorities agreed by the presidents of the Commission, Council and Parliament.

These political guidelines, and those that may follow for 2025, are to be taken into consideration together with the recommendations on communication put forward by the Commission at the informal meeting of EU-27 leaders in Sibiu, Romania, in May 2019, as described on page 51 of the following document:

[https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/default/files/comm\\_sibiu\\_06-05\\_en.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/default/files/comm_sibiu_06-05_en.pdf)

When implementing the activities, *EUROPE DIRECT* should ensure that the above strategic priorities, together with the above-mentioned Sibiu recommendations, are anchored and adapted to the specific local characteristics.

Each year, in time for drafting their Annual Communication Plans (see section 10), the Commission will require *EUROPE DIRECT* to focus their activities on certain particular strategic priorities and any other additional one(s) that might have emerged in the meantime, including those agreed with the Parliament. If this is the case, *EUROPE DIRECT* will need to align the Annual Communication Plans accordingly.

- **Flexibility clause:** Each year, EUROPE DIRECT may be asked to refocus or adjust, where possible, their Annual Communication Plan to take into account emerging communication needs that could not be defined when the Annual Communication Plan was drafted.

In such cases, the Commission will communicate the details to EUROPE DIRECT in a timely manner. EUROPE DIRECT will then adjust its communication activities accordingly, e.g. by replacing or repositioning the planned activities.

Such requests may concern:

- a) the target groups addressed in information and engagement activities;
- b) specific issues ('hot topics') arising from political and societal shifts;
- c) topics arising from the Conference on the Future of Europe<sup>12</sup>. EUROPE DIRECT should be prepared to dedicate part of the engagement activities to

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<sup>11</sup> Regions or areas are specified in the "Key facts" text box appearing at the beginning of the call for proposals under the heading 'Regions/areas targeted by the call'.

<sup>12</sup> The Conference on the Future of Europe started in 2020 and continued into 2021 until May 2022. The Commission published on 17 June a Communication offering a detailed assessment of what is needed to follow up on the Conference's proposals. More information is available at: [https://ec.europa.eu/info/publications/commissions-contribution-shaping-conference-future-europe\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/info/publications/commissions-contribution-shaping-conference-future-europe_en)

structured dialogue with the wider public that follows from the activities of the Conference on the Future of Europe, in a form to be defined by the Commission and at inter-institutional level.

For 2022, the annual priorities are, in addition to the [6 Commission priorities](#) 2019-2024:

1. NextGenerationEU: promoting the initiative and showcasing how its EU funded projects impact the region

2. European Year of Youth

[https://europa.eu/youth/year-of-youth\\_en](https://europa.eu/youth/year-of-youth_en)

3. Follow-up to the Conference on the future of Europe

In addition, in 2022, within the shortest possible time from the start of the operations, the partner hosting a *EUROPE DIRECT* will organise a promotion event involving citizens and regional/local media, to make the existence of *EUROPE DIRECT* known to the local community.

## **2.4 EUROPE DIRECT – BASIC REQUIREMENTS**

All *EUROPE DIRECT* must have:

- a) a recognisable space hosting a walk-in centre (hereinafter referred to as the ‘seat of the *EUROPE DIRECT*’) with a plaque<sup>13</sup> fixed to the front side of the premises at street level and displaying as close as possible to the plaque the *EUROPE DIRECT* opening hours or/and appointment arrangements, and the contact telephone number;
- b) a dedicated phone line and email address;
- c) online presence<sup>14</sup>.

All *EUROPE DIRECT* must:

- d) support the communication and engagement activities organised by the Commission Representation and the EPLO, including the development of [together.eu](#) community;
- e) respond to individual requests for meetings;
- f) reply to questions or direct people to the appropriate EU networks or to the Europe Direct Contact Centre<sup>15</sup>;

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<sup>13</sup> To be provided by the Commission at the beginning of *EUROPE DIRECT* operations. If fixing such a plaque requires formal permission, the partner will need to obtain permission.

<sup>14</sup> Annex 4 contains general guidelines on minimum standards for online presence.

<sup>15</sup> More information on Europe Direct Contact Centres: [https://europa.eu/european-union/contact/call-us\\_en](https://europa.eu/european-union/contact/call-us_en)

- g) interact with the public via social media;
- h) distribute EU publications/information/video clips/messages;
- i) provide monthly reporting in English on the activities of their *EUROPE DIRECT*<sup>16</sup> via an online reporting tool put at disposal by the Commission.

## 2.5 PARTNER'S COMMITMENT TO SUPPORT *EUROPE DIRECT*

The selected partner commits to supporting its *EUROPE DIRECT* as follows:

- a) ensuring that *EUROPE DIRECT* provides **neutral, accurate and factually correct information** about the EU that is neither used nor considered to be used for purposes not commensurate with the *EUROPE DIRECT* mission;
- b) using the *EUROPE DIRECT* **name, logo** and other forms of identification provided by the Commission systematically for all activities and on all products;
- c) ensuring that *EUROPE DIRECT* is run by a ***EUROPE DIRECT* manager** who meets the relevant requirements as detailed under section 8.2;
- d) making sure that *EUROPE DIRECT* has access to **meeting facilities**, enabling the successful implementation of the activities that require meeting space, as detailed in the Annual Communication Plan;
- e) ensuring that *EUROPE DIRECT* activities are smoothly implemented from the **first month** of any given year, irrespective of the fact that 70% of grant pre-financing will be paid in the course of the first quarter of that year, followed by a final payment the following year<sup>17</sup>;
- f) putting its own **partnerships with media** and useful contacts at the disposal of *EUROPE DIRECT* and ensuring a fruitful relationship between *EUROPE DIRECT* and regional/local media;
- g) ensuring that all *EUROPE DIRECT* activities are carried out **free of charge** for the citizens involved;
- h) putting its own **media facilities and capacity** (e.g. press office and press releases) at the disposal of *EUROPE DIRECT*;
- i) fixing a plaque (see section 2.4 a) to the front side of the premises at street level where the seat of *EUROPE DIRECT* is located;

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<sup>16</sup> Following the requirements set out in the Annual Communication Plan (see section III PART 2 of Annex 1).

<sup>17</sup> For 2021 first month of operations is May and the pre-financing will be paid in the second quarter of the year.adapt according to date of start of operations

- j) making sure that the **EUROPE DIRECT manager participates in coordination/training meetings** organised by the Commission Representation and by the Commission headquarters in Brussels<sup>18</sup>;
- k) **notifying** the Commission Representation as soon as possible of **problems** with implementing the Annual Communication Plan.
- l) **ensuring continuity of services in exceptional circumstances** - the partner in agreement with the Commission Representation should adapt the offline activities set out in the Annual Communication Plan, wherever possible, making full use of **online** formats and increased social media engagement, without undue delay. It is essential that *EUROPE DIRECT* continue engaging with people on the ground, thus ensuring continuity of their services.

## 2.6 INDEPENDENCE CLAUSE

*EUROPE DIRECT* will work closely with the Commission Representation and with the European Parliament’s Liaison Office. However, they do not represent nor speak on behalf of the EU.

*EUROPE DIRECT* must ensure at all times that they convey the EU’s activities and positions as accurately as possible and communicate in a neutral, factually correct and non-partisan way. They should also explain to their audience the role of *EUROPE DIRECT*.

When *EUROPE DIRECT* manager runs for national or European elections, the partner must inform the Commission Representation without undue delay. In addition, the partner must suspend the *EUROPE DIRECT* manager as long as needed and propose suitable replacement.

## 3. TIMETABLE

	<b>Steps</b>	<b>Provisional dates</b>
(a)	Publication of the call	15/09/2022
(b)	<b>Deadline for submitting questions</b>	06/10/2022
(c)	<b>Deadline for submitting applications 17:00 BRUSSELS LOCAL TIME</b>	13/10/2022
(d)	Information to applicants about outcome of the	31/10/2022

<sup>18</sup> For one annual meeting/training course held in one of the EU countries, the Commission will cover only accommodation costs. The Commission will cover travel and accommodation costs relating to any other meetings/training courses. For annual national meetings held in Ireland, the Commission Representation will cover only accommodation costs. Annual national meetings are organized once or twice a year and involve managers of the Europe Direct Network in Ireland.



	procedure	
(e)	Signature of Framework Partnership Agreement & Specific Grant Agreement for 2022	14/11/2022
(f)	Enter into force of Framework Partnership Agreement & Specific Grant Agreement for 2022	01/12/2022

#### **4. BUDGET AVAILABLE**

The total budget earmarked for the co-financing of projects under this call for proposals for the first year of implementation (2022) is €17.200.

This amount is subject to budget availability.

Budget availabilities for subsequent years are subject to the respective annual EU budget being adopted by the EU budgetary authority.

The amount of each annual grant for the years 2022 – 2025 will be €45,600.

The amount of each annual grant for 2022 will be €3.800.

In addition, a one-off extra grant in 2022 for an event promoting *EUROPE DIRECT* amounts to €4,800.

The Commission reserves the right to draw up a reserve list. Applicants are placed on the reserve list due to a lack of budget. If additional budgetary appropriations become available, those applicants may be contacted in the order of their ranking and following the regional priority provisions as specified under section 9.1.

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

#### **5. ADMISSIBILITY REQUIREMENTS**

To be admissible, applications must:

- be submitted by using the application form and electronic submission system referred to in section 14;
- be submitted no later than the deadline for submitting applications referred to in section 3; and
- be drafted in English.

Failure to comply with these requirements will lead to the application being rejected.

#### **6. ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA**

##### **6.1. Eligible applicants**

Proposals may be submitted by any of the following applicants:

- public body, such as municipality or other level of local/regional authority, or

- federation/association of local authorities, non-profit organisation, social partner, educational or training establishment.

Natural persons are not eligible.

Affiliated entities that provide funding, but do not become beneficiaries, are allowed (for more on affiliated entities, see section 4 of the Guide for applicants: <https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/portal/screen/opportunities/topic-details/ed-ie-2022>)

Legal entities that form one applicant out of several entities, which together comply with criteria for being awarded a grant, may participate as ‘sole applicants’ (for more on sole applicants, see section 4 of the Guide for applicants <https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/portal/screen/opportunities/topic-details/ed-ie-2022>).

### **Country of establishment**

Only applications from legal entities established in Ireland are eligible.

### **Supporting documents**

Applicants, including any affiliated entities and/or entities forming together a ‘sole applicant’, if relevant, wishing to submit a proposal for this call for proposals must be registered in the [Participant Register](#) – an online repository of organisations participating in Commission calls for tenders or proposals (‘participants’).

When registering, participants receive a unique 9-digit Participant Identification Code (PIC). They only need to register once – they can then update or reuse the information provided in other Commission calls for tenders or proposals.

At any moment during the grant procedure, the Research Executive Agency Validation Services (hereafter ‘the EU Validation Services’) may contact the participant and ask for supporting documents on legal existence and status. The register’s messaging system is used to send requests to the participant’s email address. It is the participant’s responsibility to provide a valid email address and to check its mailbox regularly.

The [EU Funding & Tenders rules on legal entity validation, LEAR appointment and financial capacity assessment](#) list the documents that may be requested.

**⚠ A request for supporting documents in no way implies that the applicant has been successful.**

## **7. EXCLUSION CRITERIA**

### **7.1. Exclusion**

To assess if applicants are not subject to any of the exclusion criteria, applicants together with any affiliated entities and/or entities forming a ‘sole beneficiary’, if relevant, must declare on honour that they are not in one of the situations referred to in Articles 136(1) and 141 of the Financial Regulation by filling in the template of declaration on honour in Annex 2.

This obligation is fulfilled in one of the following ways:

- (i) the applicant signs a declaration in its name and on behalf of its affiliated entities and/or entities forming a ‘sole beneficiary’; or
- (ii) the applicant and its affiliated entities and/or entities forming a ‘sole beneficiary’ each sign a separate declaration in their own name.

## **7.2. Rejection from the call for proposals**

The authorising officer shall not award a grant to an applicant who:

- (a) is in a situation that excludes them from taking part in the action, as referred to in the Declaration on honour (see Annex 2); or
- (b) has misrepresented the information required as a condition for participating in the procedure or has failed to supply that information; or
- (c) was previously involved in the preparation of documents used in the award procedure where this entails a breach of the principle of equal treatment, including distortion of competition, that cannot be remedied otherwise.

The same exclusion criteria apply to affiliated entities and sole beneficiaries.

Administrative sanctions (exclusion) may be imposed on applicants, or affiliated entities and/or sole beneficiaries, where applicable, if any of the declarations or information provided as a condition for participating in this procedure prove to be false.

## **8. SELECTION CRITERIA**

### **8.1. Financial capacity**

Applicants must have stable and sufficient sources of funding to maintain their activity throughout the duration of the grant and to participate in the co-financing of the *EUROPE DIRECT* Annual Communication Plan.

The applicants’ financial capacity (including where the application is by ‘sole applicant’ as specified in section 6.1) will be assessed based on a declaration on honour.

This obligation is fulfilled in one of the following ways:

- (i) the applicant signs a declaration in its name and on behalf of entities forming a ‘sole beneficiary’; OR
- (ii) the applicant and entities forming a ‘sole beneficiary’ each sign a separate declaration in their own name.

If the Commission has any doubts about the financial capacity, it may request further information.

If the Commission considers that the financial capacity is insufficient, it will reject the application.

### **8.2 Operational capacity**

Applicants must have the professional competencies as well as appropriate qualifications necessary to complete the proposed activities. This includes:

- the capacity to host the ‘seat of *EUROPE DIRECT*’ in the form presented in the call for proposals (see section 2.4. a);
- experience working in public communication or a field that relates to the call for proposal’s objectives over the last 2 years;
- *EUROPE DIRECT* manager with the following responsibilities and requirements:

### **Responsibilities**

- serve as the main contact person for *EUROPE DIRECT*;
- develop and implement the Annual Communication Plan;
- report on the implementation of the Annual Communication Plan;
- oversee all internal and external communication of *EUROPE DIRECT*;
- manage and coordinate the *EUROPE DIRECT* activities on a day-to-day basis;
- attend training courses/meetings and events organised by the Commission.

### **Requirements**

- previous experience as a project manager (2 years);
- good knowledge of the EU, its institutions and bodies and its activities;
- native speaker level or equivalent in English;
- good written and presentation skills in English;

### **Supporting documents**

To assess if the applicant fulfils the above criteria, the applicant must provide the following documents:

- declaration on honour (see Annex 2);
- description of the *EUROPE DIRECT* seat, including location, purpose (enabling the provision of information, event organisation or both), equipment and type of premises for hosting *EUROPE DIRECT*<sup>19</sup>;
- description<sup>20</sup> of relevant past and current performance in public communication or a field that relates to the call for proposal’s objectives over the last 2 years, including outcomes, timeline, objectives, key audiences, messages, channels and resources;
- CV in Europass format<sup>21</sup> for the proposed *EUROPE DIRECT* manager;
- motivation letter that demonstrates the *EUROPE DIRECT* manager’s capabilities and expertise in achieving the objectives set out in the call for proposals<sup>22</sup>.

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<sup>19</sup> The description must not exceed one (1) page (including visual representations, if any).

<sup>20</sup> The description must not exceed one (1) page.

<sup>21</sup><https://europa.eu/europass/en>

<sup>22</sup> The description must not exceed one (1) page.

The Commission Representation may invite the applicant to provide extra proof. This can happen during or after the evaluation of the application.

If legal entities form **one** applicant (the ‘sole applicant’), as specified in section 6.1, the above requirements apply to those entities together.

## 9. AWARD CRITERIA

### 9.1 Award criteria for the Framework Partnership Agreement and Specific Grant Agreement covering the 2022 Annual Communication Plan

The eligible proposals will be assessed based on the following criteria:

Part 1 of the proposal, i.e. description of the catchment area and of the applicant’s unique qualities, will be evaluated against the following criteria:

1. **Quality** of the description of the **catchment area** (*see section III.1.1 of the Application form – Annex 1*), both in terms of coverage (number of specific local characteristics taken into consideration) and analysis (level of detail and knowledge of the challenges linked to each specific local characteristics), and **relevance** of the elements described with respect to the competences of the EU and of its policy priorities. (maximum score: 20 points)
2. **Relevance** of the **applicant’s unique qualities** (*see section III.1.2 of the Application form – Annex 1*) for the purposes of addressing the communication and engagement needs of citizens in **the specific catchment area** (*see section III.1.1 of the application form – Annex 1*). (maximum score: 20 points)

Is the entity (of the applicant) where the EUROPE DIRECT will be hosted a relevant and appropriate environment for the EUROPE DIRECT activities?  
Are the applicant’s connections with the local civil society organisations sufficiently established and relevant for reaching out to the target audiences in the catchment area?

Part 2 of the proposal, i.e. the 2022 Annual Communication Plan, will be evaluated against the following criteria:

3. **Quality** of the Annual Communication Plan and relevant coverage of the five tasks and of the annual communication priorities (see section 2.2 and 2.3). (maximum score: 30 points)
4. **Coherence** of the Annual Communication Plan with the description of the catchment area and with the applicant’s unique qualities. (maximum score: 30 points)

Proposals that score below 60% for any of the above award criteria (total score for each of the four award criteria) will not be considered. The same rule applies to proposals that score below 70% of the total maximum possible mark.

The call aims to establish at least 1 (one) *EUROPE DIRECT* in each of the following regions/areas (provided there are applications in each region/area that meet the minimum quality levels set in section 9): Cork and Limerick.

Applications will be ranked in order of merit, i.e. according to the number of points received. If multiple proposals are received from the same region/area, the Commission will award the grant to the proposal with the highest score in the given region/area. Once the minimum number of *EUROPE DIRECT* has been awarded according to the priority provisions stated above, the Commission will then award grants to the proposals with the highest score (not linked to region/area) until the annual budget earmarked for the co-financing of the communication activities of *EUROPE DIRECT* in Ireland has been reached. If the budget cannot cover the minimum number of *EUROPE DIRECT* in all the regions/areas as specified above, the Commission will award grant(s) to the proposal(s) with the highest score among the best proposal from each region, until the annual budget earmarked for the co-financing of the communication activities of *EUROPE DIRECT* in Ireland has been reached.

The proposals that score enough to be considered but for which there is not enough budget will be placed on a reserve list. If additional budgetary appropriations become available, those applicants may be contacted in the order of their ranking and following the regional priority provisions as specified above.

## **9.2 Award criteria for the Specific Grant Agreements - Annual Communication Plans from 2023 to 2025**

1. Quality of the Annual Communication Plan and relevant coverage of the five tasks and of the annual communication priorities (see section 2.2 and 2.3). (maximum score: 50 points)
2. Coherence of the Annual Communication Plan with the description of the catchment area and of the applicant's unique qualities. (maximum score: 50 points)

Proposals that score below 60% for any of the above award criteria (total score for each of the two award criteria) will not be considered. The same rule applies to proposals that score below 70% of the total maximum possible mark.

## **10. LEGAL COMMITMENTS**

If the application is selected, a Framework Partnership Agreement detailing the conditions of cooperation will be sent to the applicant together with information on how to formalise the agreement.

The Commission Representation will sign a Framework Partnership Agreement (1 December 2022 – 31 December 2025) with successful applicants, followed by a Specific Grant Agreement for the 2022 Annual Communication Plan. The draft text of the agreement will be provided to the successful applicants in due time.

The award of an annual grant does not establish an entitlement for subsequent years.

Each year, within the period covered by the Framework Partnership Agreement, the Commission Representation will invite partners to submit proposals for the following year's Annual Communication Plan. It will evaluate the proposals submitted against the award criteria (see section 9.2). Annual Specific Grant Agreements can be signed subject to a positive evaluation of the proposal.

In this case, the exclusion and selection criteria will not be re-examined. Partners must report any change in circumstances since they signed the Framework Partnership Agreement that could affect the exclusion and selection criteria.

The Commission Representation reserves the right to verify compliance with exclusion and selection criteria at any time during the term the Framework Partnership Agreement.

Indicative calendar of legal commitments:

Year/agreement	Submission of proposal	Award notification	Signature	Start/end
Framework Partnership Agreement	Submitted in response to this call for proposals	End October 2022	First half November 2022	1 December 2022-31 December 2025
2022 Specific Grant Agreement	Submitted in response to this call for proposals	End October 2022	First half November 2022	1 December 2022-31 December 2022
2023 Specific Grant Agreement	Submitted in response to the invitation to submit proposals	Before the end of 2022	First quarter of 2023	1 January 2023-31 December 2023
2024 Specific Grant Agreement	Submitted in response to the invitation to submit proposals	Before the end of 2023	First quarter of 2024	1 January 2024-31 December 2024

2025 Specific Grant Agreement	Submitted in response to the invitation to submit proposals	Before the end of 2024	First quarter of 2025	1 January 2025-31 December 2025
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## **11. FINANCIAL PROVISIONS**

### **11.1. Form of the grant**

The grant for the Annual Communication Plan will take the form of a lump sum contribution amounting to €45,600.

Exceptionally, the grant for 2022 will amount to €3800 as it will start on 1 December and thus will cover 1 month of *EUROPE DIRECT* operations.

The grant will be paid provided the Annual Communication Plan is implemented as per the submitted proposal.

In addition, a one-off extra grant in 2022 in the form of lump sum contribution for an event promotion *EUROPE DIRECT* will amount to €4,800.

The grant will be paid provided the event is implemented according to the conditions set out under annual priorities for 2021 in the section 2.3

### **11.2. Balanced budget**

The estimated budget of the action included in the application form must be balanced. It must have revenue and expenditure in balance.

The budget must be drawn up in €.

The applicant must ensure that the resources necessary to carry out the action are not entirely funded by the EU grant.

Co-financing of the action may take the form of:

- the beneficiary’s own resources;
- financial contributions from third parties.

Overall co-financing may also include in-kind contributions from third parties, i.e. non-financial resources made available free of charge by third parties to the beneficiary.

### **11.3. Final grant amount**

The Commission calculates the final grant amount at the time of the balance payment. This involves the following steps:

- The Commission determines if the actions were carried out as per the proposal.
- The balance payment amounts to the grant amount minus pre-financing.
- The Commission may reduce the grant amount if the action has not been implemented properly (i.e. if it has not been implemented or has been



implemented poorly, partially or late), or if another obligation under the Agreement has been breached.

- The amount of the reduction will be proportionate to the degree to which the action has not been implemented.

#### 11.4. Reporting and payment arrangements

The beneficiary may request the following payments provided that the actions as per the Annual Communication Plan are duly implemented and the conditions of the grant agreement are fulfilled (e.g. payment deadlines). Payment requests must be accompanied by the documents provided below and detailed in the grant agreement:

Payment request	Accompanying documents	Payment deadline
A <b>pre-financing payment</b> corresponding to 70% of the grant amount awarded	signed Specific Grant Agreement	Within 30 calendar days from the entry into force of the Specific Grant Agreement (it enters into force on the date on which the last party signs)
<b>Payment of the balance</b> The Commission establishes the amount of this payment based on the calculation of the final grant amount (see section 11.3 above)	annual report on the implementation of the Annual Communication Plan	60 calendar days following submission of the balance payment (the beneficiary has 60 calendar days to submit the balance payment following the end of the reporting period)

#### 11.5. Other financial conditions

##### a) **Non-cumulative award**

An action may only receive one grant from the EU budget.

##### b) **Non-retroactivity**

No grant may be awarded retrospectively for actions already completed.

A grant may be awarded for an action that has already begun only where the applicant can demonstrate in the grant application the need to start the action before the grant agreement is signed.

In such cases, costs eligible for financing must not have been incurred prior to the date of submission of the grant application.

##### c) **Implementation of contracts/subcontracting**

Where implementation of the action requires the award of procurement contracts ('implementation contracts'), the beneficiary may award the contract in accordance with its usual purchasing practices provided that it is awarded to the tender offering the best value for money or the lowest price (as appropriate), avoiding conflicts of interest.

The beneficiary is expected to clearly document the tendering procedure and retain the documentation in the event of an audit.

Beneficiaries may subcontract tasks that form part of the action. If they do so, they must ensure that, in addition to the above-mentioned conditions of best value for money and absence of conflicts of interest, they also comply with the following conditions:

- a) subcontracting does not cover core tasks of the action;
- b) recourse to subcontracting is justified because of the nature of the action and what is needed to implement it;
- c) any recourse to subcontracting, if not part of the description of the action and above €15 000 is communicated by the beneficiary and approved by the Commission. The Commission may grant approval:
  - (i) before any recourse to subcontracting, if the beneficiaries request an amendment;
  - (ii) after recourse to subcontracting if it:
    - is specifically justified in the interim or final technical report; and
    - does not entail changes to the grant agreement that would call into question the decision to award the grant or be contrary to the equal treatment of applicants;
- d) they ensure that certain conditions applicable to beneficiaries, listed in the grant agreement (e.g. visibility, confidentiality), are also applicable to subcontractors.

## **12. PUBLICITY**

### **12.1. By the beneficiaries of the grant**

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

To this end, beneficiaries are required to give prominence to the name and emblem of the EU on all publications, posters, programmes and other products they realise under the co-financed project.

For this reason, beneficiaries must:

- mention that *EUROPE DIRECT* is 'co-funded by the European Union';
- display the EU emblem in a prominent place;
- use the *EUROPE DIRECT* name, logo and other forms of identification provided by the Commission of the same size and prominence as the logo of the partner;
- fix a plaque (see section 2.4 a) to the front side of the premises at street level where the seat of *EUROPE DIRECT* is located.

Beneficiaries should also use a disclaimer stating that the EU is not responsible for the views presented in the publications and/or in conjunction with the activities for which the grant is used.

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

## **12.2. By the Commission**

All information relating to grants awarded over the course of a financial year will be published on an EU institution website no later than 30 June of the year following the financial year in which the grants were awarded.

The Commission will use the [Financial Transparency System](#) to publish the following information:

- name of the beneficiary;
- address of the beneficiary when the latter is a legal person; region when the beneficiary is a natural person as defined by NUTS 2<sup>23</sup> if he/she is domiciled within the EU, or equivalent if domiciled outside the EU;
- subject of the grant;
- amount awarded.

Following a reasoned and duly substantiated request by the beneficiary, this information will not be published if such disclosure risks threatening the rights and freedoms of individuals concerned as protected by the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights or risks harming the commercial interests of the beneficiary.

## **13. PROCESSING OF PERSONAL DATA**

The reply to any call for proposals involves the recording and processing of personal data (such as name, address and CV). Such data will be processed under Regulation (EU) 2018/1725 of 23 October 2018 on the protection of natural persons with regard to the processing of personal data by the Union institutions, bodies, offices and agencies and on the free movement of such data, and repealing Regulation (EC) No 45/2001 and Decision No 1247/2002/EC, OJ L 295/39. Unless indicated otherwise, the questions and any personal data requested that are required to evaluate the application in accordance with the call for proposals will be processed solely for that purpose by the Head of the Commission Representation in Ireland.

The Commission may register personal data in the early detection and exclusion system database if the beneficiary is in one of the situations mentioned in Articles 136 and 141 of Regulation (EU, Euratom) 2018/1046<sup>24</sup>. For more information, see the [privacy statement](#).

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<sup>23</sup> Commission Regulation (EC) No 105/2007 of 1 February 2007 amending the annexes to Regulation (EC) No 1059/2003 of the European Parliament and of the Council on the establishment of a common classification of territorial units for statistics (NUTS), OJ L39, 10.2.2007, p.1.

<sup>24</sup> <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A32018R1046>

## 14. PROCEDURE FOR THE SUBMISSION OF PROPOSALS

Applicants should visit <https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/portal/screen/opportunities/topic-details/ed-ie-2022> and follow the procedure for submitting a proposal.

Applications cannot be modified once the deadline for submission has passed. However, if there is a need to clarify certain aspects or to correct clerical mistakes, the Commission may contact the applicant during the evaluation process.

The Commission will inform applicants in writing about the results of the selection process.

Further information on how to submit the proposal is available in the Guide for applicants available at <https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/portal/screen/opportunities/topic-details/ed-ie-2022>

### ➤ **Contacts**

Applicants must read all the documents related to the call for proposals, including:

- Guide for applicants, available at <https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/portal/screen/opportunities/topic-details/ed-ie-2022>

- *Questions & Answers to be published at*  
[https://ireland.representation.ec.europa.eu/business-and-funding/tenders-and-contracts-ireland-european-commission/calls-tender-launched-commission-representation-ireland\\_en](https://ireland.representation.ec.europa.eu/business-and-funding/tenders-and-contracts-ireland-european-commission/calls-tender-launched-commission-representation-ireland_en)

For any further questions, applicants should send an email (indicating in the subject line the reference of the call ED-IE-2022 to the following email address: [eu-ie-info-request@ec.europa.eu](mailto:eu-ie-info-request@ec.europa.eu)

### ➤ **Annexes:**

- Annex 1: Application form, including checklist of documents to be provided
- Annex 2: Declaration on honour
- Annex 3: List of the EU outreach or information networks
- Annex 4: General guidelines on minimum standards for online presence