



EUROPEAN COMMISSION
DIRECTORATE-GENERAL
REGIONAL AND URBAN POLICY
Communication Unit

GUIDELINES FOR APPLICANTS

2019CE16BAT117

'Support for information measures relating to the EU Cohesion policy'

Deadline for submission of applications

10 December 2019

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DISCLAIMER

This document provides the applicants with a summary of the main legal and financial rules contained in the Financial Regulation (FR)¹ applicable to the general budget of the Union. **The information given is not exhaustive and applicants are invited to read carefully the call for proposals and the model grant agreement published with this call as the latter will constitute the legal basis for the grant.**

Should changes occur regarding formal requirements for submission of applications they will be highlighted and available at the following website http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/en/newsroom/funding-opportunities/calls-for-proposal/ where the call has been published; applicants are therefore advised to check the website regularly prior to submitting their application.

1. POLICY BACKGROUND

The political agenda of the European Union for the next years includes decisions of major importance for the future of the EU: a wide-ranging debate is taking place about the priorities on which the EU should focus. In parallel, a new multi-annual financial framework covering the period after 2020 will soon be adopted and new programmes and funding mechanisms will be set up to implement them.

In this context, it is important that future decisions about priorities for the EU take adequately into account the contribution of Cohesion policy² to delivering on the EU's priorities and its potential to help reconnect the EU with its citizens.

The Cohesion policy provides investments in all regions in the EU in order to support job creation, business competitiveness, economic growth, sustainable development, and improve citizens' quality of life across the EU's 276 regions. These investments – which represent a third of the total EU budget - help to deliver on the EU's political priorities. They represent the most tangible and concrete proof of the EU's impact in the daily life of millions of citizens.

However, citizens are still insufficiently aware of the results of Cohesion policy and their impacts on their lives. To enable an informed debate about future priorities for the EU and ensure more transparency on how the EU's funds are being used and with what results,

¹ Regulation (EU, Euratom) 2018/1046 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 18 July 2018 on the financial rules applicable to the general budget of the Union, amending Regulations (EU) No 1296/2013, (EU) No 1301/2013, (EU) No 1303/2013, (EU) No 1304/2013, (EU) No 1309/2013, (EU) No 1316/2013, (EU) No 223/2014, (EU) No 283/2014, and Decision No 541/2014/EU and repealing Regulation (EU, Euratom) No 966/2012 (OJ L 193 of 30.07.2018, p.1).

² http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/en/policy/what/investment-policy/

citizens should have a better knowledge and awareness of the investment in their countries, regions and cities.

The European Commission, the European Parliament and the Council of the EU have repeatedly emphasised the need to increase visibility of the EU's Cohesion policy, as illustrated by the General Affairs Council Conclusions³ on '*Bringing Cohesion policy closer to the citizens*', by the European Parliament resolution⁴ on '*Increasing engagements of partners and visibility in the performance of European Structural and Investment Funds*' and by the proposals from the Joint communication actions⁵ on Cohesion policy put forward by the European Commission.

Within the current legal framework governing the implementation of the EU's Investment and Structural Funds⁶, this call for proposals aims to provide support for the production and dissemination of information and content linked to the EU Cohesion policy, while respecting complete editorial independence of the actors involved.

2. THE EXPECTED RESULTS AND TARGET AUDIENCE

The content of the proposed information measures will depend on the editorial choice of the applicants. The editorial independence will be guaranteed by a charter of independence that will be part of the agreement signed between the European Commission and the grant beneficiaries.

The expected results and outputs are the following:

- To increase media coverage on Cohesion policy, in particular at regional level;
- To enhance people's awareness of the results of Cohesion policy and their impact on their lives;
- To achieve concrete outputs and deliverables aimed at wide outreach within the measure's duration – e.g. TV and radio broadcast, online or print coverage, other type of information measures and dissemination - taking multilingualism into account;
- To establish an efficient and effective collaboration between the European Commission and the grant beneficiaries.

³ <http://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/meetings/gac/2017/04/25/>

⁴ <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?pubRef=-//EP//TEXT+REPORT+A8-2017-0201+0+DOC+XML+V0//EN&language=en>

⁵ http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/sources/informing/events/3005-pamhagen/20170523_joint_communication_actions.pdf

⁶ Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 17 December 2013 laying down common provisions on the European Regional Development Fund, the European Social Fund, the Cohesion Fund, the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development and the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund and laying down general provisions on the European Regional Development Fund, the European Social Fund, the Cohesion Fund and the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund and repealing Council Regulation (EC) No 1083/2006 (in particular Articles 115-117 therein and Annex XII).

The target audience of the information measures to be implemented through this call is the general public and/or related stakeholders. More specifically:

- For the general public: the objective is to raise public awareness of the results of Cohesion policy and their impact on citizens' lives to Europeans who are unaware of the EU and of the EU action in their region. Information should focus on developing greater understanding of the contribution of Cohesion policy to boosting jobs and growth in Europe and reducing disparities among Member States and regions.
- For stakeholders: the objective is to engage with stakeholders (including national, regional and local authorities, beneficiaries, businesses, academia) to further communicate the impact of Cohesion policy on their regions and to feed into the discussion on the future of Cohesion policy and, more broadly, the future of Europe.

3. ADMISSIBILITY REQUIREMENT AND PROCEDURE FOR THE SUBMISSION OF PROPOSALS

3.1. Admissibility requirements

The following admissibility requirements must be complied with:

- 1) Applications must be submitted no later than 10 December 2019.
- 2) Applications must be submitted in writing, using the application form available at http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/en/newsroom/funding-opportunities/calls-for-proposal/.
- 3) Applications must be drafted in one of the EU official languages.
- 4) Applicants (including single taxable entities) can submit only one application for one action for this call for proposals.

Failure to comply with the above requirements will lead to the rejection of the application.

3.2. Procedure for the submission of proposals

Applications must be sent by post (registered letter or equivalent and the postmark will serve as proof of the date of posting) or courier service (date of receipt by the courier service serving as proof of date of sending) or delivered by hand (see below for address) by the deadline set out under section 3.1.

No modification to the application is allowed once the deadline for submission has elapsed. However, where, due to an obvious clerical error on the part of the applicant, the applicant omits to submit evidence or to make statements, the Commission shall ask the applicant to clarify and/or provide the missing information/documents during the evaluation process. Such information or clarification shall not substantially change the proposal.

Applicants will be informed in writing about the results of the selection process.

Application forms and relevant documents are available at:
http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/en/newsroom/funding-opportunities/calls-for-proposal/

If the application is not submitted in English, applicants are recommended to accompany it by a summary of the proposal in English.

There is no minimum or maximum number of pages foreseen for the applications.

Applications must be submitted in the correct form, duly completed, signed and dated. They must be submitted in 2 copies (one original in paper format, plus one electronic copy on a USB key) and signed by the person authorised to enter into legally binding commitments on behalf of the applicant organisation. Applicants are requested to submit their budgetary annex in Excel format (or equivalent). The paper copy takes precedence.

Only the application form, including the budget form and the declaration on honour need to be signed. The supporting documents do not have to be signed.

Where applicable, all additional information considered necessary by the applicant can be included on separate sheets (or electronic files in the case of videos).

Applications must be sent in a sealed envelope to the following address:

Means of submission	Time limit	Evidence	Address for delivery
Post	23:59 CET	Postmark	European Commission Directorate General for Regional and Urban Policy (DG REGIO) – Unit A3 – Budget and Financial management – TA Cell (NOT BE OPENED BY THE CENTRAL MAIL SERVICE) Call for proposals 2019CE16BAT117 BU-1 00/181 B-1049 Brussels BELGIUM
Courier	23:59 CET	Deposit slip of courier service	European Commission Directorate General for Regional and Urban Policy (DG REGIO) – Unit A3 – Budget and Financial management – TA Cell (NOT BE OPENED BY THE CENTRAL MAIL SERVICE) Call for proposals 2019CE16BAT117 BU-1 00/181 Avenue du Bourget, no 1/Bourgetlaan 1 B-1140 Brussels BELGIUM

In person (hand delivery)	23:59 CET	Proof of receipt, signed and dated by the official in the central mail department who takes delivery	European Commission Directorate General for Regional and Urban Policy (DG REGIO) – Unit A3 – Budget and Financial management – TA Cell (NOT BE OPENED BY THE CENTRAL MAIL SERVICE) Call for proposals 2019CE16BAT117 BU-1 00/181 Avenue du Bourget, no 1/Bourgetlaan 1 B-1140 Brussels BELGIUM
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Mail can be received from 07.30 to 17.30 Monday to Fridays. The service is closed on Saturdays, Sundays and official holidays of the contracting authority.

The admissibility of applications will be evaluated on the basis of submission on paper.

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

Contacts

Any additional specific questions related to this call may be addressed to:

European Commission
Directorate-General for Regional and Urban Policy
Directorate for Budget, Communication and General Affairs
Budget and Financial Management Unit A3

E-mail address: REGIO-CONTRACTS@ec.europa.eu

The answers to the questions submitted will be published in the Q&A list at http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/en/newsroom/funding-opportunities/calls-for-proposal/ to ensure equal treatment of all potential applicants.

Questions may be sent by to the above address no later than 10 days before the deadline for the submission of proposals.

The Commission may, on its own initiative, inform interested parties of any error, inaccuracy, omission or clerical error in the text of the call for proposals on the mentioned Europa website. It is therefore advisable to consult the above-mentioned website regularly in order to be informed of the questions and answers published.

No individual reply to requests concerning the progress of the procedure may be provided by the means of the above-mentioned electronic address. In order to guarantee equal treatment, the European Commission may not give preliminary opinions on the eligibility of an applicant or the quality of the envisaged information measure.

4. ELIGIBLE ACTIVITIES

The eligible activities shall be those necessary to carry out the information measure and realise the intended outputs/results in accordance with the objectives, themes and target audience as listed under section 1 of the call for proposals and section 2 of this guide.

A. The measures should be implemented within the EU at local, regional, multiregional, national level, or at the level of several Member States.

B. The proposals should include one or several activities and tools having an innovative character with a view to attaining the objectives, cover the themes and reach the target audience.

C. Measures required by law or under the specific public service contracts (in the case of publicly owned entities) are not eligible.

5. SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS FOR ELIBILITY, EXCLUSION AND SELECTION CRITERIA

5.1. Supporting documents for eligibility criteria

In order to assess the applicants' eligibility as specified under section 2 of the call for proposals applicants may be requested in the course of the procedure to register and provide a Participant Identification Code (PIC, 9-digit number), serving as the unique identifier of their organisation in the Participant Register. Applicant(s) will receive instructions on how to create a PIC in due time.

The obtained PIC code should be communicated by e-mail to REGIO-CONTRACTS@ec.europa.eu. The EU Validation Services will contact the applicant (via the messaging system embedded in the Participant Register) and request the latter to provide the supporting documents necessary to prove the legal existence and status of the organisation. **All necessary details and instructions will be provided via this separate notification.**

The supporting documents to be provided on request as described above are the following:

- signed legal entity identification form
- official VAT document or – if the entity is not registered for VAT – the proof of VAT exemption, not older than 6 months
- signed bank identification form
- the following additional documents, where relevant:
 - **private entity:** extract from the official journal, copy of articles of association, extract of trade or association register, certificate of liability to VAT (if, as in certain countries, the trade register number and VAT number are identical, only one of these documents is required);

- **public entity:** copy of the resolution or decision establishing the public company, or other official document establishing the public-law entity;
- **affiliated entities** shall demonstrate their legal/capital link with the applicant.

Entities which do not have legal personality under the applicable national law may be eligible applicants, provided that their representatives have the capacity to undertake legal obligations on their behalf, and offer guarantees for the protection of the Union's financial interests equivalent to that offered by legal persons and provide evidence that they have financial and operational capacity equivalent to that of legal persons.

Entities without legal personality should submit the documents listed above. Where the documents listed above cannot be provided, they must be substantiated by any document deemed relevant. In addition, these entities must provide a document certifying that their legal representatives have the capacity to undertake legal obligations on their behalf.

5.2. Supporting documents for exclusion criteria

The applicant (lead and co-applicants) and affiliated entities must sign a declaration on their honour certifying that they are not in one of the situations referred to in Articles 136(1) and 141 of the Financial Regulation (FR)⁷ (concerning exclusion and rejection from the procedure respectively).

The relevant form is available at:

http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/en/newsroom/funding-opportunities/calls-for-proposal/

For the signature of the declaration of honour the following options are available:

a) in case of mono beneficiary grants:

- (i) the applicant signs in its name and on behalf of its affiliated entities (if any) or
- (ii) the applicant and its affiliated entities (if any) signs each a declaration in their own name.

b) in case of multi beneficiary grants:

- (i) the coordinator of a consortium signs on behalf of all applicants and their affiliated entities (if any);
- (ii) each applicant in the consortium signs each a declaration in its name and on behalf of its affiliated entities (if any); or
- (iii) each applicant in the consortium and its affiliated entities (if any) signs each a declaration in their own name.

⁷ Regulation (EU, Euratom) 2018/1046 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 18 July 2018 on the financial rules applicable to the general budget of the Union, amending Regulations (EU) No 1296/2013, (EU) No 1301/2013, (EU) No 1303/2013, (EU) No 1304/2013, (EU) No 1309/2013, (EU) No 1316/2013, (EU) No 223/2014, (EU) No 283/2014, and Decision No 541/2014/EU and repealing Regulation (EU, Euratom) No 966/2012 (OJ L 193 of 30.07.2018, p.1).

5.3. Supporting documents for selection criteria (financial and operational capacity)

In relation to the **operational capacity**, applicants have to submit a declaration on their honour and the following supporting documents:

- a list of previous projects/activities performed and related to the call or a list of activities that have been carried out in the last two years (maximum 4 projects/activities).

Additional supporting documents may be requested to confirm the operational capacity.

In order to assess the applicants' **financial capacity** specified under section 3 of the call for proposals, applicants may be requested in the course of the procedure to register and provide a Participant Identification Code (PIC, 9-digit number) (see point 5.1.).

Upon communication of the applicant's PIC, the EU Validation Services will contact the applicant (via the messaging system embedded in the Participant Register) and request the latter to provide the supporting documents necessary to prove the financial capacity of the organisation. **All necessary details and instructions will be provided via this separate notification.**

The supporting documents to be provided on request are:

- The profit and loss account, the balance sheet for the last available financial year for which the accounts were closed or, for newly created entities, a business plan that might replace the above documents.

The verification of the financial capacity will not apply to public bodies. Public bodies, therefore, do not have to provide the documentation mentioned above.

If the financial capacity is considered weak on the basis of the documents submitted, the European Commission may request further information, decide not to give pre-financing, decide to give pre-financing in instalments or decide to give pre-financing covered by a bank guarantee (see section 7.5. below).

The application will be rejected if the financial capacity is considered insufficient.

If the lead applicant is considered not to have the required financial or operational capacity, the application as a whole will be rejected. Since co-beneficiaries will share the financial responsibility, the financial capacity of each co-applicant will be assessed against its share in the information measure's budget. If a co-applicant is considered not to have the required financial or operational capacity, this co-applicant will be removed from the consortium and the application will be evaluated without this co-applicant. In addition, the costs that are allocated to the non-selected co-applicant will be removed from the budget. If the application is accepted, the work program will have to be adapted as appropriate.

Entities without legal personality must provide evidence that they have operational and financial capacity equivalent to that of legal persons.

6. AGREEMENT GOVERNING THE GRANT

6.1. Applicant/s - Beneficiary/ies:

The designation "applicants" refers to the organisations which submit a proposal; "beneficiaries" are entities which sign the grant agreement with the Commission. They are actively involved in the implementation of the information measure and are financially engaged, be it by engaging staff or other costs or by providing a direct financial contribution.

The proposals can be submitted by a single applicant (if selected, a "*mono-beneficiary agreement*" will be signed) or by a group of several applicants (consortium) (if selected, a "*multi-beneficiary agreement*" will be signed). The grant agreement models are published with the text of the call and provide details on the specific obligations of the beneficiary or, in the case of a consortium, of the coordinator and the co-beneficiaries.

Where proposals are submitted by several applicants, one applicant must assume the role of lead-applicant and is called the "*coordinator*". The other members of the consortium involved in the application are called "*co-applicants*". The coordinator is responsible for submitting the proposal. When a grant agreement will be signed, powers of attorney to act in their name and on their behalf should be given from co-applicants⁸ to the coordinator who is signing the grant agreement (and its amendments). Powers of attorney shall be signed before the signature of the grant agreement.

Should the Commission award a grant, a grant agreement setting out the conditions and maximum level of funding will be concluded with the beneficiary

Successful applicants/coordinators will receive two original copies of the grant agreement for acceptance and signature. Both of these copies must be sent back to the Commission, which will then return one of them once it has been signed by both parties.

The grant agreement will detail the specific obligations of the beneficiary and, where appropriate, of the coordinator and the co-beneficiaries.

For information measures led by a consortium, the lead applicant and co-applicants shall take appropriate internal measures – preferably in writing –, consistent with the provisions of the grant agreement, to ensure the proper implementation of the action.

Hereafter in this document, reference to the applicant or to the beneficiary is understood to include co-applicants where applications are submitted by a group of applicants and co-beneficiaries in the case of multi-beneficiary grant agreements.

⁸ Please refer to the grant agreement model for more information on the responsibilities of the coordinator and other beneficiaries.

6.2. Affiliated entities

Affiliated entities are legal entities which have a specific relationship with the beneficiary⁹. On that basis, they may incur eligible costs for the information measure covered by the grant under certain conditions, i.e.: they are legal entities satisfying the eligibility criteria of the particular call and non-exclusion criteria and having a link with a beneficiary, notably a legal or capital link, which is neither limited to the action nor established for the sole purpose of its implementation. This link must be proven by supporting documents to be provided with the application such as the statutory list of members included in reports approved by governing bodies, the list of controlled companies in audited consolidated accounts, the balance sheet or the deeds of establishment proving ownership or partnership. Affiliated entities are not signatories to the grant agreement and are not financially liable in case of recovery of funds. The beneficiary to whom they are linked is financially liable for them. Consequently, the Commission does not test the financial capacity of affiliated entities at time of application.

6.3. Financial support to third parties (i.e. cascading grants)

Financial support to third parties is not allowed by this call for proposals.

Financial support to third parties consists of a grant given by the beneficiary to a third party¹⁰.

7. FINANCIAL PROVISIONS

7.1. General principles

Non-cumulative award

An information measure may only receive one grant from the EU budget. The same costs cannot be financed twice by the Union budget¹¹. To ensure this, applicants shall indicate in the grant application the sources and amounts of Union funding received or applied for the same information measure or part of the information measure or for its functioning during the same financial year as well as any other funding received or applied for the same information measure.

⁹ Article 187 FR

¹⁰ Article 204 FR

¹¹ Article 191 FR

Non-retroactivity

No grant may be awarded retrospectively for activities already completed¹². A grant may be awarded for an information measure which has already begun only where the applicant can demonstrate in the grant application the need to start the information measure before the grant agreement is signed. In such cases, costs eligible for financing may not have been incurred prior to the date of submission of the grant application.

Co-financing principle

Under the co-financing principle the resources which are necessary to carry out the activities may not be entirely provided by the EU grant¹³. Co-financing may take the form of the beneficiary's own resources, financial contributions from other third parties or income generated by the action.

No-profit rule

The EU grant may not have the purpose or effect of producing a profit for the beneficiary¹⁴. Profit is defined as a surplus of the receipts over the eligible costs incurred by the beneficiary, when the request is made for payment of the balance. Any income of the information measure must be indicated in the estimated budget and the final financial statement. If the final amount results in a profit for the beneficiaries, the amount of the grant will be reduced by the percentage of the profit corresponding to the Union contribution to the eligible costs of the information measure actually incurred by the beneficiaries.

7.2. Estimated budget of the information measures

Applications must include a detailed estimated budget in balance in which all costs and contributions are given in euros. Applicants from countries outside the euro zone may use the monthly rate published on the Commission's website at www.ec.europa.eu/budget/inforeuro/

Applicants should be aware that they fully carry the exchange rate risk and benefits.

The budget estimate must be balanced: the two totals (income and expenditure) must be the same, since the available income (including the grant requested from the Commission) will have to finance the planned expenditure¹⁵. Please make sure that all the items related to the implementation of the information measure are included and not just those for which financing are being sought.

In case of organisations receiving an operating grant for the period of implementation of the action(s) under this grant, indirect costs will not be eligible.

¹² Article 193 FR

¹³ Article 190 FR

¹⁴ Article 192 FR

¹⁵ Article 196 (1) (e) FR

Depending on the quality of the proposals, the Commission reserves the right not to grant all or part of the available funds. The Commission also reserves the right to award a grant of less than the amount requested by the applicants. In such a case, applicants will be asked to increase the amount that they co-finance, to propose other co-financing means or to decrease the total costs without altering the substance of the proposal.

7.2.1. Expenditure

Expenditure must include the estimated costs exclusively for the implementation of the information measure. In order to be eligible for EU funding, costs must meet the following criteria¹⁶:

- a) **be incurred by the beneficiary during the duration of the information measure**, with the exception of costs relating to final reports and audit certificates;
- b) **be indicated in the estimated overall budget of the information measure** to be attached to the grant agreement;
- c) **be necessary for the implementation of the information measure** which is the subject of the grant;
- d) **be identifiable and verifiable**, in particular being recorded in the accounting records of the beneficiary and determined according to the applicable accounting standards of the country where the beneficiary is/are established and according to the usual cost accounting practices of the beneficiary;
- e) **comply with the requirements of applicable tax and social legislation**;
- f) **be reasonable, justified and comply with the principle of sound financial management**, in particular regarding economy and efficiency. If applicable under the call for proposals, costs incurred by entities affiliated to a beneficiary will be eligible provided that:
 - the concerned entities are identified in the grant agreement
 - they abide by the rules applicable to the beneficiary under the grant agreement with regard to eligibility of costs and rights of audits by the Commission, the European Anti-Fraud Office and the Court of Auditors.

Value added tax (VAT) is considered as eligible¹⁷ where it is not recoverable under the applicable national VAT legislation and is paid by a beneficiary other than a non-taxable person as defined in the first subparagraph of Article 13(1) of Directive 2006/112/EC¹⁸ on the common system of value added tax.

The successful applicant/s must take care to avoid any unnecessary or unnecessarily high expenditure.

¹⁶ Article 186 (3) FR

¹⁷ Article 186 (4) (c) FR

¹⁸ OJ L 347, 11.12.2006,p.1

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

Documentation justifying costs must be kept by the beneficiary for five years following the Commission's final payment.

Expenditure eligible for financing may not have been incurred before the grant application was submitted.

7.2.1.1. Eligible direct costs

The eligible direct costs for the information measure are those costs which, provided that they satisfy the criteria of eligibility set out above, are identifiable as specific costs directly linked to the implementation of the information measure and which can therefore be attributed to it directly.

In particular, the following categories of direct costs may be considered eligible:

a) Staff costs (Heading 1 of the budget form)

The costs of personnel working under an employment contract with the beneficiary or an equivalent appointing act and assigned to the information measure, comprising actual salaries plus social security contributions and other statutory costs included in the remuneration, provided that these costs are in line with the beneficiary's usual policy on remuneration; those costs may also include additional remunerations, including payments on the basis of supplementary contracts regardless of the nature of those contracts, provided that they are paid in a consistent manner whenever the same kind of work or expertise is required, independently from the source of funding used.

The costs of natural persons working under a contract with the beneficiary (eg. external experts) other than an employment contract may be assimilated to such costs of personnel, provided that the following conditions are fulfilled:

- (i) the persons work under conditions similar to those of an employee (in particular regarding the way the work is organised, the tasks that are performed and the premises where they are performed);
- (ii) the result of the work belongs to the beneficiary; and
- (iii) the costs are not significantly different from the costs of staff performing similar tasks under an employment contract with the beneficiary.

If all of the above three conditions are met, the costs shall be declared under staff costs independently of the way of payment.

Conversely, the cost of any work to be performed by external experts must not be included in staff costs but under services (see Heading 3).

The salary costs should not exceed the rates corresponding to the beneficiary's usual policy on remuneration.

Should your proposal be financed by the Commission, only the real costs (i.e. actual salaries paid) will be considered eligible costs. For personnel costs to count as eligible direct costs there must be a real and verifiable transfer of funds from the organisation and the assignment of the staff in question must be genuine, necessary and reasonable in relation to the activity being subsidised and to the duration of the information measure.

The costs of personnel of national administrations may be considered as eligible to the extent that they relate to the cost of activities which are additional and which the relevant public authority would not carry out if the related information measure was not implemented.

Please fill in the section reserved for staff costs in the budget estimate (see application form) as follows:

- **Column "Profile/Category of personnel"** – indicate the profile or category of the staff according to their role in the information measure (Coordinator, Project manager, etc.) and the number of persons in each category. The names of individuals **are not required and should not be indicated**.
- **Column "Name of the organisation"** – indicate the name of the lead applicant, co-applicant or, where applicable, the name of the affiliated entity.
- **Column "Types of employment (permanent/temporary) and work patterns (fulltime/ part-time)"** – indicate how many of each type.
- **Column "Indicative daily salary cost"** – the indicative daily rate for each category of staff should be determined as follows:

$$\frac{\text{Gross actual salaries + social security charges + statutory costs}}{\text{Total workable days}}$$

The determination of the workable days should be made respecting the standard working time either under national laws, collective agreements or under the organisations' normal accounting practice. An example for determining the total workable days per year could be as follows (according to the appropriate legislation (example based on Belgium)):

Days/year	365 days
Less 52 weekends	104 days
Less annual holidays	25 days
<u>Less statutory holidays</u>	<u>11 days</u>

Total workable days = 225 days

If necessary, homogeneous sub-categories of profiles (e.g. Senior Project officer/ Junior Project officer) can be used as necessary so that the indicative daily salary cost is as representative of that particular sub-category as possible.

- Column "number of days" - the number of days of work to be performed on the information measure per category or sub-category of personnel or per person as applicable.

The actual time spent on the information measure must be recorded on a regular basis using timesheets or an equivalent time registration system established and certified by the employer.

Timesheets must be dated and signed by the individual concerned and validated by the employer. It is recommended to adopt a single timesheet encompassing the overall time worked by each staff member (not just the time worked by the employee on the particular EU supported action).

Timesheets should not be sent to the Commission, except if specifically requested. For instance, when submitting the request for final payment, the beneficiary might be requested to provide pay slips and timesheets justifying the actual staff costs declared, as well as the basis for the calculation of daily rates and workable days.

b) Travel, accommodation and subsistence allowances (Heading 2 of the budget form)

Costs of travel and related subsistence allowances are eligible provided that they are in line with the beneficiary's usual practices on travel.

Heading 2 may also include expenses for participants from organisations other than the beneficiaries or affiliated entities where applicable (e.g. for attendance of a conference).

Attendance lists of all meetings that take place in the context of the information measure must be established and signed by all participants. These lists must be provided to the Commission if so requested.

Journeys must be carried out by the most direct and economic route. Economy class fares will be used as the benchmark for analysing air travel costs. Air travel is acceptable only for distances above 400 km, i.e. return flight above 800 km. For other modes of transport, the benchmark is the first-class rail fare. The calculation for car journeys should be based on the equivalent of the corresponding first-class train ticket. If the destination is not accessible by train and therefore the price cannot be calculated on the basis of a train ticket, the calculation will be made as follows: EUR 0.22/km.

The Daily subsistence allowances (DSA) are paid in addition to costs for accommodation as a flat-rate amount and are considered to cover breakfast and the two main meals, local transport, the cost of telecommunications and all other sundries. Daily subsistence allowances are to be calculated as follows according to the length of the mission:

- 6 hours or less: 20% of the daily allowance and any transport costs on the basis of supporting documents
- more than 6 hours but not more than 12 hours: 0.5 DSA;
- more than 12 hours but not more than 24 hours: 1 DSA;
- more than 24 hours but not more than 36 hours: 1.5 DSA;

- more than 36 hours but not more than 48 hours: 2 DSA;
- more than 48 hours but not more than 60 hours: 2.5 DSA;
- each successive 12-hour period: 0.5 DSA.

The amounts (in Euros per calendar day) for each country set out in the table below will be used as a benchmark for analysing accommodation and subsistence costs¹⁹.

Destination	Hotel ceiling	Daily allowance
Belgium	148	102
Bulgaria	135	57
Czech Republic	124	70
Denmark	173	124
Germany	128	97
Estonia	105	80
Ireland	159	108
Greece	112	82
Spain	128	88
France	180	102
Croatia	110	75
Italy	148	98
Cyprus	140	88
Latvia	116	73
Lithuania	117	69
Luxembourg	148	98
Hungary	120	64
Malta	138	88
Netherlands	166	103
Austria	132	102
Poland	116	67
Portugal	101	83
Romania	136	62
Slovenia	117	84
Slovak Republic	100	74
Finland	142	113
Sweden	187	117
United Kingdom	209	125

Please note that the Commission and the other European Institutions cover the travel and subsistence costs of their own officials when they participate in an event organised by the beneficiary/ies and these should therefore not be included in the budget estimate.

If catering services are provided by the organisers, the DSAs directly paid to participants must be reduced accordingly. In such cases, the daily allowance would be reduced by 30% for each meal provided, and by 15% for breakfast. NB.: Where applicable, catering costs should be mentioned under Heading 3, Costs of Services, subheading Other Services.

c) Implementation contracts/subcontracting (Heading 3 of the budget form)

The implementation of an information measure may require the buying of goods or services in order to carry out specialised tasks that beneficiaries cannot do themselves (i.e. translations, production of documents, web site creation, informatics support, accountancy, catering, etc.). This does not involve externalisation of parts of the action directly related to

¹⁹ The daily allowance rates are subject to periodic review by the Commission.

the main objectives of the information measure. The related contracts are known as "**Implementation contracts**".

The beneficiary should have the operational capacity to carry out the activities related to the main objectives of the proposed information measure. Nevertheless, if the staff does not have all the skills required, where justified and necessary, specific tasks that are part of the information measure (except the core tasks defined in the call document) may be executed by another person or organisation by means of a contract between one or more of the beneficiaries and a subcontractor. This is known as "**subcontracting of tasks forming part of the action**".

The estimated costs relating to any implementing contracts and any subcontracting should be indicated in the appropriate sub-heading in the estimated budget and, if the proposed information measure is selected to receive an EU grant, the award of such contracts will be subject to the procedures indicated below.

Information, dissemination, reproduction and publications costs shall be taken into account provided that they are directly related to the information measure. Please give, for each publication and/or other materials, a description, an estimate of the number of pages and copies planned, the frequency and language of publication, an indication of the production costs per copy, as well as an estimate of the distribution costs where appropriate.

Translation costs must include the following details: the number of languages, the number of pages to be translated and the rate applied per page.

Interpretation: the different components must be specified. In particular, the number of languages, the number of interpreters, the number of days and the daily rates must be specified. Interpreters should be hired locally. For their travel and subsistence expenses to be covered by the grant, it must be impossible to hire them locally and it must be explained why this is so.

Specific Evaluation: if the call or the proposed information measure requires some form of evaluation, monitoring and evaluation methods must be developed, as well as tools to assess, on an ongoing basis, the progress of the information measure in relation to the objectives defined at the beginning and the results. The cost of such work will be regarded as eligible expenditure, either under Heading 1 Staff costs if the work is done internally or under Heading 3 – Implementation contracts/sub-contracting, or under Specific Evaluation if done by an external expert.

External Expertise: this heading should include costs relating to: i) implementing service contracts not covered under the previous sub-headings; ii) costs relating to the subcontracting of tasks forming part of the information measure.

The Financial Regulation lays down the principles that should govern the conclusion of external contracts necessary to implement the information measure: the beneficiary must award the contract to the tender offering **the best value for money, i.e. the best price-**

quality ratio, or, as appropriate, to the tender offering the lowest price²⁰. In doing so, the beneficiary shall take care to avoid any conflict of interests.

In addition the beneficiary shall ensure that the conditions applicable to itself under the articles of the General Conditions to the grant agreement related to liability, conflict of interests, confidentiality, ownership and use of results (including intellectual and industrial property rights), checks, audits and evaluation are also applicable to the contractors.

The beneficiary remains solely responsible for carrying out the information measure and for compliance with the grant agreement. The beneficiary must undertake the necessary arrangements to ensure that the contractors and subcontractors waive all rights in respect of the Commission under the agreement.

Within the respect of these principles, the beneficiary may organise the award of contracts according to their usual practices.

Contracts and Sub-contracts entered into by a "public" beneficiary, i.e. a "contracting authority" within the meaning of EU Directives on public procurement procedures²¹ must be awarded in accordance with the applicable national rules on public procurement.

If beneficiaries subcontract tasks forming part of the action, they must ensure that, in addition to the above mentioned conditions of best value for money and absence of conflict of interest, the following conditions are complied with :

- a) subcontracting may not cover core tasks of the information measure;
- b) recourse to the award of subcontracts must be justified in relation to the nature of the information measure and what is necessary for its implementation;
- c) the tasks to be subcontracted must be set out in the description of the information measure and the corresponding estimated costs must be set out in detail in the budget estimate;
- d) if not foreseen in the initial proposal (and subsequently in Annex I to any Grant agreement), any recourse to subcontracting while the information measure is underway shall be communicated by the beneficiary to and approved by the Commission.

The Commission may grant approval:

- i) before any recourse to subcontracting, if the beneficiary requests an amendment as provided for in the relevant Article of the grant agreement; or
- ii) after recourse to subcontracting if the subcontracting (i) is specifically justified in the final technical report and (ii) does not entail changes to the grant agreement which would call into question the decision awarding the grant or be contrary to the equal treatment of applicants;

²⁰ Article 205 FR

²¹ Directives 2014/24/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 26 February 2014 on public procurement and repealing Directive 2004/18/EC and 2014/25/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 26 February 2014 on procurement by entities operating in the water, energy, transport and postal services sectors and repealing Directive 2004/17/EC.

NB.: Since a negative opinion by the Commission with regard to the criteria indicated in point ii) above would entail the related costs being declared ineligible, it is strongly recommended that you seek prior written approval of the Commission before having recourse to any subcontracting not foreseen in Annex I to the grant agreement.

- e) the beneficiary must undertake to ensure that the terms, mentioned above, applicable to itself under the agreement are also applicable to the subcontractor;
- f) the beneficiary shall ensure that the conditions applicable to itself under the relevant article of the grant agreement regarding visibility of Union funding are also applicable to the subcontractors;
- g) the coordinator shall not subcontract any part of its tasks to the other beneficiaries (in the case of multi-beneficiary grant agreements) or to any affiliated entity, associated organisation or donor.

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

d) Administration costs (Heading 4 of the budget form)

Depreciation for purchase of equipment²²: the purchase cost of equipment or other assets (new or second-hand) is eligible provided that it is written off in accordance with the international accounting standards and the beneficiary's usual accounting practices and has been purchased in accordance with the procurement rules indicated above. Only the portion of the equipment's depreciation corresponding to the period of eligibility for EU funding covered by the grant agreement and the rate of actual use for the purposes of the information measure may be taken into account by the Commission.

Administration costs also include the specific sub-headings: Rental of meeting rooms (coffee breaks included); Rental of interpretation booths; Costs for external audits required by the call or grant agreement (see section 9 below); Financial costs such as those relating to any bank guarantee required under the terms of the specific call or grant agreement (see point 7.5. below) and other administrative costs such as costs for consumables and supplies directly assigned to the information measure and purchased according to the procurement rules.

7.2.1.2. Eligible indirect costs – Overheads (Heading 5 of the budget form)

Indirect costs are general administrative costs – overhead costs incurred in connection with the eligible direct costs of the information measure. They are limited to a flat-rate of 7% of the total eligible direct costs for the information measure. These can include maintenance, stationery, photocopying, mailing postage, telephone, internet and fax costs, heating, electricity or other forms of energy, water, office furniture, insurance and any other expenditure necessary for the successful completion of the information measure. Postage costs are considered as overhead costs and cannot be accepted under the headings "publications" or "administration".

²² Article 186 (4) (d) FR

If the accepted budget includes a provision for flat-rate funding in respect of indirect costs, such costs do not need to be supported by accounting documents.

Indirect costs are not eligible for an information measure where the beneficiary already receives an operating grant from the EU budget during the period in question.

7.2.1.3. Ineligible costs

The following costs are ineligible and therefore not accepted:

- return on capital;
- debt and debt service charges;
- provisions for losses or debts;
- interest owed;
- doubtful debts;
- exchange losses;
- costs of transfers from the Commission charged by the bank of a beneficiary;
- costs declared by the beneficiary in the framework of another action receiving a grant financed from the Union budget (including grants awarded by a Member State and financed from the Union budget and grants awarded by other bodies than the Commission for the purpose of implementing the Union budget); in particular, indirect costs shall not be eligible under a specific grant for an action awarded to the beneficiary when it receives an operating grant financed from the Union budget during the same period in question;
- excessive or reckless expenditure;
- deductible VAT. VAT²³ will be ineligible when the activities to be supported through the grant are taxed activities/exempt activities with right of deduction or activities engaged in by bodies governed by public law acting as a public authority of a Member State (i.e. activities resulting from the exercise of sovereign powers or prerogatives exercised by Member States under the special legal regime applicable to them in line with Article 13(1) of Council Directive 2006/112/EC²⁴: e.g. police, justice, definition and enforcement of public policies, etc.).

7.2.2. Revenue

Total revenue must be identical to total expenditure. The revenue side of the budget must show:

- a) The beneficiary's contribution: the direct monetary contribution from the applicant's own resources (i.e. an effective expenditure for which a financial flow can be traced in the accounts);
- b) Any financial contributions given by third parties to a beneficiary or to an affiliated entity, if they are specifically assigned by the third parties to the financing of the eligible costs of

²³ Article 186 (4) (c) FR

²⁴ OJ L 347, 11.12.2006, p.1

the *action* reimbursed by the Commission in accordance with Article 1.3.2(a)(i) of the grant agreement.

The following are not considered receipts:

- (i) financial contributions by third parties, if they may be used to cover costs other than the eligible costs under the Agreement;
 - (ii) financial contributions by third parties with no obligation to repay any amount unused at the end of the implementation period;
- c) The revenue generated by the information measure: any income expected to be generated by the implementation of the information measure should be detailed (such as the yield from sales of publications or conference registration fees).
- d) The EU grant: the grant requested from the Commission.

Contributions in kind are not accepted under this call for proposals.

In kind contributions shall mean non-financial resources made available free of charge by third parties to the beneficiary²⁵.

7.3. Calculation of the final grant amount

If the proposal is selected for a grant, the Commission will calculate the EU contribution as a percentage of the total eligible costs as shown in the estimated budget for the implementation of the information measure.

The Commission reserves the right to invite the applicant to correct the grant requested if the proposal is acceptable but includes ineligible costs or requires non-substantial adjustments to optimise cost-effectiveness (e.g. reduction of number of working days if these are estimated to be too high, elimination of non-essential activities, etc.).

Determination of the final amount of the grant

The EU final grant is calculated on the basis of the **actual** eligible expenditure by applying the "double ceiling" rule and verifying compliance with the non-profit rule.

- Application of the "**double ceiling**" rule limiting the grant both to the percentage of the eligible costs and to the maximum amount mentioned in the grant agreement

The EU final grant is calculated by applying the percentage for the co-financing of the eligible costs laid down in the grant agreement to the total of the actual eligible costs. This amount must not exceed the maximum amount for the EU grant laid down in the grant agreement. If the actual expenditure turns out to be lower than the estimated budget, the actual grant will be calculated on the basis of the % of total eligible costs foreseen in the grant agreement. If the actual expenditure turns out to be higher than the expenditure budgeted, the EU grant

²⁵ Article 190 (2)

will not be increased above the maximum amount of the grant foreseen in the grant agreement. It is therefore in the applicant's interest to submit a realistic estimate of expenses.

- Verification of compliance with the **no-profit rule**

The grant may not have the purpose or effect of producing a profit within the framework of the action for the beneficiary²⁶. Profit is defined as a surplus of the receipts over the eligible costs incurred by the beneficiary, when the request is made for payment of the balance.

The receipts referred to above shall be limited to income generated by the information measure up to the date on which the request for payment of the balance is drawn up by the beneficiary as well as financial contributions specifically assigned by the donors to the financing of the eligible costs.

Any income of the information measure must be indicated in the estimated budget and the final financial statement. If there is a profit, it will be deducted in proportion to the final rate of reimbursement of the actual eligible costs of the information measure approved by the Commission for the categories of costs referred to in Article 1.3.2(a) (i) of the grant agreement (as compared to the amount calculated following application of the "double-ceiling rule" indicated above)²⁷.

A mere forecast of expenditure does not give entitlement to a grant. This is why the exact amount of the final grant cannot be calculated until the Commission has received the final activity report and the final statement of expenditure. The expenditure that is committed to the implementation of the information measure must be justified by invoices or equivalent supporting documents, in order to be accepted as actual expenditure. It must also relate to actual rather than budgeted costs.

7.4. Reporting periods and payment arrangements:

Reporting will take place as follows:

- 1) a first interim report 3 months after the signature of the grant agreement;
- 2) a second interim report and an interim financial statement 7 months after the signature of the grant agreement;
- 3) within 60 days after the closing date of the information measure, the beneficiary must submit to the Commission the final report on implementation of the information measure and a final financial statement of all actual expenditure and actual revenue.

Details will be laid down in the grant agreement.

²⁶ Article 192 FR

²⁷ Article II.25.3 of the Grant Agreement

Payments will be made to the beneficiary or to the beneficiary acting as co-ordinator in the case of proposals submitted by a consortium.

Payment of the grant will be made in a pre-financing instalment, interim payment and a final payment (the balance). The aim of the pre-financing is to provide the beneficiaries with a float. The pre-financing remains the property of the Union until the payment of the balance. The frequency and size of pre-financing, interim payment and final payment will in principle be as described hereafter but may be adjusted according to the risk assessment of the responsible authorising officer following the assessment of the financial capacity of the beneficiary(ies) (see point 5.3).

One pre-financing, one interim payment and a final payment will be made as follows:

- A pre-financing payment of 40% of the grant within 30 calendar days from the entry into force of the grant agreement. In the case a guarantee is required the pre-financing payment will be subject to the receipt of the guarantee.
- An interim payment of up to 40% will be made within 60 calendar days²⁸ from receipt by and subject to the approval of the Commission of the request for payment, the interim report and the interim financial statement.
- Final payment will be made within 90 calendar days²⁹ from receipt by and subject to the approval of the Commission of the request for payment of the balance, the final report and the final financial statement. If the total amount of earlier payments is greater than the final amount of the grant, the payment of the balance will take the form of a recovery.

If the beneficiary fails to submit the request for payment of the balance accompanied by the above-mentioned documents within the above deadline, the Commission shall send a written reminder. If the beneficiary still fails to submit them within 60 days following the reminder, the Commission reserves the right to terminate the agreement.

Should the final report be deemed to be inadequate or of low quality, the Commission reserves the right to request additional information suspending the time limit for payment specified in the grant agreement. When the suspension exceeds two months, the beneficiary may request a decision by the Commission on whether the suspension is to be continued.

7.5. Guarantee³⁰

The Commission may require the beneficiary to provide a guarantee in advance, in order to limit the financial risk linked to the payment of the pre-financing following the assessment of the financial capacity of the beneficiary(ies) (see point 5.3.).

²⁸ Article I.5.3 of the Grant Agreement.

²⁹ Article I.5.4 of the Grant Agreement.

³⁰ Articles 152 and 153 FR

The decision to request a bank guarantee is to be taken by the responsible authorising officer, if he/she deems it appropriate and proportionate, on a case-by-case basis and subject to a risk analysis. In case of a multi-beneficiary grant, a single guarantee for the total amount of the pre-financing to be guaranteed may be requested (if appropriate).

This guarantee shall be denominated in euro and shall be valid for a period sufficiently long to allow it to be activated. The guarantee shall be provided by an approved bank or financial Institution established in one of the Member States.

The guarantee shall remain in force until the pre-financing is cleared against payment of the balance by the Commission, and, in case the payment of the balance is made in the form of a debit note, three months after the debit note is notified to the beneficiary. The Commission shall release the guarantee within the following month.

In exceptional cases, the guarantee may be replaced by a joint and several guarantee by a third party or by the irrevocable and unconditional joint guarantee of the beneficiaries of an information measure who are parties to the same grant agreement.

7.6. Bank account and interest generated by pre-financing payments

Payment shall be made to the beneficiary's bank account or sub-account denominated in Euro (in the case of a consortium to the bank account of the beneficiary acting as coordinator). Interest yielded by the pre-financing payments is not compulsory nor must it be reimbursed to the EU budget.

8. PUBLICITY

8.1. By the beneficiaries

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

In this respect, beneficiaries are required to give prominence to the name and emblem of the European Commission on all their publications, posters, programmes, other products and during activities (conferences or seminars, etc.) realised under the co-financed project.

To do this they must use:

- the text: “With financial support from the European Union”
- the emblem available at https://europa.eu/european-union/about-eu/symbols/flag_en
- the following disclaimers:

For publications in print or electronic format:

'This publication was produced with the financial support of the European Union. Its contents are the sole responsibility of <name of the author/partner> and do not necessarily reflect the views of the European Union'

For websites and social media accounts:

'This <website/account> was created and maintained with the financial support of the European Union. Its contents are the sole responsibility of <name of the author/partner> and do not necessarily reflect the views of the European Union'

For videos and other audio-visual material:

'This <video/film/programme/recording> was produced with the financial support of the European Union. Its contents are the sole responsibility of <name of the author/partner > and do not necessarily reflect the views of the European Union'.

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

8.2. By the Commission

All grants awarded in the course of a financial year shall be published on the Internet site of the EU institutions during the first half of the year following the closure of the budget year in respect of which they were awarded.

By signing the grant agreement for an information measure, the beneficiary/ies authorises the Commission to publish the following information in any form and medium, including via the Internet site of the EU³¹:

- the beneficiary's/ies' name/s and the address/es
- the subject of the grant,
- the amount awarded and the rate of funding of the costs of the information measure.

Upon a duly substantiated request by the beneficiary/ies, publication of this data may be waived if it threatens the safety of the beneficiary or harms its business interests.

9. CHECKS

The Commission may, during the implementation of the action or afterwards, carry out technical and financial checks and audits to determine that the beneficiary is implementing the action properly and is complying with the obligations under the Agreement.

The beneficiary shall certify on his honour that the information contained in requests for payments is full, reliable and true. He shall also certify that the costs incurred can be considered eligible in accordance with the grant agreement and that requests for payment are substantiated by adequate supporting documents that can be checked.

The beneficiary/ies undertakes to provide any detailed information requested by the Commission or by another qualified outside body chosen by the Commission for the purposes of checking that the information measure and the provisions of the agreement are being properly implemented. The beneficiary must enable the Commission and/or the Court of Auditors to verify the organisation's accounting documents, if they deem this appropriate. To this end, documentation justifying items of expenditure must be retained by the applicant's organisation for five years following final payment by the Commission.

³¹ Article 189 FR

10. 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 pursuant to Regulation (EC) No 2018/1725 of the European Parliament and of the council of 23 October 2018 on the protection of natural persons with regard to the processing of personal data by the union institutions; bodies, offices and agencies and on the free movement of such data, and repealing Regulation (EC) No 45/2001 and Decision No 1247/2002/EC. Unless indicated otherwise, the questions and any personal data requested that are required to evaluate the application in accordance with the call for proposal will be processed solely for that purpose by DG REGIO – Budget and Financial Management.

Personal data may be registered in the Early Detection and Exclusion System by the Commission, should the beneficiary be in one of the situations mentioned in Articles 136 and 141 of Regulation (EU, Euratom) 2018/1046³². For more information see the Privacy Statement on:

https://ec.europa.eu/info/data-protection-public-procurement-procedures_en.

11. ANNEXES

- Application form (with the checklist of documents to be provided)
- Model grant agreement
- Budget form
- Declaration on honour

All documents are available at the following link:

http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/en/newsroom/funding-opportunities/calls-for-proposal/

³² <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A32018R1046>