

Europe for Citizens (2014-2020)

In a nutshell

The European Union (EU) programme, Europe for Citizens (EFC), aims at encouraging direct participation of citizens at EU level and promoting dialogue between the EU institutions, civil society organisations and municipalities. The programme has been running since 2004. For the 2014-20 period the EFC focuses on enhancing European citizens' awareness of remembrance and the history of the EU, and on actively involving European civil society in shaping EU policy.

EU Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF) heading

Security and citizenship

2014-20 financial envelope (in current prices and as % of total MFF)

Commitments: €185.47 million (0.0171%)

2014 budget (in current prices and as % of total EU budget)

Commitments: €23.38 million (12.60%)

Payments: €27.85 million (15.01%)

2015 budget (in current prices and as % of total EU budget)

Commitments: €24.25 million (13.07%)

Payments: €18.33 million (9.8%)

Methods of implementation

Implemented by the European Commission (DG HOME); *Direct management* of the programme by the Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency.



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EU role in the policy area: legal basis

Articles 10 and 11 of the [Treaty on European Union](#) provide European citizens with the right to participate in the democratic life of the Union and engage the EU's institutions in maintaining an open, transparent and regular dialogue with representative associations and civil society. The attempt to develop a thriving European civil society is pursued at the political level (e.g. through the European Citizens' Initiative)¹ and the administrative level (e.g. through the right of access to documents and information).

The first Community action programme designed to promote active European citizenship was launched in 2004 with [Council Decision 2004/100/EC](#). In the wake of the unsuccessful attempt to create a Constitution for Europe the programme was renamed Europe for Citizens (EFC), established by [Decision No 1904/2006/EC](#) of the European Parliament and the Council for the period 2007-2013.² [Council Regulation \(EU\) No 390/2014](#) of 14 April 2014 extended the EFC programme for the 2014-20 period, following a favourable interim evaluation in 2010.

Objectives of the programme

The current programme has two general objectives: *first*, to contribute to citizens' understanding of the EU, its history and diversity; and *second*, to foster European citizenship and improve civic participation at EU level.

These objectives are pursued in two areas. '**European remembrance**' supports initiatives to preserve the memory of the past in Europe. A total of **42 project grants** and **seven specific annual operating grants** are planned for this area. '**Democratic engagement and civic participation**' has the main goal of fostering closer engagement of European civil society in EU policy-making. A total of **312 town twinning projects**, **42 urban networks**, **33 action grants for civil society projects** and **29 operating grants** are scheduled for this area.

A horizontal action, '**valorisation**', complements these two areas. This horizontal action is aimed at supporting initiatives that could further enhance the results of the other objectives, so as to ensure they have lasting effects.

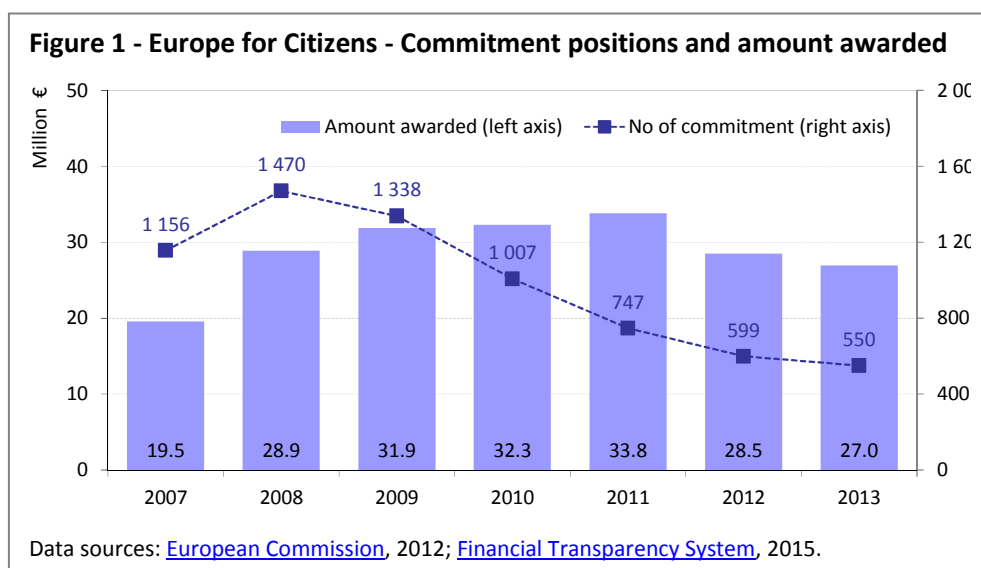
Funded actions

The reference amount for the implementation of the EFC for the 2014-20 period is set at **€185.5 million**. In spite of the [attempt of the EP](#) to avoid this, the reference amount was decreased by 13.74% compared to the EFC's 2007-13 programme period, where **€215 million** were budgeted under the 2007-13 Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF).

EFC funds two types of grants to support the actions pursued by not-for-profit organisations in relation to EFC: (1) **action grants** (meant to fund actions of limited duration, during which proposed specific activities are implemented); (2) **operating grants** (which provide financial support to cover the running costs of not-for-profit organisations that pursue a general Union interest in the field covered by EFC). Action and operating grants are awarded by the [Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency](#) (EACEA), together with DG HOME, according to the criteria laid down in the [Programme Guide of the Europe for Citizens programme](#).

For the 2007-13 period the European Commission reported that nearly **1 000 not-for profit organisations** from **30 participating countries** (the then 27 Member States plus Croatia, Macedonia and Albania) had been awarded grants to support their projects.³ According to the

Financial Transparency System, between 2007 and 2013 a total of **6 867 commitment positions** (i.e. grants and contracts) were opened (see figure 1).



1. European remembrance

Within the EFC, annual priorities are defined by the European Commission, and then published in a 'work programme'. In 2014, a total of **33 projects** were funded with an amount of **€2 826 500**. The indicative 2015 budget for 'European remembrance' is **€4 502 867**. Each project is funded to a maximum level of **€100 000** for **18 months**. The [2015 work programme](#) sets two priorities for funded projects: the first priority concerns crimes against humanity during World War II; the second priority links to World War II and its consequences for the architecture of Europe.

2. Democratic engagement and civic participation

The second topic, 'Democratic engagement and civic participation', for the year 2015 is focused on 'Debating the future of Europe'. The aim is to foster discussion of the future of Europe, stimulating new forms of civic participation and strengthening those that already exist. The indicative budget for 'Democratic engagement and civic participation' is **€16 091 133**, split into three parts. The first part – '**town twinning**' – funds projects from twinned towns to debate issues from the European political agenda. Each project has a maximum duration of **21 days** and a maximum grant set at **€25 000**. In 2014, **253 projects were** funded with **€3 912 000**. A first round of **144 projects** has been approved for funding (**€2 338 000**) in 2015.

The second part – '**networks of towns**' – funds long-term partnerships between towns and associations of citizens with shared interests. The duration of each project is **24 months** (a maximum of 21 days per event), with grants ranging between **€10 000** and **€150 000**. In 2014 a first round of **22 projects** was funded with **€2 902 500**, and a second round of **13 projects** (beginning in June 2015) with **€1 620 000**. Overall, over 15 municipalities have already been involved.

The third part – '**civil society projects**' – supports projects that aim at enhancing citizens' participation in the EU policy-making process. The project duration is set at **18 months** and maximum grant amount is set at **€150 000**. In 2014 a total of **27 projects** were funded, with **€3 373 250**.

3. Operating grants

In 2014 a total of [34 operating grants](#) were approved for funding: seven under the first strand and 37 under the second strand. For the year 2015, [37 operating grants](#) have been approved amounting to **€6 841 449** in total. Under the first strand, funds have been awarded to two think-tanks and four civil society organisations. Under the second strand funds have been awarded to nine think-tanks, two platforms of pan-European organisations and 20 civil society organisations working at European level.

Assessment of programme/actions

Thus far EFC has been evaluated on two occasions. The first was the interim evaluation of the first EFC programme (2007-13). This stressed the importance of its impact at both the *organisational* (in terms of capacity-building) and *personal* (in terms of increased interest in Union matters) levels. The evaluation also pointed to a number of shortcomings (e.g. significant unmet demand) and formulated a series of recommendations (e.g. increased media visibility).

The second evaluation is the result of an online consultation held between October 2010 and January 2011 and a '[Stakeholder Forum](#)' held in Brussels in June 2011. The consultation and the Forum discussed the opportunity to further extend the reach of EFC (under the 2007-13 programme, the European Commission estimated at over 5 million the number of citizens reached by EFC).

Other EU programmes and action in the same field

The EFC is the main EU programme devoted to increasing dialogue between EU institutions and citizens. The European Commission (DG HOME) and the EACEA are responsible for implementing EFC. The EACEA, however, operates through a number of [contact points](#) located in the Member States and it may cover joint activities with international organisations, such as the Council of Europe and Unesco, on the basis of joint contributions.

Endnotes

¹ See I. Anglmayer, [The European Citizens' Initiative: the experience of the first three years - European Implementation Assessment](#), European Parliamentary Research Service, 2015

² See M.J. Prutsch, European Parliament, DG for Internal Policies, Policy Department B, [Europe for citizens \(2014-2020\)](#), 2012

³ See European Commission, [25 features about the Europe for Citizens programme](#), 2012

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