

Call for scouting partners

Civic Europe is an idea challenge and civic incubator realised by MitOst and Sofia Platform, funded by Stiftung Mercator. We support initiatives that strengthen civic cohesion and active citizenship on the local level in Central, Southeastern and Southern Europe (**Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Croatia, Greece, Hungary, Italy, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain**). Civic Europe supports civil society actors by providing them with funding and mentoring to implement their project ideas. We fund up to 15 local projects with grants of up to €50,000 each.

Why an idea challenge for Civic Europe?

In our times of polarisation and deep political divisions, **open and functioning civic spaces** and **active citizens** at all levels of society are the stronghold for democracy in Europe. Only a vibrant and diverse civil society lives up to the potential that the core idea of democracy holds: Co-creating our own future and having agency to influence our collective lives.

Because polarisation has grown over recent years around Europe and the world, support for civil society has become more crucial. Organisations, initiatives and projects that showcase the possibilities for living in **diversity** and remaining **open and tolerant** while holding **profound disagreements** operate most effectively on **local level**, filling the specific needs of their local community. Their work can also be regarded as "a living practise of democracy", democracy at its core: actively co-shaping a colourful and vibrant community life that builds bridges, strengthens **civic cohesion** and creates hope for a better future. This is where the Civic Europe Idea Challenge starts: We are looking for 15 lighthouse ideas, functioning as bright horizons and inspiration on how to bring people together in times of segregation and hate.



What are scouting partners?

Scouting partners are local active members of civil society from the Civic Europe impact region that support the Civic Europe team to spread the call for the 2020 idea challenge in

their country. The main task of the scouting partner is to reach out through their local, regional and national networks and directly address relevant local actors on the ground whose work and motivation fit the profile of the Civic Europe Idea Challenge.

Why scouting partners?

The Civic Europe Idea Challenge wants to reach beyond the “usual suspects” of our networks, deep into the work of small-scale local organisations and grass-root initiatives in Central, Eastern and Southern Europe. Civic Europe especially targets initiatives and organisations active in and around “civic deserts” – places with little or no opportunities for civic engagement and participation and a deficient civic infrastructure (few or no civil society organisations, no access to decision and policy making, community centres, libraries, museums, etc.).

To reach out to these local initiatives and organisations, the Civic Europe Idea Challenge team invites local actors from civil society who are **deeply connected** to their national, regional and local networks of activists, CSOs (Civil Society Organisations) and local initiatives and who **understand the specificities of the civic landscape of their country/region** and context in a scouting collaboration.

We are looking to team up with **one scouting partner for each of the twelve eligible countries**.

What is the expected profile?

- Scouts should have **wide networks and connections within local, regional and national civil society** that expands outside of the usual urban centres or the capital city and is not solely based on digital connections.
- Scouts should have **several years of activity in the civil society sector** of the country on a local and/or national level.
- Scouts should have a **keen eye for a good project application**.
- Scouts can be **individuals or organisations**.



IMPORTANT: The scouts are excluded from applying for the 2020 Civic Europe Idea Challenge. If the scout is an individual person (freelancer) but also active in a civil society initiative, that NGO cannot apply for the 2020 Civic Europe Idea Challenge.

What are the responsibilities

- **Spread** the Civic Europe Idea Challenge call within **local civil society networks**, making sure it has both a wide and deep outreach on local and national level in your country. Identify relevant **local multipliers** who will spread the Civic Europe call to their communities.
- **Reach out to specific organisations** that fit the profile of the Civic Europe Idea Challenge and invite/encourage them to apply. Actions undertaken to inform and reach relevant actors can be various: mailings, social media as well as informative events, personal meetings, phone calls, etc. We expect scouting partners to use at least three different ways to spread the call within the network and to stay active during the entire call period of six weeks.
- **Be a “local contact point”** and answer questions from local civil society about the Civic Europe Idea Challenge or the application process.
- **Communicate with the Civic Europe team and report about and document your activities** by briefly describing the actions undertaken to spread the call. Further, scouts make a personal evaluation on some of the applications from their country after the call is closed provided they have sufficient knowledge about the applicant, the organisation applying or the project itself.

How do we reach out to relevant local actors?



Together with the scouting partners, Civic Europe makes sure that the open call for the idea challenge reaches a broad portion of active civil society and that it is directly communicated to those civil society actors that fit the eligibility criteria particularly well. The scouting partners actively **support the spread of the call in a quality and quantity-based promotion** in their country. The quantitative promotion is done by the scouting partners by **activating their own networks** as well as by **reaching local multipliers** to create a snowball effect. The qualitative promotion is realised through **directly and personally contacting relevant and eligible actors** from the local CSO scene to present

the idea challenge to them thoroughly and invite them to apply. Furthermore, the scouting partners are encouraged to **organise informative events** and/or to use personal encounters to **present Civic Europe in detail**, give some insight into how to write a good application and answer the questions of the prospective applicants.

The scouts communicate closely with the Civic Europe Team throughout the scouting process and can ask for support from the Civic Europe Team when needed.

How do I prepare for the scouting activities?

All the scouting partners will receive a thorough **briefing** about Civic Europe's selection and eligibility criteria and their tasks. As the scouting partners gain an **extended understanding of the application criteria** as well as knowledge on **how to write a good application**, they can give tips and support to the CSOs that approach them regarding their application.

Good to know

Time frame: The scouting activities should take place between **15 April and 1 June 2020**.

Remuneration: The scouting partners receive a one-time **gross payment of €1400** for the assignment.

Application: Please send us a short **motivational letter** answering the following questions: What is your/your organisation's background in the civil society field? Describe/give an overview of your network (organisations and possible multipliers you will reach out to). How would you effectively spread the call for ideas to relevant local actors within your country? What will you undertake to support local actors and initiatives in the application phase? Please use **max. 500 words**.

Extended Application Deadline is 12 March 2020.



Questions: Don't hesitate to contact Eva if you need more information about the scouting partners: **civiceurope@mitost.org**