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Guide of

European Active Citizen



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Content:

1. Foreword	4
2. European Citizenship: values, rights and duties	4
3. How the EU influences our life	9
4. How to voice your interests in Europe	11
5. How to get a project grant from the EU	15
6. E-governance and e-participation	21
References and further information	26

1. Foreword

The brochure *Guide of European Active Citizen* is part of the Jean Monnet module no. 542696-LLP-1-2013-1-RO-AJM-MO, entitled *Active Citizenship, Identity and Democratic Governance in the European Union*, supported by the European Commission through Life Long Learning Programme.

The guide addresses both students and a wider public, wishing their information on the rights as European citizens, on the opportunities and benefits brought by the EU membership. It aims to contribute to a better understanding of civic rights and to promote the active participation in community life and decision-making processes, by exposing the advantages of such participation and the responsibilities we have as EU citizens.

2. European Citizenship: values, rights and duties

- European Citizenship is the cornerstone of the EU integration process, being that a real integration can not be achieved without citizens, without their participation in a project built for them;
- As the euro represents the symbol of economic and monetary Union, European citizenship is at the heart of the political integration project;
- As a distinct concept, EU citizenship was introduced by the *Maastricht Treaty* (signed in 1992, in force since 1993) and was

later extended and reinforced by the *Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union* and the *Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union*.

The universal values on which the EU citizenship is based:

- ✓ Human dignity
- ✓ Freedom
- ✓ Equality
- ✓ Solidarity
- ✓ Rule of law
- ✓ Respect for human rights (including the rights of persons belonging to minorities)

The Common Values

- The legal status of EU citizenship is derived from national citizenship:
 - only persons holding the nationality of a Member State are citizens of the European Union
 - EU citizenship is additional to and does not replace national citizenship

Discrimination on the basis of nationality, as well as discrimination based on sex, racial or ethnic origin, religion or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation are prohibited (*Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union*, Part Two, art. 18,19).

Your Rights as EU Citizens

Free movement- the core right of EU Citizenship

Every citizen of the Union shall have the right to move and reside freely within the territory of the Member States (Treaty, art. 21)

The right of free movement is subject of several **limitations**. Thus, EU citizens can reside on the territory of another Member State for a period not exceeding three months without any conditions other than the requirement to hold a valid identity card or passport. But, for periods of residence *longer than three months*, they are required to meet **certain conditions** (specified in the Directive 2004/38/EC):

- be workers or self-employed persons in the host Member State;
- have sufficient resources for themselves and their families not to become a burden on the social assistance system of the host country and a comprehensive sickness insurance cover in the host Member State;
- be enrolled at a private or public accredited establishment in the host Member state for the purpose of study and have a comprehensive sickness insurance;
- be a family member accompanying or joining a EU citizen who satisfies the previous conditions.

EU citizens who have resided legally for a continuous period of five years in the host Member State shall have the right of **permanent residence** there and this provision is also valid for their family members who resided in the host country for a continuous period of five years.

The right of permanent residence is a genuine vehicle for integration into the society of the host Member State and a key element in strengthening the social cohesion and the feeling of EU citizenship.

Political Rights:

Right to vote in European elections

Every citizen of the Union has the right to vote and to stand as a candidate at elections to the European Parliament in the member State in which he or she resides under the same conditions as nationals of that state (Treaty, art. 22)

Right to vote in municipal elections

Every citizen of the Union has the right to vote and to stand as a candidate at municipal elections in the Member State in which he or she resides under the same conditions as nationals of that State (Treaty, art. 22)

Right of access to documents

Any citizen of the Union and any natural or legal person residing or having its registered office in a Member State, has a right of access to European Parliament, Council and Commission documents (Charter, art. 42)

Right to petition the European Parliament and the Ombudsman

Every citizen of the Union shall has the right to petition the European Parliament and to refer to the Ombudsman of the Union cases of maladministration in the activities of the Community institutions or bodies, with the exception of the Court of Justice and the Court of First Instance acting in their judicial role (Charter, art. 43-44)

The rights to petition the European parliament, to apply to the European Ombudsman or to adress to the institutions and advisory bodies of the Union may be expressed in any of the official languages of the Union and must have an answer in the same language.

Rights abroad- diplomatic and consular protection

Every citizen of the Union has the right to enjoy, in a territory of a third country, in which the member state of which they are nationals are not represented, the protection of diplomatic and consular authorities of any Member State on the same conditions as the nationals of the State (Treaty, art. 23)

In addition to these main rights, the citizens of the European Union have **many rights**, some of which they are not even aware

of because they appear obvious (they self-evident nature being a consequence of the existence of the Union and the membership of their state of origin to it).

Citizenship Responsibilities

- The theories on citizenship assert the importance of balancing rights and responsibilities; an active citizen is that one who exercises both his rights and responsibilities in a balanced way.
- EU citizenship offers not only many benefits, but also important responsibilities:
 - To obey the law
 - To stay informed on issues that affect the community
 - To participate in the democratic process
 - To respect the rights, opinions and beliefs of others
 - To involve in the local community
 - To take responsibility for oneself and one's family (working hard for personal prosperity)
 - To protect the common heritage for future generations



3. How the European Union influences our lives

The European Union is part of Europeans' everyday life, making decisions in practically all policy areas (from banks' regulation to consumers' rights, from environmental policy to protection of personal data).

The right to live, to work and to study anywhere in the Union is the most common right.

According to official data, over 14 million EU citizens are residing in another Member State.

EURES (European Job Mobility Portal), a network coordinated by the European Commission, is meant to facilitate free movement of workers within the EU, informing and guiding mobile workers on job opportunities and assisting employers wishing to recruit workers from other countries.

Academic mobility is promoted through educational programmes and many steps have been made towards the recognition of professional qualifications.

In the years 2014-2020, Erasmus+ will enable over four million European students, teachers and trainers to have an education/training experience abroad.

With a budget of 14.7 billion euros, the program will also help over 125.000 organizations to innovate and modernize teaching practice and youth work.

The EU membership also means the opportunity to benefit from European structural and investment funds in a wide range of areas (from agriculture and rural development to infrastructure, environment and renewable energy, from human resources development to public services and cross-border cooperation). These funds were designed to invest in economic and social restructuring across the EU and to reduce gaps in development between European regions.

Between 2007-2012, through regional policy instruments (European Regional Development Fund and Cohesion Fund) were funded 61.000 research projects, 198.000 smaller business and were created 594.000 jobs.

Between 2014-2020, a total of over 351.8 billion euros will be invested in EU regions, creating new jobs, developing strategic transport and energy efficiency, research and innovation, small business and entrepreneurs, improving the quality of life of EU citizens.



4. How to voice your interests in the European Union

The essence of EU citizenship is the citizens' participation in the democratic life of the Union. The involvement in decision-making process at local/regional/national/European levels and the transparent dialogue between citizens and institutions are the basis for bringing the Union closer to its citizens.

The general principles of participation and dialogue are established by *The Treaty on European Union* (Articles 10-11), which stipulates that:

Every citizen shall have the right to participate in the democratic life of the Union.

The institutions shall, by appropriate means, give citizens and representative associations the opportunity to make known and publicly exchange their views in all areas of Union action. The institutions shall maintain an open, transparent and regular dialogue with representative associations and civil society.

The European Commission shall carry out broad consultations with parties concerned in order to ensure that the Union's actions are coherent and transparent.

Several tools for consultation and dialogue were created in order to involve citizens in European politics and to shape the EU's political agenda:

European Citizens' Initiative

This is an innovative tool for participatory democracy, which enables **one million EU citizens from at least seven EU countries** to call on the European Commission to propose legislation in a field where it has the power to do so (for example, environment, agriculture, transport, culture, concurrency, public health etc.).

All EU citizens with right to vote have the possibility to organize such initiative. There are several steps in this way (see figure below).



The **first step** is to form a **citizens' committee** composed of at least seven EU citizens living in at least seven different EU

countries, which is responsible for managing the initiative throughout the procedure.

The **second step** is to **register the initiative** on the Commission's citizens' initiative website:

<http://ec.europa.eu/citizens-initiative/public/how-to-register>, providing several information (such as title, the subject, description of its objectives, personal details of the committee members, the provisions of EU treaties considered relevant for the proposed initiative). Within 2 months, the Commission will check if the initiative does not manifestly fall outside the framework of its powers to legislate and if it's not manifestly abusive or contrary to the EU values. After this check, the initiative will be registered to the Commission's website.

The third step is to **collect the statements of support**, within 1 year, using the paper format or the online collection system and respecting all procedures regarding personal data protection. The signatures must be collected in at least seven EU countries and there are minimum numbers of signatories per country, according to population size.

The fourth step is to submit the initiative to the Commission for consideration, which will examine the initiative and replies within 3 months.

The fifth step consists of meeting between the Commission representatives and organizers in order to explain in detail the issues raised in their initiative. Also, the organizers have the opportunity to present their initiative at a **public hearing** in the European Parliament.

The last step is the **Commission response** spelling out what action intends to take, if any, and its reasons. If the Commission considers proposing legislation in response to the citizens' initiative, the proposal will be afterwards submitted to the legislator, which will need to adopt it to become law.

The European citizens' initiative website (<http://ec.europa.eu/citizens-initiative/public/welcome?lg=en>) contains all necessary

information regarding the procedure step by step to use this tool, as well as the list of open and closed initiatives and the Commission's answers.

Citizens' dialogues

This is another instrument in pan-European communication, meant to increase the citizens' trust to EU institutions and governance and to build a European public space.

The dialogues were conceived as open door events and started in September 2012, in the context of the deterioration of EU's public image. The aim was to enable citizens to directly address their questions on the future of the Union and EU policies to European and national politicians, to voice their opinions and to obtain concrete information.

51 Citizens' Dialogues have been held in all Member States between September 2012 and March 2014, involving 22 out of 28 European Commissioners, the representatives of the European Parliament, national and local politicians and more than 16 000 citizens. At the same time, over 105 000 citizens have participated to these democratic exercises via the live web stream and on social media and many more followed it via TV.

The dialogues are an instrument to inform people, to restore trust in European and national institutions and to make citizens aware that their voice does count in the EU.

Public consultations

A wide variety of consultations are regularly launched by the European Commission on initiatives it is planning, enabling citizens

to play an active role in the European policy-making process. In 2013, 141 online consultations were open to EU citizens on topics ranging from agriculture to health, from transport to taxation.

Your Voice in Europe website offers information on open and planned consultations and the modalities in which citizens can submit their point of views. See:

http://ec.europa.eu/yourvoice/index_en.htm

The website is conceived as a “single access point” to a wide variety of consultations, discussions and other ways in which citizens can make their voices heard in Europe (ex. contacting their local members of the European Parliament or their representatives at the Committee of Regions or their representatives at the European Economic or Social Committee).



5. How to get a project grant from the EU

5.1 What is a project based grant funded by the EU?

The European Commission makes direct financial contributions in the form of grants in support of projects or organisations which further the interests of the EU or contribute to the implementation of an EU programme or policy. Interested parties can apply by responding to a public announcement known as a 'call for proposals'.

Who is managing EU funding?

EU Member States	•Over 76 % of the EU budget is managed by national and regional authorities. This includes the Structural Funds and agricultural subsidies.
European Commission	•Roughly 22 % are centrally managed programmes (e.g. research, education, health, youth actions).
Third countries and international organisations	•Third countries and international organisations (e.g. the Red Cross, UN) manage 2 %.

A project is a series of activities aimed at bringing about clearly specified objectives within a defined time period and with a defined budget which is specific to the project.

A project should have:

- Clearly identified stakeholders, including the primary target group and the final beneficiaries.
- Clearly defined coordination, management and financing arrangements.
- A monitoring system to oversee and follow implementation and to support project management.

5.2 How to select the right funding programme for your project?

In development terms a **“programme”** is taken to mean a series of projects whose objectives together contribute to a common Overall Objective, at sector, country or even multi-country level.

Each programme is linked to objectives, areas of intervention, budgets, a specific timetable, etc. Moreover **“a project”** must necessarily contribute to one or more priorities and strategies of the EU that will be mentioned in the programme sheet. It is therefore necessary to ensure that these conditions are not too restrictive in relation to your project and that you can adapt them to some circumstances.

Grant calls for proposals are regularly advertised on the European Commission's website and cover a wide range of fields: Agriculture, fisheries and foods; Business, Culture, education and youth, Economy, finance and tax; Energy and natural resources; Environment, consumers and health; External relations and foreign affairs; Justice, home affairs and citizens' rights; Regions and local development; Science and technology; Transport and travel.

After assessing the consistency of your project with the programme objectives, you should ensure your eligibility.

Who can apply for funding?



5.3 Who are the beneficiaries of your project?

Beneficiaries are those who benefit in whatever way from the implementation of the project. Here an important distinction may be made between:

- **Target group(s)** is the group or entity who will be directly positively affected by the project at the Project Purpose level
- **Final beneficiaries** are those who benefit from the project in the long term at the level of the society or sector at large, e.g. “children” due to increased spending on health and education, “consumers” due to improved agricultural production and marketing

5.4 What process needs to be followed to get access to European grants?

Since grants cover a very diverse range of fields, the specific conditions that need to be fulfilled vary from one field to another. It is therefore important to consult carefully the rules of each grant programme. The webpage of the European Commission presents a list of European policies in favour of which grants are awarded; you will find additional information on the specific grant programmes and on the application process by clicking on the fields which interest you

(see http://ec.europa.eu/contracts_grants/grants_en.htm).

However, some basic principles apply in every case. Grants:

- are a form of **complementary financing**. The EU does not finance projects up to 100%; only projects taking place outside the European Union have the possibility to be financed in full;
- enable a given operation to break even financially and cannot lead to a profit for their beneficiaries;
- **cannot be awarded retroactively** for actions that are already completed.

In addition, **only one grant** may be awarded for the same action.

Grants are not awarded on a case-by-case basis. Instead, they are subject to annual programming. Before 31 March each year, those Departments of the Commission that manage grant programmes

publish their **annual work programme** on their Internet site. The work programme fixes the broad outlines of the grants that are envisaged over the year (area of activity, objectives, timetable, available budget, award conditions, etc...). By consulting these work programmes you may thus already identify the fields which interest you.

Subsequently, the Commission's Departments publish **calls for proposals** on their Internet sites; the calls for proposals invite candidates to present, within a given deadline, a proposal for action that corresponds to the objectives pursued and fulfils the required conditions. These calls for proposals can also be published in the Official Journal of the European Union – C series.

All applications are examined and evaluated on the basis of criteria that have clearly been announced in the calls for proposals, while ensuring equal treatment; candidates are individually informed of the final decision concerning their proposal.

Some grants are exceptionally awarded directly to certain beneficiaries without a call for proposals. This may be due to their specific competences or characteristics which means that they are the sole beneficiaries for certain actions (situations of monopoly), or to the emergency nature of the action (humanitarian aid in particular).

As grants are made with public money, the European Commission applies the principle of transparency. Thus, by 30 June of each year, the Commission Departments publish on their Internet sites the list of the grants that they awarded during the previous year, with the exception of those awarded in the form of scholarships to individuals.

5.5 How to manage your EU funded project?

The Project Cycle follows a sequence or pattern in which projects are planned and carried out. The cycle starts with an idea and helps planners to develop their idea into a working plan which can be implemented and evaluated.

There are six stages in the project cycle:



- **Planning:** analysis of the situation at national, local and sector level. CSOs should review their own Strategic Plan and look to find synergies with the programming documents of the EU and national Government.
- **Identification:** formulation of the initial project idea and the design of the project addressing technical and operational aspects;
- **Formulation:** the project proposal is formatted to a template suitable for presentation to a potential funder. In the case of EU funding, this is likely to be in the format of a Grant Application Form;
- **Financing:** securing financial resources, which may be the award and contracting of an EU-funded grant;
- **Implementation and Monitoring:** implementation of project activities with on-going checks on progress and feedback;
- **Evaluation:** periodic review of project with feedback for next project cycle.

The cycle represents a continuous process in which each stage provides the foundation for the next. Decision making is carried out at each phase.



6. E-governance and e-participation

6.1 Europe's Digital Agenda

The Digital Agenda for Europe (DAE) aims to help Europe's citizens and businesses to get the most out of digital technologies. It is the first of seven flagship initiatives under Europe 2020, the EU's strategy to deliver smart sustainable and inclusive growth. Launched in May 2010, the DAE contains 101 actions, grouped around seven priority areas.

The review of the Digital Priorities, published on 18th December 2012, identifies 7 key areas for further efforts to stimulate the conditions to create growth and jobs in Europe:

1. Create a new and stable broadband regulatory environment;
2. New public digital service infrastructures through Connecting Europe Facility loans;
3. Launch Grand Coalition on Digital Skills and Jobs;
4. Propose EU cyber-security strategy and Directive;
5. Update EU's Copyright Framework;
6. Accelerate cloud computing through public sector buying power;
7. Launch new electronics industrial strategy – an "Airbus of Chips";

The full implementation of the updated Digital Agenda is estimated to increase the European GDP by 5%, or 1500€ per person, by 2020, by increasing investment in ICT, improving e-skills levels in the labour force, enabling public sector innovation, and reforming the framework conditions for the internet economy. In terms of jobs, up to 900.000 digital jobs risk going unfilled by 2020

without pan-European action while 1.2 million jobs could be created through infrastructure construction. This would rise to 3.8 million new jobs throughout the economy in the long term.

According to the vision articulated in the Malmö Declaration, by 2015 European governments will be: "recognised for being open, flexible and collaborative in their relations with citizens and businesses. They use eGovernment to increase their efficiency and effectiveness and to constantly improve public services in a way that caters for user's different needs and maximises public value, thus supporting the transition of Europe to a leading knowledge based economy."

6.2 The European e-Government Action Plan

The second eGovernment Action Plan (2011-2015) aims to realise the ambitious vision contained in the Declaration made at the 5th Ministerial eGovernment Conference (the 'Malmö Declaration'), which was also supported by industry and by a citizens' panel.

The Malmö Declaration sets out 4 political priorities for all European public administrations for 2015:

- Citizens and businesses are empowered by eGovernment services designed around users' needs and developed in collaboration with third parties, as well as by increased access to public information, strengthened transparency and effective means for involvement of stakeholders in the policy process,
- Mobility in the Single Market is reinforced by seamless eGovernment services for the setting up and running of a business and for studying, working, residing and retiring anywhere in the European Union,
- Efficiency and effectiveness is enabled by a constant effort to use eGovernment to reduce the administrative burden, improve organisational processes and promote a sustainable low-carbon economy,

- The implementation of the policy priorities is made possible by creating the appropriate key enablers and by establishing the necessary legal and technical preconditions.

6.3 E-participation in Europe

In the context of growing political apathy in Europe, e-participation is often viewed by EU officials as a tool that could help people engage in politics and policy-making and make the decision-making processes easier to understand, thanks to Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs). It is assumed that thanks to ICT – particularly social media – more and more citizens will be able to take direct part in the European political debates.

While citizens, civil society organisations and businesses are the main beneficiaries of e-participation tools and mechanisms, the role of European administrations is to organise and support such new forms of e-governance. The eParticipation.eu portal presents a five step guide for the use of online environments in order to increase the communication with citizens. The activities and actions included in each stage could be sometimes carried simultaneously, so it doesn't mean that when entering the next phase the activities of the previous step must be finalised. The eParticipation.eu portal summarizes the five steps as follows:

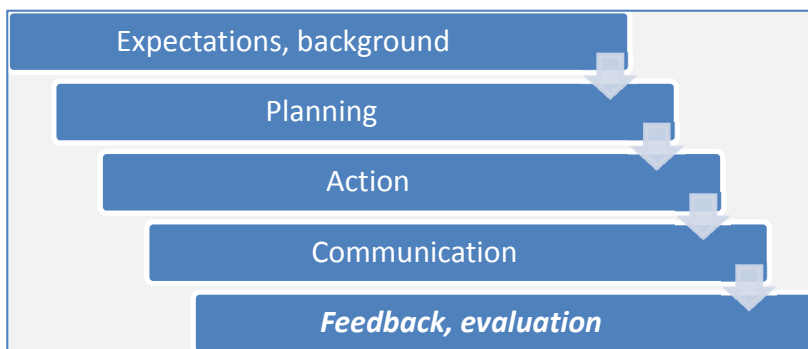
Expectations, background

Every day, local governments need to decide something, plan something and get new ideas about something. The best way to do this is to start from the very beginning, from mapping the general and background for the decision. It is also important to map the expectations of (but also resistance from) all target groups that this plan or decision may affect.

Planning

If there is general understanding in our organization that the environment is favourable and the organization is ready for participative decision making, then the next step is planning – setting of concrete goals, timeframe, participants and rules.

Steps for using online environments to increase communication with citizens



Source: Adapted from eParticipation.eu

Action

Once the environment and expectations are mapped and the whole participation process planned, it is time to distribute concrete tasks and tools.

Communication

Communication is definitely one of the key actions of the whole participation-process and it has to be part of each step. However, we would like to highlight some aspects of communication.

Feedback, evaluation

The way how you communicate and explain final decision to the participants is just as important as the decision itself.

The European Union has launched several initiatives to increase citizen participation in e-governance. For instance, the European e-Government Action Plan (2011-15) and the Malmö Ministerial Declaration on e-Government support the use of ICTs in civic life. The Europe for Citizens Programme (2007-2013) promotes initiatives that facilitate the active participation in the civic and democratic life of the EU. There are also several projects founded under the Competitiveness Innovation Programme (CIP) together with the European Year of Citizens related activities in 2013 and the Europe for Citizens Programme (2007-2013) aimed to enable participatory, transparent and inclusive policy making and more democratic public life. The activities and results obtained in the CIP/PSP projects *OurSpace*, *Puzzled by Policy*, *MyUniversity*, *Immigration Policy 2.0* and *PARTERRE* are presented on the European Commission's website as good bases for future actions to be funded under the Horizon 2020 programme – Societal Challenge 6 – to engage with young people, allowing them to become active actors in all activities of the public sector.



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