

European Citizenship Awards 2016 – Guidelines for the Judging Panel

The European Citizenship Awards 2016 are a joint initiative between Volonteuropé and European Civic Forum, two European networks which promote active citizenship and recognition of the importance of social justice to the cohesion of communities across Europe. The Awards celebrate the democratic and civic engagement of individuals, organisations, citizens' groups, media platforms and social enterprises, recognising innovative initiatives and contributions which give real substance to European values¹, create ownership of public space and improve the lives of our communities in terms of democracy, social justice and universal access to rights.

Since 2006, Volonteuropé has run a major European awards scheme: the Active Citizens of Europe (ACE) Awards. European Civic Forum introduced, in 2014, its flagship European Democratic Citizenship Awards. This year, the two networks are joining forces to launch the European Citizenship Awards 2016. The joint initiative comes at a time when the European project is facing many challenges. Through the European Citizenship Awards 2016, the two networks will recognise and give visibility to outstanding initiatives and civil society actors who put European democratic citizenship into practice and have a real, positive impact on the lives of their communities – be it at the local, regional, national or European level.

The importance of ownership and belonging are at the heart of European Civic Forum and Volonteuropé's understanding of European citizenship. This understanding, based up the Council of Europe's vision:

- Includes all the aspects of living in a democratic society, such as education, culture, sustainable development, fight against discrimination, integration of minorities, participation of disabled people, gender equality and especially the equal representation of women and men in decision-making processes; and

¹ Respect for human dignity, freedom, democracy, equality, the rule of law and respect for human rights, including the rights of persons belonging to minorities, pluralism, non-discrimination, tolerance, justice, solidarity and equality between women and men.

- Guarantees every citizen and civil society representative – including the most underprivileged groups – the right to take part in the democratic life and the shaping of public policies at all levels.

The European Citizenship Awards 2016 will be awarded in the following four categories:

1. **Campaign of the Year:** rewarding awareness-raising or advocacy campaigns organised by both informal and formal groups of citizens, including NGOs, with a real and proven impact on community life or public action, and a high potential for driving transformative change;
2. **Social Enterprise of the Year:** rewarding businesses or not-for-profits founded on the basis of social goals, which are written into the enterprise's vision and mission, the pursuit of which brings in positive social change in communities;
3. **Volunteer of the Year** rewarding individuals who have made an outstanding contribution to democratic life and to the development of a community or cause, be it through a volunteering role in an NGO or in another form of an organisation or community association (including informal groups); and
4. **Media Initiative of the Year:** rewarding professional media and media-based collaborative initiatives which give citizens effective tools to engage and bring about positive change in their communities; successful media initiatives will have used different tools for engagement and enhanced citizens' participation, fostered an informed citizenry and enabled the development of a common civic space.

In order to ensure a smooth organisation of the judging panel meetings and deliberations, the judging process will proceed as follows:

- Following the close of the nomination period, all nominations will be circulated amongst the judges;
- The first physical meeting of the judges will take place in the afternoon of 29 May 2016 in Amsterdam; the organisers of the Awards will cover the travel and subsistence costs of the judges; if any of the judges cannot attend the meeting, they will be asked to score all entries and send their personal ranking on submitted applications by email; during the meeting the judges will select four top ranked nominees per category;
- The four top ranked nominees per category will be then subject to an open online vote, running from 30 May until 27 June 2016;
- A second meeting of the jury will take place after the closing of the online voting in order to decide upon the final ranking and winners of the Awards; the exact date will be confirmed as soon as possible but is likely to be the end of June or beginning of July 2016. Please note that the online vote will represent 50% of the overall final score, while the remaining 50% will be given by the judging panel.

Members of the Jury will also be invited to the Awards ceremony, which will take place on 12 September 2016, in London's City Hall.

Depending on the Award category, the judges are encouraged to take into consideration some of the following:

1. The relevance of the nomination to the ethos and principles of the European Citizenship Awards 2016
2. The ability of the nomination to capture public attention
3. The originality of the content of the nomination
4. Any relevant technical qualities of the nomination
5. The accessibility of the activities undertaken by the nominee to the general public
6. The impact of the activities undertaken by the nominee

Apart from the final winners of the European Citizenship Awards 2016, the judges may award a special mention to one or several other nominees for their outstanding achievements.