



Call for Applications



2026

DEADLINE: 6th February 2023 (23:59 CET)
<https://www.youthforum.org/topics/youthcapital>

Applications and enquiries: eyc@youthforum.org

The European Youth Forum is delighted to [open the call for applications for the European Youth Capital \(EYC\) 2026 title](#).

The **European Youth Capital** (EYC) is a title awarded by the European Youth Forum designed to empower young people, boost youth participation and strengthen European identity.

Each year, a new European city is given the chance to showcase its innovative ideas, projects and activities that aim to raise up young voices and bring a new youth perspective to all aspects of city life.

From public transport and infrastructure, to cultural and educational programmes and democratic policy-making the European Youth Capital title invites cities across the continent to rethink how they engage with and include young people.

It is crucial that young people have equal opportunity to shape the social, economic and political life of where they live.

The European Youth Capital initiative aims to support both young people and the city to open up these possibilities and lead the way for other European municipalities to follow.

Through encouraging active participation, the EYC title ensures that young people are at the core of the decision-making processes, thus creating sustainable local level youth participation mechanisms and structures. The title shows the support for youth rights, strengthening a good base for a stronger youth civil society sector at the local level.

Encouraging the discussion and exchanges on an international scale, cities are able to better connect their youth policies with the European level.

Furthermore, the European Youth Capital title aims to make cities a better place for young people by mainstreaming young people's perspective in a cross-sectoral manner, notably ensuring that youth take part in conversations on different policy areas, including but not limited to environment, social investment, urban development, human rights, governance and transparency. The European Youth Capitals are a vehicle to inflict change in local communities using the transformative energy of young people.

In order to show their willingness to move in this direction, applicant **municipalities together with participating youth structures** are invited to present a multi-faceted programme highlighting their approach to youth participation and plans for creating a better environment for young people in their cities.

The first European Youth Capital was *Rotterdam* (the Netherlands) in 2009 followed by *Turin* (Italy) in 2010, *Antwerp* (Belgium) in 2011, *Braga* (Portugal) in 2012, *Maribor* (Slovenia) in 2013, *Thessaloniki* (Greece) in 2014, *Cluj-Napoca* (Romania) in 2015, *Ganja* (Azerbaijan) in 2016, *Varna* (Bulgaria) in 2017, *Cascais* (Portugal) in 2018, *Novi Sad* (Serbia) in 2019, *Amiens* (France) in 2020, and *Klaipėda* (Lithuania) in 2021. The current European Youth Capital for 2022 is Tirana (Albania), which will be followed very soon by *Lublin* (Poland) for 2023, and *Ghent* (Belgium) for 2024. The winner for the EYC 2025 will be announced on 23 November 2022 at the EYC 2025 Award Ceremony in Tirana, Albania.

So far, the EYC title has allowed cities to organise more than 11.000 events, mobilising more than 13.000 volunteers, with over 75 million Euros invested in youth during the EYC years.

All this without counting the preparation and the follow-up to the EYC title, which brought local authorities to collaborate with its youth on a wider and longer term scale.

Adding to that, around 150 cities have applied to the title, gaining considerable benefits from this process; above all, starting new forms of interaction between decision-makers and young people, regardless of the outcome of the selection process.

If you want to know more about the EYC history, check out the "[European Youth Capital: ten years of boosting vibrant youthful cities](#)" report.

HOW TO APPLY? - TIMELINE

The call for applications opened on [21 November 2022](#), with the following timeline:

1st APPLICATION DEADLINE: SUBMISSION OF INITIAL CONCEPT NOTE

Municipalities are invited to complete and submit the **First Round application form**, setting out their vision for the proposed EYC year.

Following the guiding questions set in [First Round Application Questionnaire](#), this document details the municipality's past performance in the youth field, the motivation to become EYC, the key challenges to be tackled, and a programme of activities to meet these goals. It should clearly outline the involvement of young people in this process, the proposed governance structure and financial resources, as well as the longer-term impact of the EYC year. The First Round Application Form is available [here](#).

DEADLINE: The application form and annexes should be completed entirely in English, and sent by email to eyc@youthforum.org before the first application deadline on [6 February 2023 \(23:59 CET\)](#). Applications received after this date will not be considered. Applications should be submitted both in PDF and Microsoft Word formats with the document title "Application Form EYC [relevant Award year] [Municipality Name]."

FEE: All applications must include the application fee of €300, to be transferred before the first application deadline (6 February 2023, 23:59 CET) to the European Youth Forum bank account provided at the end of this call¹.

ANNOUNCEMENT: The European Youth Forum convenes the Jury (detailed below) to assess all the applications for European Youth Capital. This Jury will shortlist up to five candidate cities best fulfilling the aims of the EYC initiative to progress to round two of the competition, where they will be invited to submit a longer, more detailed application form. All applicant cities will receive feedback from the Jury on the strengths of their applications and areas for improvement.

The Short-Listed Candidates will be published on the European Youth Forum's website on

¹ The application fee collected during the EYC 2026 selection process will be used to support the organisation of the European Youth Capital Award Ceremony in 2023 (FAQ).

22 March 2023.

WEBINAR: The European Youth Forum will host a webinar for cities that are interested to apply for the European Youth Capital 2026 title. The webinar will provide an overview of the application process and will take place on **1 December 2022** ([click here](#) to register).

2nd APPLICATION DEADLINE: SUBMISSION OF DETAILED APPLICATION FORMS

The Short-Listed Candidates will be invited to complete and submit the **Second Round Application Form**, providing more details and expanding on their plans for EYC 2026.

This round will give Short-Listed Candidates the chance to further extend the content of their proposal, deepening the content of the different chapters, and following some additional guiding questions.

Applicants will have the possibility to use the allocated time to foster the relationship between the Municipality and the youth sector, and better outlining the details on their plan for the EYC year.

DEADLINE: The second round application form should be completed entirely in English, and sent by email to eyc@youthforum.org before the application deadline on **5 June 2023 (23:59 CET)**. Applications received after this date will not be considered.

Applications should be submitted in PDF and Microsoft Word formats with the document title “Second Round Application Form EYC 2026 *Municipality Name*”.

FEE: All second round applications must include the application fee of €700, to be transferred before the application deadline (5 June 2023, 23:59 CET) to the European Youth Forum bank account provided at the end of this call.

The Short-Listed Candidates will then receive detailed feedback and recommendations for improvement of their applications.

These recommendations will be developed by the Jury, a Focus Group, and an external evaluator, and will be sent to the Short-Listed Candidates on **9 August 2023**.

3rd APPLICATION DEADLINE: SUBMISSION OF FINAL APPLICATION FORMS

The Short-Listed Candidates will be invited to update their applications from the second round of the competition, based on the recommendations made by the Jury and European Youth Capital Focus Group, and the external evaluator.

DEADLINE: The same detailed application form will be updated and resubmitted, and sent by email to eyc@youthforum.org before the third application deadline on **25 September 2023 (23:59 CET)**. Applications received after this date will not be considered. The detailed application form should be completed entirely in English.

Applications should be submitted in PDF and Microsoft Word formats with the document title “Final Application Form EYC 2026 *Municipality Name*”.

FEE: The third application round does not include a fee.

THE JURY MEETING: Assessment of the received Final Applications and the selection of the successful Short-Listed Candidate will be made by the Jury before the Jury meeting, and the Short-Listed Candidates will be invited to the Jury meeting in November 2023 (date and place to be decided) to present their Final Application and answer to the questions of the Jury.

ANNOUNCEMENT & AWARD CEREMONY: After the Jury meeting, the city awarded the title will be announced during the Award Ceremony in Lublin (Poland), European Youth Capital 2023, taking place in November 2023 (exact date to be decided).

COOPERATION AGREEMENT: After being awarded the title, EYC 2026 and the European Youth Forum will sign an agreement setting out the terms and conditions of their relationship and cooperation with respect to the title. The Standard template of the Cooperation Agreement can be found [here](#).

KEEP IN MIND - IMPORTANT DATES:

First Application Deadline [6 February 2023](#)

Announcement of the Short-Listed Candidates [22 March 2023](#)

Second Application Deadline [5 June 2023](#)

Second Round Feedback to the Short-Listed Candidates [9 August 2023](#)

Third Application Deadline [25 September 2023](#)

European Youth Capital 2026 Jury Meeting [November 2023](#)

European Youth Capital 2026 Award Ceremony [November 2023](#)

KEY CRITERIA

All applications for the European Youth Capital title are assessed by the Jury composed of European and international institutional and civil society experts and practitioners, representatives from youth organisations, the private sector, the media, and from local and regional authorities.

This Jury is selected and convened by the European Youth Forum, and the list of organisations that are taking part in the Jury will be published on the European Youth Forum's website at the same time of the shortlisted candidate cities' announcement.

Additionally, a Focus Group, composed of experts from different areas relevant to the title, will provide feedback for the improvement of the applications of the Short-Listed Candidates between the second and third round of applications. In addition to contributing to the feedback shared with the shortlisted candidate cities, the Focus Group serves as an additional resource to the European Youth Forum and the Jury to come up with the most objective decision on which city should get the European Youth Capital title.

In completing the concept note, cities are asked to set out their vision to become the European Youth Capital 2026 and how it can empower young people, boost youth participation, promote European cohesion, and bring change to their city.

Applicant cities are invited to be creative and push the boundaries of what they want to achieve through this process. The different chapters don't ask direct questions, the aim is to give applicants the possibility to present their own unique perspective and goals, but at the same time to give the Jury a well-rounded picture of the scope, intent and feasibility of each proposal.

Applicants should assess feasibility of a proposed concept and emphasize the added value the title would bring to the applicant city and not only in the youth field.

As such, the key themes and focus of the proposed EYC year are ultimately the decision of the applicant city and the young people therein. However, there are certain key elements that are essential to any application for the EYC title:

- **Youth Participation:** Young people should be at the heart of any EYC application. This applies to the design of the application itself, the development of the programme, and the governance and implementation structures of the proposed EYC year – in every step of the application process it should be clear to the Jury that young people are at the core of it.

The applicant should outline in a clear way how the title would benefit young people in the city, and their engagement in the development of the proposal.

- **Co-decision-making:** Youth participation is important not only in developing the proposal, but also in terms of how the EYC year will work in practice. This should not be solely a municipal initiative – it must be developed and delivered in an equal partnership between the municipality, local youth organisations and the city's young people.

Cities that are willing to genuinely hand over the reins and trust young people with responsibility will fare best, striking a balance between offering the necessary support and resources while empowering young people to jointly manage the implementation of the EYC year.

- **European Dimension:** A key goal of the EYC initiative is to emphasize and strengthen the relationship between the European and local levels, and this is an important aspect of any proposal.

The proposed EYC year should include clear links to the European level, particularly in terms of common European processes and objectives, and especially regarding youth policy, as well as policies of the European Youth Forum. It should also seek to create

an opportunity for young people at the local level to discuss European topics, foster their European identity and inspire other cities in the country, and beyond national borders, to develop a better environment for young people, and thus bring a long-term change to cities across Europe.

In order to support applicant cities in building a strong European dimension, the European Youth Forum provides a [EYC Policy Toolkit](#). This document gives applicants a list of the main (list is not exhaustive) European youth policies and related key documents. The EYC Policy Toolkit also highlights European Youth Forum's policies and potential resources it can offer to the awarded city.

The European Youth Forum's [Policy Programme](#) is also a useful up-to-date resource for applicants.

Applicant cities are encouraged to consider these policies, implementation mechanisms and findings as outlined in the document when applying for the European Youth Capital title, seeing how these policies could be channeled to the local level.

The following elements must to be present and visible throughout the application, and will be taken in consideration by the Jury in assessing the proposals:

- **Coherence:** The First Round Application Form requires applicants to outline a vision of what they want to achieve through the proposed EYC year, but this must be coherent from start to finish.
The Jury should be able to draw a clear line right through from the city's track record, motivation, challenges and key goals, to a targeted programme designed to meet these goals and a longer-term legacy of what this can change for young people. The different sections of the concept note are related, and there should be a coherent link running through each of the answers provided.
- **Credibility:** Applications should be as convincing and credible as possible, particularly by providing clear evidence and data to support the claims made and plans outlined. When assessing the documents, the Jury members will be tasked with judging the credibility of the answers – is the level of youth participation genuine and effective? Is the governance structure feasible? Is there a solid level of support (financial or otherwise) to implement the proposed programme? The more detail provided in this regard, the better.
- **Long-term commitment:** Running for the European Youth Capital title, preparation and implementation phases once being awarded, all this takes up to four years of continual effort. The legacy lives on many years after. Thus, applications should demonstrate a long term and cross-party political commitment to the title.

Should you have any questions relating to the selection procedure, please contact the European Youth Forum's Secretariat: eyc@youthforum.org.

More information is also available on the European Youth Forum website: <https://www.youthforum.org/topics/youthcapital>

Disclaimer:

Please note that in order to ensure an independent, transparent and fair process the European Youth Forum neither (a) reviews applications before the application deadline nor (b) attends meetings with candidate cities.

EUROPEAN YOUTH FORUM BANK DETAILS

Name of Bank	ING bank Marnix Business Branch
Address of bank	1, rue du Trône 1000 BRUXELLES BELGIUM
SWIFT or BIC code	BBRUBEBB
Account number	375-1009152-43
IBAN	BE66 3751 0091 5243

<https://www.youthforum.org/topics/youthcapital>

FAQ

1. Who can apply?

The European Youth Capital competition is open to any Local Authority from Member States of the Council of Europe, which are parties to the European Cultural Convention adopted in 1954 in Paris. A local authority is defined as a municipality or group of municipalities located in a common geographical area, such as a metropolitan area. If you are unsure about your eligibility to apply, please contact the European Youth Forum secretariat (eyc@youthforum.org).

2. Is the support of youth organisations an essential criterion of an application?

Yes, support of youth organisations is a crucial selection criterion. We request a signed statement of support by at least one independent local or regional youth council. If no local youth council exists, a relevant coalition of local youth NGOs should support the application of the municipality, in written form. The youth organisation(s) should be active for young people and run by young people, and involved in the EYC application process.

3. Is there any specific funding connected with the EYC title?

There is no direct funding provided by the European Youth Forum to the European Youth Capitals. However, the Awarded City is free to seek additional funding or partnerships in support of its programme. Past holders of the title secured funding from both institutional and private funders based on their commitment to support youth in their cities.

4. In which language applications should be submitted?

The complete application and all complementary information should be submitted entirely in English.

The applications that do not comply with this requirement will not be considered eligible.

5. What is the role of the European Youth Forum?

The European Youth Forum is the coordinator of the European Youth Capital process and gives legitimacy and credibility to the title.

The European Youth Forum is the platform of youth organisations in Europe. We represent more than 100 youth organisations, which bring together tens of millions of young people from all over Europe.

Aiming to support young people to actively participate in the shaping of Europe and of the societies in which they live, the European Youth Forum works as a representative body to promote the interests of all European youth at the institutions of the European Union, the Council of Europe and the United Nations, and with its partners in the youth field.

The European Youth Forum is a key partner of the awarded city during the preparation, implementation and follow-up phases of the title. The European Youth Forum primarily supports the Capital in implementing the programme, leading towards change using the expertise that lies within the organisation. It also ensures a strong European dimension and connections with key international institutions and stakeholders and with a network of youth organisations at local, regional, national and European level.

In addition, the European Youth Forum does monitoring activities throughout the European Youth Capital process to further identify the needs of the Capital and improve the process itself.

Further questions on the application process

Please contact the European Youth Forum secretariat (eyc@youthforum.org).