European Parliament

DIRECTORATE-GENERAL FOR INTERNAL POLICIES

POLICY DEPARTMENT B
STRUCTURAL AND COHESION POLICIES

Agriculture and Rural Development

Culture and Education

Fisheries

Regional Development

Transport and Tourism

RESEARCH FOR CULT COMMITTEE – EUROPE FOR CITIZENS: NEW PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTATION – FIRST EXPERIENCES

STUDY

2016

DIRECTORATE-GENERAL FOR INTERNAL POLICIES

POLICY DEPARTMENT B: STRUCTURAL AND COHESION POLICIES

CULTURE AND EDUCATION

RESEARCH FOR CULT COMMITTEE – EUROPE FOR CITIZENS: NEW PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTATION – FIRST EXPERIENCES

STUDY

This research paper was requested by the European Parliament's Committee on Culture and Education and commissioned, supervised and published by the Policy Department for Structural and Cohesion Policies.

AUTHORS

Coffey: Irina JEFFERIES, Bradford ROHMER

DIRECTORATE-GENERAL FOR INTERNAL POLICIES

POLICY DEPARTMENT B: STRUCTURAL AND COHESION POLICIES

CULTURE AND EDUCATION

RESEARCH FOR CULT COMMITTEE – EUROPE FOR CITIZENS: NEW PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTATION – FIRST EXPERIENCES

STUDY

Abstract

The present study is intended to research first experiences with the implementation of the Europe for Citizens (EfC) programme 2014–2020. The study provides an overview of the current implementation of the programme and aims to contribute to an understanding of what works well in the present iteration of the EfC programme and what are the main areas of concern for applicants and beneficiaries. The analysis is based on 24 interviews with the National Contact Points of the Programme, located in the Member States.

CONTENTS

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

EACEA Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency

EDIC Europe Direct Information Centre

EfC Europe for Citizens Programme

EC European Commission

EP European Parliament

NCP (Europe for Citizens) National Contact Point

_____

LIST OF TABLES

LIST OF FIGURES

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Europe for Citizens Programme 2014 – 2020

The **Europe for Citizens Programme** (hereafter referred to as the programme or EfC programme) was initially established for the period 2007-2013 with the purpose of enhancing citizen support to European integration. After the success of the first programming period, a revamped version of the EfC programme was adopted in April 2014.

While the essence of the EfC remains the same, the **revision of the EfC** programme sought to simplify its structure and make it more accessible for applicants. The **programme objectives were redrafted with a simpler vocabulary** and the number of programme **strands was reduced**. The respective measures were also streamlined, in an attempt to make the logic of the programme easier to understand. In addition, the programme **priorities** previously announced on an annual basis by the Education, Audiovisual and Cultural Executive Agency (EACEA) became **multi-annual**. Finally, **a system of lump sum payments replaced the budget-based financing** used during the previous programme period.

The programme remained **jointly managed** by the European Commission (EC), the EACEA and the Programme Committee, comprised of representatives appointed by the Member States. The Europe for Citizens National Contact Points (NCPs) act as **a 'bridge' between the programme implementers** (EC and EACEA) on the one hand and **potential programme beneficiaries, multipliers and the general public** on the other**.**

Background to the study

The present study is intended to **research first experiences with the implementation of the EfC programme 2014-2020.** The programme has now been running for two years. The objective of the study is to **provide an overview of the current implementation of the programme, which contributes to an understanding** of what works well in the present iteration of the EfC programme and what are the main areas of concern for applicants and beneficiaries.

The analysis is based on **24 interviews with NCPs, carried out by Coffey from March to May 2016**.

Conclusions

Role of the EfC NCPs in the new programme

While EfC NCPs are **generally satisfied with their role and responsibilities, the programme is not currently harnessing their full potential**, as their insights and experiences are **not fed systematically into the strategic programming and planning process.**

There are benefits when EfC NCPs work across a number of EU-related activities, including Creative Europe or Erasmus+ as this allows stronger links with these other EU activities, which can be beneficial to the programme.

_____

NCP perceptions of the new programme

The new programme is an improvement on the last one. Programme documentation provides more clarity on the objectives and requirements for applications. The advance **publishing of the priorities and the move towards setting multiannual priorities covering the whole timeframe of the programme** can be considered as significant improvements.

Even though applicants are very positive about the application process **there are still some areas for improvement:**

- **Programme objectives** still use a lot of institutional jargon, which is not easily accessible to all citizens.
- **The Programme Guide** could be further improved.
- There is scope to improve **feedback to rejected applicants.**

How to generate an impact with a modest budget remains the biggest challenge for projects supported under the EfC programme, but there are ways to make programme budgets go further, for example through synergies with other EU funding activities. **There are potential advantages to making changes to financing rules under the new programme**. The lump sum system is easier to administer than budget-based financing, but the reduced rate of pre-financing (i.e. max 50%) creates a significant burden on smaller organisations. Co-financing can also be problematic for smaller organisations, and not taking account of differences in the cost of living puts some Member States at a disadvantage.

There is **good co-operation between NCPs and programme implementers** (EACEA, European Commission) and also among the EfC NCPs. However, there may be scope to generate more systematic benefits for NCPs **by coordinating and supporting these individual entities as part of a network.**

Views on communication

There is still room to improve the centralised communication channels and tools provided by the EC and EACEA. Although the EACEA project Portal is a significant step in the right direction further developments are required. **NCPs take an active role in communicating about the funding opportunities** offered by the EfC programme to potential applicants. But whilst they use a wide range of channels they are not systematically maximising opportunities presented by social media and multipliers including Europe Direct Information Centres (EDICs). [1]

It may be difficult to attribute the rise in awareness of the EfC programme among applicants and target groups directly to communication actions. But it seems plausible that communication efforts have at least supported the increased levels of awareness, even if this increase varies significantly across different regions in different Member States.

---

[1] EDICs disseminate information about the programme at a regional level in Member States, but also on occasion offer premises for EfC information days and events.

Recommendations

The following recommendations are drawn from NCPs' views on how to improve the programme during the 2014-2020 funding period and in further programming periods.

It is recommended to give consideration to:

- **Redefining the NCP role to allow NCPs to exploit their full potential.** As well as providing a helpdesk function, NCPs could be encouraged to provide feedback to the Programme Committee and collaborate with other EU spending programmes where this adds value.

- **Enhancing coordination by EfC programme implementers.** The findings suggest that collaboration between NCPs, and between NCPs, the EC and EACEA enhances programme impact.

- **Identifying ways to strengthen synergies between NCP activities related to EfC and other relevant EU spending programmes,** including but not limited to Creative Europe and Erasmus+. This would allow the NCPs the make the most of the funding they get from the European Commission and to carry out more activities.

- **Giving consideration to redefining programme priorities** so that they are closer to the current European context and affairs. However, a potential revision should not compromise the multi-annual definition of priorities, which has been welcomed as a significant improvement from the last programming period. The research team strongly recommends that the NCPs are consulted and their views taken into account in this process.

- **Upgrading the overall approach to EfC communication at central and local level.**

- **Redefining the process for the communication of results to applicants.** It is recommended that EACEA communicates the results to the NCPs prior to or at the same time as making them public. As part of the process, NCPs need to be given access to applicants' files so that they are able to give better feedback to applicants. Applicants and NCPs would also benefit if **parts of the Programme Guide[2] were redrafted** to address important shortcomings, including:

  o Providing an Annex to the Programme Guide providing additional details on key aspects such as selection criteria and partnership agreements.

  o Making further improvements to the text: simplifying wording of objectives and priorities, reviewing definitions.

  o Ensuring that NCPs are consulted in the context of a redrafting of the EfC Programme Guide, as they are able to provide practical suggestions which are relevant to the programme applicants.

- **Addressing the tension between the current ambitious goals and the limited funding opportunities available.** There is a general sense that the amount of funding is a significant limiting factor and insufficient to meet programme goals. If it is decided to address this issue, then the main options include redefining programme goals so that they are more specific and realistic in line with the available budget, or

---

[2] The Programme Guides of Erasmus+ and Fundamental Rights and Citizenship are considered to be useful examples.

redefining funding modules so that they are more in line with programme ambitions, or both.

- **Undertaking a fuller evaluation of the EfC programme, taking into account participants' and citizens' views**. Whilst NCPs have provided a quick snapshot of the evolution of the programme and current areas for improvement, it is inevitable that this feedback is influenced by their experience. It is important for any funding intervention to take account of the views of those that the intervention is intended to serve, particularly when decisions are required with regards to whether or not to continue an approach or programme.

1. INTRODUCTION

Based on the experience of a prior programme for Active Citizenship, in December 2006, the **Europe for Citizens Programme** (hereafter referred to as the programme or EfC programme) was initially established for the period 2007-2013.[3]

The second iteration of the EfC programme was adopted for the period 2014-2020 and is an important instrument aimed at getting the European Union's 500 million inhabitants to play a greater part in the development of the Union. The Regulation establishing this programme underlined that the programme's objectives seek to "*contribute to citizens' understanding of the Union, its history and diversity, and to foster European citizenship and improve the conditions for civic and democratic participation*."[4]

The programme structure was revised in the new programming period and is implemented through two Strands and a horizontal Action:

- **Strand 1**: *European remembrance*: Raise awareness of remembrance, common history and values and the Union's aim.

- **Strand 2**: *Democratic engagement and civic participation*: Encourage democratic and civic participation of citizens at Union level. The measures in Strand 2 are:
  - *Town Twinning*
  - *Networks of Towns*
  - *Civil Society Projects*

- **Horizontal Action**: *Valorisation*: Analysis, dissemination and use of project results.

Both **Action Grants and Operating Grants can be awarded within the programme**. The Action Grants are granted for projects (actions with a limited duration during which proposed specific activities are implemented) within both strands. The Operating Grants differ from Action Grants in that they provide financial support for costs required for the proper conduct of the usual and permanent activities of an organisation, such as rental costs for premises or staff remuneration.[5]

The programme is **jointly managed** by the European Commission, the Education, Audio-visual and Cultural Executive Agency (EACEA) and the EfC Programme Committee, which is comprised of representatives appointed by the Member States. The Europe for Citizens National Contact Points (NCPs) are **contact points** that provide information to the general public, potential programme beneficiaries and multipliers on the EfC programme 2014-2020. They play an intermediary role between these stakeholders and the European Commission.

---

[3] Decision No 1904/2006/EC establishing for the period 2007 to 2013 the programme Europe for Citizens to promote active European Citizenship (OJ L378/32, 27.12.2006)

[4] COUNCIL REGULATION (EU) No 390/2014 of 14 April 2014 establishing the 'Europe for Citizens' programme for the period 2014-2020 (OJ L 115/3, 17.04.2014)

[5] See EfC Programme Guide (Version valid as of 2014); https://eacea.ec.europa.eu/sites/eacea-site/files/documents/comm2013003670000en.pdf

_____

The **revision of the EfC** programme sought to simplify its structure and make it more accessible for applicants.

The **programme objectives were simplified** and **refocused** on the overall aim of bringing the Union closer to citizens. The number of **strands was reduced** from four to two and the number of measures was also reduced. These changes make the programme logic easier to understand and more accessible for its main target audience, the European citizens.

Initially, the EACEA announced **priorities** on an annual basis. This year, **multi-annual priorities have been set which** will apply throughout the remaining period of the programme from 2016 to 2020.

Finally, **a system of lump sums replaced the budget-based financing**[6] used during the previous programme period. The grant is calculated on the basis of a lump-sum financing system. The lump sums cover all the eligible costs of the actions and the same parameters are valid for all participating countries.

1.1. Background to the study

1.1.1 Aim

The present study is intended to **research first experiences with the implementation of the EfC programme 2014-2020.** The programme has now been running for two years.

The objective of the study is to **provide an overview of the current implementation of the programme, which contributes to an understanding** of what works well in the present iteration of the EfC programme and what are the main areas of concern for applicants and beneficiaries.

As the **NCPs are responsible for promoting the programme and supporting applicants** to the programme at the national level, they have a good overview of the programme and first-hand knowledge of its implementation. In addition, they understand the issues experienced by applicants throughout the application process. Thus, **NCPs are in a good position to inform this study from the perspective of the applicants**, and to identify the successes and shortcomings of programme implementation to date.

1.1.2 Methodological overview

The present analysis is based on **an interview programme of the NCPs, which was carried out by Coffey from March to May 2016**.

At the outset, **26 interviews with NCPs** were planned. This took into account national differences in the availability of NCPs. Three Member States do not have a dedicated NCP (Luxembourg, Portugal and the United Kingdom), while there is an NCP in the Republic of Serbia, which is a candidate country for EU membership. Also, Belgium has three active NCPs, one for each of its language communities (French, Flemish and German-speaking). For the sake

---

[6] According to the Programme Guide, the grant is calculated on the basis of Lump sum financing system fixed per "tranches". The same parameters are valid for all participating countries.

The lump sums cover all the eligible costs of the actions, i.e.:
- staff costs linked directly to the action;
- travel and subsistence costs of participants at events;
- rental of room/interpreting and translation needed for the running of events;
- communication/dissemination costs linked to the events;
- coordination costs generated by the involvement of several organisations;
- cost of research and IT tools needed for the preparatory activities under actions 1 and 2.3

For Town Twinning, the lump sum is based only on the number of participants invited. For the other strands/measures, the lump sum is based on three parameters which constitute the essential elements of all the citizenship actions: the number of participants, the number of countries involved and the number of events developed, with no direct impact on the format of activities.

of efficiency, it was agreed that one interview would be carried out with the longest-standing NCP (Flanders), who would gather any comments or concerns from the other two NCPs prior to the discussion with Coffey.

In total, **24 NCPs provided feedback on the implementation of the EfC programme** in the current programming period by participating in an interview led by a member of the research team at Coffey (or, in limited cases, by providing written answers to the questionnaire). Two NCPs did not respond to the research team's repeated requests (by email and telephone) for an interview or written feedback. The research team considers this to be a minimal setback given the number of NCPs that did participate.

The **main objectives of the interviews** with NCPs were to:

- **gain knowledge** from professionals who have worked with the new programme on a day-to-day basis;
- **gather evidence** about the new programme's performance to date;
- **engage in a critical discussion** about programme's implementation, including both success factors and improvement areas.

The study team used a semi-structured discussion guide to ensure a focus on the same key topics, whilst allowing the interviewee scope to bring their own insights. The interviews focussed on several key topics, including the type of the host structure, roles and responsibilities, perceptions of the revised EfC programme and application process, and cooperation with the programme's implementers. The NCPs were also **invited to make suggestions for how to improve** the programme drawing on their experiences.[7]

The research team analysed the feedback from NCPs by topic, taking into account relevant programme documents.

The **findings of the study are grouped around three core themes**:

- NCP roles and responsibilities in the new programme;
- NCP perceptions of the new programme;
- Views on communication.

Based on the analysis of key findings, the study team devised conclusions and recommendations for improvement.

---

[7] By way of reference, the following legend should be applied when reading the Report in relation to the views expressed by the NCPs: Few < 3; Several > 5; Many > 8; A majority > 12.

2. ROLE OF THE NATIONAL CONTACT POINTS

KEY FINDINGS

- Most NCPs are governmental organisations. The remaining NCPs are mostly NGOs.
- Views and opinions among NCPs did not seem to significantly differ on the basis of their organisation type.
- NCPs are making efforts to maximise the synergies between their EfC-related activities and other EU programmes, such as Creative Europe or Erasmus+. Working across programmes allows NCPs to apply lessons from different programmes and produces some economies of scale. In consequence, NCPs consider that they are more effective because they are able to do more with the limited amount of funding available.
- NCPs see themselves as a 'bridge' between the programme implementers (European Commission and EACEA) and potential programme beneficiaries, multipliers and the general public.
- NCPs see promoting the programme as one of their core responsibilities.
- Around a third of NCPs consider that their role goes beyond the provision of technical advice.
- All NCPs agree that the recent changes in the new EfC programme were positive, though their own roles had not changed significantly.
- NCPs were generally satisfied with their responsibilities in the programme. But several NCPs felt they could potentially play a more active role.

2.1. Administrative aspects

2.1.1   Typology of host structures

This section describes the types of organisations which act as NCP to the EfC programme (listed in a table in **Annex 2)**.

The interviews conducted for the study indicated that 18 of the interviewed NCPs are **government structures**:

- Approximately half of these NCPs are **directly hosted in national ministries**, most of which are in charge of culture policies. Often, these NCPs are embedded in departments involved in international relations and the EU policy aspects of culture.

- Most of the other NCPs are **government institutions or state-funded agencies**, which administer cultural policies and programmes.

- Several NCPs stated they are **independent**, albeit receiving public funding.

Fewer than 10 NCPs are **non-governmental organisations (NGOs) or associations**, appointed by the competent ministry in the Member State following public procurement procedures. Only one NCP is a **private consultancy** firm.

There were no significant differences in NCPs' views and opinions on the basis of their organisation type. However, some of the NGOs acting as NCPs felt that they had unrealised potential that could be translated into a bigger role on the programme. These NCPs suggested that they could build on their current help-desk function by placing a stronger focus on active liaison with grassroots organisations.

2.1.2   Typical profile

The evidence suggests that NCPs are making efforts to **maximise the synergies between officers' EU-related activities**. This is particularly relevant as the majority of NCPs have one officer in charge of the EfC, who frequently is responsible for other work streams too, such as Creative Europe or Erasmus+. These other EU programmes are normally managed by the EfC NCP, hosted in the same structure or department or coordinated by the same officer.[8] In the cases where the responsibilities for these EU programmes are carried out by separate structures, the NCPs mentioned communicating with the programme officers in charge to ensure co-operation. However, links between the EfC programme and others are stronger when they are hosted in the same Ministry or organisation.

Several NCPs pointed out that they are able to **avoid silo effects** because there are often similarities between different aspects of their EfC and other EU programme work. For example, activities concern similar target groups (e.g. civil society organisations) or policy areas (e.g. culture, mobility). By maximising the synergies between EU-related activities, NCPs are able to make the most out of the funding they get from the European Commission.

Several NCPs explicitly mentioned their conscious efforts to establish connections between the activities they carry out in the field of civil society, which are sometimes beyond what is expected from their job description.

2.2.   The NCPs in the revised EfC Programme

Around **half of the NCPs interviewed were new to the EfC** programme and could not draw comparisons with the previous programming period. When possible, new NCPs consulted with the officer formerly in charge of the programme and shared anecdotal views on how the EfC programme 2014-2020 differed from the previous iteration, as well as on the impact of the programme revision on their function.

2.2.1   Responsibilities of the NCPs

Annex 5 to the Programme Guide[9] for the EfC programming period 2014-2020 sets out NCPs' responsibilities:

---

[8]   Less than a third of the NCPs have more than one officer in charge of the EfC in the host structures. Officers have variable job descriptions and there are both full-time and part-time positions across NCPs in the different countries.

[9]   EfC Programme Guide (Version valid as of 2014); https://eacea.ec.europa.eu/sites/eacea-site/files/documents/comm2013003670000en.pdf.

Table 1: EfC NCPs' Responsibilities based on Annex 5

Basic services: *general information on the 'Europe for citizens' programme to the general public*	**Specific services:** *support to other multipliers at national level*
Ensure the **promotion** of the Europe for Citizens Programme	Mobilise relevant organisations in the **promotion** of the programme, paying particular attention to varying the spectrum of potential applicants by involving new organisations
Facilitate **participation** in the programme by the widest number of potential candidates	Co-operate with, co-ordinate and facilitate the work of **information multipliers,** by organising meetings, and producing and disseminating information material
Provide **information** to potential candidates on the different actions of the Europe for Citizens programme through various means: 1) answering requests for information, 2) providing information pro-actively through newsletters and/or a website, 3) organising information meetings	**Participate** in events promoting the programme organised by the multipliers
Provide **advice** to applicants	Ensure a link with the **other EU information offices** in the country in order to be in a position to inform potential applicants on the Community programmes most adapted to their needs
Facilitate **partner search**	Ensure co-operation with contact points for **other relevant programmes** (Erasmus+, Creative Europe)
Enhance **dissemination** activities to promote the results of the programme (promotion at national/regional level of transnational cooperation) and provide citizens with information on the achievements	
Ensure a balanced **geographical distribution** of the events organised at national level	
Strategic Task	
To support **the strategic approach** of the European Commission and the Executive Agency by favouring the implementation of projects with a large geographical coverage, a wide impact and a strong thematic focus on EU policies	

In most cases, task descriptions provided by the NCPs were in line with those specified in the Programme Guide. In general, the NCPs consulted saw their responsibilities as focussed on around **three primary aspects**:

- Being a contact point between the programme implementers, stakeholders and the general public;

- Promoting and disseminating information on the EfC programme; and

- Providing assistance to applicants during the application process.

Contact point between programme implementers, stakeholders and the general public

In the majority of the interviews conducted for the study, the NCPs emphasised that their main **role is to be a "contact point"** that bridges the gap between the programme implementers (European Commission and EACEA), the programme stakeholders in their Member State (potential programme beneficiaries and multipliers) and the general public.

This task takes up a significant part of their time and efforts. It involves using various communication channels (emails to applicants and programme implementers, managing the national website for EfC or organising face-to-face events), and drawing on a number of communication skills. The professional background of the NCP officers was not discussed in detail, but it appeared that all of the interviewed NCPs were satisfied that they were able to fulfil this role in line with EC and EACEA expectations.

Promotion of the EfC programme

NCPs view promoting and disseminating information on the EfC in their country as one of their core tasks. NCPs reported that they play a pivotal role in raising-awareness of the programme. Most potential applicants find out about the EfC programme from the NCP website (in their native language) or from NCP information events.

The interviews revealed that NCPs try to tailor their efforts to meet target groups' needs. This means that NCPs place different levels **of priority on different target audiences. Variations relate to** the amount of existing awareness of the programme by different groups. For example, in Member States where local authorities are already well aware of the existence of the programme and have regular contacts with the NCPs, NCPs tend to focus their programme promotion on NGOs. A few NCPs reported that they invest significant amounts of time and resources in touring around the provincial towns of the country to attract the interest of local authorities and municipalities in Town Twinning and Networks of towns.

Section 4 of this report presents an analysis of NCPs' views on how the programme is promoted and what are the best practices in this area.

Assistance to applicants

NCPs pointed out that they **do not have the authority to provide official advice on the content of applications**. NCPs explained that interaction with applicants during the application process is usually as follows:

1) The NCP receives an **initial enquiry** from a potential applicant (most of the time by email, although a direct phone call or a Facebook private message are also possible).
2) The NCP **replies and attaches an information pack** that usually includes the Programme Guide, the document on the Programme priorities[10] and/or a list of events or information days organised locally by the NCP.
3) The NCP can provide **further assistance** by, for example, guiding the project leader on how to create, complete and submit an application e-form and providing ad-hoc support. Occasionally, NCPs maintain contact after the results of the call have been announced by EACEA. There is no institutionalised "after care" process and the practices between NCPs largely differ.

---

[10]   Priorities of the programme for 2016-2020, https://eacea.ec.europa.eu/sites/eacea-site/files/priorities_of_the_programme_for_2016_5.pdf

However, interviews with around a third of NCPs showed a lack of clarity about the type and how much support to provide. These NCPs felt that **the assistance they offer to applicants sometimes goes slightly beyond the technical advice**, and that this is beneficial to applicants. For instance, several NCPs indicated that they would comment on the way that the project is linked to the programme priorities or whether the EU dimension of the project is sufficient. A couple of NCPs mentioned that they would sometimes **suggest a structural modification of the project or share best practices** from successful projects. This last aspect was repeated by several NCPs, although they all mentioned that **their knowledge of best practices was insufficient** and that they are **uncertain of exactly how EACEA scored applications**.

Finally, many NCPs **also facilitate a partner search** for potential applicants. Since there are **no EU-level rules for how to do this**, the process appears to vary substantially depending on the NCP in question. NCPs mentioned the following partner-search activities:

- NCP websites: making available a summary of all partner-search forms in one document that is periodically updated (depending on the number of requests sent by the NCP network and the closeness of the deadlines). This document is regularly forwarded by email to the network of regional liaison offices to support the participation of partners from different regions in the Programme.

- Sharing the list of potential partners with operators that have contacted the NCP asking for partnership opportunities, via e-mail or phone.

- Providing a Partner Search Database on their website (Italy, France).

- Publishing a brief abstract of each partner search form received by NCPs or national operators on Facebook. Operators interested in collaborating can contact the NCP and obtain the contact details.

- Circulating all the partner requests received nationally to all other NCPs through the shared NCP mailbox.

2.2.2   NCPs' views on their role in the EfC programme 2014-2020 and beyond

The NCPs involved in the previous programme were unanimous that **their role had not changed significantly** from the previous to the new programme, but that there had been some positive developments.[11] For example, various NCPs highlighted that the scope of their activities had been expanded and that they were now conducting in-depth analyses of project proposals. Also, some considered that their position had evolved towards a more 'advisory' role.

Several NCPs also noted that they now provide more advice on the financial aspects of the grant since the introduction of the lump sum payment modality. The reduced budget for 2014-2020 has increased the level of competition for grants. In consequence, some interviewees indicated that their role includes managing potential applicants' expectations about their chances of success.

NCPs reported that they are busier under the current programme. Five NCPs specifically stated that the interest in the programme had increased among stakeholders in their country in the last two years. Figures presented in section 3.3 of this study support this view. On a positive note, several NCPs mentioned that the **Programme Guide explained more clearly** the priorities of the programme and administrative aspects such as co-financing rules.

---

[11] It is worth noting that circa half of the NCPs that were interviewed were not involved in the predecessor EfC programme and therefore were not in a position to talk about what had changed from the prior to the new programme.

_____

In general NCPs felt that their **potential as actors in the EfC programme is not fully exploited**. This was particularly the opinion of NCPs that are either NGOs or have extensive experience of the EfC programme. Indeed, one in every three NCPs interviewed considers that the EC and EACEA do not realise that NCPs have good contacts with applicants and the potential to act as programme multipliers, especially among grass-roots level civil society organisations. These NCPs consider that they are viewed more as a 'help desk' which is limited to providing technical and administrative support. According to NCPs, this constitutes a missed opportunity to build capacity at national level. There is scope for the **EC and EACEA to use feedback from NCPs to improve the definition of the aims and content of the programme so that it is more aligned with target group needs.**

The interviews also revealed that there is a demand for developing **formal procedures for a) linking beneficiaries and NCPs after successful applications and b) sharing information on the assessment of applications**, as this would immensely facilitate knowledge building and best practices going forward.

Finally, a number of NCPs highlighted that they could also **play a more significant role in explaining the practicalities of programme implementation and thus contributing to policy development,** for instance through being involved in the Programme Committee, which is attended by Ministry representatives from the Member States. The role of NCP and Member of the Programme Committee are only rarely filled by the same organisation. As holders of first-hand information from the applicants, the NCPs that expressed this wish thought they could share their grass-roots knowledge to enhance the impact of the programme in their Member State and across the EU.

3. PERCEPTIONS OF THE REVISED PROGRAMME

KEY FINDINGS

- The changes in the EfC programme were welcomed by NCPs, who agreed that the new programme is more understandable for applicants.

- While the wording of the programme objectives has improved since the last iteration, there is still a lot of institutional jargon that is not easy to understand.

- The fact that the new programme objectives put more emphasis on European Remembrance could prove problematic for applicants from a number of Member States which were neutral during World War II.

- NCPs consider that the advance publishing of programme priorities and the move towards their multiannual definition are significant improvements. These changes provide stakeholders with more time to prepare their application.

- NCPs have observed an improvement in the quality of projects submitted since 2014. Applicants now tend to prepare follow-up plans which are more detailed and support greater project sustainability. Also, NCPs consider that projects are setting goals that are more realistic and achievable (e.g. engaging citizens in activities that are accessible to them).

- The most significant challenge for the EfC programme is how to contribute to bringing the European Union closer to citizens with its modest budget.

- The introduction of the lump sums is perceived as a significant improvement from the budget-based financing used during the previous programme period.

- The reduced rate of pre-financing (i.e. max 50%) creates a significant burden on smaller organisations.

- However, the financing available under the EfC programme does not take into account geographical differences and the cost of living in the participating countries, which puts some Member States at disadvantage.

- The co-financing principle is a difficulty for smaller organisations and is exacerbated in Member States which have been particularly affected by the economic crisis.

- NCPs reported a growing interest in the EfC programme in the first two years of the new programming period.

- There is still scope to improve the Programme Guide. Potential beneficiaries have found that the guide does not provide key information in an easily accessible manner.

- NCPs indicate that the applicants have positive perceptions of the EfC programme application process.

- The type of feedback provided to rejected applicants could be improved. This feedback could be used as an opportunity to help applicants submit better applications in the future.

- NCPs consider that cooperation between NCPs and other programme implementers (EACEA, European Commission) is successful.

- The outlook of NCPs on cooperation among themselves is positive, although they fall short of coming together as a coherent network in which all members communicate effectively and systematically.

The following section provides more details on how NCPs perceive the revisions made to the EfC programme in the programming period 2014-2020.

3.1. Revised programme structure

3.1.1 Content of objectives and priorities

Programme objectives

The EfC's revised general and specific objectives are laid out in Articles 1 (2) and 2 of Regulation No 390/2014 establishing the EfC:

Table 2: EfC programme objectives

Overall aim of the EfC programme: *To bring the European Union closer to citizens*	
General objectives	**Specific objectives** *(pursued on a transnational level or with a European dimension)*
Contribute to citizens' understanding of the Union, its history and diversity	Raise awareness of remembrance, common history and values and the Union's aim that is to promote peace, its values and the well-being of its peoples by stimulating debate, reflection and development of networks
Foster European citizenship and to improve conditions for civic and democratic participation at Union level	Encourage democratic and civic participation of citizens at Union level, by developing citizens' understanding of the Union policy making-process and promoting opportunities for societal and intercultural engagement and volunteering at Union level

In line with the general objectives of the Programme, the annual priorities are defined by the EC after consultation with the Programme Committee. The structure of the EfC programme was significantly simplified after the 2007-2013 programme period, in terms of objectives, priorities and programme strands. The description of objectives was simplified and refocused towards the overall aim of bringing the Union closer to citizens. The strands were reduced from four to two and the number of measures was also reduced. This makes the programme logic easier to understand. The revisions attempt to bridge the gap between the programme's ambitions and European citizens' needs.

Most of the NCPs who were interviewed for this study **welcomed the revision of the programme structure and believe** that the revision has delivered a programme improvement because the description of the new programme is much more precise than in the past. Many NCPs have noticed **an improvement in project proposals, which are now more specific**. This improvement was attributed directly to the fact that the definition of programme objectives is much clearer for applicants. Also, the new programme is more concrete for potential grant seekers.

However, despite this generally positive view of the new programme, there are still some concerns in relation to the **language used for describing the programme's objectives**. Some NCPs mentioned that a number of applicants still find the description of the EU's history and diversity confusing as expressed in the programme objectives. This suggests that although the wording of the programme objectives has been simplified, **there is still room for improvement**. According to the NCPs who highlighted this issue, institutional jargon can make the programme seem overly ambitious and abstract to some potential applicants. It was suggested that this could deter applicants from submitting project proposals, because it is difficult to prepare a strong application without fully understanding what the EfC programme aims to achieve.

Programme priorities

NCPs suggested that successful projects are usually well aligned with the objectives of the Programme and that projects that reflect the multi-annual priorities of the Programme are given more weight. Until 2016, the **priorities** were announced annually by EACEA, but priorities now relate to a whole programme period, for example 2016 to 2020. This change was intended to ensure that applicants have adequate time to plan and prepare their projects.

There are specific priorities for the two programme strands *European remembrance* and *Democratic engagement and civic participation*.

Table 3: Programme priorities for 2016-2020

Specific priorities for Strand 1 *European Remembrance*	Specific priorities for Strand 2 *Democratic engagement and civic participation*
Civil society and **civic participation** under totalitarian regimes	Understanding and debating **Euroscepticism**
Ostracism and loss of citizenship under totalitarian regimes: drawing the lessons for today	**Solidarity** in times of crisis
Democratic **transition and accession** to the European Union	**Combatting stigmatisation** of "immigrants" and building counter narratives to foster intercultural dialogue and mutual understanding
Commemorations of major historical turning points in recent European history *During the 2016-2020 period, the following commemorations are eligible for projects per year of application*: • **2016**: 1936 Beginning of the Spanish Civil War; 1956 Political and social mobilisation in central Europe; 1991 Beginning of the Yugoslav Wars; 1951 Adoption of the United Nations Convention relating to the Status of Refugees in relation with the post WWII refugee situation in Europe. • **2017**: 1917 The social and political revolutions, the fall of empires and their impact on Europe's political and historical landscape; 1957 The Treaty of Rome and the beginning of European Economic Community. • **2018**: 1918 The end of the WWI – the rise of nation states and the failure to create a European cooperation and peaceful coexistence; 1938/1939 Beginning of WWII; 1948 Beginning of the Cold War; 1948 The Hague Congress and the integration of Europe; 1968 Protest and civil rights movements, invasion to Czechoslovakia, student protests and anti-Semitic campaign in Poland. • **2019**: 1979 European Parliament elections – also 40 years since the first directly elected EP in 1979; 1989 Democratic revolutions in Central and Eastern Europe and the fall of the Berlin wall; 2004 15 years of EU enlargement into central and Eastern Europe. • **2020**: 1950 Robert Schuman Declaration; 1990 German reunification; 2000 Proclamation of the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights.	Debate on the **future** of Europe

_____

In the previous programme, there were five themes applicable throughout the programming period.[12] In addition to these broad programme priorities, two priorities were defined for each year (for instance in 2013, they were *The EU: values, rights and opportunities for Citizens* and *Citizens participation in the democratic life of the EU*).[13]

The majority of the NCPs interviewed for the study were **supportive of the changes made to the programme priorities for 2014-2020**. They viewed this as a very important development as the emphasis on multi-annual priorities increases the focus of the programme and makes it more understandable for media and other information multipliers.

In the opinion of several NCPs that were involved in the prior EfC programme, the more precise description of the programme priorities has positively affected projects submitted to date. The new priorities encourage projects which engage and activate the civil society on a local level solving contextual, but pan-European problems related to current issues. The projects in the new programming period have delivered more outputs and are more sustainable, as their priorities are more realistic.

However, other NCPs were concerned that **some of the priorities are still too general**, which makes it difficult for interested participants to translate them into realistic projects. Close to a third of the NCPs pointed out that the priorities could be even more specific and oriented towards thematic projects. This is also related to the point made above about the scope for further rephrasing the objectives of the EfC in laymen's terms and practical issues if any further revisions were to take place. However, NCPs are not unanimous in their views of the programme.

> The views of NCPs were also analysed with regards to the **projects they think should be prioritised in order to maximise the programme impact**. Two main issues emerged from the interviews.
>
> 1. **There is too much emphasis on face-to-face interaction in the current selection process**, which leads to activities not involving direct participation being ignored. This excludes activities which make use of digital media, intellectual outputs or distribution events when the project plan does not include a physical meeting of participants.
>
>   A few NCPs pointed out that other types of activities (for instance, as suggested by one NCP, a chain of letters across the EU aiming to link refugees and citizens living in different Member States, without direct interaction) could have significant added-value for participants without necessarily engaging the costs of a face-to-face meeting.
>
> 2. **There is a need to shift the emphasis towards the debate on the future of the EU and civic participation rather than reflecting on the past**. Several NCPs were convinced that the programme could benefit from an outlook oriented towards the future, rather than the past.

A small number of NCPs suggested that whilst Remembrance holds an all-important place in the programme's priorities, this is not necessarily reflected by the actual allocation of resources. Indeed, the Regulation establishing the EfC 2014-2020 provides that in the overall breakdown between the different action strands of the programme, only **20% of the budget is dedicated**

---

[12] *Active European Citizenship: participation and democracy in Europe; Impact of EU policies in societies; Future of the European Union and its basic values; Inter-cultural dialogue and People's well-being in Europe: employment, social cohesion and sustainable development.*

[13] For more information, please see EACEA's website:
http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/citizenship/programme/priority_themes_en.php.

to European Remembrance, versus 60% of funds towards democratic engagement and civic participation. However, the fact that there are several commemorations to choose from in each year was thought to give more options for the development of Remembrance projects than others. Nonetheless, the NCPs who raised this issue considered that EfC programme focus was more towards the past rather than the future of Europe. It was suggested that consideration could be given to making links between the Remembrance strand and a more forward-looking approach in any potential future revisions.

3.1.2 Challenges faced by the EfC programme going forward

An important topic of discussion during the interviews with NCPs was the future of the programme and the challenges it faces going forward. While the overall sentiment was that the revision had been a great improvement to the previous programming period, **several NCPs were concerned that there are still a number of issues that limit the success of the EfC programme.**

The most significant challenge is how to **deliver the expected impact with the modest budget allocation**. NCPs consider that the budget cut (from EUR 215 million for 2007–2013 to EUR 185 million for 2014–2020) means that the budget is insufficient for the broad range of measures and projects financed through the programme. It was suggested that further budget reductions could jeopardise the programme operation as a whole.

Given the current political context of austerity and budget cuts, NCPs understand that it would be difficult to obtain a budget increase in the years ahead. Therefore, a small number suggested a **redistribution of the amounts assigned among the different measures**. For instance, the amount allocated to Town Twinning (measure 2.1) could be reduced considering that local authorities have (other) stable sources of funding. This would increase the available funding for projects under European Remembrance and Civil Society Projects. NCPs consider that this budgetary shift would result in a higher percentage of citizens included in the policy making process.

Another challenge mentioned by NCPs was the **limited visibility** of the programme and the lack of centralised PR at an EU level (or an insufficient effort to promote the programme on behalf of the other programme actors). From the interviews, however, it was suggested that the target groups of the EfC programme are well aware of the initiative at a national level as reflected in the increase of applications in the two years of the new programming period. Nevertheless, NCPs called for additional efforts by both the EC and EACEA to promote the programme further. Feedback from several NCPs suggested that they consider their work with multipliers as very important for the promotion activities they carry out. These NCPs provided details on the efforts they deploy to ensure they maximise the effects of such partnerships. It was not possible to ascertain whether all NCPs go to the same lengths to establish fruitful relationships with multipliers. It was unclear whether this was due to limited funding or to more pressing needs such as handling queries from applicants that take precedence. Some NCPs mentioned that they coordinate promotion efforts with Europe Direct Information Centres (EDIC), which was reported to be an efficient way to pool EU resources. An important suggestion from one NCPs was that they consider the cooperation with umbrella organisations as even more crucial, as such organisations can bring them in direct contact with potential eligible applicants.

Some NCPs were slightly concerned that some projects lack **focus on sustainability** and argued that the programme management needs to ensure that the projects selected have clear mechanisms for follow-up, such as detailed and realistic plans for the dissemination of project results or other plans to continue the partnerships created for the project duration. The NCP officers who raised this issue considered this would enhance the overall sustainability of the

programme itself, as such efforts could generate lasting effects of project activities in the communities where they took place.

Another point made by several NCPs was that the EfC programme is at risk of not realising its full potential by **shying away from some controversial topics** such as migration. However, the recent transfer of the EfC programme to DG HOME offers the possibility of rethinking its reach and its relationship with such important issues. The change of the Directorate-General in charge of the EfC programme presents an opportunity to show that a direct impact of project outcomes could be the alleviation of the fear of migration processes among European citizens and an overall better understanding of cultural differences.

3.2. Financial aspects

3.2.1 Introduction of the lump sum payment

Overall, the NCPs consulted shared the same views on the results of the introduction of the lump sum and described it as **a significant improvement from the previous programming period.** The system works well and is easily understood by applicants.

However, according to the NCPs, financing in the new programming period also has shortcomings. This is especially the case for smaller organisations that often do not have the necessary financial means to cover the expenses until the receipt of the final payment. According to the NCPs, the **reduced rate of pre-financing creates a significant burden on smaller organisations.** Contrastingly, feedback given by EACEA in the context of this study suggested that there have not been any notable cases where an approved project was cancelled because of insufficient pre-financing. An increase of the rate of pre-financing could result in more project partnerships developed under the EfC programme, as it could support the participation of an increased number of smaller organisations.

In addition, several NCPs explained that the **calculation of the grant also presents issues** for potential applicants from some Member States. The grant is calculated on the basis of a lump sum financing system fixed per "tranches", where a maximum amount can be applied to the different costs of projects. The same parameters are valid for all participating countries. The lump sum covers all the eligible costs of the actions:

- staff costs linked directly to the action;

- travel and subsistence costs of participants at events;

- rental of room/interpreting and translation needed for the running of events;

- communication/dissemination costs linked to the events; and

- coordination costs generated by the involvement of several organisations and cost of research and IT tools.

For Town Twinning, the lump sum is based only on the number of participants invited and for the other strands/measures, the lump sum is based on three parameters which constitute the essential elements of all the citizenship actions: the number of participants, the number of countries involved and the number of events developed, with no direct impact on the format of activities. This means that **currently the financing under the EfC programme does not take into account the geographical differences** and **cost of living in the participating countries**. According to the NCPs, this is an issue for countries with higher costs of living (Sweden, Ireland) and also for geographically isolated countries (Ireland, Portugal, Finland).

To mitigate these adverse effects of the current financing system, some NCPs suggested **including an additional parameter in the calculation of the lump sum for travel costs**. This option could support cooperation projects from a wider geographic area, as currently projects are often regional and applicants tend to partner with neighbouring countries to save resources. Several NCPs reported that potential applicants and beneficiaries have complained that they are limited to regional partnerships because their cost is much lower than a partnership with a distant country.

In addition, it was suggested that adjusting the lump sum to the cost of living could stimulate engagement from Member States like Sweden, where participation in the EfC programme could be enhanced.

3.2.2   The co-financing principle

Under the co-financing principle stated in the Programme Guide, **a grant from the EU in the context of the EfC programme cannot finance the entire costs of the project**. Several NCPs suggested that **this financial system presents a disadvantage for many potential applicants**, as many are discouraged by the idea of having to look for additional financing to cover project costs. This difficulty is even more exacerbated in countries that have been heavily impacted by the financial crisis. In this view, the financial capacity of applicants could be taken into account when determining the level of co-financing for the grants.

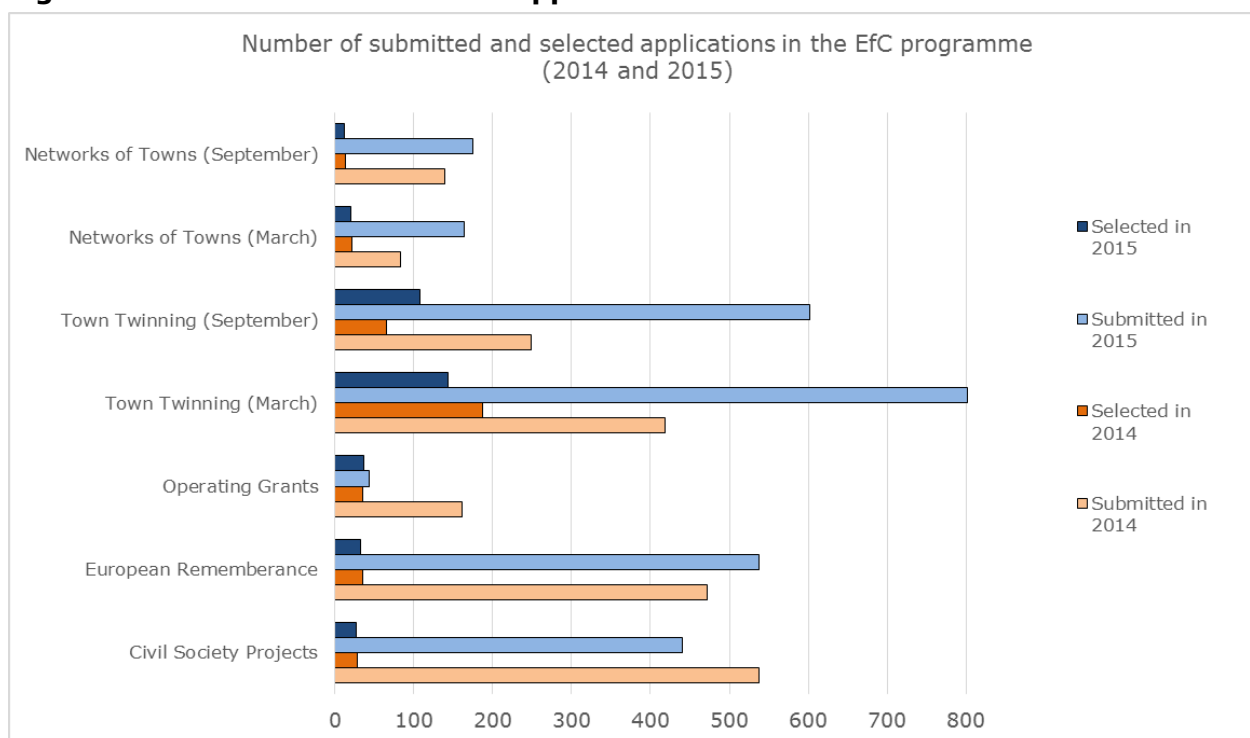## 3.3.   Application process

3.3.1   Statistics to date

During the interviews conducted for the study, several NCPs reported **a growing interest in the EfC programme** in the first two years of the new programming period.

This is evidenced by the increase in the number of applications and enquiries received by NCPs. In addition, it was noted by several NCPs that participation of eligible applicants (NGOs, public institutions and local self-government units) has also increased at the presentations and workshops organised to present the EfC programme.

NCPs pinpointed that the reasons for the rise in interest in the programme were the **new priorities and the increased target group awareness resulting from promotion** during the last programming period (2007-2013).

In order to continue this trend, the NCPs who have been particularly successful in promoting the programme in their countries could share best practice on communication, such as useful tools and techniques, with the NCPs who have found it more difficult to promote the programme.

According to data received from EACEA, the total number of applications for funding under the programme increased from 2,062 in 2014 to 2,764 in 2015, equivalent to an increase of 25%. Figure 1 below presents the details of the increase per programme measure, in conjunction with the low success rates.

Figure 1: Submitted and selected applications in 2014 and 2015

Number of submitted and selected applications in the EfC programme
(2014 and 2015)

3.3.2 Main reasons for award and rejection of project proposals

In the interviews carried out for the study, all NCPs were asked to share their impressions on the reasons that make projects successful or not, based on their observations on the application process over the years. The views of NCPs who have been involved in the programme since 2007 were particularly helpful for analysing this particular aspect.

More than half of the NCPs considered that the **award criteria were not entirely clear and that the Programme Guide could be more explicit**. Some went as far as wondering what the EC/EACEA was looking for in a project, as they felt they did not fully understand the selection criteria applied by EACEA.

The following **award criteria** are applied to all projects:

- Consistency with the objectives of the Programme and Programme Strand (30%);
- Quality of the activity plan of the project (35%);
- Dissemination (15%);
- Impact and Citizen involvement (20%).

In addition, applications must fully comply with eligibility criteria common to all strands of the Programme, as well as specific eligibility and award criteria applicable to each measure. According to the Programme Guide, "*grants will be awarded to those applications which maximize the overall effectiveness of the 'Europe for Citizens' Programme*".

Pathways to success

The NCPs interviewed for the study were fairly unanimous on the main features of projects that get consistently selected.

- **Projects that manage to establish a plausible link between their objectives and the programme's objectives and priorities are generally successful**. It appeared

from the interviews that this was not an easy task and that a fine balance had to be stricken between realistic project outcomes and sufficient linkages with the programme objectives and priorities.

- **Successful projects are also those which propose activities with a clear EU dimension**, for example, with well-chosen partners from other Member States. As noted by one NCP in particular, applicants achieving this often have benefitted from a good international network or support from consultants who have linked them with international partners, or both.

- **Demonstrating a certain degree of innovation appeared to be another pathway to success in the EfC programme.** A number of NCPs were adamant that inventive and clever ideas and activities were the key to get selected, considering the vast pool of eligible applications submitted in the programme for each call for proposals. The idea was that unusual and innovative features make projects stand out against the traditional citizens' meetings and other typical projects submitted in the EfC programme.

- **Other important aspects** of successful projects were well-planned recruitment of participants and ways of reaching the indirect participants, and mechanisms for effective promotion and dissemination of results (in particular, including follow-up measures to ensure the sustainability of the project).

Common reasons for rejection of project proposals

The most cited reasons for rejection by NCPs were:
- Lack of an EU dimension (or demonstration thereof)
- Insufficient networking or international cooperation aspect

These were also the two most challenging areas for applicants according to the NCPs. In many Member States, potential applicants struggle to put together coherent project proposals because of their inadequate capacities in international partnerships or the insufficient presentation of a European dimension of the project. In others, this was due to the administrative culture of the Member State, where organisations are seldom used to cooperate with different stakeholders on an international level. The NCPs often offer support in explaining the idea of EU added-value or in partnership search, but it appears that applicants could require further assistance in these core areas. In this view, solutions could be considered to raise the capacity of stakeholders who struggle to establish international partnerships, potentially through carrying out trainings and workshops on this topic by NCPs which could be allocated additional funding to this end.

In several Member States, the NCPs reported that applicants often struggle to **establish a link between the objectives and priorities of programme and the project proposal's outcomes** in a satisfactory manner, even in the presence of a "*good*" project idea.

From an operational perspective, it was noted that failing projects often made an insufficient presentation of the expected results and lacked a dissemination plan for the project results, thus not achieving a satisfactory level of sustainability. Finally, it was often mentioned that projects simply get rejected because **the EfC programme is very competitive** and the success rates are very low compared to other spending programmes. Unfortunately, according to NCPs this also occurred in the presence of projects fulfilling all the criteria for selection and which presented a great potential.

3.3.3   The application process and feedback on results

Perceptions on the application process under the revised programme

_____

In view of NCPs, **applicants appear to have very positive perceptions of the EfC programme's application process.** The administrative requirements are perceived to be less burdensome than those of other EU spending programmes such as Creative Europe and Erasmus+.

The revision of the EfC programme in the current programming period introduced a **simplified e-application**, with all the information available on the EACEA website.[14] The research team reviewed the *e-application* and found the process very user-friendly. In particular, the current paperless application appears to have significantly eased the administrative burden both for applicants and for officials reviewing project proposals.

However, several NCPs noted that some of the applicants they assisted experienced **technical problems in the electronic application process**, and suggested that there is room to improve the support that applicants receive from the EACEA when they encounter technical difficulties in the application process.

Interviewees also noted that on several occasions beneficiaries complained that **the Programme Guide did not provide key information in an easily accessible manner**, for instance on the level of co-financing required The Programme Guide is available in all the official EU languages.[15] The study team reviewed the French and Bulgarian translations which appeared complete and faithful to the original English version. However, according to a number of NCPs, key information is either lacking or not sufficiently precise to provide helpful guidance to applicants on the content of their project proposals. On this issue, many NCPs felt they were **unable to supplement the shortcomings of the Programme Guide through additional guidance**, as they were unaware of these crucial details. The research team has compiled specific suggestions for the re-drafting of the Programme Guide in a recommendation in the final section of the study.

Feedback on success or rejection

The **provision of feedback to applicants on the selection results was identified as an important and sensitive issue**. Some NCPs reported feeding back to unsuccessful applicants based on the information of the rejection letter from the EACEA, which they discuss with the unsuccessful applicant. Many objected to **the lack of detailed feedback on unsuccessful projects, and thought that this was a missed opportunity to highlight problematic areas for applicants** who had a decent project and were keen to try again. It should be taken into account that the EACEA has limited human resources and reviews a significant number of applications during each call for proposals. Therefore, it may not be possible to provide detailed feedback to each applicant. Nevertheless, efforts should be made to outline key problematic areas in order to enable applicants to contribute to their capacity building for future applications.

Most of the interviewed NCPs reported keeping in touch with the applicants they had assisted, but suggested that **it would be beneficial if their role after the application process was more formalised**. In the current setting, their lasting relationship with applicants depends solely on their initiative.

---

[14] See for instance, http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/europe-for-citizens/strands/democratic-engagement-and-civic-participation_en.
[15] See http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/europe-for-citizens_en.

Thus, it appears from the research carried out that **the method of providing feedback to rejected applicants** in the current programme could be improved. In view of those consulted, a potential solution can be offered by **a more active involvement of the NCPs in the feedback process**. NCPs confirm having regular contact with the applicants during the application process and knowledge of many application dossiers. **The feedback stream could be formalised if the EACEA communicated the results to the NCPs prior to making them public and granted them access to the files of unsuccessful applicants**, as this would enable them to explain what could be improved and enhance the quality of feedback which is currently considered too limited. Such an initiative would also **enable the NCPs to build a database of examples and best practices**, which could improve significantly the guidance they provide to applicants in future calls for proposals.

3.4. Cooperation between programme actors

During the interview process, the NCPs were asked to share their impressions on the on-going cooperation with the other programme actors (the EC and EACEA), as well as among themselves. The ensuing sub-sections present key findings in relation to this topic.

3.4.1 Cooperation with the European Commission and EACEA

Overall, NCPs reported a **constructive cooperation between the NCPs and other programme actors (EACEA, European Commission)**. In view of most NCPs, the **EACEA fulfils its role in a timely and efficient manner**. NCPs communicate regularly with the EACEA by email and phone on a variety of issues, but mostly regarding the application process and on-going calls for tender. Some interviewees noted that the EACEA meets with **difficulties to address the work stream during peak times** (such as closing of calls for projects) due to lack of human resources.

It was also noted that, although the EACEA is doing its best, **communication processes could be swifter and more effective**. Interviewees emphasised the added-value of face-to-face interaction and the need for more meetings in person to maximise cooperation between the institutional actors involved in the programme. One interviewee highlighted his positive experience in **job-shadowing** an officer at EACEA for two days in 2015. His impression was that this had been an invaluable experience, offering an insight into the EACEA's work that had a positive influence on his role as NCP.

The EC is seen to be present in the management of the programme, but interviewees agree that Commission representatives could attend more project events and be more involved. It was also stated that EU-level meetings proved very useful to clarify how projects are chosen during the predecessor programme. Such meetings continue being organised by the EC in the new programme. Most of the NCPs do not communicate with the EC on a regular basis, which creates a feeling of disconnect and a shared perception that their work is not well understood or noticed by the EC. The EC nevertheless attends the annual meeting of the NCPs, which is helpful and appreciated.

Finally, a few NCPs mentioned attending briefings with the National Representations in Brussels, which enabled them to better **coordinate with the Member State representative on the Programme Committee**. It could not be established whether this is a common practice amongst NCPs, but it is certainly **a helpful initiative that provides further cohesion** between programme actors.

Notwithstanding the generally positive outlook of NCPs on their cooperation with other institutional actors, the study identified **an area of concern** highlighted by a majority of NCPs.

Notwithstanding their regular exchanges with the EACEA, most of the NCPs agreed that **the communication could be improved if the NCPs received more detailed information on the application process**. Indeed, a significant concern raised by NCPs was that they did not receive information in a timely fashion. Many were frustrated to learn about deadlines and decisions from the applicants rather than the EACEA. In particular, many would like to receive selection results prior to these being disseminated to candidates, and to have a more formal role in communicating the outcomes. Furthermore, NCPs suggested that **the updates published on the websites of the EACEA and the European Commission should be shared with them first**, so that they can make timely use of the information, rather than learn about it from the applicants and beneficiaries.

3.4.2 Cooperation among NCPs

Overall, **NCPs interviewed had a positive view on cooperation among themselves**, although they also agreed that they **fall short of coming together as a coherent network**.

Face-to-face meetings are considered a crucial feature of the cooperation between NCPs, as these allow sharing lessons learned and best practices. These meetings take place at least once per year, attended by the EC and the EACEA, and present an opportunity for NCPs to exchange information about general queries and improvements to the programme.[16]

The most frequent channel of cooperation for NCPs is their **shared NCP mailbox.** Although it facilitates communication amongst NCPs, the shared mailbox **is not as helpful as it could be because of its interface** (NCPs have to sift through a chain of emails, as there is no other way to follow what the issue is). In view of NCPs interviewed, communication through this channel could be improved and could take place more regularly.

Although they operate in a variety of political and geographical contexts, the **NCPs follow similar strategic objectives and share analogous concerns and situations**. According to NCPs consulted, **closer and more formalised channels of cooperation** would enable them to exchange best practices, enhance international partnerships through partner search and build a more sustainable and coherent network. Furthermore, facilitating the cooperation between NCPs will **stimulate the engagement of less experienced NCPs** and help them perform their role better.

Several interviewees pointed out that **NCPs lack the tools that could help them build an efficient peer-to-peer network**. However, a majority of NCPs reported **regular and successful informal cooperation** among themselves, with only a few (in their majority, new to their role) confirming sporadic contacts with fellow NCPs outside of the shared mailbox and the annual event. Some interviewees recognised the importance of induction and training processes, like for example shadowing a fellow NCP for a number of days to get to grips with the responsibilities of the role or going through a formalised induction process.

The evidence collected in the interviews suggests that **regional cooperation is frequent between NCPs**. For example, the Baltic NCPs co-host an annual networking event and generally exchange information and ideas for the promotion and organisation of local events. NCPs in Belgium and the Netherlands have jointly developed a newsletter and factsheet on the EfC programme in Dutch.

---

[16] The study team attended one of these meetings in April 2015, in the context of the ex-post evaluation of the predecessor EfC programme. The meeting was very well structured and informative, including a session on responses to specific queries sent by NCPs to the EACEA and a presentation on application / results statistics for the last call for proposals. The remaining presentations included a session on cooperation with multipliers, a discussion on topical questions and mini-case studies of projects as examples of best practice.

4. VIEWS ON COMMUNICATION

KEY FINDINGS

- NCPs see themselves as active communicators of funding opportunities offered by the EfC programme. The main channels used to communicate opportunities to applicants include the local websites developed by the NCPs, as well as the information days and other events in the Member States.

- Email is also used as a frequent channel to disseminate newsletters and other relevant information. Social media channels are less frequently used for communication with applicants.

- In the view of NCPs consulted, centralised communication channels and tools administered by the EC and the EACEA could be made more attractive (e.g. more examples, more images, more detailed project descriptions) and interactive. The content could also be updated more regularly.

- A Portal of successful projects has been developed by EACEA and is now up and running. This is a considerable improvement from the last programming period, but the search function and the section on best practices could be further developed.

- The levels of awareness of the potential applicants and target groups (local authorities, NGOs) were thought to have significantly increased in the current programming period. However, levels of awareness were said to vary considerably across different regions in each Member State.

- In the view of NCPs, there are no monitoring tools to gauge the levels of awareness of the general public in relation the EfC programme, but there is consensus among NCPs consulted that citizens tend to be detached and that awareness ranges from low to non-existent.

4.1. Communication to potential applicants

The evidence collected during the interviews with NCPs suggests that **potential applicants mainly find out about the programme's funding opportunities through the communication efforts of the NCPs**. The local websites developed by the NCPs are among the most frequent entry points for potential applicants.

However, a majority of NCPs noted that **the best opportunities to link with potential applicants are the information days and face-to-face events they organise locally**. To this end, many NCPs travel around their Member States to present at promotional events. Some **NCPs reported coordinating with local EDICs** which disseminate information about the programme, but also offer premises for EfC information days and events.

Over the years, NCPs have also developed **comprehensive mailing lists of potential beneficiaries** who receive newsletters and information on the EfC programme. Social media channels are occasionally used, but mainly for general promotion activities rather than targeted communication to potential applicants.

4.2. Promotion of the EfC programme

The **promotion of the EfC programme is carried out by the EC, the EACEA and the NCPs**. The EC[17] and the EACEA[18] both have dedicated websites, which were reviewed by the study team in the context of the study. Both websites are **heavily focussed on the administrative aspects of the application process**. The EC's website features project examples[19], but the description is very brief and there are no photos from the events. The EACEA's website could be more regularly updated (in particular the news and events sections), to provide new information.

The majority of NCPs consulted agreed that there is significant **room for improvement of the programme's websites**. In view of the NCPs, the EACEA website **could be made visually more attractive and interactive** with regards to the application process. In particular, suggestions included making the website more concrete on how to write a good application and including examples from successful projects.

A **Portal of successful projects**[20] was developed by EACEA and is now up and running. This is a **considerable improvement from the last programming period, but could be further fine-tuned**. For instance, NCPs noted that the project search function does not display all country results, but it is unclear whether this is due to the fact that the database is a work in progress and the EACEA are working through a backlog. Finally, the database could contain a section on best practices in project writing, linking to successful examples. These improvements would involve significant time and staff resources, but could contribute to the promotion of the programme to larger audiences.

With few exceptions, the **NCPs have developed local websites in the language of the Member State they operate in**. The current study examined some of the local websites, with some including a list of best practices linking to successful projects[21] or a partner search function.[22] According to the majority of NCPs interviewed, the applicants tend to use their websites more frequently because it is available in their local language.

The additional promotional tools used by NCPs were mostly discussed in section 4.1. As previously noted the **added-value of face-to-face events is significant, as it caters for a variety of audiences and leaves a lasting impression with stakeholders**.

The **use of social media for promoting the programme was variable across the interviewed NCPs,** but holds potential as an inexpensive tool for increasing the levels of awareness of the general public if scaled up.

---

[17] http://ec.europa.eu/citizenship/europe-for-citizens-programme/index_en.htm
[18] http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/europe-for-citizens_en
[19] See for instance http://ec.europa.eu/citizenship/europe-for-citizens-programme/sharing-experiences/networks-of-towns/28102013_fromyutoeu_en.htm.
[20] Available at http://ec.europa.eu/programmes/europe-for-citizens/projects/.
[21] See for instance the Croatian NCP website: http://europazagradane.hr/primjeri-dobre-prakse/.
[22] See for instance the French NCP websites: http://europepourlescitoyens.org/rechercher-des-partenaires/consulter-les-annonces/.

4.3. Levels of awareness of programme stakeholders

The **levels of awareness of potential applicants and target groups** (local authorities, NGOs) **were thought to be good**, especially in the Member States where limited funding is available for civil society stakeholders (Bulgaria, Romania). Several NCPs emphasised that the **levels of awareness in stakeholder groups significantly differed between regions in their Member States**, as a result of regional discrepancies in the capabilities of the non-profit sector. A few interviewees also highlighted **an increased interest in the programme since the launch of the new programming period**.

Unsurprisingly, it was **difficult for NCPs to gauge the level of awareness of the programme among the general public**. Some interviewees thought that, in smaller Member States, people had heard of the programme as there had been events organised in their town. However, a large majority of the NCPs **estimated that levels of awareness of the general public in their Member State ranged from low to non-existent**.

In view of NCPs, **programme awareness could be strengthened across the EU**. Interviewees agreed that there is a lack of interest in EU programmes because of their complexity and their burdensome application processes and requirements. A majority of the NCPs confirmed making big efforts to achieve a higher visibility for the programme locally, but they recognise **there is scope for centralised efforts from the EC and the EACEA to increase the level of awareness of EU citizens**.

5. CONCLUSIONS

Role and responsibilities of the NCPs in the new programme

- Whilst EfC NCPs are **generally satisfied with their role and responsibilities, the programme is not currently harnessing their full potential.** NCPs are uniquely placed between the EU implementing authorities and beneficiaries and stakeholders at local and regional levels. But their insights and experiences are **not fed systematically into the strategic programming and planning process.**
- **There are benefits when EfC NCPs work across a number of EU-related activities, including Creative Europe or Erasmus+.** This more integrated approach increases NCP effectiveness because NCPs can apply lessons from different programmes and extend both the range and the volume of their activities through the economies of scale that can be achieved.
- **Locating NCPs in the same Ministry or organisation that hosts other EU programmes such as the European Heritage Label Action and European Capital of Culture or the European Social Fund is also beneficial.** This allows stronger links with these other EU activities, which can be beneficial to the programme.

NCP perceptions of the new programme

- **The new programme is an improvement on the last one**. Programme documentation provides more clarity on the objectives and requirements for applications. This seems to have led to **better quality** proposals being submitted, which now tend to include more **realistic and achievable goals** and describe plans for project sustainability in much greater detail.
- The advance **publishing of the priorities and the move towards setting multiannual priorities covering the whole timeframe of the programme** can be considered as significant improvements. The new programme provides stakeholders with sufficient time for the preparation of their application and the implementation of their project, which as highlighted above contributes to higher quality outputs.
- Even though applicants are very positive about the application process **there are still some areas for improvement:**
    - **Programme objectives** still use a lot of institutional jargon, which is not easily accessible to all citizens. Also, the greater emphasis on European Remembrance may be problematic for applicants from Member States which were neutral during World War II.
    - **The Programme Guide** could be further improved. Some potential beneficiaries have found that it does not provide clear explanations of some of the key information including around financial and contractual aspects. Also, out-of-date referencing from the previous programming period causes confusion.
    - There is scope to improve **feedback to rejected applicants.** This would help unsuccessful applicants to improve future applications.
- **How to generate an impact with a modest budget remains the biggest challenge for projects supported under the EfC programme**. There are ways to make programme budgets go further, for example through synergies with other EU funding activities. But there appears to be a mismatch between the high ambitions of programme goals and the amount of funding available to meet them.
- **There are pros and cons to changes to financing under the new programme**. The lump sum system is easier to administer than budget-based financing. But the reduced rate of pre-financing (i.e. max 50%) creates a significant burden on smaller organisations. Co-financing can be problematic for smaller organisations, particularly in Member States strongly affected by the economic crisis. Not taking account of differences in the cost of living puts some Member States at a disadvantage.

- There is **good co-operation between NCPs and programme implementers** (EACEA, European Commission) and also among EfC NCPs. However, there may be scope to generate more systematic benefits for NCPs **by coordinating and supporting these individual entities as part of a network.**

Views on communication

- **There is still room to improve the centralised communication channels and tools provided by the EC and EACEA.** Although the EACEA project Portal is a significant step in the right direction further developments are required. Channels and tools need to be more attractive, engaging and interactive (e.g. there could be more examples built around story-telling, images and detailed project descriptions). The content needs to be updated more regularly.

- **NCPs take an active role in communicating about the funding opportunities** offered by the EfC programme to potential applicants. But whilst they use a wide range of channels they are not systematically maximising opportunities presented by social media and multipliers including EDICs.

- **It may be difficult to attribute the rise in awareness of the EfC programme among applicants and target groups directly to communication actions.** But it seems plausible that communication efforts have at least supported the increased levels of awareness, even if this increase varies significantly across different regions in different Member States.

- **Communication efforts seem unlikely to have had much impact on general public awareness** of the EfC programme. Although there are no tools to monitor this, to achieving general public awareness would require budgets in excess of available funding.

6. RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations are drawn from NCPs' views on how to improve the programme during the 2014-2020 funding period and in further programming periods.

It is recommended to give consideration to:

- **Redefining the NCP role to allow NCPs to exploit their full potential.** As well as providing a helpdesk function, NCPs could:

  o Act as a multiplier of the EfC programme in the Member States.
  o Be required to provide feedback to the Programme Committee
  o Be required or formally encouraged to collaborate with other EU spending programmes, where this adds value
  o Be consulted on drafting and definitions for programme documentation
  o Provide a defined level and type of support (within the boundaries of the application process) to programme applicants, including in relation to non-success.

- **Enhancing coordination between EfC programme implementers.** The findings suggest that collaboration among NCPs, and between NCPs the EC and EACEA enhances programme impact. This effect could be further expanded through:

  o A more formalised communication stream, which ensures that sensitive content is circulated to the NCPs prior to being published on the official programme website, including results and feedback to applicants. Respectively, NCPs should provide feedback to the EC and EACEA regarding key aspects of the application process.

  o Centralised updates similar to the January 2016 EfC Newsletter, which provided information about programme implementation and disseminated news on projects, beneficiaries, partners and stakeholders.

  o Collaboration tools, for example a platform, similar to Creative Europe's Ning, which allows NCPs to communicate, ask questions, share their experience and support partner search.

- **Identifying ways to strengthen synergies between NCP activities related to EfC and other relevant EU spending programmes,** including but not limited to Creative Europe and Erasmus+. This would allow the NCPs the make the most of the funding they get from the European Commission and to carry out more activities. This could also result in beneficial improvements for the other programmes. Suggestions include establishing a stronger connection between the EfC programme priorities and the European years and pooling EU resources to enhance coordination with local EDICs.

- **Giving consideration to redefining programme priorities** so that they are closer to the current European context and affairs. The EC has the possibility to "*review, adapt and/or modify the list of priorities should the need arise, at any moment, after consulting the programme stakeholders represented in the civil dialogue group and*

the Programme Committee."[23] Therefore, nothing precludes the EC from reassessing the priorities and further simplifying them during the current programming period. However, a potential revision should not compromise the multi-annual definition of priorities, which has been welcomed as a significant improvement from the last programming period. The research team strongly recommends that the NCPs are consulted and their views taken into account in this process.

- **Upgrading the overall approach to EfC communication at central and local level** This will involve the following aspects:

  o Defining communication objectives and roles at central and NCP level to provide clarity about who does what why, and with which goal in mind.

  o Ensuring that the Portal of Successful Projects is kept up-to-date and presents an attractive design, and that the EC and EACEA programme websites are redesigned to make them more interactive and visually appealing.

  o Reviewing options for promotion and raising visibility, including using social media and information multipliers at EU and local level, including EDICs and the media.

  o Facilitating discussions and sharing best practice, for example via an annual meeting, to allow on-going improvements.

- **Redefining the process for the communication of results to applicants.** It is recommended that the EACEA communicates the results to the NCPs prior to or at the same time as making them public. As part of the process, NCPs need to be given access to applicants' files so that they are able to give better feedback to applicants. This would also enable the NCPs to build a database of examples and best practices, which could improve significantly the guidance they provide to applicants in future calls for proposals. Involving the NCPs to a greater extent in this process could also inform future revisions of the programme as it would bring to light any recurring issues experienced by applicants or any difficulties they experience addressing the programme objectives and priorities. Applicants and NCPs would also benefit if **parts of the Programme Guide[24] were redrafted** to address important shortcomings, including:

  o Providing an Annex to the Programme Guide to give more detail on:

    ▪ Selection criteria and partnership agreements;
    ▪ Financial aspects including modalities, grants for specific tools, co-financing and calculations, country specificities, how to handle unspent funds, etc.

  o Making further improvements to the text (simplifying wording of objectives and priorities, reviewing definitions (e.g. what is a participant in the context of the project proposals under EfC?), deleting out-dated references and jargon, greater emphasis that co-financing is mandatory).

---

[23] Priorities of the programme for 2016-2020, https://eacea.ec.europa.eu/sites/eacea-site/files/priorities_of_the_programme_for_2016_5.pdf
[24] The Programme Guides of Erasmus+ and Fundamental Rights and Citizenship are considered to be useful examples.

- o Ensuring that NCPs are consulted in the context of a redrafting of the EfC Programme Guide, as they are able to provide practical suggestions which are relevant to the programme applicants.

- **Addressing the tension between the current ambitious goals and the limited funding opportunities available.** There is a general sense that the amount of funding is a significant limiting factor and insufficient to meet programme goals. If it is decided to address this issue, then the main options include redefining programme goals so that they are more specific and realistic in line with the available budget or redefining funding modules so that they are more in line with programme ambitions, or both.

  However, each financial formula is likely to have some adverse effects, given the variety of organisations and locations covered by the EfC programme. This means that decisions need to relate to the types of participation that are considered desirable, as follows:

  - o An increase of the rate of pre-financing could result in the involvement of more smaller organisations;

  - o Including an additional amount for travel cost (in line with the approach to Erasmus+, in which the grant amount is calculated on a distance model) could support cooperation projects with partners over a wider geographical area;

  - o Adjusting the lump sum to the cost of living could also stimulate engagement from Member States like Sweden, where participation in the EfC programme could be enhanced.

- **Undertaking a fuller evaluation of the EfC programme, taking into account participants and citizens views**. Whilst NCPs have provided a quick snapshot of the evolution of the programme and current areas for improvement, it is inevitable that this feedback is influenced by their experience. It is important for any funding intervention to take account of the views of those that the intervention is intended to serve, particularly when decisions are required with regard to whether or not to continue an approach or programme.

7. REFERENCES

- COUNCIL REGULATION (EU) No 390/2014 (14 April 2014), establishing the 'Europe for Citizens' programme for the period 2014-2020 (OJ L 115/3, 17.04.2014).

- Decision No 1904/2006/EC establishing for the period 2007 to 2013 the programme Europe for Citizens to promote active European Citizenship (OJ L378/32, 27.12.2006).

- Document on the Priorities of the programme for 2016-2020, available at https://eacea.ec.europa.eu/sites/eacea-site/files/priorities_of_the_programme_for_2016_5.pdf

- EfC Programme Guide (Version valid as of 2014); https://eacea.ec.europa.eu/sites/eacea-site/files/documents/comm2013003670000en.pdf

ANNEX 1 QUESTIONNAIRE FOR THE INTERVIEWS WITH THE NATIONAL CONTACT POINTS

coffey ▸

Europe for Citizens: First Experiences with the Implementation of the 2014 – 2020 Programme

Interviews with National Contact Points

Interviewee name and position	
Interviewer	
Date	

The Europe for Citizens National Contact Points (NCPs) are national structures responsible for dissemination of practical information on the Europe for Citizens (EfC) Programme's implementation. In addition, the NCPs have an important role with regard to other functions, such as organising information sessions and providing advice for applicants, support for partner search and transmission of information about national/regional initiatives in the area of civic participation at the European level.

Currently, there are 22 NCPs, all of which will be contacted in the objective to conduct in-depth interviews.

Main objectives of the interviews with NCPs:

- To gain knowledge from professionals who have worked practically with the new programme, on a day-to-day basis

- To gather evidence about the new programme's performance to date

- To engage in a critical discussion about the programme's implementation, while covering both its success factors and improvement areas

- The interviews will be structured around the following topics:

A. *Introduction*
B. *Revised Programme*
C. *Communication*
D. *Application process*
E. *Suggestions for improvement*

Introduction

1. Please briefly tell me about the organisation you work for and your position.

2. Please describe your responsibilities in direct relation to the EfC Programme.

3. How much time do you devote to the programme? How is this time funded? What does the rest of your job entail and how closely does it relate to the programme?

Revised Programme

4. What are your thoughts on the programme and its objectives, compared in particular to the previous programme?

   [as a prompt, we can discuss the simplified number of work streams and objectives (see below), as well as the move towards a lump sum for payments

   "*The general objectives of the Programme are the following:*
   (a) to contribute to citizens' understanding of the Union, its history and diversity;
   (b) to foster European citizenship and to improve conditions for civic and democratic participation at Union level."]

5. Has your job changed since the programme was re-launched? In what ways?

6. How would you describe your cooperation with the other programme actors (European Commission / EACEA)?

7. In your opinion, what works well under the new programme? And anything that works not so well? What would you say its strengths and weaknesses are? How about in comparison to any problems with the previous programme? Provide examples where possible.

Communication

8. In your opinion, are relevant people and organisations aware of the programme? Who do you consider relevant? And what about the general public? Have there been any notable changes since the revised programme was launched?

9. What are the main channels and tools of communication on the programme?
   How do you communicate on the programme?
   Do you think the communication efforts of NCP / European Commission / EACEA are sufficient? How could they be improved?

10. Do you think that the communication between NCPs is sufficient, is it beneficial/useful in its current form? How could it be improved?

Application process

11. How do potential applicants receive information about applying for EfC funding? Do you consider the communication on the application modalities sufficient and clear?

12. In what ways do you assist applicants?

13. What are, in your opinion, the main reasons for award / rejection of applications?

14. How do you provide feedback to unsuccessful applicants?

15. Do you receive feedback from successful applicants on how the project went and if so, are they in general satisfied with how the administrative procedures were handled?

Suggestions for improvement

16. What do you think are the main challenges facing the revised programme? How could these be addressed?

17. Do you think the role of the contact points could be improved? Why, and in what ways?

18. Do you have any other ideas about improving the programme going forward?

Final Comments

19. Would you like to add anything, or is there anything you think we've not discussed

ANNEX 2 PROFILES OF NATIONAL CONTACT POINTS

Member State	EfC NCP Host Structure	Synergies with other EU programmes	Start of NCP role
Austria	Ministry of Culture	Focus on EfC, but Creative Europe Desk hosted in same department	2014
Belgium	Ministry of Culture, Youth Sport and Media (Flanders)	Focus on EfC, but Creative Europe Desk hosted in same department	2007
Bulgaria	Ministry of Culture	Focus on EfC, but Creative Europe Desk hosted in same Ministry	2013
Cyprus	Private consultancy company, appointed by Ministry of Education and Culture following public procurement tender	Used to be Creative Europe Desk officer Manages projects in other EU spending programmes	2010
Croatia	Governmental Agency	Programming of Calls for Proposals/grant schemes under the IPA Programme and the European Social Fund	2007
Denmark	Governmental Agency	Focus on EfC, but Creative Europe Desk hosted in same Agency	2014
Estonia	Government-funded Agency	Communication with structures in charge of Creative Europe and Erasmus+	2013
Finland	Governmental Agency	Also in charge Creative Europe Desk and Erasmus+	2007
France	NGO	Focus on EfC	2008*[25]
Germany	NGO	Also in charge Creative Europe Desk	2008
Greece	Ministry of Interior	Also in charge Creative Europe Desk	2008
Hungary	NGO	Structure also manages scholarships and cooperation programmes such as Erasmus +	2014
Ireland	NGO	Promoting and building awareness around Europe 2020, Peace 4, manages grant from the European Parliament	2015
Italy	Ministry of Cultural Heritage and Activities and Tourism	Also in charge of Creative Europe, European Heritage Label Action and European Capital of Culture	2009
Latvia	Ministry of Culture	Also in charge Creative Europe Desk	2008
Lithuania	Government-funded Agency	Also in charge Creative Europe Desk and other EU programmes	2008*
Netherlands	NGO	Also in charge Creative Europe Desk and Secretariat of Dutch EUNIC cluster	2008
Poland	Government-funded Agency	Also in charge Creative Europe Desk	2008
Romania	Ministry of Culture	Focus on EfC, but Creative Europe Desk hosted in same department	2008
Republic of Serbia	Governmental Agency	Focus on EfC	2008*
Slovakia	Government-funded Agency	Focus on EfC	2009
Slovenia	Governmental Agency	Also coordinating Erasmus+ Sport programme and assisting Erasmus+ in technical matters	2014
Spain	Ministry of Education, Culture and Sports	Also in charge Creative Europe Desk	2009
Sweden	Governmental Agency	Focus on EfC	2009*

---

[25] Interviewee new to role.

DIRECTORATE-GENERAL FOR INTERNAL POLICIES

POLICY DEPARTMENT B
STRUCTURAL AND COHESION POLICIES

Role

The Policy Departments are research units that provide specialised advice
to committees, inter-parliamentary delegations and other parliamentary bodies.

Policy Areas

- Agriculture and Rural Development
- Culture and Education
- Fisheries
- Regional Development
- Transport and Tourism

Documents

Visit the European Parliament website:
http://www.europarl.europa.eu/supporting-analyses