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| **No 18 / 2021** | **3 May 2021** |

**EESC launches the Civil Society Prize 2021 on climate action**

**The EESC will award up to five climate projects that showcase civil society's invaluable contribution to achieving climate neutrality**

The European Economic and Social Committee (EESC) has opened applications for its Civil Society Prize 2021. Choosing climate action as the theme of its prize, the EESC will select the winners from creative and innovative initiatives which aim to promote a just transition towards a low-carbon and climate-resilient economy.

Applications can be submitted by all civil society organisations officially registered within the European Union and acting at local, regional, national or European level. The prize is also open to individuals who reside in the EU. Eligible initiatives and projects have to be carried out in the EU.

The **deadline for entries is 10 a.m. (Brussels time) on 30 June 2021.**

The projects must have already been implemented or still be ongoing. Those which are planned but which have not begun implementation by 30 June 2021 will be excluded.

A total of **EUR 50 000** will be awarded to a maximum of five winners. The award ceremony is likely to take place during the EESC plenary session on 8 – 9 December 2021 in Brussels, depending on the health situation.

**MORE ABOUT THE THEME OF THIS YEAR'S PRIZE**

As the first EU institution to have given the floor to Greta Thunberg in the early days of the "Fridays for Future" global climate strike movement, the EESC has always been a fervent advocate of bottom up climate action.

As such, it has always emphasised the importance of grassroots organisations and individuals in making the transition to climate neutrality a reality. They play a critical role in helping to bring about a shift in norms and behaviours, making local economies greener or driving the transition to net-zero emission societies at the local or regional level.

Through its work, the EESC has repeatedly stressed that the success of the European Green Deal – under which the EU has pledged to achieve climate neutrality by 2050 – depends on action and commitment by all actors. One of the key initiatives of the Green Deal – the European Climate Pact – must focus on encouraging people to become part of the solution rather than the problem, empowering them to change the systems that led us to the brink of the climate crisis.

The EESC also attaches special importance to engaging young people in climate action. In March this year, its yearly trademark event "Your Europe Your Say!", which brings together high school students from all EU Member States and EU candidate countries, modelled an international climate change conference (COP) and played host to many prominent climate activists.

By dedicating its flagship prize to this all-important topic, the EESC wants to honour and showcase the non-state climate efforts made so far. It also aims to encourage ongoing projects and inspire new ones, thus highlighting the contribution that civil society organisations and individuals can make to the European Green Deal.

The Civil Society Prize 2021 will be awarded to outstanding projects and initiatives covering at least one of the following issues:

* Promoting full involvement and/or acceptance of civil society in the transition to a climate neutral society;
* Promoting citizens' participation in the climate debate;
* Designing/implementing projects that inspire and promote a transition to climate-friendly lifestyles for individuals in their local environments and places of work, including by employers or workers' organisations;
* Promoting climate awareness among consumers or encouraging behavioural change and change in social norms in the context of climate crisis;
* Designing/implementing projects that advocate active climate policies at local/regional/national or European level;
* Promoting climate justice in a broad sense with consideration for human rights and social responsibility of enterprises; encouraging climate awareness among wider, more diversified and/or disadvantaged/marginalised audiences; ensuring that no groups of society are left behind in the transition to a climate-neutral economy and society;
* Promoting climate education at schools of all levels; designing/implementing projects that raise awareness on climate change and solutions to it among children and young people;
* Raising awareness about impacts of climate change and promoting actions that aim to increase resilience and adaptation to climate change;
* Promoting civil society involvement in the implementation of climate policies at local/regional/national or European;
* Fostering active citizenship and empowerment though involvement in projects that promote a just transition and creating new civic interactions leading to a climate neutral economy;
* Promoting active youth engagement in proposing and implementing climate solutions, as well as empowering young people to get involved in the decision-making processes on climate and environment policies at local/regional/national or European level.

Literary or scientificpublications of any kind and on any support, audiovisual products and any kind of artworks are not eligible for the prize.

The full description of requirements and the online application form are available on our webpage: <http://www.eesc.europa.eu/civilsocietyprize/>

**ABOUT THE CIVIL SOCIETY PRIZE**

In 2021, the EESC will award its 12th Civil Society Prize. Every year, dedicated to a different theme of special relevance to the EU, the prize rewards and encourages initiatives and achievements by civil society organisations and/or individuals that have made a significant contribution to promoting the common values that bolster European cohesion and integration.

In 2020, the EESC replaced its Civil Society Prize with a one-off Civil Solidarity Prize which was dedicated to the fight against COVID-19. With that award, the EESC paid tribute to 23 civil society organisations, individuals and private companies from across the EU who had shown exceptional solidarity and civic responsibility in battling the pandemic and cushioning its terrible blows. In 2019, the Civil Society Prize celebrated gender equality and women's empowerment.

We kindly invite you to encourage civil society organisations in your country or in your network to apply for the EESC Civil Society Prize 2021 and thus help valuable projects win recognition.

**For more information, please contact:**

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*The European Economic and Social Committee is an institutional consultative body established by the 1957 Treaty of Rome. The Committee has 329 members from across Europe, who are appointed by the Council of the European Union. It represents the various economic and social components of organised civil society. Its consultative role enables its members, and hence the organisations they represent, to participate in the EU decision-making process.*

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