



Government of Iceland



The Vigdís Prize for Women's Empowerment¹

Launched in Reykjavík on the eve of the 4th Summit of Heads of State and Government of Council of Europe Member States (16-17 May 2023)

The Vigdís Prize for Women's Empowerment takes its name from the first woman in the world to be elected President, Vigdís Finnbogadóttir, elected President of Iceland in June 1980. Also, a UNESCO Goodwill Ambassador, she is a shining example for women's empowerment, and an inspiration for women today who are still striving for equality in all walks of life. Its aim is to reward outstanding initiatives promoting the empowerment of women in all their diversity, with a broad remit ranging from achievements in gender equality, in equal access to participation and decision making, to championing women's opportunities and helping them to take their place in society, as well as action to encourage inclusive policies and practice.

Eligible candidates for the Vigdís Prize for Women's Empowerment are individuals or civil society groups, including national or international non-governmental organisations, associations and private companies. Current members of the Parliamentary Assembly and deceased individuals are not eligible. Prize-winners will be awarded a sum of 60.000 euros to finance action in the field that is conducted or supported by the Prize-winner, and a diploma, to be presented during each June part-session of the Parliamentary Assembly.

A call for candidates for the Vigdís Prize for Women's Empowerment will be launched each year in November, by submission of a letter to the Secretary General of the Parliamentary Assembly and a form signed by at least 5 sponsors. Once eligibility of the applications has been verified, a meeting of the Selection Panel will be held in spring in Reykjavík or in Strasbourg, on a rotation basis, to examine the candidacies and decide on a shortlist of three nominees to be submitted, for information, to the Bureau of the Assembly. The names of these nominees will be made public by the President of the Assembly. On the Sunday preceding the Assembly's June part-session, the Selection Panel will meet in Strasbourg to decide on the winner of the Prize. The name of the Prize-winner will be announced by the President of the Assembly during a special ceremony to be held at the opening of the Assembly's June part-session.

The Selection Panel of the Prize, chaired by the President of the Assembly or by a person designated by her or him, will be composed of six independent members with recognised standing in the field of women's empowerment, three nominated by the Bureau of the Assembly upon the proposal of the Assembly's Committee on Equality and Non-Discrimination and three nominated by the Government of Iceland. Current members of the Assembly cannot be members of the Selection Panel. They are appointed for a two-year period, renewable twice.

The Vigdís Prize for Women's Empowerment will replace the Parliamentary Assembly's Gender Equality Prize, established pursuant to its Resolution 1593 (2007).

¹ The regulations of the Prize were adopted by the Committee on 27 April 2023, approved by the Bureau of the Parliamentary Assembly on 28 April 2023 and revised by the Bureau of the Parliamentary Assembly on 28 November 2024.

Regulations for the Vigdís Prize for Women's Empowerment

Article 1 – The Prize

The Vigdís Prize for Women's Empowerment will be awarded by the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe every year in order to reward outstanding initiatives promoting the empowerment of women in all their diversity, with a broad remit ranging from achievements in gender equality, in equal access to participation and decision making, to championing women's opportunities and helping them to take their place in society, as well as action to encourage inclusive policies and practice.

Article 2 – Award

The Prize will consist of a sum of 60 000 euros to finance action in the field that is conducted or supported by the Prize-winner and a diploma.

Article 3 – Eligibility

Individuals or civil society groups, including national or international non-governmental organisations, associations and private companies may be nominated for the Prize. Current members of the Parliamentary Assembly and deceased individuals will not be eligible.

Article 4 – Nominations

4.1. Nominations for the Prize must reach the Secretary General of the Parliamentary Assembly in March, at a date to be set each year. They will be signed by at least five sponsors, other than the nominee, on the special form appended to these Regulations.

4.2. Nominations will provide details of the nominee's action to promote women's empowerment and specify the reasons why the nominee's action can be considered to be outstanding. All relevant supporting documents will be provided.

4.3. Nominations may be submitted in one of the two official languages of the Council of Europe.

Article 5 – Selection Panel

5.1. The Selection Panel, chaired by the President of the Assembly or a person designated by her or him, will be composed of six independent members with recognised standing in the field of women's empowerment.

5.2. Three members of the Selection Panel will be nominated by the Bureau of the Assembly upon the proposal of the Assembly's Committee on Equality and Non-Discrimination and three nominated by the Government of Iceland.

5.3. Current members of the Assembly cannot be members of the Selection Panel. They are appointed for a two-year period, renewable twice.

Article 6 – Decision on the Prize-winner

6.1. The Selection Panel will decide on any conflict of interest concerning its members.

6.2. Once eligibility of the applications has been verified, a meeting of the Selection Panel will be held in spring in Reykjavík or in Strasbourg, on a rotation basis, to examine the candidacies and decide on a shortlist of three nominees to be submitted, for information, to the Bureau of the Assembly. The names of these nominees will subsequently be made public by the President of the Assembly.

6.3. In a second sitting on the Sunday preceding the Assembly's June part-session, the Selection Panel will meet in Strasbourg to decide on the winner of the Prize. This decision will be taken by an absolute majority of the votes cast.

Article 7 – Award ceremony

7.1. The name of the Prize-winner will be announced by the President of the Assembly during a special ceremony to be held at the opening of the Assembly's June part-session.