
1538th meeting, 24 September 2025

8 Youth and sport

8.1 European Youth Foundation (EYF)

Operational Regulations of the European Youth Foundation (2025)

1. Considering the evolving societal needs of young people and the importance of strengthening international youth co-operation, the Youth statutory bodies decided in 2023 to initiate a reform of the European Youth Foundation (hereinafter, the Foundation). This is the first major reform since 2012 and reflects the need to adapt the Foundation to better support youth and civil society organisations across Europe.
2. The 4th Summit of Heads of State and Government of the Council of Europe in 2023 reaffirmed the vital role of civil society and of young people in strengthening democratic societies. The Foundation's reform has been developed in line with the commitments set out in the Reykjavík Declaration and aims to ensure the Foundation remains a relevant and effective instrument for youth participation and democratic engagement.
3. The reform also aims to fully align the Foundation's grant-making procedures with established Council of Europe standards and international best practices. This objective was pursued through close interdepartmental collaboration throughout the Foundation's reform process, particularly between the Foundation's secretariat and the Directorate of Legal Advice and Public International Law (DLAPIL).
4. At its 50th and 51st meetings in 2024, the Joint Council on Youth (CMJ) advanced the reform of the Foundation, endorsing a roadmap and orientations for revising its Operational Regulations to better reflect the evolving needs and future challenges of young people and youth organisations. Following public consultations and research on youth engagement trends and donor best practices, the Foundation's secretariat, in collaboration with DLAPIL and other Council of Europe bodies, began revising the regulations to align with international grant-making standards and the Council of Europe's internal procedures and compliance frameworks.
5. At its 52nd meeting in April 2025, the Joint Council on Youth welcomed the concept and legal framework of the revised Operational Regulations and agreed to conduct a written consultation with member States, i.e. the European Steering Committee for Youth (CDEJ) and the Advisory Council on Youth (CCJ). The feedback received was subsequently incorporated into the draft text by the DLAPIL, in collaboration with the Foundation's secretariat.
6. At its 53rd meeting on 16-17 June 2025, the Programming Committee on Youth (CPJ) reviewed the final draft of the revised Operational Regulations and expressed its full support for the Foundation's reform process. It acknowledged the outcomes of the written consultation and commended the participatory and transparent drafting process. In line with the Foundation's Statute, the Programming Committee on Youth delivered a favourable opinion on the revised Operational Regulations, recommending its submission to the Committee of Ministers for adoption.
7. These Operational Regulations will prompt updates to the Foundation's online application and reporting system, and its working methods will be adjusted to align with the new grant-making procedures.

Appendix 1

Operational Regulations of the European Youth Foundation (2025)

*(Adopted by the Committee of Ministers on 24 September 2025
at the 1538th meeting of the Ministers' Deputies)*

Preamble

The Committee of Ministers

Having regard to Resolution Res(72)17, adopted by the Committee of Ministers at its 50th session on 15 May 1972, on setting up the European Youth Foundation (hereinafter "the Foundation") as a key instrument of the Council of Europe for ensuring the participation of young people;

Having regard to the Foundation's commitment to carrying out its missions on the basis of its statute and on the following principles, in line with the Reykjavik Declaration and Principles for Democracy adopted by the Heads of State and Government of the Council of Europe:

- nurturing trust-based relations with international and national non-governmental youth organisations and networks, as well as with other non-governmental structures involved in areas of youth work that are relevant to the Council of Europe's youth policy;
- supporting the independence of organisation, autonomy of action and voluntary nature of youth activities at European level;
- ensuring adaptability to economic and social progress and changes and responsiveness to organisational development and the needs of international youth organisations and networks;

Underlining that the Foundation's main mission is to promote peace, understanding and international co-operation between young people in Europe and beyond, in a spirit of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms;

Considering that the Foundation fulfils its mission by providing financial support to international, national and local non-governmental youth organisations and networks, enabling them to carry out strategic projects that are relevant to the Council of Europe youth sector priorities, under the guidance of the Joint Council on Youth;

Considering that the Foundation supports youth organisations in empowering young people to play a more active role in revitalising democracy and safeguarding human rights;

Emphasising that through trust-based partnerships with youth organisations, the Foundation strives to empower young people to be actors of change for democracy and human rights in their communities;

Underlining that by strengthening youth organisations across Europe, the Foundation contributes to the overall missions of the Council of Europe, while recognising young people as key stakeholders for safeguarding democracy and for the protection and promotion of human rights;

Considering that the Foundation provides grants to support initiatives of different sizes and formats that foster the participation of young people in democratic life and empower today's youth in the pursuit of peace based on justice and international co-operation;

Emphasising that these Operational Regulations of the European Youth Foundation (hereinafter "the Regulations") were designed to ensure that the Foundation acts as a unique, agile and relevant donor for youth organisations across Europe;

Underlining that these Regulations should aim to adopt a dynamic grant-making approach, tailored to the diverse situations of young people across member States with adaptable procedures to support youth activities, strengthen the resilience and sustainability of youth organisations and address the evolving needs of the youth sector,

adopts the following Regulations of the European Youth Foundation.

Part I – General provisions

Article I – Definitions

For the purposes of these Regulations, the following definitions apply.

Foundation members

Member States of the Council of Europe and Contracting Parties to the European Cultural Convention (ETS No. 18) that may be invited by a decision of the Committee of Ministers to participate in the activities of the Foundation, in accordance with Articles 2 and 3 of the Statute of the European Youth Foundation (hereinafter “the Foundation Statute”).

International non-governmental youth organisation

A non-profit, non-governmental, youth-led organisation that operates across national borders and has a minimum of seven branch offices or member organisations established and operating in at least seven Foundation members.

International network of non-governmental youth organisations

A group of at least seven national and/or local non-profit, non-governmental, youth-led organisations, which are based in different Foundation members, established to collaborate on a long-term basis and to achieve shared objectives.

Sub-regional network of non-governmental youth organisations

A group of four to six national, non-profit, non-governmental, youth-led organisations, based in different Foundation members, which operates within a specific European sub-region.

National non-governmental youth organisation

A non-profit, non-governmental, youth-led organisation that operates at the national level, in one of the Foundation members, and whose activities embrace several or all regions within its country of operation.

Local non-governmental youth organisation

A non-profit, non-governmental, youth-led organisation that operates locally, in one of the Foundation members, and whose activities are confined within a specific geographic area, such as a village, town, community or region of a country.

Article 2 – Scope of the Regulations

1. These Regulations identify the types of grants awarded by the Foundation and lay down the procedures for the award of such grants.
2. For the purposes of these Regulations, and with reference to Article 1.1 of the Foundation Statute, a grant shall constitute a provision of financial assistance by the Foundation to a grantee aimed at supporting European youth activities that promote peace, understanding and co-operation among people in Europe and globally, in a spirit of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms.

Article 3 – Types of grants

1. With reference to Article 1 of its statute, the Foundation may award grants, in accordance with the requirements and procedures laid down in the present Regulations, to:

- a. finance an activity or a project by the grantee relevant to the Council of Europe’s youth policy (“project grant”), namely:

- projects involving educational, cultural, social and humanitarian expressions of a European character;
- activities aimed at strengthening peace and co-operation in Europe;
- activities designed to promote closer co-operation and better understanding among the young people of Europe, particularly by developing the exchange of information;
- activities intended to stimulate co-operation in Europe and in other regions of the world for cultural, educational and social purposes;
- studies, research and documentation on youth matters.

b. finance all or part of the general administrative costs incurred by the grantee in running their activities, when these fall within the types of activities the Foundation would finance under Articles 2.2 and 3.1, sub-paragraph a, above (“structural grant”).

2. The following activities shall not be supported by the Foundation:

- a. operations of a commercial nature;
- b. the purchase of land or buildings;
- c. the construction or renovation of buildings;
- d. the purchase of fixed equipment for buildings;
- e. tourism activities;
- f. scholarships;
- g. sports events and competitions;
- h. school exchanges;
- i. activities that are part of a school or university programme or that have a strictly vocational character;
- j. statutory meetings of youth organisations.

3. Grants awarded by the Foundation shall, in principle, take the form of reimbursement of eligible costs actually incurred by the grantee.

4. Grants awarded by the Foundation may also take the form of:

- a. financing not linked to the actual costs of the relevant operations but based on the achievement of results measured by reference to previously set milestones or through performance indicators;
- b. lump sums, which cover in global terms all or certain specific categories of eligible costs which are clearly identified in advance;
- c. unit costs, which cover all or certain specific categories of eligible costs which are clearly identified in advance by reference to an amount per unit;
- d. flat-rate financing, which covers specific categories of eligible costs, which are clearly identified in advance, by applying a percentage;
- e. a combination of the forms referred to in Article 3.3 and Article 3.4, sub-paragraphs a to d.

Article 4 – Project grants

1. Activities or projects falling within the scope of Article 3.1, sub-paragraph a, can take the form of:

- a. international co-operation activities;
- b. ad hoc initiatives to address emerging needs, priorities and societal phenomena.

International co-operation activities

2. Within this category, the aim is to fund international co-operation activities in line with the mission of the Foundation to enhance international understanding and solidarity and contribute to the promotion of human rights and democracy. Activities shall aim to contribute to the work of the Council of Europe in the youth field in accordance with the principles of the youth sector and have a multiplier effect for those who participate in the activities implemented and/or for the grantee.

3. The international co-operation activities supported by a project grant may include:

- a. one-off youth co-operation activities, focusing primarily on the organisation of an international meeting of young people, for example youth camps, seminars, conferences, training courses or study visits;
- b. long-term youth co-operation projects that include a combination of international meetings and other activities, such as campaigns, advocacy projects, production of educational and other resources, research, support for local activities or regional initiatives.

4. In order to be supported by a project grant, international co-operation activities must also:

- a. be attended, in suitable numbers, by participants from at least seven Foundation members. Depending on the aim, the project may also include participants from States which are not Foundation members;
- b. be attended by participants of whom at least 75% are not older than thirty years of age;
- c. as a general rule, take place in one or several Foundation members.

5. International one-off youth co-operation activities receiving a project grant from the Foundation must be prepared and organised by:

- a. an international non-governmental youth organisation;
- b. an international network of non-governmental youth organisations;
- c. a sub-regional network of non-governmental youth organisations;
- d. a partnership composed of at least four national non-governmental youth organisations; or
- e. a partnership of a national non-governmental youth organisation and an international non-governmental youth organisation or network.

6. International, long-term youth co-operation activities receiving a project grant from the Foundation must be prepared and organised by:

- a. an international non-governmental youth organisation; or
- b. an international network of non-governmental youth organisations.

7. As long as the conditions in the preceding paragraph are met, grants falling under this provision may be awarded to partnerships that include other international, sub-regional or national non-governmental youth organisations or networks, and/or movements, campaigns, initiatives and other informal groups.

Ad hoc initiatives to address emerging needs, priorities and societal phenomena

8. Within this category, the aim is to fund one-time initiatives – or immediate responses – of young people to specific emerging needs or priorities that relate to young people's living conditions or broader societal phenomena.

9. The ad hoc initiatives must aim to achieve one or several of the following objectives:

- a. encouraging new forms of youth participation and organisation;
- b. supporting young people – in particular young people experiencing exclusion, marginalisation and discrimination – to find ways of addressing the challenges facing them and meeting their own aspirations;
- c. contributing to social cohesion, in particular by fighting exclusion;
- d. addressing societal challenges and phenomena affecting young people.

10. In order to be supported by a grant, the ad hoc initiative must also:

- a. have a European dimension, either by involving participants from more than one country or foreseeing activities in more than one country and/or by taking into account the European context;
- b. be innovative in terms of thematic focus and methodology for the target group and/or organising body;
- c. have an impact for young people and their local communities.

11. Any ad hoc initiatives receiving a grant from the Foundation must be prepared and organised by a local or national non-governmental youth organisation.

12. As long as the conditions in the preceding paragraph are met, grants falling under this provision may be awarded to partnerships that include other movements, campaigns, initiatives and other informal groups.

Other types of grants

13. The Foundation may award grants to support the implementation of activities or projects that do not fall under the categories in Article 4, paragraphs 2 to 12, of the present Regulations but that nevertheless fall within the mandate of the Foundation and its objectives as defined by the Foundation Statute.

Article 5 – Structural grants

1. In accordance with Article 1.4 of the Foundation Statute, the Foundation may award a structural grant to international non-governmental youth organisations and networks, as defined in Article 1 of these Regulations, to cover part of the general administrative costs involved in running their activities.
2. Structural grants may only be awarded to applicants that have an established co-operation with the Council of Europe. In particular, during the three years preceding the year for which the structural grant is requested, applicants must have either received a contribution from the Foundation for at least three international co-operation activities or must have been financed within the annual programme of the European Youth Centre.
3. The Foundation may also contribute to the administrative costs of emerging international non-governmental youth organisations or networks, in order to help them to establish a European platform. Such a contribution can be provided to organisations and networks:
 - a. whose members have joined voluntarily;
 - b. which have branches or member organisations in at least four Foundation members;
 - c. which can demonstrate that they plan to set up a new European or international platform, including a secretariat/co-ordination function;
 - d. which, during the two years preceding the year for which the structural grant is requested, have received a contribution from the Foundation for at least one international co-operation activity, or have been financed in the annual programme of the European Youth Centre.

Article 6 – General principles

1. The Foundation's grant award procedures shall be based on the principles of transparency, equal treatment, non-retroactivity, non-cumulative awards, no profit, co-financing and non-discrimination as described below.
2. Principle of transparency
 - a. Grants shall in principle be awarded through a competitive grant award procedure, unless the conditions for the direct award of a grant to a particular grantee or grantees set out in Article 20 of the present Regulations are met.
 - b. Information about awarded grants shall be published by the Foundation on a regular basis, except when specific confidentiality measures must be taken to preserve the vital interests of the grantee.
3. Equal treatment

No preferential treatment shall be given to any potential grantee. This rule applies not only to the process of identifying and selecting beneficiaries but also during the implementation of the grant.

4. Principle of non-retroactivity
 - a. A project grant cannot be awarded to support an activity or a project that has already been completed.
 - b. When a project grant is awarded for an activity or a project which has already begun, costs eligible for financing cannot be incurred prior to the date of the deadline for submission of the grant proposal, unless provided otherwise by the grant agreement.
5. Principle of co-financing
 - a. The Foundation shall finance only part of the activity or project supported by a project grant.
 - b. The grantee shall contribute to the activity or the project either by way of its own resources or by contribution from third parties. Depending on the needs of the Foundation, the objectives of the activity or the characteristics of the grantee, co-financing may take the form of financial or human resources – including volunteer work – in-kind contributions or income generated by the activity or project.
 - c. When duly justified, the Foundation may finance an activity or project in full where this is essential for it to be carried out. In such a case, justification shall be provided in the award decision.

6. Principle of non-cumulative awards

- a. An activity or project can only receive one project grant. Each grantee can only receive one structural grant per financial year.
- b. The Foundation cannot provide funding for any part of an activity or project that is already being fully funded by other sources.

7. Principle of no profit

Grants shall not have the purpose or effect of producing a surplus over the eligible costs incurred by the grantee as defined in Article 21 of the present Regulations.

8. Principle of non-discrimination

Grant award procedures shall be carried out, in line with the Council of Europe applicable regulatory framework and policies, without direct or indirect discrimination on any ground, such as “race”; national, ethnic or social origin; colour; citizenship; disability; age; civil or parental status; sexual orientation, gender identity or expression or sex characteristics; or political, philosophical or religious opinions.

Part II – Grant award procedure

Article 7 – Responsibility for the grant award procedure

1. The Programming Committee shall be the body responsible for exercising decision-making powers in the Foundation’s grant award procedures, in accordance with its terms of reference as adopted by the Committee of Ministers. The Programming Committee shall ensure compliance of each procedure with the provisions of the present Regulations. In particular, the Programming Committee shall:

- a. decide on the award of grants following a competitive procedure;
- b. where appropriate, suspend the implementation of the grant agreement;
- c. where appropriate, terminate the grant agreement;
- d. where appropriate, reduce grant amounts or recover them in full or part;
- e. decide whether conditions for a direct award referred to in Article 20 of the present Regulations are met.

2. The secretariat of the Foundation (hereinafter “the secretariat”) ensures the smooth running of grant award procedures, facilitates the process and assists in the work of the Programming Committee, and carries out any tasks connected to grant award procedures not explicitly attributed to the Programming Committee under the present Regulations. In particular, the secretariat shall:

- a. ensure the overall planning of grant award procedures;
- b. ensure access to information related to grant award procedures and provide capacity building to youth organisations;
- c. manage the online grant platform used, in principle, for the carrying out of grant award procedures;
- d. manage the registration process of potential applicants on the online grant management platform and provide assistance to potential applicants on the use of the platform;
- e. conduct a preliminary assessment of the proposals received against the applicable exclusion, eligibility and award criteria, and submit its recommendations to the Programming Committee;
- f. follow the implementation of grants and assess the narrative and financial reports submitted by grantees;
- g. amend the grant agreement without the prior approval of the Programming Committee, provided that such amendments do not result in a significant change to the scope of the supported activity, project or initiative.
- h. adopt guidelines, templates and other supplementary documents supporting the interpretation and implementation of these Regulations in accordance with Article 27.

Article 8 – Registration of grant applicants

1. Applicants applying for the first time for a grant awarded by the Foundation must register on the dedicated online grant management platform and provide all the information and documentation required during the registration process. The Foundation may request certified copies or originals of any relevant documents.

2. Registration on the grant portal may be denied if an applicant fails to provide the requested information and documents or fails to comply with exclusion criteria listed below in Article 10 of the present Regulations.

3. Registered applicants may be requested by the Foundation to update their status and/or to provide information and/or documents at regular intervals. Failure to comply with the Foundation's requests may result in the applicant being unable to apply for a grant or, in case of persistent failure to comply with such a request, the deletion of the applicant's account from the online grant management platform.

Article 9 – Rolling calls for proposals and ad hoc calls for proposals

Rolling calls for proposals

1. Grants falling under Article 4, paragraphs 2 to 12, and Article 5 of the present Regulations are awarded following rolling calls for proposals organised at regular intervals. Rolling calls for proposals shall be published on the Foundation's website and, in principle, on the online grant management platform. If need be, alternative means of publication may be employed, provided they target relevant audiences, are non-discriminatory in nature and do not have the effect of restricting the access of applicants to the award procedure.

2. The rolling calls for proposals must include information on:

- a. the expected amount of the grant(s) to be awarded;
- b. the co-financing requirements, if any;
- c. instructions and requirements for the submission of proposals;
- d. where appropriate, instructions on how potential applicants may request, in writing, supplementary information;
- e. the indicative date by which all applicants shall have been informed of the outcome of the assessment of their proposal and the indicative date for the start of the implementation period;
- f. any additional exclusion criteria other than the ones listed in Article 10 of the present Regulations;
- g. any additional eligibility criteria, and the list of relevant supporting documents to be submitted, other than the ones listed in Article 4, paragraphs 2 to 12, and Article 5 of the present Regulations;
- h. the award criteria and the list of relevant supporting documents to be submitted;
- i. the terms of the grant agreement to be concluded with the potential grantee.

Ad hoc calls for proposals

3. Grants under Article 4.13 of the present Regulations are awarded following ad hoc calls for proposals to be published as the need arises. Ad hoc calls for proposals shall be published on the Foundation's website and, in principle, on the online grant management platform. If need be, alternative means of publication may be employed, provided they target relevant audiences, are non-discriminatory in nature and do not have the effect of restricting the access of applicants to the award procedure.

4. The ad hoc calls for proposals shall specify at minima:

- a. the objectives pursued by the activity or project to be implemented;
- b. the co-financing requirements, if any;
- c. the anticipated amount of the grant(s) to be awarded;
- d. the instructions and requirements for the submission of proposals;
- e. where appropriate, instructions on how potential applicants may request, in writing, supplementary information;
- f. the indicative date by which all applicants shall have been informed of the outcome of the assessment of their proposal;
- g. the indicative timetable for the project implementation;
- h. the exclusion and eligibility criteria, and the list of relevant supporting documents to be submitted by applicants, as may be appropriate given the nature of the grant to be awarded;
- i. the award criteria, their respective weighting and the relevant supporting documents to be submitted by applicants, as may be appropriate given the nature of the grant to be awarded;
- j. the terms of the grant agreement to be concluded with the potential grantee.

5. When a potential applicant requests supplementary information, in accordance with the conditions specified in the ad hoc call for proposals, the information given to that applicant shall be made available to all potential applicants at the same time.

Article 10 – Exclusion criteria

1. Applicants shall be excluded from the grant award procedure where they:
 - a. have been sentenced by final judgment on one or more of the following charges: participation in a criminal organisation, corruption, fraud, money laundering, terrorist financing, terrorist offences or offences linked to terrorist activities, child labour or trafficking in human beings;
 - b. are in a situation of bankruptcy, liquidation, termination of activity, insolvency or arrangement with creditors or any such situation arising from a procedure of the same kind, or are subject to a procedure of the same kind;
 - c. have received a judgment with res judicata force, finding an offence that affects their professional integrity or constitutes serious professional misconduct;
 - d. do not comply with their obligations as regards payment of social security contributions, taxes and dues, according to the statutory provisions of the country where they are established;
 - e. are an entity created to circumvent tax, social or other legal obligations (empty shell company), have ever created or are in the process of creation of such an entity;
 - f. have been involved in mismanagement of Council of Europe funds or public funds;
 - g. are in a situation of actual, perceived or potential conflict of interest that cannot be managed to the secretariat's satisfaction.
2. Additional exclusion criteria may be added, as appropriate given the circumstances and nature of the grants to be awarded.
3. Applicants shall deliver, when registering on the online grant platform, a declaration on their honour certifying that they are not in any of the above-mentioned situations.
4. The secretariat reserves the right to ask applicants to supply the following:
 - a. for the items set out in Articles 10.1, sub-paragraphs *a*, *b*, *c* and *f*, an extract from the record of convictions or failing that an equivalent document issued by the competent judicial or administrative authority of the country where the applicant is established, indicating that these requirements have been met;
 - b. for the items set out in paragraph Article 10.1, sub-paragraph *d*, a certificate issued by the competent authority of the country of establishment;
 - c. any additional document or information considered necessary for checking compliance with the exclusion criteria.

Article 11 – Eligibility and award criteria

1. Proposals submitted will be assessed against the eligibility criteria laid down in these Regulations and, when applicable, against the additional eligibility criteria set down in the rolling call for proposals or ad hoc call for proposals.
2. The eligibility criteria shall be such as to make it possible to, *inter alia*:
 - a. identify eligible applicants;
 - b. identify eligible proposals;
 - c. assess the applicant's ability to complete the proposed project.
3. Eligible proposals shall be assessed against the award criteria set in the rolling call for proposals or ad hoc call for proposals and approved by the Programming Committee. The award criteria shall be such as to make it possible to assess the quality of the proposals submitted and to award grants to projects, activities or initiatives which best meet the Foundation's objectives and priorities. Award criteria shall be weighted.

4. The eligibility and award criteria shall be objective, in the sense that they shall not confer any unfair advantage on an applicant and shall not constitute an unjustified obstacle to competition. Social and environmental criteria and considerations such as accessibility and environmental sustainability may also be taken into account.
5. The criteria, once made public, shall not be changed
. The same rule applies to the weighting of each of the award criteria.

Article 12 – Submission of proposals

1. Proposals shall be submitted in accordance with the instructions and the requirements of the rolling call for proposals or the ad hoc call for proposals. Failure to comply with these instructions may result in the proposal being rejected.
2. For project grants, an estimated budget for the project shall be attached to the proposal, indicating the estimated eligible costs of the project.
3. Applicants applying for a structural grant must also submit an outline of the general budget showing its receipts and expenditure. The Foundation may ask an organisation to provide additional documents.
4. Applicants shall further be required to indicate whether they have received or applied for any additional funding from the Foundation or the Council of Europe, or other sources in respect of the same activity or project or for its operational expenditure, and what the respective amounts of additional funding are.
5. Applicants may be asked to submit their proposals in two stages. In this case, they shall be first asked to submit a concept note. The applicants whose concept notes successfully pass the first-stage evaluation shall be asked to develop their respective concept notes and to submit a detailed proposal for the second-stage evaluation.
6. Proposals submitted after the deadline shall automatically be excluded from the procedure, unless the applicant proves that the proposal could not be submitted in time because of *force majeure*.

Article 13 – Receipt of proposals

1. The reception process shall ensure that the integrity of data, the confidentiality of proposals and the protection of personal data in accordance with the requirements of the Council of Europe legal framework concerning data protection are ensured.
2. If a deadline for the submission of proposals has been set, proposals shall only be opened after the expiration of this deadline. Proposals shall be opened by the secretariat and a record of the proposals submitted shall be established.

Article 14 – Assessment procedure

1. The secretariat shall carry out an assessment of each proposal received against the applicable exclusion, eligibility and award criteria.
2. The secretariat may ask an applicant to provide additional information or to clarify the supporting documents submitted in connection with the proposal, provided that such information or clarification does not substantially change the proposal. Records of such communication shall be kept.
3. The secretariat shall prepare a report outlining the outcome of its preliminary assessment and submit it, together with its recommendations, to the Programming Committee for decision.
4. Proposals shall automatically be excluded in cases of misrepresentation or false information.

Article 15 – Dialogue with applicants

1. Where appropriate, the secretariat may enter into a dialogue with applicants with a view to ensuring that eligible proposals fully align with the scope and objectives of the grant award procedure.
2. This dialogue shall not result in a significant deviation from the proposal initially submitted by the applicant. The equal treatment of applicants and the confidentiality of information provided by applicants shall be ensured. The dialogue shall be fully documented, and the information shall be included in the report to be submitted to the Programming Committee.
3. Following the dialogue, applicants shall be requested to confirm in writing any changes to their original proposal.

Article 16 – Award decision

Decisions regarding the award and the amounts of grants are taken by the Programming Committee based on the secretariat's assessment report and recommendations.

Article 17 – Communication of the decision

1. The secretariat shall inform the applicant(s) of the outcome of the grant award procedure in writing. The secretariat shall inform unsuccessful applicants about the reasons for non-selection and, when applicable, modalities for enquiries and the deadline by which enquiries must be submitted.
2. Decisions to award a grant shall, in principle, be accompanied by a draft grant agreement to be signed by the grantee and returned to the Foundation.

Article 18 – Grant agreement

1. Grants shall be covered by a written agreement concluded between the Foundation and the grantee(s). The terms of the grant agreement must be drawn up on the basis of the standard template established by the Foundation for this purpose.
2. Grantees shall implement the grant in accordance with the conditions laid down in the grant agreement.
3. If a selected applicant has an outstanding debt to the Foundation due to failure to reimburse funds that should have been returned to the Foundation in accordance with the provision of a previously concluded grant agreement, the Foundation may reserve the right to withhold signature of the new grant agreement until the repayment of the outstanding debt has been received.
4. Amendments to grant agreements shall neither aim for nor result in calling into question the grant award decision, nor breach the principle of equal treatment of applicants. In principle, the amount of the grant shall not be increased through an amendment to the grant agreement, unless justified by the need to support the costs associated with facilitating the participation of people with disabilities in activities supported by a grant.

Article 19 – Enquiry and reconsideration request

1. Following a rolling call for proposals or an ad hoc call for proposals, unsuccessful applicants may submit their enquiries in compliance with the instructions, and before the deadline, indicated in the information letter referred to in Article 17.1 of the present Regulations.
2. The answer to an enquiry shall be sent without delay and shall address the issues raised by the unsuccessful applicant. When the enquiry concerns an ad hoc call for proposals, the answer must also include information on the deadline and modalities for the submission of a reconsideration request.
3. If the applicant is not satisfied with the given answer and believes that there have been shortcomings in the handling of their proposal submitted in the framework of an ad hoc call for proposals, the applicant may submit a written reconsideration request within thirty calendar days after receiving the answer to the enquiry.

4. The secretariat shall acknowledge receipt of the request for reconsideration and shall promptly examine it. Manifestly ill-founded or unsubstantiated requests for reconsideration shall not be examined. If the secretariat concludes that a manifest error was committed, the issue shall be brought to the attention of the Programming Committee that shall then assess the request for reconsideration and, where relevant, decide on the appropriate means of redress. The Programming Committee's decision referred to in the previous paragraph is final and shall be communicated to the unsuccessful applicants.

Article 20 – Direct award

1. Grants aimed at financing projects or activities of the same nature as those specified in Article 1.2 of the Foundation Statute may, exceptionally, be awarded directly by the Programming Committee to a particular grantee or grantees outside of a rolling call for proposals or ad hoc call for proposals:

- a. where for unforeseen reasons of urgency, not attributable to the Foundation, a rolling call for proposals or ad hoc call for proposals cannot be followed;
- b. for the purposes of humanitarian aid or emergency support in cases of crisis; or
- c. where the characteristics of the grantee(s) or of the activity or project leave no choice.

2. The decision to award a grant directly must be duly substantiated, in the light of the criteria set out in this article.

Part III – Implementation of a grant

Article 21 – Eligible costs

1. Grants shall not exceed an overall ceiling expressed in terms of an absolute value (maximum grant amount) which shall be established on the basis of:

- a. estimated eligible costs, where possible, in the case referred to in Article 3.3;
- b. the overall amount of financing not linked to costs in the case referred to in Article 3.4, sub-paragraph a;
- c. the overall amount of the estimated eligible costs clearly defined in advance in the form of lump sums, unit costs or flat rates as referred to in Article 3.4, sub-paragraphs b, c and d.

2. Without prejudice to the grant agreement, grants may in addition be expressed as a percentage of the estimated eligible costs, where the grant takes the form specified in Article 21.1, sub-paragraph a, or as a percentage of the lump sums, unit costs or flat-rate financing referred to in 21.1, sub-paragraph c.

3. Grants shall not exceed the eligible costs.

4. Eligible costs actually incurred by the beneficiary, as referred to in Article 3.3, shall meet all of the following criteria:

- a. they have been indicated in the estimated overall budget of the activity or project;
- b. they have actually been incurred by the grantee during the implementation period as defined in the grant agreement;
- c. they are necessary for the purpose of the grant;
- d. they are identifiable and verifiable, in particular they are recorded in the grantee's accounts and determined according to the accounting standards applicable to the grantee;
- e. they comply with the requirements of applicable tax and social security legislation;
- f. they are reasonable and justified, and they comply with the principle of sound financial management, in particular best value for money and cost-effectiveness;
- g. they are backed up by originals or certified copies of supporting documents.

5. Funding of the grantee's indirect costs may be authorised in the form of a flat rate, to be expressed as a percentage of the total eligible direct costs for the activity.

6. Where possible and appropriate, lump sums, unit costs or flat rates shall be determined in such a way as to allow their payment upon achievement of concrete outputs and/or results.

7. The essential conditions triggering payments, including, where applicable, the achievement of outputs and/or results shall be clearly outlined in the grant agreement and, where relevant, in the rolling call or ad hoc call for proposals. The conditions triggering the payment of lump sums, unit costs or flat rates shall not require reporting on the costs actually incurred by the beneficiary.

8. A lump sum as referred to in Article 3.4, sub-paragraph *b*, may cover the entire eligible costs of a supported activity, project or initiative.

9. In accordance with Article 27 of the present Regulations, the secretariat may issue guidelines or other supplementary documents further detailing, among others, the following:

- a. when lump sums, unit costs, flat-rate financing may be used;
- b. the identification of the costs or categories of costs that may be covered by these forms of financing;
- c. the description of the methods for determining lump sums, unit costs or flat-rate financing;
- d. the periodic assessment of lump sums, unit costs or flat rates and conditions for possible adjustment;
- e. the checks and controls to be performed before the payment of the balance and the checks and controls that may be performed ex post.

Article 22 – Ineligible costs

1. In addition to the list of ineligible activities listed in Article 3.2 of the present Regulations, the following costs shall not be considered eligible:

- a. expenditure already fully financed by other sources;
- b. debts and provisions for losses or debts incurred prior to the award;
- c. costs incurred outside the implementation period as defined in the grant agreement;
- d. expenditures unrelated to the project or activity;
- e. expenditure incurred in breach of conditions set out in the grant agreement;
- f. interest owed;
- g. currency exchange losses;
- h. loans to third parties.

2. Where appropriate, additional ineligible costs may be defined in a grant agreement to, among others, satisfy the contractual obligations of the Council of Europe.

Article 23 – Final amount of the grant

1. The amount of the grant shall not become final until after the secretariat has approved the final reports and, where applicable, the accounts, without prejudice to subsequent audits, checks and investigative processes.

2. Only expenditure which meets the criteria established in the grant agreement may be reimbursed.

Article 24 – Suspension, termination and reduction

1. The secretariat may suspend payments or the implementation of the grant agreement where:

- a. the grant award procedure or the implementation of the grant agreement prove to have been subject to irregularities, fraud or breach of obligations under the grant agreement;
- b. it is necessary to verify whether presumed irregularities, fraud or breach of obligations have actually occurred.

2. Where the presumed irregularities, fraud or breach of obligations referred to in Article 24.1, sub-paragraph *b*, are not confirmed, the implementation or payments shall resume as soon as possible.

3. When a decision to suspend payments or the implementation of the grant agreement is taken, the secretariat may, where appropriate, set a reasonable time limit for the grantee to remedy the situation.
4. The Programming Committee, upon recommendation of the secretariat, may terminate the grant agreement in the cases referred to in Article 24.1, sub-paragraph a.
5. In addition to the possibility of suspending or terminating the grant agreement, the Programming Committee may, upon recommendation of the secretariat, reduce the grant in proportion to the seriousness of the irregularities, fraud or of the breach of obligations under the grant agreement, including where the activities concerned were not implemented or were implemented poorly, partially, late or differently from what was envisaged.

Part IV – Final provisions

Article 25 – Allegations of fraud, corruption or other wrongdoing

1. In accordance with the applicable Council of Europe regulatory framework and policies, applicants and grantees shall report any allegation of fraud, corruption or other forms of wrongdoing, including any form of harassment or unethical behaviour, occurring in grant award procedures and in the implementation of grant agreements.
2. Applicants and grantees shall comply with the applicable Council of Europe regulatory framework and policies, throughout grant award procedures and the implementation of grant agreements. Applicants and grantees shall fully co-operate with investigative processes into alleged instances of fraud, corruption or other forms of wrongdoing, including any form of harassment or unethical behaviour, launched by the Council of Europe in accordance with the applicable regulatory framework.
3. Where controls or audits demonstrate systemic or recurring irregularities, fraud or a breach of obligations attributable to the grantee, which have a material impact on a number of grants awarded to that beneficiary under similar conditions, the secretariat may suspend the implementation of the grant agreement or payments under all the grants concerned or, where appropriate, recommend to the Programming Committee the termination of the grant agreements concerned with that grantee, having regard to the seriousness of the findings, or any other measure aimed at protecting the interests of the Foundation.

Article 26 – Record-keeping

The secretariat shall establish a file in respect of each grant award procedure in which it shall store all documents mentioned in these Regulations. These documents shall be kept by the administrative entity concerned, for a minimum of ten years and no longer than fifteen years.

Article 27 – Interpretation

1. These Regulations shall be interpreted in good faith, in accordance with the ordinary meaning to be given to the terms used in the Regulations and in the light of its preamble.
2. The interpretation and implementation of the legal framework established by the present Regulations may be supported by guidelines, templates and other supplementary documents provided by the secretariat.

Article 28 – Entry into force

These Regulations shall enter into force three months after their adoption by the Committee of Ministers. They shall repeal and replace the Revised Operational Regulations of the European Youth Foundation adopted by the Committee of Ministers on 11 January 2012.

Appendix 2

Operational Regulations of the European Youth Foundation (2025)

Explanatory report

The drafting of revised Regulations of the European Youth Foundation (hereinafter “the Foundation”) has focused on establishing a modern, strong, yet adaptable framework for the Foundation’s grant-making procedures, fully aligned with the main orientations endorsed by the Joint Council on Youth at its 52nd meeting in October 2024. The revised Regulations have been designed to respond to the evolving needs of young people and youth organisations, while reflecting the strategic priorities and policy directions of the Council of Europe’s youth sector.

In line with the Statute of the European Youth Foundation, the Regulations are designed to uphold key principles and values that support the revitalisation of democracy in Europe. These principles align with the Reykjavík Declaration and its principles for democracy, and are grounded in the Council of Europe’s youth policy standards and best practices.

- Nurturing trust-based relations with international and national non-governmental youth organisations and networks, as well as with other non-governmental structures active in youth work and youth-related fields, relevant to the Council of Europe’s youth policy.
- Supporting the independence of youth organisations, their autonomy of action and voluntary nature of youth activities at the European level.
- Ensuring adaptability to economic and social change, while remaining responsive to the developmental needs of international youth organisations and networks.

From the outset, the main objectives of the revision process of the Foundation’s Regulations were:

- ensuring the alignment of the Regulations with the legal and procedural framework governing the award of grants by Council of Europe entities outside of the youth sector (see in particular Rule No. 1374 of 16 December 2015 on the grant award procedures of the Council of Europe), as well as including key risk-management tools and measures;
- ensuring the alignment of the revised Regulations with internationally recognised standards;
- modernising the Foundation’s tools and processes, by creating a basis for future developments;
- incorporating the evolving needs and specific characteristics of the youth sector.

As outlined in the table of contents, the Regulations are divided into several sections, including a preamble and four core parts (Parts I to IV).

The preamble outlines the core values and guiding principles that underpin the Foundation’s work with young people and reflects the specificities of the youth sector in relation to grant making.

Part I sets out the foundational elements of the Foundation’s regulatory framework and includes the following components:

- definitions and scope: clarifies the key terms used in the Foundation in its granting procedures and defines the scope of the revised Regulations;
- types of grants: describes the various categories of grants provided by the Foundation, including international activities, ad hoc initiatives and structural grants, as well as other types of grants, along with their respective definitions, characteristics and eligibility criteria;
- general principles: establishes the overarching principles governing the grant award procedures.

Parts II, III and IV focus on the operational aspects of the grant award procedures and include detailed provisions on the following elements:

- responsibilities in the grant award procedures: clarifies the roles of various stakeholders involved in the assessment and decision-making process;
- registration of applicants: outlines the steps required for organisations to register in the Foundation’s online grant-management system;

- calls for proposals: describes the procedures for launching calls;
- exclusion, eligibility and award criteria: specifies the criteria applicable to each type of grant;
- grant application and decision procedure: details the steps from submission and receipt to examination and decision making on the grants, including the conditions for direct awards;
- eligible and ineligible costs: defines the categories of costs that may or may not be covered by the Foundation funding;
- grant agreement: outlines the legal framework governing the relationship between the Foundation and the grantee;
- termination and suspension provisions: sets out procedures to be followed in cases where a grant is suspended or terminated;
- fraud, corruption or misconduct: establishes the procedures for addressing allegations of financial or ethical irregularities.

The main adjustments proposed in the revised Regulations can be summarised as follows.

Grant types

The Regulations maintain the existing grant types of the Foundation, which are considered to offer sufficient variety to meet the diverse needs of civil society. These include financial support for short-term or stand-alone youth projects, as well as longer-term projects, international co-operation projects, operational support to youth organisations and networks, as well as to youth initiatives that address emerging and relevant issues affecting young people at the European level, while also incorporating a local dimension. Within the scope of these grant types, the regulations provide greater clarity regarding eligibility requirements and procedural expectations.

Under the revised Regulations, grants can, take different forms: reimbursement of eligible costs actually incurred by the grantee; financing not linked to the actual costs of the relevant operations; lump sums; unit costs; flat-rate financing; or a combination of the above.

Process of calls for proposals

The revised Regulations introduce clear, transparent and accessible procedures. These include the regular publication and broad dissemination of calls for proposals, with comprehensive guidance, key deadlines and submission requirements clearly set out.

Additionally, the assessment procedures and criteria have been further refined to enhance objectivity and consistency. The enquiry and communication procedures with applicants have also been clarified, contributing to greater coherence and transparency across the grant-making process, thereby strengthening accountability towards member states, partners and donors.

Registration of applicants

With regard to the registration of youth organisations and networks, the revised regulations introduce clearer and more streamlined procedures. A “rollover” mechanism has been established to maintain the registration status of eligible youth organisations over time, thereby ensuring their continued compliance with the criteria required to receive a grant from the Foundation.

Submission of proposals

The submission procedures have been streamlined and clarified in the revised Regulations. The new framework allows for different formats of proposals, including multistep processes. This flexible, iterative approach is intended to foster the development of higher-quality youth project proposals and to better support youth organisations in the design and implementation of their projects.

Assessment process and award decision

The revised Regulations have strengthened the decision-making process by introducing specific provisions for a step-by-step process designed to improve transparency. These include clearer communication assessment outcomes, opportunities for dialogue with applicants and established procedures for submitting review requests. Together, these measures aim to provide applicants with a better understanding of how decisions are made by the Foundation’s governing bodies.

Implementation of grants

Regarding the implementation of grants, the revised Regulations strengthen compliance and accountability mechanisms. This includes the possibility of revoking funding decisions and initiating the recovery of funds where there is sufficient evidence or indication of fraudulent conduct or mismanagement. These provisions ensure the integrity of the Foundation's financial operations.

Transversal issues

The revised Regulations also introduce or reinforce provisions addressing key transversal priorities. These include promoting accessibility and inclusion, encouraging environmentally responsible practices and upholding ethical practices. These cross-cutting elements reflect the Council of Europe's and its youth sector's broader policy commitments and values.