



CALL FOR APPLICANTS

Deadline for Applications 3 June 2024, 12 noon (CET).
13th edition of the European Volunteer Capital Competition

As a candidate to be the #EVCapital 2026 your municipality will gain **European-wide visibility** for excellence in policies and programmes that **support volunteers and volunteering**. As a candidate and potential winner, you will be **rewarded with recognition** for your existing practices, and for your ambitious, credible and quality-focused plans for future growth and development in the field of volunteering. In joining the competition, you will play a key role in motivating, inspiring and encouraging other municipalities to improve their **provision of supportive and facilitatory policies and programmes for quality volunteering**.



Once accepted as a candidate municipality, you will **join a unique community of practice** of municipalities (and other levels of local and regional authorities) that have expertise in, and a shared concern for, *strengthening, inspiring and celebrating VOLUNTEERING and SOLIDARITY*, the **European Volunteering Capital Candidates Community (EVCCC)**. In applying to be the European Volunteering Capital 2026 you will be able to **strengthen volunteering** in your area by **connecting present and future local volunteering actions, strategies, policies and programmes to the European Context**.

The application and candidate process will enable you to collaborate more closely with volunteers,

volunteer-involving and volunteer infrastructure organisations in a common cause to strengthen, inspire and celebrate volunteers in your area.

We invite you to step forward into a friendly, uplifting and rewarding process to be the best you can be and go for **European Volunteering Capital 2026**.

What is the purpose of the competition?

- A. **Recognise and reward municipalities** who are doing well to support their volunteers and volunteering and have ambitious, credible and quality-focused plans for future growth and development in the field of volunteering.
- B. **Motivate, inspire and encourage** other municipalities to do better in their provision of supportive and facilitatory policies and programmes for quality volunteering.

The competition aims to strengthen volunteering at the local level and connects present and future local volunteering actions, strategies, policies, and programmes to the European Context. It enables volunteers, volunteer-involving and volunteer infrastructure organisations to collaborate more closely with local policy makers in a common cause to strengthen, inspire and celebrate volunteers in their area. Participation as a candidate requires a **detailed analysis and assessment ('Audit') of volunteer provision** at the local level, therefore helping to **identify strengths and weaknesses of the approaches** taken, as well as acting as a catalyst for improvements. Participation enables stakeholders from different fields and sectors to come together and further **develop their local volunteering policy and practice frameworks and strategies, using European standards as guidelines**. It also assists the development of volunteering and solidarity in Europe more widely as the examples shared serve as inspiration for others all across Europe. Finally joining the competition as a candidate municipality provides the opportunity to join a unique community of practice of municipalities "European Volunteer Capital Candidates Community" (EVCCC) (and other levels of local and regional authorities) that have expertise in, and a shared concern for, strengthening, inspiring and celebrating VOLUNTEERING and SOLIDARITY.

Who is Eligible to apply?

Municipalities of any size from a member state of the Council of Europe.

What is required of the winner?

1. **Organise and fund prestigious opening and closing ceremonies.**
2. **Organise actions** taking place during the year of the awarded title **that will contribute to the growth and development of quality volunteering opportunities** available in the municipality and ensure greater impact of the volunteers on their communities as a legacy of the title.
3. **Lead on an application for an event in EURegionsWeek** during their year as Capital together with other members of the "European Volunteering Capital Candidates Community" (EVCCC), involving candidates, winners, and future candidates for the title with the support of the CEV secretariat.
4. **Maintain close contact with the CEV secretariat** providing timely and suitable information for online and other media in order to strengthen, inspire and celebrate volunteering in their municipality and across Europe.

What are the opportunities available for participant municipalities?

1. **Participate in applying for funds for hosting and sending European Solidarity Corps Volunteers.**
2. **Participate in a study visit for members of the “European Volunteering Capital Candidates Community” (EVCCC) and other interested stakeholders** in order to gain a greater appreciation and understanding of the local volunteering policies and programmes in place in the winning municipality.
3. **Liaise with CEV secretariat to consider possible hosting of a CEV event** during their year as winner or in the following year as part of the legacy actions.
4. **Contribute to, and participate in, CEV events and other activities and opportunities** that become available throughout the year.
5. **Participate in, and organise, other initiatives** in the framework of the “European Volunteering Capital Candidates Community” (EVCCC).

What are the application criteria?

Applicant municipalities are required to **demonstrate their strategies, policies, and programmes in connection to the Blueprint for European Volunteering 2030 and to the CEV Volunteering Policy Statements**. Evidence about their engagement with, and support for, the European Solidarity Corps when the applicant comes from an EU member state is also required. Applicants are also asked to indicate if they are signatories of the [Integrating Cities Charter](#).

Successful applicant municipalities will be announced by CEV as Candidate Municipalities and will be presented with the candidacy certificate in Brussels. Candidates need to indicate in the application form a suggested date and contact details for the responsible person in Brussels for this ceremony. All Candidate Municipalities can become full members of the “European Volunteering Capital Candidates Community” (EVCCC).

Applications consist of:

- **70%:** An online application form with specific questions focussed on **current performance and existing practice** around volunteering (worth 70% of the total score for the written part) and an attachment of maximum four sides of A4 to describe the municipality's “**Strategy for future growth as concerns the access to, and impact of, quality volunteering, and the legacy** of the EV Capital title for volunteers and solidarity locally, nationally and on a European level” (worth 30% of the total score for the written part).
- **30%:** A **video** of maximum of 5 minutes to demonstrate volunteering in the municipality and how it is encouraged and supported & a **physical presentation in Brussels on Tuesday 10th September 2024**. (maximum 10 minutes).

The **video should contribute to demonstrating in a visual way how volunteering policies and programmes are implemented in the municipality**. It should provide complementary information to that provided in the application form and during the physical presentation but at the same time be understandable in isolation having in mind that it will be shared online.

How is the winner decided?

70% allocated score on the **basis of the written application form** and **30%** allocated score on the physical presentation at the CEV Autumn Volunteering Congress and video combined.

The Jury:

50% of the total score: Allocated by the **CEV EV Capital Steering Group**.

50% of the total score: Allocated by the **External Jury** involving representatives nominated by:

1. The Council of Europe.
2. European Commission.
3. European Economic and Social Committee.
4. Committee of the Regions.
5. A Member of the European Parliament.
6. A company member of EVEN.
7. The Mayor of Trento, European Volunteering Capital 2024.

In the event of a tie, the deciding score will lie with the Centre for European Volunteering (CEV) EV Capital Steering Committee. The Jury's decision is final and no correspondence will be entered into by CEV or individual Jury members with candidates in relation to that decision. A short summary of the opinion of the Jury concerning the merits of each candidate municipality will be published following the announcement of the winner on November 29th 2024 at the Trento EV Capital 2024 Closing Ceremony. The precise membership of the Jury will be defined once the candidate municipalities are known. This is in order to avoid conflicts of interests, in particular concerning the countries or regions from where the EP, EESC and CoR representatives are from.

Competition Timeline:

12 February	Open call for applications.
3 June, 12 noon	Deadline for written applications from Applicant Municipalities.
9 June	Candidates announcement on social media.
June/July	Presentation of a certificate of candidacy in Brussels to an appropriate representative from the National and/or Regional representation to the EU or Belgium and signing of the Memorandum of Understanding for EV Capital Candidates.
July/August	Appointment of the Jury.
8 September, 12 noon	Deadline to receive a maximum of 5 minute video.
10 September	Presentation of Candidatures as part of the CEV Volunteering Congress Maximum 10 minutes per candidate.
29 November	Announcement of the European Volunteering Capital 2026 Winner in Trento.

How to Apply:

The link to the official online application form is found at the end of this document. For your convenience, the questions can be accessed [here](#). **Videos are to be submitted before noon on 8 September (via suitable file sharing App) and they will be published on receipt.**

Deadline for online application: 3 June 2024, 12 noon (CET)

The **application form needs to be completed in English** providing information on **existing** volunteering policy and practice in your municipality. The sections in the application form reflect the [BEV2030](#) and other criteria as mentioned above:

Independent and inclusive engagement: Policymakers should protect and support the power of volunteering as a transformative force in a decade of action towards strengthening the European values, achieving the SDGs and playing a critical role in the COVID-19 recovery process. Volunteers should be properly supported in making a vital contribution to the Conference on the Future of Europe and ensuring resilient and sustainable communities through expressions of European Values that have a positive impact on future generations.

New volunteers and methods: In order to respond to the growing number of citizens willing to offer their time and expertise as volunteers and address their changing needs, the access to volunteer involvement needs to be improved and increased in scope and quality. The potential for volunteer engagement of people of all ages and backgrounds should be explored and implemented within innovative and flexible frameworks unlocking new possibilities and quality principles for volunteering must remain central to all developments, as must the general trends impacting on all civil society. Volunteering should not replace paid employment and the balance of roles and responsibility between state actors and those of volunteer organisations around issues of unemployment and employability rates should be carefully considered. The potential of employee volunteering should be further exploited and developed.

Empowerment: Thriving communities at the local level are often characterised by strong interpersonal connections, frequently established in the frame of volunteer-based and volunteer-led initiatives. If needs are to be continued to be met, discrimination & marginalisation combatted, and human rights defended, more citizens from diverse realities and backgrounds will need to be empowered and supported for active engagement as volunteers to support themselves and others.

Appreciation of contribution: Volunteers, volunteer-involving and volunteer infrastructure organisations continue to realise their potential as a force for the common good. During the COVID19 crisis a high number of citizens offered their time and expertise as volunteers but it was not always possible to allocate roles. A more holistic approach to volunteering policy with a cross-cutting approach would lead to better matching of supply and demand.

Resources For More Value: It should be ensured that organisations are in a more secure position to contribute effectively to recovery processes and future resilience. It should be understood that the compassion, altruism, generosity and solidarity that underpins volunteering takes place in context, and that context should be an enabling one.

You are encouraged to familiarise yourself with the Blueprint for European Volunteering 2030 as it will assist in making your application. You are also encouraged to liaise with relevant stakeholders in preparing your application such as Volunteer Centres, volunteer organisations and businesses organising employee volunteering opportunities. The BEV2030 document in various languages is available on the CEV website [here](#). If the language needed is not there please enquire with the CEV office. The [CEV Policy Statements](#) are also available.

Please clearly distinguish between support and /or situations that exist only in your municipality or when it is the case nationally or regionally.

NB: Only information provided directly in the form, the maximum four sides of A4 attachment as requested, the video and the physical presentation, will be taken into account for the initial assessment by the Jury. Other information provided via hyperlinks or other email attachments will not be considered for the purpose of the application. The Jury reserves the right to contact candidates with follow up questions as deemed necessary.

Good to know:

- The Candidate municipalities will be required to sign a **Memorandum of Understanding** with CEV reflecting the agreed framework for cooperation and adherence to communication and visibility guidelines, in particular: the use of the European Volunteering Capital logo that CEV will provide to the winning municipality; and due recognition be given to the co-financers for the competition, namely the Centre for European Volunteering (CEV), the EU CERV Programme and any other future co-financing entity.
- CEV is not liable for any damage, loss or disappointment suffered by applicant and/or candidate municipalities or any connected individuals for taking part, or not being able to take part, in this competition.
- In the event of unforeseen circumstances, CEV may alter, amend or cancel the competition without prior notice.
- Municipalities that have been awarded the title of “European Volunteer Capital” cannot apply for the next 5 years after having received this recognition.
- CEV reserves the right to change these terms at any time.

Submission: Online, followed by confirmation email to be sent to gabriella.civico@cev.be

Additional requirements:

1. **Video:** a link to the 5 minutes video on how volunteering policies and programmes are implemented in the municipality to be sent to gabriella.civico@cev.be (before noon **8 September 2024**).
2. **Scanned signature** of the legal representative attached to the form.
3. **Scan of the official stamp** of the municipality (where available) attached to the form.
4. **Proof of payment:** An application fee of EUR 600 should be paid by every candidate municipality and the proof of payment should be attached to the form. Details are:

Please use the reference: *name of Municipality* V. Capital Application

Account Holder: "CEV, Avenue des Arts 7 / 8 1210, Bruxelles, Belgium

Bank: BNP Paribas Fortis

Account Number IBAN: BE83210007455615

SWIFT: GEBABEBB

European Volunteering Capital 2026 Competition OFFICIAL ONLINE FORM

Jury: For an up to date list of jury members please follow the link:
<https://www.europeanvolunteercentre.org/ev-capital>.

Candidates Announcement: Candidate municipalities will be announced in June 2024.

Decision: Jury decision is final and will be announced in November 2024.

Useful Resources:

- [Vote Volunteer Vision](#)
- [Blueprint for European Volunteering 2030](#)
- [Policy Agenda for Volunteering in Europe \(PAVE\)](#)
- The [Volunteering Infrastructure in Europe](#);
- The ["Helping Hands" EYV2011, 5 Year Policy Review detailing the 5R policy priorities](#);
- The [Developing European Volunteering Strategies \(DEVS\) Report](#).
- The [CEV Policy Statements](#).

Questions: gabriella.civico@cev.be