



MEDIA BACKGROUND

European Capitals of Inclusion and Diversity Award 2023

What is the European Capitals of Inclusion and Diversity Award?

The competition is the second edition of the European Capitals of Inclusion and Diversity Award, part of the European Commission's [European Diversity Month initiative](#). Launched in 2022, the Award recognises and rewards local authorities across the EU that actively promote inclusion and diversity and help to build a fairer Europe.

The competition is a chance for cities, towns, or regions to highlight policies and initiatives that create more diverse and inclusive spaces for their citizens. These initiatives may have already been implemented or be in the process of being implemented.

Why will the European Commission designate 'European Capitals of Inclusion and Diversity'?

Equality and non-discrimination are core values and fundamental rights in the EU, enshrined in its Treaties and the EU [Charter of Fundamental Rights](#).

Nevertheless, discrimination persists; [according to recent surveys](#) over 1 in 2 Europeans (59%) believe that discrimination based on one's ethnic origin is widespread. One in three people of African descent says they have experienced racist harassment in the last five years. Also, in a [2019 survey](#) conducted by the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights, discrimination against LGBTIQ people continues throughout the EU, with 43% of LGBTIQ people declaring they felt discriminated against in 2019.

The Covid-19 pandemic has also widened the gender pay gap. After the pandemic, women earned on average 16 % less than men across the EU, compared to an average of 14% gap in 2019, as indicated by a [2022 research](#) by the European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions.

There are also many obstacles faced by people with disabilities when accessing essential services, healthcare, education, employment, and political life. And Roma people continue to face discrimination, racism, and social exclusion. A FRA report published in 2021 shows that more than 25% of Roma feel they have been discriminated against in their daily life (employment or educational opportunities, for example).

The European Capitals of Inclusion and Diversity Award is part of the European Commission's ongoing efforts to [promote equality](#) and fight against discrimination. The Award recognises local authorities' efforts to build more inclusive societies so that all EU citizens can reach their potential and no one is left behind.

More information on EU Action on Equality:

- [EU anti-racism action plan 2020-2025](#)
- [LGBTIQ equality strategy 2020-2025](#)
- [Gender equality strategy 2020-2025](#)
- [Strategy for the rights of persons with disabilities 2021-2030](#)
- [EU Roma strategic framework for equality, inclusion and participation for 2020-2030](#)
- [EU Strategy on combating antisemitism and fostering Jewish life \(2021-2030\)](#)

Who were the 2022 Award winners?

Last year, several local authorities across the European Union won the Gold, Silver, and Bronze Awards.

- **The City of Cologne** (Germany) won the Gold Award in the category of local authorities with more than 50,000 inhabitants
- **Koprivnica** (Croatia) won the Gold Award in the category of local authorities with less than 50,000 inhabitants
- **Andalusia** (Spain) won the Gold Award in the Special Award category for Roma inclusion.

Discover the Silver and Bronze Award winners [here](#).

Who can apply?

The Award is open to local authorities from EU-27 that actively practice inclusion policies that challenge sex, age, disability, LGBTIQ identity, religion, and ethnic/racial origin discrimination.

The applicant must be an administrative unit governed by a city council or a democratically elected governmental body; it is open to towns, cities, and regions within the EU.

Are there special Award categories?

There are two categories for 2023: local authorities with less than 50,000 inhabitants and those with more than 50,000 inhabitants. There is also a special prize for LGBTIQ inclusion in 2023.

What types of diversity initiatives is the Award planning to recognise?

The Award recognises diversity and inclusion initiatives tackling all [discrimination grounds](#) (sex, racial or ethnic origin, religion or belief, disability, age, or sexual orientation) and intersectionality.

How will the winners be selected?

Applications for the Awards will be subject to an eligibility check and pre-assessment by independent experts. A European Jury will make the final selection in the two general categories and the Special Award for LGBTIQ inclusion.

Who will evaluate Award entries?

The European Commission will appoint independent experts for the pre-assessment phase and European Jury members for the final selection phase. The European Jury will comprise at least five members representing European non-governmental organisations.

The European Jury for the LGBTIQ Special Award will include at least five people representing European non-governmental organisations and other relevant national and European stakeholders.

When and where will the Award ceremony take place?

A ceremony announcing the award winners will take place in Brussels on 27 April 2023. Commissioner for Equality, Helena Dalli will host the high-level event. It will bring together mayors, policymakers, city officials and stakeholder organisations representatives.

How can I attend the prize-giving ceremony (online or in-person)?

Please contact our media team, who will assist you (media@eudiversity2023.eu).

Can interviews be arranged with the Award winners or European Commission representatives?

Yes, arranging interviews is possible. Please write to our media team, who will work with you to facilitate quotes or interview requests (media@eudiversity2023.eu).

Where can I find more information?

Visit the European Capitals of Inclusion and Diversity Award website: www.eudiversity2023.eu

More information will be added to the Media toolkit in the lead up to the event. Get in touch with our media team to receive future press releases and related information: media@eudiversity2023.eu

You can also receive monthly updates by [signing up](#) for our newsletter.