



# culture of solidarity fund

**Thematic Call**

**Phase I - March 2021**

*We invite you to submit your expression of interest to apply to a thematic Culture of Solidarity call to strengthen a European public space.*

*We are looking for projects that contribute to inclusive and democratic European media platforms, networks and infrastructure during the Corona infodemic.*

# Culture of solidarity in times of an infodemic

The societal, political and economic crises exacerbated by the pandemic have been a painful reminder of how fragile solidarity among Europeans is. Despite recurring references to Europe's 'historical' culture of solidarity, most political leaders show little interest in societal developments beyond their own country's borders.

If the media facilitates public debate, it is rarely beyond national perspectives. Often, different voices and perspectives of marginalised groups are not sufficiently represented. Fake news and disinformation about Covid-19, preventive measures or vaccines, spread as rapidly as the virus itself accelerated by profit-driven social media algorithms.

All this has become apparent since the outbreak of the Corona virus a year ago; Europe is not only struck by the pandemic but also by an infodemic.

Lockdowns have moved virtually every aspect of our lives - private, professional and civic - online. But since online spaces are controlled by private interests and traditional media is giving us mostly national perspectives, the inhabitants of Europe lack the space to debate a shared European interest, based on solid facts and a culture of care.

If Europe is to come out of this crisis in peace and solidarity, we need spaces where all its inhabitants, regardless of their economic, social, cultural or national backgrounds, can connect, share ideas, debate opinions and produce shared culture. Media outlets and digital infrastructures that are based on shared public values are vital elements for such an inclusive space.

## Culture of Solidarity Fund 2021

In 2020 the Culture of Solidarity Fund was launched as a rapid response tool to support cross-border cultural initiatives of solidarity in times of uncertainty and lockdown. Nearly a year later, solidarity remains a major cultural challenge, particularly in the field of media:

Europe needs a shared public space where a culture of solidarity can be practiced. It is there where the ongoing infodemic can be combated. Please visit [our website](#) to read more about the European Cultural Foundation's work on the development of a European public space.

## What are we looking for?

This call supports **cross-border collaborative initiatives that reinforce a European Culture of Solidarity by contributing to open and democratic European digital and other media spaces.**

The Fund is open to individuals, collectives and organisations and supports initiatives that produce tangible results as well as have the potential of a sustainable impact and that fall into one or more of the following categories:

- » **Cross-border media collaborations** that address societal issues across Europe that have become more imminent as a direct or indirect consequence of the pandemic.
- » **Development of digital tools** that are based on **shared public values** and that have the potential to contribute to a digital **European public infrastructure.**
- » **Storytelling for increased public attention and policy awareness** regarding the needs and opportunities for open and democratic European digital and other media spaces.

## What do we offer?

The European Cultural Foundation has a large network of individuals and organisations that care about solidarity in Europe. Expressing your interest to apply for this call is **an opportunity to become part of that family** as we expand your and **our international network.**

Candidates selected in Phase I (March - April 2021) to submit their project proposals in Phase II (April - May 2021) will also be connected to each other and to other relevant stakeholders of the foundation. Beyond the opportunity to expand networks, invited **candidates will be offered a platform and resource to develop their idea further** and improve their project proposal's relevance to the call.

In Phase II, shortlisted and invited candidates may apply for **a grant up to a maximum of €40.000** per project. With a project term of up to 18 months, grants can be used for financing a wide range of activities ranging from seed money for entirely new initiatives to (co-)funding for scaling up already existing ideas to a European level.

Although co-funding is not a prerequisite for funding, a balanced budget with diversified resources can significantly improve the project's feasibility. Grants can cover production-, rental costs, online co-working and communication tools. They can also be used to cover expert fees, staff- and operational costs. However, it is highly recommended that these do not exceed 80% of the total requested budget unless justifiable.

## How does it work?

### Phase I - Express your interest!

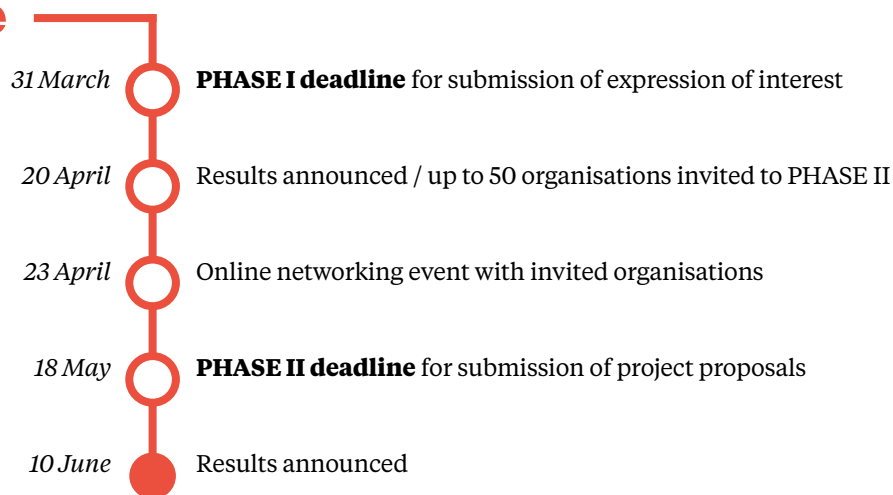
At this stage applicants are invited to submit their expressions of interest by completing a short form answering a few general questions on the applicant and on the project they would like to apply with. Although the call ultimately looks to support cross-border collaborations, in this first phase, we also welcome submissions by local initiatives with European relevance that would like to use the platform offered via this call to establish partnerships and further develop the cross-border element of their project.

### Phase II - Call for Proposals *by invitation only*

After an internal assessment, up to 50 organisations will be shortlisted and invited to submit their project proposals. Guidelines and selection criteria will be announced in the invitation. **The invited applicants** are encouraged to **further develop their project**, to prepare a **detailed budget** and timeline and to **develop partnerships** across Europe. In support of this exercise, applicants will be brought into contact with one another and other relevant stakeholders in an online networking event.

**The deadline for submitting the expressions of interest is Wednesday 31 March 2021 at 13:00 CET.**

## Timeline



## Overall eligibility criteria

- » Expressions of interest must be submitted in English. Additional video materials included in the application may be in any language, preferably but not mandatorily with English subtitles;
- » Applicants must be above 18 years old;
- » Applicants can represent the private, public or civic sector;
- » The call is open to individuals (such as journalists, activists, developers), collectives (including volunteer groups and networks) and any legal form of organisations (NGOs, public institutions, private enterprises, cooperatives) who operate in the media or digital sector or any other professional fields and sectors of society, including education and academia, health and social care, environmental, human rights, social entrepreneurship, rural development, etc.
- » Applicants can be based anywhere in the world, but their proposal must contribute to the overall focus of the call;
- » We do not accept proposals submitted by political parties. Our work is strictly non-partisan.

**To submit your expression of interest, please fill in the online form here:**

**[culturalfoundation.eu/initiatives/culture-of-solidarity-fund](https://culturalfoundation.eu/initiatives/culture-of-solidarity-fund)**

The form must be completed online and cannot be saved during the inputting process. For this reason, we provide a WORD template with the main questions in the application form. We strongly recommend you to prepare your application in advance then cut and paste the content into the online form.

*Foundations that would like to collaborate on this call and serve the community, please reach out to us. We would be happy to engage in a conversation about the possibilities.*