



Funded by
the European Union



erim
Equal Rights
& Independent
Media

Call for Applications for Cultural Events on Key Social and Democratic Issues

ERIM (Equal Rights & Independent Media), a French-based organisation, is launching a call for proposals for civil society organisations (CSOs), initiatives, collectives, and networks in **Armenia** to organise cultural events addressing key social and democratic issues. The supported projects must promote inclusive and democratic societies, strengthen public understanding of human rights and civic engagement, and highlight the essential role of civil society actors as defenders of democracy. Proposed events should adopt innovative and accessible cultural formats that reach broad audiences, particularly youth and vulnerable groups, and contribute to fostering an enabling environment for civil society.

CONTEXT AND OBJECTIVE

The present call for application is launched by ERIM within the framework of Democracy in Eastern Partnership (DEAP) project, funded by the European Union.

ERIM (Equal Rights and Independent Media) is a not-for-profit organisation based in Lyon, France. Our mission is to promote human rights, strengthen independent media and civil society, develop and maintain democratic, fair and sustainable societies where people enjoy equal rights, have access to independent information and are empowered to build the society they want to live in. ERIM's approach emphasises partnerships with local development organisations to bring about change through training, partnerships, education, research and sub-granting schemes.

- **Democracy in Eastern Partnership (DEAP)** project aims to promote inclusive, resilient and democratic societies in the Eastern Partnership region by strengthening the capacities of civil society and grassroots organisations, supporting research and policy analysis, and organising cultural and networking events to promote the work of human rights defenders. It is funded by the European Union and implemented by ERIM.

Objectives:

This call aims to support the organisation of cultural events that reinforce the role of civil society in advancing democratic values and human rights in **Armenia**. These events should address democratic issues through a cultural angle and promote positive narratives around civil society actors as agents of change

Specifically, the call aims to:

- Enhance the enabling environment in which civil society organisations operate.
- Increase public awareness of democratic values, human rights and civic engagement.
- Strengthen constructive dialogue between civil society and broader communities.
- Promote positive public narratives around civil society as a driver of democratic change.

SCOPE OF SUPPORTED PROJECTS

This call will support the implementation of innovative cultural events that address key social and democratic issues and actively contribute to strengthening the enabling environment for civil society.

Supported projects are expected to:

- Promote democratic values, human rights, rule of law, civic participation, inclusion, accountability, and pluralism.
- Highlight the role and contribution of civil society actors in defending democratic principles and responding to social challenges.
- Reach broad and diverse audiences, with particular attention to women, youth, vulnerable groups, LGBTQIA+ community, and communities outside capital cities.
- Encourage inclusive participation and safe spaces for discussion, debate and exchange.

Thematic Focus:

Applicants are encouraged to demonstrate how their proposed events respond to current local or regional challenges and how they contribute to positive narratives around civil society as a driver of democratic change.

Events may address a wide range of democratic and social issues, including but not limited to:

- Protection of civic space
- Human rights and fundamental freedoms
- LGBTQIA+ rights
- Gender equality and women rights
- Inclusion of marginalized groups
- Media freedom and independent journalism
- Democratic participation and accountability

Nature of Activities:

Proposals should focus on the organisation of 1 to 5 cultural events that use creative and participatory approaches to engage the public. Events should move beyond traditional conference formats and instead adopt interactive, visually engaging and audience-oriented approaches.

Activities may include, but are not limited to:

- Art exhibitions, photography projects, or public installations
- Film festivals, screenings, and moderated debates
- Media and Information Literacy events
- Public lectures, history and civic education classes
- Hackathons or innovation labs linked to the thematic focus of this call
- Fairs or civic festivals
- Diversity and equality celebrations
- Women's, youth or community clubs
- Cultural forums promoting one of the thematic focus of the call

GRANT SIZE and DURATION

- **Maximum grant amount:** 24 000 EUR
- **Maximum duration:** Up to 9 months
- **Start date:** We expect to finalize the contracting process at the end of April 2026 or in early May 2026, so that implementation can begin during that period.

The final grant amount, contract conditions and payment schedule will be agreed between ERIM and the selected organisations.

ELIGIBILITY

Applications will first be screened against the minimum eligibility criteria below. Only applications meeting all minimum requirements will proceed to further assessment.

Eligibility of the Applicant

To be eligible under this call, applicants must:

- Be a civil society organisation (CSO), initiative, collective, network, grassroots, women rights, media, or LGBTQIA+ rights organisation operating in **Armenia**.
- Be registered in **Armenia**.
- Be non-profit in nature.
- Have proven experience in organising cultural events, advocacy initiatives, or public engagement activities relevant to democratic values, human rights, and civic participation.
- Have a mission, statutes and activities consistent with democratic principles, human rights, inclusion, pluralism and non-discrimination.
- Submit a complete application in line with the requirements of this call and within the specified deadline. Late submissions won't be accepted.

The following are not eligible:

- Political parties or party-affiliated organisations
- For-profit entities
- Religious organisations
- Public Institutions

Minimum Eligibility Criteria

In addition to formal eligibility, applicants must demonstrate adequate operational and financial capacity to implement the proposed project. Therefore, applicants must:

- Have been active for at least two years in fields relevant to democracy, human rights, civic engagement, social inclusion, media freedom, or related areas.
- Demonstrate a track record of successfully implementing projects or public events of comparable scale or complexity.
- Possess sufficient human resources and internal management structures to ensure sound implementation, monitoring, and reporting of the proposed activities.
- Demonstrate financial management capacity, including the ability to manage grant funds transparently and maintain appropriate financial documentation.
- Be able to comply with contractual, visibility, monitoring and reporting requirements associated with EU-funded projects.

Applications that fail to meet the minimum eligibility criteria outlined above will not be considered for further evaluation.

SELECTION CRITERIA

Only applications that meet minimum eligibility criteria will proceed to qualitative evaluation. Eligible applications will be assessed and ranked by the Selection Committee based on the criteria outlined below, considering the overall quality, strategic relevance, thematic diversity, and balanced geographical coverage of the proposals.

Relevance and Strategic Alignment

- Clear alignment of the proposed project with the objectives of the call.
- Strong linkage between the proposed cultural events and the promotion of democratic values, human rights, civic participation, and inclusive societies.
- Clear contextual understanding, with coherent problem analysis and justified intervention .

Quality and feasibility of the proposed project

- Innovative and engaging cultural approach to addressing democratic issues.
- Clarity and coherence of the concept, methodology, and implementation plan.
- Feasibility of the proposed activities within the proposed timeframe and budget.
- Realistic and measurable expected results.
- Potential for continuity of impact beyond the duration of the grant.

Outreach, Inclusion and Communication

- Capacity to reach broad and diverse audiences, particularly youth and vulnerable or underrepresented groups.
- Strong and comprehensive communication and media strategy.
- Geographical outreach beyond capital cities, where relevant.
- Measures to ensure inclusive participation and safe spaces for dialogue.

Synergies, collaboration, and added value

- Relevant partnerships that strengthen implementation, especially where activities are implemented outside the applicant's main area of operation.
- Complementarity with existing civic initiatives or networks.
- Contribution to regional dialogue and exchange, where applicable.

Organisational and Financial Soundness

While minimum operational and financial capacity is assessed at the eligibility stage, the Selection Committee will further consider:

- The coherence between the proposed activities and the applicant's prior experience and expertise.
- The realism and cost-effectiveness of the requested budget.

SELECTION PROCESS

Eligible applications will undergo qualitative evaluation by a Selection Committee. The criteria described above provide guidance on the aspects considered during the assessment. For scoring purposes, they will be grouped into five evaluation blocks:

- (1) Relevance and strategic alignment,
- (2) Quality and feasibility of the proposed project,
- (3) Outreach, inclusion and communication,
- (4) Synergies, collaboration, and added value
- (5) Organisational and financial soundness.

Each block will be scored on a scale from 0 to 5 and combined into an overall score.

ELIGIBLE AND NON-ELIGIBLE COSTS

Eligible Costs

Eligible costs are those that are:

- Directly related to the preparation, organisation and implementation of the approved cultural events.
- Incurred during the implementation period defined in the grant agreement.
- Identifiable and verifiable.

These may include, but are not limited to:

- Fees or honoraria for experts, facilitators, moderators, artists, speakers or consultants directly involved in the activities.
- Travel costs for staff, experts or participants where justified.
- Accommodation and subsistence costs related to the implementation of the events.
- Rental of venues and technical equipment, like audio-visual equipment and interpretation services.
- Materials and supplies necessary for the events.
- Design and production of communication materials, like photography, video production, Social media promotion, and printed material (if necessary).
- Targeted advertisement and outreach activities.
- Administrative costs directly attributable to the project and proportionate to its implementation.
- Staff costs directly linked to the organisation of the events.
- Other costs directly related to project implementation.

All proposed costs must be realistic, justified and proportionate to the scale of the proposed activities.

Non-Eligible Costs

The following costs are not eligible for funding:

- Core or structural operating costs of the organisation not directly linked to the project.
- Salaries of staff not involved in the implementation of the project.
- Equipment or software purchases, unless clearly justified as essential for the project and proportionate to the grant amount.
- Costs already covered by other funding sources.
- Expenses not included in the approved budget.
- Costs incurred before the signature of the grant agreement.
- Purchase of real estate or major capital investments.
- Expenses related to the preparation of the application.
- Debts and debt service charges.
- Any costs not directly connected to the approved activities.

ERIM reserves the right to request clarification or adjustment of budget lines during the contracting phase to ensure compliance with funding rules and financial soundness.

APPLICATION PROCESS

The application package must include:

1. Application Form
2. Budget Form (provisional budget, to be discussed and agreed with selected applicants during the contracting process)

Applications must be submitted in **English** to the email address: deap.team@protonmail.com
Please indicate in the email subject line: *“Application – Cultural Events (Armenia)”*.
Applications should be submitted using the Application Form in Word and budget in Excel formats.

Proposals must be submitted online by **April 10, 2026 at 18:00 CET**.

We will collect questions until 23 March 2026 and will prepare and share the responses thereafter.
If you would like to submit a question or receive the compiled answers, please use this form ([Link](#)).