

Rules of the DiscoverEU contest

1. Description

DiscoverEU is an initiative of the European Union based on a proposal from the European Parliament, which aims at offering young people aged 18 years old a travel experience that will enable them to take advantage of the freedom of movement in the European Union, discover the diversity of European regions, enjoy its cultural richness, connect with people from all over the continent and ultimately discover themselves.

Under this initiative, the European Commission is going to select at the end of June 2018 around 15.000 enthusiastic young people aged 18 years old and provide them with free travel tickets to travel across the EU during the summer of 2018.

Participants will, as a general rule, travel by rail. The scenery from European trains gives an ever-changing, endlessly entertaining variety of towns, countryside and landscapes that can promote discovery and better understanding of Europe, its citizens and cultures.

However, in order to ensure a wide access across the continent, DiscoverEU will offer, when travel by rail is not available, alternative modes of transport such as buses or ferries. In exceptional cases, and when no other transport means are available, travel by plane will be permitted. This will ensure that young people living in remote areas or on islands also have a chance to take part in this initiative.

2. Eligible applicants

Eligible applicants are young people who fulfil the following criteria:

- are 18 years old on 1 July 2018, i.e. those young people born between 2 July 1999 (included) and 1 July 2000 (included);
- have the nationality of one of the 28 Member States of the European Union;
- fill in the correct ID or passport number on the online application form;
- plan to start their journey in one of the EU 28 Member States;
- plan to start their travel between 9 July 2018 and 30 September 2018 inclusive;
- plan to travel between 1 day and up to 30 days inclusive;
- plan to travel to at least 1 and up to 4 foreign country destinations within the European Union;
- are motivated to become DiscoverEU Ambassadors, implying that they should report back on their travel experiences through social media and other online community tools or by giving a presentation at their school or local community.

Any applicant not fulfilling the eligibility criteria will not be able to complete the application process and will not be taken into consideration in the award decision.

3. Application procedure

The application round to the DiscoverEU initiative is open from Tuesday 12 June 2018 12:00 (CET) until Tuesday 26 June 2018 12:00 (CET) through a specific online application form on the [European Youth Portal](#). It will not be possible to submit any applications after the deadline:

1. The applicants will first have to provide a valid email address. Once that is done, they will receive an automatic email from the European Youth Portal in order to verify if the email

address exists. This verification is needed given that communication with the applicants will happen by email.

2. After the validation of their email address, young people can fill in the application form. First, they must provide their personal data (i.e. first name, last name, email address, phone number, gender, birth date, ID number, nationality, etc.). Then they must give more details about the trip they are planning to make (i.e. when they plan to start their journey, their preferred country to visit, how many countries they want to visit and how many times they travelled in the last 12 months). The information on their trip is not binding and applicants selected are allowed to change it at the moment of the booking.

Young people with reduced mobility and/or special needs will have the possibility to indicate their needs.

Young people who do not fulfil the eligibility criteria will not be allowed to continue with the next step of the application process.

3. Once they have filled in their personal data and desired trip info, all applicants will need to participate and complete a quiz. They will need to answer 5 quiz questions linked to the *2018 European Year of Cultural Heritage*, *European Union initiatives targeting young people* and the *European Parliament elections*. Finally, they will need to answer a subsidiary question on the interest that this initiative would generate among young people. The correct replies to the quiz and the subsidiary question will allow the European Commission to rank the applicants in case there are too many applications as opposed to the available budget.
4. All applicants will receive a confirmation email through the European Youth Portal once they have submitted their application. This confirmation email will inform them that their application has been registered and also inform them about the time table for the communication of the award decision.

Please note that everyone can only apply once, the first application registered in the European Youth Portal will be the only one to be considered for selection and any other application from the same applicant (individually or in a group) will be blocked. A check will be done based on the personal data provided.

Once the participants are selected, an external contractor hired by the European Commission will be responsible for arranging the travel tickets. The external contractor will request a copy of the ID or passport and double-check if the information on the age and nationality as written on the ID or passport matches the information provided in the online application form. If the information does not match and if the applicant has made a false declaration, then the applicant will be excluded from the contest.

Young people can either apply as an individual or as a group of maximum 5 persons.

In case of a group application, a group leader must be appointed on the group's behalf. The group leader will fill in the application form and respond to the quiz and the subsidiary question. S/he will receive a code in the confirmation email when submitting the application. S/he should then communicate this code to the group members in order to allow their registration. Based on the code provided by the group leader, the remaining group members will then have to register online, and fill in their personal data.

A group application will be assessed as one single application. Please note that only those group members who have filled in the application form using the code provided by the group leader will be taken into consideration for the selection. Group members shall not register individually. The group leader will also be the single point of contact with the European Commission and the external contractor designated that will arrange the booking of the travel passes.

Groups can be composed of persons from different nationalities living in different places but the starting point of the departure of the travel shall be the same for all the members of the group.

Multiple registrations in terms of groups will also be forbidden, the first application as a group will be considered. In addition, as mentioned above, individuals applying in differently composed groups will also be excluded. No one is allowed to apply more than once. The first application registered in the European Youth Portal is the one to be considered for selection. The data will automatically be checked at submission stage and when the list of selected participants is provided to the contractor.

Each individual and each group leader will receive a code when they have submitted the application form. This code will also be used for publishing the list of selected participants and the reserve list on the European Youth Portal.

4. Selection process and the award criteria

There is a quota of travel tickets set for each EU Member State. The allocation of the travel tickets is based on the share of the EU Member States' population compared to the overall population of the European Union. The number of travel tickets available per EU Member State for an estimated allocation of 15,000 tickets is indicated in Annex 1.

Selection will be carried out based on the nationality indicated by the applicant in the registration form. In case there are less applicants than the fixed quotas for certain countries, the remaining tickets will be distributed among the countries where there are more applicants than the fixed quotas.

The nationality of the group leader will determine the nationality to be taken into consideration for the quota calculation. If a group comes last in the list of selected participants per nationality and the quota for that nationality is already reached, the whole group will be nevertheless selected.

The applicants will first have to pass the eligibility criteria check as mentioned under point 3. Please note that this will automatically be assessed during the application, and the data provided will be double-checked by the external contractor designated by the European Commission to provide the participants with the travel tickets.

If all eligibility criteria are fulfilled, the applicants will then have to fulfil the award criteria, which are the replies to the 5 quiz questions and the subsidiary question. In case of groups, it is only the group leader who will fill in the 5 quiz questions and the subsidiary question.

The participants will first be ranked according to the correct replies to the quiz questions, and then according to the reply to the subsidiary question.

After the closure of the application period, the results will be extracted from the European Youth Portal and sent to the members of the evaluation committee for final assessment.

If there are applications (individual or groups) with equal rankings and the number of those applications is higher than the quota foreseen for the concerned nationality, then the European

Commission will apply the “first come first served” principle. This implies that those of the ex aequo applicants who first completed the quiz and the subsidiary question during the application period will be selected first.

5. Evaluation Committee

An evaluation committee composed of European Commission officials will meet tentatively on 27 June 2018. They will look at the selection results on the basis of the award criteria set out above. They will assess and decide on the final ranking of the selected participants who will be awarded the travel tickets following the results of the quiz and the subsidiary question as well as the quota per nationality. They will assess and decide on the reserve list of the non-selected lower ranked participants.

Based on the assessment of the evaluation committee, the responsible authorising officer in the European Commission will then take the award decision. In the award decision, the authorising officer in the European Commission will announce the total amount of travel tickets awarded, the total budget that will be allocated to the travel tickets, the list of the selected participants to whom the travel tickets will be awarded, and the list of applicants who will be put on the reserve list and who might benefit if there are still funds available or when selected participants decline the travel ticket.

6. Notification of results

Between 28 June 2018 and 6 July 2018, all applicants will receive a notification from the European Youth Portal via email stating whether:

- they have been selected for travelling ('selected participants')
- they have not been selected and have been put on a reserve list

Once the selected participants have been notified, the list of those selected for travelling will be sent to the external contractor designated by the European Commission who will take care of the travel bookings. Further communication will then be established between this external contractor and the selected participants. More information can be found under point 8.

The list of the codes of the selected participants and the reserve list will be published on the European Youth Portal. In order to comply with the protection of personal data as set out in the Regulation (EC) No 45/2001, only the codes that the applicants received when submitting the application on the European Youth Portal will be announced on the website. Based on those codes, the applicants can verify on the European Youth Portal whether they are selected or not.

7. Reserve list

All non-selected applicants will be placed on a reserve list in descending order of their ranking (i.e. replies to the quiz and subsidiary question). If the value of the tickets awarded to the selected participants is lower than the maximum value envisaged under this initiative, the European Commission may award tickets to applicants placed on the reserve list up to the complete use of the available funds. For this purpose, travel bookings and budget consumption will be reviewed on a monthly basis.

Inclusion in the reserve list does not create any entitlement vis-à-vis the European Commission and does not guarantee that the participants will be selected for travelling at a later stage under this initiative.

8. Booking of travel tickets and dates for travelling

Trips can include travels from 1 to 4 foreign country destinations in the EU. One return journey from and to the country of departure will be included in the travel ticket. Young people can travel between 1 day and up to 30 days inclusive. The travel period should start between 9 July 2018 and 30 September 2018.

Travel tickets for the selected participants will exclusively be booked, purchased and delivered by the external contractor designated by the European Commission. Selected participants should not book under any circumstances their tickets themselves nor via any other travel agency, as tickets purchased separately, shall not be reimbursed.

The external contractor designated by the European Commission will contact the selected participants and provide them access to an online booking form which they will need to fill in, in order to receive their travel tickets.

A derogation regarding the travelling period requirement may be applied for young people living in countries which have specific legal constraints (e.g. compulsory civil service). They could be allowed to travel within 6 months after the termination of this specific legal impediment, to be assessed on a case by case basis by the European Commission.

9. Timetable

Opening Date of registration	12 June 2018 (12:00 CET)
Closing Date of registration	26 June 2018 (12:00 CET)
Evaluation Committee	tentatively on 27 June 2018
Notification of Award Decision	tentatively 29 June 2018 – 6 July 2018
First Departure Date	9 July 2018
Last Departure Date	30 September 2018

10. Transportation means

The selected participants will, as a basic rule, travel by rail. Ferries and buses are also allowed as alternatives to ensure a wide access across the continent. Travel will be in 2nd class.

Only in special cases, the option of travelling by plane may be allowed. This is the case for those young people residing:

- 1) In the *nine outermost regions* (i.e. Guadeloupe, French Guiana, Martinique, la Réunion, Mayotte, Saint-Martin, Madeira, Azores and Canary Islands);
- 2) In countries/regions which are *not accessible by the previous mentioned transportation means* (rail networks, ferry and buses);
- 3) When young people have to travel *more than 18 hours* via land or sea transport before crossing the border of the country of departure.

Only their inbound and outbound trip can be a flight, afterwards they are required to travel by rail and they fall under the basic rule.

Young people from the outermost regions can choose any destination matching the set requirements (except other outermost regions), but no participant can travel to any outermost regions under this initiative.

Selected participants who are either resident in Cyprus or Malta, or who want to travel there, can travel by plane. As mentioned in Annex I, a quota will be applied for those travelling from Cyprus and Malta. The same quota will be applied for the selected participants who want to travel to Cyprus and Malta, and the flight tickets will be booked based on a "first come first served" basis at the booking phase.

Importantly, this initiative covers only public means of transport. Rental cars, chartered buses and any other private vehicles are as a basic rule not covered.

11. Maximum value of the travel tickets

The selected participants shall only be awarded the travel tickets to the chosen destination. Accommodation, subsistence, insurance, travel supplements or any other expenses related to the trip shall be covered by the selected participants themselves.

The basic rule is that each selected participant will be entitled to a travel ticket worth (on average) EUR 255. Travel will only be in 2nd class. However, this amount can be higher in the specific cases referred to below:

- For participants travelling from the outermost regions (i.e. Guadeloupe, French Guiana, Martinique, la Réunion, Mayotte, Saint-Martin, Madeira, Azores and Canary Islands) to mainland Europe. Once participants land on the continent, the basic rule applies;
- For participants outside the outermost regions who have to travel by plane to mainland Europe. Once on the continent, the basic rule applies;
- For participants with reduced mobility and/or special needs. Costs to be assessed on a case by case basis according to their needs. Costs of special assistance (accompanying person, dog for visually impaired participants, etc.) might be covered.

12. Withdrawal and cancellation of the trip by the selected participant

Each travel ticket will be nominative and cannot be transferred to another person under any circumstance. The name on the travel ticket cannot be changed.

If a selected participant declines for whatever reasons before the external contractor designated by the European Commission has booked the travel ticket, his/her place will be given to someone else from the reserve list in descending order of the selection.

If a member of the group (group leader or group member) declines to travel before the European Commission contractor has booked the travel ticket, this decision will not jeopardise the whole group. The remaining group members can still travel as foreseen. However, the person who withdrew cannot be replaced. The European Commission will give this unused travel ticket to someone else from the reserve list in descending order of the selection.

In case it is the group leader who declines, then the group should appoint a new group leader who will be the new single point of contact for the external contractor designated by the European Commission.

Once the bookings are done, any potential cancellation or modification fees will need to come from the participants' entitlement.

13. Reporting back on the trip

The European Commission would like to hear back from the young travellers and will encourage them to share their experiences and adventures. That is why, once selected, the participants will become DiscoverEU Ambassadors of the initiative. They are invited to report back on their travel experiences, for example through social media tools like Instagram, Facebook, and Twitter or by providing a presentation at their school or at their local community. A Facebook Group will be set up and participants will be welcomed to join it. Young travellers will also need to report back in a survey sent out by the contractor of the European Commission after their travelling period.

A photo competition will be organised for the selected participants with the selection of 5 winners. More detailed information about this photo competition will be published later on the European Youth Portal website once the selected participants have been chosen.

14. Disclaimer

The European Commission will only provide for the travel tickets as explained above. Therefore, accommodation, subsistence, insurance, travel supplements or any other expenses related to the trip shall be covered by the participants. Insurance coverage is not provided by the European Commission and is the sole responsibility of the selected participant.

The European Commission and its contractor shall not be held liable for any damage caused or sustained by any of the participants in the contest, including any damage caused to third parties as a consequence of or during the implementation of the activities related to this contest.

The European Commission and its contractor shall not be held liable for any material, non-material or physical damage suffered by the participants or those accompanying them in the course of their journey to or during their stay at their destination.

The desired trip is subject to constraints related to budget, time and tickets availability. Therefore it can be subject to change, and the external contractor designated by the European Commission cannot guarantee that the desired trip can be realised.

The selected participants are advised to acquire appropriate health and travel insurance for the whole duration of the trip. Basic health insurance coverage is usually provided by the participant's national health insurance during his/her stay in another European Union country through the European Insurance Card. However, the coverage of the European Health Insurance Card or private health insurance may not include all possible cases, especially if repatriation or specific medical intervention is needed. In those cases, a complementary private insurance is advisable.

The European Commission reserves the right to modify the rules set up under points 10 and 11 in case of exceptional circumstances.

15. Applicable Law

This contest is governed by the applicable Union law complemented, where necessary, by the law of Belgium. The General Court or, on appeal, the Court of Justice of the European Union, shall have sole

jurisdiction to hear any dispute between the Union and any participant concerning the interpretation, application or validity of the rules of this contest, if such dispute cannot be settled amicably.

16. Data Protection

The data requested will only be used for the purpose of selecting the participants and enabling the travel agency to book the travel tickets.

Any personal data will be processed by the European Commission under the Regulation (EC) No 45/2001 and according to the 'notifications of the processing operations' to the Data Protection Officer (DPO) of the European Commission (publicly accessible in the DPO register). Such data will be processed by the "data controller" of the European Commission for the purposes of the contest, implementation and follow-up or protecting the financial interests of the EU.

The Privacy Statement for the DiscoverEU initiative explains to applicants the way in which the initiative uses the personal data and the way in which the privacy of this data is being protected. The Privacy Statement for the DiscoverEU initiative can be found at the following link: https://europa.eu/youth/privacy_en

The applicants have the right to have recourse at any time to the European Data Protection Supervisor.

ANNEX 1

Number of available tickets per country based on the total population in 2017 (source: EUROSTAT)

	Population	Share of population	No of tickets
Austria	8.772.865	1,71%	257
Belgium	11.365.834	2,22%	333
Bulgaria	7.101.859	1,39%	208
Croatia	4.154.213	0,81%	122
Czech Republic	10.578.820	2,07%	310
Cyprus	854.802	0,17%	25
Denmark	5.748.769	1,12%	168
Estonia	1.315.635	0,26%	39
Finland	5.503.297	1,08%	161
France	67.024.459	13,10%	1964
Germany	82.800.000	16,18%	2427
Greece	10.757.293	2,10%	315
Hungary	9.797.561	1,91%	287
Ireland	4.774.833	0,93%	140
Italy	60.589.445	11,84%	1776
Latvia	1.950.116	0,38%	57
Lithuania	2.847.904	0,56%	83
Luxembourg	590.667	0,12%	17
Malta	440.433	0,09%	13

Netherlands	17.081.507	3,34%	501
Poland	37.972.964	7,42%	1113
Portugal	10.309.573	2,01%	302
Romania	19.638.309	3,84%	576
Slovakia	5.435.343	1,06%	159
Slovenia	2.065.895	0,40%	61
Spain	46.528.966	9,09%	1364
Sweden	9.995.153	1,95%	293
United Kingdom	65.808.573	12,86%	1929
Total	511.805.088	100,00%	15000