

# DiscoverEU: 18 year olds can tomorrow apply for 15,000 travel passes to explore the EU this summer

DiscoverEU is a new EU initiative based on a proposal from the European Parliament. It offers 18 year olds 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.

## **Will this initiative happen again or is it a one-off action?**

In the framework of a European Parliament Preparatory Action adopted in March 2018, the Commission is selecting the first batch of at least 15,000 young people during a first application round in June. The Commission will organise a second round of applications in autumn 2018 based on the feedback it will receive from the first round. The success and continuation of DiscoverEU up to 2020 will depend on its reception by the target audience. For the budget period 2021 – 2027 the Commission has proposed to allocate €700 million for this initiative, which should be able to fund around 1.5 million travels for young Europeans.

## **Why don't you offer this opportunity to all 18 year olds?**

The aim would be to give as many young people as possible the chance to benefit from this new initiative to explore Europe. However, the budget of €12 million does not allow to offer this opportunity to all 18 year olds in Europe. In the EU around 5.8 million young people turn 18 each year. If we assume that only 50% of them would be interested in a travel pass, this would – taking an average price of the travel pass at €255 – cost around €750 million per year.

## **Will there be a quota per country?**

The selection will be carried out in accordance with the number of travel tickets allocated to each European Union Member State. This allocation is based on the share of the Member States' population compared to the overall population of the European Union.

Selection will be carried out based on the nationality indicated by the applicant in the registration form. In case there are fewer 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.

## **Who can participate?**

All EU nationals who will be 18 year old on 1 July 2018 can apply. This means young people born between 2 July 1999 (included) and 1 July 2000 (included)

are eligible to participate. Young people have to submit their application online through the European Youth Portal during the application period from 12 June 2018 12:00 (midday) CEST until 26 June 2018 12:00 (midday) CEST.

### **Why is the initiative only accessible to young people aged 18?**

The European Parliament Preparatory Action as agreed in the 2018 EU budget focuses on young people turning 18, as this age marks a major step to adulthood and to European citizenship.

### **For how many days are participants allowed to travel?**

Young people can travel between a minimum of 1 and up to 30 days inclusive. They can visit from 1 to 4 foreign country destinations (only EU 28 Member States) with a travel trip arranged back home. The trip must start between 9 July 2018 and 30 September 2018.

### **Will young people always travel by rail?**

Participants will, as a basic rule, travel by rail. Nevertheless, in order to ensure the widest possible access, the project can offer alternative transport modes, such as buses or ferries. Travel will only be in 2<sup>nd</sup> class.

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

- Residing in any of the nine EU's outermost regions (i.e. Guadeloupe, French Guiana, Martinique, la Réunion, Mayotte, Saint-Martin, Madeira, Azores and Canary Islands);
- Residing in EU countries/regions which are not accessible by rail networks, ferries and buses;
- Having to travel more than 18 hours via land or sea transport before being able to cross the border of the departure country of their trip.

In any of these special cases, only one round trip can be a flight. For the remainder of their trip, participants are required to travel by rail or other alternative modes (except private cars and chartered buses), and they fall under the basic rule.

### **Can a participant travel alone or in a group of friends?**

The project foresees that participants can travel either individually or in a group of maximum 5 persons. In the case of a group, 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 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.

**If a group application is selected will all group members be able to participate?**

Yes, a group application will be assessed as one single application.

**How are the young people selected?**

The selection of applicants will take place via an online application tool available on the [European Youth Portal](#). Applicants will first have to pass the eligibility criteria check. Then, all applicants will need to complete a quiz. They must answer 5 quiz questions linked to the [2018 European Year of Cultural Heritage](#), to European Union initiatives targeting young people and to the European Parliament elections. Finally, they will need to answer a subsidiary question on how many young people they think will apply for this initiative. The correct replies to the quiz and the subsidiary question will allow the European Commission to rank the applicants in case there are more applications than the budget can cater for.

**What about young people with special needs?**

Young people with special needs (e.g. reduced mobility, visually impairments, etc.) may be entitled to receive appropriate additional support. Those costs will be assessed on a case by case basis according to their needs. In that respect, costs of special assistance (accompanying person, dog for visually impaired participants, etc.) might be covered.

**Should the selected participants book the travel tickets themselves?**

No. Selected participants shall not book their travel tickets themselves, as tickets purchased separately shall not be reimbursed. Travel tickets for the selected participants will exclusively be booked, purchased and delivered by the external contractor designated by the European Commission.

**What is the value of the travel tickets?**

The basic rule is that each participant will be entitled to a travel ticket worth (on average) €255. However, this amount can be higher in the following exceptional cases:

- For participants travelling from the EU's outermost regions (i.e. Guadeloupe, French Guiana, Martinique, la Réunion, Mayotte, Saint-Martin, Madeira, Azores and Canary Islands) to mainland Europe. Once the participants land on the mainland, the basic rule applies.
- For participants outside the above-mentioned outermost regions who are entitled to travel by plane to mainland Europe. Once on the mainland, the basic rule applies.

- For participants with reduced mobility and/or special needs. Those costs to be assessed on a case by case basis according to their needs. In that respect, costs of special assistance (accompanying person, dog for visually impaired participants, etc.) might be covered.

**Can a relative or friend older than 18 travel with the participant?**

Yes, as long as they book and pay for the travel costs.

**Is the travel ticket transferable to another person?**

No. 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.

**What if the participants have to cancel their trip or need to modify it?**

Any potential cancellation or modification fees will need to be covered by the participants. There is no extra budget foreseen to cover expenditures of this kind, whatever the reason.

**Are any of the following expenses included: travel insurance, accommodation, subsistence or any other expenses related to the trip?**

No. The initiative does not include any travel insurance. Insurance coverage is the sole responsibility of the participant. Moreover, accommodation, subsistence, travel supplements to be paid during the trip or any other expenses related to the trip shall be covered by the participants.

The participants should 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 that case, a complimentary private insurance is advisable.

**Will the European Commission help participants with booking accommodation?**

No. Booking accommodation is the sole responsibility of the participant.

**Will the European Commission give preference to specific transport operators?**

No. The contractor who will book the trips can select any public transport mode and any operators or lines (private cars and chartered buses are excluded).

**How can participants prepare their travel?**

The European Commission will provide an online information package to the selected participants with useful tips for travelling. Participants must

possess their valid travel document/ticket during their journey. Anything related to such a document (e.g. validity) is the participant's responsibility.

Young people should also have a valid passport or ID card when travelling in the European Union. Anything related to such a document (validity, etc.) is the participant's responsibility.

### **What is expected from the selected participants?**

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 Ambassadors of the initiative. They will be encouraged 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 their local community. Participants will also be welcome to join a Facebook Group set up for this initiative.

### **Given Brexit, are young people with UK nationality able to participate?**

UK nationals aged 18 are indeed able to participate in this initiative as long as the UK remains a Member State of the European Union with all its rights and obligations. Selected participants can also choose the UK as one of their travel destination.

### **Where can people find more information on the rules of the contest?**

The rules of the contest are published on [the European Youth Portal](#).

### **For more information**

[Press release](#)

[European Youth Portal: Apply here](#)