



EUROPEAN CAPITAL OF CHRISTMAS

TERMS & CONDITIONS OF THE CALL 2026

EUROPEAN CAPITAL, CITY AND VILLAGE OF CHRISTMAS
LAST CALL 31 OCTOBER 2025

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1. INTRODUCTION

The European Union is founded on the values of respect for human dignity, freedom, democracy, equality, the rule of law and respect for human rights.

Christmas is a time of special significance in Europe, a time when the profound values of integration, tolerance, coexistence and peace that are at the heart and origin of the European project are revealed.

Christmas, as European as it is universal, is an unbeatable tool for boosting the entrepreneurial spirit and the economic, social and cultural development of European cities and regions, while bringing out the best of their tangible and intangible heritage, as well as the activation of communities and the well-being of citizens.

To promote a distinction for European Christmas Cities is to promote peace, coexistence and harmony. A powerful element of integration and knowledge of the values of Europe among its citizens.

2. OBJECT OF THE CALL FOR PROPOSALS

Christmas Cities Network, a non-profit association, with registered office for notification purposes at Calle del General Alvarez de Castro, 41, 28010, Madrid (Spain) CIF G88128970 announces the Call for Projects for 'European Capital, City and Village of Christmas 2026', in which the following may participate cities of the 27 Member States of the European Union plus Andorra, Iceland, Liechtenstein, Monaco, Norway, Switzerland, United Kingdom, Albania, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Kosovo, Montenegro, San Marino, Serbia, Ukraine and North Macedonia with the following objectives:

- Spreading the intrinsic values of Christmas and the European Union.
- Creating spaces around the idea of Christmas in Europe.
- Exchanging and sharing traditions, similarities and differences in the celebration of Christmas in different cities, regions and countries, thus deepening the diversity and common characteristics.
- Promoting the image of the cities, making known their characteristics and their diversity in relation to the celebration of Christmas.
- Promoting the development of projects that will activate economic, cultural, social and economic sectors, affecting cities and the lives of their inhabitants.

Any city that wishes to do so may apply for the title of 'European Capital of Christmas 2026, European City of Christmas 2026 or European Village of Christmas 2026', in accordance with the present rules (hereinafter referred to as the Call for Proposals).

3. PARTICIPANTS

All cities and towns that are part of the 27 Member States of the European Union, as well as Andorra, Iceland, Liechtenstein, Monaco, Norway, Switzerland, United Kingdom, Albania, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Kosovo, Montenegro, San Marino, Serbia, Ukraine and North Macedonia will be able to participate in the Call.

The same city may submit to the Call only one single Project in the corresponding category, which will include all the proposed activities, in order to be assessed by the jury.

The proposed activities may be of a cultural, educational, commercial, nature leisure, etc.

Projects should be focused on enhancing the human values and solidarity that underlie the Christmas and European spirit.

4. CALL FOR PROPOSALS

Three categories are established according to the size of the city:

- **EUROPEAN CAPITAL OF CHRISTMAS 2026:** for cities with more than 100.000 inhabitants.
- **EUROPEAN CITY OF CHRISTMAS 2026:** for cities with fewer than 100,000 inhabitants and more than 10,000 inhabitants
- **EUROPEAN VILLAGE OF CHRISTMAS 2026:** for cities with less than 10.000 inhabitants.

5. REGISTRATION AND PRESENTATION

Registration requirements:

A representative of city should register and send the letter of registration in PDF format to contact@europeancapitalofchristmas.org providing all the essential information about the city competing and that should include the following:

- A letter signed by the Major, or city representative, stating their willingness to be part of the or European Capital of Christmas, European City of Christmas and European Village of Christmas 2026.
- Identification and position of the registrant
- City name
- Type of city and modality in which it competes: European Capital of Christmas, European City of Christmas or European Village of Christmas
- Registered office of the local government on the city
- Complete postal address (including city, province and country, phone number and email address
- Name and surname of the legal representative on the city. Contact details of the legal representative (email, address and phone number) Position held by the legal representative on the city in the local government.

5. REGISTRATION AND PRESENTATION

The registration of a city will entitle the submission of only one project and its participation in the chosen category.

Project presentation requirements:

The registered city must send its project to contact@europeancapitalofchristmas.org before the deadline established in the terms and conditions.

The PDF document of the project must include the following information:

- Number of institutions and people involved in the project
- Events included in the project
- Photographic/Videos and/or digital representation of the aesthetics of the project

All required information and documentation must be provided in English.

The application is free of charge. Christmas Cities Network has decided to waive the registration fee for participants.

6. DEADLINE FOR SUBMISSION TO THE CALL

The deadline for submission of the candidate's projects to call for the European Capital, City and Village of Christmas 2026, will open for the current edition on 1 March 2025 and end 31 October 2025 of the same year. After this date the deadline will be closed.

Only applications submitted during this period via email contact@europeancapitalofchristmas.org and Christmas projects sent by email to contact@europeancapitalofchristmas.org will be accepted.

7. PROJECT PRESENTATION REQUIREMENTS AND EVOLUTION CRITERIA

The projects presented in the categories described must be submitted in English. They must also include and develop the following headings:

1. European Capital of Christmas, European City of Christmas or European Village of Christmas project.
2. Description of the town and its characteristics Presentation of the existing Tangible and Intangible Heritage: traditions, customs and aspects linked them such as gastronomy, music, decorative arts, lightings activities, specifically markets, popular shows... and activities carried out in the past.

Strategic Plan

- Detailed description of the project, including proposed actions for the Call
- Sponsorship and organisations involved in the project: companies, trade associations, cultural organisations, etc.
- Detailed budget and social, cultural and economic viability of the project
- Economic and social impact, assessment, measurement and expected results for the community

8. JURY

The **International Jury** is composed of 6 and 10 members, experts in the different aspects involved in the project, from the state's members of the European Union.

The composition of the Jury will be announced on the website of the organization before the end of the deadline for the presentation of the projects.

Duty of secrecy and discretion:

1. The members of the International Jury shall at all times maintain standards of standards of prudence commensurate with their role in relation to the duty of secrecy and discretion discretion. They shall therefore be required at all times to maintain the secrecy of their own or others' deliberations or opinions. deliberations or opinions, whether their own or those of others, that take place during the evaluation process. evaluation of the candidate city.
2. The duty of secrecy and discretion shall be maintained even after the evaluation process of the candidate cities has been completed and the award has been granted. The duty of secrecy and discretion shall also be maintained even if a member of the Jury ceases to be associated with the Christmas Cities Network.

9. CRITERIA FOR EVALUATION

The Jury will evaluate the sections described below, as well as the overall consistency and coherence of submitted projects, and will assess them using the following criteria with the corresponding score.

Evaluation criteria for the European Christmas City Award, European City of Christmas and European Village of Christmas. These criteria focus on cultural, social and touristic aspects that reflect the Christmas spirit:

1. Christmas Decoration and Lighting

- Creativity and originality in urban decoration.
- Use of sustainable and energy efficient lights.
- Visual impact and tourist attractiveness of lighting.

2. Cultural Events and Activities

- Organisation of Christmas markets, concerts, fairs and traditional activities.
- Initiatives that promote local Christmas customs.
- Inclusion of activities for all ages, especially for children.

3. Solidarity and Social Spirit

- Charity campaigns, volunteering and actions for people in vulnerable situations.
- Collaboration with NGOs, local associations and community centres.

4. Gastronomy and Tradition

- Promotion of typical local Christmas products.
- Activities that promote Christmas gastronomic culture (workshops, tastings, etc.).

5. Innovation and Sustainability

- Use of recycled materials in decoration.
- Implementation of ecological practices in Christmas events and markets.

9. CRITERIA FOR EVALUATION

6. Tourism and International Projection

- Strategies to attract international visitors during the Christmas season.
- Promotion of the city as a Christmas destination through advertising campaigns.

7. Citizen Participation

- Active involvement of neighbours, businesses and associations in decoration and events.
- Competitions or initiatives that motivate creativity and a sense of community.

8. Security and Accessibility

- Implementation of security measures at large events.
- Inclusive access for people with reduced mobility or special needs.

9. Technological Innovation

- Use of technology in Christmas activities (videomapping, augmented reality, digital markets, etc.).
- Creation of immersive experiences that enhance tourism.

10. Economic and Commercial Impact

- Economic benefit derived from Christmas tourism.
- Initiatives that boost local commerce during the season.

These criteria would allow a comprehensive assessment of each city's efforts to create a memorable, inclusive and sustainable Christmas experience.

9. CRITERIA FOR EVALUATION

Scoring System for the European City of Christmas

Each criterion will be evaluated on a scale based on the following table. The criteria are weighted differently according to their relevance to the Christmas experience.

Criteria	Weight (%)	Maximum Score
Solidarity and Social Spirit	20%	20 points
Cultural Events and Activities	15%	15 points
Christmas Decoration and Lighting	10%	10 points
Gastronomy and Tradition	10%	10 points
Innovation and Sustainability	10%	10 points
Tourism and International Projection	10%	10 points
Citizen Participation	10%	10 points
Security and Accessibility	5%	5 points
Technological Innovation	5%	5 points
Economic and Commercial Impact	5%	5 points

MAXIMUM TOTAL SCORE: 100 POINTS

9. CRITERIA FOR EVALUATION

Final Rating Scale

- **90 - 100 points: Excellent** - Outstanding city in all aspects of Christmas.
- **75 - 89 points: Very Good** - Meets high standards in most criteria.
- **60 - 74 points: Good** - Meets basic requirements, but with areas for improvement.
- **Less than 60 points: Insufficient** - Does not meet the standards expected for recognition.

10. SELECTION OF WINNERS AND DEADLINES FOR ACTIVITIES

The dates for the 2026 edition as follow:

After the deadline for submission of “European Capital, City and Village of Christmas 2026”, the International Jury will evaluate those submitted projects from 1 to 8 November 2025. The winners will then be announced after the Jury meeting.

The International Jury reserves the right to declare the Call void in case none of the submitted projects is, in the opinion of Jury worthy of the prize, either because it lacks viability or because it is not suitable to integrate the values represented by the European Union. The decision of International Jury regarding the award may not be appealed against.

The date for implementing the project activities is the year 2025 until the first month of 2026.

11. COMMUNICATION AND AWARD CEREMONY

For the 2026 edition, the result of the call will be officially announced on the website www.europeancapitalofchristmas.org and the Jury will be able to personally contact representatives of the winning cities.

The **awards ceremony** will be held by the High Patronage of the European Parliament and will be attended by the presence of the International Jury and representatives of the winning cities.

The winning Capital, City and Village will hold the distinction of “European Capital of Christmas 2026”, “European City of Christmas 2026” and “European Village of Christmas 2026” and will have the right to use it, as well as the winning logos of the Call in the physical and digital documents that they deem appropriate.

The winners will receive the award of ‘European Capital of Christmas 2026’, ‘European City of Christmas 2026’ and ‘European Village of Christmas 2026’ in the city of VILNIUS (Lithuania) at a ceremony to be held in December 2025.

12. OBLIGATIONS OF WINNING CITIES

The winning cities in each category will assume a number of responsibilities as defined below:

1 - Duty of performance

The cities that are distinguished as European Christmas Capital, City and Village must assume the responsibility that the recognition entails. The awarded municipalities undertake to implement the programme presented during the defence of the candidacy by carrying out the actions and activities set out in the project submitted.

2 - Report of activities

The award of the European Christmas Capital City, City and Village also entails the obligation to produce an activity report at the end of the award year. The report should contain a section on best practices as well as an estimation of how the award has benefited the capital in terms of increased tourism, participation of professionals in markets, activities and economic strengthening of tourism service oriented businesses.

3 - Participation in the Christmas Cities Network

The candidate municipalities, once declared winners of the title, will have the possibility to voluntarily join the Christmas Cities Network whose agreement will be signed at the award ceremony.

12. OBLIGATIONS OF WINNING CITIES

The winning cities in each category will assume a number of responsibilities in terms of communication features:

1- Correct use of graphic identity

The winning cities in each category will assume a number of responsibilities in terms of communication features:

The winning cities will be obliged to use the logo of the award in their communications always making reference to the year in which they won the award. Under no circumstances may the logo be used without reference to the award year, whether in digital, print or television media.

2 - Recognition of sponsors

In the event that the award is sponsored by a brand, the logo and communications will be subject to a manual of use provided by the organisation, which will explain in detail how this communication should be carried out so that the sponsor is always present in all mentions of the award in any of the communication channels used by the winning city.

3 - Communication in the media

In those communications that are used in social media, the award must be present and mentioned whenever the dynamisation allows it, in press releases the official website will be linked to the official website and in social networks the official profiles of the award will be measured or tagged.

13. DATA PROTECTION

Christmas Cities Network, of Spanish nationality and with address for notification purposes in Calle General Alvarez de Castro, 41 28010, Madrid (Spain) will be the owner of the website created for the Call and responsible for the files generated with personal data supplied by users through this website.

Those how register the projects on the website and the cities participating in the Call guarantee that the data they provide is true and will be entirely responsible for this declaration and for the access and correct use of the website subject to the its Terms of Use.

The user authorizes **Christmas Cities Network Association** for the treatment of personal data that he voluntary provides for the following purposes:

- Manage the participation in the project "European Capital, City and Village of Christmas 2026" program
- Manage de user's relationship with Christmas Cities Network
- Send information about Christmas Cities Network
- Carry out studies and statistical calculations
- Conduct satisfaction surveys
- Quality control
- Sending personal or official congratulations
- Disseminate in web publications, social network, media, print, media of Christmas Cities Network

13. DATA PROTECTION

The data subject unequivocally consents to and authorizes the international transfer of the personal data arising from his/her participation in the “European Capital, City and Village of Christmas 2026” call for applications.

All data will be handled in the strictest confidentiality and will not be accessible to third parties for purposes other than those authorized.

The created file is under the supervision and control of Christmas Cities Network, how assumes responsibility for the adoption of technical and organizational security measures to protect the confidentiality and integrity of the information, in accordance with the Law 3/2018 of 5 December, on the Protection Personal Data and other applicable legislation Any registered user/participant may exercise their rights of access, rectification, opposition and cancellation of their personal data provided through the website or by writing communication addressed to Christmas Cities Network at Calle General Álvarez de Castro, 41, 28010, Madrid (Spain).

14. ACCEPTANCE OF THESE TERMS AND CONDITIONS

Potential participants are informed that participation in the “European Capital, City and Village of Christmas 2026” competition implies:

- Total acceptance of this terms and conditions
- The Jury decisions and its criteria in any resolution of conflict that may arise from the interpretation of the rules. - Decisions of the Jury shall be final

Likewise, the International Jury reserves the right to disqualify the participation of entities that totally or partially fail to comply with the rules, especially in those cases where untruthful information is provided.

15. MODIFICATION AND/OR CANCELLATION

Christmas Cities Network reserves the right to make changes to the conditions of this Call provided that they are justified or do not harm the participants, who must be duly informed, giving the new conditions the same degree of publicity as the current terms and conditions.

If cause of force majeure makes it necessary to postpone or cancel the promotion, it will be stated in its terms and conditions, so please consult them after your registration.

16. DISPUTE

In the event of any discrepancy between the participants in the Call and the Christmas Cities Network Association, such disputes shall be submitted to the Courts of the city of Madrid, will express waiver by the parties of their jurisdiction, if other.