

**European Union: Public Consultation on the Proposed “Citizens for Europe”
Funding Programme
Response of the Scottish Council of Jewish Communities**

The Scottish Council of Jewish Communities supports the goal of a ‘Europe united in and enriched through its cultural diversity’ and welcomes the proposed ‘Citizens for Europe’ funding programme. Minority communities with members who live throughout Europe particularly stand to benefit from enhanced interaction between countries, and from being able to share and learn from each other’s experiences. Organisations such as the European Council of Jewish Communities have long been active in facilitating such contact, and their programmes could be enhanced and developed with the support of a comprehensive funding programme.

We note that the Funding Programme has been designed to simplify the financial management of the current scheme, and urge that this simplification should be extended to the application process. People will best learn to identify with Europe and to come to regard themselves as European citizens through developing relationships with residents of other European countries at individual, communal and civic levels through activities such as those included in Action 1 of the funding programme. A ‘closer Europe’ will only come about when individual citizens feel Europe to be accessible to them, and programmes that appear to be designed so as to deter applicants will deter people from wanting to become involved. Many community organisations potentially eligible for grants are small and composed of volunteers who do not have a lot of time to devote to what may initially seem to be peripheral or even irrelevant to their principal purposes.

If the funding programme is to be successful it will have to engage and excite members of these community groups and encourage them to broaden their field of activities. In practical terms this means that effective mechanisms must be developed to inform people at local level about the funding programme, making use of local and national media, existing interest networks, public meetings etc. Further, application procedures should be simplified so that community groups are not deterred from applying for grants. Application forms should be written in plain language by a native speaker of the language concerned so that applicants can immediately understand what is required, and will not find their applications disqualified due to inaccurate form-filling. (Mutual understanding between European citizens will only be enhanced if those citizens are not frustrated by the process of engagement and the facilitation of that engagement.)

In summary, the Scottish Council of Jewish Communities supports the ‘construction of an ever closer Europe, united in and enriched through cultural diversity’ and hopes that the Citizens for Europe funding programme will be designed so as to be effective in making that goal a reality.

The Scottish Council of Jewish Communities is the representative body of all the Jewish communities in Scotland comprising Glasgow, Edinburgh, Aberdeen and Dundee as well as the more loosely linked groups of the Jewish Network of Argyll and the Highlands, and of students studying in Scottish Universities and Colleges.