

European Capitals of Inclusion and Diversity Award 2026: Winners announced!

Brussels, 21 April 2026

Ahead of the kick-off of EU Diversity Month tomorrow, the European Commission has announced the winners of the [fifth edition of the European Capitals of Inclusion and Diversity Award](#). As a key action of the [Union of Equality](#), the Award celebrates towns, cities, and regions across the EU that lead by example in fostering inclusive policies and driving diversity.

This year's winners are cities and municipalities from Belgium, Hungary, Italy, the Netherlands, and Spain. They have been recognised for their work to build fairer societies by promoting diversity and inclusion across gender, racial and ethnic origin, religion and belief, disability, age, and LGBTIQ+ identities.

The winners of the 2026 European Capitals of Inclusion and Diversity Award are: In the category of 'local authorities with more than 50,000 inhabitants':

- The **Gold Award** goes to **Józsefváros, Budapest's 8th District, Hungary**, for its commitment to promoting inclusion, through initiatives covering inclusive municipal employment, action on LGBTIQ+ equality, integration of Roma communities, and initiatives against gender-based violence.
- The **Silver Award** goes to the city of **Leuven, Belgium**, for its strong approach to combatting exclusion, shown through projects such as '[Leuven without Racism](#)' and the city's ten-point action plan to combat discrimination in areas such as housing, employment, education, and more.
- The **Bronze Award** goes to the city of **Leiden, the Netherlands**, for its ambitious actions under the 'Leiden Inclusive' policy which ensure that everyone feels free to be themselves, regardless of origin, faith, gender, age, sexual orientation, or disability.

In the category of 'local authorities with fewer than 50,000 inhabitants':

- The **Gold Award** goes to the city of **Errenteria, Spain**, for its strong commitment to cultural diversity as well as its initiatives focusing on migrants, the LGBTIQ+ community, women, persons with disabilities, and older persons.
- The **Silver Award** goes to the town of **Orio, Spain**, for its inclusion and diversity strategy, 'Bizitza Askeak Plazer' (Living Free is a Pleasure), which supports migrants, women, LGBTIQ+ individuals, older people, and persons with disabilities.
- The **Bronze Award** goes to the village of **San Xoán de Río, Spain**, for its initiatives to eliminate discrimination against older people, women, and members of the LGBTIQ+ community.

Specific award for building inclusive labour markets for all:

- The **Gold Award** goes to the city of **Erreterria, Spain**, for its vision that access to employment is essential for social inclusion and for its commitment to a local labour market that reflects diversity.
- The **Silver Award** goes to the town of **Orio, Spain**, for its initiatives targeting those who may experience exclusion in the local labour market, with a specific focus on migrant women in the care economy.
- The **Bronze Award** goes to **the Metropolitan City of Milan, Italy**, for its work towards a fair, sustainable, and inclusive employment ecosystem, for example through the 'Claudia!' project which helps organisations and businesses adopt inclusion and gender equality policies.

The public choice award, for which the audience voted a week before the Awards ceremony, went to Marsicovetere, Italy.

Background

Launched within the [EU's Anti-Racism Action Plan 2020-2025](#), and the [LGBTIQ+ Equality Strategy 2020-2025](#), the annual European Capitals of Inclusion and Diversity Award recognises the work done by cities, towns, or regions in the European Union to promote inclusion and create discrimination-free societies. They cover initiatives that promote diversity and inclusion in terms of gender, racial or ethnic origin, religion or belief, disability, age, and LGBTIQ+ equality, and how these inequalities can intersect with each other.

The Commission has renewed its commitment to the ethos of the Award across the [LGBTIQ+ equality strategy 2026-2030](#), the [Anti-racism strategy 2026-2030](#), and the [Gender equality strategy 2026-2030](#). The Commission will continue to give visibility, celebrate and support local authorities that champion inclusivity.

Applications for the fifth edition were open from November 2025 to beginning of February 2026. A jury of experts evaluated the applications based on a range of criteria, including the nature and scope of initiatives, ownership and level of commitment, the quality and sustainability of initiatives, and the involvement of people exposed to discrimination in policymaking.

Today's award ceremony also marks the launch of the [2026 European Diversity Month](#). The European Diversity Month was first held in May 2020 as part of the 10th anniversary of the EU Platform for Diversity Charters. It celebrates efforts to help build equal and inclusive environments for the benefit of all. The theme of the 2026 European Diversity Month focusses on promoting and strengthening inclusive labour markets and workplaces, to ensure that equal treatment becomes a reality for everyone.

For more information

European Capitals of Inclusion and Diversity Award 2026 | Celebrate Diversity in the EU
[European Diversity Month](#)

Quotes

Roxana **Mînzatu**, Executive Vice-President for Social Rights and Skills, Quality Jobs and Preparedness, said: "Inclusive labour markets and workplaces in Europe benefit not only our citizens and companies but our entire society and economy. It is a question of equality and fairness, which guides our efforts every day but also a contribution to prosperity and wealth. The 2026 European Capitals of Inclusion and Diversity Award is an opportunity to reward the cities and towns leading the way towards making the Union of Equality a reality and to inspire others to follow."

Hadja **Lahbib**, Commissioner for Equality, Preparedness and Crisis Management, said: "The 2026 European Capitals of Inclusion and Diversity Award highlights the outstanding efforts of cities and towns leading the way in building inclusive and diverse communities. At the same time, companies play a crucial role in making the Union of Equality a reality by fostering inclusive workplaces where everyone can succeed and feel free to be themselves. During European Diversity Month, I encourage everyone to join the initiative and help drive positive change across our society."

Press contact

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Newsletter

To be added to our newsletter for updates on the latest developments regarding the European Capitals of Inclusion and Diversity Award, please register [here](#).

Further information

For more information on the European Capitals of Inclusion and Diversity Award and the European Diversity Month, visit our [website](#), [subscribe to #DiversityCapitals newsletter](#), check our [media backgrounder](#), and follow us on social media.

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