

European Capital of Democracy 2026

Diversity and Inclusion Guidelines

Diversity matters and is not an end in itself. We believe in the power of diversity and the benefits of a diverse society. Globalisation, societal and demographic change have shaped every society in the world to a considerable degree over recent decades. Embracing and appreciating diversity means way more than just acknowledging this development. Including people with a wide variety in backgrounds and profiting from different experiences and knowledge makes a society more inclusive, more diverse and more just. Correspondingly, it has the great potential for improving societal outcomes, as people can learn from one another and enrich one another.

In our understanding, the most important features of a diverse society are:

- **Gender equality:** A balanced relationship between men and women, and the openness towards people of non-binary genders.
- **Intergenerational justice:** All age groups should be able to participate equally, meaning people belonging to structurally disadvantaged age groups should be encouraged and supported to be active members of society.
- **LGBTIQ+:** The social equality of the LGBTIQ+ community is an important political concern for us. Members of this community must not face any form of discrimination or disadvantages due to their sexual preferences or orientations.
- **People with a migration history**
Equally, people with a history of migration should also not face any form of discrimination or disadvantage. In accordance with the UN International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination of 1965, all forms of racial discrimination, in all its forms and manifestations, needs to be eliminated to secure respect for the dignity of the human person.
- **People with special needs**
The inclusion of people with special needs is an equally important concern. It is important to create the right conditions for this group of people; conditions that will enable a barrier-free society, and a society in which people with special needs do not encounter discrimination and can play an active part in society.

European Capitals of Democracy and Participants in the Initiative must show their commitment to diversity, inclusion and equality. They must also demonstrate a strong record of anti-discrimination measures and policies for fostering the inclusion of marginalised groups.