

Partnership Policy

European Liberal Forum

Why are partnerships important?

The European Liberal Forum (ELF) is the political foundation and think tank of the ALDE party, with 57 member organisations across Europe. Our mission is to create a stronger, more resilient and more liberal Europe. Through our network of policy experts, we conduct timely and evidence-based research contributing to comprehensive, liberal solutions to real-life problems.

We believe that finding the right policy solutions requires cooperation and knowledge sharing. This is why we bring together a diverse network of national foundations, think tanks and experts from the corporate sector. Through the **ELF Partnership Programme**, stakeholders who share our vision of a free, prosperous, and democratic Europe can support our research efforts. This support is essential to expand our policy work into new domains and stay ahead of the curve.

Criteria for partnerships

Regulations regarding donations

Donations and contributions received by the European Liberal Forum are regulated by Regulation (EU, Euratom) No 1141/2014 of the European Parliament and of the Council on European Political Parties and Foundations.

Based on this, the European Liberal Forum, as a European political foundation, only accept donations from European bank accounts in euros, of up to a value of EUR 18 000 per year and per donor, and from a natural or legal entity based in a member state of the European Union. A written agreement (Memorandum of Understanding/concept note/contract/ partnership agreement) shall be signed with a natural or legal entity based in a member state of the European Union by a representative who has the legal power to act on behalf of the company. ELF is committed to verifying that the partner has its own business entity in the European Union, which is not a subsidiary of a company based in a third country, with substantial activity and budget line, and that decisions are taken from within the EU.

Contributions to the European Liberal Forum from its members and the European political party with which it is affiliated are permitted. The value of such contributions shall not exceed 40% of the foundation's annual budget and may not derive from funds received by a European political party pursuant to this Regulation from the general budget of the European Union.

Donations we cannot accept

Based on the Regulation (EU, Euratom) No 1141/2014, the **European Liberal Forum as a European political foundation, cannot accept donations:**

- from any private entities based in a third country or from individuals from a third country who are not entitled to vote in elections to the European Parliament. At ELF, we commit to verifying that decisions are taken from within the EU, especially in the case of large multinational companies.
- from the budgets of political groups in the European Parliament;
- from any public authority from a Member State or a third country, or from any undertaking over which such a public authority may exercise, directly or indirectly, a dominant influence by virtue of its ownership of it, its financial participation therein, or the rules which govern it; or
- anonymous donations or contributions;

Any donation not permitted under this Regulation shall be returned within 30 days following the date of its receipt to the donor or to any person acting on the donor's behalf. If it is not possible to return it, it shall be reported to the Authority and the European Parliament. The Authorising Officer of the European Parliament shall establish the amount receivable and authorise the recovery in accordance with the provisions laid down in Articles 78 and 79 of the Financial Regulation. The funds shall be entered as general revenue in the European Parliament section of the general budget of the European Union.

Other conditions

For the European Liberal Forum, it is essential to exercise due diligence to ensure that we only accept funding from trusted sources and partners that align with our mission, especially through our Partnership Programme. Based on that, the **European Liberal Forum does not accept donations:**

- from companies or other organisations that represent views or are involved in activities incompatible with ELF's mission. These include, among others, discrimination, exploitation of people, or any involvement with radical groups;
- from companies or other organisations that are related to oppressive regimes or involved in foreign interference in European democracy;
- from companies or individuals on the European Union's [sanction list](#).

Partnerships should also be in line with the following conditions:

- the partnership benefits ELF and contributes to our overall strategy, mission and vision;
- the partner adheres to the values of the European Liberal Forum;
- ELF and the partner both have the capacity (HR, Finances, etc.) to engage with the partnership;
- the Board of Directors is satisfied that no adverse publicity will result from the partnership;
- there is no attempt on the part of the partner to influence ELF's policy or actions either explicitly or implicitly;
- the financial health of the partnership is ensured from both sides;
- while ELF may publicly acknowledge its partners, we cannot advertise, promote, sell or distribute products or services for partners;
- the partnership does not compromise the ethical standards and/or independent nature of ELF;
- ELF shall have the right to terminate a partnership if the partner has demonstrated that they breach the above conditions for partnership.

Compliant donors and donations

The total amount should be paid in **EUROS** from a **European Entity** and **independent from any non-EU entity**. This means that the EU entity cannot have a headquarters in a third country. The signatory of the agreement should **be an individual with a clear employment relationship or power to sign for the EU entity**.

ELF may also accept donations from individuals (natural persons) in line with the rules regarding the value of the donation up to 18,000 Euros per year. Such individuals must be citizens of a member state of the European Union and align with the values of the organisation. These conditions, along with any exclusionary conditions as outlined in the section on other conditions, will be verified before ELF receives money from any individual. Unsolicited donations from individuals will be returned if these conditions cannot be met. The same rules regarding currency and receipt from an EU bank account must be observed.

For donations from legal entities, the donor should be informed that the Authority may request information regarding the donation, their company/organisation, and the signatory for European Political Parties and Foundations. Information about the donation will be published on the Authority's website. The amount should **be paid under the same fiscal year as the date of the invoice (N) or for late payments that are paid within the first quarter of N+1, provided that the agreement has been signed for year N and communicated to the Authority in year N.**

In compliance with the principle of proportionality, the obligation to publish the identity of individual donors should not apply to donations equal to or below EUR 1 500 per year and per donor. The obligation to publish the identity does not apply to donations of between EUR 1 500 and EUR 3 000 annually unless the donor has given prior written consent to the publication. ELF commits to receiving consent from its individual donors for donations exceeding EUR 3000 per year.

We stay independent

While, as liberals, we take into consideration industry and civil society stakeholders when delving into policy matters, **our research outputs are fully independent and unbiased against any donation** ELF receives. Upholding the integrity of our research work is our top priority and responsibility as a political foundation and think tank with close ties to decision-makers and policy influencers at national, European and international levels.

ELF staff members are required to preserve their professional and personal independence. They must act in a manner consistent with the independence of their position and the principle of integrity. When dealing with interest groups and corporate partners, ELF staff members shall follow the European Ombudsman's '*Practical recommendations for public officials' interaction with interest representatives.*' ([Case SI/7/2016/KR](#)). In light of the "Know your donor" approach, staff members involved in fundraising activities shall conduct research on donor identity to assess and avoid any risk of conflicts between public and private interests as well as to check the existence of a company seat inside the European Union.

Transparency matters

One of the most effective ways to demonstrate our commitment to transparency is by making **all our [financial reports available on our website](#)**.

Alongside its annual financial statements, the European Liberal Forum has to transmit a list of all donors with their corresponding donations, indicating both the nature and the value of the individual donations. This also applies to contributions made by member organisations. **The information about donations and contributions is published [on the website of the Authority for European Political Parties and European Political Foundation](#).**

Single donations exceeding EUR 12,000 shall be reported to the Authority within 48 hours along with the contract and proof of payment. Besides, donations received within six months before elections to the European Parliament shall be reported weekly to the Authority.