

Irish Girl Guides press release

Monday 15 February 2021

Irish Girl Guides awarded European Citizens' Prize for its innovative European programme

- Almost 3,000 Irish Girl Guides' members have earned a Europe badge since its launch in partnership with European Movement Ireland in May 2019 –

Members of Irish Girl Guides (IGG) were thrilled to hear today [Monday 15 February 2021] that the organisation has been chosen to receive the European Citizen's Prize in recognition of its exceptional achievements in promoting awareness of the European Union (EU).

Since launching its Europe programme in partnership with European Movement Ireland (EMI) on Europe Day (9 May) 2019, 2,957 of IGG's youth members have earned a Europe badge. To earn the badge, girls and young women take part in age-appropriate activities that help them gain an understanding of the EU and how it affects the lives of Irish citizens.

The youngest members (Ladybirds aged 5-7) learn to recognise the EU flag, learn greeting customs from other EU countries and make rubbings of Euro coins. Brownies (aged 7-10) learn about other cultures and the role of MEPs while Guides (aged 10-14) learn about the formation of the EU and the advantages of being an EU member. They also celebrate international cultural festivals and invite politicians to talk to them about the EU.

The European Citizens' Prize is given to organisations and individuals around Europe that contribute to European cooperation and the promotion of common values. Thirty awards were announced today with two for Ireland – the other recipient being Family Carers Ireland.

Jenny Gannon, IGG's Programme and Training Commissioner, said, "We are thrilled to win a European Citizens' Prize. We were delighted to get the opportunity to work with European Movement Ireland when putting the criteria and resources together for the Europe Badge, so a big thank you to them. The Europe Badge is a welcome addition as members of all ages get the opportunity to learn more about the European community they belong to, while encouraging them to be empowered and take action in the European movement."

"We in IGG strive to develop programmes that are responsive to our girls' needs and the needs of our society. We have developed mutually beneficial partnerships with a number of organisations in recent years, including EMI, and we are always on the lookout for partners to develop badges with that will add to the depth and breadth of our programme."

Jillian van Turnhout, a volunteer with IGG and former Chair of the IGG board as well as former Vice Chair of EMI, said, "I am ecstatic the work of Irish Girl Guides' volunteer leaders and girls to earn the Europe Badge has been recognised through the awarding of the European Citizens' Prize. From its launch, the leaders and girls have demonstrated their quest to learn more about the European Union, and they have clearly shown they wish to influence and shape the European project."

Noelle O'Connell, CEO of EM Ireland and Vice President of European Movement International, said, 'Almost 3,000 Irish Girl Guides' members from age five-plus have gained Europe badges and learnt about our shared European home and Ireland's EU journey. It is a great tribute and testimony to their hard work and accomplishments that it is being recognised by the European Parliament through the awarding of the European Citizens' Prize. EM Ireland was delighted to partner with the Irish Girl Guides in helping so many girls and young women influence Ireland's European project.'

Deirdre Finlay, member of the Irish national jury for the 2020 European Citizens' Prize, said, "The 2020 entrants for the European Citizens' Prize from Ireland were of a very high standard, representing the realities of EU citizens in current times. I am delighted to see the Irish Girl Guides Association and Family Carers Ireland announced as winners and wish them continued success in their work."

Irish Girl Guides welcomes members from age 5+ and volunteer leaders from age 18+. To find out more, see www.irishgirlguides.ie or tel: 01 6683898.

ENDS -

Photos taken at the launch of the Europe badge in May 2019 by Conor McCabe Photography Ltd. (captions are embedded in the photos) info@conormccabe.ie

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Notes for editors:

Irish Girl Guides - Guiding started in Ireland in 1911 and operates throughout the 26 counties with 1,600 volunteer leaders providing an informal educational programme of fun and challenging activities that foster confidence and leadership skills in girls and young women, enabling them to develop to their full potential and to become responsible citizens. Girls from age 5+ can choose to earn a wide range of badges, including Aviation, Community Action, Cultural Diversity, Disability Awareness, Drug Awareness, Engineering, STEM, Science Investigator, Climate Action and Global Traveller. www.irishgirlguides.ie

The European Citizens' Prize - Each year the European Parliament awards **The European Citizens' Prize** for exceptional achievements in the following areas: projects promoting better mutual understanding and closer integration between citizens of the Member States or facilitating cross-border or transnational cooperation within the European Union; projects involving long-term, cross-border or transnational cultural cooperation contributing to the strengthening of a European spirit; projects linked to the current European Year; projects giving concrete expression to the values enshrined in the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union.

Citizens, groups of citizens, associations or organizations can apply for the European Citizen's Prize for projects they have carried out, or can nominate one other citizen, group, association or organisation for the European Citizen's Prize. Each year, a National Jury prepares a shortlist of up to five nominations. The Irish National Jury for 2020 consisted of: Ciaran Cuffe MEP (Dublin), Billy Kelleher MEP (South), Chris MacManus MEP (Midlands North West), Deirdre Finlay (The Wheel/Learghas) and Jean-Marie Cullen (National Youth Council of Ireland). National shortlists are considered by the European Citizen's Prize Chancellery which made the final decision on the Awards at its meeting on 9 February.

The 2020 Award was delayed by the pandemic. The 2021 Prize will be launched at the start of March and the deadline for applications will be 15 April 2021 (23:59, Brussels time).

European Movement Ireland - Founded in 1954, European Movement (EM) Ireland is the longest established Irish NGO working on European affairs. A non-partisan, independent, not-for-profit,

membership-based organisation, EM Ireland works to develop the connection between Ireland and the rest of Europe. For more information, visit www.europeanmovement.ie