

Europe for solidarity and citizenship

The European Solidarity Corps

The **general objective** of the European Solidarity Corps is to enhance the engagement of young people and organizations in accessible and high-quality solidarity activities, primarily volunteering, to strengthen cohesion, solidarity, democracy, European identity and active citizenship in the Union and beyond, addressing societal and humanitarian challenges on the ground, with a particular focus on the promotion of sustainable development, social inclusion and equal opportunities.

The **specific objective** of the Programme is to provide young people, including young people with fewer opportunities, with easily accessible opportunities for engagement in solidarity activities that induce positive societal changes in the Union and beyond, while improving and properly validating their competences, as well as facilitating their continuous engagement as active citizens.

The European Solidarity Corps in practice

Projects implemented under the ESC programme get a financial support from the European Commission, in the form of:

- international travel costs. The amount is fixed within a limit set by the programme, depending on the distance of the departure and arrival city
- a small contribution provided to the organisations to support the management of the activities
- organisational support to cover any cost related to the implementation of the activity and the volunteer's stay, such as accommodation, food, local transport
- pocket money, a small daily allowance for the volunteer
- linguistic support to study the language of the hosting country
- Insurance coverage
- exceptional costs can also be covered such as vaccination, visas, expenditure necessary to provide specific support for disadvantaged young people.

In addition, participants is entitled to receive a Youthpass, which is a certificate stating their participation and the skills they have developed thanks to their participation.

The actions included in the European Solidarity Corps Programme: Two main actions can be implemented within the frame of this programme: **individual and group volunteering.**

Individual Volunteering is a solidarity activity lasting from 2 weeks to 12 months. This type of activity provides young people with the opportunity to contribute to the daily work of organizations in solidarity activities to the ultimate benefit of the communities within which the activities are carried out.

A volunteer can take part in only one Solidarity Corps individual volunteering activity. In duly justified cases, especially to encourage the participation of young people with fewer opportunities, volunteering activities of 2 weeks – 2 months can be accepted and implemented.



Individual volunteering activities can take place **Cross-border** (taking place in a country different from the country of residence of the participant), or **In-country** (activities taking place in the same country as the country of residence of the participant).

ESC for groups: there are two possibilities to participate in European Solidarity Corps projects in groups: volunteering Teams, volunteering Teams in High Priority Areas. Volunteering Teams: it corresponds to group solidarity activities for a group of young people between 10 and 40 participants. These projects are expected to bring a real added-value in the field of solidarity even though they take place during a short period of time. They could be: restoring cultural heritage that has been damaged by natural or man-made disaster, caring for endangered species, socio-animation activities in a youth centre or in a refugee camp. **Good to know:** for these projects, preparatory visits can be funded to support the participation of young people with fewer opportunities.

Volunteering Teams in High Priority areas: this is a specific action that has been included in the programme to implement activities carried out by volunteers to express solidarity in group that address common European challenges in policy areas that are defined each year at EU level. In this case, the projects should bring together groups of minimum 5 participants, who should be international. The activities must last during a period between 2 weeks and 2 months. Solidarity is at the heart of this action and the programme can add significant value. As it is a group activity, this can help to encourage young people who may not feel ready to embark individually in a volunteering experience. One project should in principle aim to organize volunteering teams for at least 40 participants or more. **Good to know:** even called “Group volunteering”, individuals can apply to Volunteering teams, with the same procedure as for individual volunteering.

What can take place in addition to volunteering activities: this action can include complementary activities. They are relevant side activities designed to add value and augment the results of the project. Concretely, it can be: workshops, conferences, seminars, training courses, job shadowing, coaching, exchange of good practices. Preparatory visits are also eligible. **Good to know:** a volunteer can take part in more than one Solidarity Corps volunteering.

How can you take part in the European Solidarity Corps? Young people express their willingness to participate in the European Solidarity Corps by registering on the European Solidarity Corps Portal. What is good to know is that there are no diploma or foreign language requirements. Motivation is the key point!

How can organisations participate in the programme?

In order to participate in individual or group volunteering projects, organisations must hold a Quality Label (QL), i.e. a certificate issued after successful completion of the accreditation process carried out by the National Agencies of the Programme (or by Salto in the case of organisations established in countries not associated to the Programme).

The QL certifies that an organisation can and will carry out high quality solidarity activities in accordance with the principles, objectives and quality standards of the European Solidarity Corps.

Eligible bodies are: associations, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), local and regional authorities, non-profit public bodies or institutions, private profit-making entities. The QL is awarded on the basis of the role that organisations want to play within the Programme, i.e. whether they want to host volunteering activities or support volunteers in activities abroad. Projects and fundings are managed by the National Agencies at decentralised level, or by the Education and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA) at centralised level.

More information:

For more information, you can visit our website www.youthspeaces.eu or consult the European Youth Portal or contact the National Agency for Youth

