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## PART C – PARTICIPATION OF YOUNG PEOPLE IN HUMANITARIAN AID RELATED SOLIDARITY ACTIVITIES

In this part, readers will find relevant information and criteria for the Quality Label for Humanitarian Aid Volunteering, as well as information and criteria for participation in the European Voluntary Humanitarian Aid Corps (Humanitarian Aid volunteering).

In particular this chapter will provide the following information:

- a description of the Quality Label for Humanitarian Aid Volunteering;
- a description of the objectives, expected impact and supported activities under the European Voluntary Humanitarian Aid Corps;
- tables presenting the criteria which are used to assess project applications;
- additional information on quality features of activities;
- a description of the funding rules.

Before submitting an application, applicants are advised to read carefully the entire section.

### WHICH ACTIONS ARE SUPPORTED?

Under this strand, the European Solidarity Corps supports volunteering in humanitarian aid related solidarity activities.

Given the significant increase in global humanitarian needs and with a view to enhancing the promotion of solidarity and the visibility of humanitarian aid among Union citizens, there is a need to develop solidarity between Member States and with third countries affected by man-made or natural disasters. Contributing to assistance to people and communities outside the Union in need of humanitarian aid, based on the fundamental principles of neutrality, humanity, independence and impartiality, is an important expression of solidarity.

Activities implemented under the European Voluntary Humanitarian Aid Corps aim at contributing to providing needs-based humanitarian aid aimed at preserving life, preventing and alleviating human suffering and maintaining human dignity and to strengthening the capacity and resilience of vulnerable or disaster-affected communities. Humanitarian Aid Volunteering projects funded under this strand will offer the opportunity to young people aged 18 to 35 years old to participate in volunteering activities, aiming at supporting humanitarian aid operations. Such activities will provide young people with the opportunity to carry out tasks needed to support the activities undertaken by their host organisation.

To ensure the safety of young people, volunteering under this strand may only take place in countries:

- where humanitarian aid activities and operations take place; and
- where there are no ongoing international or non-international armed conflicts<sup>53</sup>.

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<sup>53</sup> Art 10(2) of the REGULATION (EU) 2021/888 OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL of 20 May 2021 establishing the European Solidarity Corps Programme and repealing Regulations (EU) 2018/1475 and (EU) No 375/2014

## QUALITY LABEL FOR HUMANITARIAN AID VOLUNTEERING

### WHAT IS THE QUALITY LABEL?

The Quality Label for Humanitarian Aid Volunteering certifies that an organisation is able to carry out high quality solidarity activities in compliance with the principles, objectives and requirements of the action ‘European Voluntary Humanitarian Aid Corps’. Obtaining this Quality Label is a precondition for participation only in volunteering activities in support of humanitarian aid operations.

### WHAT ARE THE DIFFERENT TYPES OF QUALITY LABEL?

When applying for a Quality Label for Humanitarian Aid Volunteering, applicant organisations can choose one of the following roles:

- **Support role** – entails supporting, preparing and/or training participants before departure, mediation between them and their host organisations and/or providing support to participants upon return from their activity. The support role also entitles the organisation to submit project applications and coordinate partnerships for Humanitarian Aid Volunteering projects;
- **Host role** – covers the full range of activities related to hosting a Solidarity Corps participant, including the development of a programme of the young person’s activities and providing guidance and support to the participant during all the phases as appropriate.

### HOW DOES IT WORK?

The Quality Label for Humanitarian Aid Volunteering is awarded following a selection process, involving three main stages: submission of application, assessment and award.

The applications for the Quality Label for Humanitarian Aid Volunteering can be submitted on a continuous basis (i.e. at any time) during the programming period, **to the Executive Agency, which is the sole implementing body for this action**. The applications will be evaluated at set intervals, according to an annual timetable, which is aligned to the timetable of the Humanitarian Aid Volunteering call for projects.

Applications will be assessed against admissibility, eligibility, selection, exclusion and award criteria (for more information on the admissibility, selection and exclusion criteria, see Part E of this Guide). Successful organisations will be awarded the Quality Label for Humanitarian Aid Volunteering. The Executive Agency will award this Quality Label and monitor compliance and may carry out periodical reassessments. The Quality Label will be valid for the entire duration of the programming period and until the end of the last project in which the organisation is involved.

In order to facilitate partner-finding and the setting up of project consortia, profiles of all organisations holding this Quality Label are published in a database<sup>54</sup> of Quality Label organisations on the European Solidarity Corps Portal. To identify potential partners, partner searching tool on the Funding and Tender Opportunities Portal<sup>55</sup> can be used.

### APPLYING FOR A QUALITY LABEL ON BEHALF OF SUPPORTING OR HOSTING ORGANISATIONS

An organisation that applies for a Quality Label in a support role or in a host role may also apply for host role on behalf of its branches located in those regions of third countries where humanitarian aid activities and operations take place and where there are no ongoing international or non-international armed conflicts, and with which it shares the same legal personality.

This procedure is designed to help larger organisations, with several branches, including when they are located in different countries.

The applicant organisation is accountable for the quality and safety of the activities offered by host organisation(s) on behalf of which it is applying.

<sup>54</sup> [https://youth.europa.eu/volunteering/organisations\\_en](https://youth.europa.eu/volunteering/organisations_en)

<sup>55</sup> <https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/portal/screen/how-to-participate/partner-search>

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## WHAT ARE THE QUALITY STANDARDS?

The European Solidarity Corps guarantees high-quality volunteering activities, through the Quality Label process. Participating organisations must respect the following principles and standards:

- **Equal opportunities and non-discrimination.** Volunteers are to be selected in a fair, transparent and objective way, regardless of their gender, ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, political opinion or disability. No previous qualifications, educational level, specific experience or language knowledge must be required. In order to promote inclusion, participation in volunteering activities must be free of charge for the volunteer. The activities should respect the principles set out in Article 9 of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.
- **Avoidance of job substitution.** Volunteering activities must not substitute traineeships or jobs, so that any adverse effect on potential or existing paid employment is avoided. The involvement of volunteers should complement the work of paid staff. They should not replace paid staff or undercut their pay and conditions of service.
- **Avoidance of harmful activities.** Security and safety of the young people, participating organisations and target groups must be ensured. Such security and safety should include appropriate clearance requirements for volunteers working with vulnerable groups in accordance with applicable national law. Volunteering activities should be implemented with due consideration for the impact of unforeseen circumstances such as environmental crises, conflicts or pandemics. The activities should respect the principles set out in the EU Guidelines for the Promotion and Protection of the Rights of the Child<sup>56</sup>.
- **Provision of high quality, easily accessible and inclusive activities.** The volunteering tasks should enable young people to develop skills and competencies for personal, social and civic development. Particular attention will be given to the capacity of hosting organisations in third countries and the need to embed the activities of volunteers within the local context and to facilitate volunteers' interaction with local humanitarian actors, the hosting community and civil society. The value and benefits of European Solidarity Corps volunteering should be recognised for volunteers, through identification and documentation of learning outcomes, preferably through Youthpass.
- **Adequate training, working and volunteering arrangements.** Safe and decent living and working conditions must be ensured for volunteers. The young people and the organisations must sign a volunteering agreement that will outline the rights and responsibilities of both parties and will include a well-defined set of volunteering tasks.
- **"No profit".** In accordance with the Financial Regulation, beneficiaries must not derive any profit from the activities funded by the grants awarded. Furthermore, volunteering should cover the participants' expenditure arising from participation in such solidarity activities but should not provide them with salaries or an economic benefit.

## TASKS AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF ORGANISATIONS HOLDING A QUALITY LABEL FOR HUMANITARIAN AID VOLUNTEERING

In addition to complying with the above-mentioned principles, organisations implementing humanitarian aid volunteering projects must carry out specific tasks and responsibilities in order to ensure high quality activities. When applying for a Quality Label, organisations must be able to demonstrate their capacity to perform the tasks and take up responsibilities relevant to the role they are applying for, as outlined in the requirements below. This list is not comprehensive, and in some cases, the set of tasks and responsibilities may overlap between host and support organisations, without prejudice to the overall quality of the activity.

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<sup>56</sup> [https://home-affairs.ec.europa.eu/policies/internal-security/organised-crime-and-human-trafficking/together-against-trafficking-human-beings\\_en](https://home-affairs.ec.europa.eu/policies/internal-security/organised-crime-and-human-trafficking/together-against-trafficking-human-beings_en)

**ORGANISATIONS APPLYING FOR A SUPPORT ROLE**

<p><b>Management</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Ensure compliance with the European Solidarity Corps Regulation, in particular the articles and the recitals which refer to the Volunteering under the European Voluntary Humanitarian Aid Corps</li> <li>▪ For the coordinators: Ensure effective coordination in cooperation with all other participating organisations;</li> <li>▪ Prepare risk assessment/security procedures/evacuation plan;</li> <li>▪ Carry out monitoring, reporting and evaluation in compliance with programme procedures;</li> <li>▪ Carry out dissemination and information activities.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Before the activity</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Ensure selection procedure in line with the principles for transparency and equal treatment;</li> <li>▪ Select trained young people from the European Solidarity Corps Portal;</li> <li>▪ Ensure that the volunteer signs a volunteering agreement<sup>57</sup></li> <li>▪ Ensure that the volunteer receives support in carrying out language preparation (if applicable, support to carry out the Online Language Course and assessment provided by the Commission);</li> <li>▪ Identify learning needs and set learning objectives;</li> <li>▪ Provide adequate preparation for the volunteers before departure, according to the individual needs and tailored to the specificities of the project, the activity and the host country and in line with the Training and Evaluation Cycle;</li> <li>▪ Provide support to the volunteers to reflect on the learning process and to identify and document their learning outcomes, through EU validation tools, in particular Youthpass, Europass or national tools;</li> <li>▪ Encourage the volunteer to follow the General Online Training offered on EU Academy and accessed through the European Solidarity Corps portal;</li> <li>▪ Ensure that volunteers meet relevant clearance requirements, and undergo specific preparation, particularly for volunteers involved in activities with vulnerable groups in accordance with applicable national law;</li> <li>▪ Ensure the participation of the volunteers in the pre-departure training session including security briefing;</li> <li>▪ Ensure that the volunteers have pre-departure medical assessment;</li> <li>▪ Ensure that the volunteer is covered by the obligatory insurance plan foreseen by the Corps;</li> <li>▪ Ensure that the volunteer understands the terms and conditions of the insurance scheme;</li> <li>▪ Ensure that the volunteer has all necessary visas/residence permit or any other required document for volunteering activities in the country of the host organisation;</li> <li>▪ Make or facilitate travel arrangements to/from the country where the volunteering activity takes place;</li> <li>▪ Take necessary measures to ensure the security and safety of the volunteers;</li> <li>▪ Designate support contact for the volunteers and stay in touch with the volunteers and the host organisation throughout the activity;</li> <li>▪ Support the settlement and the transition of the volunteers;</li> <li>▪ Provide necessary additional support to the volunteers and the hosting organisation, in particular when the volunteers are young people with fewer opportunities;</li> </ul>
<p><b>During the activity</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ For the coordinators: coordinate with the hosting organisations to ensure that the project is progressing as planned;</li> <li>▪ To take part in the mid-term evaluation and final reviews;</li> <li>▪ To provide mediation support in case of disagreement between the host organisation and the volunteer.</li> </ul>
<p><b>After the activity</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Ensure medical and psychological examination of volunteers is provided;</li> <li>▪ Provide support to help reintegration of the volunteer into the home community;</li> <li>▪ Provide the volunteer with the opportunity to exchange and share experiences and learning outcomes;</li> </ul>

<sup>57</sup> Please see section “other support measures – agreement with participants”

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Encourage the involvement of the volunteer in dissemination and exploitation of results;</li> <li>▪ Provide guidance regarding further education, training or employment opportunities;</li> <li>▪ Ensure the participation of the volunteer in possible European Solidarity Corps events.</li> </ul>
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**ORGANISATIONS APPLYING FOR A HOST ROLE**

<b>Management</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Ensure compliance to the European Solidarity Corps Regulation, in particular the articles and the recital which refer to the Volunteering under the European Voluntary Humanitarian Aid Corps.</li> </ul>
<b>Before the activity</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Cooperate, as necessary, with the coordinator and the support organisation in preparing the activity and the volunteers for their volunteering activities.</li> </ul>
<b>During the activity</b>	<p><i>Learning, mentoring and support</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Ensure that the volunteer attends on-arrival training, including security briefing;</li> <li>▪ Ensure organisation of mid-term evaluation;</li> <li>▪ Ensure that the volunteer attends the full Training and Evaluation Cycle (if applicable);</li> <li>▪ Offer to the volunteer the opportunity to carry out a well-defined set of tasks, allowing some of the volunteer’s ideas, creativity and experience to be integrated;</li> <li>▪ Identify clear learning opportunities for and with the volunteer;</li> <li>▪ Provide task related support, supervision and guidance to the volunteer through experienced staff;</li> <li>▪ Provide support to the volunteers in their learning process;</li> <li>▪ Support the volunteers undertaking language courses, if necessary;</li> <li>▪ Identify a mentor who is responsible for providing to the volunteers:                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– support to carry out self-reflection on the learning</li> <li>– personal support</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p><i>Volunteering living and working conditions</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Support the volunteers’ visa and/or residence permit or other legally required documents for the volunteering activity</li> <li>▪ Ensure safety and security of participants in accordance with the approved procedures/evacuation plan;</li> <li>▪ Provide adequate living and working conditions to the volunteer;</li> <li>▪ Facilitate integration of volunteers in the local community and interaction with expatriate community;</li> <li>▪ Ensure conflict prevention, mediation and well-being, including psychological support where necessary;</li> <li>▪ Ensure that means of local transport are available for the volunteer;</li> <li>▪ Ensure access to means of communication for contact with consortium partners, other European Solidarity Corps volunteers and close relatives;</li> <li>▪ Provide agreed financial contributions to the volunteer.</li> <li>▪ Provide necessary additional support to the volunteers, in particular when the volunteers are young people with fewer opportunities.</li> </ul>
<b>After the activity</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Provide final performance review and debrief to the volunteer;</li> <li>▪ Follow up and evaluation of the action with the coordinator and/or support organisation immediately after the voluntary activity is completed;</li> <li>▪ Contribute to impact and dissemination of result phases and support the final evaluation of the project.</li> </ul>

## WHAT ARE THE CRITERIA USED TO ASSESS THE QUALITY LABEL?

### ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA AND APPLICATION INFORMATION

<b>Eligible applicants</b>	Quality Label for support role – international organisations <sup>58</sup> and any organisation legally established in an EU Member State or a third country associated to the Programme.
	Quality Label for host role – any organisation operating in those regions of third countries not associated to the Programme where humanitarian aid activities and operations take place and where there are no ongoing international or non-international armed conflicts.
	A Quality Label application should only refer to the entirety of an organisation with its departments and/or branches <sup>59</sup> . Groups of young people are not eligible.
<b>Duration of Quality Label validity</b>	The Quality Label is valid for the whole duration of the programming period 2021 – 2027, subject to compliance monitoring and periodical reassessments which will be carried out by EACEA.  After the end of the 2021-2027 programming period, the Quality Label remains valid until the end of the last activity in which the organisation is involved. The Quality Label for lead organisations remains valid until the end of the last grant agreement signed by the beneficiary organisation.
<b>When to apply?</b>	Applications can be submitted on a continuous basis. Organisations willing to take part in Humanitarian Aid Volunteering projects under the 2025 call must have submitted their application for Quality Label electronically by 24 September 2024 at 17:00 (Brussels time). Organisations willing to participate in the Humanitarian Aid Volunteering projects under the 2026 call must submit their applications for Quality Label electronically, via the Funding & Tenders Portal Electronic Submission System (see part E) by 23 September 2025 at 17:00 (Brussels time).
<b>Where to apply?</b>	To the Education and Culture Executive Agency via the Funding & Tenders Portal Electronic Submission System (see part E).
<b>Exclusion Criteria</b>	A declaration of honour signed by the legal representative must be annexed to the application form.

### AWARD CRITERIA

To be considered for receiving a Quality Label, proposals must meet the award criteria below:

#### ORGANISATIONS APPLYING FOR A SUPPORT ROLE

<b>Relevance</b>	<p>The extent to which:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ the organisation’s motives for participation in the European Solidarity Corps are convincing and clearly explained</li> <li>▪ the organisation’s objectives address issues relevant for the objectives of the European Solidarity Corps</li> <li>▪ the organisation’s activities and its experience are relevant for the humanitarian aid and development cooperation fields and have a strong solidarity dimension</li> <li>▪ the organisation demonstrates commitment to the humanitarian principles of humanity, neutrality, impartiality and independence, as well as with the ‘do no harm’ principle</li> <li>▪ the proposal is relevant for the respect and promotion of shared EU values, such as respect for human dignity, freedom, democracy, equality, the rule of law and respect for human rights, as well as fighting any sort of discrimination.</li> </ul>
<b>Quality of measures</b>	The extent to which the organisation respects the programme quality standards by:

<sup>58</sup> The obligation to be established in an EU Member State, or a third country associated to the Programme does not apply to international organisations.

<sup>59</sup> Departments within an organisation can not apply for separate Quality Labels. Quality Labels are awarded at organisation level (one legal entity = one Quality Label).

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ carrying out activities that respond to humanitarian aid needs and provide tangible benefits to target groups and local communities</li> <li>▪ ensuring that security, health and safety of volunteers are guaranteed and any risks concerning the proposed accommodation and work placement are properly tackled</li> <li>▪ taking necessary measures to respect the avoidance of harmful activities principle</li> <li>▪ ensuring adequate practical and logistical arrangements</li> <li>▪ ensuring adequate mentoring support for volunteers</li> <li>▪ ensuring adequate personal support for volunteers, including conflict prevention and mitigation measures and psychological support</li> <li>▪ taking adequate measures to ensure appropriate living and volunteering conditions for the young people</li> <li>▪ taking adequate measures to support the specific needs of young volunteers with fewer opportunities</li> <li>▪ avoiding job substitution, routine tasks and tasks with low learning impact</li> <li>▪ promoting environmental sustainability and responsibility and incorporating sustainable and environmental-friendly practices in activities</li> <li>▪ making use of digital tools and methods to complement and improve activities</li> </ul>
<p><b>Organisational Capacity</b></p>	<p>The extent to which:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ the organisation has demonstrated the ability, capacity and commitment to allocate appropriate resources to manage the European Solidarity Corps activities in accordance with applicable quality standards, in particular the safety and security standards for the Humanitarian Aid Volunteering</li> <li>▪ the organisation has proposed appropriate steps to ensure continuity of activities in case of organisational changes</li> <li>▪ the organisation demonstrates a good approach towards working with partners</li> <li>▪ the measures for assuring the sustainability of the planned activities are of appropriate high quality</li> <li>▪ the organisation ensures quality project management, including proper communication and coordination measures with other support or host organisations</li> <li>▪ the measures aimed at disseminating the outcomes of the activities within and outside the participating organisations are appropriate and of high quality</li> <li>▪ the measures for monitoring and evaluating the activities are appropriate and of high quality.</li> </ul>

**ORGANISATIONS APPLYING FOR A HOST ROLE**

<p><b>Relevance</b></p>	<p>The extent to which:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ the organisation’s motives for participation in the European Solidarity Corps are convincing and clearly explained</li> <li>▪ the organisation’s objectives address issues relevant for the objectives of the European Solidarity Corps</li> <li>▪ the organisation’s activities and its experience are relevant for the humanitarian aid and development cooperation fields and have a strong solidarity dimension</li> <li>▪ the organisation demonstrates commitment to the humanitarian principles of humanity, neutrality, impartiality and independence, as well as with the ‘do no harm’ principle</li> <li>▪ the proposal is relevant for the respect and promotion of shared EU values, such as respect for human dignity, freedom, democracy, equality, the rule of law and respect for human rights, as well as fighting any sort of discrimination.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Quality of measures</b></p>	<p>The extent to which the organisation respects the programme quality standards by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ carrying out activities that respond to humanitarian aid needs and provide tangible benefits to target groups and local communities</li> <li>▪ ensuring that security, health and safety of volunteers are guaranteed and any risks concerning the proposed accommodation and volunteering activity are properly tackled</li> <li>▪ taking adequate measures to ensure appropriate conditions for the living and the volunteering activity are in place for the volunteers</li> <li>▪ taking necessary measures to respect the avoidance of harmful activities principle</li> <li>▪ ensuring adequate practical and logistical arrangements</li> <li>▪ ensuring adequate mentoring support for volunteers during the activity</li> <li>▪ ensuring adequate personal support for volunteers, including conflict prevention and mitigation measures and psychological support</li> <li>▪ taking adequate measures to support the specific needs of young volunteers with fewer opportunities</li> <li>▪ avoiding job substitution, routine tasks and tasks with low learning impact</li> <li>▪ promoting environmental sustainability and responsibility and incorporating sustainable and environmental-friendly practices in activities</li> <li>▪ making use of digital tools and methods to complement and improve activities</li> </ul>
<p><b>Organisational Capacity</b></p>	<p>The extent to which:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ the organisation has demonstrated the ability, capacity and commitment to allocate appropriate resources to manage the European Solidarity Corps activities in accordance with applicable quality standards, in particular the safety and security standards for the Humanitarian Aid Volunteering</li> <li>▪ the organisation has proposed appropriate steps to ensure continuity of activities in case of organisational changes</li> <li>▪ the organisation demonstrates a good approach towards working with partners</li> <li>▪ the organisation ensures quality project management, including proper communication and coordination measures with the coordinator and/or the support organisation</li> <li>▪ the measures for assuring the sustainability of the planned activities are of appropriate high quality</li> <li>▪ the measures aimed at disseminating the outcomes of the activities within and outside the participating organisations are appropriate and of high quality</li> <li>▪ the measures for monitoring and evaluating the activities are appropriate and of high quality.</li> </ul>



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## **MONITORING, REPORTING AND QUALITY ASSURANCE MEASURES**

### **CHANGING/UPDATING THE QUALITY LABEL**

The organisations holding a Quality Label for Humanitarian Aid Volunteering must notify the awarding body of any changes in their organisation that should be reflected in their Quality Label.

### **MONITORING AND CHECKS**

The Executive Agency may carry out regular or ad hoc monitoring visits to verify that the organisations holding a Quality Label still meet the quality standards.

### **TERMINATION**

In cases of serious underperformance, failure to comply with Executive Agency's instructions and deadlines or repeated violations of the Programme rules, the Quality Label for Humanitarian Aid Volunteering can be withdrawn. The Executive Agency will give due consideration to each case of non-compliance and will prompt the organisation well in advance to allow enough time to take corrective measures.

In addition, the Executive Agency may terminate a Quality Label if the organisation ceases to exist.

## VOLUNTEERING UNDER THE EUROPEAN VOLUNTARY HUMANITARIAN AID CORPS (HUMANITARIAN AID VOLUNTEERING)

### WHAT IS VOLUNTEERING IN SUPPORT OF HUMANITARIAN AID OPERATIONS?

Volunteering under the European Voluntary Humanitarian Aid Corps<sup>60</sup> (Humanitarian Aid Volunteering) takes place in third countries where there are ongoing humanitarian aid operations. This action gives the opportunity to young people aged 18 to 35 years old to contribute to society by short-term or long-term volunteering activities aimed at improving living conditions of people in need. Volunteering is a full-time<sup>61</sup> non-remunerated activity. Projects must be in line with the humanitarian aid principles of humanity, neutrality, impartiality and independence, as well as with the ‘do no harm’ principle.

### WHAT ARE THE OBJECTIVES?

The projects funded under Humanitarian Aid volunteering should:

- a. where relevant, facilitate the transition from the humanitarian response to long-term sustainable and inclusive development
- b. contribute to strengthening the capacity and resilience of vulnerable or disaster-affected communities;
- c. reinforce disaster preparedness and disaster risk reduction;
- d. link relief, rehabilitation and development;
- e. ensure a high level of safety and security for volunteers.

Additionally, to increase the quality and impact of the action on local communities, projects could include complementary activities. They should also facilitate the active involvement of local staff and volunteers from the countries and communities in which they are implemented.

### WHICH ACTIVITIES CAN BE SUPPORTED?

The following activities are supported under Humanitarian Aid Volunteering:

- Individual volunteering
- Volunteering teams
- Complementary activities

#### INDIVIDUAL VOLUNTEERING

Individual volunteering is an activity in the field of humanitarian aid of a duration of 2 to 12 months, excluding travel time.

This type of volunteering provides young people with the opportunity to carry out tasks needed to support the activities undertaken by the host organisation.

Individual volunteering activities take place cross-border, in a country different from the country of residence of the volunteer(s), as detailed in the section on general eligibility criteria – “geographical location”.

Mentor expertise should support the individual volunteering activities.

<sup>60</sup>Art. 2 (12) and 9 of [Regulation \(EU\) 2021/888 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 20 May 2021 establishing the European Solidarity Corps Programme and repealing Regulations \(EU\) 2018/1475 and \(EU\) No 375/2014 \(europa.eu\)](#)

<sup>61</sup> At least 30 and not more than 38 hours per week

### VOLUNTEERING TEAMS

Volunteering teams are activities that allow in principle teams of 5 to 40 participants coming from at least two different EU Member States or third countries associated to the Programme to volunteer together for a period between 2 weeks and 2 months (up to 59 days, excluding travel time).

Volunteering teams activities take place cross-border, in a country different from the country of residence of the participants, as detailed in the section on general eligibility criteria – “geographic location”.

In volunteering teams, volunteers are deployed over a short period of time to perform a clearly defined activity, which can be realised in a short time frame. Despite their short duration, these activities will be valuable both for the volunteers and for the communities benefitting from this service. This format may facilitate the participation of people with fewer opportunities due to the short duration and the participation in a collective endeavour.

Specific mentor expertise could be involved in support of the activities of volunteering teams and could be reinforced where young people with fewer opportunities are involved.

The advantages of this specific type of group activities compared to individual volunteering activities include the following:

- Volunteers will carry out the activity in a group. This can be an incentive for young people who do not feel ready to embark into challenging experiences on their own;
- The activity will be shorter in its duration. This can foster the participation of those young people who cannot commit for a long period of time because of their studies or jobs, but still want to be of help for the local community.

### COMPLEMENTARY ACTIVITIES

Complementary activities are relevant side activities related to the projects and designed to add value, give more resonance to their results and increase their impact on local and/or regional level. Such complementary activities aim also at raising awareness on the value of volunteering and solidarity at local level, reaching out to the local community. The complementary activities that require the physical presence of (a) volunteer(s) should take place within the timeframe of the volunteering activity.

Complementary activities can contribute to capacity building of local organisations and communities, to create a feeling of ownership by actors at local level. Specific expertise and experienced/professional profiles can be contracted in this framework, aiming to ensure further support to volunteers (including people with fewer opportunities) and intergenerational sharing of experience.

Complementary activities could include meetings, coaching, conferences, job shadowing, training courses, practical workshops involving local youth, etc.

## HOW TO SET UP A PROJECT?

A project supported by this strand should include one or more volunteering activities with at least 15 participants per project. The volunteering activities can be combined in a flexible manner, depending on the objectives of the project, the identified needs at local level and the needs of the participating organisation(s) and volunteers.

A project is implemented by at least three eligible applicants with a valid Quality Label for Humanitarian Aid Volunteering, of which at least two must be support organisations from two different countries and at least one host organisation with no affiliation to another support organisation taking part in the project.

A project will typically consist of the following stages:

- Planning (defining the needs, objectives, development of work programme, schedule of activities, etc.);
- Preparation (practical arrangements, selection of volunteers, set up of agreements with partners and participants, linguistic/intercultural/learning and task-related preparation of volunteers before departure, preparatory meetings);
- Implementation of volunteering activities (including support and guidance to volunteers during the activities);
- Follow-up (including the evaluation of the activities, issue of the certificate of participation as well as the dissemination and exploitation of the project's outcomes).

All participating organisations involved in Humanitarian Aid Volunteering must hold a valid Quality Label for Humanitarian Aid Volunteering. For more information on the Quality Label for Humanitarian Aid Volunteering, please refer to the relevant section of this Guide (Part C – Quality Label for Humanitarian Aid Volunteering).

Organisations taking part in Humanitarian Aid Volunteering should cover the following roles:

- A **support role** that entails supporting, preparing and/or training volunteers before departure (including tailor made training for people with fewer opportunities), a mediation between them and their host organisations and/or providing support to volunteers upon return from their activity. The support role also entitles the coordinator to submit project applications and manage the consortium.
- A **host role** that covers the full range of activities related to hosting a volunteer, including the development of a programme of the volunteer’s activities and providing guidance and support to the volunteer during all the phases of the project as appropriate (some of these activities can be carried out by a support organisation involved in the same project). Specific arrangements for people with fewer opportunities must be put in place.

Associated partner organisations may contribute to a project to cater for specific needs, such as to facilitate the inclusion of young people with fewer opportunities. Associated partner organisations do not need to hold a Quality Label for humanitarian aid volunteering, as they are not meant to host and send volunteers.

Arrangements and procedures foreseen by the host organisation to ensure the security and safety of volunteers, including for their safe return in case of a serious security incident, must be in place prior to the arrival of the volunteer at the place of the volunteering activity in a third country.

No age limit applies to coaches, mentors and experts, who are part of the ‘learning and training component’ for Humanitarian Aid Volunteering as set out in Article 10(1) and are not considered as ‘participants’ in the sense of Article 2(3) of the Regulation.

## SELECTION OF PARTICIPANTS

Young people who want to participate in the European Solidarity Corps must register on [the European Solidarity Corps Portal](#)<sup>62</sup>. Young people with fewer opportunities may receive support from appropriate entities specialised in dealing with young people with fewer opportunities, to complete the registration phase. The European Solidarity Corps Portal offers a meeting place for young people and organisations holding a Quality Label and willing to implement solidarity activities. Organisations have to select participants that are registered in the Portal and successfully completed the mandatory trainings organised by the Commission.

Young people interested in participating in Humanitarian Aid Volunteering need to complete on the [EU Academy](#)<sup>63</sup> Portal a self-assessment and specific online training, followed by a test. This option is usually available throughout the year – however, the access to the training environment can be temporarily closed in case of too high demand. Those who pass the test may be invited for a face-to-face training of 5 days, offered in several training venues in Europe. It should be noted that the number of places for face-to-face training is limited. Upon completion of the face-to-face training, the candidates will be able to apply for vacancies proposed by Humanitarian Aid Volunteering projects for individual volunteering or for volunteering teams. The project members will manage the entire selection process and inform the candidates on its outcome.

## QUALITY AND SUPPORT MEASURES

A set of measures and services, such as training, language learning support, insurance, identification and documentation of the competences acquired are foreseen to ensure the quality of the volunteering activities and a strong learning dimension for the young people. Some of these measures are optional and could be used depending on the interest and needs of the young people and some of them are compulsory. Organisations should aim to promote the use of the **General Online Training** and the **Online Language Support** and assessment offered by the Commission as part of the volunteers’ learning experience. Detailed information on those measures is available in Part D of this Guide.

<sup>62</sup> [https://youth.europa.eu/solidarity\\_en](https://youth.europa.eu/solidarity_en)

<sup>63</sup> <https://academy.europa.eu/>

## PRIORITIES

### INCLUSION AND DIVERSITY

The European Solidarity Corps seeks to promote equal opportunities and access, inclusion and fairness. Organisations should design accessible and inclusive activities, taking into account the views and needs of participants with fewer opportunities.



To support **inclusion of young people with fewer opportunities**, additional support measures and funding that allow participating organisations to better accommodate and cater for the needs of young people with fewer opportunities are available.

In order to benefit from additional funding applicants will be required to describe how they will involve in activities young people who are at comparative disadvantage i.e. they have comparatively fewer opportunities than their peers in the same country/area/age group/situation. In this sense, “involving” does not refer to a target group that the applicant organisation may work with. It means to facilitate the participation of young people with fewer opportunities by designing the project activities in an inclusive and accessible way. This requires specific measures of outreach and support to ensure that young people with fewer opportunities can participate in activities on equal terms as others.



Wherever relevant, projects should take into account the **specific needs of women** and seek to involve women and groups and networks of women.

### ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION, SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AND CLIMATE ACTION

A project should incorporate green practices in all facets. Organisations and volunteers involved should have an environmental-friendly approach when designing the activities, which will encourage them to discuss and learn about environmental issues, make them think about what can be done at their level and help them come up with alternative greener ways of implementing their activities.

Volunteering activities should promote environmentally sustainable and responsible behaviour among young people, raising the awareness about the importance of acting to reduce or compensate for the environmental footprint of activities.

Volunteering activities should be designed and implemented with environmental consciousness by e.g. integrating sustainable practices such as reducing waste and recycling.

### DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION

Participating organisations are encouraged to make use of digital tools and learning methods to complement and add value to their activities, to improve the cooperation between partner organisations, support further dissemination of the outcomes or support for community building. The General Online Training and the Online Language Support, available in EU Academy, should also be used (see part D for more information about these tools).

Organisations could also envisage adding virtual cooperation between volunteers, and between volunteers and participating organisations, before, during and after the activities. Online activities may contribute to lowering the threshold of participation for young people with fewer opportunities or to strengthening the overall impact of the projects. Blending volunteering activities with other virtual components may also add to the quality of the project.

### PARTICIPATION IN DEMOCRATIC LIFE

The European Solidarity Corps supports all participating organisations in improving the quality of their projects by integrating a participatory dimension, offering young people relevant opportunities to actively engage and participate in the conception and implementation of project activities as a pathway to discovering the benefits of active citizenship and participation in democratic life. Resources for enhancing the participatory dimension of supported projects can be accessed i.e. via the website [participationpool.eu](http://participationpool.eu). Links with and involvement in existing national, international or (other) EU initiatives and platforms revolving around participation and civic engagement are also encouraged.

## WHAT ARE THE CRITERIA USED TO ASSESS PROJECTS?

The projects are selected and managed by the Education and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA).

Projects will be assessed against the following criteria: admissibility, eligibility, award (for the admissibility, exclusion and selection criteria please see Part E of this Guide).

The eligibility criteria that must be respected are listed here below:

### ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

<b>Eligible applicants</b>	<p>Any public or private entity, whether non-profit or profit making, local, regional, national or international, legally established in an EU Member State, a third country associated to the Programme or a third country not associated to the Programme where humanitarian aid activities and operations take place and where there are no ongoing international or non-international armed conflicts<sup>64</sup>, or any international organisation<sup>65</sup>.</p> <p>Participating organisations (support and host role) must hold a valid Quality Label for Humanitarian Aid volunteering at the application deadline and for the entire duration of the project. Eligible participating organisations are expected to form a consortium.</p>
<b>Consortium composition</b>	<p>A consortium must consist of at least three eligible participating organisations with a valid volunteering Quality Label for Humanitarian Aid Volunteering. It must include at least two support organisations from different EU Member States or third countries associated to the Programme, and at least one host organisation which is a separate legal entity with no affiliation to the support organisations taking part in the project.</p> <p>Only an eligible participating organisation established in one of the EU Member States or third country associated to the Programme may submit an application for funding on behalf of the consortium.</p> <p>Affiliated entities do not count towards the minimum eligibility criteria for the consortium composition.</p>
<b>Eligible participants</b>	<p>Young people aged 18 to 35<sup>66</sup> who are legally residing in a EU Member State or in a third country associated to the Programme and who have registered in the European Solidarity Corps Portal to express their interest in engaging in Humanitarian Aid Volunteering. Candidates who apply for individual volunteering must not have yet participated in the European Solidarity Corps' Humanitarian Aid individual volunteering.</p> <p>The participant must also have successfully completed the mandatory trainings organised by the Commission.</p>
<b>Venue of activities</b>	<p>Activities have to take place in the country of one of the applicant organisations except in duly justified cases related to the objectives of the call.</p> <p>Volunteering under this action may only take place at participating organisations in third countries not associated to the Programme, where humanitarian aid activities and operations take place and where there are no ongoing international or non-international armed conflicts.</p>
<b>Duration of project</b>	<p>Projects should last 12, 24 or 36 months (extensions are possible, if duly justified and through an amendment). The duration has to be chosen at application stage, based on the objectives of the project and on the type of activities planned over time.</p>
<b>Where to apply ?</b>	<p>To the Education and Cultural Executive Agency via the Funding and Tenders Portal Electronic Submission System (see part E).</p>

<sup>64</sup> Art 10(2) of the Regulation (EU) 2021/888 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 20 May 2021 establishing the European Solidarity Corps Programme and repealing Regulations (EU) 2018/1475 and (EU) No 375/2014

<sup>65</sup> The obligation to be established in a Member State or a third country associated to the Programme does not apply to international organisations.

<sup>66</sup> Participants must have reached 18 and must not be older than 35 at the start date of the activity.

<b>When to apply?</b>	Proposals must be submitted by 24 April 2025 at 17.00 (Brussels time).
<b>How to apply?</b>	Please see part E of this guide on how to apply.
<b>Exclusion criteria</b>	A Declaration of Honour signed by the legal representative must be provided with the application.

## AWARD CRITERIA

To be considered for funding, proposals must:

- a) score at least 60 points; and
- b) score at least half of the maximum points in each of the categories of the award criteria mentioned below.

In case of equal scores, priority will be given to proposals that received the highest scores for “relevance, rationale and impact” and then to those that received the highest scores for “Quality of project design” and then to those that received the highest scores for “Quality of project management”.

<p><b>Relevance, rationale and impact</b> (maximum 40 points)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The relevance of the project to the objectives of the European Solidarity Corps and to the specific objectives of this action;</li> <li>• The extent to which the proposal relates and integrates the relevant activities in the project set-up;</li> <li>• The relevance of the project to the needs and objectives of the hosting participating organisations and target groups in third countries;</li> <li>• The relevance to which the proposal will address well defined humanitarian needs of local communities and the extent to which the project will provide benefits to such communities within which the activities are carried out;</li> <li>• The extent to which the project is consistent with and complementary to other areas of Union external action, in particular humanitarian aid policy, development cooperation policy, enlargement policy, neighbourhood policy and the Union Civil Protection Mechanism;</li> <li>• The extent to which the project involves young people with fewer opportunities as participants;</li> <li>• The quality of measures for evaluating the impact of the project, assuring its sustainability and disseminating its outcomes;</li> <li>• The added value of the complementary activities to the project objectives and the extent to which they contribute to capacity building of local organisations and communities.</li> <li>• The extent to which the proposal is relevant for the respect and promotion of shared EU values, such as respect for human dignity, freedom, democracy, equality, the rule of law and respect for human rights, as well as fighting any sort of discrimination.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Quality of the project design</b> (maximum 40 points)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The appropriateness and quality of all the phases of the project: Consistency between project objectives and activities proposed; logical links between the identified problems, needs and solutions proposed (e.g. logic of intervention); feasibility of the project within the proposed time frame;</li> <li>• The clarity, completeness and quality of the action, including appropriate phases for preparation, implementation, monitoring, evaluation and dissemination;</li> <li>• The appropriateness of measures for selecting and/or involving volunteers in activities;</li> <li>• The quality of proposed measures to reach out and involve young people with fewer opportunities;</li> <li>• The quality of the non-formal learning methods and measures proposed to enable the volunteers to gain skills and competences that are valuable for their personal, educational, social, civic and cultural development;</li> <li>• The quality of arrangements for the recognition and validation of participants’ learning outcomes, as well as the consistent use of European transparency and recognition tools;</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The quality of the practical arrangements for volunteers (logistics, travel arrangements, living conditions, etc.);</li> <li>• The quality of management of the volunteers’ work and support modalities;</li> <li>• The specific measures in place to guarantee security, health and safety of volunteers and to tackle risks at the proposed accommodation and work placement, including the evacuation procedure.</li> <li>• The extent to which the project facilitates the active involvement of local staff and volunteers from the countries and communities in which it is implemented;</li> </ul>
<p><b>Quality of project management</b> (maximum 20 points)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The extent to which the project involves an appropriate mix of complementary participating organisations with the necessary profiles and experience to successfully deliver all aspects of the project;</li> <li>• The quality of cooperation and communication between the participating organisations, as well as with other relevant stakeholders;</li> <li>• The extent to which the management structures and decision-making mechanisms are organized within the consortium;</li> <li>• The quality of the evaluation methods and indicators, the monitoring and verification of the outreach and coverage of the activities and results;</li> <li>• Cost effectiveness: the proposed budget is sufficient for proper implementation and the project is designed to ensure the best value for money.</li> </ul>



## WHAT ARE THE ELIGIBLE COSTS AND THE APPLICABLE FUNDING RULES?

Maximum EU grant per project: 650,000 EUR.

	Eligible costs	Financing mechanism	Amount	Rule of allocation
<b>Volunteer support</b>	Contribution to travel costs and exceptional costs such as visa and vaccinations costs, residence permits, medical certifications and contribution to additional personal expenses for volunteers (pocket money).	Contribution based on unit costs	35 EUR per day per volunteer	Based on the duration of the activity (if necessary, including also one travel day before the activity and one travel day following the activity) per volunteer, including accompanying persons.
<b>Organisational Support</b>	Contribution to management costs (e.g. planning, finances, coordination and communication between partners, administrative costs) and to costs directly linked to the implementation of volunteering activities (e.g. preparation, monitoring and support of volunteers, validation of learning outcomes) and costs linked to the subsistence of volunteers (e.g. boarding, lodging and local travel).  Contribution to complementary activity costs.  Contribution to other costs such as financial guarantee.	Contribution based on unit costs	63 EUR per day per volunteer	Based on the duration of the volunteering activity (if necessary, including also one travel day before the activity and one travel day following the activity) per volunteer, including accompanying persons.
<b>Inclusion support</b>	Contribution to costs incurred by organisations to support the participation of young people with fewer opportunities on equal terms as others such as investment in physical assets, reinforced mentorship, preparatory visits.	Contribution based on unit costs	25 EUR per day per volunteer	Based on the duration of the activity (if necessary, including also one travel day before the activity and one travel day following the activity) per volunteer with fewer opportunities, excluding accompanying persons. This contribution is allocated in addition to the volunteer support.