



## BRIEFING FOR MEMBERS

# EUROPEAN SOLIDARITY CORPS

## What is the European Solidarity Corps initiative?

The European Solidarity Corps is a European Initiative which creates opportunities for young people to volunteer or work in projects that benefit communities and people around Europe. Young people have the possibility to engage in a project either abroad or in their own country.

Since 2017, the European Solidarity Corps finances solidarity related-projects run by organisations aiming at promoting solidarity and responding to societal challenges. All private and public organisations implementing solidarity activities through their projects can apply for a grant. One of the necessary conditions to run European Solidarity Corps projects is to obtain a Quality Label recognizing the organisation.

The projects must be in line with the [Mission and Principles of the Corps](#), and the organisation must adhere to the [Charter of the European Solidarity Corps](#).

The European Solidarity Corps supports different actions:

- Volunteering activities. The volunteering strand offers young people between 18 and 30 years old the opportunity to carry out full-time voluntary service of between two and twelve months in another country or in their own country.
- Occupational activities. The occupational strand provides young people with the opportunity of a job, traineeship or apprenticeship in a wide range of sectors which are engaged in solidarity-related activities, and which need highly motivated and socially-minded young people. Young people engaged in the Occupational part of the European Solidarity Corps for a job will have an employment contract and will be paid by the organisation. **The Grant does not cover the salary of the young employed.**

An organisation can apply to different calls for proposals:

- Volunteering partnerships
- Volunteering projects
- Volunteering teams in high priority areas
- Traineeships and Jobs

Once an organisation receives a grant, its project will appear on the European Solidarity Corps Portal. The organisation can access the portal with its login at any time. There are two ways to involve young people in a project: the organisation can either search participants in the portal database and select young people that could be the best suited to join the project or advert for opportunities and let the young directly apply.





## Focus on volunteering:

### Two different volunteering activities can be funded:

- **Individual volunteering:**

Individual volunteering is a full-time (at least 30 and not more than 38 hours per week) unpaid solidarity activity for a duration from 2 to 12 months. This type of solidarity activity will give young people the chance to take part in the daily work of organisations and perform tasks that can have a real impact. Activities can take place either in a country other than the country of residence of the participant (cross-border) or in the country of residence of the participant (in-country).

- **Volunteering team:**

Volunteering teams are solidarity activities which allow teams of 10 to 40 participants coming from at least two different countries to volunteer together for a period between 2 weeks and 2 months. Such solidarity activities could especially contribute to the inclusion of young people with fewer opportunities in the European Solidarity Corps. At least a quarter of the volunteers must come from abroad. In volunteering teams, European Solidarity Corps' volunteers will carry out tasks for a project over a short period of time (usually, but not exclusively, during holidays, breaks between study periods, transition from education to work, etc.).

In both cases, participants are covered by complementary insurance and they can access a range of support services such as online linguistic support and training. Their travel costs from home to the venue of the project and back will be covered, as well as their accommodation and food. Participants will also receive a small allowance for their personal expenses. The organisation receiving a Solidarity Grant to support volunteering activities will be responsible for the preparation (including a visit for the volunteers before the start of the activities), implementation and follow-up of the solidarity activity.

The volunteering activities can be implemented through three types of projects corresponding to different call for proposal.

- **Volunteering projects:** are the most common type of project. The format allows the applicant organisations to apply for a European Solidarity Corps grant to implement one or more volunteering activities.
- **Volunteering partnerships:** are a specific project format designed for enabling experienced volunteering organisations to develop and implement long-term projects, within a stable contractual framework. Volunteering Partnerships will also help enhance the quality and quantity of European Solidarity Corps volunteering opportunities. Projects should strategically respond to important societal needs; contribute to strengthening communities while enabling young people to acquire useful experience, skills and competences for their personal, educational, social, civic and professional development, thereby improving their employability. Volunteering Partnerships may implement the same volunteering activities as Volunteering Projects, except complementary activities
- **Volunteering teams in high priority areas:** is a distinct project format that supports activities by volunteering teams with a specific focus on thematic priorities defined each year at EU level.



## Traineeships and jobs

**Traineeships** are periods of full-time work practice of between 2 to 6 months renewable once for a maximum duration of 12 months within the same participating organisation. This type of solidarity activity should include a learning and training component, to help the participant gain relevant experience with a view to developing competencies useful for the personal, educational, social, civic and professional development. It should be based on a written traineeship agreement concluded at the beginning of the traineeship in accordance with the applicable regulatory framework of the country where the traineeship takes place. Traineeships must not substitute jobs and should be remunerated by the host organisations.

**Jobs** are solidarity activities for young people, for a period from 3 to 12 months, paid by the participating organisation employing the European Solidarity Corps participant. The financial support to participating organisations offering jobs shall not exceed twelve months in cases when the duration of the employment contract exceeds twelve months. Such jobs shall include a learning and training component and be based on a written employment contract, which respects all the terms and conditions of employment as defined in national law or applicable collective agreements, or both, of the country in which the job is being carried out.

## Why is the European Solidarity Corps relevant for Eurodiaconia members?

As providers of social and healthcare services, Eurodiaconia members are running projects promoting solidarity and responding to a diverse range of societal challenges such as the integration of third-country nationals or the inclusion of persons with disabilities. Furthermore, involving volunteers in their daily activities is a common practice of many Eurodiaconia members. Therefore, the European Solidarity Corps is a relevant instrument for them. The European Solidarity Corps represents a new source of funding for Eurodiaconia members to further develop their projects responding to societal challenges. It is also an opportunity to involve more volunteers in their project and providing them with a good support.

A variety of projects can be rewarded by a European Solidarity Corps grant. The different types of European Solidarity Corps projects are in line with many activities run by Eurodiaconia members. Some examples can be found in the table below, as well as on the [ESC non-exhausting topics list](#).

**Inclusion projects:** this wide topic covers many issues Eurodiaconia members are working on such as fighting discrimination and intolerance, working with people with disabilities or additional support needs, or working with minority groups such as Roma. For instance, if your organisation is running an after-school center for Roma children, applying to the European Solidarity Corps is a interesting way to involve volunteers in the running for your activities.

**Reception and integration of refugees and migrants' projects:** across Europe Eurodiaconia members are working for the integration of refugees and migrants. The European Solidarity Corps rewards projects helping to provide a safe welcome for people newly arrived in Europe and assisting in integrating them into their new communities.

**Health and wellbeing projects:** projects encouraging general health and wellbeing, such as health lifestyles and actives aging can also be rewarded by a European Solidarity Corps grant. For instance, a project involving volunteers in nursing home can be a European Solidarity Corps project.

**Education and Training projects:** A wide range of projects linked to education and training can be funded under the European Solidarity Corps, such as projects combatting early school leaving, increasing basic competences or teaching foreign languages. For example, through a European Solidarity Corps project you could involve volunteers in tutoring activities in Kindergartens or in elementary schools.



## How to apply to a European Solidarity Corps grant?

A summary of the different steps to follow to apply for a European Solidarity grant can be found below. However, if you are interested to respond to one of the calls for proposal, we strongly encourage you to read the [European Solidarity Corps guide](#) for more details.

### Create an EU login and register to the participant portal.

Before filling out any application, the first step is to register to the participant portal. You need to create an EU Login account via [this link](#) and then you can access the portal and register on behalf of your organisation. Your login is a unique identifier and is necessary for the submission of applications. It enables the organisation to fill in the online application forms in a simpler manner. **Note that if you have already applied to an EU grant you don't need to create a new EU Login.**

### Apply to the Quality Label.

The Quality Label is the entry ticket for the European Solidarity Corps, it certifies that the organisation is able to ensure the necessary framework conditions for young people to take place in solidarity activities in compliance with the principles and objectives of the European Solidarity Corps and further requirements necessary to ensure quality. Any organisation willing to apply for a grant must have the Quality Label. **Note that if you already have the accreditation of the European Voluntary Service or Erasmus + Volunteering covering the period 2018-2020, you don't need to apply for the Quality Label.**

Three types of Quality Label exist depending on the participants you want to involve in your project:

- The Quality Label for Volunteering – supporting and/or host role,
- The Quality Label for Traineeship
- The Quality Label for Jobs.

For any application, it is important to know the following points:

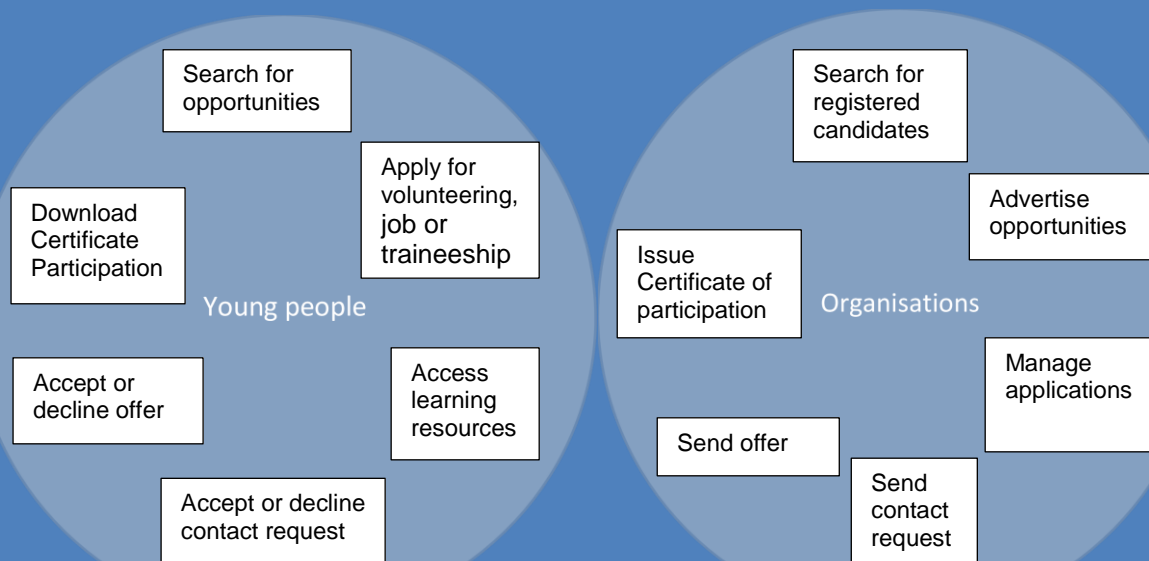
- To apply for the Quality Label your organisation needs a legal identity.
- The information you give on your organisation in the application will be visible on the European Solidarity Corps portal, therefore a detail and attractive description is important.
- Your organisation needs to fulfil the awarded criteria: the relevance of the organisation's aims to the European Solidarity principles; the capacity of the organisations to ensure quality project management (including proper communication and coordination measures with partners); the capacity of the organisations to ensure logistical arrangements; the appropriateness of measures to ensure a solid learning dimension of participants; the appropriateness of measures for the recognition and validation of participants' learning outcomes as well as consistent use of European transparency and recognition tools; the extent to which the organisation will ensure a transparent and fair selection process.
- To apply to a Quality Label, you need to contact your country's [European Solidarity Corps Agency](#).
- Applications for Quality Labels can be done on a continuous basis.
- If you have applied for the Quality Label but not received the answer yet, you can still apply for the grant.



Apply to one of the grants.

## European Solidarity Corps Portal:

If you receive a grant, your project will appear on the European Corps portal. You can access the portal any time to select participants or to advertise for your project.



## Principles and criteria

For applying to the European Solidarity Corps, your project and your organisation have to respond to the following principles: equal treatment, equal opportunities and non-discrimination, avoidance of job substitution, provision of high-quality activities with learning dimension focusing on personal, social-educational and professional development, adequate training, working and volunteering arrangements, safe and decent environment and conditions, and, the 'no-profit principle' in compliance with the Regulation (EU, Euratom) 2018/10464 .

Furthermore, the European Solidarity Corps aims to promote social inclusion by facilitating the access to young people with fewer opportunities. Young people with fewer opportunities are young people who need additional support due to the fact that they are at a disadvantage compared to their peers because of various obstacles, such as disabilities, health problems, educational difficulties, cultural differences or economic, social or geographical obstacles, including young people from a marginalised community or at risk of facing discrimination.



- **Check the compliance with the criteria.**

You need to check that your organisation is in line with the eligible and selection criteria (financial capacity and operational capacity). You must also check the exclusion criteria. The details for all the criteria can be found in part D of the guide.

- **Check the financial conditions.**

The grants are delivered under financial conditions. Different types of grant are delivered, and the eligible costs can be found in part B of the guide. Note that as for other EU grants, the principles of no retroactivity, non-cumulative award, no-profit activities and co-financing are applying to the European Solidarity Corps' call for proposal.

- **Fill-in and submit the application form.**

After all those steps, you can fill the application forms corresponding to the call for proposals you want to apply for. The applications forms can be found on the website of the European Commission, or of your National Agency. The application form must be filled in one of the official languages of a participating country and must respect the deadline.

**Note that only online e-form will be received, any other forms won't be considered.**

## How to reach potential participants?

### Age and nationality criteria

- The European Solidarity Corps activities are open to young people aged 17-30.
- The volunteering activities are open to young people residing in the EU Member States as well as the following Partner Countries:
  - o Liechtenstein, Iceland and Norway;
  - o Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, Montenegro, Serbia;
  - o Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova, Ukraine;
  - o former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Turkey;
  - o Russian Federation.
- Jobs and traineeships, as well as solidarity projects, are open to participants residing in the EU Member States.

### Registering to the ESC portal

As explained before, a main point in the ESC selection process is to invite potential participants to register to the [European Solidarity Corps portal](#). On the portal, organisations that have access to the participant database can invite targeted users to participate in their activities. These organisations can also advertise opportunities on the same portal, so that young people can apply directly for the advertised position.



## Expected outcomes

In drafting the volunteering projects proposals as well as the activities descriptions for the ESC web portal, it is important to highlight the following expected main outcomes for young participants:

- improved skills for personal, educational, social, civic, cultural and professional development;
- enhanced employability and transition into the labour market;
- increased sense of initiative and entrepreneurship;
- increased self-empowerment and self-esteem;
- improved foreign language competences;
- better awareness of the EU common values;
- enhanced intercultural awareness;
- more active participation in democratic life and in society in general;
- increased motivation for further engagement in solidarity activities.

## Further information and links

European Solidarity Corps Charter. [https://europa.eu/youth/solidarity/charter\\_en](https://europa.eu/youth/solidarity/charter_en)

European Solidarity Corps Guide. <https://ec.europa.eu/youth/sites/youth/files/library/documents/2018-european-solidarity-corps-guide.pdf>

European Solidarity Corps – Our Mission and Principles. [https://europa.eu/youth/solidarity/mission\\_en](https://europa.eu/youth/solidarity/mission_en)

European Solidarity Corps – Types of European Solidarity Corps projects. [https://europa.eu/youth/solidarity/topics\\_en](https://europa.eu/youth/solidarity/topics_en)

National Agencies. <https://ec.europa.eu/youth/sites/youth/files/library/documents/na-esc-2018.pdf>