

Alliance Strategic Direction

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Introduction

This document sets the ground and the future directions of the Alliance of European Voluntary Service Organisations for the period 2022-24.

It outlines the vision, mission, principles, permanent fields of action and working priorities of the network, as stated in the policy papers, constitutional documents and resolutions adopted in recent years by the General Assemblies of the network.

The strategic priorities of the next 3 years have been identified through the process of the Congressino 2019 - the midterm evaluation of the first Alliance Congress that took place in 2014 and set the desired lines of work and improvement until 2024.

The Strategic Direction is intended to be used by the whole network as a compass for the conception and development of actions of all kinds, thanks to the initiative of the members through their volunteers and staff. The Alliance welcomes the initiative particularly of young people active in the IVS and related movements, to advance the work of the network towards the strategic direction set in this document, and ultimately towards fulfilling the Alliance mission in line with its principles.

About the Alliance

The Alliance of European Voluntary Service Organisations is a European based International Non-Governmental Youth Organisation of like-minded organisations not aligned to other structures at a European Level. Its members are active national organizations, which work

together on the quality and development of International Voluntary Service. The Alliance is an organisation for its members and by its members. It is “a democratic, accessible, efficient, supportive and open network, based on the active voluntary participation of its diverse members, a cooperative structure and a permanent secretariat. The trust and common values form the main ground for the cooperation among member organisations and partners.” (Congress resolution 2014).

Vision

The Alliance strives for a world in which all beings live in peace and mutual respect towards each other and their environment.

Mission

To promote and facilitate cooperation in the field of International Voluntary Service in Europe and beyond, as a means to advance towards the vision.

Concretely:

- it supports its members in order for them to impact society according to the Alliance vision and principles.
- it practices and disseminates a culture of exchange, cooperation and democratic participation.

Guiding principles and key approaches

Cooperation and solidarity

The Alliance is a democratic, accessible, efficient, supportive and open network, based on the active voluntary participation of its diverse members, a cooperative structure and a permanent secretariat. The sense of belonging to a cooperative network and having an equal role in an international community of organisations built on trust and solidarity, is a strong point of the Alliance membership.



Democratic participation & active citizenship

The Alliance aims at fostering the engagement of citizens in activities that promote and sustain the democratic participation of all in society, always respecting human rights. It applies to the IVS and educational activities run by the members and Alliance, as well as to the internal life and external relations of the network.

Gender equality

Gender equality means equal rights and equal opportunities for everyone



regardless of gender identity and sexual orientation. Gender equality recognises the diversity of everyone's interests, needs and priorities. It is a human right.



Inclusion

The Alliance believes that volunteering is an opportunity and a right for everyone. Diversity in IVS is a value and an aim for the Alliance, therefore we implement activities, develop tools and train members to enhance greater diversity in workcamps and other activities, so that they become fully accessible to all people with fewer opportunities.

Intercultural understanding

Through engaging member organisations and volunteers with communities of different cultures, the Alliance aims to foster the awareness, understanding and appreciation of one's own and other cultures.



International voluntary service

IVS projects are organised by Alliance members either on a national or regional basis but always in partnership with local communities. They engage multicultural groups of volunteers in a wide range of community development tasks.

Mobility

It not only enables the possibility for everybody to travel, but also to change points of view by meeting different cultures, and learning and understanding them through international voluntary service projects.



Non-formal education

It refers to the learning which takes place outside formal educational curricula. NFE activities involve people on a voluntary basis and are carefully planned to foster the participants' personal and social development. The Alliance considers NFE and intercultural learning as a way to enable personal growth and social development of all participants in our activities.

Peace

Peace not only is the absence of conflict, but also requires a positive, dynamic participatory process where dialogue is encouraged and conflicts are solved in a spirit of mutual understanding and cooperation.

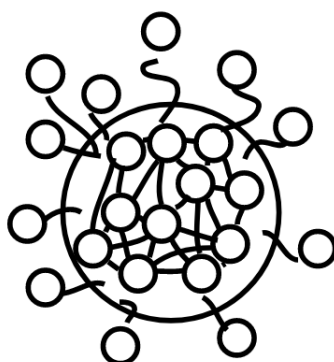


Sustainability

In line with the Sustainable Development Goals, IVS projects build on a range of approaches to sustainability – environmental work, reconstruction, peace-building, social work etc. – and aim for the development of resilient local communities with strong relationships to surrounding environments.

Permanent fields of action

In order to shape the future the Alliance envisions and strives for by promoting and facilitating cooperation in the field of International Voluntary Service in Europe and beyond, the network focuses on three fields of action. Each field is broken down into subfields, describing the specific objectives and expected results.



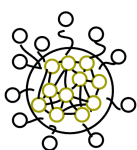
1. Organisation and Network: The Alliance as a participatory, sustainable and resilient organisation and network

1.1 Governance (participatory): The Alliance is a cooperative network, building on the active contribution and involvement of its members, volunteers as well as a strong secretariat. Its governance structure is open, democratic, transparent, accountable and efficient. It encourages active participation, grass-root initiative and collaboration, offering a forum for each member organisation to contribute to their full potential according to their resources and possibilities.

1.2 Resources (sustainable): The Alliance draws from solid, diverse and sustainable means to sustain itself. It sustainably and responsibly manages the ecological, human and economic resources nourishing the network.

1.3 Development (resilient): The Alliance moves with the times and is able to constantly renew itself in order to both adapt to changing systems and address the challenges they bring about. This implies continuously monitoring and evaluating the functioning and de facto impact of the network, its activities and membership.

1.4 Network life: The Alliance appreciates the variety and diversity of its member organisations as a value. It seeks to grow in a qualitative and sustainable way. The shared principles and decisions of the membership are respected and implemented by all members not only on network level activities, but also through members' activities, projects and mutual cooperation. Conflicts between member organisations are dealt with in a clear and transparent way.



2. Membership: Alliance members as active members of the network, sustainable and resilient organisations and proficient actors in the IVS movement

2.1 Network support and solidarity (active members): The Alliance is an accessible and cooperative network building on mutual support, solidarity and collaboration as guiding principles of its membership. It facilitates exchanges, empowers and supports its members by giving access to relevant information and tools, and it offers space for the creation of new types of cooperation and collective projects according to the needs and requests of the members. Specific support and onboarding is provided to newcomers of any kind – organisations, staff, volunteers etc.

2.2 Professional and organisational capacity-building (sustainable and resilient organisations): The Alliance provides members, staff and volunteers with sufficient opportunities and support to develop on a professional and organisational level, according to their needs. In particular, this includes skills in and tools for monitoring and evaluation, organisational development and advocacy.

2.3 Value-based capacity-building (proficient actors of the IVS movement): The Alliance provides members, staff and volunteers with sufficient opportunities to get familiar with and actively live the network values and principles. This includes for instance specific training offers and info material, campaigns as well continuous practice as part of the everyday network life.



3. External representation and advocacy: the Alliance, its membership and volunteers as IVS ambassadors

3.1 Advocacy and visibility: The Alliance actively advocates and spreads its principles and the ideals of the IVS movement, in particular reaching out to potential volunteers (including

volunteers from different social and personal backgrounds), project stakeholders, and institutions (including like-minded organisations with common interests).

3.2 External communication: The Alliance uses adequate means and tools for communication towards its stakeholders, drawing interest for and informing about the IVS movement and Alliance members' activities. Insights as to the impact of IVS form an essential part of communications.

3.2 External cooperation and acknowledgement: The Alliance is open for cooperation with like-minded stakeholders, in particular with regards to its vision and principles as well as its ambition to create meaningful impact, requiring it to constantly monitor and evaluate its activities. It is acknowledged and consulted as a proficient actor in the fields of volunteering and social programmes, while workcamps are recognised as a form of non-formal education.

Priorities for 2022-2024

Within the three fields of action, the following priorities will be specifically worked on in the timeframe 2022-2024.

These priorities stem from insights gained at the Alliance Congressino in 2019 ([see the Resolution and download the Annexes](#)), as well as current insights and needs expressed by Alliance members through surveys and recent events ([Training Needs Survey 2020](#), Joint Meeting September 2021).

Deeper considerations, root causes and specific roadmaps, that should serve as guidelines for future initiatives, are available in the mentioned documents.



1. Organisation and Network: The Alliance as a participatory, sustainable and resilient organisation and network

1.1 Governance (participatory):

- **Structure revision:** developing and testing proposals to change the network structure, roles and task division (*see Congressino Recommendation II and Annex II Structure*)

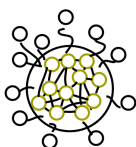
1.2 Resources (sustainable):

- **Secretariat revision:** developing a financial plan to empower the network Secretariat that should be composed of two full-time staff positions - in order to fully address

members' needs and expectations - as well as an autonomous office (see *Congressino Recommendation VI and Annex VI Secretariat*)

1.3 Development (resilient):

- **Impact and quality of IVS projects:** plan for and evaluate the impact and quality, as two separate elements, of Alliance and members' activities (see *Congressino Recommendation III and Annex III IVS-impact*)
- **Workcamp fees system:** establish exchange practices (e.g. fees) that are fair, clear and transparent, taking into account volunteers' perspective and solidarity as well as the financial sustainability of Member Organisations (see *Congressino Recommendation V and Annex V Decreasing number of volunteers-2*)



2. Membership: Alliance members as active members of the network, sustainable and resilient organisations and proficient actors in the IVS movement

2.1 Network support and solidarity (active members):

- **Enhance active participation of Alliance members in the network:** identify members' needs, address their motivation to be part of the network (e.g. offer space for sharing), create solidarity schemes (see *Congressino Recommendation I and Annex I Active participation*)
- **COVID-19 measures:** Plan and implement COVID-19 relief measures for the Alliance community

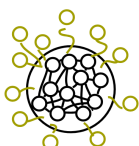
2.2 Professional and organisational capacity-building (sustainable and resilient organisations):

- **Monitoring and evaluation of quality and impact:** provide members with tools, know-how and capacities to monitor and evaluate their activities (see *Congressino Recommendation I and Annex VII Capacity building strategy*)
- **Increase volunteer exchanges and projects:** Alliance provides space / trainings / tools to its Member organizations in following topics in order to build their capacities: Online & Offline promotion, Quality of projects description (Giving visibility to extra activities), Stronger promotion of our values, Funding for workcamps, Working with different target groups, Develop new kinds of projects, Competitors (alternatives of volunteering), GDPR (see *Congressino Recommendation V and Annex V Decreasing number of volunteers-1*)

- **Pre-departure training for outgoing volunteers:** mutual exchange of good practices (see *Training Needs survey 2020*)
- **Retaining volunteers** and valorising their experiences after workcamps (see *Training Needs survey 2020*)
- **Campleaders:** training and recruitment (see *Training Needs survey 2020*)

2.3 Value-based capacity-building (proficient actors of the IVS movement):

- **Inclusion/access for all** (see *Training Needs survey 2020 and Accessing Policy Paper*)
- **Environmental sustainability** (see *Sustainability Policy Paper*)
- **Gender equality** (see *Gender Equality Policy Paper*)



3. External representation and advocacy: the Alliance, its membership and volunteers as IVS ambassadors

3.1 Advocacy and visibility:

- **Recognition of workcamps** as tool of non-formal education (see *Congressino Recommendation IV and Annex IV Template NFE*)
- **Value-based action & campaigns** on: inclusion/access for all, environmental sustainability, gender equality and freedom of movement (see *Training Needs 2020 survey and related Policy Papers*)
- **Involve more people in the advocacy actions and external representation** through projects such as proMOTION, the Pool of Ambassadors and capacity building initiatives (from *Joint Meeting 2021*)

3.3 External cooperation and acknowledgement:

- **Participate in the international forums and bodies of other relevant stakeholders:** European Youth Forum-YFJ, Council of Europe and Advisory Council, CCIVS & other IVS networks, European Union, United Nations etc.

Reference documents

All the following documents, upon which the Strategic Direction is based, have been discussed and adopted by the General Assemblies of the network (adoption year):

- 1st Alliance Congress Resolution ([2014](#))
- Position paper on Freedom of Movement ([2017](#))
- Sustainability Policy Paper ([2017](#))
- Accessing Policy Paper ([2017](#))
- Educational Framework ([2018](#))
- Gender Equality Policy Paper ([2018](#))
- Congressino Resolution and annexes/roadmaps ([2019](#))
- What is our IVS? ([2019](#))
- Alliance Representation Guide ([2020](#))