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European Solidarity Corps Volunteering Teams Time2Team Guidelines







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Introduction

This document is produced as a result of the Time2Team project and meant to support international volunteering organisations which are interested in joining the cooperation projects funded by the European Solidarity Corps.

Project context

It is an undeniable fact, shared among a majority of youth organisations, that the European Solidarity Corps (ESC) has brought new perspectives for volunteering in Europe. The programme was first announced in 2016 by Jean-Claude Juncker during his State of EU speech, surprising all organisations active in the field of youth. Thanks to its ambitious plan it aims to reach 100000 young people by 2020, while the European institutions have all agreed to continue its implementation further on, with an increased budget allocation for the new Multiannual Financial Framework.

The ESC is built upon the successful implementation of the previously known as European Voluntary Service programme, a flagship programme of the EU for the last 20 years. Even though similarities between the two programmes are evident, there are new elements introduced with its major one being the Volunteering Teams. Volunteering Teams in its core idea involve from 10 to 40 young people for a period of 2 weeks to 2 months supporting a local community through an international volunteering project.

Over the last 100 years of its existence, the International Voluntary Service movement has been developing international workcamps as its core activity, which now have been recognised by the EU through the creation of an EU Programme, the European Solidarity Corps and the insertion of the concept of volunteering teams therein. Every year, more than 5000+ local projects are organised with the participation of more than 40000 international volunteers from all over the world.

While ESC is an opportunity both for youth organisations and young people, the programme also poses certain threats to already existing forms of youth participation and engagement being developed and implemented by youth organisations. The new programme and procedure through the new platform (PASS) also shake up our ways of working, ensuring good quality of exchanges, volunteers preparation and projects itself.

Consequently, the project aims to ensure the sustainability of the international volunteering activities, whether funded by an EU programme or being funded by organisations' own sources as well as to upscale already existing methods that will lead to increased quality and recognition of youth work and volunteering in Europe.

Through a thorough identification of the already existing practices and methodological analysis, the consortium will be able to present standardised methods and tools for youth workers and volunteering organisations working in the field of international volunteering and mobility.

<u>Project aims and objectives</u>

The main objectives of this project include:

- identify best practice, successful working methods and tools for the development of volunteering team activities within the IVS movement, and extended,
- standardise and upscale existing practice in the field of International Volunteering,
- increase the quality of youth work through enhanced methodological planning, preparation, mentoring and follow up of volunteering team activities,
- disseminate the project results to other stakeholders implementing volunteering teams,
- ensure empowerment, by upscaling the impact of international mobility for the integration of young people with fewer opportunities, migrants and refugees in local and international actions for social change.

Based on the experience of the organisations participating in the project, we aim to analyse the current reality, exchange and standardise good practice and be able to multiply the results to other IVS organisations implementing ESC Volunteering Teams.

Through this project and the produced outcomes (including this document), the partnership aims to improve the quality of the projects offered as well as extend the practice already in place with more than 100 youth/volunteering organisations in Europe.

Time 2 Team partner organisations

CONCORDIA (France) www.concordia.fr



ALLIANSSI (Finland) www.nuorisovaihto.fi



COMPAGNONS BÂTISSEURS (Belgium) www.compagnonsbatisseurs.be



EGYESEK (Hungary) www.egyesek.hu



ELIX (Greece)
www.elix.org.gr



GRENZENLOS (Austria) www.grenzenlos.or.at



IBG (Germany)
www.ibg-workcamps.org



LUNARIA (Italy)
www.lunaria.org



SOLIDARITES JEUNESSES (France) www.solidaritesjeunesses.org



ALLIANCE OF EUROPEAN VOLUNTARY SERVICE ORGANISATIONS (Europe)

www.alliance-network.eu



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European Solidarity Corps Volunteering Teams Guidelines

General information about European Solidarity Corps Volunteering Teams

The European Solidarity Corps (ESC) aims to promote solidarity as a value to enhance the engagement of young people in accessible and high quality solidarity activities.

It contribute to strengthen cohesion, solidarity, democracy and citizenship in Europe, while also responding to societal challenges and strengthening communities.

Volunteering offer opportunities for young people to take part in structured solidarity activities contributing to the ultimate benefit of the communities within which the activities are carried out.

Volunteering teams are activities that allow teams of participants coming from at least two different countries to volunteer together for a short period.

Such solidarity activities could especially contribute to the inclusion of <u>young people with fewer opportunities</u> in the ESC.



European Solidarity
Corps funding for
volunteering projects
helps organisations
broaden their impact
by hosting volunteers
or sending volunteers
abroad.



In volunteering teams, ESC volunteers will carry out tasks for a project over a short period of time. Despite their shorter duration, these activities will be valuable both for the individuals and for the communities in which the volunteering takes place.

European Solidarity Corps (ESC) Volunteering Teams:

- last between 2 weeks and 2 months (14 to 59 days excluding travel days),
- is full-time (between 30 and 38 hours a week),
- is composed by volunteers at least coming from 2 different countries (at least a quarter of the volunteers must come from a country other than the one where the activity takes place),
- with between 10 and 40 volunteers, including youngsters with fewer opportunities,
- and is usually abroad, though it can be in the home country of the volunteers.

Participants are young people who express their willingness to participate in the ESC by registering on the ESC Portal. Registration at the ESC Portal is possible as of 17 years of age but participants must have reached 18 and must not be older than 30 at the start date of the activity.

Organisations taking part must hold an appropriate Quality Label (ESC volunteering accreditation).



Funding

If your organisation applies for a volunteering project, the grant should cover the following costs:

- project management costs (e.g. planning, finances, coordination)
- activity costs (e.g. preparation, monitoring of and support for participants, accommodation and food)
- contribution to participants' travel costs
- support for participants with fewer opportunities
- pocket money for the volunteers
- Exceptional costs (visa costs, passport costs and so on)

To have more information regarding the General call for proposals, the European Solidarity Corps Guide, the Quality Label or how to apply for it, please refer to these webpages:

https://europa.eu/youth/solidarity/organisations/before-you-apply_en https://europa.eu/youth/solidarity/organisations/quality-label_en_

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Selection of suitable projects



Always check the priorities in the current ESC programme guide!

https://europa.eu/youth/sites/default/files/european_solidarity_corps_guide_2022_en_v2.pdf

Where to find the most recent copy of the programme guide?

https://europa.eu/youth/solidarity/organisations/before-you-apply_en

- In countries that usually provide local or national grants: focus on projects that have less or no funding!
- In countries that do not usually provide local or national grants: create new projects that can support local partners who otherwise don't have the possibility to provide food, accommodation or who work with marginalised/vulnerable young people.
- Choose local partners that can host at least 12 participants. The minimum requirement for an ESC volunteering team is 10 participants (maximum 40 participants). In order to be on the safe side regarding no-shows and last-minute cancellations, we recommend planning with a minimum of 12 participants.
- Inform your local partner about the program, conditions and about the differences between volunteering teams and regular workcamps, especially if they have been hosting workcamps in the past!
- Ensure that your local partner and team leaders are properly equipped to support the learning process of the young people involved.
- If the project is organised by a local host, it is recommended to have a written agreement about sharing tasks, responsibilities and the grant division.

If you want to draft a project with a special emphasis on the impact, you can refer to the results of the Solidarités Jeunesses project called "Changing Perspectives" which provides valuable information about it. The project results can be found following this link:

lien !!!!

Keep in mind inclusion and social aspects, such as

- including local participants with fewer opportunities,
- including international participants with fewer opportunities,
- including refugees and asylum seekers.

Writing project applications



Always read the current version of the ESC programme guide!

https://europa.eu/youth/solidarity/organisations/before-you-apply_en

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Volunteering Teams Guidelines



Travel distances

- Declare participants from different "distance band" countries so that there is enough budget foreseen for travel support.
- Keep a realistic composition of the final group according to our experiences (e.g. 1/3rd with 180€ lump sum, 1/3rd with 275€, 1/3rd with 360€).
- Ask for travel support for national volunteers with a 180€ lump sum, this way you may include national volunteers, who have to travel a longer distance.
- Check your statistics and include the countries you usually receive most volunteers from.
- Don't forget: at least a quarter of the participants have to be legally residing in another country than the one where the project takes place.

| Travel rates (ESC guide 2022) | | | | | | |
|-------------------------------|---------|--------------|--|--|--|--|
| Travel distances | Amount | Green travel | | | | |
| Between 10 and 99 KM | 23€ | / | | | | |
| Between 100 and 499 KM | 180€ | 210€ | | | | |
| Between 500 and 1 999 KM | 275€ | 320€ | | | | |
| Between 2 000 and 2 999 KM | 360€ | 410€ | | | | |
| Between 3 000 and 3 999 KM | 530€ | 610€ | | | | |
| Between 4 000 and 7 999 KM | 820€ | / | | | | |
| 8 000 KM or more | 1 500 € | / | | | | |

Distance calculator:

https://erasmus-plus.ec.europa.eu/resources-and-tools/distance-calculator



Green travel

Green travel is defined as lower emissions means of transport such as bus, train or car sharing.

Keep in mind that the program encourages the volunteers to use sustainable transport, which can be included in your funding. Volunteers can travel up to 6 days in total which can be put in the application in order to ask for organisational support, pocket money and inclusion support.

At least 50% of the transportation (in terms of distance) should be done in an alternative way.

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Inclusion support is a lump sum and the amount is calculated per day and per volunteer considered with fewer opportunities. It can be kept by the hosting organisation, or given to the sending organisation or the volunteer depending on the support needed.

Including participants with fewer opportunities (e.g. 25%) shows on the one hand that we have quite ambitious goals in terms of inclusion and accessibility; on the other hand the experience of CBB shows that it is achievable and realistic.

Exceptional costs

- Ask for additional support for visa costs for a substantial percentage of participants so that there is a budget available if needed. (e.g. 30 or 50 % of participants) if you plan host volunteers from other countries than EU countries.
 We recommend planning 120€ per participant, which is based on the current price for a visa for Turkish volunteers.
- Consider applying for exceptional costs to cover real costs that the volunteer with fewer opportunities might not be able to afford in order to participate in your project: covid tests, passport costs, vaccinations etc.
- Reinforced mentorship (check conditions on the application form). We recommend asking for additional support for the inclusion of participants with fewer opportunities (mentoring, preparation, and possibly accompanying person) for a substantial percentage of participants, so that there is a budget available if needed.
- Beware! Your "in country" participants are not covered by Cigna! But you can cover the costs of their insurance by asking exceptional costs (based on real costs).

Keep in mind that there is a maximum amount for the organisational support (2000€ per Volunteering Teams activity; 225 euros per long term ESC volunteer, up to 4500€ maximum) per application!

Presentation, project descriptions and volunteers' recruitment



How and when to present the volunteering team projects?

Do not publish volunteering team projects on the ALLIANCE Placement Tool or any other placement tool before you have received the approval!

When planning the volunteer's recruitment, please consider:

- To book minimum of 2 places per project for young people with fewer opportunities,
- To have 12 volunteers as minimum instead of 10 so that you can afford last minute cancellations and no shows
- In case you wish to welcome young people from outside of Europe, to have additional places for young people coming from outside of Europe,
- Ensure a balanced gender and nationality mix in your group.

Make sure the people responsible for dealing with ESC volunteering teams in your organisation (hosting and sending) are clearly identified in your Yellow Pages.

Add the age limit 18-30 to the project description, because you are looking for participants eligible to take part in the ESC.

The project code must contain "ESC" so that it is easily distinguishable from regular workcamp projects (e.g. CONCF-001-ESC).

Remember to select the project type as "ESC" in your placement tool backend. Add a description about ESC volunteering teams and the special conditions, which are different to workcamps, to the descriptions (e.g. in the SPECIAL REMARKS section).

Feel free to use this example provided by Concordia France and fill in your organisations name and rate for the pocket money that applies to you:

"This project is supported by the European Solidarity Corps program for young people between 18 and 30 years. It is open to all volunteers that fit the ESC criteria. The participation to the ESC volunteering teams is subject to several principles and conditions, presented on the ESC webpage:

https://europa.eu/youth/solidarity/mission_en

https://europa.eu/youth/solidarity/young-people/volunteering_en_

- Volunteers do not have to pay any fee (neither sending nor participation fee) to attend the project.
- Volunteers need to enrol in the PASS, the European Solidarity Corps Portal; "Hosting Organisation" will organize their matching in the portal with the volunteering project.
- Volunteers will receive pocket money, calculated on basis of "rate of your country" €/day, during the project
- Volunteers will receive financial support for their travel, according to a
 maximum amount established in accordance with their travel distance
 and upon the presentation of tickets; the reimbursement will be done
 afterwards and by bank transfer. (make sure you always follow national
 legislation when dealing with payments and money!)
- Volunteers will have to complete a participation report, submitted online through the portal."

During the application phase we recommend giving priority to applications coming through the ALLIANCE exchange system. If an application comes through the PASS portal directly, please connect the volunteer with an ALLIANCE organization in their country of residence, if any.

Administration and division of tasks



Volunteering Teams Guidelines

We recommend using <u>Alliance ESC Exchange Agreement</u> between Sending Organisation (SO) and Hosting Organisation (HO). This document contains the data of the organisations; description of roles and tasks, the agreed sending fee and travel cost reimbursement.

We recommend keeping the sending fee of 100€, as long as the financial provisions in the program stay as they are.

Tasks of the Sending Organisation

- Informing volunteers about the ESC Portal and supporting them in registering to the database
- Sending the volunteers' application to the host organisation through PLATO, Evet or other placement system
- Discussing with volunteers if any support, assistance, etc. is needed, using the <u>A4AWG reference document</u>, and informing the host organisations accordingly
- Ensuring volunteers have valid EHIC card in case they are eligible, in case not, inform the host organisation the volunteer needs a full coverage for CIGNA
- Implementing adequate and high quality preparation for the volunteers
 - Values of volunteering and non-formal education (learning objectives), intercultural dialogue, conflict resolution, collective life, contribution to the local community
 - Give information about
 - ESC principles, ESC info-kit,
 - Alliance Quality Charter,
 - Administrative procedures throughout the project (e.g. <u>EHIC card</u>, <u>CIGNA</u>, travel reimbursement, visa, etc.)
- Supporting travel and visa arrangements if needed
- Administrating the travel reimbursement after return (in case the host organisation pays the travel cost to the sending organisation)
- Ensuring volunteers fill in the EU Survey/Participant report
- Organizing follow-up for the volunteers (evaluation meeting, post-camp event, etc.)

Tasks of the Hosting Organisation

- Preparing the Volunteer Agreement to be signed by the volunteer and the host organisation and send it to the sending organisation and to the volunteer
- (Sending organisation does not need to sign the Volunteering Agreement in case there is an existing ESC Exchange Agreement between the organisations)
- Sending the offer on the ESC Portal to the volunteers
- Enrolling volunteers under CIGNA insurance on the Mobility Tool/Beneficiary Module 14 days before the activity starts (volunteers from EU countries must have their EU health insurance card. In justified cases when volunteers are ineligible to obtain EHIC card, the host organisation requests full coverage from CIGNA).
- Sending the infosheet at least 4 weeks before the project starts including all the content written in the <u>Alliance Quality Charter</u>, <u>Alliance Guidebook</u>
- Providing the information about the applicable distance band to the sending organisation
- Distributing the pocket money to the participants upon arrival
- Once the EU Survey/Participant report is completed, issuing ESC certificates to the volunteers latest two months after the end of the project
- Making the agreed transfers to the sending organisation
- Issuing the YouthPass to the volunteers

Recommendation: Try to put all documents for the volunteer to sign and read preferably in the acceptance message or later in one e-mail!

Successful project implementation



The key for success is to stay in regular contact with your National Agency as each country has its specificities according to the national reality. Do not hesitate to communicate what is working and what is not to your National Agency.

Make sure you downloaded all the mandatory documents from the ESC website, especially list of participants, and pocket money receipt

If you applied for exceptional costs linked to reinforced mentorship, make a list of activities provided by the group leader so that it can be explained in the final report (check with your National Agency if there is a specific document that has to be filled in)

Learning process



Learning is an inherent part of volunteering.

As a coordinating organisation you can facilitate the learning process of everyone involved.

It is important to see the learning experience as a process that involves different stages and different actors.

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Volunteering Teams Guidelines

The learning journey of the volunteer starts in the **preparation / pre-departure** of the sending/supporting organisation, where learning goals are reflected.

We recommend to discuss the following topics with the volunteers:

- What is volunteering and voluntary service
- Basic information about IVS and Alliance
- Learning, service and community dimensions of a voluntary service
- Administrative aspects (travel reimbursement, insurance, practicalities, etc.)
- Content of the Volunteer Agreement coming from the hosting organisation.

You can use interactive tools and online tools as iprepare.eu.

If possible, we advise you to organise an "on-arrival session" in the project which should include:

- Presentation of the ESC program
- Information about the conditions, especially pocket money, travel reimbursement, etc. If you have international participants outside the ESC, you may include them in the session, so that they are aware of the specificities of the program.
- If it was not done before the project start, sign the volunteering agreement with the participants during / in the frame of the on arrival session with a special focus to "rights & responsibilities".

The camp leaders have their own learning goals and processes as well as a special role in the learning process of other participating volunteers. In the preparation of the camp leaders, make sure they receive and understand the non-formal education tools. They can also benefit from the facilitation of the learning process that happens during the project activity.

In order to use the tools that the EU programme provides you and the volunteers, you can have a workshop on the Youth Pass and the participants' report in the last days. Like this, the volunteers understand the different competences and can reflect on their own learning process.

Youthpass is available for all European Solidarity Corps participants for reflecting on the learning process and for documenting their learning outcomes. More info https://www.youthpass.eu/en/help/faqs/youthpass-in-solidarity-corps/

Many organisations in Alliance implement post camp events which is a follow-up meeting for the volunteers who returned home. This is to reflect and process the learning journey and give information for possibilities to participate in a new volunteering short-term or long-term volunteering project, be a camp leader, or a permanent volunteer or even staff member in the sending organisation. Here you can use different tools, like <u>l'VE Tools</u> to support volunteers in their learning reflection.

Visibility and dissemination





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Don't forget the DEOR (dissemination and exploitation of results) and use the ESC logo and material!

It is very important that every time you communicate about your project, display a simple funding statement, mentioning the European Union's support.

The funding statement "Funded by the European Union" or "Co-funded by the European Union" should always be spelled out in full and placed next to the emblem. You can download the correct version of the EU emblem together with the funding statement from our multilingual download centre.

Link to logo:

https://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/en/information/logos_downloadcenter



Link to the use of the EU emblem in the context of EU programmes: https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/default/files/eu-emblem-rules_en.pdf

In the beginning of your project, ask the volunteers to sign the document (image rights) that would allow you to publish their pictures and materials taken during the project. Make sure that you have the right to use the pictures, especially those involving children and vulnerable groups.

During the project you can make a few publications about it on behalf of the hosting organisation. You can also assign a volunteer who would do some pictures and write a report. You can also ask your volunteers to tag your organisation and ESC program in their publications on social media or even give them your instagram account. Ask them to use hashtags #wearethealliance #europeansolidaritycorps.

You can also organise a special event, invite the local authorities and local community in order to present the project (e.g. intercultural evening) in order to talk about the project and ESC program. Don't forget to invite the local media, radio or newspaper to give it more visibility on the local level.

After the project is over, you should disseminate the results:

• collect feedback and testimonies of ESC volunteers and try to valorise their experience by promoting their stories (written or video). You can ask for the same things from the local hosts

• ask your campleaders to write a feedback or a report about the project that you could put on your website and share with the members of your organisation and other stakeholders

 organise a post-camp event or a workshop where the campleaders could share the experiences of their projects, pictures and results with other youngsters in order to promote ESC program and engage them in ESC activities later on

• organise a big final evaluation event (online or offline) in order to share the project results with the new volunteers and engage new local hosts.

Here you can find a step-by-step guide on communicating about projects and their results. This guide aims to support beneficiaries of Erasmus+, European Solidarity Corps and Creative Europe programmes in their communication activities.

These communication guidelines consist of five sections organised in chronological steps. Each step is explained according to the "what, why, how" methodology, which aims to show all the details of the actions you will perform.

https://op.europa.eu/s/wblw

Reporting and Evaluation



After the project is over, you should evaluate your project with the volunteers, the campleaders and the local hosts.

At the end of the project, volunteers are asked to fill in the evaluation forms from your organisation as well as the participants' report that is available on the last day of the project. Keep in mind that some volunteers with fewer opportunities might need support while filling in this report.

According to ESC rules, you have 2 months in order to submit your project report on the Beneficiary Module to the National Agency. Depending on the year of funding, check the requirements for the documents to submit. For sure you will need to provide the documents for exceptional costs, including the receipts.

Depending on your legislation, you will need to keep all the originals for 5 to 10 years in case you have an audit.

Here is a list of documents that you need to collect and keep in case of audit:

- Participants' list
- Pocket money receipt
- Volunteer Agreements signed by the lead/host organisations and the volunteers
- Alliance ESC Exchange Agreement between the lead/hosting organisation and the sending organisation
- Electronic or original tickets depending on the requirements of your NA (sometimes you just need a signed declaration from the volunteers)
- A declaration on honour signed by the volunteers and the sending organisation in case of green travel
- All documents related to the exceptional costs, like visa costs
- If you asked for reinforced mentorship, you need a document per volunteer
- All the other invoices for the project implementation for your accountancy.

Do not hesitate to stay in touch with your National Agency in case you need any support or you have some questions.

Annexes





Is my organisation eligible?

The European Solidarity Corps is open to any public or private entity in participating or partner country, non-profit or profit-making, local, regional, national or international, that with their activities addresses important societal challenges to the benefit of a community or society as a whole.

8 steps for organisations

A quick guide to navigating your way through the European Solidarity Corps processes.

1 Get your PIC number

PIC number is a 9-digit identifier that enables you to access the online application forms. To receive it, register on the European Commission's participant portal.

Obtain your Quality Label 2

A Quality Label ensures compliance with the principles and objectives of the Corps, allows you to access the database of young people and apply for funding. To get one, apply for it online from the National Agency in your country. It will take approx. 6 weeks.

Develop your project and identify partners

Think about the aims, results and impact of your project, list activities and develop project management and governance. Find your project partners from abroad who will help you support or host participants.

- Look for partners
- Look for potential participants

Apply for grant 4

Submit your online application for grant to the National Agency in your country. There are three deadlines per year. See the next calls for proposals.

5 Receive a grant decision

Your National Agency will evaluate your application now. It will take approx. 3 months. Once your project is approved, and the grant agreement is signed, you will receive pre-financing. Select and match participants on the European Solidarity Corps portal.

Start your project 6

Project includes preparation time before the activities start, and evaluation and dissemination of results after the activities finish.

7 Implement the project activities

Meet your project participants, implement planned activities and remember to issue participants the certificate of participation and the Youthpass documenting the learning outcomes.

Close your project 8

Submit a final report and receive the final payment.



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