



Spotlight on THE EUROPEAN SOLIDARITY CORPS

December 2016



Many young Europeans are ready to volunteer or work for a good cause, in projects where their help makes a difference, and to show solidarity with those less fortunate. Finding the right opportunity can be difficult. That is why the European Solidarity Corps has been set up.

The European Solidarity Corps will provide young people with an opportunity to gain invaluable experience, develop their skills and make a contribution to society. If you're a young person looking for a volunteering or occupational experience, or an organisation looking to attract young people to your solidarity activities, then the European Solidarity Corps may well be the answer.



European Commission President Jean-Claude Juncker announced his plan for a European Solidarity Corps in his State of the Union address on 14 September 2016:

“...There are many young, socially minded people in Europe willing to make a meaningful contribution to society and help show solidarity. We can create opportunities for them to do so ... Solidarity is the glue that keeps our Union together ... Young people across the European Union will be able to volunteer their help where it is needed most, to respond to crisis situations ... These young people will be able to develop their skills and get not only work but also invaluable human experience.”



WHAT IS THE EUROPEAN SOLIDARITY CORPS?

The European Solidarity Corps brings together two complementary strands:

- The volunteering strand offers young people, through a grant, the opportunity to carry out full time voluntary service of between 2 and 12 months.
- The occupational strand provides young people with the opportunity of a job, traineeship or apprenticeship in a wide range of sectors that are engaged in solidarity activities and have a demand for highly motivated and socially minded young people.

The objective of the European Solidarity Corps is to allow more young people to take part in a wide range of solidarity activities, either by volunteering or by taking up work experience to address challenging situations across the European Union.

WHAT DOES IT INVOLVE?

Young people will be able to engage in actions and projects of a broad nature. These may cover areas such as education, health care, social and labour market integration, assistance in the provision of food and other items, shelter construction, site construction, renovation and management, reception and integration of migrants and refugees, environmental protection and prevention of natural disasters.

Participation will not only benefit young people, but also national and local authorities, non-governmental organisations and companies in their efforts to cope with various challenges and crises. Participating organisations will be able to draw on the European Solidarity Corps for the benefit of citizens and society as a whole.

WHEN WILL IT BE UP AND RUNNING?

The European Solidarity Corps is being set up gradually. On 7 December 2016, the registration system was opened for interested young people. The registration tool will soon be made available for organisations, which will be able to search for suitable candidates among the young people registered in the Solidarity Corps database.

HOW CAN I GET INVOLVED AND WHAT CAN I GET OUT OF IT?

The scheme is open to young people (17-30 years of age).

REGISTER AT:
europa.eu/solidarity-corps

When registering, you will be asked to provide your basic details. Further information will be collected at a later stage. When you register, you will be able to specify the countries you would like to be placed in, whether you want a volunteering experience or an occupational one, what type of activities interest you and what experiences and skills you have. The registration tool is available in the 24 official languages of the EU.

The European Solidarity Corps will provide young people with an opportunity not just to help others, but to receive training, improve skills and gain life experience.

For European Solidarity Corps participants in a volunteering placement, accommodation, food, travel, insurance and pocket money will normally be covered. For European Solidarity Corps apprenticeship and traineeship placements, travel costs and a subsistence allowance will normally be paid. For those in a European Solidarity Corps employment placement, there will always be a labour contract as well as a wage, in accordance with local laws, regulations and collective agreements. All participants will receive a certificate detailing the actions they have undertaken through the European Solidarity Corps.



HOW CAN MY ORGANISATION TAKE PART?

Each participating organisation — whether small or big — will need to subscribe to a Charter setting out the main principles to which they will adhere. The Charter explains the activities that fall within the scope of the European Solidarity Corps and the recruitment of participants. The Charter will also commit organisations to certify the participation in the activity, to guarantee safe living and working conditions and to provide adequate training and support to help European Solidarity Corps participants fulfil their tasks. Information will also be provided concerning the solidarity contract to be agreed between the European Solidarity Corps participants and organisations, setting out mutual rights and responsibilities.



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