EUROPEAN SOLIDARITY CORPS GUIDE

2027 Call

In case of discrepancy between language versions, the English text will prevail.

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EUROPEAN SOLIDARITY CORPS

Programme Guide 2027

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INTRODUCTION

This Guide is a tool for anybody who would like to have a thorough knowledge of what the European Solidarity Corps (referred also as 'Corps' or 'Programme') is about. This document is mainly addressed to organisations, institutions, bodies willing to organise activities under the European Solidarity Corps and young people wishing to get involved in solidarity activities supported by the Corps.

The rules and conditions for receiving a grant from the European Solidarity Corps are specified in this Guide and as such it has legal value when it comes to the selection procedures and the award of the grants.

STRUCTURE OF THE EUROPEAN SOLIDARITY CORPS GUIDE

The Guide has five main parts:

- **Part A** offers a general overview of the European Solidarity Corps, its scope and structure. It provides information about its objectives, priorities and main features; eligible countries; implementing structures and the overall budget available.
- **Part B** provides information on the Actions of the European Solidarity Corps supported under the strand "Participation of young people in solidarity activities".
- **Part C** provides information about the Actions of the European Solidarity Corps supported under the strand "Participation of young people in humanitarian aid related solidarity activities".
- **Part D** provides information concerning quality and support measures offered to participating organisations and participants during the preparation, implementation and follow-up of activities and projects[1]
- **Part E** gives information on procedures for grant application and selection of projects, as well as the financial and administrative provisions linked to the award of a European Solidarity Corps grant[2].

Furthermore, this Guide includes the following Annexes:

- **Annex I**: Glossary of terms
- **Annex II**: Multiple Participations
- **Annex III**: Contact details

The European Solidarity Corps Guide 2027 constitutes an integral part of the Call for Proposals 2027 - European Solidarity Corps (hereinafter the 'Call')[3] and sets out the conditions for participation and funding for the Call. As such, it is based on and subject to the provisions of the Regulation (EU) 2021/888 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 20 May 2021 establishing the European Solidarity Corps Programme (hereinafter 'European Solidarity Corps regulation')[4] as well as of the 2027 Annual Work Programme of European Solidarity Corps[5]. Actions included in the Call are subject to modifications through the publication of a corrigendum. Potential applicants are invited to regularly consult the European Youth Portal[6], EACEA website, the website of their National Agency, as well as the Annual Work Programme of European Solidarity Corps and its amendments. Regulation (EU, Euratom) 2024/2509 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 23 September 2024 on the financial rules applicable to the general budget of the Union (recast) (hereinafter 'EU Financial Regulation'[7]) applies. The implementation of the Call is also subject to the availability of the appropriations provided for in the draft budget after the adoption of the budget for the year by the EU Budgetary Authority or as provided for in the system of provisional twelfths.

1 Please note that this part is only relevant for the Actions covered by this guide.
2 See previous footnote.
3 https://youth.europa.eu/solidarity/organisations/calls-for-proposals_en
4 https://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/reg/2021/888/oj/eng
5 https://youth.europa.eu/solidarity/organisations/documents-resources_en
6 https://youth.europa.eu/solidarity_en
7 http://data.europa.eu/eli/reg/2024/2509/oj

PART A - GENERAL INFORMATION ABOUT THE EUROPEAN SOLIDARITY CORPS

SINGLE ENTRY POINT FOR SOLIDARITY ACTIVITIES

The European Union is built on solidarity, a shared value which is strongly felt throughout European society. Solidarity defines the European project and provides the necessary unity to cope with current and future crises by holding a strong moral ground. Solidarity provides a clear compass to guide the European youth in their aspirations for a better Union.

Young people need easily accessible opportunities to engage in solidarity activities, which could enable them to express their commitment to the benefit of communities while acquiring useful experience and competences for their personal, educational, social, cultural, civic and professional development, thereby improving their employability.

The European Solidarity Corps brings together young people to build a more inclusive society, supporting vulnerable people and responding to societal and humanitarian challenges. It offers an inspiring and empowering experience for young people who want to help, learn and develop and provides a single-entry point for such solidarity activities throughout the Union and beyond.

The Programme opens more and better opportunities covering a broad range of areas, such as integration of migrants, environmental challenges, prevention of natural disasters, education and youth activities, preservation of cultural heritage, humanitarian aid. It also supports national and local actors, in their efforts to cope with different societal challenges and crises.

By extending its scope to cover volunteering activities in support of humanitarian aid operations, the European Solidarity Corps provides needs-based emergency aid and helps to deliver assistance, relief and protection where most needed. It thus helps addressing not only unmet societal needs in Europe but also humanitarian challenges in third countries.

The activities of the European Solidarity Corps support the objectives of the EU Youth Strategy for 2019-2027[8] which encourages young people to become active citizens, agents of solidarity and positive change for communities across Europe, inspired by EU values and a European identity. The European Solidarity Corps also contribute to fulfilling the objectives of the Horizon Europe Missions, which tackle some of the greatest challenges facing our societies: improving the lives of people affected by cancer, adapting to climate change, restoring our ocean and waters, restoring soil health, and living in climate-neutral and smart cities.

BUILDING ON PAST EXPERIENCE, LOOKING TOWARDS THE FUTURE

The European Solidarity Corps builds on the achievements of more than 25 years of European programmes in the field of youth and solidarity, especially on the success of the European Voluntary Service, on the EU Aid Volunteers initiative and on the previous European Solidarity Corps running from 2018 to 2020.

[8] https://youth.europa.eu/strategy_en

WHAT IS THE POLICY CONTEXT?

The European Union is built on solidarity, a shared value which is strongly felt throughout European society. Solidarity defines the European project and provides the necessary unity to cope with current and future crises. Solidarity provides a clear compass to guide European youth in their aspirations for a better Union.

Young people need easily accessible opportunities to engage in solidarity activities, through which they can help communities while acquiring useful experience, skills and competences for their personal, educational, social, civic and professional development, thereby improving their employability, their societal engagement, participation in society and social inclusion.

THE EU YOUTH STRATEGY

The EU Youth Strategy is the framework for EU youth policy cooperation for 2019-2027[9] within which it shall make the most of youth policy's potential. EU youth cooperation aims at tackling existing and upcoming challenges young people are facing all over Europe and provides a framework of objectives, principles, priorities, core areas and measures for youth policy cooperation for all relevant stakeholders.

An important aspect of the EU Youth Strategy is the 11 European Youth Goals[10], which were developed in the context of the EU youth dialogue through a participatory approach that involved decision-makers, young people and researchers. These Youth Goals present a vision for a Europe that enables young people to realise their full potential. They identify cross-sectoral areas that affect young people's lives and point out which challenges need to be tackled. Among others, the Youth Goals call for inclusive societies, space and participation for all and quality employment for all young people. The EU Youth Strategy should contribute to realising this vision of young people by mobilising EU level policy instruments as well as actions at national, regional and local level by all stakeholders.

The EU Youth Strategy is built on three core areas of action:

- ENGAGE
- CONNECT
- EMPOWER

Under ENGAGE, the EU Youth Strategy aims for a meaningful civic, economic, social, cultural and political participation of young people. The Strategy fosters youth participation in democratic life, supports social and civic engagement and aims to ensure that all young people have the necessary resources to take part in society.

Under CONNECT, the EU Youth Strategy underpins opportunities for young people to experience exchanges, cooperation and civic action in a European context first hand.

Under EMPOWER, the Strategy aims at supporting youth work in all its forms as catalyst for the empowerment of young people across Europe.

THE EU POLICY FRAMEWORK FOR VOLUNTEERING

Currently, the policy framework for volunteering is mainly set by the 2022 Council Recommendation on the mobility of young volunteers across the European Union[11]. This Recommendation aims to eliminate obstacles to volunteering in Europe by raising awareness, increase the capacity to offer volunteering opportunities, reduce barriers to participation especially for disadvantaged groups and increase the recognition of skills

9 OJ COM 269, 22.05.2018, A new EU Youth Strategy, https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/en/TXT/?uri=CELEX:52018DC0269

10 https://youth.europa.eu/strategy_en

11 OJ C 157/1, 11.04.2022, Council Recommendation on the mobility of young volunteers across the European Union, https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=uriserv%3AOJ.C_.2022.157.01.0001.01.ENG&toc=OJ%3AC%3A2022%3A157%3AFULL

gained.

Humanitarian aid volunteering actions of the European Solidarity Corps will be guided by the European Consensus on Humanitarian Aid[12] and strive to contribute to enhancing the effectiveness and efficiency of Union humanitarian aid, in line with the Good Humanitarian Donorship principles[13]. International humanitarian law and human rights law will be promoted.

THE LEGACY OF THE EUROPEAN YEAR OF YOUTH

One of the transversal priorities of the European Solidarity Corps is to support participation in democratic life, promote common values and foster active citizenship. This was a key focus of the European Year of Youth 2022 which aimed to help young people to become active and engaged citizens. Building on the achievements and contributing to the long-lasting legacy[14] of the 2022 European Year of Youth, the Programme will continue to empower young people and to encourage their participation in democratic life in 2027.

For further information on the policy framework, please consult the 2027 Annual Work Programme[15] of the European Solidarity Corps.

[12] OJ C 25/01, 30.01.2008, The European Consensus on Humanitarian Aid, https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=uriserv%3AOJ.C_.2008.025.01.0001.01.ENG&toc=OJ%3AC%3A2008%3A025%3ATOC

[13] https://ec.europa.eu/echo/partnerships/relations/ghd_en

[14] OJ COM 1, 10.01.2024, Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions on the European Year of Youth 2022 (COM/2024/1 final) https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=COM:2024:1:FIN

[15] https://youth.europa.eu/solidarity/organisations/reference-documents-resources_en

WHAT ARE THE OBJECTIVES, PRIORITIES AND IMPORTANT CHARACTERISTICS OF THE EUROPEAN SOLIDARITY CORPS?

OBJECTIVES

GENERAL OBJECTIVE

The general objective of the Programme is to enhance the engagement of young people and organisations in accessible and high-quality solidarity activities, primarily volunteering, as a means to strengthen cohesion, solidarity, democracy, European identity and active citizenship in the Union and beyond, addressing societal and humanitarian challenges on the ground, with a particular focus on the promotion of sustainable development, social inclusion and equal opportunities.

SPECIFIC OBJECTIVE

The specific objective of the Programme is to provide young people, including young people with fewer opportunities, with easily accessible opportunities for engagement in solidarity activities that induce positive societal changes in the Union and beyond, while improving, recognising and offering validation of competences, as well as facilitating their continuous engagement as active citizens.

POLICY PRIORITIES

TRANSVERSAL PRIORITIES

INCLUSION AND DIVERSITY

The European Solidarity Corps seeks to promote social inclusion, tolerance, human rights and the value of differences and diversity of all kinds and to provide all young people equal access to opportunities across all its actions.

The Corps provides accessible and flexible formats of activities, additional financial support as well as a range of support measures (e.g. general and language training, insurance, support before and after solidarity activities, administrative assistance) to encourage the participation of young people with fewer opportunities and better cater for their specific needs. When designing their projects and activities, organisations should have an inclusive approach and make use of the available mechanisms to involve a diverse range of participants.

The European Solidarity Corps should also support projects and activities actively addressing the issue of inclusion and diversity more broadly in the society.

In order to implement these principles, a **Framework on inclusion measures**[16] as well as an **Inclusion and Diversity Strategy**[17] have been developed to support organisations to better reach out to more participants with fewer opportunities and help addressing the barriers different target groups may face.

Young people with fewer opportunities are young people who are at a disadvantage compared to their peers because they face one or more exclusion factors and obstacles. The list of barriers, spelt out below, is not exhaustive and is meant to provide a reference in taking action with a view to increasing accessibility and outreach to disadvantaged groups:

- **Disabilities**: This includes physical, mental, intellectual or sensory impairments which, in interaction with various barriers, may hinder someone's full and effective participation in society on the same footing as

[16] Commission Implementing Decision - framework of inclusion measures of Erasmus+ and European Solidarity Corps 2021-27: https://erasmus-plus.ec.europa.eu/document/commission-decision-framework-inclusion-2021-27

[17] Implementation guidelines - Erasmus+ and European Solidarity Corps Inclusion and Diversity Strategy: https://erasmus-plus.ec.europa.eu/document/implementation-guidelines-erasmus-and-european-solidarity-corps-inclusion-and-diversity-strategy

others[18].

- **Health problems**: Barriers may result from health issues including severe illnesses, chronic diseases, or any other physical or mental health-related situation that prevents someone from participating in the programme.
- **Barriers linked to education and training systems**: Individuals struggling to perform in education and training systems for various reasons, early school-leavers, NEETs (people not in education, employment or training) and low-skilled adults may face barriers. Although other factors may play a role, these educational difficulties, while possibly linked to personal circumstances, mostly result from educational systems which create structural limitations and/or do not fully take into account the individual's particular needs. Individuals can also face barriers to participation when the structure of curricula makes it difficult to undertake a learning or training mobility abroad as part of their studies.
- **Cultural differences**: While cultural differences may be perceived as barriers by people from any background, they can particularly affect people with fewer opportunities. Such differences may represent significant barriers to learning in general, all the more for people with a migrant or refugee background – including but not limited to newly-arrived migrants, people belonging to a national or ethnic minority, sign language users, or people with linguistic adaptation and cultural inclusion difficulties. Being exposed to foreign languages and cultural differences when taking part in any kind of programme activities may put some individuals off and, in a way, limit the benefits from their participation. Such cultural differences may even prevent potential participants from applying for support through the programmes, thereby representing an entry barrier altogether.
- **Social barriers**: Social adjustment difficulties, such as limited social competences, anti-social or high-risk behaviours, (ex-)offenders, (ex-)drug or alcohol abusers, or social marginalisation may represent a barrier. Other social barriers can stem from family circumstances – for instance being the first in the family to access higher education or being a parent (especially a single parent), a caregiver, a breadwinner or an orphan, or having lived or currently living in institutional care.
- **Economic barriers**: Economic disadvantage, for instance a low living standard, low income, learners who need to work to support themselves, dependence on the social welfare system, long-term unemployment, precarious situations or poverty, being homeless, in debt or with financial problems, may represent a barrier. Other difficulties may derive from the limited transferability of services (in particular support to people with fewer opportunities) that need to be "mobile" together with the participants when going to a far place or, all the more, abroad.
- **Barriers linked to discrimination**: Barriers can occur as a result of discrimination linked to gender, age, ethnicity, religion, beliefs, sexual orientation, disability, or intersectional factors (a combination of two or several of the mentioned kinds of discrimination).
- **Geographical barriers**: Living in, for example, remote or rural areas, on small islands or in peripheral/outermost regions, in urban suburbs, in less serviced areas (limited public transport, poor facilities) or less developed areas may constitute a barrier.

ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY AND CLIMATE GOALS

The European Solidarity Corps can make a meaningful contribution to the Commission's commitment to tackling climate and environmental-related challenges. To contribute to the **European Green Deal**[19], the Programme aims at integrating green practices into all projects and activities as well as promoting environmentally sustainable and responsible behaviour among participants and participating organisations. Organisations and participants should thus have an environmental-friendly approach when designing and implementing their activities. Activities contributing to other existing EU initiatives in the area of environmental sustainability (e.g. the New European Bauhaus[20], EU Missions[21], the Communication on integrated wildfire risk management[22], the CAP contribution towards environment and climate[23] and the EU Forest Strategy - more specifically the "3 billion trees" initiative, as well as actions on ocean, rivers and

[18] For more information on this topic, please see the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities: https://www.un.org/development/desa/disabilities/convention-on-the-rights-of-persons-with-disabilities.html

[19] https://commission.europa.eu/strategy-and-policy/priorities-2019-2024/european-green-deal_en

[20] https://new-european-bauhaus.europa.eu/about/about-initiative_en.

[21] https://research-and-innovation.ec.europa.eu/funding/funding-opportunities/funding-programmes-and-open-calls/horizon-europe/eu-missions-horizon-europe_en.

[22] https://ec.europa.eu/echo/files/civil_protection/communication_on_integrated_wildfire_risk_management.pdf

[23] https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=celex:52025PC0560

beaches clean-up and conservation, ecosystem restoration, city decarbonisation, climate risk adaptation, and landscape regeneration) are highly encouraged.

The Programme also supports projects and activities addressing the societal challenges related to environmental protection, sustainability and climate goals. Such projects can tackle a variety of issues, aiming for example at protecting, conserving and enhancing the natural capital or raising awareness about environmental sustainability and enabling behavioural changes for individual preferences, consumption habits and lifestyles. The programme supports initiatives aimed at preventing and mitigating or repairing the adverse effects of extreme weather events and natural disasters, as well as activities that provide support to affected communities in the aftermath of such extreme weather events or natural disasters.

DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION

The political guidelines of the European Commission underline the need for Europe to lead the digital transformation[24]. The European Solidarity Corps can play a role by supporting Europeans, regardless of their gender, age and background to live and thrive in the digital age through projects and activities that aim to boost digital skills, foster digital literacy and/or develop an understanding of the risks and opportunities of digital technology.

The European Solidarity Corps also promotes the use of virtual and digital components such as information, communication and technology tools in all projects and activities.

PARTICIPATION IN DEMOCRATIC LIFE, COMMON VALUES AND CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

The Corps promotes participation of young people in democratic processes and civic engagement. With volunteering at its heart, the programme engages and empowers young people to be active in society and addresses the Europe-wide trends of youth limited participation in democratic life and the low levels of knowledge and awareness about European matters that have an impact on the lives of all European citizens.

The activities supported by the European Solidarity Corps should also strive to strengthen European identity (notably as regards common EU values and, the principles of unity and diversity, as well as participant countries' social, cultural and historical heritage) and the participation of young people in democratic processes including European, national, regional and local elections, and thorough involvement in other EU initiatives, platforms revolving around participation and civic engagement.

The Youth Participation Strategy[25] has been designed to provide a common framework and support the use of the Corps to foster youth participation in democratic life. The Strategy aims to improve the quality of youth participation in the Corps and complements key EU Youth Policy documents, such as the EU Youth Strategy, the EU Youth Goals[26] and the Legacy of the European Year of Youth 2022. The Youth Participation Toolkit[27] accompanies the Strategy and aims to, in practical terms, enhance the participation of young people in each of the actions of the Corps, by sharing know-how, recommendations, tools and practical guidance.

ANNUAL PRIORITIES

In addition, **specific annual policy priorities** in 2027 for the Volunteering Teams in High Priority Areas action will be:

- Enhancing a culture of preparedness, and providing relief and assistance to victims of armed conflicts and disasters;
- Fostering positive learning experiences and outcomes for young people with fewer opportunities;
- Enhancing intergenerational fairness and solidarity;

For more details, please see section "Volunteering Teams in High Priority Areas".

ADDITIONAL ACTION PRIORITIES

Beyond the level of transversal and annual priorities, across all its actions, the activities of the European

[24] https://ec.europa.eu/info/strategy/priorities-2019-2024/europe-fit-digital-age/shaping-europe-digital-future_en
[25] Youth Participation Strategy: https://participationpool.eu/resource-category/youth-participation/youth-participation-strategy/
[26] European Youth Goals: https://youth.europa.eu/strategy/european-youth-goals_en
[27] Youth Participation Toolkit: https://participationpool.eu/toolkit/

Solidarity Corps will strongly support action in the following areas:

PROMOTION OF HEALTH AND WELLBEING

The Corps aims to support activities related to prevention, promotion and support in the field of physical and mental health, with special focus on supporting vulnerable or disadvantaged population groups.

INNOVATION

The Corps also strives to add value by promoting and supporting new waves of innovation by mobilising young people and organisations to contribute to awareness of and innovative solutions to a wide range of societal challenges.

ENHANCING THE CULTURE OF PREPAREDNESS

The Corps aims to support activities related to promotion and support of enhancing the culture of preparedness and enabling the active participation of young people in it. The Corps can help people adapt to change and risks in society, such as in health, security, economy or any other emerging threat. It can do so by implementing community-based solidarity activities.

INTERGENERATIONAL FAIRNESS AND SOLIDARITY

The Corps aims to support activities related to promotion and support of intergenerational fairness and solidarity. It can support development of skills aimed at understanding intergenerational fairness and ensuring that interests of all generations are respected in society and policy making. It can also enhance and promote solidarity among different generations, by fostering dialogue, transfer of knowledge and experience, and supporting activities aimed at combating age discrimination and inequalities.

IMPORTANT CHARACTERISTICS

In line with the objectives of the European Solidarity Corps, the following features deserve special attention.

RESPECT FOR EU VALUES

The European Solidarity Corps' implementation, and therefore, the programme beneficiaries, the participants and the activities implemented under the programme, have to respect the EU values of respect for human dignity, freedom, democracy, equality, the rule of law and respect for human rights, including the rights of persons belonging to minorities, in full compliance with the values and rights enshrined in the EU Treaties and in the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights.

In line with the grant agreements, the beneficiary's grant may be terminated or reduced if such provisions are not respected.

VOLUNTEERING IN THE CONTEXT OF THE CORPS

As one of the most visible manifestations of solidarity, volunteering provides young people with the opportunity to take part in activities that address identified needs within local communities and contribute to overcoming important societal challenges on the ground.

Volunteering also enables young people to acquire useful experience, skills and competences for their personal, educational, social, cultural, civic and professional development, thereby improving their employability and active citizenship. Activities supported under volunteering constitute a rich experience in a non-formal and informal learning context, which enhances young people's competences.

NON-FORMAL AND INFORMAL LEARNING

Non-formal learning refers to learning which takes place outside formal education and training through learning activities and with some form of learning support. It has a participative and learner-centred approach; it is carried out by learners on a voluntary basis and is therefore closely linked to young people's needs, aspirations and interests.

Informal learning refers to the learning in daily life activities, at work, with peers, etc. It can often be characterised as learning by doing. In the youth sector, informal learning has an important role for example in peer group discussions, in voluntary activities and in a variety of other situations.

Non-formal and informal learning enable young people to acquire essential competences that contribute to their personal and socio-educational development and foster their active participation in society, thereby – amongst others – improving their employment prospects. Such learning experiences have also a strong potential to improve the attainment in formal education and training as well as to address young NEETs (i.e. young people not in employment, education or training) or young people with fewer opportunities and combat social exclusion.

Learning activities within the youth field are meant to have a significantly positive impact on young people as well as on the organisations involved, the communities in which these activities take place, the youth field itself and the European economic and societal sectors at large.

RECOGNITION AND VALIDATION OF LEARNING OUTCOMES

To ensure the impact of European Solidarity Corps activities on the personal, educational, social, civic, and professional development of the participants, the competences that are the learning outcomes of the solidarity activities should be properly identified and documented.

To that end, the use of effective instruments at Union and national level for the recognition of non-formal and informal learning, such as Youthpass and Europass should be encouraged, as appropriate. For further information, see part D of this Guide.

EUROPEAN ADDED VALUE

The European Solidarity Corps must support solidarity activities which present a clear European added value, for example by virtue of their:

- transnational character, particularly with regard to learning mobility and cooperation;
- ability to complement other programmes and policies at local, regional, national, Union and international level;
- European dimension with regard to the topics, aims, approaches, expected outcomes and other aspects of these solidarity activities;
- approach with regard to involving young people from different backgrounds;
- contribution to the effective use of Union transparency and recognition tools.

INTERNATIONAL DIMENSION

The European Solidarity Corps includes a strong international dimension (i.e. cooperation with third countries not associated to the Programme, through involvement of young people and organisations). Through its extended geographical scope, the Corps contributes to the EU efforts to support and strengthen capacity and resilience in non-EU countries. It can serve as a powerful tool for building bridges between diverse societies and fostering connections between like-minded individuals across Europe and the world.

In accordance with Article 14 (2) of the European Solidarity Corps Regulation, legal entities from other third countries non-associated to the Programme may be eligible for the actions referred to in Articles 5 and 7 of the Regulation (Networking Activities, quality and support measures and volunteering under the 'participation of young people in solidarity activities' strand) in duly justified cases and in the EU's interest. Among this group of applicants, in line with the EU Youth Strategy 2021-2027, Council conclusions of 5 June 2020 on Youth in external action and the Youth Action Plan (YAP) in EU external action 2022 – 2027, special consideration will be given to candidate countries, Easter Partnership countries and Western Balkan countries, as well as other countries with whom the EU has association or cooperation agreements. The cooperation with these countries is in the EU's strategic interest as it fosters the connectedness of this group of applicants with the applicants of EU Member States.

The participation of these countries is fully in line with the EU Youth Strategy 2021-2027 which calls "to foster the connectedness between young people in the EU and candidate countries, Eastern-Partnership and Western Balkan partners, as well as with other third countries with whom the EU has association or cooperation agreements." "Connections, relations and exchange of experience are a pivotal asset for

solidarity and the future development of the European Union. This connection is best fostered through different forms of mobility."

In addition, the Council conclusions of 5 June 2020 on Youth in external action stresses the contribution of young generations to building stronger, more legitimate, peaceful and democratic societies. The programme contributes to promoting the meaningful participation and engagement of all young people, and hence in strengthening exchanges and dialogue between young people from the Union and partner countries, including the Eastern Partnership, the Western Balkans and the Southern Neighbourhood.

This is further supported by the Youth Action Plan (YAP) in EU external action 2022 – 2027. Specifically, the Youth Action Plan states that the EU will further promote young people-to-people contacts through the existing initiatives like the European Solidarity Corps, encouraging the participation of young people in volunteering and solidarity. The Programme also supports in delivering the Global Gateway strategy for a Stronger Europe in the World. Cooperation in volunteering activities has gradually become an important instrument for the implementation of EU external policies, based on European values, trust and autonomy.Under the EU Enlargement Policy, the European Solidarity Corps aims to strengthen the informal and non-formal educational and volunteering systems of acceding countries, candidate countries and potential candidate countries and contribute to the process of aligning their legislation to meet the EU standards.

Participants from third countries not associated to the Programme may participate in Volunteering Projects and Volunteering Teams in High Priority Areas. However, participation of participants from third countries not associated to the Programme[28] may be limited, as grant beneficiaries may use only up to 25% of the project grant to involve participants from such countries.[29]

Activities in third countries not associated to the Programme take place where there are no ongoing international or non-international armed conflicts, subject to a substantiated Union's interest as spelt out under each of the programme actions concerned.

Based on restrictive measures or guidelines adopted at EU level, some organisations and individuals of third countries not associated to the Programme, including subsidiaries of such organisations and entities held by such third country individuals, may not be considered eligible to take part in some or all actions of the European Solidarity Corps programme.

MULTILINGUALISM

Multilingualism is one of the cornerstones of the European project and a powerful symbol of the EU's aspiration to be united in diversity. Foreign languages have a prominent role among the skills that will help equip people better for the labour market and make the most of available opportunities. The EU has set the goal that every citizen should have the opportunity to learn at least two foreign languages from an early age.

While the promotion and support of language learning is primarily covered under other EU initiatives, it has been demonstrated that the lack of language competences is one of the main barriers to European cross-border activities in general such as those supported by the European Solidarity Corps. In order to help overcoming this barrier, linguistic support is provided in the context of the European Solidarity Corps. For further information, see part D of this Guide.

PROTECTION, HEALTH AND SAFETY OF PARTICIPANTS

The protection, health and safety of participants involved in the activities supported by the European Solidarity Corps are important principles of the programme. All European Solidarity Corps participants should have the opportunity to take full advantage of the possibilities for personal and professional development and learning offered through the European Solidarity Corps. This should be assured in a safe environment which respects and protects the rights of all persons, their physical and emotional integrity, their mental health and their wellbeing. There shall be zero tolerance for abuse, sexual harassment and exploitation.

To this end, each organisation participating in the European Solidarity Corps must have in place effective procedures and arrangements, including repatriation in case of unexpected security crisis, to promote and

[28] Given the immediate right to temporary protection granted to Ukrainian nationals under the Temporary Protection Directive (Council Directive 2001/55/EC), volunteers who are Ukrainian nationals (whether legally residing in the EU or in Ukraine) shall be exempted from this 25% limitation. For the purposes of applying the limitation, they shall be counted as participants coming from an EU Member State. The exemption shall apply at least until 4 March 2027 (or longer, if the temporary protection is extended beyond this date).

[29] In case of projects of four volunteers or less, the 25% limitation may be exceeded in order to allow participation of one volunteer from a third country not associated to the programme.

guarantee the safety, protection and non-discrimination of the participants in their activities. Such measures should be adapted based on the needs of the participants. With this regard, all volunteers must be insured against the risks linked to their participation. A specific insurance policy is foreseen for cross-border volunteers. For further information, see part D of this Guide.

If applicable, it is strongly recommended that participants in transnational activities taking place in EU Member States or some third countries associated to the programme are in possession of a European Health Insurance Card (EHIC). This is a free card that gives access to medically necessary, state-provided healthcare during a temporary stay in any of the 27 EU countries, Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway, under the same conditions and at the same cost (free in some countries) as people insured in that country. More information on the card and on how to obtain it is available at http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=559.

COMMUNICATING PROJECTS AND THEIR RESULTS TO MAXIMISE IMPACT

Communicating projects and their results is crucial to ensure impact on different levels. Applicants are required to plan their communication activities aimed at sharing information about their project and results during and beyond the project life cycle. Project applications will be evaluated based on relevant criteria to ensure that these aspects are covered. The level and intensity of communication and dissemination activities should be proportional to the objectives, the scope and the targets of the different actions of the Corps. Beneficiaries of European Solidarity Corps funding must follow the **communication guidelines for project beneficiaries**[30] prepared by the European Commission; and monitor and evaluate the success of their communication activities, both qualitatively and quantitatively.

As indicated in the communication guidelines, beneficiaries must clearly acknowledge the European Union's support in all communication and dissemination activities and products, such as events, websites, visual material and publications. In particular, they must ensure that the European Union emblem[31] is included in all communication material and that it respects the provisions laid out in the grant agreement. The beneficiary's grant may be reduced if such provisions are not respected.

WHAT ARE THE ACTIONS AND THE QUALITY AND SUPPORT MEASURES?

In order to achieve its objectives, the European Solidarity Corps implements four Actions structured into two strands:

- Participation of young people in solidarity activities:
  - Volunteering Projects;
  - Volunteering Teams in High Priority Areas;
  - Solidarity Projects.
- Participation of young people in humanitarian aid related solidarity activities ("Volunteering under the European Voluntary Humanitarian Aid Corps"):
  - Humanitarian Aid Volunteering projects.

Additionally, the European Solidarity Corps supports a series of activities and measures aiming at providing high-quality solidarity activities.

- Quality and Support measures
  - Networking Activities for individuals and organisations participating in the European Solidarity

[30] How to communicate your project: https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/429c34ff-7231-11ec-9136-01aa75ed71a1/language-en/format-PDF/source-248841143

[31] Guidance on how to use the European Commission visual identity, including the European Union emblem, can be found at: https://youth.europa.eu/solidarity/organisations/reference-documents-resources_en https://ec.europa.eu/info/resources-partners/european-commission-visual-identity_en#documents and https://commission.europa.eu/document/download/3192a0ef-6bda-4e1a-81ca-65ade2ffad73_en?filename=eu-emblem-rules_en.pdf

Corps;

- appropriate measures to provide clearance requirements in accordance with applicable national law;
- measures taken before, during or after the solidarity activities that aim to ensure the quality and accessibility of volunteering, including online and offline training, adapted, where appropriate, to the solidarity activity in question and its context, language support, insurance, including accident and sickness insurance, the further use of Youthpass, which identifies and documents the competences acquired by participants during the solidarity activities, capacity building, and administrative support for participating organisations;
- the development and maintenance of a Quality Label;
- the activities of European Solidarity Corps Resource Centres to support and raise the quality of the implementation of the Programme actions and enhance the validation of their outcomes;
- the establishment, maintenance and updating of an accessible European Solidarity Corps Portal and of other relevant online services, as well as necessary IT support systems and web-based tools.

WHAT IS THE BUDGET?

The European Solidarity Corps has an overall indicative financial envelope of EUR 1.009 billion of the EU Budget for the period 2021-2027. The annual budget is adopted by the Budgetary Authority. The different steps for the adoption of the EU budget can be followed at: https://commission.europa.eu/strategy-and-policy/eu-budget/how-it-works/annual-lifecycle/figures-2021-2027_en

In 2023 and 2024, the European Solidarity Corps also received a financial contribution[32] from the Horizon Europe Programme to increase synergies with the Horizon Europe Missions.

For information about the available budget by action, planned number of projects to be granted as well as indicative average grants, please consult the 2027 European Solidarity Corps Annual Work Programme:

(https://youth.europa.eu/solidarity/organisations/reference-documents-resources_en).

[32] This contribution amounted to EUR 16.53 million in 2023 and EUR 12.71 million in 2024.

WHO IMPLEMENTS THE EUROPEAN SOLIDARITY CORPS?

THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION

The European Commission is ultimately responsible for the running of the European Solidarity Corps. It manages the budget and sets priorities, targets and criteria for the programme on an on-going basis. Furthermore, it guides and monitors the general implementation, follow-up and evaluation of the programme at European level. The European Commission also bears the overall responsibility for the supervision and coordination of the structures in charge of implementing the Programme at the national level.

THE EDUCATION AND CULTURE EXECUTIVE AGENCY (EACEA)

At the European level, the European Commission's Education and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA or the Executive Agency) is responsible for the implementation of a number of actions of the Corps in direct management. In addition to the information contained in this Guide, the relevant Call documents and application forms for the actions covered by this Guide and managed by the Executive Agency are published in EU Funding & Tenders Portal[33].

The Executive Agency oversees the complete life-cycle management of certain projects under the Programme, from the promotion of the actions, the evaluation of the grant applications, the monitoring of projects to the dissemination of the projects and Programme's results. It is also responsible for launching specific calls for proposals relating to some actions of the Programme that are not covered by this guide.

The European Commission, notably through the Executive Agency is responsible for:

- carrying out studies in the fields supported by the Programme;
- carrying out research and evidence-based activities through the Eurydice network;
- improving the visibility and the systemic impact of the European Solidarity Corps through dissemination and exploitation activities of the Programme's results;
- ensuring the contractual management and financing of bodies and networks supported by the European Solidarity Corps;
- managing calls for tenders to provide services within the framework of the Corps.

NATIONAL AGENCIES

The European Solidarity Corps is mainly implemented through indirect management[34], meaning that the European Commission entrusts budget implementation tasks to National Agencies. The rationale of this approach is to bring the European Solidarity Corps as close as possible to its beneficiaries and to adapt to the diversity of each country. For this purpose, one or more National Agencies is appointed in each EU Member State and third country associated to the Programme. These National Agencies promote and implement the European Solidarity Corps at the national level and are the link between the European Commission and participating organisations at local, regional and national levels. Their tasks are to:

- provide with appropriate information on the European Solidarity Corps;
- administer a fair and transparent selection process for project applications to be funded in their country;
- monitor and evaluate the implementation of the European Solidarity Corps projects in their country;
- provide support to project applicants and participating organisations throughout the project life-cycle;

[33] https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/portal/screen/home
[34] Article 62 (1)(c) of the EU Financial Regulation No 2024/2509 , http://data.europa.eu/eli/reg/2024/2509/oj

- collaborate effectively with the network of all National Agencies and the European Commission;
- ensure the visibility of the Corps;
- promote the dissemination and exploitation of the results at local and national level.

In addition, National Agencies play an important role as intermediate structures for the policy development and qualitative implementation of the European Solidarity Corps by:

- carrying out the Training and Evaluation Cycle in EU Member States and third countries associated to the Programme;
- carrying out projects and activities outside the tasks of project life-cycle management that support the qualitative implementation of the European Solidarity Corps and/or trigger policy developments such as Networking Activities;
- contributing to the links and synergies between the European Solidarity Corps and the Union youth policy;
- promoting and communicating to stakeholders on the opportunities to further engage youth in Horizon Europe Missions activities;
- providing a supportive approach to newcomers and less advantaged target groups in order to remove the obstacles to full participation;
- seeking cooperation with external bodies and National Authorities to increase the impact of the European Solidarity Corps in their country and in the European Union.

The supportive approach of the National Agencies aims to guide the potential applicants and beneficiaries through all phases, from the first contact with the European Solidarity Corps and through the application process to the implementation of the project and the final evaluation. This principle is based on the idea that, to guarantee equal opportunities to everybody, it is necessary to support target groups through advising, counselling, monitoring and coaching systems tailored to their needs.

WHAT OTHER BODIES ARE INVOLVED IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE EUROPEAN SOLIDARITY CORPS?

Apart from the European Commission, the Executive Agency and the National Agencies, the following bodies provide complementary expertise to the implementation of the Corps.

RESOURCE CENTRES

The Resource Centres are part of the quality and support measures mentioned in the Regulation establishing the European Solidarity Corps. They constitute additional entrusted tasks to be performed by designated National Agencies to support the development, implementation and quality of actions under the European Solidarity Corps. The European Solidarity Corps benefits from the already well-established network of Resources Centres under the Erasmus+ programme and a dedicated European Solidarity Corps Resource Centre.

SALTO RESOURCE CENTRES

SALTO[35] Resource Centres are structures mainly supported through the Erasmus+ and European Solidarity Corps Programmes aiming to improve the quality of projects in the field of youth and education. Through their thematic (participation & information, inclusion & diversity, training & cooperation, digital transformation and green transition) or geographical (Eastern Europe and Caucasus, Southern Mediterranean, Western Balkans) focus, they provide resources, information and training in specific areas for National Agencies and other actors and foster the recognition of non-formal and informal learning. The SALTO resource centres also offer support and develop trainings, tools and resources for the European Solidarity Corps. Their experience and knowledge thus also benefit the stakeholders of the European Solidarity Corps.

More information available at: https://saltonetwork.eu .

SALTO INCLUSION AND DIVERSITY

The mission of this SALTO Resource Centre is to improve the quality and impact of European Solidarity Corps projects with a view to making the programme more inclusive and diverse.

More specifically, this SALTO also acts as evidence-based knowledge hub and impartial broker based on its expertise and experience with programme management in the field of inclusion and diversity. This means continuously building and channelling the knowledge and lessons learned from programme implementation in this thematic area into the contexts of programme development in cooperation with the NA network and the Commission through appropriate platforms. Moreover, this SALTO supports the National Agencies to implement the programme in a way that puts into practice the relevant policy decisions (e.g. Council conclusions/resolutions), results of mutual learning activities, and decisions on the inclusion and diversity priority.

Key responsibilities of SALTO for Inclusion and Diversity are:

- Raising the quality and impact of projects and activities of European Solidarity Corps, focusing on the inclusion and diversity priority;
- Helping to optimise the implementation, monitoring and follow-up of the inclusion and diversity priority in education, training and youth as defined in the European Solidarity Corps programme;
- Playing a key role in guiding the National Agencies on analysis and impact evaluation of projects focusing on the inclusion and diversity priority in education, training and youth.

SALTO ON GREEN TRANSITION AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

[35] SALTO stands for 'Support for Advanced Learning and Training Opportunities'.

This SALTO is supporting the implementation of the priority on environmental protection, sustainability, and fight against climate change in line with the European Green Deal and the Climate Pact, and contributing directly to the achievement of one of the 11 European Youth Goals (Sustainable Green Europe) included in the EU Youth Strategy. Key responsibilities of **SALTO on green transition and sustainable development** are:

- Raising the quality and impact of projects and activities of European Solidarity Corps, focusing on sustainability and fight against climate change;
- Helping to optimise the implementation, monitoring and follow-up of the priority on environmental protection, sustainability and fight against climate change, as defined in the European Solidarity Corps programme;
- Playing a key role in guiding the National Agencies on analysis and impact evaluation of projects focusing on the environmental protection, sustainability, and fight against climate change priority of the programme.

SALTO DIGITAL

The SALTO Digital Resource Centre covers key policy documents for youth, supports the implementation of the digital transversal priority in the European Solidarity Corps Programme, with the goal to continuously raise the quality and inclusion of digital aspects in the field of youth. SALTO Digital Resource Centre acts as an evidence-based knowledge hub in the field of digital education, training and youth, and channels knowledge related to its mandate into programme as well as policy development. Key responsibilities on SALTO Digital are:

- Raising the quality and impact of projects and activities of the programme, focusing on the digital priorities;
- Helping to optimise the implementation, monitoring and follow-up of youth priorities as defined in the European Solidarity Corps programme;
- Playing a key role in guiding the National Agencies in successful implementation of the digital priorities as well as analysis and impact evaluation of projects focusing on the digital priorities of the programme, which feeds into policy development and stakeholder fora and in particular the European Digital Education Hub.

SALTO PARTICIPATION AND INFORMATION

The SALTO Participation and Information Resource Centre supports active and informed participation in democratic life and civic engagement guided by European values throughout the programme. It's work includes:

- Developing guidance for applicants and beneficiaries, notably to foster the involvement of young people in democratic decision-making, the youth participation in civic and social life through volunteering or taking up a role in youth organisations;
- Providing guidance to and support for all National Agencies on state-of-the art strategies for reaching out to a higher number of young people, increasing quality and impact of information activities as well as their inclusiveness and the sustainability and transferability of project results.
- Maintaining the Participation Resource Pool[36], a knowledge hub for all people interested in enhancing democratic participation which offers a variety of learning materials, data, inspiration, practical tools and current news on democratic participation and related topics.

SALTO TRAINING AND COOPERATION

The SALTO Training and Cooperation Resource Centre focuses on developing strategic and innovative actions to ensure the overall quality approach to training strategies and activities, and the recognition of non-formal and informal learning throughout Europe, including through:

- Developing and implementing processes, activities, and tools within the Youthpass Strategy to support and promote the recognition and validation of non-formal and informal learning activities;
- Enhancing the quality of youth projects through training courses, tools and practical publications and

[36] https://participationpool.eu/

guidance;

- Offering a platform to support Networking Activities in the field of youth;
- Coordinating the management of the SALTO network's website and the related tools;
- Providing support to National Agencies staff in their work with Networking Activities, with Youthpass, and through contributing to the Knowledge Management and Staff Training framework.

REGIONAL SALTO RESOURCE CENTRES

The three regional SALTOs: SALTO **SOUTH EAST EUROPE**, SALTO **EASTERN EUROPE** and **CAUCASUS** and SALTO **EUROMED** foster strategic and innovative cooperation between stakeholders from EU Member States, third countries associated to the Programme and third countries not associated to the Programme both in Erasmus+ and the European Solidarity Corps, and:

- Further raise the quantity, quality and impact of projects and partnerships;;
- Carry out the award and monitoring of the Quality Label in the countries not associated to the programme;
- Carry out the Training and Evaluation Cycle in the third countries not associated to the programme;
- Support youth work and youth policy development in third countries not associated to the Programme in the Western Balkans, Eastern Partnership, Norway and Russia and in the South-Mediterranean, respectively.

EUROPEAN SOLIDARITY CORPS RESOURCE CENTRE

The European Solidarity Corps Resource Centre aims to assist the National Agencies, the participating organisations and the young people taking part in the European Solidarity Corps in raising the quality of implementation of solidarity activities and actions. Its work involves:

- Organising training courses, study visits, forums, cooperation and partnership-building activities;
- Developing and documenting training methods and tools related to the activities supported by the European Solidarity Corps;
- Issuing practical publications and guidance on how solidarity, as a European value, can impact local and larger communities and serve as a tool to encounter current and future societal crisis;
- Gathering evidence and carrying out monitoring and analysis of good practice and obstacles during implementation;
- Contributing to the links and synergies between the European Solidarity Corps and the Union youth policy; supporting the National Agencies in the development and implementation of Networking Activities;
- Acting as central point of support to bring together National Agencies and SALTOs to reflect on and improve certain aspects related to the Corps implementation;
- Contributing to building a network of communities within the European Solidarity Corps programme, which includes organisations, mentors, TEC trainers etc.

More information available at: https://saltonetwork.eu/salto-youth-european-solidarity-corps/about-us

EURODESK NETWORK

The Eurodesk network is supported through the Erasmus+ Programme and offers information services to young people and those who work with them on European opportunities in the education, training and youth fields, and the involvement of young people in European activities.

Present in all countries participating in the European Solidarity Corps and coordinated at European level by

the Eurodesk Brussels-link Office, the Eurodesk network offers enquiry answering services, funding information, events and publications. It also contributes to the animation of the European Youth Portal.

For more information on Eurodesk, please go to: http://www.eurodesk.eu.

THE EUROPEAN YOUTH PORTAL

The European Youth Portal offers European and national information and opportunities that are of interest to young people who are living, learning and working in Europe. It provides information in 28 languages.

To access the European Youth Portal, please go to: https://youth.europa.eu.

The European Solidarity Corps Portal is integrated into the European Youth Portal and accessible via the **EU Initiatives** menu.

WHO CAN PARTICIPATE IN THE EUROPEAN SOLIDARITY CORPS?

Young people constitute the target population of the European Solidarity Corps. Except for Solidarity Projects where young people can apply directly, the Corps involves young people through organisations, institutions, public or private bodies that organise solidarity activities. The conditions of access to the Corps therefore relate to these two actors: the "participants" (young people participating in the Corps) and the "organisations". For both participants and participating organisations, the conditions for participation depend on the country in which they are legally based[37], and on the Action concerned. These conditions are specified in Part B and C of this Guide, under each specific Action.

PARTICIPANTS

Young people express their interest in participating in the European Solidarity Corps by registering on the European Solidarity Corps Portal. The registration on the European Solidarity Corps 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. For participants in humanitarian aid related solidarity activities, the upper age limit at the start of the activity is 35 years old.

PARTICIPATING ORGANISATIONS

European Solidarity Corps projects are mainly submitted and implemented by participating organisations. Organisations participating in European Solidarity Corps projects must be established in an EU Member State or third country associated to the Programme, or, where specified for a particular action in this Guide, in a third country not associated to the Programme.

ELIGIBLE COUNTRIES[38]

Member States of the European Union and third countries associated to the Programme can participate fully in all the actions of the European Solidarity Corps. In addition, some actions are open for participation of third countries not associated to the Programme. Please refer to the actions in Part B and Part C of this Guide for the specific conditions.

[37] In accordance with the Declaration of the European Union concerning amendment to the Euro-Mediterranean Agreement, actions funded under the European Solidarity Corps are open to participation of the Sahrawi diaspora and Sahrawi-led organisations according to the criteria of the respective actions listed in this Programme Guide.

[38] Entities from EU Member States and people legally residing in them can fully take part in all the actions of the European Solidarity Corps. In addition, in accordance with article 13 of the Regulation, the following third countries can be associated to the programme subject to agreements between the European Union and those countries: members of the European Free Trade Association (EFTA) which are members of the European Economic Area (EEA); acceding countries, candidate countries and potential candidates. In addition, in accordance with article 14 (2) of the European Solidarity Corps Regulation, entities from other third countries and people residing in them can be eligible in some Actions in duly justified cases and in the Union's interest.

EU Member States and third countries associated to the Programme

Member States of the European Union (EU)[i]			
Belgium	Greece	Lithuania	Portugal
Bulgaria	Spain	Luxembourg	Romania
Czechia	France	Hungary	Slovenia
Denmark	Croatia	Malta	Slovakia
Germany	Italy	Netherlands	Finland
Estonia	Cyprus	Austria	Sweden
Ireland	Latvia	Poland	

Third countries associated to the Programme[ii]			
Iceland	Liechtenstein	North Macedonia	Türkiye

Third countries not associated to the Programme

EFTA countries
Norway

Third countries neighbouring the EU				
Western Balkans (Region 1)	**Neighbourhood East (Region 2)**	**South-Mediterranean countries (Region 3)**		**Russian Federation (Region 4)**
Albania Bosnia and Herzegovina Kosovo[iii] Montenegro Serbia	Armenia Azerbaijan Belarus[iv] Georgia[v] Moldova Territory of Ukraine as recognised by international law	Algeria Egypt Israel[vi] Jordan Lebanon	Libya Morocco Palestine[vii] Syria Tunisia	Territory of Russia[viii] as recognised by international law

Host countries for Humanitarian Aid Volunteering
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: host role for Humanitarian Aid Volunteering

i According to Article 33.3 of the Council Decision 2013/755/EU on the Association of the OCTs with the European Union, the Union shall ensure that individuals and organisations from or to Overseas Countries and Territories (OCT) shall be eligible to participate in the European Solidarity Corps on an "EU Member States or third countries associated to the Programme status", subject to the rules of the Programme and the arrangements applicable to the Member State with which these OCTs are connected. The list of OCTs can be found at: https://international-partnerships.ec.europa.eu/countries/overseas-countries-and-territories_en.

ii Subject to the signature of the Association Agreements between the European Union and those countries.

iii This designation is without prejudice to positions on status and is in line with UNSCR 1244 and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo declaration of independence.

iv In line with the Council Conclusions of 12 October 2020 and in light of Belarus's involvement in the Russian military aggression against Ukraine, recognised in the European Council Conclusions of February 2022, the EU has stopped engaging with representatives of Belarus public bodies and state-owned enterprises. Should there be a change of the context this may be reconsidered. In the meantime, the EU continues to engage with and, where possible, has stepped up support to non-state, local and regional actors, including within the framework of this programme as appropriate. For security reasons, while mobilities of young people from Belarus can be allowed, no mobilities to Belarus are allowed.

v In line with the Council Conclusions of 19 December 2024 and in response to political developments in Georgia, the EU has reconsidered financial assistance directly benefitting the Georgian authorities. Taking into account Article 14(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, direct financial assistance from the Programme to Georgian authorities - which should be understood as central government, local authorities, agencies and state-owned enterprises - is not considered in the Union's interest. Georgian authorities are thus not eligible under any of the actions under this guide.

vi The eligibility criteria formulated in commission notice Nr.2013/C-205/05 (OJEU C-205 of 19/07/2013, pp. 9-11) shall apply for all actions implemented through this Programme Guide, including with respect to third parties receiving financial support in the cases where the respective action involves financial support to third parties by grant beneficiaries in accordance with Article 207 of the EU's Financial Regulation.

vii This designation shall not be construed as recognition of a State of Palestine and is without prejudice to the individual positions of the Member States on this issue.

viii Organisations based and individuals residing in Russia cannot participate in any of the actions under this Programme in any capacity. See also section 'EU restrictive measures' in Part E of this Guide for more details.

PART B – PARTICIPATION OF YOUNG PEOPLE IN SOLIDARITY ACTIVITIES

In this part, readers will find, for all of the Actions and activities under this strand and covered by the European Solidarity Corps Guide, the following information:

- a description of their objectives and expected impact;
- a description of the supported activities;
- tables presenting the criteria which are used to assess proposals;
- 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 concerning the Action under which they wish to apply.

WHICH ACTIONS ARE SUPPORTED?

The following Actions may be supported and covered in this section:

- Volunteering Projects;
- Volunteering Teams in High Priority Areas;
- Solidarity Projects;
- Humanitarian Aid Volunteering.

This section also covers all relevant information and criteria for the Quality Label, which is a pre-requisite to participate in Volunteering Projects and Volunteering Teams in High Priority Areas.

In line with the general and specific objectives of the European Solidarity Corps, the above actions supported by the Programme are expected to bring positive and long-lasting effects on the participants and participating organisations involved, as well as on the communities in which these actions take place.

As regards participants, the solidarity activities, as well as any other supported activities related to them (e.g. quality and support measures), are meant to produce the following main outcomes:

- improved skills and competences for personal, educational, social, civic, cultural and professional development;
- more active participation in democratic life and in society in general;
- enhanced employability and transition into the labour market;
- increased sense of initiative and entrepreneurship;
- increased self-empowerment and self-esteem;
- improved foreign language competences;

- enhanced intercultural awareness;
- better awareness of the European project and the EU common values;
- increased motivation for further engagement in solidarity activities.

Supported solidarity activities are also expected to produce the following outcomes on participating organisations:

- increased capacity to operate at EU/international level;
- innovative and improved way of operating towards their target groups;
- greater understanding and responsiveness to diversity (social, linguistic, cultural, gender and ethnic diversity, disabilities etc.);
- more modern, efficient, dynamic, committed and professional environment inside the organisations.

As regards communities where the activities related to supported solidarity activities are implemented, the following outcomes are expected:

- increased ability to address societal challenges;
- greater understanding and responsiveness to diversity (social, linguistic, cultural, gender and ethnic diversity, disabilities etc.);

In the long run, the combined effect of supported solidarity activities is expected to have a positive impact on a large number of stakeholders in EU Member States and third countries associated to the Programme or third countries not associated to the Programme.

QUALITY LABEL FOR VOLUNTEERING

WHAT IS THE QUALITY LABEL?

The Quality Label is a process that certifies that an organisation is able and willing to carry out high quality solidarity activities in compliance with the principles, objectives and quality standards of the European Solidarity Corps. Obtaining a Quality Label is a non-budgetary award and it is a prerequisite for an organisation to participate in volunteering projects supported by the Corps. While it does not provide automatic access to funding, it does simplify the grant application process into separate stages and thereby enables easier access to funding for applicants holding a Quality Label.

WHAT ARE THE DIFFERENT TYPES OF QUALITY LABEL?

There are three types of Quality Label, depending on the role(s) that the organisation wishes to play in the process:

- **Host role** - covers the full range of activities related to hosting a 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;
- **Support role** - entails supporting, preparing and/or training participants before departure, a mediation between them and their host organisations and/or providing support to participants upon return from their activity;
- **Lead role** - for organisations that apply for grants, manage and coordinate Volunteering Projects. This role cannot be awarded independently, organisations must hold a Quality Label for host/support in order to be able to act in a lead capacity. Further information on the lead organisations is available in the section 'What is the Quality Label for lead organisations?' below.

HOW DOES IT WORK?

The requirements to obtain the Quality Label vary depending on the type of Quality Label requested.

The Quality Label is awarded following a fair and transparent selection process carried out by the National Agencies or respective regional SALTO where applicable, involving three main stages: submission of Quality Label application, assessment and award.

The organisations will submit application forms by filling in parts which are relevant for the Quality Label roles they wish to play.

Applications are assessed by the National Agency against eligibility criteria, selection exclusion and award criteria (for more information on this last criterion, see Part E of this Guide). The award of Quality Label is non-budgetary.

The National Agency may organise monitoring visits, formal checks or other activities to assess the ability of the candidate organisation to respect the required quality standards and provide support. Formal checks may take the form of desk checks or visits to the organisation. The National Agency may request assistance of other National Agencies or external experts in other countries to check and monitor applications.

The Quality Label is awarded for the remaining duration of the 2021 - 2027 programming period and for the entire 2028 – 2034 period, subject to continued compliance with requirements. Unless withdrawn, the Quality Label remains valid until the end of the last activity in which the organisation is involved either as a lead or a partner, implemented through a grant awarded under the respective 2021–2027 or 2028–2034 programming

periods. The National Agencies will monitor compliance and may carry out periodical reassessments.

Organisations who do not hold a Quality Label for lead organisation may act as partners in projects, they cannot apply for funding.

In order to facilitate partner-finding, profiles of all organisations holding a Quality Label are published in a database[39] of Quality Label organisations. Partners can also be found through Networking Activities.

Once awarded a Quality Label, organisations have access to the European Solidarity Corps Portal where they are invited to publish volunteering activities for which they are looking for participants. Organisations must make use of the European Solidarity Corps Portal's database to search for potential participants. Information in the database is published as it is formulated in the Quality Label application form.

PRE-DEFINED ACTIVITIES AND LOCATIONS

An organisation applying for the Quality Label with a host role must declare pre-defined activities, i.e. standard activities in which volunteers are involved, with a set of tasks that they will carry out in the organisation.

Organisations applying for a host role may also declare locations during the application for a Quality Label. A location is a place in which the activities are organised for a specific number of volunteers. A location must be under the legal and managerial responsibility of the host organisation. By default, the main address of the host organisation is considered as a first location, but organisations can declare and host volunteers in more than one location. Organisations can organise an activity for volunteers that are hosted in different locations, provided that the hosting capacity in terms of number of volunteers is not exceeded. The locations' appropriateness to accommodate volunteering activities should be demonstrated in the Quality Label application. The National Agencies will assess all declared locations against the award criteria. All locations must be in the same country where the host organisation is based.

The pre-defined activities that the volunteers will be involved in, in terms of tasks to be performed, must also be defined for each location.

WHAT ARE THE QUALITY STANDARDS AND TASKS AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF ORGANISATIONS?

The quality standards apply to all beneficiary organisations implementing volunteering activities. The standards exist to define the expected level of quality for participants, and to ensure that all organisations receiving funding are contributing to the programme's objectives.

The beneficiary organisations always remain fully responsible for the respect of the quality standards, including when implementation of the standards requires actions on part of the beneficiaries' partner organisations. Therefore, beneficiary organisations must choose their partners and establish working relations with them that make it possible to ensure the respect of quality standards in all activities.

Organisations holding Quality Labels for host and support roles are equally responsible for the respect of the quality standards according to the rules of the action and the division of tasks agreed with the beneficiary organisation.

Quality standards are available here: https://youth.europa.eu/solidarity/organisations/documents-resources_en

TASKS AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF ORGANISATIONS HOLDING A QUALITY LABEL

In addition to complying with the quality standards, organisations implementing volunteering projects must carry

[39] https://youth.europa.eu/volunteering/organisations_en

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.

Management *(Lead organisation)*	• Ensure effective project coordination in cooperation with all participating organisations by establishing a clear, jointly agreed division of tasks and responsibilities formalised through agreements, and ensure that all participating organisations fulfil their commitments throughout the project lifecycle; • Ensure that the quality standards are respected by all participating organisations; • Submit the grant requests and bear the financial and administrative responsibility for the entire project towards the National Agency; • Distribute the grant among all participating organisations, ensuring a fair allocation of the budget that reflects the tasks carried out; • Carry out monitoring, reporting and evaluation in line with programme procedures; • Carry out dissemination and information activities.
Before the activity *(Support role)*	• Select and match registered candidates in the European Solidarity Corps Portal (this task may also be undertaken by the host organisation) or support the registered candidates to find suitable opportunities; • Ensure that the volunteer receives the European Solidarity Corps Info Kit and signs a volunteering agreement before the activity; • Ensure that the volunteer is in possession of the European Health Insurance Card (if applicable) and is covered by the appropriate insurance; • Provide support with practical arrangements and adequate preparation for the volunteer before departure, considering individual needs and expectations; • Organise pre-departure training or ensure volunteers' participation in pre-departure training organised by the National Agency or SALTO; • Ensure that the volunteer receives support in carrying out language preparation, including Online Language Support, if applicable • Stay in touch with the volunteer and the host organisation throughout the activity.
Before the activity *(Host role)*	• Select and match registered candidates in the European Solidarity Corps Portal (this task may also be undertaken by the support organisation); • Organise pre-departure training or ensure volunteers' participation in pre-departure training organised by the National Agency or SALTO, as defined in the Programme Guide.
During the activity *(Host role)*	*Learning, mentoring and support* • Organise training and evaluation activities or ensure volunteers' participation in those organised by the National Agency or SALTO, as defined in the Programme Guide • Ensure that the volunteer makes proper use of the European Health Insurance Card, and only uses the insurance scheme when required by the

	circumstances (if applicable); • Offer to the volunteer the opportunity to carry out a well-defined set of tasks, while allowing their ideas, creativity, and experience to contribute to and enhance the quality of the volunteering activities • Provide task related support, supervision and guidance to the volunteer; • Identify clear learning opportunities and outcomes for and with the volunteer; • Support the volunteers undertaking language courses, including Online Language Support, if applicable; • 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 or Europass or national tools • Identify a mentor who is responsible for providing to the volunteers: – support to carry out self-reflection on the learning – personal support • Encourage contact with other European Solidarity Corps participants • Provide opportunities to integrate in the local community, meet other people, etc. *Living and working conditions* • Ensure that volunteering activities are organised as a full-time commitment of 30–38 hours per week, including training activities, and that volunteers' rights to weekly rest days (two consecutive free days per week) and holidays (two days per month) are respected in accordance with the volunteering agreement and Programme Guide • Provide pocket money to the volunteer on a weekly or monthly basis. • As defined in the quality standards, the host organisation will be responsible for practical arrangements and health, safety and respect of applicable regulation. Specifically, the host must: – Provide suitable accommodation and healthy meals (or a food allowance) to the volunteer, including during the holiday period – Support access to local transport for project activities and cover related costs – Ensure safe activities for volunteers and target groups by respecting applicable regulations and protecting volunteers' physical and mental wellbeing.
After the activity *(Support role)*	• 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 or Europass or national tools • Provide support for the reintegration of the volunteer into the home community; • Provide guidance regarding further education, training or employment opportunities; • Encourage the volunteer's participation in the annual European Solidarity Corps event;

	• Provide opportunities for the volunteer to exchange and share experiences and learning outcomes, and contribute to the visibility, sustainability and transfer of project results.

WHAT IS THE QUALITY LABEL FOR LEAD ORGANISATIONS?

Obtaining a Quality Label for lead organisations is a precondition for applying for funds to implement Volunteering Projects. Successful applicants for such a Quality Label type will gain simplified access to funding for Volunteering Projects, as described in the section "Volunteering Projects", subsection "How to access funding?" of this Guide, subject to funding availability and performance assessments.

Those who request the lead role will be required to lay down in the application form their longer-term objectives and targets, expected benefits as well as their approach to project management.

Applications for a Quality Label for lead organisations will be assessed against eligibility, selection, exclusion and award criteria. The relevant section in application form will also be assessed against a supplementary set of award criteria.

To be awarded a Quality Label for lead organisations the applicant has to have appropriate and effective processes and measures in place to coordinate and implement high quality solidarity activities as planned. Previous experience in the European Solidarity Corps or Erasmus+ is not a requirement for application.

The award of a Quality Label for lead organisations is conditional on being awarded a Quality Label for host and/or support role (partner organisations).

A) QUALITY LABEL – CALL FOR ACCREDITATION OF NEW APPLICANTS

ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

Who can apply?	Quality Label - 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[40] or any international organisation. Quality Label for lead organisations - any public or private entity, whether non-profit or profit making, local, regional, national or international that has been legally established in an EU Member State or a third country associated to the Programme or in a third country not associated to the Programme but in the process of association to Erasmus+ Programme[41], for at least one year or any international organisation. Organisations holding a Quality Label for any role awarded in the 2021–2027 programme period are in principle not eligible under the call for accreditation of new applicants and should apply instead under the reaccreditation call. These organisations may only apply under this call in the following circumstances: (a) for roles for which they do not already hold a Quality Label; (b) if they hold a Quality Label awarded during the 2021–2027 programme period under a call year that is not covered by the reaccreditation call, as specified by the National Agency; (c) organisations established in Norway or Serbia wishing to participate in the new programme period[42] should apply to their respective National Agencies for all roles they wish to hold, including those for which they already hold a Quality Label.
	A Quality Label application should only refer to the entirety of an organisation with its departments and/or branches[43]. Groups of young people are not eligible.
Duration of Quality Label validity	All types of Quality Label are valid for the remaining duration of the 2021 - 2027 programming period and for the entire 2028 – 2034 period, subject to compliance monitoring and periodical reassessments which will be carried out by the National Agency. After the end of these programming periods, the Quality Label remains valid until the end of the last activity in which the organisation is involved, implemented through a grant awarded under the 2021–2027 or 2028–2034 programming periods, either as a lead or a partner.

[40] Entities established in countries which are, at the time of this Call, officially in the process of being associated to Erasmus+ Programme may also apply. Validity of their **Quality Label**, if awarded, will commence no earlier than 1 January 2028 and be conditional upon the entry into force of the Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council establishing the Erasmus+ programme for the period 2028-2034, and repealing Regulations (EU) 2021/817 and (EU) 2021/888 (COM(2025)549 of 16 July 2025)(Erasmus+ Regulation 2028-2034), which foresees integration of the European Solidarity Corps Programme into Erasmus+ Programme, and also conditional upon the respective countries being validly associated to the Erasmus+ Programme under the respective agreements.

[41] Entities established in countries which are, at the time of this Call, officially in the process of being associated to Erasmus+ Programme may also apply. Validity of their **Quality Label**, if awarded, will commence no earlier than 1 January 2028 and be conditional upon the entry into force of the Erasmus+ Regulation 2028-2034, and also conditional upon the respective countries being validly associated to the Erasmus+ Programme under the respective agreements.

[42] Validity of Quality labels of these organisations will, if awarded, commence no earlier than 1 January 2028 and be conditional upon the entry into force of Erasmus+ Regulation 2028-2034 and re-association of these countries to Erasmus+.

[43] Departments within an organisation can not apply for separate Quality Labels. Quality Labels are awarded at organisation level (one legal entity = one Quality Label).

Where to apply?	To the National Agency of the country in which the applicant organisation is established[44] for organisations established in an EU Member State, Norway, Serbia or a third country associated to the Programme. International organisations that are not established in an EU Member State or a third country associated to the Programme may apply at any National Agency. To the relevant SALTO for organisations established in a third country not associated to the Programme: ▪ SALTO South East Europe for organisations established in Western Balkans countries; ▪ SALTO Eastern Europe and Caucasus for organisations established in Eastern Partnership countries, the territory of Russia as recognised by international law ▪ SALTO EuroMed for organisations established in Southern Mediterranean.
When to apply?	Until 30 September at 12:00:00 (midday Brussels time).
Quality standards	Applicants must subscribe to quality standards as presented in the application form. Quality standards may be updated during the period of implementation of the accreditation. In that case, agreement of the accredited organisations to the updated quality standards will be a condition for applying for their next grant. For organisations accredited only for host and/or support roles, agreement to the updated quality standards may be verified through other means.
Exclusion Criteria	A Declaration on honour signed by the legal representative must be annexed to the application form by using the available template.

AWARD CRITERIA

The awarding of a Quality Label has to comply with the principles and quality standards mentioned above. The following award criteria will be used to assess applications. Some criteria are specific to the role applied for.

Relevance	The extent to which: ▪ the organisation's motives for participation in the European Solidarity Corps are convincing and clearly explained; ▪ the organisation's objectives and regular activities address issues relevant for the objectives of the European Solidarity Corps and have a strong solidarity dimension. ▪ 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.
Quality of measures	The extent to which the organisation respects the programme quality standards by: ▪ selecting and/or involving participants in activities through a transparent and fair process; ▪ ensuring adequate practical and logistical arrangements; ▪ ensuring adequate support for participants before, during and after the activity,

[44] Please note that organisations under the supervision of national authorities of another country apply to the NA of the supervising country.

	as appropriate; ▪ ensuring that participants meet relevant clearance requirements, and undergo specific preparation, particularly for participants working with vulnerable groups in accordance with applicable national law; ▪ ensuring adequate personal support for participants; ▪ ensuring a solid learning component for participants and the recognition and validation of learning outcomes; ▪ guaranteeing the safety and protection of participants and target groups, in line with the avoidance of harmful activities principle; ▪ avoiding job substitution, routine tasks and tasks with low learning impact; ▪ designing and implementing high quality standard activities that respond to unmet societal needs and benefit participants, communities and target groups; ▪ reaching out, supporting and involving young people with fewer opportunities.
Organisational Capacity	The extent to which: ▪ the organisation has demonstrated the ability and commitment to allocate appropriate resources to manage the European Solidarity Corps activities in accordance with applicable quality standards; ▪ the organisation has proposed appropriate steps to ensure continuity of activities in case of organisational changes; ▪ the organisation demonstrates a good approach towards identifying and working with partners.

ADDITIONAL AWARD CRITERIA FOR LEAD ORGANISATIONS ONLY

Proposals must score at least 70 points. Furthermore, they must score at least half of the maximum points in each of the categories of award criteria mentioned below.

Strategic approach (maximum 50 points)	The extent to which: ▪ the applicant formulates a convincing long-term framework for achieving well-defined objectives, with clear milestones and adjustment measures; ▪ the stated objectives will address important societal needs and are relevant to the objectives of the European Solidarity Corps; ▪ the planned activities are suitable to address the identified needs and objectives; ▪ the targets proposed are realistic and sufficiently ambitious relative to objectives and capacity; ▪ the planned activities bring clear benefits to the participants, participating organisations and target groups and have a potential broader impact (e.g. on local, regional, national and transnational level); the planned activities and objectives demonstrate European added value; ▪ the applicant aims to design accessible and inclusive activities and/or support projects and activities actively addressing the issue of inclusion and diversity more broadly in the society; ▪ the applicant aims to promote environmental sustainability and responsibility and is planning to incorporate sustainable and environmental-friendly practices in the activities; ▪ the applicant is planning to make use of digital tools and methods to complement

	and improve activities.
Project management and coordination (maximum 50 points)	The extent to which: ▪ the organisation ensures quality project management, including proper communication and coordination measures with partners; ▪ the measures aimed at disseminating the outcomes of the activities within and outside the participating organisations are appropriate and of high quality; ▪ the measures for monitoring and evaluating the activities are appropriate and of high quality.

B) QUALITY LABEL – CALL FOR REACCREDITATION OF EXISTING QUALITY LABEL HOLDERS

This call is launched in preparation for the 2028-2034 Erasmus+ programme for education, training, youth and sport proposed by the European Commission in July 2025.[45] It is open only to organisations that already hold one or more Quality Labels (with at least one awarded in the programming period 2021-2027) and wish to be reaccredited for the future Programme (2028–2034). Organisations that are unsuccessful in the reaccreditation call may apply for a new accreditation in 2028. In the context of this call, the term 'accreditation' refers to Quality Label.

The Regulation establishing the Erasmus+ programme for the period 2028 - 2034, and repealing Regulations (EU) 2021/817 and (EU) 2021/888 proposed by the European Commission on 16 July 2025 (hereinafter Erasmus+ Regulation 2028 - 2034) has not yet been adopted by the European Union legislators. This reaccreditation call is therefore published based on Regulation 2021/817 and the 2027 annual work programme for the implementation of the European Solidarity Corps Programme. The accreditation awarded under this call will be recognised as part of eligibility criteria at the grant application stage for the funding calls under the Erasmus+ Regulation 2028 - 2034.

The Commission reserves the right to modify or cancel the present reaccreditation call and/or launch other (re)accreditation calls with different content.

ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

Who can apply?	Applicants must hold a valid Quality Label approved under one of the previous calls for proposals in the programme period 2021 - 2027[46]. Suspended Quality Labels are not valid for the purpose of this criterion. In addition, applicants must belong to one of the eligibility categories: 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 or any international organisation.
Where to apply?	Applications must be submitted electronically to the National Agency or SALTO of the country where the applicant organisation is established.
When to apply?	**30 September 2027 at 12:00:00 (midday Brussels time)**

[45] Proposal for a Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council establishing the Erasmus+ programme for the period 2028-2034, and repealing Regulations (EU) 2021/817 and (EU) 2021/888, COM/2025/549 final, https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=celex:52025PC0549

[46] Organisations established in Norway or Serbia wishing to participate in the new programme period should apply under the call for accreditation of new applicants to their respective National Agencies for all roles they wish to hold, including those for which they already hold a Quality Label. For organisations established in Norway or Serbia, Quality Labels previously awarded by the regional SALTOs are not eligible for reaccreditation.

Quality standards	Applicants must subscribe to quality standards as presented in the application form. Quality standards may be updated during the period of implementation of the accreditation. In that case, agreement of the accredited organisations to the updated quality standards will be a condition for applying for their next grant. For organisations accredited only for host and/or support roles, agreement to the updated quality standards may be verified through other means.
Type of accreditation	Applicants can request reaccreditation only for the Quality Label role as the one they currently hold (host, support or lead). Each role may be approved or rejected for reaccreditation independently. Only holders of a Quality Label in the 2021–2027 programming period are eligible to apply for the reaccreditation call for all roles they hold, regardless of the programme period in which those roles were awarded[47]. Reaccreditation of a lead role is conditional on being reaccredited for the host and/or support role.
Exclusion Criteria	A Declaration on honour signed by the legal representative must be annexed to the application form by using the available template.

AWARD CRITERIA

Reaccreditation applications will be assessed against the pass/fail award criteria listed below. The criteria are based on the applicants' report scores and reflect comprehensive qualitative assessments of their achievement of objectives, priorities, expected results, and the maximisation of the overall effectiveness of the Union funding. To be reaccredited, applicants must pass all indicators. Minimum thresholds and other precise requirements for each of the listed indicators will be defined and published by the relevant National Agency ahead of the application deadline.

Performance (lead role)	To pass, applicants must reach a minimum threshold on each of the following elements: ▪ Final report score of projects completed under the current accreditation ▪ Budget absorption rate in projects completed under the current accreditation, where indicated by the National Agency. ▪ Progress report score for lead role
Compliance (all roles)	To pass, during the implementation of volunteering projects, applicant must have: ▪ no documented irregularities and significant implementation issues in accredited projects awarded under the current accreditation ▪ shown respect of commitments and deadlines, and timely follow-up of National Agency's or SALTO's recommendations and instructions.

[47] Holders who have only a Quality Label awarded in the 2018–2020 programme period and have not obtained any Quality Label in the 2021–2027 period are not eligible for the reaccreditation call and may apply instead under the call for new applicants. Organisations holding a combination of Quality Labels awarded during the 2021–2027 and 2018–2020 programme periods may apply for the reaccreditation of all such roles together under the reaccreditation call.

REPORTING, MONITORING, UPDATES AND QUALITY ASSURANCE FOR THE CALL FOR NEW APPLICANTS AND THE REACCREDITATION CALL

Project reports (lead role)	At the end of each grant agreement implemented under the Quality Label, the accredited organisation will submit a final report as specified in that grant agreement.
Activity Plan monitoring (lead role)	Progress of accredited organisations' Activity Plan implementation will be assessed through a written exercise or a structured monitoring visit at least once during a period of five years, counting from when the accreditation implementation started.
Quality standards monitoring (all roles)	Accredited organisations' compliance with quality standards will be periodically assessed by the National Agency or SALTO.
Activity Plan/locations/standard activities updates (lead or host role)	The Activity Plan will be updated at the request of the National Agency. In addition, the accredited organisation can submit a justified request to exceptionally update its Activity Plan, locations or standard activities at any other time.

The number and frequency of reporting exercises will be decided by the National Agency or SALTO and communicated as part of the accreditation award decision. The National Agency or SALTO may modify the schedule of reporting exercises based on the accredited organisation's performance or due to structural changes in the organisation.

Following a report or a monitoring activity, the National Agency or SALTO will provide feedback to the accredited organisation. Based on those exercises or based on other relevant information, the National Agency or SALTO can issue obligatory instructions to address weaknesses in implementation.

In case the accredited organisation shows non-compliance with National Agency's or SALTO's instructions and deadlines, long-term inactivity, low performance, or violations of programme rules (including in another action), the National Agency or SALTO can take the following precautionary and remedial measures:

- **Observation**: the National Agency or SALTO may issue obligatory instructions and impose financial limitations in actions where that accreditation is a requirement. Observation measures for organisations with host and/or support role may include limiting number of volunteers involved in activities. The National Agency or SALTO may also initiate observation measures for high-risk organisations that have received their accreditation for the first time.
- **Suspension**: the National Agency or SALTO may issue obligatory instructions and suspend the validity of the accreditation. When the accreditation's validity is suspended, no new applications for accredited funding can be submitted, and all ongoing grant agreements awarded under that accreditation may also be suspended due to the organisation's non-compliance with the eligibility conditions. Accreditation suspension may also lead to termination of ongoing projects awarded under that accreditation in accordance with grant agreement provisions. Where accreditation for the host and/or support roles is suspended, the organisation is not eligible to participate in activities requiring those roles and may not host or support volunteers. Suspension may apply to individual roles or to the accreditation as a whole.
- **Termination**: the National Agency or SALTO may terminate the accreditation, after giving the organisation the opportunity to submit observations. When the accreditation is terminated, no new applications for accredited funding can be submitted and all ongoing grant agreements awarded under that accreditation will also be terminated. The accreditation will also be terminated if the accredited organisation ceases to exist or by agreement of the National Agency or SALTO and the accredited organisation.

Before activating suspension or proceeding to termination, the National Agency or SALTO will inform the

accredited organisation of its intention and provide it with a possibility to submit a reply. The observation or suspension period will continue until the National Agency or SALTO determines that the conditions and quality standards set in this call are once again fulfilled, and that the accredited organisation has complied with its instructions. Organisations under observation or suspension cannot apply for a new accreditation.

EXCLUSION CRITERIA

Applicants must submit a signed Declaration on Honour certifying that they are not in any of the situations referred to in the exclusion criteria listed in **Part E of this Guide.**

SELECTION CRITERIA [ONLY FOR THE QUALITY LABEL FOR LEAD ORGANISATIONS]

Applicants must have sufficient operational capacity to implement the proposed activity plan. If the accreditation is awarded, the applicants' financial capacity will be assessed at grant request stage. Please read **Part E of this Guide** for more information about the selection criteria.

VALIDITY

Quality Label awarded under call for accreditation of new applicants will be valid for the remaining duration of the 2021 - 2027 programming period and for the entire 2028 – 2034 period, subject to continued compliance with the accreditation conditions.

Successful applicants under the reaccreditation call will have their accreditations' validity extended for the entire programming period until 31 December 2034, subject to continued compliance with the accreditation conditions.

Quality Label cannot be transferred between organisations. However, in case of structural changes to an accredited organisation (for example split, merge, change of legal entity, statute, ownership, or formal transfer of tasks and resources between institutions in the public sector), the National Agency or SALTO may transfer the accreditation to one successor organisation based on a reasoned request.

In case accreditation is required for participation in any action after the end of the 2028-2034 programming period, the National Agency or SALTO may prolong the accreditation's validity under conditions defined by the European Commission. If an accreditation is not prolonged, implementation of previously awarded projects can continue beyond 31 December 2034 until the end of the relevant grant agreements.

VOLUNTEERING PROJECTS

WHAT ARE VOLUNTEERING PROJECTS?

Volunteering Projects[48] offer opportunities for young people to take part in solidarity activities contributing to the daily work of participating organisations, to the ultimate benefit of the communities within which the activities are carried out.

Volunteering is a full-time[49] unpaid activity that has a duration of up to 12 months. This type of solidarity activity is undertaken through participating organisations that offer young people the opportunity to carry out a wide variety of activities, in a structured way.

Participation in volunteering activities must be **free of charge** for the volunteer and may not involve any financial contribution from participants.

The scope of Volunteering Projects is broad, covering a wide range of areas, such as environmental protection, climate change mitigation, greater social inclusion, integration of refugees, support for vulnerable groups, digital skills development, civic engagement, human rights, etc.

Volunteering may take place 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)[50].

WHICH ACTIVITIES CAN BE SUPPORTED UNDER THIS ACTION?

The following activities are supported:

INDIVIDUAL VOLUNTEERING

Individual Volunteering is a solidarity activity of a duration of 2 weeks to 12 months. This type of solidarity activity provides young people with the opportunity to contribute to the daily work of organisations in solidarity activities to the ultimate benefit of the communities within which the activities are carried out.

Individual volunteering activities can take place:

- **Cross-border** i.e. activities taking place in a country different from the country of residence of the participant(s); or
- **In-country,** i.e. activities taking place in the same country as the country of residence of the participant. These activities aim to encourage and facilitate the participation of young people with fewer opportunities; however, they are open to all participants.

[48] The main budget of this Action is allocated to support transnational activities involving organisations and participants from EU Member States and third countries associated to the Programme. However, grant beneficiaries may only use up to 25% of the project grant to involve participants from third countries not associated to the Programme neighbouring the EU (see section "Eligible countries" in Part A of this Guide).
Given the immediate right to temporary protection granted to Ukrainian nationals under the Temporary Protection Directive (Council Directive 2001/55/EC), volunteers who are Ukrainian nationals (whether legally residing in the EU or in Ukraine) shall be exempted from this 25% limitation. For the purposes of applying the limitation, they shall be counted as participants coming from an EU Member State. The exemption shall apply at least until 4 March 2027 (or longer, if the temporary protection is extended beyond this date). In case of projects of four volunteers or less, the 25% limitation may be exceeded in order to allow participation of one volunteer from a third country not associated to the programme.

[49] At least 30 and not more than 38 hours per week

[50] Each national agency may use up to 20% of the final budget allocated for Volunteering activities (after any budget transfers) on in-country activities.

In-country activities should present a clear European added value including complementarity to existing national schemes. Projects with in-country activities presenting a weak or a lack of European added value will not be considered as relevant in the context of the Corps.

In terms of activity duration, individual volunteering can be short term (participation lasting between 14 and 59 days, excluding travel days) or long term (participation lasting between 60 and 366 days, excluding travel days).

VOLUNTEERING TEAMS

Volunteering teams are solidarity activities that allow teams of participants coming from at least two different countries to volunteer together for a period between 2 weeks and 2 months.

The composition of the volunteering teams must be international; at least a quarter of the volunteers must come from a country other than the one where the activity takes place. Examples:

- A grant application is submitted by an organisation legally established in country B to its National Agency for a volunteering activity with 20 participants that takes place in country B. In this case at least 5 participants must come from countries different from country B (country A, C, D etc).
- A grant application is submitted by an organisation legally established in country A to its National Agency for a volunteering activity with 20 participants that takes place in country B. In this case and where only countries A and B participate, at least 5 participants must come from country A, because the link with the National Agency of the applicant must be preserved (see section *What are the eligibility criteria for volunteering activities?*). Volunteers from other countries may also participate (country C, D etc). In the case where countries A, B, C, and D participate, at least one quarter of the volunteers should come from countries A, C, and D, with at least one volunteer from country A included within that quarter.

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.). Despite their shorter duration, these activities will be valuable both for the individuals and for the communities in which the volunteering takes place.

Examples of the valuable work that can be accomplished even over a short period of time, include restoring cultural heritage damaged by natural or man-made disaster, catering for species threatened by extinction; organising educational activities in refugee camps, etc.

Volunteering teams activities can bring a significant contribution to the inclusion of young people with fewer opportunities in the European Solidarity Corps.

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

- Volunteers will carry out the activity in a group. This can be an incentive for youngsters who do not feel ready to embark into challenging experiences on their own. The activity will also be shorter in its duration. This can foster the participation of those youngsters who cannot commit for a long period of time because of their studies or jobs, but still want to be of help for the community;
- The above makes volunteering teams particularly suitable for a first experience in volunteering. They can thus serve as an entry way for long-term activities or provide an incentive to start their own solidarity project.

Furthermore, the following additional type of activity can also be funded:

- **Preparatory visits** to the venue of the volunteering activities before the start of the activities. The purpose of the preparatory visits is to ensure high quality activities by facilitating and preparing administrative arrangements, building trust and understanding and setting-up a solid partnership

between the organisations and the young people involved. The visits will be organised for activities involving young people with fewer opportunities or when the visit is necessary for the implementation of an activity with a strong inclusion dimension. Participants with fewer opportunities that will take part in the planned volunteering activities can be involved in the visit, in order to help with their preparation and involve them in activity design so that their needs are taken into account from the start. The preparatory visits can also take place online. However, only the physical preparatory visits will receive funding.

HOW TO SET UP A VOLUNTEERING PROJECT?

A Volunteering Project consists of four stages: planning, preparation, implementation and follow-up. Participating organisations and young people involved in the activities should take an active role in all those stages enhancing thus their learning experience.

- Planning (including defining the learning outcomes, activity formats, development of work programme, schedule of activities);
- Preparation phase, including practical arrangements, selection of participants, set up of agreements with partners and participants, tailor-made linguistic/intercultural/task-related preparation based on the needs of participants before departure;
- Implementation of activities;
- Follow-up phase, including the evaluation of the activities, issue of the certificate of participation, support to participants upon return as well as the evaluation, dissemination and use of the activities' outcomes.

Most European Solidarity Corps activities are implemented by one or several participating organisations. All participating organisations involved in a volunteering activity must hold a **valid Quality Label**. The organisations involved assume the role of "supporting" the implementation of the activities and the volunteers and/or "hosting" the volunteers:

- **The 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 (some of these activities can be carried out by a support organisation involved in the same project).
- **The support role** entails supporting, preparing and/or training participants before departure, a mediation between them and their host organisations and/or providing support to participants upon return from their activity as well as project management and coordination.

Where only one organisation is involved (in-country activities or volunteering teams), the organisation has to ensure that all phases are carried out and the above tasks and responsibilities are fulfilled. In all cases, the involvement of a support organisation in activities involving young people with fewer opportunities is highly recommended.

In addition, organisations applying for grant must hold a **valid Quality Label for lead organisations**. For more information on the Quality Label, please refer to the section "Quality Label for volunteering".

SELECTION OF PARTICIPANTS

Young people who want to participate in the European Solidarity Corps must register on the European Solidarity Corps Portal https://youth.europa.eu/solidarity. Young people with fewer opportunities may receive support from organisations 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 the participants from the

database of registered young people. No previous qualifications, educational level, specific experience or language knowledge must be required. A more specific profile of the volunteer might be drawn up if justified by the nature of the tasks of the activity or by the project context.

In addition, all individual volunteers in cross-border activities need a support organisation from their country of residence. Support organisations can be found in the database of accredited organisations:

https://youth.europa.eu/volunteering/organisations_en

QUALITY AND SUPPORT MEASURES

A set of measures and services, such as training, language learning support, identification and documentation of the competences acquired, insurance are foreseen to ensure the quality of the volunteering activities and a strong learning dimension for the participants. Some of these measures are optional and could be used depending on the interest and needs of the participants and some of them are compulsory. Detailed information on those measures is available in Part D of this Guide.

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. Organisations should cover the participants' expenditure arising from participation in the activities but should not provide them with salaries or an economic benefit.

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.

Volunteering Projects should also aim to support projects and activities actively addressing the issue of inclusion and diversity more broadly in the society.

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.

ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION, SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AND CLIMATE ACTION

Volunteering activities should promote environmentally sustainable and responsible behaviour among participants, 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 opting for reusable or eco-friendly materials, reducing waste and recycling, using sustainable means of transportation.

Projects and activities addressing the societal challenges related to environmental protection, sustainability and climate goals should also be supported, notably where they contribute to fulfilling the objectives of relevant Horizon Europe Missions. Such projects can tackle a variety of issues, aiming for example at protecting, conserving and enhancing the natural capital or raising awareness about environmental sustainability and enabling behavioural changes for individual preferences, consumption habits and lifestyles. Volunteering initiatives should also aim at preventing and mitigating or repairing the adverse effects of extreme weather events and natural disasters, as well as activities that provide support to affected communities in the aftermath of such extreme weather events or natural disasters.

DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION

The European Solidarity Corps can play a role by supporting Europeans, regardless of their gender, age and background to live and thrive in the digital age. Those projects and activities that aim to boost digital skills, foster digital literacy and/or develop an understanding of the risks and opportunities of digital technology, should also be supported. Depending on the design and objectives of the activities, the development of competences and awareness on digital issues, and the use of new technologies can be introduced in volunteering activities within the ESC programme.

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 (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

Volunteering Projects should promote participation of young people in democratic processes and civic engagement. With volunteering at its heart, the ESC programme engages and empowers young people to be

active in society and addresses the Europe-wide trends of youth limited participation in democratic life and the low levels of knowledge and awareness about European matters that have an impact on the lives of all European citizens.

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. 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 ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA FOR VOLUNTEERING ACTIVITIES?

The eligibility criteria for the volunteering activities implemented under Volunteering Projects are listed below:

Eligible participating organisations	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 or any international organisation. Participating organisations must hold a valid volunteering Quality Label[51] at the latest at the start of the activities and during the entire period of implementation of the activities.	
Number of participating organisations	Individual Volunteering	For cross-border activities at least two organisations must participate: one host organisation and one support organisation from the country in which the participant is legally residing. For in-country activities, at least one host organisation is required.
	Volunteering Teams	At least one organisation – either host or support - is required.
Duration	Individual Volunteering	From 2 weeks to 12 months, excluding travel time.
	Volunteering Teams	From 2 weeks to 2 months[52], excluding travel time.
Venue of activities[53]	Individual Volunteering	Activities have to take place in a host organisation or one of its locations. A volunteer from an EU Member State or third country associated to the Programme must carry out the activity in an EU Member State or third country associated to the Programme, or in a third country not associated to the Programme. A volunteer from a third country not associated to the Programme must carry out the activity in an EU Member State or a third country associated to the Programme.
	Volunteering Teams	The activities must take place in an EU Member State, or third country associated to the Programme or a third country not associated to the Programme.
	Preparatory Visits	Preparatory Visits must take place at the venue of the volunteering activity.

[51] A valid volunteering Quality Label is not 'under suspension'.
[52] Up to 59 days, excluding travel days.
[53] Activities cannot take place in Belarus or on the territory of Russia as recognised by international law.

Eligible participants	Individual Volunteering and Volunteering Teams	Young people between 18 and 30 years[54] who are legally residing in an EU Member State, a third country associated to the Programme or in a third country not associated to the Programme[55] and have registered in the European Solidarity Corps Portal. Each project may spend up to 25% of the grant to involve participants from third countries not associated with the Programme[56]. In case of projects of four volunteers or less, the 25% limitation may be exceeded in order to allow participation of one volunteer from a third country not associated to the Programme. A volunteer can take part in: ▪ a single individual cross-border volunteering activity longer than 2 months. A second individual cross-border volunteering activity longer than 2 months is allowed only if the National Agency approves it, either for young people with fewer opportunities or in other duly justified cases. ▪ multiple individual cross-border volunteering activities lasting up to 2 months[57]; ▪ multiple volunteering teams activities; ▪ multiple in-country volunteering activities. The total amount of time spent by a young person in European Solidarity Corps volunteering activities must not exceed 12 months and the activities carried out must not overlap. Activities carried out under Erasmus+ volunteering/European Voluntary Service will count towards the total of 12 months allowed.
	Preparatory Visits	Representatives of the participating organisations and young people with fewer opportunities who take part in the volunteering activity, including accompanying person(s) if applicable.
Number of participants	Volunteering Teams	At least 5 participants per volunteering team activity, coming from at least 2 different countries out of which one is an EU Member State, or a third country associated to the Programme. At least a quarter of the volunteers should be legally residing in a country other than the one where the activity takes place.

[54] Participants must have reached 18 and must not be older than 30 at the start date of the activity.
[55] Each project can spend up to 25% of the grant to involve participants from third countries not associated with the Programme.
[56] Given the immediate right to temporary protection granted to Ukrainian nationals under the Temporary Protection Directive (Council Directive 2001/55/EC), volunteers who are Ukrainian nationals (whether legally residing in the EU or in Ukraine) shall be exempted from this 25% limitation. For the purposes of applying the limitation, they shall be counted as participants coming from an EU Member State. The exemption shall apply at least until 4 March 2027 (or longer, if the temporary protection is extended beyond this date).
[57] Up to 59 days, excluding travel days.

Other criteria	In order to maintain a clear link with the country where the National Agency is based, either: ▪ the venue of the activity (individual or team volunteering) must be the country of the National Agency to which the application is submitted; or ▪ the participant in an individual volunteering activity must be from the country of the National Agency to which the application is submitted. For volunteering teams, participant(s) from the country of the National Agency to which the application is submitted must be involved.

WHAT ARE THE ELIGIBLE COSTS AND THE APPLICABLE FUNDING RULES?

Eligible costs		Financing mechanism	Amount	In case of "green" travel	Rule of allocation
Travel	Contribution to the travel costs of participants from their place of origin to the venue of the activity and return. Below 500 KM, participants will, as a general rule, travel with low-emissions means of transport. Over 500 KM, participants are strongly encouraged to use a combination of different modes of transport to make their travel more sustainable.	Contribution based on unit costs	For travel distances between 10 and 99KM: EUR 28 per participant	**56** EUR	Based on the travel distance per participant, including accompanying persons. Travel distances must be calculated using the distance calculator supported by the European Commission[58]. The applicant must indicate the distance of a one-way travel to calculate the amount of the EU grant that will support the round trip[59].
			For travel distances between 100 and 499 KM: EUR 211 per participant	**285** EUR	
			For travel distances between 500 and 1 999 KM: EUR 309 per participant	**417** EUR	
			For travel distances between 2 000 and 2 999 KM: EUR 395 per participant	**535** EUR	
			For travel distances between 3 000 and 3 999 KM: EUR 580 per participant	**785** EUR	
			For travel distances between 4 000 and 7 999 KM: EUR 1 188 per participant	1 188 EUR	
			For travel distances of 8 000 KM or more: EUR 1 735 per participant	1 735 EUR	

[58] https://youth.europa.eu/solidarity/organisations/reference-documents-resources_en

[59] https://erasmus-plus.ec.europa.eu/resources-and-tools/distance-calculator For example, if a person from Madrid (Spain) is taking part in an activity taking place in Rome (Italy), the applicant will a) calculate the distance from Madrid to Rome (1365,28 KM); b) select the applicable travel distance band (i.e. Between 500 and 1999 KM) and c) calculate the EU grant that will provide a contribution to the costs of travel of the participant from Madrid to Rome and return (309 EUR).

Eligible costs		Financing mechanism	Amount	Rule of allocation
Management costs	Management costs (e.g. planning, finances, coordination and communication between partners, administrative costs). Management costs cover the costs incurred by the lead, support and host organisation. The division of the received grant will be agreed between participating organisations.	Contribution based on unit costs	**238 EUR** per participant in individual volunteering **125 EUR** per participant in volunteering teams	Based on the number of participants, excluding accompanying persons.
Organisational Support	Costs directly linked to the implementation of volunteering activities (e.g. preparation, monitoring and support of participants, documentation and identification of learning outcomes) and costs linked to the subsistence of participants (e.g. boarding, lodging and local travel).	Contribution based on unit costs	A1 per day per participant	Based on the host country and the duration of the activity per participant, including accompanying persons; (if necessary), including also one travel day before the activity and one travel day following the activity, and up to four additional days for participants receiving a green travel grant.
Inclusion Support	Contribution to costs related to the organisation of volunteering activities involving participants with fewer opportunities and costs incurred by organisations related to reinforced mentorship, i.e. the preparation, implementation and follow-up of tailor-made activities to support participation of young people with fewer opportunities.	Contribution based on unit costs	A2 per day per participant with fewer opportunities	Based on the host country and the duration of the activity per participant with fewer opportunities, excluding accompanying persons; (if necessary), including also one travel day before the activity and one travel day following the activity, and up to four additional days for participants receiving a green travel grant. Conditional: only for activities involving young people with fewer opportunities.
Pocket Money	Contribution to additional personal expenses for participants.	Contribution based on unit costs	A3 per day per participant	Based on the host country and the duration of the activity per participant, excluding accompanying persons; (if necessary), including also one travel day before the activity and one travel day following the activity, and up to four additional days for participants receiving a green travel grant.

Linguistic support	Costs linked to the support offered to participants - prior to departure or during the activity – in order to improve the knowledge of the language they will use to carry out their volunteering tasks.	Contribution based on unit costs	**150 EUR** per participant	Conditional: Only for activities lasting 60 days or more. For cross-border activities - Only for languages and/or levels not offered by the Online Language Support.
Preparatory Visit	Costs linked to the implementation of the physical preparatory visit including travel and subsistence.	Contribution based on unit costs	**609 EUR** per participant per preparatory visit	Based on the number of participants, including accompanying persons. A maximum of 2 participants per participating organisation can be funded per volunteering activity, provided that one of them is a young person with fewer opportunities who will take part in the volunteering activity.
Exceptional costs	Costs for providing a financial guarantee, if the National Agency asks for it. Visa and visa-related costs, residence permits, vaccinations, medical certifications, clearance requirements costs. Costs connected to personal insurance for in-country activities. Expensive travel costs for participants (e.g. from and to outermost regions), including for the use of cleaner, lower carbon emission means of transport which result in expensive travel costs. Costs incurred by organisations to support the participation of young people with fewer opportunities on equal terms as others related to reinforced mentorship, i.e. the preparation, implementation and follow-up of tailor-made activities. Contribution to costs related to the organisation of	Real costs	Costs for financial guarantee: 80 % of eligible costs Expensive travel costs: 80 % of eligible costs Other costs: 100 % of eligible costs	Conditional: The request for financial support for exceptional costs must be motivated and approved by the National Agency. For exceptional costs related to insurance, only for in-country participants in need of private personal insurance to reach the same coverage as the insurance coverage for cross-border activities. For exceptional costs for expensive travel, applicants must justify that the standard funding rules (based on unit costs per travel distance band) do not cover at least 70 % of the travel costs of participants. If awarded, the exceptional costs for expensive travel replace the standard travel grant. For exceptional costs to support the participation of young people with fewer opportunities—such as reinforced mentorship, tailor-made activities, contribution to costs related to the organisation of volunteering activities, reasonable adjustments or

	volunteering activities involving participants with fewer opportunities and costs incurred by organisations to support the participation of young people with fewer opportunities on equal terms as others related to reasonable adjustments or investment in physical assets. Costs related to accompanying persons can also be eligible.			investments in physical assets, costs for accompanying persons etc., applicants must justify that the standard funding rules ("Inclusion support" unit cost per day per participant) do not cover at least 80 % of the costs incurred. If awarded, the exceptional costs to support the participation of young people with fewer opportunities will replace the inclusion support grant.

WHAT ARE THE UNIT COSTS PER DAY PER PARTICIPANT?

	Organisational Support – Activity Costs (EUR per day)	Inclusion Support (EUR per day)	Pocket Money (EUR per day)
	A1	A2	A3
Austria	35	12	7
Belgium	36	12	6
Bulgaria	30	10	7
Croatia	40	13	10
Cyprus	30	9	7
Czechia	24	8	7
Denmark	55	19	12
Estonia	25	8	5
Finland	36	12	7
France	28	9	8
Germany	33	12	7
Greece	30	9	7
Hungary	24	8	7
Ireland	52	18	11
Italy	28	9	6
Latvia	25	8	5
Lithuania	26	8	6
Luxembourg	37	13	7
Malta	29	11	6
Netherlands	36	13	7
Poland	25	8	6
Portugal	27	9	6
Romania	23	8	4
Slovakia	24	8	6
Slovenia	26	8	5
Spain	25	8	6
Sweden	35	12	7
Republic of North Macedonia	20	6	4
Iceland	36	12	8
Liechtenstein	34	11	8
Türkiye	24	8	6
Norway	36	12	8
Third country neighbouring the EU	29	9	6

HOW TO ACCESS FUNDING?

Only organisations that are holders of a Quality Label for lead organisation can apply for funding under Volunteering Projects.

The grant applications are based on the activities approved beforehand, during the evaluation procedure for obtaining the Quality Label for lead organisations. Please read the relevant section for more details on how to obtain the Quality Label. Thus, a detailed description of the planned activities is not required for this simplified grant application procedure. Instead, the applications focus on estimating the number, type and duration of activities to be implemented, the number of participants and proportion of young people with fewer opportunities involved and the policy priorities and thematic areas addressed.

The activities to be implemented must follow the rules and principles laid down for each activity type in the respective sections of this Guide.

ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA AND APPLICATION INFORMATION

Eligible applicants	Organisations that, at the grant application deadline, hold a valid Quality Label for lead organisation and are legally established in an EU Member State or a third country associated to the Programme.
Eligible activities	▪ Individual Volunteering Activities ▪ Volunteering Teams Activities Additionally, the following support activities can be implemented: ▪ Preparatory visits Description and eligibility criteria for each of these activities are defined above, in the subsections: "Which activities can be supported under this Action?", "What are the eligibility criteria for volunteering activities?".
Duration of projects	Up to 24 months
Where to apply?	To the National Agency of the country in which the applicant organisation is established[60].
When to apply?	Applicants have to submit their grant applications by the following dates: ▪ 18 February at 12:00 (midday Brussels time) for projects starting between 1 June and 31 December of the same year; ▪ (Optional round) 5 October at 12:00 (midday Brussels time) for projects starting between 1 January and 31 May of the following year. National Agencies may organise two selection rounds by setting both deadlines as above or only the first one. This information will be published on the site of the National Agency.
Quality standards; **Tasks and responsibilities**	Applicants must subscribe to the quality standards, tasks and responsibilities as presented in the application form and in the section of this Programme Guide *What are the Quality standards and Tasks and responsibilities of organisations?,* and confirm that all other participating organisations will respect them.
Number of applications	An organisation may apply only once per round. In the event of a second selection round, the National Agency may decide that the organisations that have been awarded grants for Volunteering Projects in the first round of grant applications are not eligible for the second round of the same call for proposals. Applicants are invited to check the website of the National Agency for more precise information.
How to apply?	Please see part E of this Guide for details on how to apply.

[60] Exceptionally, international organisations must apply to the National Agency which awarded their Quality Label for lead organisation.

Exclusion criteria	A Declaration on honour of the legal representative must be annexed to the application form by using the available template.

SELECTION CRITERIA

Please refer to part E in the guide, steps 2 and 3.

BUDGET ALLOCATION

In this simplified application procedure, the applications do not undergo a qualitative assessment and therefore no award criteria are applied. The awarded grant amount will depend on a number of elements:

- the total budget available for allocation;
- the requested activities;
- the minimum and maximum grant;
- the score of the Quality Label application for lead organisation;
- applicant's performance (progress report score, budget absorption and final report score of the last completed Volunteering Project, if available);
- policy priorities and thematic areas addressed by the activities applied for;
- proportion of young people with fewer opportunities involved.

Detailed rules on basic and maximum grant, scoring of the allocation criteria, weighting of each criterion, the allocation method, and the budget available for Volunteering Projects will be published by the National Agency ahead of the call deadline.

VOLUNTEERING TEAMS IN HIGH PRIORITY AREAS

WHAT ARE VOLUNTEERING TEAMS IN HIGH PRIORITY AREAS?

Volunteering Teams in High Priority Areas[61] are large scale, high impact projects supporting voluntary activities carried out by young people from at least two different countries coming together to express solidarity by implementing short-term interventions that address common European challenges in policy areas defined each year at EU level.

WHAT ARE THE PRIORITIES OF 2027 CALL FOR THIS ACTION?

ENHANCING A CULTURE OF PREPAREDNESS, AND PROVIDING RELIEF AND ASSISTANCE TO VICTIMS OF ARMED CONFLICTS AND DISASTERS

Volunteers can provide significant value by contributing to the development of a culture of preparedness, in line with the Preparedness Union Strategy, that can help people across the whole of society, with particular attention to the most vulnerable groups, to adapt to change and risks, such as those related to health, security, economy or any other emerging threat. In addition, the Corps can also contribute to the provision of relief and assistance to those whose lives, livelihoods and communities have been disrupted by the disasters from natural hazards and human-induced risks, including armed conflicts and their environmental impacts. The importance of solidarity among individuals and communities, within or across borders, has become even more apparent with the Russian war of aggression against Ukraine and the resulting big inflow of displaced people into the EU; frequent occurrences of extreme weather events (e.g. storms, floods, droughts and wildfires) as well as large-scale seismic events in certain countries, and health issues.

FOSTERING POSITIVE LEARNING EXPERIENCES AND OUTCOMES FOR YOUNG PEOPLE WITH FEWER OPPORTUNITIES

Volunteers involved in Corps' activities can provide significant value by assisting children and young people from disadvantaged backgrounds, with disabilities or otherwise vulnerable groups to attain adequate learning achievements, including improving basic skills in line with the Action Plan on Basic Skills. This can be done through (the organisation of) recreational and educational activities for children and young people, as well as through mentoring that supplements formal learning. It is crucial to use the Corps' potential to ensure that its volunteers can support young people and children to strengthen their levels of literacy, numeracy, scientific, digital and citizenship skills to boost their creativity, innovation and critical thinking.

ENHANCING INTERGENERATIONAL FAIRNESS AND SOLIDARITY

Volunteers involved in Corps' activities can provide significant value by promoting activities intended to enhance intergenerational fairness and solidarity in line with the Strategy on Intergenerational Fairness. It can support the development of skills aimed at promoting/developing intergenerational fairness future-thinking, and at ensuring that interests of all generations are respected in society and policy making. It is crucial to use the Corps' potential so that its volunteers can help increase and promote solidarity among different generations, by fostering dialogue on sustainability and inclusiveness, transfer of knowledge and experience,

[61] The main budget of this Action is allocated to support transnational activities involving organisations and participants from EU Member States and third countries associated to the Programme. However, grant beneficiaries may only use up to 25% of the project grant to involve participants from third countries not associated to the Programme neighbouring the EU (see section "Eligible countries" in Part A of this Guide).

and by supporting activities aimed at combating age discrimination and inequalities. This can be done, for example, through community-based activities that foster empathy, culture of cooperation and solidarity among people from different generations and backgrounds.

WHAT ARE THE OBJECTIVES?

Activities by Volunteering Teams in High-Priority Areas will aim to:

- address clearly defined unmet societal challenges in the area of "Enhancing a culture of preparedness, and providing relief and assistance to victims of armed conflicts and disasters" and/ or "fostering positive learning experiences and outcomes for young people with fewer opportunities" and or "enhancing intergenerational fairness"; promote solidarity across the participating countries; enable the young people to gain skills and competences which are useful for their personal, educational, social and professional development;
- provide tangible benefits to the communities within which the activities are carried out;
- ensure a direct contact between the participant and the beneficiaries of the solidarity-related activities, to enable the participant to gain skills that are useful for their educational and social development;
- reach out to young people with fewer opportunities, including refugees, asylum seekers and migrants;
- promote diversity, intercultural and inter-religious dialogue - and the EU values of human dignity, freedom, equality and respect for human rights, including the rights of persons belonging to minorities - as well as projects enhancing media literacy, critical thinking and a sense of initiative among young people;
- reinforce the capacities and international scope of the participating organisations;
- Boost solidarity between different age groups, increase understanding and combat inequalities;
- raise young volunteers' awareness and understanding of other cultures and countries, offering them the opportunity to build networks of international contacts, to actively participate in society and to develop a sense of European citizenship and identity.

WHICH ACTIVITIES CAN BE SUPPORTED UNDER THIS ACTION?

The following activities are supported:

VOLUNTEERING TEAMS

Volunteering Teams are full-time[62] non-remunerated solidarity activities that should bring together groups of minimum 5 participants to volunteer together for a period between 2 weeks and 2 months (up to 59 days, excluding travel days). The composition of the team should be international (including participants from at least two different countries). At least quarter of team members should come from eligible countries that are different from the country where the activity takes place. Young people can only be involved in one activity at a time. In volunteering teams, European Solidarity Corps' volunteers 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.). One project should in principle aim to organise volunteering teams for at least 40 participants or more. Volunteering activities should aim to cover one or more high priority areas.

Examples of the valuable work that can be accomplished by volunteering teams under this Action include:

Volunteers are involved in volunteering activities organising recreational and educational activities for children, integration and promotion of cultural exchange with refugees in local communities, engaging refugees in providing services to the community and to most vulnerable populations, e.g. regeneration of green spaces,

[62] At least 30 and not more than 38 hours per week

recovery and redistribution of unused food, recycling of materials.

In Volunteering Teams, volunteers will carry out the activity in a group. This can be an incentive for young people who do not feel ready to embark upon 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 community.

The above makes also Volunteering Teams an **inclusive format**, particularly suitable for a first experience in volunteering and the participation of young people with fewer opportunities. They can thus serve as an entry-way for long-term activities or even provide an incentive to start an own solidarity project.

COMPLEMENTARY ACTIVITIES

Complementary activities are relevant side activities designed to add value and augment the results of the project as well as to strengthen its impact on the local, regional, and/or European level. These complementary activities aim at raising awareness of the value of volunteering for young people and for communities as well as at strengthening the recognition of the skills and competences gained by the volunteers. These activities could also enhance the capacity of the solidarity sector organisations to tackle common European challenges and their abilities to develop Volunteering Projects.

Complementary activities could include workshops, conferences, seminars, training courses, job shadowing, coaching, exchange of good practices etc. The complementary activities that require the physical presence of (a) volunteer(s) should take place within the timeframe of the volunteering activity.

PREPARATORY VISITS

Preparatory visits are visits to the venue of the volunteering activities before they start. They should ensure high quality of activities involving young people with fewer opportunities or when the visit is necessary for the implementation of an activity with a strong inclusion dimension. The visit can focus on facilitating and preparing administrative arrangements, building trust and understanding and setting-up a solid partnership between the organisations and the people involved. Young people with fewer opportunities that will take part in the planned activities can be involved in the visit, in order to help with their preparation and involve them in activity design so that their needs are taken into account from the start.

HOW TO SET UP A PROJECT?

A project is implemented by at least three eligible organisations from at least two different EU Member States, or third countries associated to the Programme and 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 participants, set up of agreements with partners and participants, linguistic/intercultural/task-related preparation of participants before departure);
- Implementation of activities (including support and guidance to participants during the activities);
- Follow-up (the evaluation of the activities, follow-up of participants, issue of the certificate of participation as well as the dissemination and use of the project's outcomes).

Implementation of cross-border solidarity activities for groups of volunteers are the core of a project. A project must thus include at least one volunteering team activity and should in principle offer volunteering for at least 40 young people.

A project could also include complementary activities. Furthermore, organisations are encouraged to organise preparatory visits to ensure high quality of activities involving young people with fewer opportunities.

Eligibility criteria laid down below must be respected.

SELECTION OF PARTICIPANTS

Young people who want to participate in the European Solidarity Corps must register on https://europa.eu/youth/solidarity_en. Young people with fewer opportunities may receive support from organisations to complete the registration phase. The European Solidarity Corps Portal offers a meeting place for those young people and organisations holding a Quality Label and willing to implement solidarity activities. Organisations have to select in PASS[63] participants that are registered in the Portal.

QUALITY AND SUPPORT MEASURES

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

POLICY 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 young people 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.

ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION, SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AND CLIMATE ACTION

Volunteering activities should promote environmentally sustainable and responsible behaviour among participants, 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, using sustainable means of transportation.

[63] Placement Administration Support System (PASS), accessible through the European Youth Portal

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 **Online Language Support** 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. 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, exclusion, selection and award (see part E for the admissibility, selection and exclusion criteria).

ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA AND APPLICATION INFORMATION

Eligible participating organisations	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 or any international organisation. Participating organisations (support or host role) must hold a valid volunteering Quality Label[64] at the application deadline and during the entire duration of the project[65]. Hosting organisations receiving volunteers must hold a Host Role Quality Label. The same organisation cannot submit as coordinator more than one application under this call for proposal.
Who can apply?	Proposals must be submitted by a consortium of at least three eligible participating organisations with a valid volunteering Quality Label from at least two different EU Member States or third countries associated to the Programme. Only an eligible participating organisation, holding a lead Quality Label, 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.

[64] A valid volunteering Quality Label is not 'under suspension'

[65] Organisations holding a Quality Label that expires during the activities should apply for a new Quality Label in due time to ensure eligibility of the activities.

Eligible participants	Young people between 18 and 30 years[66] who are legally residing in an EU Member State, a third country associated to the Programme or a third country not associated to the Programme and have registered in the European Solidarity Corps Portal. Each project may spend up to 25% of the grant to involve participants from third countries not associated with the Programme[67].
Priority areas	Projects must comply with the EU high priority areas (enhancing a culture of preparedness across the whole of society and providing relief to persons fleeing armed conflicts and other victims of disasters from natural hazards and human-induced risks and/or fostering positive learning experiences and outcomes for young people with fewer opportunities and/or enhancing intergenerational fairness and solidarity). Volunteering activities must address at least one of the high priority areas.
Venue of activities	Activities must take place in the country of one of the applicant organisations except in duly justified cases, related to the objectives of the call.
Number of activities	At least one volunteering team activity must be implemented.
Duration of project	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.
Where to apply?	To the Education and Culture Executive Agency via the Funding & Tenders Portal Electronic Submission System (see part E).
When to apply?	Proposals must be submitted by 04 March 2027 at 17.00 (Brussels time) via the Funding & Tenders Portal Electronic Submission System (see part E).
Exclusion criteria	A Declaration on honour signed by the legal representative must be provided with the application.

AWARD CRITERIA

To be considered for funding, proposals must score:

a) at least 60 points;

b) at least half of the maximum points in each of the categories of the award criteria mentioned below.

In ex aequo cases, priority will be given to highest scores for "Relevance, rationale and impact" and then “Quality of project management” and then “Quality of project design”.

[66] Participants must have reached 18 and must not be older than 30 at the start date of the volunteering activity.

[67] Given the immediate right to temporary protection granted to Ukrainian nationals under the Temporary Protection Directive (Council Directive 2001/55/EC), volunteers who are Ukrainian nationals (whether legally residing in the EU or in Ukraine) shall be exempted from this 25% limitation. For the purposes of applying the limitation, they shall be counted as participants coming from an EU Member State. The exemption shall apply at least until 4 March 2027 (or longer, if the temporary protection is extended beyond this date).

Relevance, rationale and impact (maximum 30 points)	▪ The relevance of the project to the objectives of the European Solidarity Corps and the high priority area set for this Action; ▪ The extent to which the proposal relates and integrates the relevant activities in the project set-up; ▪ The extent to which the proposal will address well defined and important societal needs; ▪ The relevance of the project to the needs and objectives of individual participants and participating organisations; ▪ The extent to which the project involves young people with fewer opportunities as participants; ▪ The extent to which the project will provide benefits to the communities within which the activities are carried out; ▪ The potential impact of the project at local, regional, national and/or European levels; ▪ The extent to which the project provides European added value; ▪ 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.
Quality of project design (maximum 40 points)	▪ The consistency between project objectives and activities proposed; ▪ The clarity, completeness and quality of all the phases of the project (preparation of participants, implementation of activities, follow-up and support provided on participants' return); ▪ The quality of proposed measures to reach out and involve young people with fewer opportunities; ▪ 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; ▪ The appropriateness of measures for selecting and/or involving volunteers in activities; ▪ The quality of the non-formal learning methods and measures proposed to enable the participants to gain skills and competences that are valuable for their personal, educational, social, civic and cultural development; ▪ The added value of the complementary activities to the project objectives and the impact of the project.
Quality of project management (maximum 30 points)	▪ The quality of the practical arrangements, management and support modalities; ▪ The quality of cooperation and communication between the participating organisations, as well as with other relevant stakeholders; ▪ The quality of measures for evaluating and disseminating the outcomes of the project.

WHAT ARE THE ELIGIBLE COSTS AND THE APPLICABLE FUNDING RULES?

The maximum EU grant per project is **EUR 400 000**.

Eligible costs		Financing mechanism	Amount	Rule of allocation
Volunteer support	Contribution to travel costs and exceptional costs such as visa and vaccinations costs, personal insurance for in-country activities, residence permits, medical certifications and contribution to additional personal expenses for volunteers (pocket money).	Contribution based on unit costs	**26 EUR** per day per volunteer	Based on the duration of the volunteering team activity (if necessary, including also one travel day before the activity and one travel day following the activity) per volunteer, including accompanying persons.
Organisational Support	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 participants, validation of learning outcomes) and costs linked to the subsistence of participants (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	**43 EUR** per day per volunteer	Based on the duration of the volunteering team activity (if necessary, including also one travel day before the activity and one travel day following the activity) per volunteer, including accompanying persons.
Inclusion support	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 with fewer opportunities	Based on the duration of the volunteering team 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.

SOLIDARITY PROJECTS

WHAT IS A SOLIDARITY PROJECT?

A **Solidarity Project** is a non-profit solidarity activity initiated, developed and implemented by young people themselves for a period from 2 to 12 months. It gives a group of minimum five young persons the chance to express solidarity by taking responsibility and committing themselves to bring positive change in their local community. The project should have a clearly identified topic which the group of young people wish to explore together, and which is to be translated into the concrete daily activities of the project and involve all the members of the group. Solidarity Projects should address key challenges within the communities, where relevant including those identified jointly in the border regions and it should also present European added value. Participation in a Solidarity Project is an important non-formal learning experience through which young people can boost their personal, educational, social and civic development.

A Solidarity Project will typically consist of the following stages:

- Planning;
- Preparation;
- Implementation of the activities;
- Follow-up (including the evaluation of the activities as well as the sharing of project's results).

WHAT ARE THE OBJECTIVES?

A Solidarity Project should clearly refer to the **European Solidarity Corps' objectives and principles** in particular solidarity. This common value provides the necessary unity to cope with current and future societal challenges, which young Europeans are willing to help address by expressing their solidarity in practice. A Solidarity Project could address young people facing situations that make their inclusion in society more difficult. It could also aim to enable active participation of young people in fostering the culture of preparedness. A Solidarity Project should also consider sustainable and environmental-friendly practices in the planned activities.

The young people should take the initiative to respond to the issues and challenges around them, which is why a Solidarity Project should be directly linked to the **local community** they live in, although some of them can also tackle regional or even national issues. Some Solidarity Projects could also tackle common challenges identified jointly in the border regions. A Solidarity Project should have an impact on the local community by addressing local issues, targeting a specific group or developing local opportunities (particularly in communities located in rural, isolated, marginalised or cross-border areas) but also through involving different actors and developing new partnerships. Thus, by setting common goals and cooperating to achieve them, communities can benefit from a Solidarity Project.

Together with addressing the local challenges, a Solidarity Project should also demonstrate **European added value** by addressing priorities identified at European level. A Solidarity Project should reflect a common concern for topics within the European society, such as for example integrating third-country nationals, climate change or active democratic participation. The European added value can be expressed through any element of a Solidarity Project that is linked with European issues, values and priorities. The European priorities will also be promoted through sharing of the results of the project. In cases of cross-border projects it should be clear what common challenges are jointly shared by the local communities spread over the border and living in proximity and how a

Solidarity Project could bring benefits to those regions by addressing them[68].

Participation in a Solidarity Project will also be an important **non-formal learning experience** for young people. It should foster sense of initiative, active European citizenship and entrepreneurial spirit. In particular, young people managing the project could absorb in practice the concept of social entrepreneurship by creating new products or services that benefit local community or society in general and address important societal challenges. By putting their own ideas into practice, meeting unexpected situations and finding solutions for them, trying out innovative and creative measures, young people will learn new skills and develop their capacities, express their own creativity and take responsibility for their action. They will boost their self-esteem, autonomy and motivation to learn. Participation in managing and implementing a Solidarity Project could be also a first step into self-employment or setting up organisations in the solidarity, non-profit or youth sectors.

HOW TO SET UP A SOLIDARITY PROJECT?

Young people who want to form a group to run a Solidarity Project must be registered in the European Solidarity Corps portal as a first step, in order to apply to a Solidarity Project. There is no maximum number of the group's members. The activities will take place in the country of residence of the applicant, facilitating in particular the participation of young people who may encounter difficulties to engage in transnational activities.

The group will decide autonomously on the working methods and how the project will be managed. One of the group's members will assume a role of legal representative who will submit the application (unless an organisation applies on behalf of the group). The group will arrange the distribution of tasks and responsibilities, ensure efficient coordination and communication between its members and define the amount of time spent in carrying out the tasks in relation to the goals of the project. Working methods should aim to involve all members of the group through various phases of the project and of activities (preparation, implementation and sharing the results). The phases should be clearly structured with the help of a project's timetable.

A group of young people who plan a Solidarity Project can seek for support from **an organisation** (any public or private body). An organisation may apply on their behalf for a grant under the European Solidarity Corps. The role of the organisation should be administrative, to support the group in the project life-cycle administrative and financial tasks. However, it can also offer support and guidance in identifying and documenting learning outcomes.

Young people carrying out a Solidarity Project may be supported by **coaches**. A coach is a resource person who could have youth work experience to accompany groups of young people and support their participation through different phases of the project. The coach will remain outside the Solidarity Project, so he/she will not be a member of the group and if needed, can come from an organisation applying on behalf of the group. The coach empowers the group of young people in those areas and topics they need support in, so that they can successfully implement the project by themselves, and (s)he can play different roles based on the needs of the group. This could be done through regular coaching sessions throughout the project period, punctual trainings on specific topics or a combination of both. The coach can provide advice on having quality learning process and assist in identifying and documenting learning outcomes at the end of the project. The group of young people can use the support of one or several coaches depending on their needs. As a principle, the coach works with the applying group of young people, not with the target group(s) of the project.

For example, a coach could be a person to turn to with doubts, questions, conflicts in the group; a trainer to give a workshop on project management; to teach the group certain skills needed for the project; a person supporting and monitoring the learning process.

Through the different phases of the project, the group should reflect on the **learning process**, which they experience and have experienced. During the planning phase of the project, the learning goals should be discussed together with the general aims of the project. During the implementation, regular reflection is encouraged and towards the end of the project, the group should consider measures that make the learning outcomes visible. For recognising and validating these learning outcomes it is recommended to use Youthpass and the related learning process reflection.

The group should reflect together on measures aimed at the visibility of their project and the visibility of the European Solidarity Corps in general. The group should also reflect on **follow-up measures**. This means that the

[68] A flexibility is allowed in a definition of cross-border regions which can include also regions spread by a sea, as long as the common challenges that a project will address are clearly identified.

project should be framed within a longer-term perspective and planned with a view to have effects after it ends. In order to make the project and its results more sustainable, the group is expected to carry out a final evaluation. This should make possible to assess whether the objectives of the project have been achieved; the expectations of the group have been met and evaluate the overall success. The group should consider the ways of sharing the results of the project and reflect on with who they should be shared.

PRIORITIES

INCLUSION AND DIVERSITY

The European Solidarity Corps seeks to promote equal opportunities and access, inclusion and fairness. Young people implementing Solidarity Projects should design accessible and inclusive activities, taking into account the needs of participants with fewer opportunities. Special funding for the participation of people with fewer opportunities is available both for the members of the group and the target group.

ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION, SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AND CLIMATE ACTION

Solidarity Projects should promote environmentally sustainable and responsible behaviour among participants, raising the awareness about the importance of acting to reduce or compensate for the environmental footprint of activities. Solidarity Projects should be designed and implemented with environmental consciousness by e.g. integrating sustainable practices such as reducing waste and recycling, using sustainable means of transportation.

DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION

The European Solidarity Corps supports incorporating the use of digital tools and learning methods in Solidarity Projects. Groups of young people implementing Solidarity Projects are encouraged to make use of digital tools and learning methods to complement the physical activities and add to the quality of the project.

PARTICIPATION IN DEMOCRATIC LIFE

The European Solidarity Corps supports integrating a participatory dimension in Solidarity Projects, 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.

WHAT ARE THE CRITERIA USED TO ASSESS PROJECTS?

ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA AND APPLICATION INFORMATION

Who implements the project?	A group of minimum 5 young people aged between 18 and 30 years[69] who are legally residing in one and the same EU Member State or a third country associated to the Programme and have registered in the European Solidarity Corps Portal. There is no maximum number of members of the group.
Who can apply?	The group that will implement the project. One of the young people in the group assumes the role of the legal representative and takes the responsibility of submitting the application. Any public or private body, legally established in an EU Member State or third country associated to the Programme, on behalf of the group that will implement the project.
Venue of projects	The project should take place in the country of the applicant. In cases in which the project addresses cross-border challenges, project activities can also take place in cross-border regions of the EU Member States, third countries associated to the

[69] Participants must have reached 18 and must not be older than 30 at the start date of the project.

	Programme and third countries non-associated to the Programme sharing the border with the country of the applicant[70].
Duration of projects	2 to 12 months.
Where to apply?	To the National Agency of the country where the applicant is legally resident.
When to apply?	Applicants have to submit their grant application by the following dates: ▪ 18 February at 12:00 (midday Brussels time) for projects starting between 1 June and 31 December of the same year; ▪ (Optional round) 5 May at 12:00 (midday Brussels time) for projects starting between 1 August and 31 December of the same year; ▪ 5 October at 12:00 (midday Brussels time) for projects starting between 1 January and 31 May of the following year. National Agencies may organise three selection rounds by setting three deadlines as above or only the first (18 February) and the last (5 October) one. This information will be published on the site of each National Agency.
How to apply?	Please see part E of this Guide for details on how to apply.
Exclusion criteria	A Declaration on honour signed by the legal representative must be annexed to the application form by using the available template.

SELECTION CRITERIA

Please refer to part E in the guide, steps 2 and 3.

AWARD CRITERIA

To be considered for funding, proposals must score at least 60 points. Furthermore, they must score at least half of the maximum points in each of the categories of award criteria mentioned below.

In ex aequo cases, priority will be given to highest scores for "Relevance, rationale and impact" and then “Quality of project management” and then “Quality of project design”.

[70] Project activities cannot take place in Belarus or on the territory of Russia as recognised by international law.

Relevance, rationale and impact *(maximum 40 points)*	▪ The relevance of the project to the objectives and priorities of the European Solidarity Corps; ▪ The degree to which the project takes into account the European Solidarity Corps principles; ▪ The extent to which the project provides European added value by addressing relevant topics ▪ The relevance of the project to the needs of members of the group; ▪ The relevance of the project to the needs of a target group (if any) and local communities; ▪ The potential impact of the project on members of the group, incl. their personal, entrepreneurship skills and social involvement; ▪ The potential impact on the target group (if any) and on local communities. ▪ 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.
Quality of project design *(maximum 40 points)*	▪ The consistency between project objectives and proposed activities; ▪ The extent to which the project is designed, developed and implemented by young people; ▪ The extent to which the composition of the group permits to reach the project objectives; ▪ The involvement of the members of the group at the various phases of the project; The clarity, completeness and quality of all the phases of the project (planning, preparation, implementation, evaluation and sharing the results); ▪ The extent to which learning process and learning outcomes in the project is thought through, identified and documented, in particular through Youthpass; ▪ The extent to which the project incorporates sustainable and environmental-friendly practices, accessible and inclusive activities, as well as makes use of digital tools and methods to complement and improve activities.
Quality of project management *(maximum 20 points)*	▪ The practical arrangements, management, cooperation and communication between the members of the group; ▪ The measures for evaluating the outcomes of the project; ▪ The measures for making the project visible to others who are not involved in the project; ▪ The measures for sharing the outcomes of the project.

WHAT ARE THE ELIGIBLE COSTS AND THE APPLICABLE FUNDING RULES?

Eligible costs		Financing mechanism	Amount	Rule of allocation
Project Management costs	Costs linked to the management and implementation of the project (e.g. preparation, implementation, of activities, evaluation, dissemination and follow-up activities).	Contribution based on a unit cost	**630 EUR** per month	Based on the duration of the Solidarity Project.
Coaching costs	Costs linked to the involvement of a coach in the project.	Contribution based on a unit cost	B1 per day of work. Maximum 12 days.	Based on the country of the applicant and the working days. Definition of a working day depends on national legislation of the country of applicant. Conditional: The request for financial support to cover coach costs must be motivated in the application form. The duration of coaching is not linked to the project duration.
Exceptional costs	Costs to support the participation of young people with fewer opportunities (members of the group implementing the project). Costs to support the participation of people with fewer opportunities who are a target group of the project.	Real costs	100 % of eligible costs	Conditional: The request(s) for financial support to cover exceptional costs must be duly justified and motivated in the application form and approved by the National Agency. The request for financial support to cover exceptional costs for people with fewer opportunities who are a target group of the project should not exceed 7000 EUR per project.

WHAT ARE THE UNIT COSTS PER DAY OF WORK?

	Coaching Costs (EUR per day)
	B1
Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Liechtenstein, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Sweden	255
Cyprus, Czechia, Estonia, Greece, Latvia, Malta, Portugal, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain	227
Bulgaria, Croatia, Hungary, Lithuania, North Macedonia, Poland, Romania, Türkiye	137

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[71].

[71] Art 10(2) of OJ L 202, 08.06.2021, Regulation (EU) 2021/888 of 20 May 2021 establishing the European Solidarity Corps Programme and repealing Regulations (EU) 2018/1475 and (EU) No 375/2014, https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=uriserv:OJ.L_.2021.202.01.0032.01.ENG

QUALITY LABEL FOR HUMANITARIAN AID VOLUNTEERING

WHAT IS THE QUALITY LABEL?

The Quality Label for Humanitarian Aid Volunteering certifies that an organisation can 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 in the annual call for Humanitarian Aid Volunteering.

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 volunteers, 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 Regulation establishing the Erasmus+ programme for the period 2028 - 2034, and repealing Regulations (EU) 2021/817 and (EU) 2021/888 proposed by the European Commission on 16 July 2025 (hereinafter Erasmus+ Regulation 2028 - 2034) has not yet been adopted by the European Union legislators. This accreditation call is therefore published based on Regulation 2021/817 and the 2027 annual work programme for the implementation of the European Solidarity Corps Programme. It is expected to facilitate the application of potential beneficiaries under future funding calls published under the Regulation for 2028 - 2034. The Commission reserves the right to modify or cancel the present Humanitarian Aid accreditation call and/or launch other accreditation calls with different content.

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). The Executive Agency will award this Quality Label to successful applicants. The Executive Agency will monitor the compliance of organisations holding a Quality Label and may carry out periodical reassessments. Unless terminated, the Quality Label will be valid for the entire duration of the programming period 2028-2034 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[72] of Quality Label organisations on the European Solidarity Corps Portal. To identify potential partners, partner searching tool on the Funding and Tender Opportunities Portal[73] 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.

WHAT ARE THE QUALITY STANDARDS?

The quality standards apply to all beneficiary organisations implementing volunteering activities. The standards exist to define the expected level of quality for participants, and to ensure that all organisations receiving funding are contributing to the programme's objectives.

All beneficiary organisations always remain fully responsible for the respect of the quality standards, including when implementation of the standards requires actions on part of the beneficiaries' partner organisations. Therefore, beneficiary organisations must choose their partners and establish working relations with them that make it possible to ensure the respect of quality standards in all activities.

Quality standards are available here: https://youth.europa.eu/solidarity/organisations/documents-resources_en

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 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.

ORGANISATIONS APPLYING FOR A SUPPORT ROLE

Management	▪ Ensure compliance with the Erasmus+ Regulation74, in particular the articles and the recitals which refer to the Volunteering under the European Voluntary

[72] https://youth.europa.eu/volunteering/organisations_en

[73] https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/portal/screen/how-to-participate/partner-search

[74] The Regulation establishing the Erasmus+ programme for the period 2028 - 2034 and repealing Regulations (EU) 2021/817 and (EU) 2021/888 proposed by the European Commission on 16 July 2025 (hereinafter Erasmus+ Regulation 2028 - 2034) has not yet been adopted by the European Union legislators. This accreditation call is therefore published based on Regulation 2021/817 and the 2027 annual work programme for the implementation of the European Solidarity Corps Programme. It is expected to facilitate the application of potential beneficiaries under future funding calls published under the Regulation for 2028 - 2034. The Commission reserves the right to modify or cancel the present Humanitarian Aid accreditation call and/or launch other accreditation calls with different content.

	Humanitarian Aid Corps ▪ For the coordinators: Ensure effective coordination in cooperation with all other participating organisations throughout all project phases; ▪ Prepare risk assessment/security procedures/evacuation plan; ▪ Carry out monitoring, reporting and evaluation in compliance with programme procedures; ▪ Carry out dissemination and information activities.
Before the activity	▪ Ensure a balanced geographical selection procedure of the volunteers in line with the principles for transparency and equal treatment to maximise the diversity and inclusiveness of their activity; ▪ Select trained young people from the European Solidarity Corps Portal; ▪ Ensure that the volunteer signs a volunteering agreement[75] ▪ 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); ▪ Identify learning needs and set learning objectives; ▪ Provide adequate preparation for the volunteer 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; ▪ Provide support to the volunteer 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; ▪ Encourage the volunteer to follow relevant trainings; ▪ Ensure that the volunteer meets relevant clearance requirements, and undergo specific preparation, particularly for volunteers involved in activities with vulnerable groups in accordance with applicable national law of the host country; ▪ Ensure the participation of the volunteers in the pre-departure training session including security briefing; ▪ Ensure that the volunteer has pre-departure medical assessment; ▪ Ensure that the volunteer is covered by the obligatory insurance plan foreseen by the programme; ▪ Ensure that the volunteer understands the terms and conditions of the insurance scheme; ▪ 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; ▪ Make or facilitate travel arrangements to/from the country where the volunteering activity takes place; ▪ Take necessary measures to ensure the security and safety of the volunteer; ▪ Designate support contact for the volunteer and stay in touch with the volunteers and the host organisation throughout the activity; ▪ Support the settlement and the transition of the volunteer; ▪ Provide necessary additional support to the volunteer and the hosting organisation, in particular when the volunteer is a young person with fewer

[75] Please see section "other support measures – agreement with participants"

	opportunities;
During the activity	▪ For the coordinators: coordinate with the hosting organisations to ensure that the project is progressing as planned; ▪ Take part in the mid-term evaluation and final reviews; ▪ Provide mediation support in case of disagreement between the host organisation and the volunteer.
After the activity	▪ Ensure medical and psychological examination of the volunteer is undertaken; ▪ Provide support to help reintegration of the volunteer into the home community; ▪ Provide the volunteer with the opportunity to exchange and share experiences and learning outcomes; ▪ Encourage the involvement of the volunteer in dissemination and exploitation of results; ▪ Provide guidance regarding further education, training or employment opportunities; ▪ Ensure the participation of the volunteer in possible Erasmus+ events.

ORGANISATIONS APPLYING FOR A HOST ROLE

Management	▪ Ensure compliance with the Erasmus+ Regulation 2028-2034[76], in particular the articles and the recital which refer to the Volunteering under the European Voluntary Humanitarian Aid Corps. ▪ Report to the lead beneficiary about progresses and difficulties
Before the Activity	▪ Cooperate, as necessary, with the coordinator and the support organisation in preparing the activity and the volunteers for their volunteering activities ▪ Provide an overview of the conditions, safety/security aspects to the support organisation and contribute to the risk assessment plan. ▪ Propose and agree with the consortium the vacancies to be published
During the activity	*Learning, mentoring and support* ▪ Ensure that the volunteer attends on-arrival training, including security briefing; ▪ Ensure the implementation of mid-term evaluation; ▪ Ensure that the volunteer attends the full Training and Evaluation Cycle (if applicable); ▪ 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; ▪ Identify clear learning opportunities for and with the volunteer; ▪ Provide task related support, supervision and guidance to the volunteer through experienced staff; ▪ Provide support to the volunteers in their learning process; ▪ Support the volunteers undertaking language courses, if necessary; ▪ Identify a mentor who is responsible for providing to the volunteers:

[76] The Regulation establishing the Erasmus+ programme for the period 2028 - 2034, and repealing Regulations (EU) 2021/817 and (EU) 2021/888 proposed by the European Commission on 16 July 2025 (hereinafter Erasmus+ Regulation 2028 - 2034) has not yet been adopted by the European Union legislators. This accreditation call is therefore published based on Regulation 2021/817 and the 2027 annual work programme for the implementation of the European Solidarity Corps Programme. It is expected to facilitate the application of potential beneficiaries under future funding calls published under the Regulation for 2028 - 2034. The Commission reserves the right to modify or cancel the present Humanitarian Aid accreditation call and/or launch other accreditation calls with different content.

	– support to carry out self-reflection on the learning progress – personal support *Volunteer living and working conditions* ▪ Support the volunteer's efforts to obtain visa and/or residence permit or other legally required documents for the volunteering activity ▪ Ensure safety and security of participants in accordance with the approved procedures/evacuation plan; ▪ Provide adequate living and working conditions to the volunteer; ▪ Facilitate integration of the volunteer in the local community and interaction with expatriate community; ▪ Ensure conflict prevention, mediation and well-being, including psychological support where necessary; ▪ Ensure that means of local transport are available for the volunteer; ▪ Ensure the volunteer's access to means of communication for contact with consortium partners, other European Solidarity Corps volunteers and close relatives; ▪ Ensure that the agreed financial contributions are provided to the volunteer. ▪ Provide necessary additional support to the volunteer, in particular when the volunteer is a young person with fewer opportunities.
After the activity	▪ Provide final performance review and debrief to the volunteer; ▪ Follow up and evaluate the action with the coordinator and/or support organisation immediately after the voluntary activity is completed; ▪ Contribute to impact and dissemination of result phases and support the final evaluation of the project.

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

ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA AND APPLICATION INFORMATION

Eligible applicants	Quality Label for support role – international organisations[77] and any organisation legally established in an EU Member State or a third country associated to the Programme[78]. 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[79]. Groups of young people are not eligible.
Duration of Quality Label validity	The Quality Label is valid for the whole duration of the programming period 2028 – 2034, subject to compliance monitoring and periodical reassessments which will be carried out by EACEA. After the end of the 2028-2034 programming period, the Quality Label remains valid until the end of the last activity in which the organisation is involved.
When to apply?	Applications can be submitted on a continuous basis. Organisations willing to participate in the Humanitarian Aid Volunteering action under the 2028 Erasmus+ call must submit their applications for Quality Label electronically, via the Funding & Tenders Portal Electronic Submission System (see part E) by 21 September 2027 at 17:00 (Brussels time).
Where to apply?	To the Education and Culture Executive Agency via the Funding & Tenders Portal Electronic Submission System (see part E).
Exclusion Criteria	A Declaration on 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

Relevance	The extent to which: ▪ the organisation's motives for participation in the Humanitarian Aid Volunteering action are convincing and clearly explained ▪ the organisation's objectives address issues relevant for the objectives of the programme, and in particular the Humanitarian Aid Volunteering action ▪ the organisation has relevant experience in humanitarian aid and/or development cooperation fields, and its activities have a strong solidarity dimension ▪ the organisation has proven commitment to the humanitarian principles of humanity, neutrality, impartiality and independence, as well as with the 'do no

[77] The obligation to be established in an EU Member State, or a third country associated to the Programme does not apply to international organisations.

[78] Entities established in countries which are, at the time of this Call, officially in the process of association to the Erasmus+ Programme may apply. Validity of their Quality Label, if awarded, will commence no earlier than 1 January 2028 and be conditional upon the entry into force of the Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council establishing the Erasmus+ programme for the period 2028-2034, and repealing Regulations (EU) 2021/817 and (EU) 2021/888 (COM(2025)549 of 16 July 2025), which foresees integration of the European Solidarity Corps Programme into Erasmus+ Programme, and also conditional upon the respective countries being validly associated to the Erasmus+ Programme under the respective agreements.

[79] Departments within an organisation can not apply for separate Quality Labels. Quality Labels are awarded at organisation level (one legal entity = one Quality Label).

	harm' principle ▪ 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.
Quality of measures	The extent to which the organisation respects the programme quality standards by: ▪ carrying out activities that respond to humanitarian aid and/or development cooperation needs and provide tangible benefits to target groups and local communities in third countries where humanitarian aid and/or development cooperation activities take place ▪ demonstrating that security, health and safety of volunteers are guaranteed and any risks concerning the proposed accommodation, travel and placement for volunteers are properly tackled ▪ taking necessary measures to respect the avoidance of harmful activities principle ▪ demonstrating adequate practical and logistical arrangements to ensure appropriate living and volunteering conditions for the young people ▪ demonstrating adequate mentoring support for volunteers ▪ demonstrating adequate personal support for volunteers, including conflict prevention and mitigation measures and psychological support ▪ taking adequate measures to support the specific needs of young volunteers with fewer opportunities ▪ avoiding job substitution, routine tasks and tasks with low learning impact ▪ promoting environmental sustainability and responsibility and incorporating sustainable and environmental-friendly practices in activities ▪ making use of digital tools and methods to complement and improve activities
Organisational Capacity	The extent to which: ▪ the organisation has demonstrated the ability and capacity to perform tasks and responsibilities for volunteering in the field of humanitarian aid and/or development cooperation ▪ the organisation has proposed appropriate steps to ensure continuity of activities in case of organisational changes ▪ the organisation demonstrates longstanding experience in working with partners in third countries where humanitarian aid or development cooperation activities take place ▪ the organisation ensures quality project management, including coordination, communication, monitoring and evaluation ▪ the measures aimed at disseminating the outcomes of the activities within and outside the participating organisations are appropriate and of high quality ▪ the measures for assuring the sustainability of the planned activities are of appropriate high quality

ORGANISATIONS APPLYING FOR A HOST ROLE

Relevance	The extent to which: ▪ the organisation's motives for participation in the Humanitarian Aid Volunteering under this programme are convincing and clearly explained ▪ the organisation's objectives address issues relevant for the objectives of the

	programme and in particular the Humanitarian Aid Volunteering ▪ the organisation has relevant experience in the humanitarian aid and/or development cooperation fields and have a strong solidarity dimension ▪ the organisation has proven commitment to the humanitarian principles of humanity, neutrality, impartiality and independence, as well as with the 'do no harm' principle ▪ 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.
Quality of measures	The extent to which the organisation respects the programme quality standards by: ▪ carrying out activities that respond to humanitarian aid needs and provide tangible benefits to target groups and local communities in third countries where the humanitarian aid and/or development cooperation activities take place ▪ demonstrating that security, health and safety of volunteers are guaranteed and any risks concerning the proposed accommodation and volunteering activity are properly tackled ▪ taking adequate measures to ensure appropriate conditions for the living and the volunteering activity are in place for the volunteers ▪ taking necessary measures to respect the avoidance of harmful activities principle ▪ demonstrating adequate practical and logistical arrangements ▪ demonstrating adequate mentoring support for volunteers during the activity ▪ demonstrating adequate personal support for volunteers, including conflict prevention and mitigation measures and psychological support ▪ taking adequate measures to support the specific needs of young volunteers with fewer opportunities ▪ avoiding job substitution, routine tasks and tasks with low learning impact ▪ promoting environmental sustainability and responsibility and incorporating sustainable and environmental-friendly practices in activities ▪ making use of digital tools and methods to complement and improve activities
Organisational Capacity	The extent to which: ▪ the organisation has demonstrated the ability and capacity to perform tasks and responsibilities for volunteering in the field of humanitarian aid and/or development cooperation ▪ the organisation has proposed appropriate steps to ensure continuity of activities in case of organisational changes ▪ the organisation demonstrates experience in working with partners in third countries where humanitarian aid and/or development cooperation activities take place ▪ the organisation ensures quality project management, including coordination, communication, monitoring and evaluation of high quality ▪ the measures aimed at disseminating the outcomes of the activities within and outside the participating organisations are appropriate and of high quality ▪ the measures for monitoring and evaluating the activities are appropriate and of high quality. ▪ the measures for assuring the sustainability of the planned activities are of appropriate high quality

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 regularly monitors organisations holding a Quality Label and may perform monitoring visits to verify that the organisations holding a Quality Label still meet the quality standards.

TERMINATION

In case of serious underperformance, failure to comply with Executive Agency's instructions and deadlines or repeated violation of the Programme rules , the Quality Label for Humanitarian Aid Volunteering can be withdrawn. The Executive Agency will give due consideration o 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[80] (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[81] 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

[80] 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)

[81] At least 30 and not more than 38 hours per week

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.

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 or receive EU funds.

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) of the European Solidarity Corps Regulation and are not considered as 'participants' in the sense of Article 2(3) of that Regulation.

SELECTION OF PARTICIPANTS

Young people who want to participate in the European Solidarity Corps must register on the European Solidarity Corps Portal[82]. Young people with fewer opportunities may receive support from appropriate entities specialised

[82] https://youth.europa.eu/solidarity_en

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 in PASS[83] participants that are registered in the Portal and successfully completed the mandatory trainings organised by the Commission.

Candidates need to complete on the EU Academy[84] Portal a self-assessment and the first online phase of a compulsory training, followed by an online 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 online test may be invited for the second phase of the training (either interactive online or face-to-face in several training venues in Europe)of around 5 days which has a strictly limited number of available places. Upon completion of this second phase of the 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.

Since young people are limited to a maximum of 12 months of participation in the Programme, young people interested in participating in the Humanitarian Aid Volunteering training must not have previously engaged in EU volunteering activities for more than a cumulative total of 6 months. 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 **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.

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. No previous qualifications, educational level, specific experience or language knowledge must be required. A more specific profile of the volunteer might be drawn up if justified by the nature of the tasks of the activity or by the project context. Participation in volunteering activities must be **free of charge** for the volunteer and may not involve any financial contribution from participants.

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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.

[83] Placement Administration Support System (PASS) - https://youth.europa.eu/solidarity/organisations/it-tool-organisation-portal_en, accessible through the European Youth Portal

[84] https://academy.europa.eu/ platform or equivalent successor platform

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

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. Organisations should cover the participants' expenditure arising from participation in the activities but should not provide them with salaries or an economic benefit.

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 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. 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

Eligible applicants	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 [85], or any international organisation[86]. 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. The same organisation cannot submit as coordinator more than one application under this call for proposal.
Consortium composition	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. 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. Affiliated entities do not count towards the minimum eligibility criteria for the consortium composition.
Eligible participants	Young people aged 18 to 35[87] who are legally residing in an 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. The participant must also have successfully completed the mandatory trainings organised by the Commission.
Venue of activities	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. 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.
Duration of project	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.
Where to apply?	To the Education and Cultural Executive Agency via the Funding and Tenders Portal Electronic Submission System (see part E).
When to apply?	Proposals must be submitted by 22 April 2027 at 17.00 (Brussels time).
How to apply?	Please see part E of this guide on how to apply.

[85] 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

[86] The obligation to be established in a Member State or a third country associated to the Programme does not apply to international organisations.

[87] Participants must have reached 18 and must not be older than 35 at the start date of the activity.

Exclusion criteria	A Declaration on 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".

Relevance, rationale and impact (maximum 40 points)	▪ The relevance of the project to the objectives of the European Solidarity Corps and to the specific objectives of this action; ▪ The extent to which the proposal relates and integrates the relevant activities in the project set-up; ▪ The relevance of the project to the needs and objectives of the hosting participating organisations and target groups in third countries; ▪ The relevance to which the proposal will address well defined humanitarian or development needs of local communities and the extent to which the project will provide benefits to such communities within which the activities are carried out; ▪ 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; ▪ The extent to which the project involves young people with fewer opportunities as participants; ▪ The quality of measures for evaluating the impact of the project, assuring its sustainability and disseminating its outcomes; ▪ 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. ▪ 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.
Quality of the project design (maximum 40 points)	▪ 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; ▪ The clarity, completeness and quality of the action, including appropriate phases for preparation, implementation, monitoring, evaluation and dissemination; ▪ The appropriateness of measures for selecting and/or involving volunteers in activities; ▪ The quality of proposed measures to reach out and involve young

	people with fewer opportunities; ▪ 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; ▪ 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; ▪ The quality of the practical arrangements for volunteers (logistics, travel arrangements, living conditions, etc.); ▪ The quality of management of the volunteers' work and support modalities; ▪ 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. ▪ 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;
Quality of project management (maximum 20 points)	▪ 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; ▪ The quality of cooperation and communication between the participating organisations, as well as with other relevant stakeholders; ▪ The extent to which the management structures and decision-making mechanisms are organized within the consortium; ▪ The quality of the evaluation methods and indicators, the monitoring and verification of the outreach and coverage of the activities and results; ▪ Cost effectiveness: the proposed budget is sufficient for proper implementation and the project is designed to ensure the best value for money.

WHAT ARE THE ELIGIBLE COSTS AND THE APPLICABLE FUNDING RULES?

Maximum EU grant per project: **EUR 650 000**.

Eligible costs		Financing mechanism	Amount	Rule of allocation
Volunteer support	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.
Organisational Support	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.
Inclusion support	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.

PART D – QUALITY AND SUPPORT MEASURES

In this Part, readers will find the following information:

- a description of the support measures;
- a description of their objectives and for whom they are;
- additional information on key elements of the participation in a European Solidarity Corps project.

The Quality and Support measures described in this section are relevant only for the Actions covered under this Guide.

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

WHICH MEASURES ARE SUPPORTED?

The European Solidarity Corps provides a range of quality and support services for participants and participating organisations. These measures vary depending on the Action and the type of activity the participants and organisations are involved in.

- Support to learning:
  - Language Learning Support;
  - Training and Evaluation cycle: TEC for Participants, including the compulsory training for candidate volunteers in humanitarian aid volunteering; TEC for Organisations; TEC for Mentors
  - Mentoring;
  - Recognition of Learning Outcomes;
- Insurance;
- European Solidarity Corps Portal;
- European Solidarity Corps Youth Card;
- Other support measures:
  - Certificate of participation;
  - Agreements;
  - Visas and residence permits.

WHAT ARE THE AIMS OF THESE MEASURES?

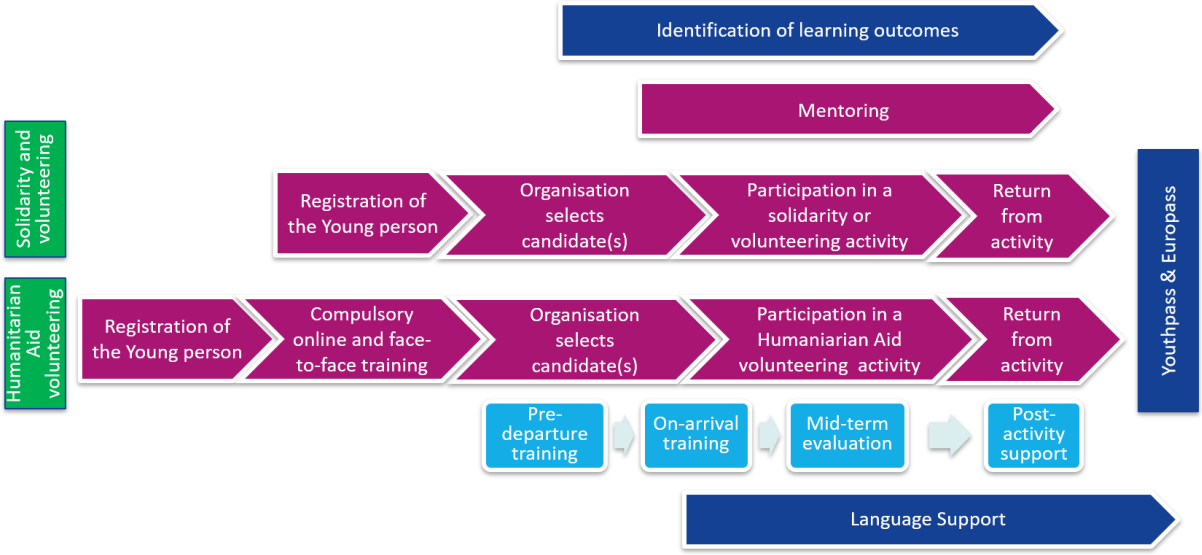
As far as quality and support measures are concerned, the specific objectives of the European Solidarity Corps shall be pursued through actions that aim:

- to ensure compliance with the principles and objectives of the European Solidarity Corps on the part of all public and private organisations seeking to participate in the activities of the European Solidarity Corps;

- to ensure that the solidarity activities that are offered to the European Solidarity Corps participants contribute to addressing concrete, unmet societal needs and strengthening communities and are of high quality and properly validated.

SUPPORT TO LEARNING

To support, reinforce and complement the learning acquired through participation in the activities, specific quality and support measures are foreseen: language learning support, the Training and Evaluation Cycle, mentoring and recognition of learning outcomes.



LANGUAGE LEARNING SUPPORT

WHAT IS THE LANGUAGE LEARNING SUPPORT?

Language learning support is available for participants carrying out a solidarity activity in the framework of the European Solidarity Corps. Depending on the Action, Language learning support takes the form either of a grant (150 EUR linguistic support) or of an online course via the Online Language Support[88] (OLS). The OLS is hosted on the corporate learning management platform of the European Commission called EU Academy[89]. Online courses are encouraged as e-learning offers advantages for language learning in terms of access and flexibility. OLS allows participants to assess, practise and improve their knowledge of the language chosen. The EU Academy platform will provide features such as social networking to enable collaborative learning as well as free language learning material. The provision of the 150 EUR linguistic support shall be based on mutual trust between organisations who should ensure appropriate linguistic support. Other forms for support may be offered to support the language learning needs of particular target groups. For participants in Volunteering Projects, a specific grant (150 EUR linguistic support) for language learning support may be provided if the required language or level (in the language of mobility) is not available in OLS yet. In such cases, the language learning must be arranged by the participating organisations. Beneficiaries of the 150 EUR linguistic support should encourage participants to start learning the language before their activity. Furthermore, organisations involved can use the "organisational support" budget category of the grant to address the needs of participants in terms of pedagogical, task-related, intercultural or specific linguistic preparation (see the "funding rules" section in Part B of this Guide).

FOR WHOM?

Participants in volunteering activities including Volunteering Teams in High Priority Areas and Humanitarian Aid Volunteering and Solidarity Projects are eligible to receive language learning support through OLS. In justified cases, participants in Volunteering Projects may be eligible for specific financial support that is 150 EUR[90].

TRAINING AND EVALUATION CYCLE

WHAT IS THE TRAINING AND EVALUATION CYCLE (TEC)?

One of the key features of the European Solidarity Corps is the training and evaluation it provides to participating organisations, participants and mentors; firstly, by guiding young participants through a non-formal learning process before, during and after their period of activity and secondly, by supporting Quality Label organisations in offering a qualitative frame for the experience to take place. The training and evaluation dimension within the European Solidarity Corps aims at:

- Providing young participants with continuous guidance and support throughout their activity period. Such training and evaluation contribute to the education and development of each young person and facilitates contacts between young participants, participating organisations and National Agencies / SALTOs (Support, Advanced Learning and Training Opportunities centres). It also helps resolve conflicts and prevent risks, and it provides a means of assessing the participants' experience. The training and evaluation cycle for participants complements other ongoing support offered by the participating organisations before and during the activity period;
- Providing organisations involved with the necessary support and tools to develop and carry out qualitative projects as well as the opportunity to exchange and network with other European Solidarity Corps actors.
- Providing mentors with guidance on how to offer support and reinforced mentorship to the participants

88 academy.europa.eu/local/euacademy/pages/course/community-overview.php?title=learn-a-new-language
89 https://academy.europa.eu/
90 Only if the participant cannot receive Online Language Support due to unavailability of the required language or level.

involved in volunteering activities.

Quality is the main objective of preparation, training and evaluation. Given the diversity of countries, National Agencies, organisations holding a Quality Label and participants, there is a large degree of flexibility in the training format, whereas the quality indicators should be common to all training sessions.

What follows outlines the minimum that should be covered by a training/evaluation session. Trainers and organisers are of course free to add any country-specific or project-specific features they deem necessary or interesting for the people attending their training/evaluation event. The minimum quality standards clarify what can be expected to be achieved at a training/evaluation session, whether by the organisers of the event, the project supervisors, the mentors or the participants themselves. At the same time, regarding the training of participants, the National Agencies, regional SALTOs and the participating organisations should, as far as possible, try to ensure that the training/evaluation opportunities offered to each participant are in line with their specific needs.

Training providers can link the different training/evaluation stages while avoiding any overlaps in the content, and can thus help create a continuous learning process for the participants before, during and following their activity period.

In addition to the Training and Evaluation Cycle, participants receive continuous counselling and guidance before, during and after the activity period, while training for project managers, mentors and trainers adds up to a complex set of measures, accompanying participants and participating organisations throughout the European Solidarity Corps experience.

FOR WHOM IS THE TRAINING AND EVALUATION CYCLE?

- Participants: The training and evaluation cycle is for volunteers, including those volunteering in Humanitarian Aid. Participants in Solidarity Projects can take part only in annual events.
- Organisations holding a Quality Label, including for Humanitarian Aid volunteering.
- Mentors can benefit from structured knowledge transfer and best practices, allowing that new mentors can be trained.

TRAINING AND EVALUATION CYCLE FOR PARTICIPANTS – HOW DOES IT WORK?

The training and evaluation cycle for participants consists of the following sessions:

- specific training for candidate volunteers in humanitarian aid volunteering – managed by EACEA and implemented by a contractor;
- pre-departure training for participants in cross-border volunteering activities – ensured by support organisations for individual volunteering or host/support organisation for volunteering teams (for those volunteers coming from countries other than the one where the activity takes place);
- on-arrival training for participants in volunteering activities of at least 2 months – ensured by National Agencies (in case of volunteering in EU Member States or third countries associated to the Programme), SALTOs (in case of volunteering in third countries not associated to the Programme), host or support organisations (in case of individual volunteering activity of less than 2 months, volunteering teams and Humanitarian Aid volunteering);
- mid-term evaluation (only volunteering activities of 6 months and longer) – ensured by National Agencies or SALTOs, or support and host organisations (in case of Humanitarian Aid volunteering).

In addition to the above sessions, an annual European Solidarity Corps event is foreseen for all participants taking part in Volunteering, including Humanitarian Aid volunteering and those implementing Solidarity Projects. Volunteers have the right and obligation to attend the pre-departure training, the on-arrival training and the mid-term evaluation sessions and the participating organisations must ensure that their participants take part in the TEC, which is considered an integral part of the activity. Given the different requirements of information between participants in cross-border and in-country activities or volunteering, the training providers can tailor the content of the trainings to each target group.

SPECIFIC TRAINING FOR CANDIDATE VOLUNTEERS IN HUMANITARIAN AID VOLUNTEERING

Young people wishing to participate in Humanitarian Aid Volunteering need to complete an additional specific training before being eligible to participate. Since young people are limited to a maximum of 12 months of participation in the Programme, this training will be available only to those who have not previously engaged in EU volunteering activities for more than a cumulative total of 6 months.

The main aim of the training for candidate volunteers in Humanitarian Aid Volunteering is to train and prepare young people for volunteering in third countries, by ensuring that they have the necessary skills and competences to help people in need in the most effective way. The training addresses, for instance, EU external policies and general principles of humanitarian and development aid, as well as specific behavioural competences required for volunteering in third countries.

The first phase of the training is to be completed on the EU Academy platform[91] and starts with a self-assessment, followed by an online training of a duration of approximately 25 hours, which concludes with an online test. Those who pass the test will be eligible for the second phase, an additional training (either interactive online or face-to-face in dedicated training centres in Europe) of around 5 days. The number of places for this second phase of the training is limited, which may lead in periods of too high demand to the temporary closure of the access to both the first online phase and to the second phase of the training.

Candidates having completed the second phase of the training will be available in the European Solidarity Corps Portal for selection by organisations involved in Humanitarian Aid Volunteering projects.

The training is mandatory for all candidates who wish to participate in Humanitarian Aid Volunteering. It is managed by EACEA and implemented by a contractor.

PRE-DEPARTURE TRAINING

In order for the project to be successful and the European Solidarity Corps experiences to be positive and enriching for the participant, it is crucial that the support or host organisation adequately prepares the participant prior to departure. This training is only mandatory to participants in cross-border volunteering activities. This preparation should take place at least one month before departure and should be tailored to the individual needs of the participant and the specificities of the project, the activity and the host country. The organisation in charge of the training is responsible for ensuring that the Info-Kit is given to all participants involved in its project.

It is essential to provide information on "What to expect from the European Solidarity Corps" (part of the Info-Kit) — as well as on the basics of conflict prevention and crisis management. It must provide participants with practical and technical information on matters such as insurance, visa, pocket money and working hours, etc.

Whereas the main responsibility of organising the pre-departure training lies with the applicant organisation, the National Agencies may organise a one-day pre-departure information session to establish contact with outgoing participants and make sure they are prepared for their upcoming activities by the support organisations (it doesn't apply to Humanitarian Aid volunteers).

ON-ARRIVAL TRAINING

The main objective of the on-arrival training is to introduce the participants to the host country, preparing them for the activity period and the European Solidarity Corps experience. On-arrival training helps the participants adapt to cultural and personal challenges. It allows participants to get to know each other and to build a network. Participants should also receive guidance on conflict prevention and crisis management. They should be informed about environmentally sustainable behaviour that the Programme encourages.

At the same time, this training session equips the participants with communication skills, including aspects of intercultural learning. It helps them become aware that cultural differences require different models of behaviour. The training is also a good time for the participants to plan the coming months, to get to know the Youthpass

[91] Or on its successor platform

concepts and process and to develop their own personal goals for their activity period, in line with the non-formal learning philosophy of the European Solidarity Corps.

On-arrival training for long-term cross-border and in-country participants is organised by the National Agencies or SALTOs. In case of Humanitarian Aid volunteering, the on-arrival training by host organisation shall be in line with the minimum quality standards detailed in the table below.

For volunteers in activities with a duration of less than two months, the host or support organisation has to organise a training in line with the minimum quality standards detailed in the table below, although possibly with a shorter duration.

MID-TERM EVALUATION

The mid-term evaluation allows participants to assess their experience up to that point and to reflect on the activities, role and support of the host organisation and on their own contribution. The evaluation provides the opportunity to learn from everybody's experience and enables the participants to plan developments and/or further improvements in their activity and to think about what they will do in the longer term, once their experience is over. The evaluation should also raise awareness of the personal learning process, linking it to the key competences of lifelong learning as used in Youthpass or to the setup of Europass. Mid-term evaluation is also mandatory for in-country participants. For Humanitarian Aid volunteering, a host organisation should organise an on-line mid-term evaluation in co-operation with support organisation.

It is essential that the event is designed as a meeting between participants. It takes place long enough after their arrival for the participants to have gained enough experience to review their situation, but also sufficiently long before the end of the activity period so that there is still time to improve the situation if necessary.

ANNUAL EVENTS

The European Solidarity Corps event is an opportunity to bring together former, current and potential participants in Volunteering, Humanitarian Aid, Volunteering Teams in High Priority Areas and Solidarity Projects. The event is organised by the National Agencies or SALTOs. It may serve as an evaluation meeting, alumni meeting and/or promotional event. It is particularly important as an opportunity for those who have finished their solidarity activity during the past year to discuss and evaluate their experiences and to pass them on to current and potential participants. One of the objectives of the event is to ensure that the National Agency receives feedback about the projects, the participating organisations, the practical arrangements and the overall impression of the participation in the activities. A key question will be what learning effect the activity period had for the participant. Attending the annual event is not mandatory, however it is highly recommended.

Overview of the Training and Evaluation Cycle for participants and candidates

	Pre-departure	On-arrival	Midterm	Annual
Long term individual cross-border volunteers	Mandatory (organised by support organisation)	Mandatory (organised by NAs or Regional SALTOs)	Mandatory for activities longer than 6 months (Organised by NAs or Regional SALTOs)	Optional (Organised by NAs or Regional SALTOs)
Long term individual in-country volunteers	Optional (organised by host organisation)	Mandatory (organised by NAs)	Mandatory for activities longer than 6 months (Organised by NAs)	Optional (Organised by NAs)
Short term individual cross border volunteers	Mandatory (organised by support organisation)	Mandatory (organised by host organisation)	N/A	Optional (Organised by NAs or Regional SALTOs)
Short term individual in-country volunteers	Optional (organised by host or support organisation)	Mandatory (organised by host organisation)	N/A	Optional (Organised by NAs)
Volunteering teams cross-border volunteers	Mandatory (organised by host or support organisation)	Mandatory (organised by host or support organisation)	N/A	Optional (Organised by NAs or Regional SALTOs)
Volunteering teams in-country volunteers	Optional (organised by host or support organisation)	Mandatory (organised by host or support organisation)	N/A	Optional (Organised by NAs)
Solidarity Projects	N/A	N/A	N/A	Optional (organised by NAs)
Volunteering Teams in High Priority Areas	Mandatory (organised by support organisation)	Mandatory (organised by host organisation)	N/A	Optional (Organised by NAs)
Humanitarian Aid volunteers[92]	Mandatory (organised by support organisation)	Mandatory (organised by host organisation)	Mandatory (organised by host and support organisations)	Optional (Organised by NAs)

[92] Young people wishing to participate in Humanitarian Aid Volunteering need to complete an additional specific training before being eligible to participate.

EXPECTED ACHIEVEMENTS

Specific eligibility training for candidate volunteers in Humanitarian Aid Volunteering	The expected result is a capacity of volunteers to contribute to providing needs-based and principled humanitarian aid, taking into account the specific needs of vulnerable groups and engaging in activities that can contribute to creating a sustainable and an inclusive society.
Pre-departure training	The pre-departure preparation will vary according to training practices, organisational possibilities and participant needs. Nevertheless, pre-departure preparation should ensure that, by the time they leave, all participants: ▪ know about the concept of the European Solidarity Corps; ▪ are familiar with the partners involved in the activity, i.e. the host and support organisation in volunteering activities, the mentor and, where applicable, the National/Executive Agency, Resource Centres and the European Commission; ▪ are familiar with the documents in the Info-Kit; ▪ have shared their motivations, expectations and fears, and have reflected on their goals, including goals for learning; ▪ have received appropriate practical and technical information on visas, residence permits, their legal status as a participant, their insurance (including guidance on how to obtain the mandatory European Health Insurance Card before the departure), pocket money, the relevant agreement under the European Solidarity Corps; ▪ understand the meaning of intercultural learning and are aware of the ongoing intercultural learning process; ▪ have received guidance or at least hints on crisis management; ▪ are aware about sustainability dimension of the Programme; ▪ understand the importance and usefulness of getting recognition for the individual learning outcomes, in particular through EU level tools such as Youthpass and Europass. The training should also contain modules for language learning in the host country's language or the language used in the context of the activity if such language training is not offered through the Online Language Support or through linguistic support.
On-arrival training	On-arrival training will vary according to national conditions, realities and training practices. Nevertheless, it should ensure that each participant: ▪ is aware of and has the chance to discuss questions about visas, residence permits, her/his legal status as a participant, insurance, the agreement under European Solidarity Corps, and the documents in the Info-Kit; ▪ has received information about adapting to a foreign working environment, rights and obligations, useful contacts to help with his/her settlement, etc.; ▪ knows the insurance and claims management systems (insurance documentation and procedures), and is fully aware that using the European Health Insurance Card when possible is mandatory; ▪ knows what support is available from the National Agency, SALTO and EACEA; ▪ has received information on the host country's history, political and social situation, on key aspects of the host culture and on how to get involved in

	the local community; ▪ is aware of how to deal with cultural differences and with conflicts; ▪ is familiar with the role of each participating organisation in the activity and knows her/his own rights and responsibilities; ▪ is informed about the environmentally sustainable behaviour that the Programme promotes; ▪ has the chance to meet and network with other participants; ▪ receives basic information about the European Union and its policies and programmes in the field of youth; ▪ learns about the objectives and principles of the European Solidarity Corps; ▪ knows the meaning of being a European Solidarity Corps participant; ▪ understands the importance and usefulness of getting recognition for the individual learning outcomes, in particular through EU level tools such as Youthpass and Europass; ▪ has identified clear learning goals and ideas for his/her activity. When needed, support should be offered to participants following the Online Language Support for taking language assessments and courses.
Mid-term evaluation	Mid-term evaluations will vary according to national conditions, realities and training practices. Nevertheless, by the end of the evaluation, each participant should have: ▪ personally assessed his/her activity so far and reflected on its scope of activities; ▪ shared personal experiences (learning new skills and competences, being part of community life, living within a different culture, using the language); ▪ identified problems, difficulties, conflicts faced or about to be faced and consequently received satisfying support and clues on the 'next steps' to solve these problems; ▪ worked on developing/improving the activities he/she is involved in; ▪ received information and guidance on opportunities he/she could be involved in after the period of activity; ▪ understood how to use EU level recognition tools, such as Youthpass and Europass, to identify and document individual learning outcomes; ▪ received information about the Participant Report to be filled in.

Annual event	Events will vary according to national conditions, realities and practices. Nevertheless, by the end of the event, each participant who has finished their activity during the past year should have evaluated their experience in terms of: ▪ the cooperation between the participant and the participating organisations, and the personal support and supervision received; ▪ their personal contribution to the activity; ▪ the overall pedagogical approach and their own learning achievements (personal, professional, social), including being aware of their personal capacities and skills and (if relevant) having finalised their Youthpass and Europass; ▪ their increased knowledge about Europe, changes in their attitude towards Europe and their greater understanding of diversity; ▪ having shared their experience with peers. Moreover, the event may be: ▪ a chance for potential participants and participating organisations to meet experienced participants, including participants having implemented Solidarity Projects; ▪ an opportunity to promote the European Solidarity Corps and its impact through contacts with stakeholders, decision-makers and the media; ▪ a networking event to explore and develop new projects and other ways of using their experiences; ▪ a showcase for successful projects; ▪ a celebration of solidarity and a step towards the reinforcement of the European Solidarity Corps community.

Training and Evaluation Cycle for Organisations – How does it work?

The Training and Evaluation Cycle for organisations consists of the following:

- training for organisations holding the Quality Label, including for Humanitarian Aid volunteering, with emphasis on newcomer organisations and staff;
- an annual event for organisations holding the Quality Label, including for Humanitarian Aid volunteering.

National Agencies are responsible for organising such trainings for all organisations holding a Quality Label in their country. For organisations in third countries not associated to the Programme, the relevant SALTOs are the ones in charge. For organisations involved in Humanitarian Aid volunteering, EACEA is responsible for organising such trainings. NAs/SALTOs may decide not to organise such trainings if other instruments are in place to ensure monitoring and quality implementation.

National Agencies / SALTOs can opt to subcontract all or some of the sessions. However, the NAs/SALTOs should remain involved in the sessions as much as possible and keep regular contact with the trainers.

Organisations holding a Quality Label are recommended to attend these sessions.

Training for organisations holding the European Solidarity Corps Quality Label

In order for the project to be successful and the experiences to be positive and enriching for all actors involved, organisations participating in the European Solidarity Corps which have been awarded a Quality Label need to have a thorough understanding of the core values and features of the Corps. During the training, these organisations will focus on the elements needed for a successful experience and reflections on how their project should be thought through and developed.

The training should:

- ensure understanding of each organisation's roles and responsibilities;
- give appropriate practical and technical information on the project management;
- raise awareness on the important features of the programme such as specific support for young people with fewer opportunities, EU level recognition tools such as Youthpass and Europass, Online Language Support, role of the mentor, etc.;
- provide necessary support and tools to develop and carry out qualitative mentorship;
- support organisations in developing qualitative projects (selection of partners and participants, development of the tasks of the participants, crisis management, dissemination, etc.);
- provide networking and partner-building opportunities for organisations.

Annual European Solidarity Corps Event

This yearly event should gather representatives of all European Solidarity Corps organisations holding a Quality Label with the aim of sharing experiences, ideas and practices, showcasing success stories, and developing and reinforcing networks / partner building. The event is also the opportunity to remind the core values and features of the programme. It will, additionally, allow assessing the difficulties encountered by organisations and the reasons of inactivity of some Quality Labelled organisations. This event can be combined with the Annual European Solidarity Corps event for participants.

Training and Evaluation Cycle for Mentors – How does it work?

The Training and Evaluation Cycle for mentors is optional and consists of trainings for mentors offering support and reinforced mentoring to participants in volunteering activities.

Trainings for mentors can be physical, virtual or include blended activities.

National Agencies and regional SALTOs are responsible for organising such trainings for mentors as needed and they can opt to subcontract all or some of the sessions. However, the NAs/SALTOs should remain involved in the

sessions as much as possible and keep regular contact with the trainers and with the mentors.

The training should:

- ensure understanding of mentor's roles and responsibilities;
- give appropriate practical and technical information on the programme characteristics relevant for volunteers;
- ensure that mentors know how to guide and provide support to the volunteers in identifying the learning acquired during their experience;
- detect wellbeing issues that are commonly encountered in the volunteering activities and support the participants in finding help;
- offer guidance for reinforced mentorship for young people with fewer opportunities;
- provide networking opportunities for mentors.

MENTORING

MENTORING IN VOLUNTEERING ACTIVITIES

Personal support through mentoring should be provided to all participants in volunteering activities. Mentoring consists of regular meetings between the mentor appointed by the host or support organisation and the participant, within as well as outside the place where the activity takes place. The meetings should focus on the personal wellbeing of the participants and should also guide and provide support to the volunteers in identifying the learning acquired during their experience. Mentoring is targeted towards the individual participant and thus the content and frequency of the meetings will vary according to the individual needs. Possible topics of mentoring meetings: personal wellbeing, wellbeing in the team, satisfaction with the tasks, practicalities, etc.

REINFORCED MENTORSHIP

'Reinforced Mentorship' is an intensified mentoring process that might be necessary to support young people with fewer opportunities, if they are not able to implement an activity independently or with normal mentoring or tutoring support. This type of mentoring is applicable to volunteering activities. Reinforced Mentorship involves closer contact, more frequent meetings and more time allocated to the implementation of tasks. This guarantees a step-by-step support of the participants during project activities as well as outside working hours. Reinforced Mentorship enables the participants to gain as much autonomy as possible, thus contributing to the successful implementation of the project.

RECOGNITION OF LEARNING OUTCOMES

WHAT IS RECOGNITION OF LEARNING OUTCOMES?

To support the impact of European Solidarity Corps activities on the personal, educational, social, civic and professional development of the participants, the competences (combination of knowledge, skills and attitudes) that are the non-formal and informal learning outcomes gained in the solidarity activities shall be identified and documented, in particular through EU level recognition tools such as Youthpass and Europass.

FOR WHOM?

The identification and documentation of non-formal and informal learning outcomes is offered to participants (on a voluntary basis) and participating organisations (mandatory, if the participant requests it). This means that every young person taking part in any European Solidarity Corps activity can benefit from a process and certificate that identifies and documents individual learning outcomes.

HOW DOES IT WORK?

Every young person taking part in European Solidarity Corps activities is entitled to go through the Youthpass process and receive a Youthpass certificate at the end of the process. Youthpass identifies and documents the competences developed during the project. It is recommended to embed the educational approach of Youthpass from the start of the project and use it during the project activities as a tool to help participants to become more aware of, reflect on and assess their learning process and outcomes. Depending on the nature of the recognition needs and the individual solidarity activities, other tools can also be used such as e.g. Europass.

For more information and support on Youthpass: https://www.youthpass.eu/en/.

For more information on Europass: https://europa.eu/europass/en.

INSURANCE

WHAT SHOULD YOU KNOW ABOUT PARTICIPANTS' INSURANCE?

One key aspect of the activities carried out under the European Solidarity Corps is that the participant must at all time be under a safe environment. To guarantee that the participant in volunteering activities is covered for unforeseen circumstances, the following areas must be covered:

- Medical and dental care, pregnancy and childbirth, accident and hospitalisation;
- Life insurance (insurance against the risk of death);
- Permanent disability;
- Third party liability (including, wherever appropriate, professional/corporate liability of participating organisations);
- Travel insurance.

The European Solidarity Corps supports insurance coverage, when needed:

- either through the insurance provided by the European Commission (for cross-border activities);
- reimbursement of the costs linked to insurance (for in-country activities).

FOR CROSS-BORDER ACTIVITIES

Beneficiaries must ensure that every participant in a cross-border activity is enrolled in the insurance scheme of the European Solidarity Corps. The European Solidarity Corps insurance scheme complements the European Health Insurance Card (EHIC)[93] for the coverage of necessary healthcare abroad[94] or, where relevant, offers primary coverage. In particular, the European Solidarity Corps provides insurance coverage, from the moment participants leave their residence to the host country until their return home after finishing the activity[95], as following:

- **Complementary** coverage from the European Solidarity Corps insurance is provided to participants who are eligible for a European Health Insurance Card.
- **Primary** coverage is provided to participants who are:
  - not eligible for the European Health Insurance Card;
  - not eligible for the European Health Insurance Card free of charge (i.e., at no cost for the participant), or those not entitled for reason of the national regulatory framework regarding the activities they perform or their individual situation,
  - coming from or going to a country where the EU social security coordination does not apply.

Participants in cross-border activities must be in the possession of a European Health Insurance Card before arriving to the host country. This card gives access to medically necessary, state-provided healthcare during a temporary stay in any of the EU Member States, as well as in Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway, under the same conditions and at the same cost (free in some countries) as people insured in these respective countries.

Information about the coverage and support available through the insurance for participants, as well as instructions for enrolment, is available on the website of the insurance company.

[93] For more information about the EHIC: https://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=559

[95] The insurance cover finishes for volunteers who after their volunteering activity decide not to return to their country of residence. The insurance also covers follow-up medical treatments until 2 months after finishing the activity.

FOR IN-COUNTRY ACTIVITIES

If the participant is in need of private personal insurance given the national regulatory framework, the participating organisations must provide the participant with personal insurance, which must offer the same coverage as the coverage for cross-border activities, in particular coverage not related to the activity for its entire duration. Should this private insurance be needed, the organisation may use exceptional costs to fund it. For activities funded under Volunteering Teams in High Priority Areas, the costs are covered by the unit cost (contribution to volunteer support).

For in-country activities, the European Commission does not define a unique format of third-party liability insurance, nor does it recommend specific insurance companies. It is it up to project organisers to seek the most suitable insurance policy according to the type of project carried out and to the insurance formats available at national level. It is not necessary to subscribe to a project-specific insurance, if the participants are already covered by existing insurance policies of the project organisers.

INSURANCE PROVIDED BY THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION

FOR WHOM?

Every participant in a cross-border activity must be enrolled in the insurance scheme of the European Solidarity Corps or in the host country's national health system. The insurance complements the coverage of the mandatory European Health Insurance Card and/or national social security systems or covers 100% of costs incurred in specified cases.

HOW DOES IT WORK?

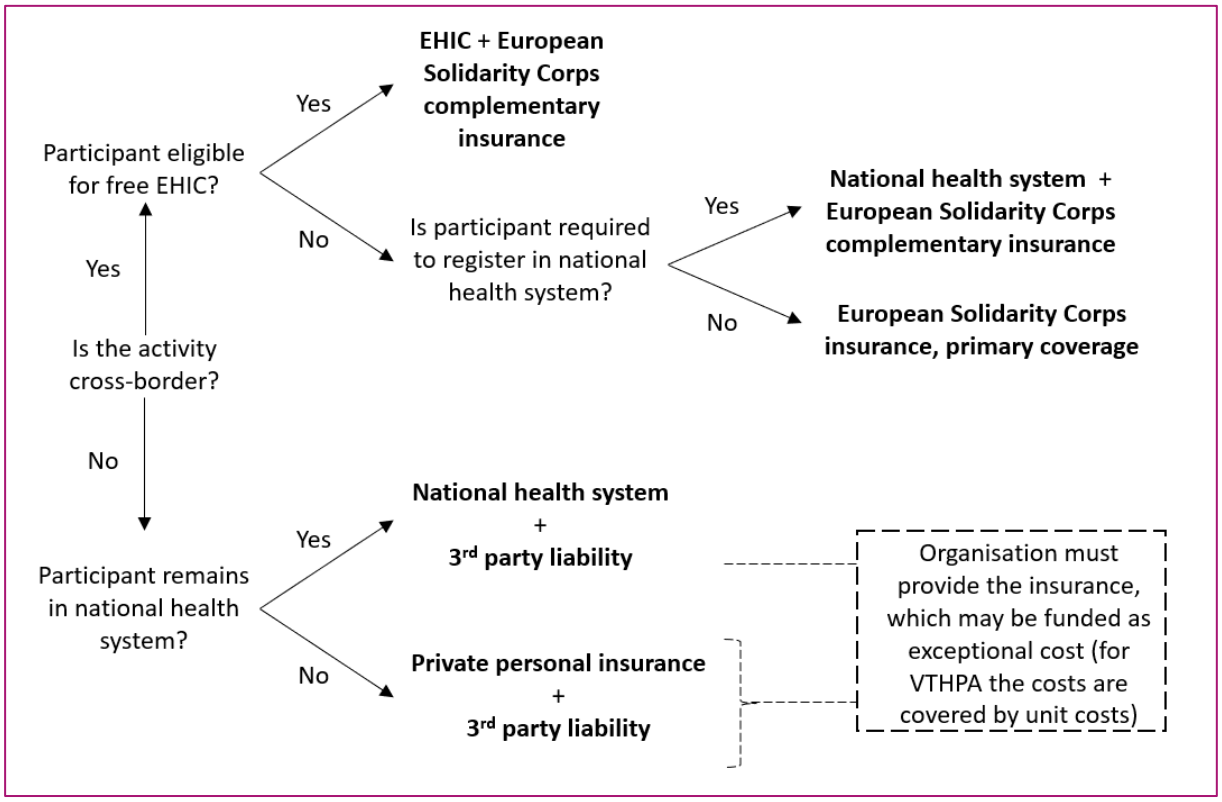
For activities supported under Volunteering Projects, the beneficiary organisation is responsible for the management of its project in the IT tool provided by the European Commission for the management of projects (Beneficiary Module). The beneficiary must encode all information about the activity the participants are involved in. The enrolment of the participants to the insurance scheme is done automatically through the system and based on the information input there. The enrolment to the insurance must be done before the departure of the participants; the beneficiary must therefore input the information in the system prior to the start of the activity (usually 2 weeks in advance). The enrolment covers the duration of the activity, including travel days. In addition, the beneficiary is responsible for keeping the information in the beneficiary module updated, in particular the start and end dates of the activity, venue etc. as this information is linked to the insurance coverage. For activities supported under Volunteering Teams in High Priority Areas and Humanitarian Aid Volunteering related activities, the beneficiary organisation is responsible for enrolling the participants and inserting activity data (start date, end date, location) in the IT systems provided by the European Commission or the Executive Agency. This information will be automatically transferred to the insurance provider[96].

The insurance provides complementary coverage to the European Health Insurance Card or to any other insurance participants may have. Participants must be in possession of their European Health Insurance Card before the departure. In certain cases, when national rules deprive volunteers from coverage under the European Health Insurance Card for the duration of the activity or a participant comes from or to the country where the EU social security coordination does not apply, the insurance company will provide full coverage (see above). The insurance coverage has its own exclusions and ceilings, and it is meant to cope with urgent and necessary care which cannot wait until the end of the activity period and the return home of the participant.

Finally, participants and organisations should bear in mind that it is a private insurance scheme. As such, it is highly recommended to contact the insurer before incurring a medical expense, as they will be able to provide the participant with information on whether the claim will be reimbursed, and how.

The following flow process chart explains each possible insurance coverage. It must be noted that, regardless of the activity and type of insurance coverage, the organisation is ultimately responsible to ensure the participant is appropriately insured.

[96] Further information on the procedure to follow will be provided once the project is granted.


Participant eligible for free EHIC?
Yes
No
EHIC + European Solidarity Corps complementary insurance
Is participant required to register in national health system?
Yes
No
National health system + European Solidarity Corps complementary insurance
European Solidarity Corps insurance, primary coverage
Yes
Is the activity cross-border?
No
Participant remains in national health system?
Yes
No
National health system + 3rd party liability
Private personal insurance + 3rd party liability
Organisation must provide the insurance, which may be funded as exceptional cost (for VTHPA the costs are covered by unit costs)

EUROPEAN SOLIDARITY CORPS PORTAL

The European Solidarity Corps Portal offers European and country information about opportunities that are of interest to young people wishing to engage in the solidarity sector. It provides a one-stop shop for both interested young people and organisations wishing to join and to be part of the Corps. The Portal also allows young people to follow online trainings, get access to other services and, importantly, to build a community of like-minded young people. To access the European Solidarity Corps Portal, go to: https://youth.europa.eu/solidarity. Each person should only have one participant account.

HOW DOES IT WORK?

BRINGING TOGETHER YOUNG PEOPLE AND ORGANISATIONS

Young people - at least 17 years old - wishing to engage in solidarity activities shall register in the European Solidarity Corps Portal Placement Administration Support System (PASS). The Portal offers a place for young people who are interested in solidarity activities and organisations who offer opportunities to participate in such activities to connect with each other. In the Portal, organisations holding a Quality Label can advertise opportunities for volunteering activities, search for registered candidates and contact them. Registered candidates obtain a unique Personal Registration Number (PRN), can look for opportunities and express their interest in them. Once the organisation and the registered candidate found each other, the organisation sends an offer to the registered candidate.



BUILDING COMMUNITY AND PROVIDING SERVICES

The European Solidarity Corps Portal offers additional services to registered candidates. Registered candidates can benefit from community building activities, updated information through newsletters and other useful functionalities that are gradually being developed. Young people registered can also make use of the mobile app, enabling them to exchange and share experiences with the other young people registered in the Corps. They can

also make a meaningful contribution to society through their engagement in the European Solidarity Network (EuSN) or the EuroPeers network, among other networks.

EUROPEAN SOLIDARITY CORPS YOUTH CARD

The European Solidarity Corps Youth Card for participants of the Corps (or European Volunteer Card) is a joint initiative of the European Commission, Directorate-General Education and Culture, the Education and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA) and the European Youth Card Association (EYCA), where a special European Volunteer Card is sent out to each young person participating in the European Solidarity Corps.

The European Volunteer Card aims to:

- provide participants in the European Solidarity Corps the opportunity to enjoy all the discounts and opportunities available through the European Youth Card scheme in order to help them participate in local activities and help volunteers integrate into their host communities;
- enable participants to travel and explore Europe both during and after their project. The card is valid for 18 months independent of the length of the European Solidarity Corps experience;
- give young people access to the information networks of the national European Youth Cards and receive quality youth information;
- support the spirit of solidarity and volunteering ;
- develop a European volunteer identity and feeling part of a larger group of active young people;
- inform participants about opportunities published via the European Youth Portal;
- support and promote a more enriching and inclusive experience for European Solidarity Corps participants through youth cards;

contribute to the visibility of the European Solidarity Corps programme and a positive image of solidarity and volunteering in Europe through youth cards.

For more information on the European Volunteer Card, visit: https://eyca.org/our-projects/european-volunteer-card.

OTHER SUPPORT MEASURES

CERTIFICATE OF PARTICIPATION

The certificate of participation is a certificate to support the visibility of the participation in volunteering activities of the European Solidarity Corps. At the end of their volunteering experience, participants are entitled to receive a certificate of participation, issued in the European Solidarity Corps portal provided that the activity is close to completion and that participants have submitted their participant report. The certificate may be issued as of one week before the end of the activity.

AGREEMENTS

AGREEMENTS BETWEEN PROJECT PARTNERS

All participating organisations involved in a European Solidarity Corps project are strongly recommended to sign an internal agreement between them. Such an agreement has the purpose of clearly defining responsibilities, tasks and financial contribution for all parties involved in the activities. It is up to the participating organisations to jointly decide on how the EU grant will be distributed and which costs it will cover.

An internal agreement constitutes a key instrument for ensuring a solid and smooth cooperation among partners in a solidarity activity as well as to avoid or manage potential conflicts. Indicatively, it should contain at least the following information:

- reference of the grant agreement between the applicant participating organisation and the granting authority;
- names and contacts of all the participating organisations involved in the activities;
- role and responsibilities of each participating organisation; division of the EU grant;
- modalities of payments and budget transfers among participating organisations.

Although this practice is strongly recommended to safeguard the interests of each partner, such an agreement remains an internal document among partners. If such an agreement exists, in case of disputes among partners with impact on the grant agreement, it may be requested by the granting authority.

AGREEMENTS WITH PARTICIPANTS

Prior to their departure, each young person participating in individual or team volunteering activities supported by the European Solidarity Corps must sign a volunteering agreement using the template provided by the European Commission that includes at least the following provisions:

- the rights and obligations of the parties to that agreement, the duration and location of deployment and a description of the tasks involved.
- reference to the terms of the participants' insurance
- financial contribution from the Corps;
- tasks to be carried out during the activity;
- where appropriate, reference to the relevant clearance requirements, in accordance with applicable national law.

VISAS AND RESIDENCE PERMITS

Participants in European Solidarity Corps projects may need to obtain a visa for staying abroad in the EU Member States and third countries not associated to the Programme hosting the activity. It is a responsibility of all the participating organisations to ensure that the authorisations required (short or long-term stay visas or residence permits) are in order before the planned activity takes place. It is strongly recommended that the authorisations are requested from the competent authorities well in advance, since the process may take several weeks. National Agencies and the Executive Agency may give further advice and support concerning visas, residence permits, social security, etc. The EU Immigration Portal contains general information on visas and residence permits in EU Member States, for both short-term and long-term stays:

https://home-affairs.ec.europa.eu/policies/migration-and-asylum/eu-immigration-portal_en

PART E - INFORMATION FOR APPLICANTS

All potential applicants[97] that intend to submit a project proposal in order to receive financial support from the EU or a Quality Label under the European Solidarity Corps are invited to carefully read this section which is drafted in accordance with the applicable provisions of the EU Financial Regulation[98].

All the contractual and financial provisions that apply to awarded grants are presented in model grant agreements, which are made available for projects implemented by the Executive Agency (EACEA) in the EU Funding & Tenders Portal[99] and for projects implemented by the National Agencies on the website of the relevant National Agency[100]. In case of discrepancies with the information presented in this Guide, provisions of the grant agreements prevail over those of Part E of this Guide. Many of the steps described and information provided in this part are also relevant for organisations wishing to apply for Quality Label.

Individuals are not entitled to submit project proposals in the framework of the European Solidarity Corps, except for individuals applying on behalf of a group of (at least five) young people wishing to carry out a Solidarity Project (hereafter defined as "Groups of young people").

HOW TO SUBMIT AN APPLICATION?

To submit a European Solidarity Corps project application, applicants must follow the four steps described below:

1) Registration. Each applicant must be registered as follows:
   a. For actions managed by the Executive Agency, applicants, affiliated entities, and associated partners must register in the EU Funding & Tenders Portal and receive a Participant Identification Code (PIC)[101]. Organisations/groups that have already obtained a PIC through their participation in other EU programmes do not need to register again. The PIC obtained from this previous registration is valid for applying under the European Solidarity Corps;
   b. For actions managed by National Agencies, organisations/groups of young people involved in the application must register through the Organisation Registration system for Erasmus+ and European Solidarity Corps[102] and receive an Organisation ID (OID). Organisations/groups of young people that have already obtained such an identification code do not need to register again;
2) Check the compliance with the criteria for the relevant Action;
3) Check the financial conditions (only applicable to requests for funding, not relevant for Quality Label);
4) Fill in and submit the application form.

STEP 1: REGISTER THE ORGANISATION

Organisations/groups of young people involved in any application must be registered and provide their basic legal

97 including groups of young people in the case of Solidarity Projects assimilated here below to 'organisations'
98 Regulation (EU, Euratom) 2024/2509 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 23 September 2024 on the financial rules applicable to the general budget of the Union (recast), OJ L, 2024/2509, 26.0.2024. The EU Financial Regulation can be found at: https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=OJ:L_202402509
99 https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/portal/screen/home
100 https://erasmus-plus.ec.europa.eu/contacts/national-agencies?facets__permanent%7Cfield_eac_topics=1964
101 PIC is a mandatory information in the application form.
102 https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/erasmus-esc

and financial data in either the Erasmus+ and European Solidarity Corps platform for projects submitted to National Agencies or in the Participant Register Portal for projects submitted at the Education and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA).

Once the registration is completed, the organisation/group will obtain an organisation ID ('OID') (if applications are submitted to the NA) and a participant identification code (PIC) (if applications are submitted to EACEA). This code, which is an identifier and is necessary for the submission of applications, enables the organisation/group to fill-in the online application forms in a simpler manner (i.e. by inserting the code in the form, all the information provided by the organisation/group at registration stage will be automatically displayed in the form).

Please note that organisations/groups of young people that have already participated in an Erasmus+ and European Solidarity Corps actions and holding a PIC do not need to register again to apply at decentralised level. An organisation ID was automatically assigned and can be found by using the search on the Erasmus+ and European Solidarity Corps platform.

However, specifically for groups of young people, as of 2026, the formation of the group needs to be evidenced by a registration form signed between the group members. The signatures on the registration form may have to be officially authenticated, if required by the granting authority, to ensure legal certainty. Existing groups which are already registered in ORS also need to upload the signed agreement in their ORS profile to be eligible to apply as informal group of young people for actions under the Call 2026 and onwards.

WHERE TO REGISTER?

For actions managed by the National Agencies, to register in the Organisation Registration System (ORS) of Erasmus+ and European Solidarity Corps, the person representing an organisation (or a group of young people) must carry out the following steps:

- Create an EU Login account (unless the person representing the organisation/entities which do not have legal personality already has an account). New EU Login accounts can be created via the following website:

  https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/cas/;

- Access the Organisation Registration system for Erasmus+ and European Solidarity Corps at https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/erasmus-esc and register on behalf of the organisation/group they represent.

The organisation or group of young people should register only once. Once the registration is processed, the organisation/group of young people will obtain an Organisation ID (OID). To be registered, the group of young people has to submit a registration form using the provided template which confirms the agreement of the members to form the group.

Entering the OID into the application form will load automatically fill in all the information provided by the organisation at registration stage and display it in the form.

Multiple registrations for an OID by the same entity and the use of multiple OIDs by the same entity may qualify as misrepresentation under the EU Financial Regulation and lead to the entity's rejection from the affected award procedures by the National Agency.

As part of the registration process, applicants must upload an Identification Form, which can be downloaded from the European Commission's website, to ORS.

Three types of the identification form are available, depending on the type of applicant (natural persons, private companies or public law bodies).

The identification form is subject to a privacy statement and to a subsequent validation by the National Agencies.

For Actions managed by the Executive Agency, to register in the Electronic Submission System of the EU Funding & Tenders Portal, the person representing an organisation must carry out the following steps:

- Create an EU Login account (unless the person representing the organisation already has an account). New EU Login accounts can be created via the following website: https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/cas/;
- Access the EU Funding & Tenders Portal at https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/portal/screen/home and register on behalf of the organisation. Guidance and Frequently Asked Questions are available on the portal.

The organisation needs to register only once. After the registration is processed, the organisation will obtain a PIC[103]. The PIC is a 9-digit unique identifier necessary for the submission of applications. It enables the applicant to fill in the application form more easily (i.e. by inserting the PIC number in the form, all the information provided by the applicant at registration stage will be automatically displayed in the form).

For applications by a consortium, the Identification Form should be provided by all members of the consortium. However, the banking details need to be provided only for the coordinator. The form must be filled in with reference to the country in which the bank is located, even if the applicant is officially registered in another country.

For grants exceeding EUR 60 000, applicants may need to upload specific documents to give proof of their financial capacity. For more details, see the section "Selection Criteria" below.

STEP 2: CHECK THE COMPLIANCE WITH THE CRITERIA

When developing their project and before applying for EU support, participating organisations / groups of young people must verify that the project respects the following criteria: admissibility, eligibility, exclusion, selection, and award.

ADMISSIBILITY CRITERIA

Applications must be sent no later than the deadline for submitting applications as indicated in the call.

The applications must be readable and accessible.

Applications must be complete containing all required parts and mandatory annexes. Only clerical errors can be corrected after the submission deadline upon request of the managing agency for duly justified cases.

For Actions managed by the National Agencies, applications must be submitted **electronically** via the forms available on the website of the European Commission and the websites of the National Agencies.

For Actions managed by the Executive Agency, applications must be submitted **electronically** via the EU Funding & Tenders Portal. Applications (including annexes and supporting documents) must be submitted using the forms provided in the Submission System.

Proposals must be complete and contain all the requested information and all required annexes and supporting

documents:

- Application Form Part A — contains administrative information about the participants (future coordinator, beneficiaries and affiliated entities) and the summarised budget for the project (to be filled in directly online);
- Application Form Part B — contains the technical description of the project (to be downloaded from the Portal Submission System, completed, and then assembled and re-uploaded).

[103] PIC is a mandatory information in the application form.

Applications are limited to 40 pages for calls for low value grants (EUR 60 000 or below); 70 pages for all other calls. Number of pages for Quality Label for Humanitarian Aid application is limited to 40 pages. Evaluators will not consider any additional pages. Excess pages will automatically be made unavailable to evaluators and will not be taken into consideration.

ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

The eligibility criteria are used to determine whether the applicant is allowed to participate in a call for proposals and to submit a proposal for an action.

To be eligible, the activities and projects must meet all the eligibility criteria relating to the Action and activities under which the proposal is submitted. If the application does not meet these criteria at application stage, it will be rejected without being further evaluated. Note that eligibility conditions must be fulfilled not only at grant signature, but also throughout project duration. If it appears at implementation or final report stage that these criteria have not been fulfilled or were no longer complied with, the activities carried out may be considered ineligible, and the EU grant initially awarded to the project may have to be returned to the granting authority.

The specific eligibility criteria applying to each of the Actions are described in Part B and C of the guide.

REASONS FOR REJECTION

An application can be rejected on different grounds, as detailed in this guide or a specific call document, if applicable. In general, the authorising officer responsible shall reject from an award procedure an applicant who[104]:

is in an exclusion situation (see the Exclusion section below);

has misrepresented the information required as a condition for participating in the procedure or has failed to supply that information[105];

was previously involved in the preparation of documents used in the award procedure where this entails a breach of the principle of equality of treatment, including distortion of competition, that cannot be remedied otherwise[106].

Furthermore, an application can be rejected on other grounds, including, but not limited to:

- non-admissibility (submission after the deadline, invalid OID, incomplete application form, lack of necessary documentation…);
- non-compliance with the eligibility criteria of the Action;
- application of sanctions or restrictive measures;
- insufficient financial capacity;
- insufficient operational capacity;
- failure to meet the award criteria;
- non-compliance of the proposed project with the principles of non-retroactivity or prohibition of double funding[107].

[104] Article 143 of the EU Financial Regulation

[105] For example, if an applicant claims to have a certain level of financial health or backing that is not true, such as inflating revenue figures or misrepresenting the availability of funds or falsely claims experience or expertise in a relevant field or sector to meet the eligibility criteria.

[106] For example, if an applicant previously participated in drafting the call for proposals, or if the applicant employs/has other link with a person who acted as an expert evaluating its grant application and who did not declare a conflict of interest.

[107] See the section on Principles applying to EU grants below as well as Art 194 of the EU Financial Regulation.

EU RESTRICTIVE MEASURES

Special restrictions and sanctions may apply for certain entities (e.g. entities subject to EU restrictive measures adopted under Article 29 of the Treaty on the European Union (TEU) and Article 215 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the EU (TFEU)). Entities named on a sanctions list and/or subject to restrictive measures as listed on www.sanctionsmap.eu[108] are not eligible to participate in any capacity, including as beneficiaries, affiliated entities, associated partners, subcontractors or recipients of financial support to third parties (if any). Other entities which fall under the Regulation No 833/2014[109] may only participate if permitted by the call conditions and provided they are granted an exception under Article 5l, paragraph 2, point e) by the granting authority with the objective of supporting mobility exchanges for individuals and people-to-people contacts.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST AT THE LEVEL OF FINANCIAL ACTORS

A conflict of interests exists where the impartial and objective exercise of the functions of a financial actor or other person, as referred to below, is compromised for reasons involving family, emotional life, political or national affinity, economic interest or any other direct or indirect personal interest. Financial actors within the meaning of the EU Financial Regulation and other persons, including national authorities at any level, involved in budget implementation under direct, indirect and shared management, including acts preparatory thereto, audit or control, shall not take any action which may bring their own interests into conflict with those of the Union. They shall also take appropriate measures to prevent a conflict of interests from arising in the functions under their responsibility and to address situations which may objectively be perceived as a conflict of interests.

The Commission considers that the following entities are or could be in a situation of conflict of interest and therefore are or could be ineligible to participate in the implementation of programme actions:

- National Authorities in charge of supervising National Agencies and the implementation of the European Solidarity Corps Programme in their country cannot apply or participate in any Action managed by National Agencies in any country, but may apply for participation (as applicants or partners) in Actions managed by the Executive Agency or by DG EAC unless that is explicitly excluded for the Action concerned (as indicated in Part B of the Guide).

National Agencies or, where the National Agency does not have a distinct legal personality, legal entities of which the National Agency is part[110], cannot apply or participate in any Action implemented through this Guide.

- Structures and networks identified or designated in the European Solidarity Corps Programme or in any Annual Commission Work programme adopted for the implementation of the European Solidarity Corps Programme which are hosted by the legal entity that also hosts the National Agency, cannot apply or participate in any Action managed by National Agencies in any country, but may apply (as applicants or partners) in Actions managed by the Executive Agency or by DG EAC unless that is explicitly excluded for the Action concerned (as indicated in Part B of the Guide). They should be able to demonstrate that they are not in a conflict of interest either because precautionary measures are taken by them or because their internal organisation is such that there is a clear separation of interests. Furthermore, costs and revenues of each project or activity for which the EU funds are awarded must be identified. The decision confirming they are not in an actual conflict of interest is taken by the institution to which they apply (Executive Agency or by DG EAC, as appropriate).

Legal entities hosting the National Agencies but dealing with other activities inside or outside the remit of the European Solidarity Corps, as well as entities affiliated to these legal entities, cannot apply or participate in any Action managed by National Agencies in any country. However, they may in principle apply for participation in Actions managed by the Executive Agency or DG EAC unless that is explicitly excluded for the Action concerned

[108] Please note that the EU Official Journal contains the official list and, in case of conflict, its content prevails over that of the EU Sanctions Map (https://www.sanctionsmap.eu).

[109] See Article 5l of Council Regulation (EU) 833/2014 concerning restrictive measures in view of Russia's actions destabilising the situation in Ukraine:
It shall be prohibited to provide direct or indirect support, including financing and financial assistance or any other benefit under a Union, Euratom or Member State national programme and contracts within the meaning of Regulation (EU, Euratom) 2024/2509 of the European Parliament and of the Council, to:
(a) a legal person, entity or body established in Russia; (b) a legal person, entity or body whose proprietary rights are directly or indirectly owned for more than 50 % by an entity referred to in point (a) of this paragraph.

[110] See Article 27 (1) a) of Erasmus+ Regulation.

(as indicated in Part B of the Guide). In this case they have to demonstrate that they are not in a conflict of interest either because precautionary measures are taken by them or because their internal organisation is such that there is a clear separation of interests (e.g. a minimum separation of accounts, separation of reporting and decision-making lines, measures to prevent access to privileged information). Furthermore, the costs and revenues of each project or activity for which the EU funds are awarded must be identified. The decision for admitting there is sufficient assurance they are not in an actual conflict of interest is taken by the institution to which they apply (DG EAC or Executive Agency), under its own responsibility and accountability.

EXCLUSION CRITERIA

THE EARLY DETECTION AND EXCLUSION SYSTEM (EDES)

The early detection and exclusion system (EDES) established by the Commission to reinforce the protection of the Union's financial interests and to ensure sound financial management applies to all who would like to participate in any of the actions in this guide. The system is designed to ensure the integrity and proper use of EU funds by individuals or organisations participating in the programme. Detailed rules set out for EDES in the EU Financial Regulation apply.

In accordance with Article 137(2) of the EU Financial Regulation, in direct and indirect management, the early detection and exclusion system shall apply to:

a) participants and recipients;

b) entities on whose capacity the candidate or tenderer intends to rely on or subcontractors of a contractor;

c) any person or entity receiving Union funds where the budget is implemented pursuant to Article 62(1), first subparagraph, point (c), and to Article 157(4) on the basis of information notified in accordance with Article 158(7);

d) guarantors;

e) sponsors as referred to in Article 26;

f) beneficial owners and any affiliate of the excluded entity as referred to in Article 138(6);

g) natural persons as referred to in Article 138(5), first subparagraph, points (a) to (c).

This is without prejudice to Article 157(7) and the rules laid down in contribution agreements with the National Agencies, in the case of persons or entities receiving Union funds where the budget is implemented pursuant to Article 62(1), first subparagraph, point (c).

For actions managed by National Agencies, it is for the National Agency to consider whether an exclusion situation as described in Article 138 of the EU Financial Regulation exists. When the National Agency ascertains that an exclusion situation exists, either based on EDES registration or in accordance with its national law where the exclusion situation is based on a final judgment or final administrative decision, it shall reject the applicant from the award procedure. The applicant should be given the opportunity to submit observations in response to such a decision rejecting it from an award procedure and be informed of the available means of administrative and judicial redress for challenging it. Such information may also be used by the Commission to initiate a registration of the entity in the Early Detection and Exclusion System in accordance with the EU Financial Regulation.

The National Agencies will also notify the Commission of cases of established fraud and irregularities and their follow-up as well as any information relating to suspected cases of fraud, corruption or any other illegal activity affecting the financial interests of the Union without delay.

EXCLUSION SITUATIONS AND DECISIONS ON EXCLUSIONS

Applicants who are subject to an EU exclusion decision or are in one of the following exclusion situations that bar them from receiving EU funding cannot participate in programme actions[111]:

[111] See Articles 138 and 143 of EU Financial Regulation 2024/2509: https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=OJ:L_202402509

the person or entity is bankrupt, subject to insolvency or winding-up procedures, its assets are being administered by a liquidator or by a court, it is in an arrangement with creditors, its business activities are suspended, or it is in any analogous situation arising from a similar procedure provided for under Union or national law;

it has been established by a final judgement or a final administrative decision that the person or entity is in breach of its obligations relating to the payment of taxes or social security contributions in accordance with the applicable law;

a) it has been established by a final judgement or a final administrative decision that the person or entity is guilty of grave professional misconduct by having violated applicable laws or regulations or ethical standards of the profession to which the applicant belongs, or by having engaged in any wrongful conduct which has an impact on its professional credibility where such conduct denotes wrongful intent or gross negligence, including, in particular, any of the following:

   (i) fraudulently or negligently misrepresenting information required for the verification of the absence of grounds for exclusion or the fulfilment of eligibility or selection criteria or in the performance of the legal commitment;

   (ii) entering into agreement with other persons or entities with the aim of distorting competition;

   (iii) violating intellectual property rights;

   (iv) unduly influencing or attempting to unduly influence the decision-making process to obtain Union funds by taking advantage, through misrepresentation, of a conflict of interest involving any financial actors or other persons, referred to in Article 61(1) of the Financial Regulation;

   (v) attempting to obtain confidential information that may confer upon it undue advantages in the award procedure;

   (vi) incitement to discrimination, hatred or violence against a group of persons or a member of a group or similar activities that are contrary to the values on which the Union is founded enshrined in Article 2 TEU, where such misconduct has an impact on the person or entity's integrity which negatively affects or concretely risks affecting the performance of the legal commitment;

b) it has been established by a final judgement that the person or entity is guilty of any of the following[112]:

   (i) fraud;

   (ii) corruption;

   (iii) conduct related to a criminal organisation;

   (iv) money laundering or terrorist financing;

   (v) terrorist offences or offences related to terrorist activities, or inciting, aiding, abetting or attempting to commit such offences;

   (vi) child labour or other offences concerning trafficking in human beings;

c) the person or entity has shown significant deficiencies in complying with main obligations in the implementation of a legal commitment financed by the budget which has:

   (i) led to the early termination of the legal commitment;

   (ii) led to the application of liquidated damages or other contractual penalties; or;

   (iii) been discovered by an authorising officer, OLAF or the Court of Auditors following checks, audits or investigations;

it has been established by a final judgment or final administrative decision that the person or entity has committed an irregularity within the meaning of Article 1(2) of Council Regulation (EC, Euratom) No 2988/95[113];

d) it has been established by a final judgment or final administrative decision that the person or entity has created an entity in a different jurisdiction with the intent to circumvent fiscal, social or any other legal obligations in the jurisdiction of its registered office, central administration or principal place of business;

[112] A certificate of clean criminal record can be requested to ascertain that a person has not been found guilty of a crime.

[113] Council Regulation (EC, Euratom) No 2988/95 of 18 December 1995 on the protection of the European Communities financial interests (OJ L 312, 23.12.1995, p. 1).

e) it has been established by a final judgment or final administrative decision that an entity has been created with the intent referred to in point (g).

f) the entity or person has intentionally and without proper justification resisted an investigation, check or audit carried out by an authorising officer or its representative or auditor, OLAF, the EPPO, or the Court of Auditors.

Furthermore, in accordance with Article 138(5) of the EU Financial Regulation, the authorising officer responsible shall exclude a person or entity if[114]:

a) a natural or legal person who is a member of the administrative, management or supervisory body of the person or entity referred to in Article 137(2), or who has powers of representation, decision or control with regard to that person or entity, is in one or more of the situations referred to in Article 138, paragraph 1, points (c) to (i);

b) a natural or legal person that assumes unlimited liability for the debts of the applicant referred to in Article 137(2) is in one or more of the situations referred to in Article 138, paragraph 1, point (a) or (b);

c) a natural person who is essential for the award or for the implementation of the legal commitment is in one or more of the situations referred to in Article 138, paragraph 1, points (c) to (i).

In the cases referred to in Article 138(3), the authorising officer responsible **may exclude a person or entity provisionally** without the recommendation of the panel referred to in Article 145, where their participation in an award procedure or their selection for implementing Union funds would constitute a serious and imminent threat to the financial interest of the Union. In such cases, the authorising officer responsible shall immediately refer the case to the panel referred to in Article 145 and shall take a final decision no later than 14 days after having received the recommendation of the panel.

The National or Executive Agency may publish the following information related to the exclusion and, where applicable, the financial penalty in the cases referred to in points (c) to (i) of Article 138 paragraph 1 above:

- the name of the person or entity concerned;
- the exclusion situation;
- the duration of the exclusion and/or the amount of the financial penalty.

In the absence of a final judgement or, where applicable, a final administrative decision, in the cases referred to in points (c) to (i) of Article 138 paragraph 1 above, the authorising officer responsible shall exclude a person or entity on the basis of a preliminary classification in law of a conduct as referred in those points, having regard to established facts or other findings contained in a recommendation of the panel referred to in Article 145 FR.

The facts and findings referred above shall include in particular:

a) facts established in the context of audits or investigations carried out by EPPO, in respect of those Member States participating in enhanced cooperation pursuant to Regulation (EU) 2017/1939, the Court of Auditors, OLAF or the internal auditor, or any other check, audit or control performed under the responsibility of the authorising officer of an EU institution, of a European office or of an EU agency or body;

b) non-final administrative decisions which may include disciplinary measures taken by the competent supervisory body responsible for the verification of the application of standards of professional ethics;

c) facts referred to in decisions of persons and entities implementing Union funds pursuant to Article 62(1), first subparagraph, point (c);

d) decisions of the Commission relating to the infringement of Union competition law or of a national competent authority relating to the infringement of Union or national competition law.

[114] Article 138(5) of the EU Financial Regulation

GENERAL PROVISIONS

Exclusion criteria apply to all participating organisations under all actions of the European Solidarity Corps.

All applicants are required to declare whether they are currently in one or more exclusion situations and whether they have already taken remedial measures to rectify such situation[115]. For this purpose, they need to submit together with the grant application a Declaration on honour on the absence of an exclusion situation, as well as on compliance with the eligibility and selection criteria[116]. In addition to the declaration provided by the lead applicant (coordinator), the co-beneficiaries (if any) also need to submit the required declaration.

Whenever requested by the authorising officer responsible and where this is necessary to ensure the proper conduct of the procedure, the applicant shall provide evidence of absence of an exclusion situation for any of the persons listed in Article 138 of the EU Financial Regulation. Where applicable and in accordance with national law, the authorising officer may accept as appropriate evidence, depending on the exclusion situation in question[117], a recent extract from the judicial record/a certificate of clean criminal record or an equivalent document recently issued by a judicial or administrative authority in its country of establishment, a recent certificate issued by the competent authority of the country of establishment, a sworn statement made before a judicial authority or notary, or a solemn statement made before an administrative authority or a qualified professional body in the country of the applicant's establishment.

SELECTION CRITERIA

Through selection criteria, the National or Executive Agency assess the applicant's financial and operational capacity to complete the proposed project. The financial and operational capacity will be verified based on an analysis of the information in the grant application, the Declaration on honour annexed with the application, and supporting documents, if required[118]. Regardless of the requested grant amount, the relevant agency may request that the applicant submit additional documents and information in line with the provisions below.

FINANCIAL CAPACITY

Financial capacity means that the applicants have stable and sufficient sources of funding to maintain their activities throughout the period during which the grant is awarded and to participate in their funding. The grant application, therefore, needs to contain the information necessary to demonstrate the applicants' financial capacity to carry out the proposed action or work programme. Organisations participating in several projects must have sufficient capacity to implement all projects. If needed, verification of financial capacity may also be done for affiliated entities.

Financial capacity verification will be based on neutral financial indicators, but will also take into account other aspects, such as dependency on EU funding and deficit and revenue in previous years. Entities which are subject to findings related to serious irregularities or fraud are automatically considered as having insufficient financial capacity and shall be rejected.

Financial capacity will not be verified if a proposal is rejected on any other ground or did not pass any other mandatory criteria.

Exempt entities

The verification of the financial capacity shall not apply to the following entities[119]:

[115] This also applies to the persons with powers of representation or control with regard to the applicants, their beneficial owners and where appropriate, subcontractors.

[116] In line with Article 199(1)(b) of the EU Financial Regulation, and in accordance with Article 139(1) of the EU Financial Regulation (Declaration and evidence of absence of an exclusion situation).

[117] See Article 139 (2) and (3) of the EU Financial Regulation. The granting authority may ask an applicant to submit to it a certificate of clean criminal record to ensure that the applicant or a person who is in any of the positions under Article 138 (5) letters a) and b) of the EU Financial Regulation or who is essential for the award of the grant or for the implementation of the project under letter c) of the same article, as listed above, is not in an exclusion situation. Where necessary under the national law, the granting authority may ask the applicant to request the national competent authority to provide the certificate directly to the granting authority.

[118] Art 201(4) of the EU Financial Regulation

[119] Art 201 (5) of the EU Financial Regulation

- natural persons in receipt of education support;
- natural persons most in need, such as unemployed persons and refugees, and in receipt of direct support;
- public bodies, including Member States organisations;
- international organisations;
- persons or entities applying for interest rate rebates and guarantee fee subsidies where the objective of those rebates and subsidies is to reinforce the financial capacity of a beneficiary or to generate an income;
- if the requested grant amount is not more than EUR 15 000[120].

Required documents

All applicants must provide a Declaration on honour certifying, among other things, that they have the financial capacity to implement the project. This Declaration on honour constitutes a specific section of the application form.

In case of EU grant requests exceeding EUR 60 000 and submitted by entities which are not exempt from undergoing the verification of their financial capacity as outlined above, in addition to the Declaration on honour, the applicants must submit, but only upon request, the following documents[121] through the EU Funding & Tenders Portal (Participant Register – "Financial capacity" tab) / Organisation Registration System:

- the applicant's profit and loss account;
- the balance sheet;
- other documents and official verifications, if requested.

Where the application concerns a grant for an action for which the amount exceeds EUR 750 000, in addition to the above, an audit report produced by an approved external auditor may be requested where available, and always in cases where a statutory audit is required by Union or national law, certifying the accounts for up to the last three available financial years[122].

If an audit report is not available and not required, the applicant shall provide a self-declaration signed by its authorised representative certifying the validity of its accounts for up to the last three available financial years.

For entities which cannot provide the above documents because they are newly created, an estimated financial data/ financial declaration or an insurance declaration stating the applicant's financial risks may replace the above documents.

For actions managed by the Executive Agency: Please also refer to the "Rules for Legal Entity Validation, LEAR Appointment and Financial Capacity Assessment"[123].

In case of a proposal submitted on behalf of a consortium of partners, should the Executive Agency have doubts on the financial capacity of the consortium, it should carry out a risk assessment based on which the same documents as indicated above may be requested from the participating organisations. This is applicable regardless the granted amount.

Organisations must upload these documents on the EU Funding & Tenders Portal (Participant Register – "Financial capacity"-tab) / Organisation Registration System either at the time of their registration (see section "Step1: Register the organisation" above), by the deadline stipulated by the specific Action or when contacted by the EU validation services requesting the applicant to provide the necessary supporting documents. In case of Actions managed directly by the Executive Agency, this request will be sent via the messaging function of the respective

[120] For applicants for grants of up to EUR 15 000, the applicant is exempt from financial capacity verification and therefore omitting to self-declare sufficient financial capacity is not in itself a ground for rejection. Nevertheless, all applicants, regardless of the value of the grant applied for, have to submit the Declaration on honour as it covers many other important criteria. For all applications for grants from EUR 15 001 to EUR 60 000, the financial capacity is verified on the basis of the self-declaration provided in the Declaration on honour and no other supporting documents are needed for this purpose. Under Art 277 (8) of the EU Financial Regulation, as of the next Multiannual Financial Framework, no Declaration on honour will be required for applications for up to EUR 15 000.

[121] For up to the last three financial years.

[122] Article 199 (1) d) of the EU Financial Regulation

[123] https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/common/guidance/rules-lev-lear-fca_en.pdf

system.

Where an application is submitted on behalf of multiple organisations, the Executive Agency may, following a risk assessment, decide to only check the financial capacity of the coordinator/lead applicant[124]. Should the Executive Agency have doubts about the financial capacity of the organisations participating in the proposal, it may request the supporting documents from some or all the participating organisations in the proposal for the purposes of verifying their financial capacity.

The financial assessment is in principle valid for 18 months after the closure date of the most recent assessed accounting period. If the participant applies for another grant during this period, the financial documents will not be requested again. However, if there are justified grounds to doubt the financial capacity or, for the actions managed by the Executive Agency, if the Rules for Legal Entity Validation, LEAR Appointment and Financial Capacity Assessment[125] change in the meantime, a new assessment may be triggered even before the end of the 18 months.

For all actions, regardless of the grant amount, the National or Executive Agency can always request the applicant to provide missing information or clarify supporting documents.

If, following the analysis of the documents indicated above, the National or Executive Agency conclude that the required financial capacity is weak, they may:

- require an enhanced financial responsibility regime, i.e. joint and several responsibility for all co-beneficiaries or joint and several liability of affiliated entities;
- ask the consortium to replace the coordinator/beneficiary;
- decide to give pre-financing paid in instalments;
- lower the prefinancing;
- decide to require a bank/financial institution guarantee for (one or more) pre-financing payments or;
- decide not to give pre-financing.

If the financial capacity is insufficient, the National or Executive Agency shall reject the application.

OPERATIONAL CAPACITY

Operational capacity means that the applicants have the necessary professional competencies and qualifications (quantity and quality) to carry out the proposed project. Applicants must have the knowledge, qualifications and resources to successfully implement the projects and contribute their share (including sufficient experience in projects of comparable size and nature).

The authorising officer responsible may, depending on a risk assessment, waive the obligation to verify the operational capacity of public bodies, Member State organisations or international organisations.

For Actions managed by the National Agencies, applicants must provide a Declaration on honour certifying that they have the operational capacity to implement the project. In the case of the Quality Label, the operational capacity will be assessed according to the relevant questions of the form. In addition, if required in the application form and if the grant exceeds EUR 60 000, applicants may be asked to submit the curriculum vitae (CVs) of the key persons involved in the project to demonstrate their relevant professional experience or other supporting documents such as:

- A list of relevant publications of the main team (where applicable);
- An exhaustive list of previous projects and activities performed and connected to the policy field or to this specific Action.

This information may also be relevant for and assessed in parallel under the 'Quality' award criterion of certain actions which will be assessed in the context of the specific project application.

Operational capacity will not be verified if a proposal is rejected on any other ground or did not pass any other

[124] Art. 201(5) of the EU Financial Regulation
[125] https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/common/guidance/rules-lev-lear-fca_en.pdf

mandatory criteria.

In case of doubt[126] , the National Agency may also use other sources of information, such as findings of previous audits, feedback (including from other National Agencies) from the management of previous or current projects, reports of monitoring visits or information from the organisation's website or social media profiles in order to assess the operational capacity and ability to obtain it. The National Agency may also ask for additional supporting documents and information to verify the information included in the application (such as CVs of the key persons involved in the project to demonstrate their relevant professional experience).

Entities for which the obligation to verify their operational capacity has been waived by the responsible authorising officer, will be considered to have a good operational capacity when the selection criteria for the consortium are being analysed.

In the case of a consortium organised around a coordinator, that entity will be required to provide evidence of the administrative and managerial skills in the relevant field as these will be necessary for the coordination, monitoring and reporting of the project. If the entity designated as coordinator for the proposal fails to show that it possesses these skills, the proposal may be rejected.

In addition, applicants under the Strand "Participation of young people in solidarity activities" for Quality Label for lead organisation must have at least one year of experience implementing activities making them eligible as applicants. Experience preceding mergers or similar structural changes of public entities will be taken into account as relevant experience in the meaning of this provision.

The above conditions will be verified based on the application (including information about the applicant's past participation in the 2014-2020 Erasmus+ and/or European Solidarity Corps programme) and the documents submitted in the Organisation Registration System. Applicants that do not complete the information requested in the application form or fail to provide additional information requested by the National Agency in a timely manner may be rejected. The National Agency may ask for additional supporting documents to verify the information included in the application.

Regardless of the grant amount, the National Agency can always request the applicant to provide missing information or clarify supporting documents.

Applicants that do not complete the information requested in the application form or fail to provide additional information requested by the National Agency in a timely manner may be rejected.

If the operational capacity is considered insufficient, the application shall be rejected.

For Actions managed by the Executive Agency, the operational capacity will be assessed in parallel with the 'Quality' award criterion on the basis of the competence and experience of the applicants and their project teams, including operational resources (human, technical and other) or, exceptionally, the measures proposed to obtain it by the time the task implementation starts.

The applicants are considered to have sufficient operational capacity when the requirements referring to the operational capacity set in the present call for proposals are met.

Applicants will have to show their capacity via the following information in the Application Form:

- general profiles (qualifications and experiences) of the staff responsible for managing and implementing the project;
- description of the consortium composition;
- list of EU-funded projects for the last 4 years.

AWARD CRITERIA

The award criteria allow the National or Executive Agency to:

[126] This applies for any grant amount, provided the applicant is not exempted.

- evaluate the quality of the project proposals and Quality Label applications submitted in light of the objectives and priorities set in framework of the European Solidarity Corps and of the expected results;
- award grants to projects which maximise the overall effectiveness of the Union funding or Quality Labels to organisations.

Award criteria will not be assessed if a proposal is rejected on any other ground or did not pass any other mandatory criteria.

For Solidarity Projects and Volunteering Teams in High Priority Areas, proposals which are not rejected on other grounds and that passed the individual quality thresholds and the overall quality threshold will be considered for funding, within the limits of the available budget. The rest of the eligible proposals will be put on reserve list, if additional budget becomes available (where applicable), or rejected.

The award criteria applying to each of the Actions implemented through this Guide are described in Part B and C of this Guide.

STEP 3: CHECK THE FINANCIAL CONDITIONS

FORMS OF GRANT

The majority of grants will be financed in the form of unit costs (simplified forms of grants). The use of these types of grants under European Solidarity Corps has been approved by the Decisions authorising the use unit costs under the European Solidarity Corps Programme 2021 – 2027[127]. In accordance with these decisions, the methodology used to establish the simplified forms of grants and their levels ensures the respect of the principle of sound financial management and reasonable compliance with the principles of co-financing and no double funding.

The grant may take the following forms[128]:

- reimbursement of a percentage of the reimbursable costs actually incurred: e.g. the exceptional costs to cover visa related costs;
- reimbursement based on unit costs, which cover certain specific categories of eligible costs which are clearly identified in advance by reference to an amount per unit: e.g. the organisational support for Volunteering Projects;

This type of grant helps applicants to easily calculate the requested grant amount and facilitate a realistic financial planning of the project. To know which type of grant is applied to each funding item under each European Solidarity Corps activity covered by this Guide, please see the column "financing mechanism" in the "eligible costs and applicable funding rules" tables.

PRINCIPLES APPLYING TO EU GRANTS AND OTHER PROVISIONS

NON-RETROACTIVITY

No EU grant may be awarded retroactively for projects already completed.

An EU grant may be awarded for a project which has already begun only where the applicant can demonstrate the need to start the project before the grant agreement has been signed. In such cases, the costs eligible for financing must not have been incurred prior to the date of submission of the grant application[129].

[127] https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/esc/guidance/unit-cost-decision_esc_en.pdf
https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/esc/guidance/unit-cost-decision_esc-humaid_en.pdf

[128] Decision authorising the use of lump sums, unit costs and flat-rate financing for volunteering and solidarity projects actions under the European Solidarity Corps: https://youth.europa.eu/solidarity/organisations/reference-documents-resources_en

[129] Exceptionally and in accordance with the legal basis, costs may be eligible for financing if they have been incurred prior to the date of submission of the grant application, if so, indicated in the Financing Decision.

If the applicant starts implementing the project before the grant agreement is signed, this is done at the risk of the applicant.

MULTIPLE SUBMISSIONS/PROPOSALS

In principle, eligible entities may apply for funding and participate in *different project proposals* under the same call. They may also apply under different calls. Specific rules are listed below for identical or very similar proposals submitted in the same call in order to ensure efficiency, fairness, and clarity in the funding process and to prevent double funding.

For actions managed by the National Agencies:

- In case of multiple submissions of the same or very similar project applications by the same applicant to the same or different National Agencies, only one proposal may be accepted and evaluated; the applicant will be asked to withdraw the others (or they will be rejected).
- Should almost identical or similar applications be submitted by different applicants to the same or different National Agencies, they will all be subject to a specific assessment and may all be rejected.
- Proposals may be changed and resubmitted until the deadline for submission.

For Actions managed by the Executive Agency, applicants may submit more than one proposal, each for different projects, under the same call (and be awarded a funding for them). Organisations may participate in several proposals. BUT: if there are several proposals for very similar projects, only one proposal will be accepted and evaluated; the applicants will be asked to withdraw the others (or they will be rejected).

Furthermore, to ensure access to funding for a wide range of organisations, making the programme inclusive and accessible, specific capping rules are introduced in this Guide which set a certain maximum number of different proposals a single entity can apply for or participate in under the same call or round for certain actions. Such measures aim to ensure a wider and more equitable distribution of funds, allowing more newcomers and a broader spectrum of participants to benefit from the programme. Those limitation rules, if applicable, are specified in the eligibility criteria of actions in this Guide.

ORIGINAL CONTENT AND AUTHORSHIP

Intellectual property rights and the originality of submitted work are to be respected under the European Solidarity Corps. All applications for projects and quality labels must contain original content authored by the applicant or, if applicable, the applicant and partner organisations or consortium members jointly applying for a grant. Where a third-party content is referred to, proper attribution and acknowledgment of intellectual property rights must be given. Failing to meet these criteria through acts of plagiarism makes a proposal ineligible for consideration. Confirmed violation of intellectual property rights represents an exclusion situation under the EU Financial Regulation[130] and will lead to rejection. It is therefore for applicants to ensure that their proposals are thoroughly original, properly cite all sources, and comply with the applicable intellectual property rules and ethical guidelines to avoid the risk of rejection.

If considering the use of generative artificial intelligence (AI) tools for the preparation of the application, applicants should be conscious of the potential of plagiarism and should exercise careful consideration to ensure the application's appropriateness and accuracy, its compliance with intellectual property regulations, as well as its original content.

The process of conceiving an application and the reflection by the applicant and other participating organisations, if any, about the different elements contained in a proposal is essential to ensure a qualitative implementation of the activities and contributes to the capacity building of these organisations.All proposals are automatically screened by the National Agencies and the Executive Agency to detect double funding and plagiarism risks. Relying on external entities for help with drafting the application increases the risk of lack of originality, especially if the external entities assist other potential applicants as well. If the application content is similar to an already funded or to be funded project, a critical similarities report will be generated highlighting the percentage of

[130] Article 138(1) c) iii) of the EU Financial Regulation

similarity with other proposals. In the absence of justification by the applicant, such detected similarities might lead to rejection of the proposal.

The grants also do not cover costs related to hiring external organisations or individuals to draft the application or any subsequent reports because these are considered as core tasks which cannot be subcontracted. Therefore, no other organisations or external individuals can be paid or otherwise compensated for drafting the application or any subsequent reports, as such costs will not be reimbursed or considered as eligible under the grant's terms.

The National Agency or the Executive Agency may reject the application from the selection process or may terminate an awarded project/Quality Label at any time if it determines that intellectual property rights have been violated or statements provided in the Declaration on honour are false. In particular, for applications submitted to National Agencies, the applicants are requested to confirm in the Declaration on Honour that the application contains original content authored by the applicant or, if applicable, the applicant andpartner organisations and that no other organisations or individuals external to the partnership have been paid or otherwise compensated for drafting the application.

CUMULATIVE FINANCING AND PROHIBITION OF DOUBLE FUNDING

Each project/activity may give rise to the award of only one grant from the budget to any one beneficiary.

A project that has received a contribution under the Programme may also receive a contribution from another Union programme, provided that the contributions do not cover the same costs. The rules of the relevant Union programme shall apply to the corresponding contribution to the project. The cumulative financing shall not exceed the total eligible costs of the project[131].

In no circumstances shall the same costs be financed twice by the Union budget. To avoid the risk of double-funding, the applicant must declare that its organisation has not received any other EU grant for the particular project and also commit to give notice of any future EU grants related to the particular project and of any EU operating grant(s) given to its organisation. This will be checked through the Declaration on honour.

NO-PROFIT PRINCIPLE

A grant financed from the Union budget must not have the purpose or effect of producing a profit within the framework of the project carried out by the beneficiary[132]. Profit is defined as surplus calculated at the payment of the balance, of receipts over the eligible costs of the project, where receipts are limited to the Union grant and the revenue generated by that project or work programme[133]. The no-profit principle does not apply to grants provided in the form of a unit cost, a lump sum or a flat-rate financing, to projects implemented by non-profit organisations, neither to grant requests that do not exceed EUR 60 000[134].

Where a profit is made, the Commission shall be entitled to recover the percentage of the profit corresponding to the Union contribution to the eligible costs actually incurred by the beneficiary in carrying out the project.

For the purpose of calculating the profit generated by the grant, co-financing in the form of contributions in kind will not be taken into account.

CO-FINANCING

Grants shall involve co-financing. As a result, the resources necessary to carry out the project shall not be provided entirely by the grant. Co-financing may be provided in the form of the project beneficiary's own resources, income generated by the project, or financial or in-kind contributions from third parties.

When the EU grant is provided in the form of a contribution to a unit cost - this is the case for most of the Actions

131 See Article 29(4) of the European Solidarity Corps Regulation.

132 Article 195 of the EU Financial Regulation.

133 To this aim, the receipts are limited to income generated by the project. The profit (or the loss) as defined above is then the difference between: the provisionally accepted amount of the grant and the income generated by the action, and the eligible costs incurred by the beneficiary. In addition, whenever a profit is made, it will be recovered in accordance with the grant agreement. The National Agency or Executive Agency are entitled to recover the percentage of the profit corresponding to the Union contribution to the eligible costs actually incurred by the beneficiary to carry out the action. Further clarifications on the calculation of the profit will be provided for actions for which grants take the form of reimbursement of a specified proportion of eligible costs.

134 Article 195(3) of the EU Financial Regulation.

covered by this Guide - the principles of no-profit and co-financing are ensured by the Commission for the Action as a whole in advance when it defines the rates or percentages of such units, lump sums and flat-rates. The respect of the no-profit and co-financing principles is generally assumed in this case and therefore, applicants do not have to justify the costs incurred by the project.

However, the payment of the grant based on the reimbursement on the basis of contribution to unit costs, lump sums, or flat-rate financing is without prejudice to the right of access to the beneficiaries' statutory records. Where a check or audit reveals that the generating event has not occurred (e.g. project activities not realised as approved at application stage, participants not taking part in the activities, etc.) and an undue payment has been made to the beneficiary on a grant based on the reimbursement on the basis of contribution to unit costs, lump sums, or flat-rate financing, the National Agency or EACEA shall be entitled to recover up to the amount of the grant. Similarly, if the activities undertaken or the outputs produced are of insufficient quality, the grant may be reduced partly or in full even if the activities have taken place and are eligible.

In addition, for statistical and monitoring purposes the European Commission may carry out surveys on samples of beneficiaries aimed at quantifying the actual costs incurred in projects funded based on the reimbursement on the basis of contribution to unit costs, lump sums, or flat-rate financing.

COST ELIGIBILITY RULES

In order to be eligible, costs and contribution must meet the eligibility conditions set in the grant agreement and as indicated below:

ELIGIBLE COSTS:

GENERAL ELIGIBILITY CONDITIONS

1) For actual/real costs:

- they must be actually incurred by the beneficiary;
- they are incurred during the period of implementation set up in the grant agreement, except for costs relating to final reports and audit certificates which may be incurred afterwards;
- they must be declared under one of the budget categories set out in the grant agreement;
- they must be incurred in connection with the project as described in the grant agreement and necessary for its implementation;
- they must be identifiable and verifiable, in particular being recorded in the account records of the beneficiary and determined according to the applicable accounting standards of the country where the beneficiary is established and according to the usual cost accounting practices of the beneficiary;
- they must comply with the requirements of applicable taxes, labour and social security;
- they are reasonable, justified, and comply with the principle of sound financial management, in particular regarding economy and efficiency.

2) For unit costs and contributions:

- they must be declared under one of the budget categories set out in the grant agreement;

(i) the units must:

– be actually used or produced by the beneficiary in the period of implementation;

– be necessary for the implementation of the project and

(ii) the number of units must be identifiable and verifiable, preferably supported by records and documentation.

SPECIFIC ELIGIBILITY CONDITIONS

DIRECT COSTS

The eligible direct costs for the project are those costs which with due regard to the conditions of eligibility set out above, are identifiable as specific costs directly linked to the performance of the project, and which can therefore be booked to it directly. In addition to the direct eligible costs that will be indicated in the call for proposals the following categories of costs are also considered eligible:

- costs relating to a pre-financing guarantee lodged by the beneficiary of the grant, where that guarantee is required by the National or Executive Agency;
- costs relating to certificates on the financial statements and operational verification reports where such certificates or reports are required in support of the requests for payments by the National Agency;
- depreciation costs, provided they are actually incurred by the beneficiary.

The beneficiary's internal accounting and auditing procedures must permit direct reconciliation of the costs and revenue declared in respect of the project with the corresponding accounting statements and supporting documents.

VALUE ADDED TAX (VAT)

Non-deductible and non-refundable value added tax (VAT) under the applicable national VAT legislation[135] is eligible. The only exception relates to activities or transactions in which states, regional and local government authorities and other public bodies engage as public authorities[136].

The VAT Directive does not apply to non-EU countries. Organisations from the countries that are not associated to the programme can be exempted from taxes (including VAT), duties and charges, if an agreement has been signed between the European Commission and the country not associated to the programme where the organisation is established.

INELIGIBLE ACTUAL COSTS

The following actual costs shall not be considered eligible:

- costs or contributions that do not comply with the conditions set in Part B of this Guide;
- costs related to return on capital and dividends paid by a beneficiary;
- debt and debt service charges;
- provisions for losses or debts;
- interest owed;
- currency exchange losses;
- bank costs charged by the beneficiary's bank for transfers from the granting authority;
- excessive or reckless expenditure;
- deductible or refundable VAT, including VAT paid by public bodies acting as public authority (see above paragraph on Value Added Tax);
- costs incurred or contributions for activities implemented during grant agreement suspension;
- in-kind contributions by third parties;
- costs declared by the beneficiary and covered by another project or work programme receiving an EU grant;
- costs or contributions declared by the beneficiary under other EU grants (or grants awarded by an EU Member State, non-EU country or other body implementing the EU budget), except the following case:

  if the project grant is combined with an operating grant running during the same period and the

[135] In the Member States the VAT national legislation translates the VAT Directive 2006/112/EC.
[136] See article 13(1) of the Directive.

beneficiary can demonstrate that the operating grant does not cover any (direct or indirect) costs of the project grant;

- costs or contributions for staff of a national (or regional/local) administration, for activities that are part of the administration's normal activities (i.e. not undertaken only because of the grant);
- costs or contributions (especially travel and subsistence) for staff or representatives of EU institutions, bodies or agencies;
- in the case of renting or leasing of equipment, the cost of any buy-out option at the end of the lease or rental period;
- costs of opening and operating bank accounts (including costs of transfers from/to the National Agency charged by the bank of the beneficiary).

SOURCES OF FINANCING

The applicant must indicate in the application form the contribution from sources other than the EU grant. Direct co-financing may take the form, for example, of the beneficiary's own resources or financial contributions from third parties. If, at the time of the final report and request of payment of the balance, there is evidence that there is a surplus, please refer to sections above on No-profit and Co-financing and relevant grant agreement provisions.

Contributions in kind from third parties are not considered as a possible source of co-financing.

STEP 4: FILL IN AND SUBMIT THE APPLICATION FORM

To request an EU grant under the European Solidarity Corps, applicants must use the specific forms for each Action that are available on the websites of the European Commission, of the National Agencies or of the Executive Agency (please consult the following link: https://youth.europa.eu/solidarity/contacts_en).

APPLICATION PROCEDURE

APPLICATION FORMS

Applicants are required to submit their application online to the appropriate National or Executive Agency using the correct electronic form and including all requested annexes. Applications sent by post, courier service, fax or email will not be accepted.

For actions managed by the National Agencies, applications (including annexes and, if relevant and required, supporting documents) must be submitted **electronically** via the application forms available in the Opportunities section of the Erasmus+ and European Solidarity Corps website[137]. For more information about the submission process, consult the Erasmus+ and European Solidarity Corps guides available at https://wikis.ec.europa.eu/display/NAITDOC.

For actions managed by the European Education and Culture Executive Agency, applications must be submitted **electronically** via the EU Funding & Tenders Portal to the relevant Call for proposals[138]. Applications (including annexes and supporting documents) must be submitted using the forms provided in the Submission System. Applicants must fill in the form in one of the EU official languages, while the project abstract/summary should always be in English. For more information about the submission process (including IT aspects), consult the Online Manual available at:

https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/common/guidance/om_en.pdf

[137] Please access the application forms through the Opportunities section of the Erasmus+ and European Solidarity Corps page at https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/erasmus-esc/index/.

[138] Please access the application forms through the EU Funding & Tenders Portal section on Calls for proposals at https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/portal/screen/opportunities/calls-for-proposals

In case of projects submitted by a consortium, the coordinator submits a single application for the project on behalf of all members.

The application must be submitted to the appropriate National or Executive Agency. In cases where the applicant has submitted an application to another National Agency than the one in charge for the corresponding call for proposals, the National Agency shall re-direct the application to the correct National Agency.

Applications sent by post, courier service, fax or email will not be accepted.

RESPECT THE DEADLINE

The application must be submitted by the deadline set for each Action. The deadlines for the submission of projects are specified for each Action in Parts B and C "Eligibility Criteria" of this Guide.

For actions managed by the National Agencies, the European Commission may, in exceptional circumstances concerning the country of the National Agency, approve an extension of a deadline or opening of an additional deadline not mentioned in this Guide, to be published on the National Agency website for applications for a particular action.

Nota Bene:
For actions managed by National Agencies, irrespective of the day of the deadline, the deadline for submission of electronic forms is always set at 12:00:00 (midday Brussels time).

For actions managed by the Executive Agency and covered in this Guide, in line with the requirements of the Commission's EU Funding & Tenders Portal, irrespective of the day of the deadline, the deadline for submission of proposals to the EACEA is 17:00:00 (Brussels time).

Applicants established in countries that have a different time zone should carefully consider the time differences to avoid rejections**.**

GUIDANCE ON THE USE OF GENERATIVE AI TOOLS FOR THE PREPARATION OF THE PROPOSAL

When considering the use of generative artificial intelligence (AI) tools for the preparation of the proposal, it is imperative to exercise caution and careful consideration. The AI-generated content should be thoroughly reviewed and validated by the applicants to ensure its appropriateness and accuracy, as well as its compliance with intellectual property regulations. Applicants are fully responsible for the content of the proposal (even those parts produced by the AI tool) and must be transparent in disclosing which AI tools were used and how they were utilised.

Specifically, applicants are required to:

- Verify the accuracy, validity, and appropriateness of the content and any citations generated by the AI tool and correct any errors or inconsistencies.
- Provide a list of sources used to generate content and citations, including those generated by the AI tool. Double-check citations to ensure they are accurate and properly referenced.
- Be conscious of the potential for plagiarism where the AI tool may have reproduced substantial text from other sources. Check the original sources to be sure you are not plagiarising someone else's work.
- Acknowledge the limitations of the AI tool in the proposal preparation, including the potential for bias, errors, and gaps in knowledge.

WHAT HAPPENS ONCE THE APPLICATION IS SUBMITTED?

All applications received by the National Agencies or by the Executive Agency undergo an evaluation procedure.

EVALUATION PROCEDURE

Project proposals are assessed exclusively based on the criteria described in this Guide. The order of assessment of that criteria is determined by the authorising officer.

The National or the Executive Agency will:

- perform a check to verify that the admissibility, eligibility, exclusion and selection criteria are respected;
- evaluate the extent to which the participating organisations meet the award criteria (except in the case of grant request under Volunteering Projects). Such quality assessment is in most cases carried out with the support of independent experts. In their assessment, experts could be supported by guidelines developed by the European Commission; where available, these guidelines will be made available on the websites of the European Commission and of the Agencies responsible for the management of projects;
- verify that the proposal does not present risks of double funding. If necessary, such verification is carried out in cooperation with other Agencies or other stakeholders.

If a proposal is rejected on any of the abovementioned grounds or does not pass any of mandatory criteria, the other criteria will not be evaluated.

The National or Executive Agency will appoint an evaluation committee to manage the entire selection process. Based on the assessment carried out by the evaluation committee – if needed with the support of external experts – the relevant agency will select and establish a list of projects proposed for the grant award.

For all actions covered by this Guide, during the evaluation process, applicants may be asked to provide additional information or to clarify the supporting documents submitted in connection with the application, provided that such information or clarification does not substantially change the proposal. Additional information and clarifications are particularly justified in case of obvious clerical errors made by the applicant, or in those cases where – for projects funded through multi-beneficiary agreements – one or more accession forms of the partners are missing (for multi-beneficiary agreements, see section “grant agreement below”).

Where deemed necessary, the National Agency may contact applicants in order to obtain clarification, confirmation or additional information, not only in writing but also by phone, or schedule an in-person or online meeting for this purpose, followed by a written summary of this interaction provided to the applicant.

FINAL DECISION

At the end of the evaluation procedure, the National or Executive Agency decides on the projects to be granted on the basis of:

- the ranking list proposed by the evaluation committee (for Solidarity Projects and Volunteering Teams in High Priority Areas);
- the budget available for any given Action.

After the completion of the selection procedure, the application files and accompanying material are not sent back to the applicant, irrespective of the outcome of the procedure.

NOTIFICATION OF RESULTS

The indicative calendar for the notification of selection results under each Action is indicated in the section "Project life-cycle deadlines and payment modalities" below. All applicants will be informed about the evaluation result in the notification letter on the outcome of the evaluation.

Successful applications will be invited for grant preparation; other ones will be put on the reserve list or rejected. Invitation to grant preparation does not constitute a formal commitment for funding. The National Agency or Executive Agency will still need to perform various legal checks before grant award: legal entity validation, financial capacity, exclusion check, etc. For actions managed by the Executive Agency applicants will be requested to submit their organisation's financial data and appoint a LEAR.

COMPLAINTS/APPEALS

If the applicant believes that the rejection of their proposal was based on an error in the selection procedure, they can submit a complaint/appeal (following the deadlines and procedures set out in the notification letter on the outcome of the evaluation)[139]. Complaints/appeals must focus on aspects concerning the evaluation of the proposals (e.g. admissibility or eligibility checks, evaluation procedure, etc), not their merits. Thus, applicants can raise procedural irregularities, factual errors, manifest errors of assessment or abuse of powers (e.g. lack of coherence between scores and comments, lack or inadequate reasoning of the conclusions, the existence of a conflict of interests, exceeding the limits of discretion, etc).

The main text of a complaint/appeal shall not exceed 7 000 characters (including spaces). Attachments and links to external documents or other sources will be disregarded.

For complaints submitted to National Agencies, if the complaint/appeal is longer or incomplete, the applicant will be asked to adjust or complete it within a 2-week deadline. Otherwise, it shall be considered to have been withdrawn, and the file will be closed. Repetition of the content of the proposal or disagreements with the result or reasoning of the technical evaluation will not be considered.

For actions managed by the Executive Agency, please note that notifications which have not been opened within 10 days after sending are considered to have been accessed and that deadlines will be counted from opening/access[140]. Please also be aware that for complaints submitted electronically, there may be other character limitations.

[139] For actions managed by the Executive Agency, please see the EU Funding & Tenders Online Manual: https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/common/guidance/om_en.pdf

[140] Please also see the EU Funding & Tenders Portal Terms and Conditions: https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/common/ftp/tc_en.pdf.

WHAT HAPPENS WHEN THE APPLICATION IS APPROVED?

GRANT AGREEMENT

If a project is selected for an EU grant under the European Solidarity Corps, a grant agreement is signed between the National or Executive Agency and the applicant. The applicant will receive the grant agreement to be signed and returned to the National or Executive Agency; the National or Executive Agency is the last party to sign. When the grant is signed by both parties, the applicant becomes beneficiary of an EU grant and can start the project[141]. Depending on the type of Action, grant agreements may take the form of mono-beneficiary agreements, with the applicant being the single beneficiary, or multi-beneficiary agreements, where all partner organisations become beneficiaries of the agreement. The multi-beneficiary agreement is signed by the coordinator (lead applicant) which is the only contact point for the National or Executive Agency. However, all other organisations participating in a project as co-beneficiaries sign an accession form to confer on the coordinator the responsibility of acting as coordinator. The accession forms of each partner to the coordinator should be provided at the application stage. If these accession forms are provided at a later stage, they must be made available at the latest by the time of the grant agreement signature.

The indicative calendar for the receipt of grant agreements under each Action is indicated in the section "Project life-cycle deadlines and payment modalities" below.

GRANT AMOUNT

The acceptance of an application does not constitute a commitment to award funding equal to the amount requested by the applicant. The funding requested may be reduced based on the specific financial rules applying to a given Action.

The award of a grant in a given round of selection does not establish an entitlement for subsequent rounds.

It should be noted that the grant amount foreseen by the agreement is a maximum which, in principle, cannot be increased, even if the beneficiary requests a higher amount. For Volunteering Projects, if the National Agency is the granting authority, for actions using a unit cost-based model, the grant amount foreseen by the agreement could, if approved by the National Agency through an amendment, be increased using a contingency reserve to cover exceptional costs/inclusion support and/or additional units following a redestribution exercise (where applicable).

Funds transferred by the National Agency or the Executive Agency must be identified within the account or sub-account indicated by the beneficiary for the payment of the grant.

For Actions managed by the Executive Agency - Reporting and Payments arrangements presented in the Model Grant Agreement published in the Funding and Tender Opportunity Portal apply.

PAYMENT PROCEDURES

Depending on the type of Action, duration of the grant agreement and the assessment of financial risk, projects/grant requests supported under the European Solidarity Corps are subject to different payment

[141] For exceptions to this rule, see section “non-retroactivity” in this part of the Guide.

procedures.

Except for the first pre-financing payment, other payments or recoveries will be made on the basis of the analysis of reports or payment requests submitted by the beneficiary (the templates of these documents will be made available in the course of the year on the websites of National Agencies or the Executive Agency).

The payment procedures applied under the European Solidarity Corps are described below.

PRE-FINANCING PAYMENT

A pre-financing payment, as agreed in the grant agreement, will be transferred to the beneficiary within 30 days of the date when the last of the two parties signs the grant agreement, and where relevant, when any appropriate financial guarantees are received (see section "financial guarantee" below). Pre-financing is intended to provide the beneficiary with a float. National Agencies or the Executive Agency may decide to split the first pre-financing payment into more instalments. They may also decide to reduce the pre-financing or not pay any pre-financing at all if the financial capacity of the beneficiary is weak or where the National Agency deems necessary based on the risk assessment.

FURTHER PRE-FINANCING PAYMENTS

Under some Actions, a second – and in some cases a third - pre-financing payment will be transferred to the beneficiary within 30 calendar days of the receipt, by the National Agency or the Executive Agency, of the further pre-financing payment requests advanced by the beneficiary or within 60 calendar days if the further pre-financing payment request is accompanied by a progress report. These further pre-financing payments may be requested when at least 70 % of the previous pre-financing payment has been used up. Where the statement on the use of the previous pre-financing payment(s) shows that less than 70 % of the previous pre-financing payment(s) has been used to cover costs of the project, the amount of the new pre-financing to be paid shall be reduced by the unused amounts of the previous pre-financing.

PERIODIC OR PROGRESS/TECHNICAL REPORT

Beneficiaries may be asked to submit a periodic report accompanying the request for an interim payment.

In other cases, beneficiaries can be as well requested to submit a progress report informing on the state of implementation of the project. Progress reports do not trigger a further payment. The periodic and the progress/technical reports must be submitted by the deadline indicated in the grant agreement.

PAYMENT OR RECOVERY OF THE BALANCE

The amount of the final payment to be made to the beneficiary will be established on the basis of a final report to be submitted by the deadline indicated in the grant agreement. If a) the events generating the grant are not implemented or are implemented in a different way than planned; or b) the eligible costs actually incurred by the beneficiary are lower than those planned at application stage, or c) the quality of the realised activities/outputs is of insufficient quality, the funding may be reduced proportionally or, where applicable, the beneficiary will be required to repay any excess amounts already received as pre-financing payment.

Under some Actions, in justified cases the National Agency or the Executive Agency may transfer 100 % of the grant awarded through the pre-financing instalments. In such cases a payment of the balance is not due. However, if - on the basis of a final report to be submitted by the beneficiary by the deadline indicated in the grant agreement - a) the events generating the grant are not implemented or are implemented in a different way than planned; or b) the eligible costs actually incurred by the beneficiary are lower than those planned at application stage, or c) the quality of the realised activities/outputs is of insufficient quality, the beneficiary will be required

to repay any excess amounts already received as pre-financing payment.

Pre-financing payments (or parts of them) may be offset (without the beneficiaries' consent) against amounts owed by a beneficiary to the granting authority — up to the amount due to that beneficiary.

The final payment will be issued within 60 calendar days of the receipt of the final report.

For more information, the detailed modalities of payment applying to each Action can be found in the section "Project life-cycle deadlines and payment modalities" below.

PROJECT LIFE-CYCLE DEADLINES AND PAYMENT MODALITIES

Please note that the indicative dates provided in the table below are given for general information only and do not constitute a legal obligation for the National Agencies or the Executive Agency. Similarly, as regards the payment modalities presented below, it should be noted that they will be applied in general, but depending on the individual situation of the applicant organisation (e.g. depending on the financial capacity), different arrangements may be provided for in the grant agreement. In case of a shortage of EU appropriations for a given budget year, the first pre-financing payment levels may be further reduced.

	Project life-cycle deadlines			Payment modalities		
	Indicative date of notification of award decision	Indicative date for signing grant agreement	Date of final payment / request for reimbursement of the balance	General N. of pre-financings	Interim (technical) report	Normal rate of grant provided at different stages
Participation of young people in solidarity activities						
Quality Label	2 months from the submission deadline	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Not Applicable
Volunteering Projects	3 months from the submission deadline	6 months from the submission deadline	Within 60 calendar days from the receipt of the final report by NA	1	Optional	Prefin.: 80 % Balance: 20 %
Volunteering Teams in High Priority Areas	6 months from the submission deadline	9 months from the submission deadline	Within 60 calendar days from the receipt of the final report by EACEA	1	No	Prefin.: 80 % Balance: 20 %
Solidarity Projects	3 months from the submission deadline	4 months from the submission deadline	Within 60 calendar days from the receipt of the final report by NA	1	No	Prefin.: 80 % Balance: 20 %
Participation of young people in humanitarian aid related activities						
Quality Label	6 months from the submission deadline	Not applicable	Not applicable	Not applicable	Not applicable	Not Applicable
Humanitarian Aid Volunteering	6 months from the submission deadline	9 months from the submission deadline	Within 60 calendar days from the receipt of the final report by EACEA	1	No	Prefin.: 80 % Balance: 20 %

OTHER IMPORTANT PROVISIONS

EU VALUES, GRAVE PROFESSIONAL MISCONDUCT, AND CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The applicants need to be aware that if they are awarded the grant, the grant agreement obliges the involved parties to carry out the project in line with the highest ethical standards and the applicable EU, international and national law on ethical principles. During the implementation of the project, the beneficiaries must commit to and ensure the respect of EU values (such as respect for human dignity, freedom, democracy, equality, the rule of law and human rights, including the rights of minorities). In case of breach, the granting authority may reduce or recover the grant and terminate the grant agreement. If the organisation is accredited under the Programme, a breach may also lead to the termination of the accreditation.

Incitement to discrimination, hatred or violence against a group of persons or a member of a group, or similar activities that are contrary to the values on which the Union is founded, as enshrined in Article 2 of the Treaty on European Union[142], are unacceptable and incompatible with the values and objectives of the programme, regardless of whether such actions occur before, during or after project implementation. In line with EU Financial Regulation, such behaviour can qualify as a ground for exclusion from EU funds where it has been established by a final judgment or a final administrative decision that the person or entity is guilty of grave professional misconduct by having violated applicable laws or regulations or ethical standards of the profession to which the person or entity belongs, or by having engaged in any wrongful conduct which has an impact on its professional credibility where such conduct denotes wrongful intent or gross negligence[143]. Excluded entities cannot receive EU funds[144].

The applicants should also take note that after the grant is awarded and grant agreement signed, they must take all measures to prevent any conflict of interests where the impartial and objective implementation of the agreement could be compromised for reasons involving family, emotional life, political or national affinity, economic interest or any other direct or indirect interest. They must formally notify the granting authority without delay of any situation constituting or likely to lead to a conflict of interests and immediately take all the necessary steps to rectify this situation. The granting authority may verify that the measures taken are appropriate and may require additional measures to be taken by a specified deadline. The same obligation to prevent any situation of conflict of interest applies to subcontractors.

Overall, the project must be implemented by the participating organisations as described in their application and in compliance with the provisions of the grant agreement, the call conditions, the applicable quality standards, as well as all legal obligations under applicable EU, international and national law.

FINANCIAL GUARANTEE

If the financial capacity is considered weak, the National Agency or the Executive Agency may require any beneficiary which has been awarded a grant exceeding EUR 60 000 to lodge a guarantee in advance, in order to limit the financial risks connected with the pre-financing payment. This guarantee can be requested for up to the same amount of the pre-financing payment(s).

The purpose of such guarantee is to make a bank or financial institution stand as irrevocable collateral security or first-call guarantor of the beneficiary's obligations deriving from the grant agreement.

This financial guarantee, in euro, shall be provided by an approved bank or financial institution established in an EU Member State. When the beneficiary is established in a non-EU country, the National or Executive Agency may agree that a bank or financial institution established in such country provides the guarantee, if it considers

142 https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/HTML/?uri=CELEX:12012M002
143 Article 138 (1) c) vi) of the EU Financial Regulation
144 For more details, see exclusion criteria section

that the bank or financial institution offers equivalent financial security and characteristics as those offered in an EU Member State.

The guarantee may be replaced by a joint third-party guarantee, or from several third-party guarantees from the participating organisations who are parties to the same grant agreement.

The guarantee will be released after the pre-financing is gradually cleared against an interim payment or payment of the balance to the beneficiary, in accordance with the conditions laid down in the grant agreement. In case the payment of the balance takes the form of a recovery, either the guarantee will be released after the beneficiary is notified or will remain explicitly in force until the final payment and, if the final payment takes the form of a recovery, until three months after the debit note is notified to a beneficiary.

SUB-CONTRACTING AND AWARD OF A PROCUREMENT CONTRACT

In principle, limited subcontracting of services is allowed, provided it does not cover core activities on which the achievement of the objectives of the project directly depends. As a rule, tasks performed by the coordinator under the grant agreement cannot be subcontracted[145]. The beneficiary may resort to subcontracting for non-core activities, such as specific technical services, which are part of the action tasks, requiring specialised skills (relating to the legal, accounting, tax, human resources fields, IT, etc.) or implementation contracts. The costs incurred by the beneficiary for this type of services may therefore be considered as eligible costs, provided they meet all the other criteria described in the grant agreement, such as best value for money and absence of conflict of interest.

Where implementation of the project requires the procurement of goods, works or services (implementation contract), beneficiaries must award the contract to the economically most advantageous offer, i.e. the bid offering the best value for money, or, as appropriate to the tender offering the lowest price, ensuring that there is no conflict of interests and that documentation is retained in case of audit.

In the event of implementation contract exceeding a value of EUR 60 000, the National or Executive Agency may impose special rules on the beneficiary, in addition to those referred to in the previous paragraph. Those special rules would be published on the websites of the National Agencies or the Executive Agency.

When assessing compliance with subcontracting limitations stipulated in this Guide, the National Agency may take into account the particularities of its national employment law to determine whether an employment relation established between a beneficiary organisation and an individual is, in its material aspects, a relation of subcontracting and effectively a circumvention of the prohibition of outsourcing of core project tasks.

INFORMATION ON THE GRANTS AWARDED

In line with the principle of transparency and the requirement for ex-post publicity, information on the recipients of the Union funds must be published on the website of the Commission, the Executive Agency and/or the National Agencies during the first half of the year following the closure of the financial year for which they were awarded.

The information may also be published in any other appropriate medium, including the Official Journal of the European Union.

The National Agencies and the Executive Agency will publish the following information:

- name and locality of the beneficiary;
- amount of grant awarded;

[145] In case of public bodies, coordinators may delegate some of their tasks as per grant agreement to an entity with 'authorisation to administer'.

- nature and purpose of the award.

Upon a reasoned and duly substantiated request by the beneficiary, the publication shall be waived if such disclosure risks threatening the rights and freedoms of individuals concerned as protected by the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union or harm the commercial interests of the beneficiaries.

As far as personal data referring to natural persons are concerned, the information published shall be removed two years after the end of the financial year in which the funds were awarded. The same shall apply to personal data indicated in the official titles of legal persons (e.g. an association or company having as title the names of their founders).

Beneficiary organisations are not authorised to publish this type of information in relation to young people participating in European Solidarity Corps activities.

VISIBILITY OF UNION FUNDING

Specific requirements regarding the visibility of the project, sharing of project results and project impact, as well as the obligation to ensure publicity for each granted project are detailed in the particular calls/actions and grant agreements.

Beneficiaries must clearly acknowledge the European Union's support in all communications or publications, in whatever form or whatever medium, including the Internet, or when activities for which the grant is used are implemented[146].

This must be done according to the provisions included in call and the grant agreement. If these provisions are not fully complied with, the beneficiary's grant may be reduced.

CHECKS, AUDITS AND MONITORING

The National or Executive Agency and/or the European Commission may carry out technical and financial checks and audits in relation to the use of the grant.

Where issues are encountered in a particular project or for a given participant (for example operational or financial capacity issues), these might require closer monitoring and taking of measures as described in the grant agreement. The purpose of such monitoring is to help the beneficiaries manage risk so that it does not materialise and the project can be successfully finalised. The granting authority may also check the statutory records of the beneficiary for the purpose of periodic assessments of lump sum, unit cost or flat-rate financing. The beneficiary will undertake, with the signature of its legal representative, to provide proof that the grant has been used correctly. The European Commission, the Executive Agency, the National Agencies and/or the European Court of Auditors, or a body mandated by them, may check the use made of the grant at any time up to five years, or for up to three years for grants not exceeding EUR 60 000. Therefore, beneficiaries shall keep records, original supporting documents, statistical records and other documents connected with the grant during this period.

The detailed provisions concerning checks and audits are described in the grant agreement.

RISK ASSESSMENT AND RISK MONITORING

Risk assessment is a fundamental part of managing EU grants, as it helps to safeguard public funds, enhance project success, and promote accountability and transparency. It is a critical component of both the application process and the management of EU funded projects and helps to ensure that funds are allocated and used

[146] The visual identity guidelines of the European Solidarity Corps are available at https://youth.europa.eu/solidarity/organisations/communication_en

effectively, efficiently, and in compliance with the relevant policies and regulations.

Risk identification and mitigation is often required from applicants when preparing their applications. It is also relevant at the stage of project selection. The EU Financial Regulation allows the authorising officer in several instances to waive an obligation or request additional documents from an applicant based on its risk assessment. Some actions also require the applicants to present a risk management plan, and where this is the case, the plan itself is part of the project's evaluation. Sound financial management requires that, where a risk is identified by the granting authority, to protect the financial interests of the Union, it may take precautionary measures, such as, for example, reducing or eliminating pre-financing, or requiring a pre-financing guarantee. Finally, risk monitoring relating to the beneficiary and the project also takes place during project implementation in the context of checks, reinforced monitoring, reviews, reinforced monitoring, audits or investigations carried out under a particular grant agreement.

COLLABORATION AND CONSISTENT PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTATION THROUGH INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY SYSTEM USED BY THE COMMISSION, EACEA AND NATIONAL AGENCIES

In order to ensure consistent implementation of the Programme across all participating countries[147] and the protection of EU financial interests[148], the information concerning the applicant, the application, compliance with eligibility and exclusion criteria and the related operational and financial capacity assessments, and other relevant information, including previously funded projects, and, if the grant is awarded, information concerning the implementation of the project, and any reinforced monitoring thereof, can be made accessible to authorised persons of the European Commission, EACEA and the National Agencies in the context of selection and award, prevention of double funding, monitoring, and other instances in the context of supervisory controls and primary checks pursuant to European Solidarity Corps Regulation.

All access to information is subject to rules of personal Data Protection notice specified below.

Concerning the EACEA, data can be made accessible through the Funding and Tenders Portal in line with the applicable privacy statements[149]. The sharing of information between EACEA and the National Agencies must comply with the provisions of the Memorandums of Understanding signed between them.

PROTECTION OF THE FINANCIAL INTERESTS OF THE UNION

The Commission takes appropriate measures to ensure that, when projects financed under the European Solidarity Corps Regulation are implemented, the financial interests of the Union are protected by the application of preventive measures against fraud, corruption and any other illegal activities by effective controls and, if irregularities are detected, by the recovery of the amounts wrongly paid and, where appropriate, by effective, proportionate and dissuasive administrative and financial penalties. This includes carrying out supervisory controls with regard to the Programme actions and activities managed by the national agencies, setting the minimum requirements for the controls by national agencies and independent audit bodies, processing of data as described below, and cooperating closely with the national agencies who are responsible for the primary controls of grant beneficiaries[150].

Applicants for grants need to be aware that any person or entity receiving Union funds is required to fully cooperate in the protection of the financial interests of the Union and shall, as a condition for receiving the funds, grant the necessary rights and access required for the authorising officer responsible, for the EPPO in respect of those Member States participating in enhanced cooperation pursuant to Regulation (EU) 2017/1939, for OLAF, for the Court of Auditors, and, where appropriate, for the relevant national authorities, to comprehensively exert

147 See Article 128 of the EU Financial regulation as well as Article 24 and 29(4) of the European Solidarity Corps Regulation.
148 See in particular Article 194 of the EU Financial Regulation on the prohibition of double funding.
149 https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/common/ftp/privacy-statement_en.pdf
150 Article 27 of the European Solidarity Corps Regulation

their respective competences[151].

DATA PROTECTION

Any personal data included in the application form or in the grant agreement/decision shall be processed by the National or Executive Agency, or by the European Commission in accordance with:

- Regulation (EU) 2018/1725 of the European Parliament and of the Council on the protection of individuals with regard to the processing of personal data by the European Union institutions and bodies and on the free movement of such data.
- In secondary order and only as far as Regulation (EU) 2018/1725 does not apply – the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR or EU Regulation 2016/679 of the European Parliament and of the Council) or the national data protection legislation in case the GDPR does not apply (non-EU countries).

Unless marked as optional, the applicant's replies to the questions in the application form are necessary to evaluate and further process the grant application in accordance with the European Solidarity Corps Guide. Personal data will be processed solely for that purpose by the department or Unit responsible for the Union grant programme concerned (entity acting as data controller). Personal data may be transferred on a need-to-know basis to third parties involved in the evaluation of applications or in the grant management procedure, without prejudice of transfer to the bodies in charge of monitoring and inspection tasks in accordance with European Union law or to bodies mandated to undertake evaluations of the Programme or any of its Actions. In particular, for the purposes of safeguarding the financial interests of the Union, personal data may be transferred to internal audit services, to the European Court of Auditors, to the Financial Irregularities Panel or to the European Anti-Fraud Office or to the European Public Prosecutor's office and between authorising officers of the Commission and the executive agencies. The applicant shall have the right of access to his/her personal data and the right to rectify any such data. In case of conflicts; the applicant also has the right of recourse at any time to the European Data Protection Supervisor. More information regarding the processing of personal data is included in the grant agreement.

Concerning the processing of personal data under the European Solidarity Corps, a detailed privacy notice, including contact information for any queries concerning the processing of their personal data, is available on the website of the Commission.

For actions managed by the National Agencies:

https://erasmus-plus.ec.europa.eu/erasmus-and-data-protection

For actions managed by EACEA:

https://ec.europa.eu/research/participants/data/support/legal_notice/h2020-ssps-grants-sedia_en.pdf

Within the framework of European Solidarity Corps actions managed by the National Agencies or the Executive Agency, applicants - and, if they are legal entities, persons who are members of the administrative, management or supervisory body of that applicant or who have powers of representation, decision or control with regard to that applicant, or natural or legal persons that assume unlimited liability for the debts of that applicant - are informed that, their personal data (name, given name if natural person, address, legal form and name and given name of the persons with powers of representation, decision-making or control, if legal person) may be registered in the Early Detection and Exclusion System (EDES) by the Authorising Officer of the Agency, should they be in one of the situations mentioned in the EU Financial Regulation (EU, Euratom) 2024/2509.

OPEN LICENCE AND INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY RIGHTS

An open licence is a way by which the owner of a work grants permission to everyone to use the resource. There

[151] Article 129 of the Financial Regulation

are different open licences according to the extent of the permissions granted or the limitations imposed, and the beneficiaries are free to choose the specific license to apply to their work. An open licence must be associated to each resource produced.

An open licence is not a transfer of copyrights or Intellectual Property Rights (IPR). Beneficiaries will remain the copyright holders of the materials they produce and are allowed to use them as they wish. The only requirement for grant beneficiaries is to make educational resources (or other documents and media produced by the project) freely accessible through open licences. To fulfil this requirement, licenses need at least to grant use and, ideally, sharing and, adaptation rights. Beneficiaries can also commercialise their project outcomes, and experience shows that open access brings visibility and may encourage interested users to buy the printed version or physical material, document or media.

ANNEX I - GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Accompanying person	An adult of at least 18 years old who accompanies participants with fewer opportunities (particularly participants with disabilities) in an activity, in order to ensure their safety, provide support and extra assistance, as well as assist with the participant's effective learning during the experience.
Activity	Set of tasks carried out as part of a project. An activity is defined by the same location, the same time frame and the same scope.
Accreditation	See Quality Label
Affiliated entity	The following can be considered Affiliated Entities (in accordance with Article 190 of the EU Financial Regulation): - entities forming the sole beneficiary; - entities that satisfy the eligibility criteria and that do not fall within one of the situations referred to in Articles 138(1) and 143(1) and that have a link with the beneficiary, in particular a legal or capital link, which is neither limited to the project nor established for the sole purpose of its implementation. Where several entities satisfy the criteria for being awarded a grant and together form one entity, that entity may be treated as the sole beneficiary, including where the entity is specifically established for the purpose of implementing the project to be financed by the grant. Unless otherwise provided in the call for proposals, entities affiliated to a beneficiary may participate in the implementation of the project, provided that both of the following conditions are fulfilled: (a) the entities concerned are identified in the grant agreement; (b) the entities concerned abide by the rules applicable to the beneficiary under the grant agreement with regard to: (i) eligibility of costs or conditions triggering the payment; (ii) rights of checks and audits by the Commission, OLAF and the Court of Auditors. Costs incurred by such entities may be accepted as eligible costs actually incurred or may be covered by lump sums, unit costs and flat-rate financing.

Applicant	A natural person or an entity with or without legal personality who has submitted an application in a grant award procedure, including any participating organisation or informal group of young people. Applicants may apply either individually or on behalf of other organisations involved in the project. In the latter case, the applicant is also defined as coordinator. For actions managed by the Executive Agency EACEA, the applicants are those entities who will become beneficiaries and affiliated entities in the Grant Agreement if their application is funded.
Application deadline	Final date for submission of the application to the National or Executive Agency to be considered admissible.
Associated partner	A participating organisation that contributes to the implementation of specific project tasks/activities or support the promotion and sustainability of the project, but that for contractual management aspects are not considered to be beneficiaries, and do not receive any funding from the Programme as part of the project (they do not have the right to charge costs or claim contributions). They are not taken into consideration for eligibility purposes, and they do not need to validate their PIC.
Beneficiary	A natural person or an entity with or without legal personality with whom a grant agreement has been signed. Where there are several beneficiaries (in multi-beneficiary agreements), they can also be referred to as 'co-beneficiaries'. The grant agreement can be signed directly or through an accession form/mandate.
Call for proposals	Invitation published by or on behalf of the Commission to present, within a given deadline, a proposal for Action that corresponds to the objectives pursued and fulfils the required conditions. Calls for proposals are published in the Official Journal of the European Union (C series) and/or at relevant websites/portals of the Commission, National or Executive Agency.
Certificate of participation	In the context of the European Solidarity Corps, a document issued to any person who has completed a European Solidarity Corps volunteering activity. It certifies the attendance and, where applicable, the learning outcomes of the participant in the activity.
Clerical Error	A minor mistake or inadvertence unintentionally made in a document that changes its meaning, such as a typographical error or the unintentional addition or omission of a word, phrase, or figure.
Coach	A resource person who is not a member of the group and who supports young people in the preparation, implementation and evaluation of a Solidarity Project.
Co-financing	The principle under which part of the costs of a project supported by the EU must be borne by the beneficiary or covered through external contributions other than the EU grant.
Consortium	Two or more participating organisations teaming up to prepare and submit a proposal as well as to implement and follow up a project. The contract is signed by all participating organisations, or by one of them which has been duly authorised by the others.
Coordinator	A participating organisation applying for a grant on behalf of a consortium of partner organisations. In addition to being a beneficiary itself, the coordinator has special obligations as foreseen in the grant agreement.

Cross-border activity	Activity taking place in another country than the country where the participant is legally resident.
Established	An organisation or body is considered as established in the location where it is subject to jurisdiction for legal and tax purposes. This is normally determined based on fulfilling certain national conditions that allow such organisation or body to be formally recognised by its national authorities. In case of a group of young people, the legal and tax residence of its legal representative (their centre of interest[152]) is considered as having the equivalent effects for the purposes of eligibility to a European Solidarity Corps grant. Secondary residences and permits will not be accepted for this purpose.
European Union Member States and third countries associated to the Programme	EU and non-EU countries that have established a National Agency which participates fully in the European Solidarity Corps. The list of EU Member States and third countries associated to the Programme is provided in Part A of this Guide, section "Who can participate in the European Solidarity Corps?". Third countries associated to the Programme have an agreement signed with the Union pursuant to Article 13 of the European Solidarity Corps Regulation.
EU Academy	It is an EU-owned online hub containing first-hand knowledge, high quality educational resources and valuable insights, directly produced by the EU institutions, for individuals whose work is related to its sphere of action. The aim is to facilitate their easy and smooth understanding and successful implementation of EU policies in a wide array of fields. The mission of the EU Academy is to provide a modern and engaging learning environment that can foster and improve the quality of the application of knowledge on EU-matters in a simple, smart and inspirational way.
Europass	The Europass online platform, an action of the European Skills Agenda, provides individuals and organisations with web-based tools and information on learning opportunities, qualifications frameworks and qualifications, guidance, skills intelligence, self-assessment tools and documentation of skills and qualifications, and connectivity with learning and employment opportunities. The Europass platform also offers tools and software to support digitally signed credentials, as announced in the Digital Education Action Plan. The platform interconnects with national data sources for learning opportunities and national qualifications databases or registers.
European Health Insurance Card (EHIC)	This is a free card that gives access to medically necessary, state-provided healthcare during a temporary stay in any of the 27 EU countries, Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway, under the same conditions and at the same cost (free in some countries) as people insured in that country. More information on the card and on how to obtain it is available at http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=559
European Solidarity Network (EuSN)	The European Solidarity Network (EuSN) is a young community dating back to spring 2019. They are united through a shared interest and vision to create a European network in which everybody works together to improve the experience of young Corps participants.

[152] In case of doubt, see Article 11 of Regulation (EC) No 987/2009 for elements determining residence

EuroPeers	EuroPeers are young people who have gained European experience under the EU's youth programmes and want to share them with their peers. They are ambassadors for the Erasmus+ Youth programme, the European Solidarity Corps and other national schemes that help young people move around Europe to work and learn. EuroPeers either organise their own events or are invited to speak by schools, youth welfare offices or cultural centres. All on a voluntary basis.
Force majeure	Any situation or event that prevents organisations and individuals from fulfilling their obligations in the implementation of the project activities. This situation or event must be an unforeseeable, exceptional situation and beyond the parties' control. The force majeure cannot be due to error or negligence of the organisations or other participants involved in the project and must prove to be inevitable in spite of the exercise of all required due diligence. For the exact definition and conditions, grant beneficiaries should refer to their grant agreement.
Green travel	Travel that uses low-emission means of transport for at least half of the round trip such as bus, train, bike or car-pooling. Traveling by boat will be considered as green travel if combined with another low-emission means of transport.
Group of young people	A group of at least five young people (18-30 years old) which does not have legal personality under the applicable national law, provided that their group representative has the legal capacity to undertake legal obligations on their behalf. The group needs to be registered and validated in the Organisation Registration System (ORS). For registration purposes, the formation of the group needs to be evidenced by a registration form signed between the group members. The signatures on the registration form may have to be officially authenticated, if required by the granting authority, to ensure legal certainty. Existing groups which are already registered in ORS also need to upload the signed agreement in their ORS profile to be eligible to apply as informal group of young people. For the purpose of simplification, they are assimilated to legal persons (organisations, institutions, etc.) in this Guide and fit within the notion of participating organisations for actions in which they can take part.
Host organisation	The organisation that 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.
Humanitarian aid activity	Activity that supports post-crisis and long-term humanitarian aid operations in third countries, that is intended to provide needs-based assistance aimed at preserving life, preventing and alleviating human suffering, and maintaining human dignity in the face of man-made crises or natural disasters, and that includes assistance, relief and protection operations in ongoing humanitarian crises or their aftermath, supporting measures to ensure access to people in need and to facilitate the free flow of assistance, and actions that aim to reinforce disaster preparedness and disaster risk reduction, link relief, rehabilitation and development and contribute towards strengthening the resilience and capacity of vulnerable or disaster-affected communities to cope with and recover from crises.
In-country activity	Activity taking place in the same country as the one where the participant is legally resident.

Informal learning	Learning resulting from daily activities related to work, family or leisure which is not organised or structured in terms of objectives, time or learning support; it may be unintentional from the learner's perspective.
International organisation	Organisations set up by international agreements and agencies set up by such organisations as specified in article 159 of EU Financial Regulation. The following organisations are assimilated to international organisations: the International Committee of the Red Cross; the International Federation of National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies.
Key competences	The basic set of knowledge, skills and attitudes which all individuals need for personal fulfilment and development, employability, social inclusion, sustainable lifestyle, successful life in peaceful societies, health-conscious life management and active citizenship, as described in Council Recommendation 2018/C 189/01 of 22 May 2018 on key competences for lifelong learning.
Learning outcomes	Statements of what a participant knows, understands and is able to do as on completion of a learning process, which are defined in terms of knowledge, skills and competence.
Legal entity	A natural person or a legal person created and recognised as such under national law, Union law or international law which has legal personality and which may, acting in its own name, exercise rights and be subject to obligations, or an entity which does not have legal personality as referred to in point (c) of Article 200(2) of the EU Financial Regulation.
Legal Entity Appointed Representative (LEAR)	For action managed by the European Education and Culture Executive Agency, parallel to the validation of an organisation in the Participant Register, its legal representative(s) must nominate a Legal Entity Appointed Representative (LEAR). The LEAR role, is key: once validated by the Commission, the LEAR will be authorised to: ▪ manage the legal and financial information about the organisation; ▪ manage access rights of persons in the organisation (but not at the project level); ▪ appoint representatives of the organisation to electronically sign grant agreements ('Legal Signatories' - LSIGN) or financial statements ('Financial Signatories' - FSIGN) via the EU Funding & Tenders Portal. All the steps for the LEAR validation are clarified in the EU Funding & Tenders Portal.
Location	A place in which volunteering activities are organised for a specific number of volunteers. A location must not have a legal personality distinct from the host organisation. By default, the main address of the host organisation is considered as a first location, but organisations could declare and host volunteers in more than one location.
Long term volunteering	Participation in volunteering activities lasting 60 days or longer, excluding travel days.
Member of the informal group implementing a project	Under Solidarity Projects, young people implementing the project are called members of the group.
National Agency	A body in charge of managing the implementation of the Programme at national level in a Member State or in a third country associated to the Programme. One or more National Agencies may exist in each country.

National Authority	An authority in charge, at national level, of monitoring and supervising the management of the Programme in a Member State or in a third country associated to the Programme. One or more National Authorities may exist in each country.
Newcomer organisation	Any participating organisation that has not previously received support in any type of action supported by the Corps.
Non-formal learning	Learning which takes place through planned learning activities where some form of learning support is present, but which is not part of the formal education and training system.
Non-governmental organisation (NGO)	A voluntary, independent from government, non-profit organisation, which is not a political party or a trade union[153].
Participant	Young person registered in the European Solidarity Corps Portal, who is fully involved in a project and who may receive European Union funding intended to cover their costs of participation (notably travel and subsistence).
Participant with fewer opportunities	Individuals who for economic, social, cultural, geographical or health reasons, a migrant background, or for reasons such as disability and educational difficulties or for any other reasons, including those that can give rise to discrimination under article 21 of the Charter of Fundamental rights of the European Union, face various obstacles compared to their peers.
Participating organisation	Any organisation or group of young people involved in the implementation of a European Solidarity Corps project. Depending on their role in the project, participating organisations can be applicants, partners or associated partners.
Partner organisation	In actions managed by National Agencies, an organisation involved in the project but not taking the role of applicant.
Preparatory Visit	Planning visit to the host country prior to the start of a volunteering activity. The purpose of the visit is to prepare and ensure high quality of those activities, build trust, understanding and a solid partnership between organisations and participants involved.
Project	A coherent set of activities which are designed and organised to achieve defined objectives and results.
Qualification	A formal outcome of an assessment and validation process which is obtained when a competent body determines that an individual achieved learning outcomes to given standards.
Quality Label	Procedure that ensures that the organisations wishing to have simplified access to funding under an action of the European Solidarity Corps comply with a set of criteria and minimum requirements. Depending on the type of organisation and/or the country where the requesting organisation is located, the Quality Label is carried out by the Executive Agency, a National Agency or a SALTO Resource Centre. The award of a Quality Label represents the first stage in a two-stage submission procedure for certain grants and does not trigger an immediate award of funding under the European Solidarity Corps.
Registered Candidate	An individual aged between 17 and 35 years who has registered in the European Solidarity Corps Portal for the purposes of expressing interest in engaging in a solidarity activity but who is not yet participating in a solidarity activity.

[153] See Article 2(49) of EU Financial Regulation

Short term volunteering	Participation in volunteering activities lasting up to 59 days, excluding travel days.
Solidarity activity	A high-quality, inclusive activity that addresses important societal that takes the form of volunteering, a solidarity project or a Networking Activity in various fields, including in the field of humanitarian aid, carried out in the frame of the European Solidarity Corps.
Third countries not associated to the Programme	Third countries not associated to the Programme are countries which do not have an agreement signed with the Union pursuant to Article 13 of the European Solidarity Corps Regulation. Pursuant to Article 14 of this Regulation, in duly justified cases in the Union's interest, the actions referred to in Article 5 and volunteering as referred to in Article 7 of the European Solidarity Corps Regulation may also be open to participation of legal entities of third countries not associated to the Programme. No National Agency is established in these countries. The list of third countries not associated to the Programme whose legal entities may apply in the Call is set out in Part A of this Guide in the section "Who can participate in the European Solidarity Corps?". Decision to award a grant to such entities is made by the authorising officer on a case by case basis having regard to the justification of the Union's interest.
Union transparency and recognition tools	Instruments that help stakeholders to understand, appreciate and, as appropriate, recognise learning outcomes and qualifications throughout the Union.
Validation of non-formal and informal learning	Procedure of confirmation by an authorised body that an individual has acquired learning outcomes measured against a relevant standard and consists of the following four distinct phases: ▪ Identification through dialogue of particular experiences of an individual; ▪ Documentation to make visible the individual's experiences; ▪ Formal assessment of these experiences; ▪ Certification of the results of the assessment which may lead to a partial or full qualification.
Venue	The physical location where an activity is taking place.
Youth Goals	The European Youth Goals were developed in the frame of the EU Youth Strategy. These goals identify cross-sectoral areas that affect young people's lives and point out challenges. https://europa.eu/youth/strategy_en
Youth Strategy	The European Union Youth Strategy 2019-2027 sets out a Framework for European cooperation in the youth field, based on the Commission's Communication of 22 May 2018 on 'Engaging, Connecting and Empowering young people'. Under the core area 'Engage', the EU Youth Strategy aims for a meaningful civic, economic, social, cultural and political participation of young people. The Strategy fosters youth participation in democratic life, supports social and civic engagement and aims to ensure that all young people have the necessary resources to take part in society. https://ec.europa.eu/youth/policy/youth-strategy_en

Youthpass	The European tool to improve the recognition of the learning outcomes of participants of projects supported by the European Solidarity Corps. Youthpass consists of a) certificates that can be obtained by participants and b) a defined process which supports young people and organisations to reflect about the learning outcomes from a project. Youthpass is also part of a broader European Commission strategy which aims to enhance the recognition of non-formal and informal learning and of youth work in Europe and beyond.

ANNEX II – MULTIPLE PARTICIPATIONS

The table below provides an overview of the possible combinations of activities available for participants. Please refer to column 1 (in grey) as first activity carried out by a participant and the other columns as subsequent activities. The eligibility rules for each activity type are described in the relevant section of this guide.

The total amount of time spent by a young person in European Solidarity Corps volunteering activities must not exceed 12 months and the activities carried out must not overlap. Activities carried out under Erasmus+ volunteering/European Voluntary Service will count towards the total of 12 months allowed. Solidarity Projects are not included in the 12-month time limit.

Activity carried out	Short term - individual volunteering (cross-border or in-country)	Volunteering teams (including VTHPA)	Long term individual cross-border volunteering	Long term individual in-country volunteering	Solidarity Project	Humanitarian aid individual volunteering	Humanitarian aid teams volunteering
Long term individual cross-border volunteering	✓	✓	X (exception: a second activity for young people with fewer opportunities or duly justified cases)	✓	✓	✓	✓
Short term - individual volunteering (cross-border or in-country)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Volunteering teams (including VTHPA)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Long term individual in-country volunteering	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Solidarity Project	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Humanitarian aid individual volunteering	✓	✓	X (exception: a second activity for young people with fewer opportunities or duly justified cases)	✓	✓	X	✓
Humanitarian aid team volunteering	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

ANNEX III - CONTACT DETAILS

European Commission - Directorate General Education & Culture (DG EAC)
https://youth.europa.eu/solidarity_en

European Commission - Education and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA)
https://www.eacea.ec.europa.eu/grants/2021-2027/european-solidarity-corps_en

National Agencies
https://youth.europa.eu/solidarity/organisations/contact-national-agencies_en