

# Public Consultation on the European Solidarity Corps

Fields marked with \* are mandatory.



## Introduction

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The European Solidarity Corps will create opportunities for young people to support communities and people in need. These opportunities will include volunteering and solidarity-related jobs, traineeships and apprenticeships, both in the young people's home countries and abroad.

The Commission is now consulting stakeholders and the general public to define key priorities and shape the implementation of the European Solidarity Corps.

This public consultation builds on an initial, targeted consultation of a selection of key stakeholders in late 2016. The questions of the initial consultation were broad, focussing on the potential and the challenges of creating a European Solidarity Corps .

The consultation results will inform the Commission's legislative proposal.

## About you

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\* You are replying

- as an individual in your personal capacity
- in your professional capacity or on behalf of an organisation

\* Respondent's first name

Caroline

\* Respondent's last name

Costongs

\* Respondent's professional email address

C.Costongs@eurohealthnet.eu

\* Name of the organisation

EuroHealthNet

\* Postal address of the organisation

Rue de la Loi, 67  
1040 Brussels  
Belgium

\* Type of organisation

Please select the answer option that fits best.

- Private enterprise
- Professional consultancy, law firm, self-employed consultant
- Trade, business or professional association
- Non-governmental organisation, platform or network
- Research and academia
- Churches and religious communities
- Regional or local authority (public or mixed)
- International or national public authority
- Youth organisation
- Social enterprise
- Other

\* If "other", please specify:

Not for profit partnership

\* Is your organisation included in the Transparency Register?

If your organisation is not registered, we invite you to register [here](#), although it is not compulsory to be registered to reply to this consultation. [Why a transparency register?](#)

- Yes
- No
- Not applicable

\* If so, please indicate your Register ID number.

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\* Country of organisation's headquarters

- Austria
- Belgium
- Bulgaria
- Croatia
- Cyprus
- Czech Republic
- Denmark
- Estonia
- Finland
- France
- Germany
- Greece
- Hungary
- Ireland
- Italy
- Latvia
- Lithuania
- Luxembourg
- Malta
- Netherlands
- Poland
- Portugal
- Romania
- Slovak Republic
- Slovenia
- Spain
- Sweden
- United Kingdom
- Iceland
- Liechtenstein
- Norway
- Switzerland
- Albania
- Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia
- Montenegro
- Serbia
- Turkey
- Other

\* Your contribution,

Note that, whatever option chosen, your answers may be subject to a request for public access to documents under [Regulation \(EC\) N° 1049/2001](#)

- can be published with your organisation's information** (I consent the publication of all information in my contribution in whole or in part including the name of my organisation, and I declare that nothing within my response is unlawful or would infringe the rights of any third party in a manner that would prevent publication)
- can be published provided that your organisation remains anonymous** (I consent to the publication of any information in my contribution in whole or in part (which may include quotes or opinions I express) provided that it is done anonymously. I declare that nothing within my response is unlawful or would infringe the rights of any third party in a manner that would prevent the publication.

## General questions to all respondents

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At present, a European Solidarity Corps placement can be either as a volunteer ('the volunteering strand') or as an apprentice, trainee or employee ('the occupational strand').

At the moment the person needs to be between 17 and 30 years when registering; the actual European Solidarity Corps placement cannot start before the age of 18.

The geographical scope of the European Solidarity Corps currently covers the EU and, where relevant, other countries participating in the various existing financing instruments contributing to the European Solidarity Corps.

What should be the priorities of the European Solidarity Corps?

*between 1 and 4 choices*

- Strengthening solidarity activities benefitting people and communities in need
- Creating more opportunities for young people to express their solidarity
- Creating more opportunities for organisations to do solidarity projects
- Promoting the engagement of young people in society
- Creating opportunities for cross-border mobility for young people
- Creating opportunities for in-country mobility for young people
- Creating opportunities for young people to improve their skills and competences

How could we foster a common spirit among European Solidarity Corps participants?

- Common induction training
- Common social media platforms
- E-newsletters
- Alumni activities
- Other

\* If "other", please specify:

►A Certificate. It is important that the young person feels recognised in the work he/she has done, this is especially useful upon returning to a job centre or when applying for jobs. A certificate also serves to make the efforts for solidarity more tangible. The certificate should be issued by the Corps and endorsed by the hosting organisation; a beautiful and EU labelled certificate could help to create a positive image of the EU.;

►A Learning Agreement. A learning agreement serves to align both parties expectations, the young person will hereby clearly be able to comprehend the link to solidarity that he/she will be doing in the Corps placement. The agreement should set clear responsibilities and roles of both parties. It should include young persons' expectations and interest, as a way to also empower the young people . This element could be included in the 'Solidarity Contract' mentioned under the Principles of the European Solidarity Corps.;

►European Solidarity Corps Communities all over Europe, such as Facebook sites and modest marketing materials. This would support young people who attend placements to feel a part of a bigger initiative and a consolidated group. The Corps should also provide tools for the integration of the young person into the local community of deployment, for instance by set up Facebook groups to facilitate contacts with other European Solidarity Corps participants active in the same area.;

►Clear criteria for organisation's accreditation. Quality placements should be ensured through clear accreditation criteria of organisations. It is also important to ensure safety of participants and beneficiaries in the placements, by requiring that organisation comply with EU legislation for health and safety at work and the legal accreditation and conformity with national law, and for the participants to provide criminal records.

What would be the best ways to facilitate access to the European Solidarity Corps for young people from a disadvantaged background or with special needs?

- Additional allowances
- Additional training
- Additional promotion activities
- Additional guidance for registration
- Additional mentoring during the placement
- Shorter placements
- Part time activities
- Other

\* If "other", please specify:

►EuroHealthNet warmly welcome the special attention and focus given to young people from disadvantaged backgrounds.

►Additional financial support for disadvantaged young people is important for successfully creating an inclusive initiative, which should be a goal in itself. This additional funding should be a different scheme than the calls for proposals on the Solidarity Corps, in order to avoid disadvantaged participants being less desirable and thereby facing additional barriers to acquiring new experiences. Limiting funding/reimbursement to the organisation who have responded to a call for proposal limits the availability of organisations able to take on disadvantaged participants. The Corps should also establish various outreach methods and tools targeting young people with disadvantaged backgrounds, for example using a strong communication strategy including social media and videos. Social media are the main sources of news for many young people, but it is also subject to extreme customisability, meaning that it reinforces exclusion from those fields a person would not normally look twice at. It is necessary to reach the young people where they are. Cooperation with schools, municipalities, and unemployment centres could be useful to identify and reach for those most in need.;

►Provide the possibility of part-time work and shorter placement durations, e.g. down to 2 weeks, could alleviate the immediate hesitation experienced by young people from vulnerable groups.;

►Ensure a counselling package including mentoring, assistance and support, provided mainly but not solely by hosting organisations, e.g. it could also be organised within local municipalities, schools or unemployment centres. Also, a central "help-line" should be made available to contact in case of need and young people should be called pro-actively at least once, with the question how they are doing.;

►Centralised EU coordinated training ensured in addition to the training /mentoring in the host organisation; Trainings should be complementary and provide skills and knowledge that are transferable between sectors and domains (e.g. project management, networking, teamwork, facilitation, CV development and work contract negotiation, personal development, etc.). The EU coordinated centralised training could also include theory, generalised know-how and pertaining knowledge on the sector relevant for the young person placement.

How could the European Solidarity Corps be easily accessible for individuals and organisations?

- Easy validation or accreditation processes for organisations
- Easy funding application processes for organisations
- Easy registration processes for individuals
- Information and guidance from specialised services
- Other

\* If "other", please specify:

►The system should allow for easy validation and accreditation for organisations while maintaining quality and capacity for validation/checks of information provided. An official declaration form should be made by the host organisations including their legal and financial liability, e.g. including formal documentation on their legal financial eligibility, such as the eligibility criteria used when accessing EU funding or registration number of the EU Transparency Register. Organisations should also not be engaged in activities and sectors that promote unhealthy behaviours or are harmful for young people (alcohol, tobacco, etc.) Organisations should sign the European Solidarity Corps Charter (which already exists). The Charter should set clearly the minimal levels of obligations, e.g. social and health insurance, protection against harassment and exploitation. The Charter should distance itself from social dumping by outlining specific characteristics: e.g. “the placement must not replace employment”, “The placement must provide the participant with transferable skills” etc.). As regards the young person, the Corps should mention that participation is ensured for all those that have no previous criminal record or history in their country.;

► Punctual and timely disbursement of the funding or reimbursement for host organisations is important to support the organisation’s ability and willingness to participate in the Corps.; Extra funding ought to be given in cases of support to vulnerable groups. This should be visible in the information published for both individual applicants and potential host organisations.

Moreover, the webpage ‘Our Mission and Principles’ should include more visible and clear the fact that the Solidarity Corps is free for young people who would like to register and participate.;

►Clear register guidelines for all types of eligible organisations, industries and institutions should be accessible on the website, including examples of placements and types of arrangements, e.g. if it could be possible to co-author a placement between organisations.;

►A clear complaint procedure for the young person should be put in place, in case the hosting organisation is not complying with the European Solidarity Corps Charter, national law or otherwise demonstrating unacceptable behaviour. The aim is to limit the participating organisations to organisations that ensure proper, good and decent placement where the young people are treated with respect.;

►Additionally to the points above, it is important to ensure continued quality placements. The young person should also be encouraged evaluate the placement and write a short report (of maximum 3 pages) on how the Agreement signed by both parties has been fulfilled, e.g. about solidarity and other work principles applied, how mentoring or other training skills (if it is the case) have been acquired, etc. the participation of the host organisation in the programme could be revoked based on the information included in the young people’s report. A clear procedure of for ensuring the quality of the programme offered should be in place to ensure that EU laws are respected and applied by host organisations.

## Questions for potential volunteers with the European Solidarity Corps

## Questions for potential trainees, apprentices or employees through the European Solidarity Corps

## Questions for persons replying on behalf of organisations

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Regarding any solidarity related activities that your organisation is engaged in at the moment, are you engaging:

- Volunteers
- Trainees
- Apprentices
- Employees

Would your organisation be interested in offering the following types of placements for solidarity related activities to participants from the European Solidarity Corps?

- Volunteering placements
- Traineeship placements
- Apprenticeship placements
- Employment placements

Please quantify the number of placements that your organisation might offer on average per year for each type of placement?

	Potential number of placements per year
Volunteering placements:	1
Traineeship placements:	3-4
Apprenticeship placements:	0
Employment placements:	0

Is receiving EU funding a prerequisite for your organisation to be able to offer the following European Solidarity Corps placements?

For volunteering placements?

- Yes
- No

For training placements?

- Yes
- No

For apprenticeship placements?

- Yes
- No

For employment placements?

- Yes
- No

What would be your organisation's motivation to engage the Corps participants for solidarity related activities?

- To contribute to change in society
- To benefit from outside experience and skills
- A mission of my organisation to work with young people
- To cope with the workload
- Other

\* If "other", please specify:

►EuroHealthNet is a not for profit partnership of organisations, agencies and statutory bodies working to contribute to a healthier Europe. Our mission is to promote health and health equity between and within European countries. For us, this is closely linked to solidarity in two ways: (1) Solidarity with the young people - helping them with a good start of their working life, which will have a positive impact on their health. (2) Solidarity with everyone who are not able to attain their highest levels of health and well-being.;

►There is a great opportunity for public health to play an important role in the European Solidarity Corps. For example, the Health Programme constitutes the instrument to implement the EU Health Strategy and achieve the EU2020 strategic objectives. Good health for all is a prerequisite for achieving smart, sustainable and inclusive European societies.;

►Young people bring new ideas and can easily fill knowledge gaps with their ability to use technology, information gathering, and self-learning capabilities. These are soft skills that are useful in the dynamic and flexible labour market of the future.

What kind of preparation would you consider essential for a young person from the European Solidarity Corps to be a potential candidate for a placement with your organisation, whether as a volunteer, trainee, apprentice or employee?

- Language training
- Intercultural training
- Training specific to the tasks that the project will entail
- Other

\* If "other", please specify:

►Interest in public health, health promotion, project management, communications, events organisation, networking, etc.: Prior training such as the EU centralised training on transferable skills and general public health or health promotion for young people with disadvantaged background would be useful. This would ensure skills that could increase young people employability or guidance for further training and education.;

►A minimum level of English speaking and writing skills are required to enable integration in office work and teams. At the local level, e.g. public health institutes and regional authorities, it is useful and sometimes essential to be able to speak the language of the country.

Would you be looking for specific profiles in terms of qualifications, skills and experience?

- No specific level of education
- At least a lower secondary education
- At least an upper secondary education or post-secondary non-tertiary education
- Tertiary education (Bachelor degree, Master degree, PhD, etc.)
- Foreign language skills
- Intercultural skills
- 'Soft skills' e.g. communication, team-working or multi-tasking skills
- Digital and IT skills
- Skills that are specific to the tasks that the project entails
- Other

\* If "other", please specify:

►We want to refrain from only looking for young people for high skilled working tasks, to provide a low threshold for participation and encourage involvement of young people with vulnerable background. Qualities that can be found in young people regardless of educational level could be 'soft skills', and include new and fresh ideas. Theoretical gaps could be easily filled in by abilities to use IT, social media, or quick learner capabilities.;

►At the level of public health institutes and regional authorities, young people could take part in specific health education, health promotion, project management activities that promote health and wellbeing and contribute to reduce health and social inequalities. They do not need specific medical skills and could also include work across sectors. At the national level, however, the knowledge of host country language is valuable.

Is it challenging to find the people with the right skills and experience for your solidarity related projects?

- Yes  
 No

## Questions for organisations who would be prepared to offer volunteering placements

Would you be willing to engage European Solidarity Corps volunteers from:

- The country where your organisation is based  
 Another EU country  
 A non-EU country  
 No preference

For what duration(s) would you like to offer volunteering placements?

- 0-2 months  
 3-6 months  
 7-12 months  
 More than 12 months

## Questions for organisations prepared to offer placements for training, apprenticeships or employment

Would you be willing to engage European Solidarity Corps trainees, apprentices or employees from:

- The country where your organisation is based
- Another EU country
- A non-EU country
- No preference

For what duration(s) would you like to offer traineeship, apprenticeship or employment placements?

- 0-2 months
- 3-6 months
- 7-12 months
- More than 12 months

## Document upload and final comments

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Please feel free to upload a concise document, such as a position paper. The maximal file size is 1MB.

*Please note that the uploaded document will be published alongside your response to the questionnaire which is the essential input to this open public consultation. The document is an optional complement and serves as additional background reading to better understand your position.*

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If you wish to add further information - within the scope of this questionnaire - please feel free to do so here. If you are aware of good practice examples which could serve as a model for future European Solidarity Corps activities, please include these here.

*1000 character(s) maximum*

## Contact

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