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EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL establishing the
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COMMISSION STAFF WORKING DOCUMENT

**CONCEPT NOTE - MAIN ACTIONS IMPLEMENTING THE EUROPEAN
SOLIDARITY CORPS**

Accompanying the document

Proposal for a

**REGULATION OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL
establishing the European Solidarity Corps programme and repealing [European
Solidarity Corps Regulation] and Regulation (EU) No 375/2014**

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- CONCEPT NOTE -

**MAIN ACTIONS IMPLEMENTING THE
EUROPEAN SOLIDARITY CORPS**

This concept note provides further information on the main actions implementing the European Solidarity Corps. It outlines: the key features of volunteering activities, traineeships and jobs); the format of the solidarity projects; the European Solidarity Corps Quality Label; the networking activities and European Solidarity Corps Resource Centres.

VOLUNTEERING ACTIVITIES, TRAINEESHIPS AND JOBS

European Solidarity Corps activities can take the shape of:

- A) volunteering activities in solidarity activities;
- B) volunteering activities in support of humanitarian aid operations;
- C) traineeship;
- D) jobs.

Solidarity activities supported under European Solidarity Corps may be offered in different areas, such as, but not limited to: education and training, employment, gender equality, entrepreneurship (in particular social entrepreneurship), citizenship and democratic participation, environment and nature protection, climate action, disaster prevention, preparedness and recovery (excluding immediate disaster response), agriculture and rural development, provision of food and non-food items, health and wellbeing, creativity and culture, physical education and sport, social assistance and welfare, reception and integration of third-country nationals, territorial cooperation and cohesion and cooperation across borders. These areas of interventions can also be considered in activities in support of humanitarian aid operations.

For all solidarity activities, a certain level of support is provided to participating organisations. The different modalities of support depending on the financing mode and the type of activity are also listed below.

The different types of activities as well as their proposed implementation and basic eligibility criteria are described below.

A) Volunteering activities in solidarity activities

1. Description of the activities

A **volunteering placement** is a full-time¹ unpaid voluntary service for a limited period (up to 12 months, see point 2 for more details), which provides young people with the opportunity to contribute to the daily work of organisations active in solidarity-related fields, to the ultimate benefit of the communities within which the activities will be carried out. In addition to the strong solidarity component of these activities, the volunteering experience will also have a solid learning and training dimension in order to enable the young volunteer(s) to gain skills and competences, which will be useful for their personal, educational, social and professional development. This will also contribute to improving their employability.

Volunteering activities in solidarity activities under the European Solidarity Corps may be 1) cross-border activities, i.e. activities taking place in a country different from the country of

¹ As a general principle, an activity carried out continuously, five days a week for seven hours a day.

origin of the participant; or 2) in-country activities, for instance to encourage and facilitate the participation of disadvantaged young people, to provide opportunities where national schemes do not exist, or to cater for priorities identified at European level within the framework of the European Solidarity Corps initiative.

Volunteering activities can be carried out either individually or in group.

As for group activities, the European Solidarity Corps supports **volunteering teams**. These activities allow groups of 10 to 40 young volunteers from different participating countries to volunteer together on community service projects for a period between two weeks and two months. In these activities, 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.). Despite their shorter duration, these activities are valuable both for the individuals and for the communities benefitting from this service. Examples of the valuable work that can be accomplished even over a short period of time include: for example restoring cultural heritage damaged by natural disaster, catering for species threatened by extinction, organising educational activities in refugee camps, etc.

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

- volunteers carry out the activity in a group. This can be an incentive for youngsters who don't feel ready to embark into challenging experiences on their own;
- the activity is shorter in 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.

2. Duration

As a general rule, the duration of regular **volunteering activities** ranges between a minimum of two months and a maximum of 12 months. In duly justified cases, notably in order to encourage the participation of young people with disabilities or disadvantaged backgrounds, short-term volunteering (two weeks to two months) can be allowed.

Volunteering teams last for a period between two weeks and two months.

3. Who can participate

Activities are offered by participating organisations² holding a valid Quality Label to European Solidarity Corps participants, i.e. young people between 18³ until 30 years who are nationals or legally residing in some of the participating country and have registered in the European Solidarity Corps portal⁴.

European Solidarity Corps participants are directly contacted and selected by participating organisations through the functionalities offered by the European Solidarity Corps portal.

² Any public or private entity established in a participating country, or an international organisation active in the field of solidarity.

³ The registration in the European Solidarity Corps portal is possible as of 17 years of age. Young people must have turned 18 in order to start a placement.

⁴ The European Solidarity Corps is open for third country nationals legally residing in one of the participating countries, including beneficiaries of international protection in full respect of the principle of non-refoulement. Applicants for international protection are not covered by the scope of the European Solidarity Corps.

Participation for individuals in any activities where the individual will have direct contact with children in the context of the European Solidarity Corps will be subject, where appropriate, to background checks with a view to ensure child safeguarding.

4. What support is offered to European Solidarity Corps participants in volunteering activities

European Solidarity Corps carrying out a placement, individually or in teams, are entitled to the following:

QUALITY AND SUPPORT MEASURES

- **Insurance:** complementary health and accident insurance for insurance-related expenses which are not already covered by the European Health Insurance Card⁵ or other insurance schemes to which participants may be enrolled in.
- **Online Linguistic Support (for cross-border activities):** European Solidarity Corps participants are given access to an online tool allowing them to assess and improve (through an online language course) their competences in the foreign language they will use to carry out their placement abroad.
- **General Online training:** open-access training provided prior to departure via the European Solidarity Corps' portal. This is a general online induction with various modules, such as: the mission of the European Solidarity Corps, ethics and integrity of the European Solidarity Corps, including child safeguarding and child protection, roles and responsibilities of participants and placement providers, European values and democracy, inter-cultural awareness, and health and safety, etc.
- In addition, the following **specific training** to those European Solidarity Corps participants carrying out individually a cross-border placement: on-arrival training, which serves as a welcoming training in the placement country, mentorship and continuous training, to equip the participant with the skills needed to carry out the tasks envisaged by the placement; (optional) pre-departure training, for disadvantaged young people and mid-term evaluation sessions, for participants in activities lasting more than six months.
- **European Solidarity Corps certificate:** participants are entitled to a certificate of participation in a European Solidarity Corps' placement, to be issued compulsorily at the end of the placement by the placement provider. A standardised written report/assessment by the participating organisation could be an integral part of the final European Solidarity Corps certificate.
- **Post placement support:** participants are provided with guidance and support services at the end of their placement, with a view to encourage their continued involvement in the European Solidarity Corps initiative (alumni network; training/mentoring to future Corps participants), as well as providing them with career guidance and/or support to sustainable labour market integration in their home country or other.

⁵ This is a free card that gives access to medically necessary, state-provided healthcare during a temporary stay in any of the 28 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>.

FINANCIAL SUPPORT TO COVER THE COSTS OF THE EXPERIENCE

European Solidarity Corps participants also receive a financial contribution to cover:

- Travel costs;
- Subsistence costs, including a pocket money;
- Additional expenses (for disadvantaged young people).

B) Volunteering activities in support of humanitarian aid operations

1. Description of the activities

A **volunteering placement** is a full-time unpaid voluntary service for a limited period (up to 12 months, see point 2 for more details), which provides young people with the opportunity to contribute to the daily work of organisations active in solidarity-related fields, to the ultimate benefit of the communities within which the activities will be carried out. In addition to the strong solidarity component of these activities, the volunteering experience will also have a solid learning and training dimension in order to enable the young volunteer(s) to gain skills and competences, which will be useful for their personal, educational, social and professional development. This will also contribute to improving their employability.

Volunteering activities in support of humanitarian aid operations under the European Solidarity Corps are cross-border activities which take place in third countries where humanitarian aid activities and operations take place, as long as there are no ongoing armed conflicts.

Volunteering activities can be carried out either individually or in group.

As for group activities, the European Solidarity Corps supports **volunteering teams**. These activities allow groups of 10 to 40 young volunteers from different participating countries to volunteer together on community service projects for a period between two weeks and two months. In these activities, 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.). Despite their shorter duration, these activities are valuable both for the individuals and for the communities benefitting from this service. Examples of the valuable work that can be accomplished even over a short period of time include: e.g. providing food and non-food items to refugees in a third country, support to reconstruction of public infrastructure in the non-immediate aftermath of a natural disaster, support to local communities working on migration related matters, etc.

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

- volunteers carry out the activity in a group. This can be an incentive for youngsters who don't feel ready to embark into challenging experiences on their own;
- the activity is shorter in 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.

2. Duration

As a general rule, the duration of regular **volunteering activities** ranges between a minimum of two months and a maximum of 12 months. In duly justified cases, notably in order to encourage the participation of young people with disabilities or disadvantaged backgrounds, short-term volunteering (two weeks to two months) can be allowed.

Volunteering teams last for a period between two weeks and two months.

3. Who can participate

Activities are offered by participating organisations holding a valid Quality Label to European Solidarity Corps participants, i.e. young people between 18 until 30 years who are nationals or legally residing in a participating country and have registered in the European Solidarity Corps portal.

European Solidarity Corps participants are directly contacted and selected by participating organisations through the functionalities offered by the European Solidarity Corps portal.

Participation for individuals in any activities where the individual will have direct contact with children in the context of the European Solidarity Corps will be subject, where appropriate, to background checks with a view to ensure child safeguarding.

4. What support is offered to European Solidarity Corps participants in volunteering activities

European Solidarity Corps carrying out a placement, individually or in teams, are entitled to the following:

QUALITY AND SUPPORT MEASURES

- **Insurance:** full coverage health and accident insurance for insurance-related expenses which are not already covered by other insurance schemes to which participants may be enrolled in;
- **Online Linguistic Support (limited to deployments to some countries):** European Solidarity Corps participants are given access to an online tool allowing them to assess and improve (through an online language course) their competences in the foreign language they will use to carry out their placement abroad;
- **General Online training:** open-access training provided prior to departure via the European Solidarity Corps' portal. This is a general online induction with various modules, such as: the mission of the European Solidarity Corps, ethics and integrity of the European Solidarity Corps, including child safeguarding and child protection, roles and responsibilities of participants and placement providers, European values and democracy, inter-cultural awareness, and health and safety, etc. Given the special circumstances under which volunteers supporting humanitarian aid operations carry out their activities, the completion of the safety and security in the field training module is mandatory;
- In addition, the following **specific training:** pre-departure training, with a special focus on safety and security; on-arrival training, which serves as a welcoming training in the placement country; mentorship and continuous training, to equip the participant with the skills needed to carry out the tasks envisaged by the placement; and mid-term evaluation sessions, for participants in activities lasting more than six months;
- **European Solidarity Corps certificate:** participants are entitled to a certificate of participation in a European Solidarity Corps' placement, to be issued compulsorily at the end of the placement by the placement provider. A standardised written report/assessment by the participating organisation could be an integral part of the final European Solidarity Corps certificate;
- **Post placement support:** participants are provided with guidance and support services at the end of their placement, with a view to encourage their continued involvement in

the European Solidarity Corps initiative (alumni network; training/mentoring to future Corps participants), as well as providing them with career guidance and/or support to sustainable labour market integration in their home country or other.

FINANCIAL SUPPORT TO COVER THE COSTS OF THE EXPERIENCE

European Solidarity Corps participants also receive a financial contribution to cover:

- Travel costs;
- Subsistence costs, including a pocket money;
- Additional expenses (for disadvantaged young people).

C) Traineeship

1. Description of the activities

For the purposes of the European Solidarity Corps Regulation, a traineeship is understood as a period of work practice of between two and six months, renewable once for a maximum duration of 12 months, remunerated by the organisation hosting the Corps participant. It is based on a written traineeship agreement, which includes a learning and training component, and is undertaken in order to gain practical and professional experience with a view to improving employability and facilitating transition to regular employment.

A traineeship may be undertaken either in a country other than the country of residence (cross-border) or in the country of residence of the participant (in-country).

Traineeships that are part of curricula of formal education or vocational education and training, as well as traineeships whose completion is a mandatory requirement to access a specific profession (for example medicine, architecture, etc.) are not supported under the European Solidarity Corps.

2. Duration

As a general rule, the duration of **traineeships** range from two to six months, in line with the Quality Framework for Traineeships. A longer duration of up to 12 months can be justified⁶, taking into account the nature of the task and national practices.

3. Who can participate

Activities are offered - by supporting organisations⁷ holding a valid Quality Label for the occupational strand - to European Solidarity Corps participants, i.e. young people between 18 until 30 years who are nationals or legally residing in a participating country and have registered in the European Solidarity Corps portal. These traineeships may take place in providing organisations not holding a Quality Label, provided they are supported by a supporting organisations holding a valid Quality Label for the occupational strand.

European Solidarity Corps participants are directly contacted and selected by participating organisations, once they have obtained a valid European Solidarity Corps Quality Label, through the functionalities offered by the European Solidarity Corps portal.

⁶ See Recommendation 10 of Council Recommendation on a Quality Framework for Traineeships (2014/C 88/01; further referred to as the QFT).

⁷ Any public or private entity established in a participating country, or an international organisation active in the field of solidarity.

Participation for individuals in any activities where the individual will have direct contact with children in the context of the European Solidarity Corps will be subject, where appropriate, to background checks with a view to ensure child safeguarding.

4. What support is offered to European Solidarity Corps participants in traineeships

European Solidarity Corps participants carrying out a traineeship placement are be entitled to the following:

QUALITY AND SUPPORT MEASURES

- **Insurance:** complementary health and accident insurance for insurance-related expenses which are not already covered by the European Health Insurance Card or other insurance schemes to which participants may be enrolled in.
- **Online Linguistic Support (for cross-border activities):** European Solidarity Corps participants are given access to an online tool allowing them to assess and improve (through an online language course) their competences in the foreign language they will use to carry out their placement abroad.
- **General Online training:** an open-access training provided prior to departure via the European Solidarity Corps' portal. This is a general online induction with various modules, such as: the mission of the European Solidarity Corps, ethics and integrity of the European Solidarity Corps, including child safeguarding and child protection, roles and responsibilities of participants and placement providers, European values and democracy, inter-cultural awareness and health and safety, etc.
- In addition, the following **specific training** to those European Solidarity Corps participants carrying out individually a cross-border placement: on-arrival training, which will serve as a welcoming training in the placement country, mentorship and continuous training in the job, to equip the participant with the skills needed to carry out the tasks envisaged by the placement; (optional) pre-departure training, for disadvantaged young people and mid-term evaluation sessions, for participants in activities lasting more than six months.
- **European Solidarity Corps Certificate:** participants are entitled to a certificate of participation in a European Solidarity Corps' placement, to be issued compulsorily at the end of the placement by the placement provider. A standardised written report/assessment by the participating organisation could be an integral part of the final European Solidarity Corps certificate.
- **Post placement support:** participants are provided with guidance and support services at the end of their placement, with a view to encourage their continued involvement in the European Solidarity Corps initiative (alumni network; training/mentoring to future Corps participants), as well as providing them with career guidance and/or support to sustainable labour market integration in their home country or other.

FINANCIAL SUPPORT TO COVER THE COSTS OF THE EXPERIENCE

Besides the remuneration covered by the participating organisation, European Solidarity Corps participants receive a financial contribution to cover:

- Travel costs (for both in-country and cross-border activities), including travel and accommodation to do an interview, relocation allowance and return travel allowance;
- Additional expenses (for disadvantaged young people).

D) Jobs

1. Description of the activities

For the purposes of the European Solidarity Corps Regulation, a job is understood as a period of work of 2 to 12 months, remunerated by the participating organisation employing the Corps participant, carried out in a participating country and based on an employment contract in accordance with the national regulatory framework of that participating country.

A European Solidarity Corps job may be undertaken either in a country other than the country of residence (cross-border) or in the country of residence of the participant (in-country).

Jobs must be based on an employment contract established in accordance with the national regulatory framework of the hosting country. The job must be of good quality (in terms of skills and training opportunities, working conditions, promotion of gender equality).

The aim is to provide Corps participants with a job within organisations (NGOs, public authorities or private companies) operating in solidarity-related sectors, which provides them with the skills and experience that will strengthen their employability and support their transition into the labour market. At societal level, the aim is to address unmet demand for labour in solidarity-related sectors and promote solidarity across Member States.

2. Duration

The duration of the support offered to **jobs** under European Solidarity Corps, range between a minimum of two months and a maximum of 12 months, in compliance with relevant national legislation in terms of jobs duration.

3. Who can participate

Activities are offered - by supporting organisations holding a valid Quality Label for the occupational strand - to European Solidarity Corps participants, i.e. young people between 18 until 30 years who are nationals or legally residing in a participating country and have registered in the European Solidarity Corps portal. These jobs may take place in providing organisations not holding a Quality Label, provided they are supported by a supporting organisations holding a valid Quality Label for the occupational strand.

European Solidarity Corps participants are directly contacted and selected by participating organisations, once they have obtained a valid European Solidarity Corps Quality Label, through the functionalities offered by the European Solidarity Corps portal.

Participation for individuals in any activities where the individual will have direct contact with children in the context of the European Solidarity Corps will be subject, where appropriate, to background checks with a view to ensure child safeguarding.

4. What support is offered to European Solidarity Corps participants in jobs

In addition to the various social protection and labour rights associated to having a regular employment contract, European Solidarity Corps participants carrying out a job placement are be entitled to the following:

QUALITY AND SUPPORT MEASURES

- **Insurance:** complementary health and accident insurance for insurance-related expenses which are not already covered by the European Health Insurance Card or other insurance schemes to which participants may be enrolled in;

- **Online Linguistic Support (for cross-border activities):** European Solidarity Corps participants are given access to an online tool allowing them to assess and improve (through an online language course) their competences in the foreign language they will use to carry out their placement abroad;
- **General Online training:** open-access training provided prior to departure via the European Solidarity Corps' portal. This is a general online induction with various modules, such as: the mission of the European Solidarity Corps, ethics and integrity of the European Solidarity Corps, including child safeguarding and child protection, roles and responsibilities of participants and placement providers, European values and democracy, inter-cultural awareness and health and safety, etc;
- In addition, the following **specific training** to those European Solidarity Corps participants carrying out individually a cross-border placement: on-arrival training, which serves as a welcoming training in the placement country, mentorship and continuous training in the job, to equip the participant with the skills needed to carry out the tasks envisaged by the placement; (optional) pre-departure training, for disadvantaged young people and mid-term evaluation sessions, for participants in activities lasting more than six months;
- **European Solidarity Corps certificate:** participants are entitled to a certificate of participation in a European Solidarity Corps' placement, to be issued compulsorily at the end of the placement by the placement provider. A standardised written report/assessment by the participating organisation could be an integral part of the final European Solidarity Corps certificate;
- **Post placement support:** participants are provided with guidance and support services at the end of their placement, with a view to encourage their continued involvement in the European Solidarity Corps initiative (alumni network; training/mentoring to future Corps participants), as well as providing them with career guidance and/or support to sustainable labour market integration in their home country or other.

FINANCIAL SUPPORT TO COVER THE COSTS OF THE EXPERIENCE

Besides the salary covered by the participating organisation, (the wage conditions will be set in accordance with national laws, regulations and collective agreements), European Solidarity Corps participants receives a financial contribution to cover:

- Travel costs (for both in-country and cross-border activities), including travel and accommodation to do an interview, relocation allowance and return travel allowance;
- Additional expenses (for disadvantaged young people).

<p>SUPPORT PROVIDED TO ORGANISATIONS PARTICIPATING IN ALL TYPES OF SOLIDARITY ACTIVITIES</p>

A participating organisation willing to offer a placement must guarantee that the European Solidarity Corps participants receive all the support described above, in relation to the type of placement offered. To do so they may:

1. Apply for and receive a co-financing provided through funds of the European Solidarity Corps;
2. Cover the costs of the placement through own funds or other sources of financing at national, regional or local level.

1. Co-financing from the European Solidarity Corps funding scheme

A participating organisation, holding a valid Quality Label, may apply for a grant under the European Solidarity Corps funding scheme. As a general rule, the grant request will be submitted⁸ to the national agency of the country where the organisation is based. Grant requests for 1) activities organised by Europe-wide or international organisations, 2) activities of volunteering teams in priority fields identified at European level and 3) activities in support of humanitarian aid operations in third countries will be submitted to the Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency of the European Commission.

In virtue of a thorough certification process (see separate fiche on the European Solidarity Corps Quality Label), the template for the submission of a grant request will be simple and easy to fill in.

Successful applicants will receive:

- free services for participants in their activities:
 - for all activities: general online training, provided by the Executive Agency of the European Commission, as well as support for the certificate and recognition of experience, provided by European Solidarity Corps Resource Centres;
 - for cross border activities: insurance and linguistic support provided by the Executive Agency of the European Commission, as well as specific training provided by a national agency.
- financial support for other expenses:
 - participants' costs: travel (for both in-country and cross-border activities), subsistence (only for volunteering activities); additional expenses arising when engaging disadvantaged young people, insurance (for in-country activities);
 - organisational support (for volunteering activities): including a financial contribution to cover costs such as administrative tasks, specific training⁹ and mentorship, coordination tasks (in case of consortia of participating organisations), a contribution for costs related to staff carrying out these tasks;
 - integration programme (for traineeships and jobs): including a financial contribution to cover costs such as administrative tasks, on-the-job and continuous training, mentorship, coordination tasks (in case of consortia of participating organisations), a contribution for costs related to staff carrying out these tasks (full coverage of the remuneration/salary of the European Solidarity Corps participant in traineeships and jobs is excluded).

2. Financing from sources other than EU Funds

Participating organisations, holding a valid Quality Label, may decide to offer activities which are financed through their own resources and/or through contributions from public/private, local/regional/national donors that wish to adhere to the European Solidarity Corps initiative.

In such cases, the European Solidarity Corps funding scheme will provide:

- general online training, provided by the Executive Agency of the European Commission;

⁸ With multiple submission deadlines per year.

⁹ Continuous training and, if relevant, pre-departure training.

- insurance and linguistic support provided by the Executive Agency of the European Commission;
- support for the certificate and recognition of experience, provided by European Solidarity Corps Resource Centres.

Through own funds or other sources, participating organisations must ensure that the European Solidarity Corps participants will receive the support for all costs directly related to their participation:

- travel;
- insurance (for cross-border activities);
- subsistence (only for volunteering activities);
- specific training and mentorship;
- post-placement support;
- additional expenses (for disadvantaged young people).

EUROPEAN SOLIDARITY CORPS QUALITY LABEL

1. Description of the activities

All organisations willing to implement activities and projects under the European Solidarity Corps must show they are able to do so in full respect of the rules of the European Solidarity Corps and with the principles and requirements of the European Solidarity Corps' Charter.

The European Solidarity Corps Quality Label is attributed by a national agency or by the Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency following a procedure that foresees, where appropriate 1) the assessment of information provided by the organisation through a form, and 2) an on-site visit to the organisation offering activities - to the intermediary organisation applying for a Quality Label on behalf of its dependent entities - to further assess whether appropriate qualitative standards are in place. In the case of organisations applying to obtain the Quality Label required for activities in support of humanitarian aid operations, special requirements regarding safety and security will apply.

The modalities for attributing a Quality Label may differ according to the profile of organisations wishing to be involved in the European Solidarity Corps.

The attribution of a Quality Label is a procedure that ensures high standards in the implementation of their activities and activities organised in the framework of the European Solidarity Corps.

For an organisation, being holder of a Quality Label is a prerequisite for participation, but does not automatically lead to funding.

2. Duration

As a general rule, once granted, the Quality Label will be valid for the entire duration of the European Solidarity Corps. However, to make sure that the qualitative standards for organising a placement are constantly met, the award of the label:

- will be re-assessed periodically;
- will be re-assessed in case of complaints by participants or third parties;
- may be revoked, following the re-assessment.

3. Implementation modalities: who can apply? How? Where?

Who can apply?

Any public or private - profit or no-profit - body willing to participate in the European Solidarity Corps and established in a participating country may apply to obtain a European Solidarity Corps Quality Label.

How to apply?

As a general rule, organisations willing to participate in the European Solidarity Corps will first need to submit an application form to request the Quality Label. This application would be submitted to and assessed by:

1. the national agency of the country where the organisation is based, in case of:
 - National/local organisations running European Solidarity Corps activities with the financial support of the European Solidarity Corps or from other funding sources which do not depend from the EU budget.

2. the relevant SALTO, in case of:
 - Organisations based in third countries not associated to the programme; and
 - Organisations wishing to carry out activities supporting humanitarian aid operations (with support from the Education, Audio visual and Culture Executive Agency).
3. the Education, Audio visual and Culture Executive Agency based in Brussels, in case of:
 - Europe-wide networks or platforms of organisations;
 - Organisations in charge of implementing national schemes or EU shared management funds (e.g. National Civic Services, managing authorities, etc.); and
 - Organisations wishing to carry out activities supporting humanitarian aid operations (with support from the relevant SALTO).

What happens when an organisation obtains the Quality Label?

Once granted, the Quality Label will entitle organisations to:

- access to the European Solidarity Corps' database of registered individuals in order to identify potential participants for their activities;
- submit an application to request a grant under the European Solidarity Corps funding scheme in order to cover the costs of the activities they intend to organise;
- in case of activities from funding sources which do not depend from the European Solidarity Corps budget, request additional services to be provided in support of the activities (e.g. online training, linguistic support, insurance).

SOLIDARITY PROJECTS

1. Description of the activities

Solidarity projects are local initiatives, set up and carried out by groups of minimum five European Solidarity Corps participants. They are youth-led volunteering activities where European Solidarity Corps participants actively in designing and implementing their own ideas for the benefit of their local communities. They are aimed at equipping European Solidarity Corps with the necessary resources (seed money) and support to be themselves drivers of solidarity actions. In the medium term, solidarity projects can also be a first step into encouraging European Solidarity Corps members to engage in self-employment or setting up associations, NGOs or other bodies active in the solidarity, no-profit and youth sectors.

Contrary to volunteering activities, the activities are typically project-based, meaning that European Solidarity Corps participants define autonomously the amount of time spent in carrying out their tasks, in relation to the goals and scheduled deliveries of the project.

Solidarity projects typically happen in the country of residence of the European Solidarity Corps participants. Similarly to the in-country volunteering activities, this gives an incentive for the participation of disadvantaged young people, who may encounter more difficulties to engage in cross-border activities, but still want to contribute to their society.

Solidarity projects should be of an innovative character and demonstrate a clear European added value, i.e. address priorities identified at European level within the framework of the European Solidarity Corps initiative/ have a European dimension, clearly motivated by the project promoters when requesting a grant and support activities which are not financed through existing domestic schemes.

To guarantee their quality and minimize the financial risks of a solidarity project, the European Solidarity Corps participants actively involved in it are supported, guided and accompanied either by a European Solidarity Corps participating organisation or by the national agency that has awarded the grant.

2. Duration

Solidarity projects last between 2 and 12 months. Within this time frame, the participation of each individual is flexible and defined in relation to the scope and nature of the project (e.g. different forms of discontinuous volunteering happening on evenings, during weekends, etc.).

3. Who can participate

Any European Solidarity Corps participant may propose a project idea to other participants through the European Solidarity Corps portal.

If other participants (at least four) show interest in the initiative, the group may decide to further elaborate the idea and apply – directly or with the administrative support of a participating organisation - for a grant under the European Solidarity Corps funding scheme.

Grant applications are submitted the national agency of the country where the activity takes place. They are assessed against qualitative criteria of relevance, European dimension, effectiveness, impact and sustainability.

4. What support is offered to European Solidarity Corps participants

If their grant application is successful, the group of European Solidarity Corps taking part in the solidarity project is entitled to receive:

QUALITY AND SUPPORT MEASURES

- **General Online training:** open-access training provided via the European Solidarity Corps' portal. This is a general online induction with various modules, such as: the mission of the European Solidarity Corps, ethics and integrity of the European Solidarity Corps, roles and responsibilities of participants, European values and democracy, entrepreneurship and project management, health and safety, etc.
- **European Solidarity Corps certificate:** participants are entitled to a certificate of participation in a European Solidarity Corps' solidarity project. The European Solidarity Corps' participants who so wish will have the opportunity to receive a certificate identifying and documenting the main learning outcomes of their experience.

FINANCIAL SUPPORT TO COVER THE COSTS OF THE PROJECT

European Solidarity Corps participants also receive a financial contribution to cover:

- Project costs (seed money in support of activities directly related to the implementation of the project);
- Insurance;
- Additional expenses (for disadvantaged young people).

5. What is the role of participating organisations?

Participating organisations may want to offer a support to European Solidarity Corps participants in implementing their solidarity project.

To do so they may apply on their behalf for a grant under the European Solidarity Corps. Their main role will be to:

- support the group in administrative and financial tasks related to the management of the grant;
- offer support and guidance in project life-cycle management;
- offer support in the recognition of competences acquired by through the project.

To carry out these tasks, a participating organisation will receive a financial incentive from the European Solidarity Corps funding scheme.

NETWORKING ACTIVITIES

1. Description of the activities

The European Solidarity Corps supports a series of activities aimed at:

- building a sense of belonging to the Corps among European Solidarity Corps participants;
- enhancing the impact and the benefits of the placement experience on the individual;
- reinforcing the capacities of the participating organisations to offer good quality activities, to an increasing number of European Solidarity Corps participants;
- attracting newcomers - both youngsters and participating organisations – into the European Solidarity Corps initiative;
- offering participants and participating organisations the opportunity to give feedback to the European Commission and national agencies on the state of play of the implementation of European Solidarity Corps.

Typical activities are:

- support for the establishment and activities of alumni networks (i.e. European Solidarity Corps members having taken part in activities or projects);
- organisation of annual events for post-placement support (with the involvement of Public Employment Services and stakeholders active in the labour market);
- seminars and other activities to facilitate contacts and exchanges of best practices between participating organisations, the establishment of new consortia, the involvement of newcomer organisations;
- networking activities to raise awareness of the Corps among public authorities – at European national, regional and local level - and potential private donors with a view to attract funding and investments in the European Solidarity Corps initiative;
- other activities aimed at the exchange of best practices and networking.

2. Description of the activities

Depending on the nature and the target of the activities, different complementary implementation modes (both indirect and direct management) could be envisaged.

An amount of the European Solidarity Corps budget dedicated to networking activities could be distributed to national agencies in each Member State and third countries associated to the programme in order to organise activities at national level. The European Commission could manage directly a part of the budget with a view to organising events at European level, in order to further disseminate and strengthen the impact of the European Solidarity Corps initiative. These activities could also take the shape of consultation fora aimed at assessing the perspective of stakeholders concerning the implementation of the initiative.

EUROPEAN SOLIDARITY CORPS RESOURCE CENTRES

European Solidarity Corps Resource Centres, hosted in some national agencies implementing the European Solidarity Corps, have been identified to assist the implementing bodies (national agencies / Education Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency / European Commission), the participating organisations and the young people taking part in the European Solidarity Corps in order to raise the quality of the implementation and of the activities of the European Solidarity Corps.

The Resource Centres support the implementation of the European Solidarity Corps by providing learning resources to European Solidarity Corps participants, training and contact-making activities for organisations, as well as supporting the national agencies with measures and resources aimed at achieving a harmonious and high quality roll-out of the European Solidarity Corps throughout Europe.

To pursue this mission, the Resource Centres carry out a series of tasks such as developing learning resources and pedagogic materials, feeding the European Solidarity Corps portal with information useful for participants and organisations, etc. The Resource Centres act, at the same time, as central point of support to bring together national agencies to reflect on and improve certain aspects related to the implementation of the European Solidarity Corps (such as training of staff of national agencies, support national agencies in reaching new public targets to be involved in the initiative, etc.).

The activities of the Resource Centres may have a competence-based focus (aimed at improving certain capacities of participants, organisations and/or staff of national agencies), as well as focusing on transversal topics such as ensuring the inclusion dimension of the programme, fostering diversity and tolerance in the activities and, in general, supporting the awareness and respect of the European Solidarity Corps principles.

Areas where the Resource Centres typically play a role:

- **European Solidarity Corps certificate:** the Resource Centres can be the central point for developing the certificates for European Solidarity Corps participants having taken part in Corps activities, as well as in developing process to help participants describe their learning outcomes.
- **Organisation of networking events:** these activities can, for example, take the shape of annual conferences of European Solidarity Corps Alumni, where alumni could exchange best practices at European level, as well as put forward proposals for improvement. They can also organise, in cooperation with the national agencies, contact-making activities for organisations, in order to attract them into the initiative.
- **Communication activities:** the Resource Centres, by not being directly involved in the administrative management of the funds, can concentrate part of its tasks to develop communication materials, in cooperation with staff from the national agencies, to promote the added value of participating in the European Solidarity Corps, as well as to raise the quality of the activities.

Training activities: in cooperation with national agencies if relevant, the Resource Centres can develop specific training materials and events for participants, organisations and staff of national agencies, both for communication and quality purposes.