INFO KIT FOR PARTICIPANTS

Congratulations!

You have been selected to participate in the European Solidarity Corps. The next weeks and months might be a life changing experience for you.

Through your participation in the European Solidarity Corps, you will get the chance to live in another country, get to know a new culture and a new language. You will make new friends – within and beyond your organisation. Not only will you provide a service to the benefit of your organisation and the local community, but you will also develop your own personal, social and professional skills.

This Info Kit attached to this letter will help you prepare for the European Solidarity Corps experience. You will learn about what you can expect from the organisation(s) involved in your activity and what is expected from you. We recommend that you go through and discuss the Info Kit with the European Solidarity Corps coordinator of your organisation because the kit is supposed to complement their preparatory activities.

It is also important to know about the European Solidarity Corps Guide, which includes everything you need to know about the Corps, from volunteering activities, through traineeships and jobs, to solidarity projects. This Info Kit is among several supporting documents which complement the information in the Guide and helps you be more successful during your activity.

We hope that you will make the most of your experience, and we wish you the best of luck!

The European Commission

Annex

WHAT TO EXPECT FROM THE EUROPEAN SOLIDARITY CORPS

1. Introduction

This document is intended for participants and organisations involved in the European Solidarity Corps. It provides information to participants and organisations about what to expect before, during and after the activities. The document also supports the efforts of organisations, agencies and the European Commission in the area of risk prevention for European Solidarity Corps participants.

Each participant carries with them ideas, expectations, needs and habits that deserve to find a respectful and trustful hosting environment, receptive of individual specificities. At the same time, participating organisations often devote a great deal of time, energy and resources to set up a European Solidarity Corps project; they can therefore expect that the participant shows a similar level of respect for and trust in their commitment to carry out activities in their local community.

The main objective of this text is therefore to clarify the role that each actor involved in the project (including participants) should take in jointly creating a positive environment for a European Solidarity Corps activity.

The guidelines outlined in this document take into account the great variety of project partners, project formats and areas, and they need to be adapted to the specific circumstances of each project. The guidelines complement the information given in the European Solidarity Corps Guide and they form part of the Info Kit to be given to all participants before departure.

2. Implementing bodies

Most participants will take part in a project granted by National Agencies established in each Programme Country. Some specific project formats can also be granted by the Executive Agency located in Brussels.

The National and Executive Agencies are promoting the programme, supporting applicants, managing applications and following up on the projects. In case a serious situation arises, you or the organisation(s) involved may contact the granting agency or the agency of the host country.

There are also six SALTO Resource Centres and a dedicated European Solidarity Corps Resource Centre, supporting National Agencies and organisations in working with a neighbouring region or on a particular theme. More information about the role of the different programme structures can be found in the European Solidarity Corps Guide.

3. Information and communication

The participant has to be informed about the European Solidarity Corps — its philosophy, aims, priorities and procedures — and how European Solidarity Corps activities are carried out. Prior to their departure, the participant must receive clear information about the European Solidarity Corps activity, in

particular about the tasks to be performed, accommodation, training and support. If the hosting is located in a live-in community, the participant must be informed about the rules and conditions that apply in such a community and which relate to them.

Prior to their departure, the participant is responsible for informing the organisations about any circumstances that may influence their capability to carry out the tasks and provide notification about any special needs. If necessary, they should also provide accurate information about health-related issues.

The participant must inform the host and supporting organisations about the exact dates of their departure and arrival. This information should be provided well in advance before the start of the activity.

It is highly recommended that the participant reads the grant application approved by the National/Executive Agency for their project. All parties involved (including the participant) are responsible for respecting the project details as set out in the European Solidarity Corps funding agreement.

4. Benefits

Participation in the European Solidarity Corps is free of charge for the participant. Except for a possible contribution to travel costs, the participant must not be charged, neither fully or partially, nor directly or indirectly, for taking part in a European Solidarity Corps activity.

All participants can access a range of support services such as online linguistic support and training. Their travel costs from home to the venue of the project and back will be covered.

At the end of the activity all participants will receive a European Solidarity Corps certificate of participation, issued through the European Solidarity Corps Portal by the organisation who provided the activity.

Every young person taking part in European Solidarity Corps activities can benefit from a process and certificate that identifies and documents their individual learning outcomes through EU level recognition tools such as Youthpass. Organisations have the obligation to provide a Youthpass certificate to each individual participant requiring it at the end of the activity. The Youthpass website (www.youthpass.eu) includes information about the scope of the Youthpass and on how to obtain the certificate. It is important that supporting and host organisations, as well as the participant, are familiar with the information provided.

Volunteering activities

The participant is entitled to free board and lodging. Their accommodation must remain available to them throughout the entire activity period, including holidays. The participating organisations must ensure that the participant lives in safe and clean accommodation and can eat sufficient and healthy food.

Participants in volunteering activities will receive a small allowance (pocket money) for their personal expenses throughout the duration of the activity,

including vacations. Their accommodation and food will be provided by the host organisation.

The participant is entitled to two consecutive free days per week (unless arranged differently in mutual agreement between the participant and the organisation and explicitly stated in the participation agreement) and two days of holiday per month.

Vacation periods and weekly rest days have to be agreed upon between the host organisation and the participant.

The participant can request and must receive help from the organisations in obtaining a visa, if so required by the legislation of the host country. If asked to do so in due time, the National/Executive Agency or SALTO can also issue letters supporting the participant's visa application.

The pocket money must not cover costs related to the implementation of the project (for example local transport or food).

Traineeships and Jobs

The participant is entitled to remuneration for the entire duration of the activity, in accordance with the traineeship agreement / job contract.

Participants in traineeships and jobs activities will also receive a relocation allowance. At least 80% of the total relocation allowance will be paid to the participant at the start of the activity and the remainder before the end of the activity. The amounts are outlined in the European Solidarity Corps Guide.

The relocation allowance must not cover costs related to the implementation of the project (for example local transport or remuneration).

Insurance

All participants in cross-border activities have to be covered, throughout the activity period, by the obligatory European Solidarity Corps insurance plan set up by the European Commission. This coverage is only complementary to the mandatory coverage of the European Health Insurance Card (EHIC), which must be obtained prior to departure.

In certain cases, when national rules deprive participants from coverage under EHIC for the duration of the placement, CIGNA will provide full coverage. However, participants must provide proof that obtaining the EHIC in their case was not possible and they should contact their National Agency in order to seek tailored advice, for their specific circumstance.

The participant must read carefully the insurance-related information found online here: https://www.cignahealthbenefits.com/en/plan-members.

5. Responsibilities

All parties involved should abide by the European Solidarity Corps principles and quality standards of any European Solidarity Corps activity. To know more, go here: https://europa.eu/youth/solidarity/mission_en.

The participant should be encouraged to take an active role in setting up their European Solidarity Corps activity together with the organisations involved.

The organisations must take care of the practical arrangements in order to support and guide the participant from the moment of their arrival in the host country.

The participant must respect the rules and the organisational structure of the host organisation. The participant must also abide by the laws in force in the host country.

The participant in volunteering activities must take good care of the accommodation that has been provided to them.

The participant must sign a volunteering or a traineeship agreement or an employment contract. More information about the content of these agreements/contracts can be found in the European Solidarity Corps Guide.

The participant must keep the host organisation informed about their whereabouts during the activity period.

While abroad, the participant should give the supporting organisation regular feedback on their experience and must evaluate the overall project with the supporting organisation upon their return.

Upon their return, the participant must complete a final report.

6. Preparation and training

Prior to departure, the participant must receive this European Solidarity Corps Info Kit and be adequately prepared by the supporting organisation for the stay abroad, according to their needs and in line with the European Solidarity Corps Training and Evaluation Cycle guidelines and minimum quality standards.

Upon arrival in the host country, participants in projects with duration of more than two months have the right and obligation to take part in an on-arrival training session. Participants taking part in activities lasting six months or more also have the right and obligation to take part in a mid-term evaluation session.

The participant should receive appropriate task-related support and guidance to enable them to carry out the agreed tasks.

If online language courses are provided as part of the project support from the Commission, the supporting organisation must ensure a proper follow-up and support to the participant in starting the course as early as possible and completing it. The same applies when funding is provided for language learning. A number of participants will take language tests before and after the activity. The final language test should be taken just before the completion of the YouthPass, at the end of the activity. The host organisation

has to oversee that the final test is taken by those participants who are given access to the testing scheme.

In addition, the participating organisations support other language training, free of charge for the participant. The training can be formal or informal, and the format, duration and frequency will depend on the needs of the participant, their project tasks and the resources available to the organisation.

For personal support, the participant has a mentor with whom they will have regular meetings throughout the activity period. The mentor must be appointed by the host organisation, and must not be the participant's supervisor or be otherwise directly involved in the participant's daily activities.

The mentor should help integrate the participant in the organisation, the project and the local community. The mentor should help the participant with administrative issues, if necessary.

The participant must accept the role of the mentor as the person responsible for their well-being and must attend the regular meetings organised by the mentor.

At the end of the project, the participant should receive help from the supporting organisation in evaluating the participation in the European Solidarity Corps so as to gain the maximum benefit from their experience. If asked for, the participant should also get help in re-adjusting to life in their home country and for guidance in accessing the labour market.

After completing their activity, participants should take part in the Annual European Solidarity Corps event organised by the National Agency.

The participant can also contact the relevant National Agencies or the Executive Agency[1] asking for any kind of advice and support (on accreditation, insurance, visa support, crisis management, etc.).

7. Participant's tasks

The participation conditions must respect the participant's personal health, safety and dignity, and be in line with the national laws of the host country.

The European Solidarity Corps must be a full-time activity for the participant, taking at least 30 and not more than 38 hours per week (including language and other training activities relating to the project).

The participants in volunteering activities and the trainees must not carry out routine tasks that would normally be carried out by paid employees. The participant must not carry out high-responsibility tasks alone or unsupervised. They must not be solely responsible for the individual care of

[1] For contact details to National Agencies and the Executive Agency please consult https://ec.europa.eu/programmes/erasmus-plus/contact/national-agencies_en

vulnerable persons (babies or children; ill, elderly or disabled people, etc.) on a day-to-day basis.

The participant must not teach or provide teaching assistance as part of their formal education.

The participant should be encouraged to use their own ideas, creativity and experience to develop their own projects or activities relating to the work of the host organisation.

Any changes in the project and in the participant's tasks, areas of responsibility, support and training must remain in line with the general set-up of the agreed and approved project and must be agreed between the participant and the host organisation.

8. Risk and conflict management

The participant must not act in any way that could put others or themselves at risk of being injured. If a conflict situation arises, the participant may ask her/his mentor to facilitate communication between the participant and the local environment or the host organisation.

The mentor should be able to provide an independent and objective evaluation of the situation. If conflict arises between the participant and the mentor, the participant can ask to get another person appointed as their mentor.

In the event of a conflict situation, the participant should be supported and must cooperate actively with the participating organisations to avoid communication problems.

If a serious incident occurs, the participant can expect the mentor to establish and maintain appropriate contact with the supporting organisation, their next of kin (if required or requested) and the insurance company, if necessary.

In the event of a serious incident or conflict situation that cannot be resolved in other ways, the participant can leave the project. This, however, should always be the last resort and should be agreed with the National/Executive Agency.