

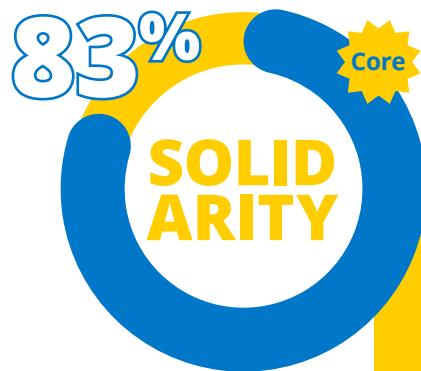
Insights for the Future

of the European Solidarity Corps

Infosheet

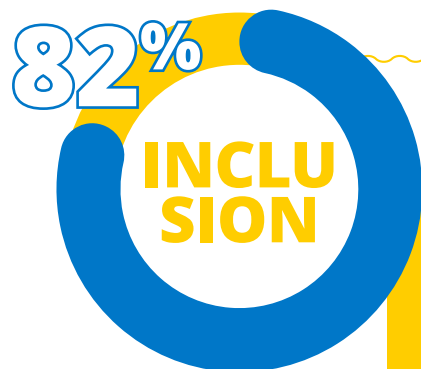
SALTO European Solidarity Corps Resource Centre





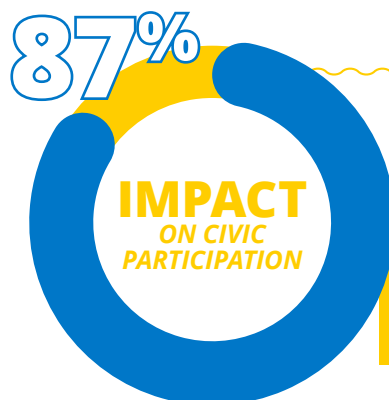
- ✦ One of the most important values for 83% of organizations
- ✦ Importance of 4.6* for volunteers
- ✦ Importance of 4.2* for young people with no previous experience of ESC

Many volunteers join the Corps for personal growth or a career break, but **their motivations often evolve** toward solidarity, community impact, and personal transformation.



- ✦ One of the most important values for 82% of organizations
- ✦ 50% of volunteers find volunteering at the ESC moderately integrative

While the programme incorporates many features that promote inclusion, **simplifying the application** process, using **more accessible language**, and providing **tailored support** that addresses the diverse circumstances of volunteers would enhance its inclusivity even further.



- ✦ 87% of volunteers plan to stay socially engaged after their ESC volunteering experience

"It was weird being back. More information is needed about **what we can do next** and how to stay connected."

Former volunteer



Although there is a need for increased financial support to cover rising costs, organisations would like **more than project funding**; support for organisational development, recognition, supportive environment, and improved insurance and visa support — essential for reducing participation barriers. Regarding organisational capacity building, half of the respondents emphasised the **importance of supporting cross-border mobility and cooperation**.

“What can help us, as national agencies and organisations, is to have **a strong, reliable network** in which we can support each other and constantly share information about new attitudes, new methods, new observations and to try to always be two steps ahead.”

Representative of an organisation

“We have a **flexible plan for the nine months**. The aim is for volunteers to understand and contribute to various aspects of our organisation’s work. The project is not just about collaborating with our organisation but also about connecting with other local activities and organisations.”

Representative of an organisation



VOLUNTEERS

Volunteers' most **important needs** in different stages of their project



Before departure

financial support
administrative support
personalised support



During volunteering

financial assistance
interpersonal skills support
language learning
intercultural support



Upon return

recognition
continued engagement
training opportunities
career guidance

Clarity and fairness in volunteer rights



Most **interesting fields** for volunteering

Youth work

76%

Community events

73%

Arts and Culture

64%

Environment conservation

52%

Social services

45%

Most **challenging experience** during volunteering

Struggles with colleagues/other volunteers

38%

Financially struggles

38%

Emotional and/or mental health

36%

Loneliness and homesickness

30%

Language barrier

28%

Also mentioned:

There are varying experiences in the training cycle. Lack of physical sessions (too many online meetings) and quality or timing of training were often mentioned.



Young people's **ideas** about volunteering

92%

are interested in joining the Corps

85%

believe they would develop competencies relevant to the labour market through volunteering

59%

feel well-informed about volunteering opportunities



FUTURE

Key elements to **improve the quality** of volunteering

- ◆ Transparency and collaboration: Challenges exist in resource allocation, capacity building, and maintaining transparent communications with both NAs and volunteers.
- ◆ Capacity building: More solid support from National Agencies, including clearer communication and better resource distribution.
- ◆ Training: Being sensitive to the specific needs and contexts of organisations.
- ◆ Mentoring: Effective mentorship can bridge the gap between the potential and actual benefits of volunteering.
- ◆ Co-creation: Allowing volunteers to leave their handmark in the project increases volunteers' motivation and commitment.
- ◆ Quality assurance and assessment framework: To uphold the highest standards of project implementation and volunteer satisfaction.

Preferred volunteering **locations** at young people

83%

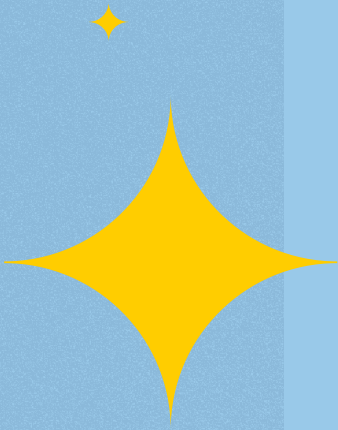
Abroad, beyond European Union

82%

Abroad, in European Union

47%

Home country



SALTO European Solidarity Corps

SALTO ESC supports National Agencies and organisations in the youth field and beyond with the implementation of the European Solidarity Corps programme. The mission is to explore the potential of solidarity as a core value in European societies and to promote the use of the European Solidarity Corps as a tool for understanding and living solidarity. SALTO ESC coordinates networking activities, training, seminars and events that will support the quality implementation of the programme and maximise its impact. By doing this, SALTO ESC contributes to building a European Solidarity Corps community of organisations. SALTO ESC is hosted by OeAD. The OeAD is the national agency for the implementation of Erasmus+ and the European Solidarity Corps in Austria. SALTO ESC is part of a European network of SALTO Resource Centres with the mission to improve the quality and impact of the EU youth programmes as well as to support and develop European youth work.

Find us online at

www.salto-youth.net, www.oead.at and
www.salto-youth.net/solidarity

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Data source: "Exploration of Needs and Trends in European Solidarity Corps Volunteering Activities" research carried out in 2023 as a part of the Strategic National Agencies' Cooperation on Volunteering. Compiled by Hilma Ruokolainen, drawing on the research findings of Sabrina Apitz, Daniele Nubile, and Lotte Vermeire. Quantitative data was collected through three surveys: one targeting current and former volunteers (n=274), another aimed at organisational representatives (n=243), and a brief survey for young people (n=73) distributed via European Solidarity Corps' social media channels.

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