

# Erasmus+ 2028-2034 and Youth Volunteering and Solidarity

## What is this topic about?

The current European Solidarity Corps programme<sup>1</sup> (ESC) encourages young people to participate in projects, either abroad or in their own country, by providing funding and other forms of support. It offers an empowering experience for young people who wish to help, learn, and develop, while also serving as a single-entry point for solidarity activities, primarily volunteering, across the EU and beyond.

In detail, the European Solidarity Corps programme supports short and long-term volunteering<sup>2</sup>, Solidarity Projects<sup>3</sup> focusing on bringing positive changes to local communities, and Humanitarian Aid Volunteering<sup>4</sup> which enables young people to support third countries in case of a humanitarian emergency.

This working group will produce recommendations on how the future Erasmus+ 2028-2034 should support youth volunteering and solidarity in Europe.

Please note: The European Commission has recently presented the proposal “Erasmus+ Programme for the Period 2028–2034”<sup>5</sup>. This proposal includes elements of the two existing programmes: “Erasmus+ 2021–2027” and the “European Solidarity Corps”. Since the Commission’s proposal merges the current “Erasmus+” and “European Solidarity Corps” programmes, participants are encouraged to draw on their knowledge and experiences of both, as well as the findings of the consultation report, and use these as a basis for discussing the future programme: Erasmus+ 2028-2034.

## What did young people say in the consultations?

A common call within the qualitative consultation was to **strengthen the opportunities provided for local volunteering and solidarity**, and to increase the local community impact of projects funded through the programmes. The Romanian National Working Group highlighted the need to ‘*Support youth-led projects at the local level, so that young people can see the impact of the EU in their own communities*’.

The value of supporting young people to **engage at the local level**, through civic mini projects or youth-led campaigns or similar, **especially as a follow-on from an international mobility experience**, was widely highlighted. This was said to reinforce the idea that civic responsibility is ongoing and rooted both locally and transnationally.

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<sup>1</sup> [European Solidarity Corps](#)

<sup>2</sup> [Volunteering activities](#)

<sup>3</sup> [Solidarity Projects](#)

<sup>4</sup> [Humanitarian Aid Volunteering](#)

<sup>5</sup> [Erasmus+ programme for the period 2028-2034](#)

Many participants felt motivated by their Erasmus+ or ESC experience but lacked direction after their project ended. It was said that local follow-on measures would help increase long-term civic engagement and maximise the impacts of the ESC and Erasmus+ 2021-2027. The desire was to enable young people to contribute meaningfully to their home communities either before departure or after returning.

*'Some [young people] suggested creating alumni networks or local action hubs, where young people could continue their engagement with the themes they explored during their Erasmus+ or ESC projects, such as climate action or inclusion. This would ensure the impact of the programme continues long after the mobility period ends.'* Maltese National Working Group Report

Various concrete suggestions for follow-on support were made, such as microgrants for participants presenting the outcomes of their work in schools and community spaces, and alumni networks and peer mentorships linked to volunteering themes. Emphasis was typically placed on enabling young people to contribute to addressing issues of concern in their local community, such as environmental clean-ups, supporting vulnerable people, combating discrimination, or initiatives on mental health.

60% to 71% of young people who took part in the consultation standardised survey totally or to a large extent agree that engagement in various mobility opportunities helps them be more active in their communities and in Europe. 60% of them believe that volunteering abroad helps them make a positive change.

## What else is good to know?

The European Solidarity Corps programme evaluation shows that it is highly relevant to enhance social cohesion, individual development, and inclusion. Participants report significant personal growth as well as meaningfully contributing to the development of local communities. It is recommended that the programme in the future supports further development of young people beyond the project scope, in areas such as employment.

The report highlighted that the programme systematically positively impacts individuals, organisations, and communities, specifically: *"At the individual level, participants in the European Solidarity Corps programme receive significant personal, professional, and educational growth, as well as an increase in civic engagement and social awareness. (...) For organisations, the European Solidarity Corps has facilitated significant improvements in project management, diversity, and inclusion practices. (...) At the local and community level, the European Solidarity Corps strengthened social cohesion and intercultural understanding while addressing local challenges."* The programme also brings added value on the European level, with benefits such as strengthening of the European identity, fostering of European values such as democracy or human rights, or deepening the sense of belonging to the European community.

Funding proved to be one of the weak sides of the programme, as allocated budgets did not manage to keep pace with inflation, and were strained when it came to supporting young people with fewer opportunities. As a result, only a fraction of interested participants were allowed to enter the programme. The report suggested that budgets should be scaled up to enable the

programme to reach more young people, and to continue to achieve the positive impacts it has proven to bring.

The report also highlights that in case the European Solidarity Corps would be integrated into the Erasmus+ programme, it might prove challenging to keep the unique focus of the European Solidarity Corps on volunteering and solidarity.

## Do you want to read more?

*REPORT FROM THE COMMISSION (...) on the interim evaluation of the 2021-2027 Erasmus+ programme and the final evaluation of the 2014-2020 Erasmus+ programme.* Online, available at <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/HTML/?uri=CELEX:52025DC0395&qid=1752646664581>

*REPORT FROM THE COMMISSION (...) on the interim evaluation of the 2021-2027 European Solidarity Corps and final evaluation of the 2018-2020 European Solidarity Corps.* Online, available at <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/HTML/?uri=CELEX:52025DC0144>

*COMMISSION STAFF WORKING DOCUMENT EVALUATION Interim evaluation of the 2021-2027 Erasmus+ programme and final evaluation of the 2014-2020 Erasmus+ programme (...).* Online, available at <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=celex:52025SC0186>

*SUPPORT STUDY FOR THE ERASMUS+ 2021-2027 INTERIM EVALUATION AND THE ERASMUS+ 2014-2020 FINAL EVALUATION.* Online, available at <https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/8c800c3f-6099-11f0-a9d0-01aa75ed71a1/language-en>

*Interim evaluation for the 2021-2027 European Solidarity Corps, final evaluation for the 2018-2020 European Solidarity Corps and final evaluation for the 2014-2020 EU Aid Volunteers Initiative. Final Report.* Online, available at <https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/c8bd5657-0b86-11f0-b1a3-01aa75ed71a1/language-en>