

European Solidarity Corps

The European Parliament is due to vote during its September plenary session on a legislative proposal on the legal framework of the European Solidarity Corps. The Corps offers opportunities to young people between 18 and 30 years old to take up placements lasting between two months and a year. The initiative covers all the EU Members States, Norway, Iceland, Liechtenstein, Turkey and the Republic of North Macedonia.

Background

European Commission President Juncker announced the [European Solidarity Corps](#) in his 2016 State of the Union speech. The aim of the Corps, officially [launched](#) in December 2016, is to build a sense of belonging to the European project among young people through a spirit of solidarity and at the same time to improve their job prospects. The first volunteers went to Norcia, Italy, following an earthquake in August 2017.

European Commission proposal

The Commission adopted its [proposal](#) on 30 May 2017 with a total budget of €341.5 million for 2018-2020, three quarters of which would come from existing programmes, most notably, Erasmus+. 80 % of the funds would be dedicated to volunteering, while 20 % would go to traineeship and job placements. All placements would be in solidarity projects. The national agencies that already manage learning mobility for the EU's education, youth and sports programme, Erasmus+, would also handle these.

European Parliament position

In its resolution of 5 July 2017 on the mandate for the trilogue on the 2018 draft budget, Parliament expressed concern that despite its previous warnings, the Commission's proposal still envisaged redeployments to finance three quarters of the European Solidarity Corps budget. The resolution reiterated Parliament's view that new political commitments need new appropriations.

On 21 February 2018, Parliament's Committee on Culture and Education (CULT) adopted its first reading report on the Commission proposal by a large majority. It proposed to allocate funds differently: 95 % to voluntary placements and 5 % to traineeship and job placements, while requesting separate quality labels and monitoring frameworks for each of the two strands. The mandate for opening inter-institutional negotiations was announced during the March 2018 plenary session and negotiations started immediately. On 27 June 2018, Parliament indicated that it had reached an informal agreement with the Bulgarian Presidency of the Council. Parliament's negotiators secured that 20 % (€76 million) of the funding would be fresh money and that no major cuts would be made to Erasmus+. Although less than envisaged in the original proposal, Council had come to the negotiating table reluctant to allocate any fresh money at all. Parliament's negotiators also secured that 90 % of the budget would go to volunteering activities in a wide range of spheres such as education, health, environmental protection, disaster prevention, provision of food and non-food items, and the reception and integration of migrants and asylum seekers. It was a top priority for Parliament to ensure that only non-profit activities would be supported and so it established safeguards within the regulation to avoid any abuse for profit-making purposes.

The text agreed between Parliament and Council negotiators was endorsed by the CULT committee on 11 July 2018. It is now due to be voted on by Parliament as a whole during its September plenary session.

First-reading report: [2017/0102\(COD\)](#); Committee responsible: CULT; Rapporteur: Helga Trüpel (Greens/EFA, Germany). For further information see our 'EU Legislation in progress' [briefing](#).

