

# **Input to the joint CULT-EMPL Hearing of the European Parliament on the European Solidarity Corps**

**Brussels, 10 October 2017**



## Putting active European citizenship in the centre

- Network of National Agencies supports the objective of the ESC, to enhance the engagement of young people and organisations to strengthen social cohesion and solidarity in Europe.
- At the same time the ESC is aiming at improving skills and competencies, enhancing employability and facilitating transition into labour market.
- ***Main objective of ESC should be in supporting the development of an active European citizenship of young people, learning in non-formal and informal settings especially in volunteering and their contributions as citizens to unmet societal needs in Europe.***
- ***All activities under the ESC, in particular in-country projects, should have a clear and strong European dimension.***

## Enlarging the geographical scope

- With the limitation of the geographical scope on EU 28, ESC gives a discouraging political signal for the debate on a renewed Europe.
- For the countries concerned it will be a step backwards in youth work cooperation and youth policy matters.
- ***ESC should guarantee that EFTA, Candidate and Partner Countries are participating countries from the very beginning and that all cross-border volunteering activities are going to be implemented by ESC.***
- ***The participation of the United Kingdom should be made possible until the end of the programme.***

## Creating a strong inclusion and diversity perspective

- No young person should face obstacles in engaging in ESC. Young people with special needs and fewer opportunities need concrete support in order to have access to ESC and to participate in activities.
- *Inclusion and diversity need to be expressed as a programme priority in the regulation and effectively implemented through the programme guide.*
- *The specific role of sending or support organisations for the inclusion dimension needs to be secured and dedicated financial means for projects with an inclusion focus are needed.*
- *Necessary support mechanisms and specific funding rules for inclusion should be continued also in ESC.*

## Distinguish volunteering, traineeships and jobs

- Within the proposed regulation the difference between volunteering, traineeship and jobs is not sufficiently clear and might cause job substitution and misuse of the opportunities of the programme.
- *Distinct definitions of the three different placement formats are needed, as well as distinguished rules and processes for implementation.*
- *Traineeships and job placements should only be offered in areas related to solidarity.*
- *Child and youth work needs to be included in the list of solidarity activities.*
- *Participation of private entities in the volunteering activities should be limited to non-profit organizations, foundations and social enterprises .*

## Keeping the high quality standards of EVS

- The European Voluntary Service has set European-wide high quality standards for cross-border voluntary services. To avoid different quality standards for cross-border volunteering ***the Quality Charter in ESC and Erasmus+ should be the same***, common systems for both (e.g. joint trainings with the Erasmus + and ESC volunteers) need to be implemented.
- ***Accreditation and labelling should be carried at national level and at the level of hosting organisations.***
- ***The Training and Education Cycle (pre-departure training, on-arrival, mid-term training, final evaluation event) should be continued.***
- ***The triangular cooperation between hosting organisation, sending/support organisation and young people should be the foundation for the matching process and the quality assurance.***

## Recognising learning outcomes through Youthpass

- Youthpass has been successfully implemented during the last 10 years as the European recognition instrument in the youth field. Almost 700.000 certificates for participants in Youth in Action have been issued. 80% of EVS projects are using it as a tool to monitor the learning processes in the project and to document the competence development of volunteers.
- ***The recognition of learning outcomes through activities in ESC should be guaranteed in all formats. Youthpass should be defined in the regulation as the instrument for recognition of learning outcomes in ESC.***

## Changing the ESC portal

- The current portal as a tool for European wide communication and information has creates communication problems because it is rather detached from the communicative needs and realities in the programme countries.
- *Beside a European wide communication strategy, the responsibility for information and communication on ESC should lie at the level of National Agencies to specifically address young people and the different actors.*
- *The ESC portal should be changed into only a registration portal for participants and project partners in ESC to support the community building, provide services or connect alumni. An additional possibility for mutual search must be developed; existing tools could be used for it.*
- *As a technical tool the portal should not be mentioned in the regulation and instead dealt with in the programme guide.*



Thank you very much for your attention.

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