

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

**Summary**

**Putting active European citizenship in the centre**

The 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. ***The main objective of ESC should be in supporting the development of an European identity and active European citizenship of young people. 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 very discouraging political signal for the debate for a renewed Europe. ***ESC should guarantee that EFTA, Candidate and Partner Countries are participating countries from the very beginning .Further the participation of the United Kingdom should be made possible until the end of the programme***

**Creating a strong inclusion and diversity perspective**

Young people with special needs and fewer opportunities need very 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 ESC. The specific role of sending or support organisations for the inclusion dimension needs to be secured. Necessary support mechanisms and specific funding rules for inclusion should be continued also in ESC.***

**Distinguishing volunteering, traineeships and jobs**

Within the proposed regulation the difference between volunteering, traineeship and jobs is not sufficiently clear. This might cause job substitution and misuse of the opportunities of the programme. ***Distinct definitions and distinguished rules and processes for implementation are needed. 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. The participation of private entities in 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. ***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 out at national level by National Agencies and at the level of hosting organisations. The training and Education Cycle should be continued and in principle provided by National Agencies. 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 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. It's actively 80% of EVS projects. ***The recognition of learning outcomes through activities in ESC should be guaranteed in all formats. Youthpass should be defined in the regulation as the only instrument for recognition of learning outcomes in ESC.***

### **Changing the ESC portal**

Young people need technological solutions to engage for Europe. The current portal has created communicative problems because it is rather detached from the communicative needs and realities in the programme countries. Beside a European wide communication strategy, ***the main responsibility for information and communication on ESC should be at the level of the National Agencies. The ESC portal should be changed into only a registration portal for participants and project partners in ESC to support the community building processes, to provide services, to connect alumni, to support communication, to deliver helpful tools.*** 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.***