OPINION

of the Committee on Budgets

for the Committee on Culture and Education


Rapporteur: Tiemo Wölken
SHORT JUSTIFICATION

The rapporteur welcomes the proposal to set up a European Solidarity Corps (ESC) put forward by the European Commission on 30 May 2017. The EU is built on solidarity: solidarity between its citizens, solidarity across borders between its Member States, and solidarity in its actions inside and outside the Union. It is a shared value that is strongly felt within the EU. It is part of the core fabric that makes the European dream inspire generation after generation, creating common values across the Union.

The present ESC proposal provides a dedicated legal base for an initiative that gives young people across the EU the opportunity to act on their aspirations for a better Union and hence push the European project forward while developing their own skills.

However, the rapporteur is of the strong conviction that the Corps deserves its own, dedicated budget. For the period 2018-2020, the Commission proposes funding the ESC by three quarters through redeploying funds from ongoing programmes within their existing financial allocation: EUR 197.7 million is to be taken from Erasmus+ and EUR 10 million from the Employment and Social Innovation programme (EaSI), as well as EUR 47.3 million from programmes in other headings (of which EUR 35 million from the European Social Fund (ESF), EUR 6 million from the Civil Protection Mechanism, EUR 4.5 million from the LIFE programme, and EUR 1.8 million from the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD)). Only one fourth of the overall ESC envelope would be ‘fresh’ funding.

The rapporteur strongly rejects this set-up that funds the ESC to a large extent at the expense of key activities of other significant EU programmes, which have their own valuable missions, objectives and matching financial envelope, as budgeted for from the start of the current MFF. What may have been acceptable in a first pilot phase of the ESC to get the activities up and running fast, cannot be a medium- or long-term solution for financing an important programme that merits not only its own legal base, but also an ambitious envelope of fresh money.

New political priorities during the current MFF require fresh resources, through the mobilisation of the flexibility provisions and special instruments included in the MFF regulation, after available margins have been exhausted. If the ESC is indeed a new priority initiative, as stated in the Joint Declaration on the EU’s legislative priorities for 2017, it is only logical that it should receive fresh funding so that it may achieve its objectives without harming ongoing EU-funded programmes and projects.

The rapporteur is of the opinion that the flexibility tools provided by the current MFF, and boosted as part of the mid-term revision, such as the Flexibility Instrument and the Global Margin for Commitments, should be used to fund the ESC in the period 2018-2020. Redeployment is only acceptable where transfer of funds has been foreseen from the start of the programme, as in the case of the funding for the intra-EU activities of the European Voluntary Service under Erasmus+. By deleting the contributions of EaSI, the ESF, civil protection, LIFE and the EARD to the ESC and returning these amounts to the budget lines from which they were taken, in line with the original financial programming, the rapporteur sends a clear signal for the financing of this initiative.
LIFE, which tackles environmental and climate challenges, has delivered substantial improvements to the state of the environment in the EU. In order to continue fighting climate change and to be aligned with the Paris agreement reached during the COP21, LIFE’s funding should not be redeployed for other purposes.

The EAFRD and the ESF, as part of the EU’s structural and investment funds (ESIF), contribute to strengthening the economic, social and territorial cohesion of the Union. The aim of the ESIF is to reduce disparities between the development levels of the various regions. The ESC should not be financed by shifting funds away from cohesion policy.

Through the Union Civil Protection Mechanism, the Union and Member States coordinate their systems for preventing, preparing for and responding to natural and man-made disasters. Bearing in mind the significant increase of the number, severity and complexity of natural and man-made disasters in recent years, including as a result of climate change, a joint and integrated approach to disaster management is increasingly important. In this context, the rapporteur finds it unacceptable to redeploy civil protection funds for the ESC.

Further, the rapporteur proposes to strengthen the provisions regarding monitoring and evaluation of the ESC.

Finally, the rapporteur strongly encourages the Commission to prepare a clear and ambitious proposal for implementing and funding the ESC from 2021, as promised.

Amendment 1

Proposal for a regulation
Recital 18

Text proposed by the Commission
(18) This Regulation lays down a financial envelope for the period 2018-2020 which is to constitute the prime reference amount, within the meaning of Point 17 of the Interinstitutional Agreement between the European Parliament, the Council and the Commission on budgetary discipline, on cooperation in budgetary matters and on sound financial management, for the European Parliament and the Council during the annual budgetary procedure. The prime reference amount includes redeployments from the Erasmus+ programme (EUR 197.7 million) and from the Employment and Social Innovation programme (EUR 10 million) for the

Amendment
(18) This Regulation lays down a financial envelope of EUR 341,5 million in current prices for the period 2018-2020 which is to constitute the prime reference amount, within the meaning of Point 17 of the Interinstitutional Agreement between the European Parliament, the Council and the Commission on budgetary discipline, on cooperation in budgetary matters and on sound financial management, for the European Parliament and the Council during the annual budgetary procedure. The financial envelope should include the amount of EUR 197,7 million that was originally earmarked to finance the intra-Union European Voluntary Service activities under the Erasmus+ Programme
financial years 2018, 2019 and 2020, and it is complemented by contributions from several Union programmes under different headings, such as the European Social Fund, the Union Civil Protection Mechanism, the LIFE programme and the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development.


Amendment 2
Proposal for a regulation
Recital 38 a (new)

Text proposed by the Commission

(38a) In its resolution of 2 February 2017 on the implementation of the Erasmus+ Regulation\(^1a\), the European Parliament encouraged the Commission and the Member States to make a budgetary effort to accommodate the new initiative of the European Solidarity Corps without underfunding other current and priority programmes.

\(^{1a}\) Texts adopted, P8_TA(2017)0018.

Amendment 3
Proposal for a regulation
Recital 38 b (new)
(38 b) In its resolution of 5 July 2017 on the mandate for the trilogue on the 2018 draft budget\textsuperscript{1a}, the European Parliament expressed its concern that, despite its warnings, the legislative proposal adopted on 30 May 2017 envisages that three fourths of the European Solidarity Corps budget would be financed by redeployments from existing programmes, and mainly from Erasmus+ (EUR 197.7 million) and reiterated that any new political commitments should be financed with new appropriations and not redeployments from existing programmes.

\textsuperscript{1a}Texts adopted, P8_TA-PROV(2017)0302.

Amendment 4

Proposal for a regulation
Recital 38 c (new)

(38 c) Separate funding and budgetary allocations should be guaranteed for the European Solidarity Corps and should not result in a reduction in the budget for other policies promoting youth, education, training, employment or solidarity. Optimal and transparent use of financial resources should be ensured.

Amendment 5

Proposal for a regulation
Recital 39

(39) The financial envelope of the European Solidarity Corps under Heading
1a of the Multiannual Financial Framework also builds on funds redeployed from the Erasmus+ programme. These funds should mainly come from appropriations aimed at financing European Voluntary Service activities that would fall under the scope of the volunteering placements supported under this Regulation. In addition, some appropriations of the Student Loan Guarantee Facility, which are unlikely to be absorbed under Erasmus+, should be redeployed with a view to providing adequate co-financing to the operating costs of national agencies and be brought more in line with the absorption capacity of this action.

Amendment 6
Proposal for a regulation
Recital 40

Text proposed by the Commission

(40) The financial envelope of the European Solidarity Corps under Heading 1a of the Multiannual Financial Framework should additionally be supplemented by financial contributions from other programmes and headings, which require the amendment of Regulations (EU) No 1293/2013\(^27\), (EU) No 1303/2013\(^28\), (EU) No 1305/2013\(^29\), (EU) No 1306/2013\(^30\) as well as of Decision No 1313/2013/EU\(^31\) of the European Parliament and of the Council.

Amendment


\(^{28}\) Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013 of the


Amendment 7

Proposal for a regulation
Article 2 – paragraph 1 – point 6

Text proposed by the Commission

Amendment

PE610.649v03-00 8/22 AD\1142056EN.docx
“volunteering” means a full-time unpaid voluntary service for a period of up to twelve months, which provides young people with the opportunity to contribute to the daily work of organisations active in solidarity-related fields, to the ultimate benefit of the communities within which the activities are carried out, including a solid learning and training dimension in order to enable the young volunteer(s) to gain skills and competences, which will be useful for their personal, educational, social and professional development, and which will also contribute to improving their employability;

32 As a general principle, an activity carried out continuously, 5 days a week for 7 hours a day.

Justification

Any volunteering activities not at non-profit organisations must be excluded explicitly. Any other approach would conflict with the national volunteering legislation of some Member States, for example, Belgium and France.

Amendment 8

Proposal for a regulation

Article 4 – paragraph 1 – point a

Text proposed by the Commission

(a) to provide young people, with the support of participating organisations, with easily accessible opportunities for engagement in solidarity activities while improving their skills and competences for personal, educational, social, civic and professional development, as well as their employability and facilitating transition into the labour market, including by supporting the mobility of young volunteers, trainees and workers;

Amendment

(a) to provide young people, with the support of participating organisations, with easily accessible opportunities for engagement in solidarity activities while improving their knowledge, skills and competences for personal, educational, social, civic, cultural and professional development, as well as their employability and facilitating transition into the labour market, including by supporting the mobility of young volunteers, trainees and workers;
Amendment 9

Proposal for a regulation
Article 8 – paragraph 1 – point d a (new)

Text proposed by the Commission

Amendment
(da) the setting up of information campaigns to raise awareness of the actions of the European Solidarity Corps.

Amendment 10

Proposal for a regulation
Article 9 – paragraph 2 – introductory part

Text proposed by the Commission

Amendment

2. The amount referred to in paragraph 1 includes a financial envelope of EUR 294 200 000\(^{33}\) in current prices supplemented by contributions from:

2. The amount referred to in paragraph 1 includes a financial envelope of EUR 197 700 000 in current prices, which corresponds to the amount originally earmarked to finance the intra-Union European Voluntary Service activities under the Erasmus+ Programme. The remaining amount of EUR 143 800 000 for the financing of the European Solidarity Corps shall be drawn exclusively from unallocated margins under the multiannual financial framework ceilings.

\(^{33}\) This financial envelope constitutes the prime reference amount within the meaning of point 17 of the Interinstitutional Agreement (2013/C 373/01) between the European Parliament, the Council and the Commission on budgetary discipline, on cooperation in budgetary matters and on sound financial management.

Amendment 11

Proposal for a regulation
Article 9 – paragraph 2 – point a
(a) the European Social Fund, deleted
contributing with EUR 35 000 000 in current prices;

Amendment 12
Proposal for a regulation
Article 9 – paragraph 2 – point b

(b) the Union Civil Protection Mechanism, contributing with EUR 6 000 000 in current prices;

Amendment 13
Proposal for a regulation
Article 9 – paragraph 2 – point c

(c) the LIFE programme, deleted
contributing with EUR 4 500 000 in current prices;

Amendment 14
Proposal for a regulation
Article 9 – paragraph 2 – point d

(d) the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development, contributing with EUR 1 800 000 in current prices.

Amendment 15
Proposal for a regulation
Article 9 – paragraph 2 a (new)
Amendment 16

Proposal for a regulation
Article 9 – paragraph 5

Text proposed by the Commission
2 a. The annual appropriations shall be authorised by the European Parliament and the Council within the limits of the multiannual financial framework.

Amendment

5. If necessary, appropriations may be entered in the budget beyond 2020 to cover similar expenses, in order to enable the management of actions not yet completed by 31 December 2020.

Amendment 17

Proposal for a regulation
Article 13 – paragraph 2

Text proposed by the Commission
2. An application from an eligible entity to become a European Solidarity Corps participating organisation shall be assessed by the competent implementing body of the European Solidarity Corps in order to ascertain that its activities adhere to the requirements of the European Solidarity Corps.

Amendment

2. An application from an eligible entity to become a European Solidarity Corps participating organisation shall be assessed by the competent implementing body of the European Solidarity Corps in order to ascertain that its activities adhere to the principles and requirements set out in the European Solidarity Corps Charter.

Amendment 18

Proposal for a regulation
Article 13 – paragraph 3

Text proposed by the Commission

Amendment
3. As a result of the assessment the entity may be attributed the European Solidarity Corps quality label. The obtained label shall be re-assessed **periodically** and may be revoked.

3a. Any entity which has received the European Solidarity Corps quality label shall be entered into the database of participating organisations which is hosted on the European Youth Portal, which all young Europeans can access.

**Justification**

At the moment, the accredited EVS structures are incorporated into the database of EVS organisations on the European Youth Portal. That enables young people to read up on the entities. Therefore it is important that the same is done for the ESC.

**Amendment 20**

Proposal for a regulation
Article 15 – paragraph 1

1. The Commission, in cooperation with the participating countries, shall regularly monitor the performance of the European Solidarity Corps towards achieving its objectives.

1. The Commission, in cooperation with the participating countries, shall regularly monitor **and report on** the performance **and results** of the European Solidarity Corps as **well as adherence to its objectives, specifically its contribution to strengthening cohesion and solidarity in Europe.**
### Amendment 21

**Proposal for a regulation**

**Article 15 – paragraph 2 – subparagraph 1 – point a**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Text proposed by the Commission</th>
<th>Amendment</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(a) number of participants in volunteering placements (in-country and cross-border);</td>
<td>(a) number <em>and profile</em> of participants in volunteering placements (in-country and cross-border);</td>
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### Amendment 22

**Proposal for a regulation**

**Article 15 – paragraph 2 – subparagraph 1 – point b**

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<td>(b) number of participants in traineeship placements (in-country and cross-border);</td>
<td>(b) number <em>and profile</em> of participants in traineeship placements (in-country and cross-border);</td>
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### Amendment 23

**Proposal for a regulation**

**Article 15 – paragraph 2 – subparagraph 1 – point c**

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<td>(c) number of participants in job placements (in-country and cross-border);</td>
<td>(c) number <em>and profile</em> of participants in job placements (in-country and cross-border);</td>
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### Amendment 24

**Proposal for a regulation**

**Article 15 – paragraph 2 – subparagraph 1 – point d**

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<td>(d) number of participants in solidarity projects;</td>
<td>(d) number <em>and profile</em> of participants in solidarity projects;</td>
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Amendment 25
Proposal for a regulation
Article 15 – paragraph 2 – subparagraph 1 – point e a (new)

Text proposed by the Commission

Amendment

(e a) the degree of satisfaction of participants and participating organisations with regard to the quality of the placements, training, language support, administrative support, insurance and post-placement support.

Amendment 26
Proposal for a regulation
Article 15 – paragraph 2 – subparagraph 1 – point e b (new)

Text proposed by the Commission

Amendment

(e b) employment rate of former participants.

Justification

We must not forget that one of the main European Solidarity Corps objectives is to make young people more employable and to ease their transition into the labour market.

Amendment 27
Proposal for a regulation
Article 15 – paragraph 3

Text proposed by the Commission

Amendment

3. In 2020 the Commission shall publish a report taking stock of the progress made towards achieving its results, including the target of offering 100 000 young people opportunities under the European Solidarity Corps by 2020 (covering all the placements and projects referred to in points (a) and (b) of Article 7(1)).

3. In 2019 the Commission shall publish a report on the results obtained and the qualitative and quantitative aspects of programme implementation, taking stock of the progress made towards achieving its results, including the target of offering 100 000 young people opportunities under the European Solidarity Corps by 2020 (covering all the placements and projects referred to in points (a) and (b) of Article 7(1)), as well
as the cost-effectiveness of the programme, and submit it to the European Parliament, to the Council, to the European Economic and Social Committee and to the Committee of the Regions.

Amendment 28

Proposal for a regulation
Article 15 – paragraph 4

Text proposed by the Commission

4. Four years after the date of application of this Regulation the Commission shall carry out an independent evaluation of this Regulation and present a report on the main findings to the European Parliament, the Council, the Committee of the Regions and the European Economic and Social Committee.

Amendment

4. The Commission shall carry out an independent ex post evaluation of this Regulation to assess the efficiency, effectiveness and impact of the programme against the programme objectives and shall, no later than 30 June 2021, present a report on the main findings, including recommendations for the future of the programme, to the European Parliament, the Council, the Committee of the Regions and the European Economic and Social Committee. As part of the evaluation, the Commission shall ensure regular consultation of all relevant stakeholders, including participants, participating organisations and the local communities concerned. The results of the evaluation shall feed back into future programme design and resource allocation proposals.

Amendment 29

Proposal for a regulation
Article 26 – paragraph 1 – point 2

Regulation (EU) No 1288/2013
Article 18 – paragraph 2 – point c

Text proposed by the Commission

(c) up to 1.5 % to the Student Loan Guarantee Facility;

Amendment

(c) 3.5 % of the Student Loan Guarantee Facility;
Amendment 30

Proposal for a regulation
Article 27

Amendment to Regulation (EU) No 1293/2013

In Article 4 of Regulation (EU) No 1293/2013, the following paragraph is added:

‘3. A maximum of EUR 3 000 000 in current prices from the sub-programme for Environment corresponding to the priority area Environment Governance and Information and of EUR 1 500 000 in current prices from the sub-programme for Climate Action corresponding to the priority area Climate Governance and Information shall be allocated to finance projects within the meaning of Article 17(4) implemented by the European Solidarity Corps in accordance with Regulation (EU) 2017/XXX, which contribute to one or more of the priority areas within the meaning of Articles 9 and 13. This allocation shall be implemented solely in accordance with the Regulation (EU) 2017/XXX, to the exclusion of the specific requirements of Regulation (EU) No 1293/2013.’

Amendment 31

Proposal for a regulation
Article 28

Amendment
Amendments to Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013

Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013 is amended as follows:

1. Article 58(1) is amended as follows:

   (a) the first subparagraph is replaced by the following:

   At the initiative of the Commission, the ESI Funds may support the preparatory, monitoring, administrative and technical assistance, evaluation, audit and control measures necessary for implementing this Regulation and support actions pursuant to Regulation (EU) 2017/XXX as referred to in the third subparagraph in so far as those actions pursue the aim of economic, social and territorial cohesion.’

   (b) In the third subparagraph, the following point (m) is added:

   ‘(m) actions financed pursuant to Regulation (EU) 2017/XXX on the European Solidarity Corps in order to enhance the personal, educational, social, civic and professional development of young people, as well as their employability and facilitating transition into the labour market.’

2. In Article 91(3), the following subparagraph is added:

   ‘EUR 35 000 000 in current prices of the amount allocated to technical assistance at the initiative of the Commission shall be allocated to the European Solidarity Corps to support its actions, in accordance with point (a) of article 9(2) of Regulation (EU) 2017/XXX. The allocation shall be implemented solely in accordance with the Regulation (EU) 2017/XXX, to the exclusion of the specific requirements of Fund-specific Regulations.’
Amendment 32
Proposal for a regulation
Article 29

Text proposed by the Commission

Amendment

Article 29
deleted

Amendment to Regulation (EU) No 1305/2013

In Article 51(1) of Regulation (EU) No 1305/2013, the following subparagraph is added under the first subparagraph:

‘The EAFRD may also finance actions implemented by the European Solidarity Corps with an amount of EUR 1 800 000 in current prices in accordance with Regulation (EU) 2017/XXX, which contribute to one or more of the Union priorities for rural development. The allocation shall be implemented solely in accordance with the Regulation (EU) 2017/XXX, to the exclusion of the specific requirements of Regulation (EU) No 1305/2013.’

Amendment 33
Proposal for a regulation
Article 30

Text proposed by the Commission

Amendment

Article 30
deleted

Amendment to Regulation (EU) No 1306/2013

In Article 6 of Regulation (EU) No 1306/2013, the following point (j) is added:

‘(j) actions implemented by the European Solidarity Corps in accordance with Regulation (EU) 2017/XXX, which contribute to one or more of the Union priorities for rural development.’
priorities in the area of agriculture and rural development and notably the actions referred to in the second subparagraph of Article 51(1) of Regulation (EU) No 1305/2013. The allocation shall be implemented solely in accordance with the Regulation (EU) 2017/XXX, to the exclusion of the specific requirements of Fund-specific Regulations.’

Amendment 34

Proposal for a regulation
Article 31

Text proposed by the Commission

Amendment

Article 31 deleted

Amendment to Decision No 1313/2013/EU

In Article 19(1) of Decision No 1313/2013/EU, the following subparagraph is added after the second subparagraph:

‘EUR 6 000 000 in current prices from the financial envelope derived from Heading 3 "Security and Citizenship" shall be allocated to finance actions implemented by the European Solidarity Corps in accordance with Regulation (EU) 2017/XXX, which contribute to one or more of the Union priorities in the area of civil protection. The allocation shall be implemented solely in accordance with the Regulation (EU) 2017/XXX, to the exclusion of the specific requirements of Decision No 1313/2013/EU.’
<table>
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<td>Committee responsible</td>
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<td>Rapporteur</td>
<td>Tiemo Wölken 29.6.2017</td>
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<td>Date adopted</td>
<td>4.12.2017</td>
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<td>Members present for the final vote</td>
<td>Nedžhmi Ali, Jonathan Arnott, Jean Arthuis, Lefteris Christoforou, Gérard Deprez, Manuel dos Santos, André Elissen, José Manuel Fernandes, Eider Gardiazabal Rubial, Jens Geier, Esteban González Pons, Bernd Kölmel, Zbigniew Kuźmiuk, Vladimír Maňka, Siegfried Mureşan, Paul Rübig, Jordi Solé, Eleftherios Synadinos, Indrek Tarand, Isabelle Thomas, Monika Vana, Daniele Viotti, Tiemo Wölken, Marco Zanni</td>
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<td>Substitutes under Rule 200(2) present for the final vote</td>
<td>John Howarth, Joachim Zeller</td>
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## FINAL VOTE BY ROLL CALL IN COMMITTEE ASKED FOR OPINION

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