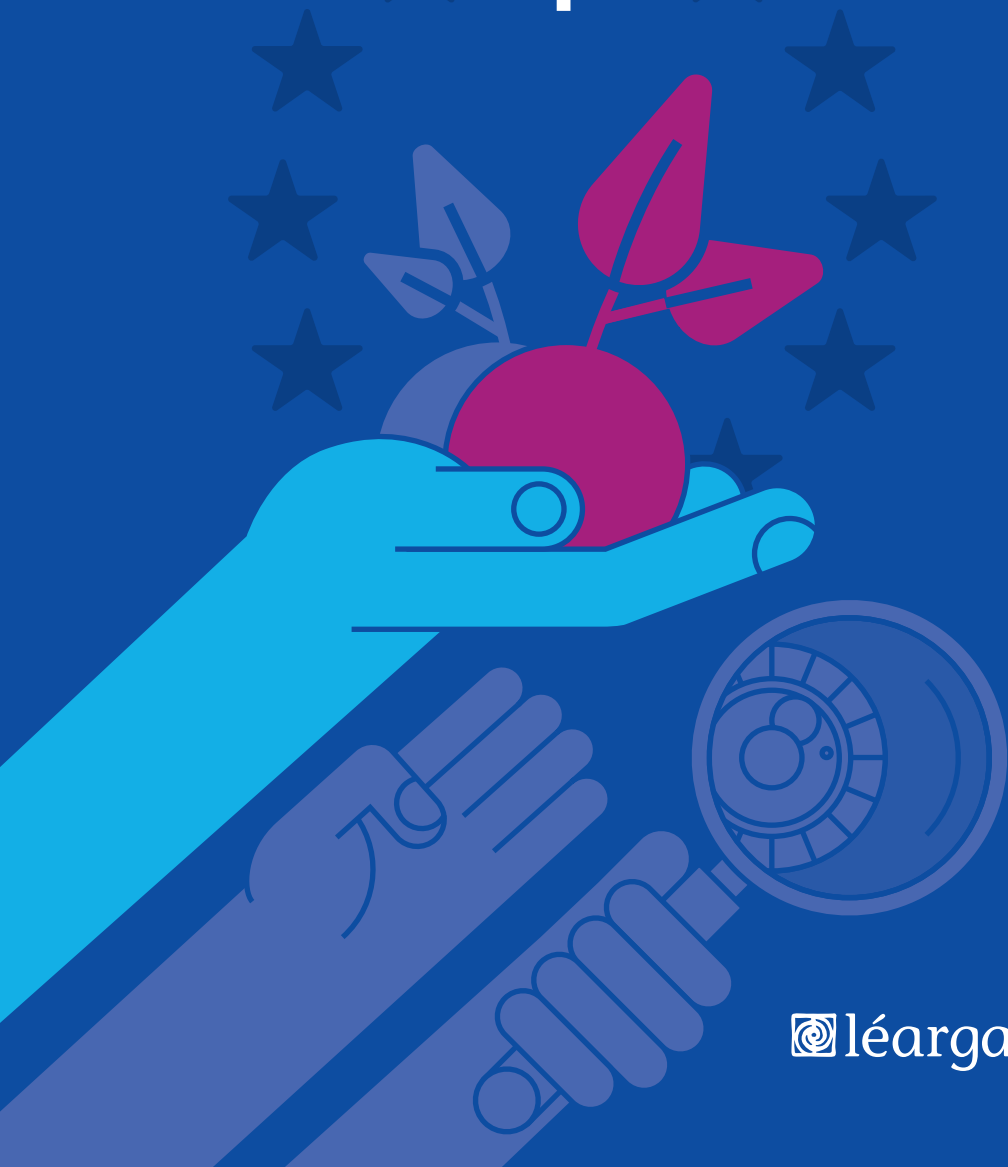




EUROPEAN
SOLIDARITY
CORPS

Explore, Experience, Empower.



 léargas

Contents

Jargon Buster	1
Mission and Principles	4
The Who, What, Why and How of the European Solidarity Corps	6
The Purpose of This Guide	7
What Is the European Solidarity Corps?	8
Why Do We Need the European Solidarity Corps?	9
Which Countries Can Take Part in the European Solidarity Corps?	10
How Do Young People Take Part in the European Solidarity Corps?	11
Taking Part	12
Quality Label	13
Volunteering Projects	14
Looking for Ideas?	15
Solidarity Partnerships and Framework	17
Solidarity Projects	18
Looking for Ideas?	19
Traineeships	20
Jobs	21
How to Find Partners or Participants	22
Training Opportunities	23
Get in Touch	24

Jargon Buster

A lot of the terms we use in the European Solidarity Corps can be a bit overwhelming when you see them first. Here's a quick guide to what the different terms mean. Contact us if you're confused!



Action A strand or measure of the European Solidarity Corps, such as volunteering projects, traineeships or jobs.

Activity A set of tasks carried out as part of a project. An activity is defined by having the same location, same time frame and same scope.

Advanced Planning Visit (APV) A planning visit carried out before an activity (volunteering, traineeship or job) by a potential participant and their support person to the receiving organisation. The purpose is to build trust and understanding, and form a solid partnership between the organisations involved. Young participants can be involved in the visit so that they are fully a part of the project.

Applicant The organisation or group of young people that submits an application.

(Application) deadline The final date for submitting the application form.

Beneficiary The term for an organisation or group of young people that have submitted a successful European Solidarity Corps application and received funding.

Call for proposals The European Commission's invitation to organisations or groups to present their ideas for European Solidarity Corps projects and apply for funding. These projects must correspond to the mission and principles of the European Solidarity Corps.

Cross-border activity An activity that takes place in a different country than the one where the participant is legally resident.

Erasmus+ The European Union programme for education, training, youth and sport, running from 2014 to 2020.

Executive Agency An organisation established by the European Commission that has responsibility for a specific field. The Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA) oversees the European Solidarity Corps.

In-country activity An activity that takes place in the country where the participant is legally resident.

Informal learning Learning that happens because of daily activities related to work, family or leisure. Informal learning is not organised or structured in terms of objectives, time or learning support, and may be unintentional from the learner's perspective.

Key competences The basic set of knowledge, skills and attitudes that all individuals need for personal fulfilment and development, active citizenship, social inclusion and employment.

Learning outcomes The defined knowledge, skills and competences that a participant is expected to gain at the end of a learning process.

National Agency (NA) The organisation that manages the European Solidarity Corps in a particular member state, on behalf of the European Commission. Léargas is the National Agency for the European Solidarity Corps in Ireland.

Non-formal learning Learning that takes place through planned activities that have learning objectives and some form of learning support, but is not part of the formal education and training system.

Participant A young person who is registered in the European Solidarity Corps and is involved in a project. In Solidarity Projects, young people who carry out the project are also considered as participants.

Participating countries EU member states that take part fully in the European Solidarity Corps, and have established a National Agency to manage the programme. The list of participating countries is in the European Solidarity Corps Programme Guide.

Participating organisation Any organisation or group of young people involved in carrying out a European Solidarity Corps project. Depending on their role in the project, participating organisations may be applicants or partners.

Partner countries Countries that do not take part fully in the European Solidarity Corps, but can be partners in certain Actions. The list of partner countries is in the European Solidarity Corps Programme Guide.

Partner organisation An organisation that takes part in the project but is not the applicant.

Programme Countries The European Solidarity Corps programme countries are the Member States of the European Union, along with countries that have signed an agreement to take part. These countries are listed in the European Solidarity Corps Programme Guide.

Project A set of activities organised to achieve defined objectives and results.

Quality Label Certification that an organisation has reached the required standards, set by the European Commission, to take part in the European Solidarity Corps. While organisations must have a Quality Label to take part in the programme, holding one does not automatically lead to a European Solidarity Corps project grant.

Registered candidate A young person who wants to take part in a solidarity activity and has registered their interest through the online portal, but isn't yet part of an activity.

Solidarity Activity A volunteering activity, a traineeship, a job or a solidarity project carried out through the European Solidarity Corps.

Youthpass A European tool to recognise the learning outcomes of young people and participants who take part in the European Solidarity Corps or Erasmus+.



Mission and Principles

General Aims

The European Solidarity Corps Programme Guide states that the programme “aims to promote solidarity as a value, mainly through volunteering, to enhance the engagement of young people and organisations in accessible and high quality solidarity activities as a means to contribute to strengthening cohesion, solidarity, democracy and citizenship in Europe, while also responding to societal challenges and strengthening communities, with particular effort to promote social inclusion. It shall also contribute to European cooperation that is relevant to young people.”

In effect, this means that the European Solidarity Corps brings together young people to build a more inclusive society, supporting vulnerable people and responding to societal challenges. It offers an inspiring and empowering experience for young people who want to help, learn and develop.



Principles

European Solidarity Corps projects and participating organisations should respect the following principles:

- Equal treatment, equal opportunities and non-discrimination
- Avoidance of job substitution
- Provision of high-quality activities with a learning dimension focusing on personal, socio-educational and professional development
- Adequate training, working and volunteering arrangements
- Safe and decent environment and conditions
- The 'no-profit principle': grants should not be used for the purpose of producing a profit for the beneficiary.

What does it involve?

European Solidarity Corps projects cover a wide variety of topics, ranging from youth work to environmental issues, arts, drama or culture. Whatever the theme, the project must fall within the Mission of the European Solidarity Corps and meet its Principles as described above.

Funding

Funding varies depending on the action involved: Volunteering, Traineeship or Jobs. For volunteers, organisational support, accommodation, food, travel, insurance and pocket money are normally covered. For traineeship placements, travel costs, organisational support and a relocation allowance are normally paid. People in an employment placement will have a labour contract and receive a wage in accordance with local laws, regulations and collective agreements. All participants will receive a certificate with details of the actions they have carried out through the European Solidarity Corps.

Benefits

The European Solidarity Corps is designed for people who are ready for a challenge and willing to dedicate themselves to helping others. Young people can improve their practical, social and cultural skills while showing their personal commitment to the community. The experience can also be a stepping stone to employment or to further learning. Organisations can connect quickly to a dedicated and enthusiastic group of young people who share their aims. This allows organisations to be more creative and flexible when working towards their goals.

The Who, What, Why and How of the **European Solidarity Corps**



The Purpose of This Guide

This guide gives an overview of how the European Solidarity Corps works. It explains the opportunities available and shows both organisations and potential participants how to get started. It is not designed to be an exhaustive overview of the European Solidarity Corps and does not replace the European Solidarity Corps programme guide.

This guide covers:

- Quality Label
- Volunteering Strand
 - Individual and Team
 - Solidarity Partnerships and Framework
 - Solidarity Projects
- Occupational Strand
 - Traineeships
 - Jobs

What Is the European Solidarity Corps?

The European Solidarity Corps is the European Union programme that supports young people aged 18 to 30 to address needs in their community or abroad by taking part in activities across Europe. It creates opportunities for young people to volunteer or work in projects that benefit communities and people. Through these activities, young people contribute to strengthening communities while gaining experience, skills and competences for their own personal, educational, social, civic and professional development.

The European Commission is in charge of the overall management of the European Solidarity Corps. Organisations called National Agencies manage the programme in their country. In Ireland, the National Agency is Léargas. Individuals and organisations working in communities in Ireland can apply to Léargas for funding for European Solidarity Corps projects and activities.



Quality Label

The European Solidarity Corps Quality Label shows that an organisation can ensure the necessary conditions for young people to take part in solidarity activities.

An organisation can apply for different Quality Labels depending on the actions it wishes to be involved in, or can apply for a combination of all three:

- Quality Label for Volunteering
- Quality Label for Traineeships
- Quality Label for Jobs.

Volunteering

Volunteering is a full-time (at least 30 and not more than 38 hours per week) unpaid activity that can last up to 12 months. It provides young people with the opportunity to contribute to the daily work of organisations. Volunteering helps to overcome important societal challenges and addresses the needs of local communities. It also enables young people to gain useful experience, skills and competences for their personal, educational, social, civic and professional development, which can improve their employability and active citizenship.

Traineeships And Jobs

Traineeships and Jobs provide young people with opportunities for full-time work practice or employment in line with national legislation. Traineeships and Jobs help participants to enhance their skills and experience, which increases their employability and supports their transition into the labour market.

Why Do We Need the European Solidarity Corps?

Europe is evolving in socially and politically significant ways. Brexit presents new and unprecedented challenges to EU structures, co-operation and principles. Given the current challenges that European society is experiencing, programmes such as the European Solidarity Corps play a big part in upholding fundamental values of the EU including human dignity, equality, democracy and human rights. The European Solidarity Corps also helps to strengthen solidarity and inclusion, and to promote active citizenship and engagement in civic society.

Strong education and training systems as well as youth policies can provide people with the skills they need to access employment, tackle social exclusion and have their voices heard. The European Solidarity Corps aims to boost people's skills, job prospects and personal development. It gives people the chance to meet, support and empower people in their communities and other countries. They have the opportunity to learn, share ideas and good practices and develop projects together. These are some of the priorities for the EU and are set out in policy documents such as the EU Youth Strategy, Europe 2020 and Education and Training 2020.

Which Countries Can Take Part in the European Solidarity Corps?

Programme Countries

The European Solidarity Corps programme countries are the Member States of the European Union, along with countries that have signed an agreement to take part. These countries are listed in the European Solidarity Corps Programme Guide.

Partner Countries

These are selected other countries in the world that can take part in some parts of the European Solidarity Corps, including countries neighbouring the EU. This is explained in detail and the countries are listed in the European Solidarity Corps Programme Guide.

How does an organisation apply for funding?

Organisations can apply for funding by submitting the relevant online application form. There are a number of funding deadlines each year. All the information you need to get started is on our European Solidarity Corps website.

www.europeansolidarity.ie



How Do Young People Take Part in the European Solidarity Corps?

Young people who are up for a challenge, and willing to dedicate themselves to helping other people, can join the European Solidarity Corps by registering their details on the online portal. Young people can register when they are 17 years old but cannot start a project until they are over 18.

The link to register is www.europa.eu/youth/solidarity/register/form_en.

People who register will be asked for some basic personal information such as name, age and email address. They then select what action they are interested in - Volunteering, Occupational (Traineeships and Jobs) or both. They select the kind of project or themes they are interested in, ranging from youth work to environmental issues, arts, drama or culture. Finally they explain what experience or knowledge they will bring to a European Solidarity Corps project.

What then?

Organisations running European Solidarity Corps projects can search the portal to find potential volunteers or workers for their projects. Young people do not have to agree to take up a position offered by an organisation: the decision on whether or not to join a project is always completely up to them.



Taking Part



Quality Label

The Quality Label is an organisation's entry ticket to the European Solidarity Corps. It is a requirement for participation in the Volunteering, Traineeships and Jobs strands, but does not automatically lead to a European Solidarity Corps project grant.

How does it work?

To get the Quality Label organisations must first decide what type of activity they would like to carry out. An organisation can apply for a Quality Label for:

- Supporting and/or hosting role for volunteering

and/or

- Traineeships and Jobs.

A Quality Label is awarded for the entire duration of the programme period (2019-2020). It remains valid until the end of the last project in which the organisation is involved. If an organisation already holds valid accreditation for the European Voluntary Service (EVS) or Erasmus+ volunteering, it will be considered equivalent to a Quality Label for Volunteering during this programme period.

Léargas is responsible for carrying out regular checks to ensure that organisations holding a Quality Label still meet the quality standards. If an organisation is found to no longer meet these standards the Quality Label may be temporarily suspended or withdrawn.

What happens after an organisation gets a Quality Label?

Organisations can access the European Solidarity Corps portal as soon as they receive the Quality Label. Then they can promote their organisation and possible projects on the portal. Profiles of all organisations holding a Quality Label are also published in a database of Quality Label organisations, to help with partner finding. The portal is how young people who are registered with the European Solidarity Corps are matched with organisations, so it's really important that organisations use the portal effectively.

How does your organisation apply for a Quality Label?

Organisations can apply for a Quality Label by filling in the relevant online application form. Applications can be submitted at any time during the programme period: there is no set deadline. All the information you need to get started is available on the Solidarity Corps website www.europeansolidarity.ie.

Volunteering Projects

Volunteering FAQ

What is involved?

- Individual volunteering activities (a full-time voluntary unpaid activity)
- Volunteering teams (full-time voluntary unpaid activities for groups of 10 to 40 volunteers)

Who can apply?

Organisations active in solidarity related activities. These are defined in the European Solidarity Corps Programme Guide.

How many organisations?

Minimum two from different countries, except for in-country volunteering activities.

Volunteering FAQ contd.

For how long?

Total project: 3 to 24 months

Individual placements: from 2 to 12 months. In some cases, activities can last from 2 weeks to 2 months.

Team placements: from 2 weeks to 2 months.

Where?

Individual placements: in-country and cross-border.

Team placements: cross-border.

What is funded?

Travel, organisational support and other relevant supports.

How does your organisation apply for funding?

Organisations can apply for funding by filling in the online application form. There are a number of funding deadlines each year. All the information you need to get started is on the European Solidarity Corps website www.europeansolidarity.ie.

Looking for Ideas?



Here's what St. Mary's Youth Centre did with their Volunteering project

St. Mary's Youth & Community Centre

The Youth and Community Centre hosted two Spanish volunteers in a youth work setting. The volunteers were involved in the day to day running of the centre and worked directly with young people aged seven upwards. They also helped staff with specific pieces of work designed to engage young people with fewer opportunities, including Youth Clubs, Summer Camps, Drama Classes and Productions, Sports Programmes and Youth Democracy Programmes. The volunteers learned about the field of youth work, experienced a different culture and improved their language skills.

Budget

The total budget granted for this project was €23,326.

For more information, visit:

www.stmarysyouthcentre.ie/european_voluntary_service_10.html

Here's what Donegal Youth Service did with their Volunteering project

A walk through the History of Madeira

This project sent four Irish volunteers for seven months to take part in a project called "Madeiran Heritage". The goal was to contribute to spreading knowledge of the cultural heritage of the 500-year-old city of Funchal, the "capital" of the Portuguese island of Madeira. The volunteers studied the history of the city so they could guide visitors through the old part of the town and other historical buildings. The project won a National Volunteering Award from the National Institute of Youth and Sports and a National Award for Good Practices in Youth Activism in 2017. This was a unique project that truly immersed the young people in a cultural heritage programme, and offered them the opportunity to develop links with the local community and foreign visitors.

Budget

The total budget granted for this project was €26,456.

For more information, visit:

www.donegalyouthservice.ie/dys-projects/ecs/

Here's what Voluntary Service Ireland (VSI) did with their Volunteering project

Volunteering Together

VSI applied to host one European Solidarity Corps in-country volunteer for 12 months. The volunteer helped with the promotion of VSI's work to promote peace, social justice, sustainable development and intercultural understanding through volunteering abroad and in Ireland. The volunteer also helped to support and manage volunteers abroad on VSI programmes, as well as volunteers coming to Ireland with VSI.

Budget

The total budget granted for this project was €16,161.40

For more information, visit:

www.vsi.ie

Solidarity Partnerships and Framework

Experienced organisations apply for long-term Volunteering Partnerships in two stages.

In the first stage, the applicant organisation provides an overall description of the project, laying down objectives, relevance, and impact. If the application is successful, a long-term framework partnership is signed by the organisation and Léargas.

The award of a Volunteering Partnership accreditation allows the organisation to apply for funding annually. These applications will not need to go through further qualitative assessment. Approved projects may be made up of individuals and/or volunteering teams.

Solidarity Partnerships FAQ

Who can apply?

Organisations active in solidarity related activities. These are defined in the European Solidarity Corps Programme Guide.

How many organisations?

Minimum of two organisations, although this is not necessary for In-country volunteering activities.

For how long?

Total project: 3 to 24 Months

What is funded?

Travel, organisational support and other relevant supports.

How does your organisation apply for funding?

Organisations can apply for funding by filling in the online application form. There are a number of funding deadlines each year. All the information you need to get started is on the European Solidarity Corps website www.europeansolidarity.ie.

Solidarity Projects

Solidarity projects are set up and carried out by groups of at least five European Solidarity Corps participants, with a view to addressing key challenges within their communities while presenting a clear European added value. Young people who want to form a group to run a solidarity project must be registered in the European Solidarity Corps portal.

The link to register is: www.europa.eu/youth/solidarity/register/form_en

Solidarity Projects FAQ

What is involved?

Part-time volunteering activity.

Who can apply?

Young people between 18 and 30

How many organisations?

None required, but the group can be supported by an organisation or coach.

For how long?

2 to 12 months

Where?

In-country.

What is funded?

Project costs, coaching costs and other relevant supports.

How do young people apply for funding?

Young people can apply for funding by filling in the online application form. There are a number of funding deadlines each year. All the information you need to get started is on the European Solidarity Corps website www.europeansolidarity.ie.

Looking for Ideas?

Here's what a group of young people in Kildare did with their Volunteering project

The Room: Community Drama

The project was managed by a group of five young people all identifying themselves as having fewer opportunities, ranging from socio-economic to rural isolation. This group have all had previous experience of youth exchanges with Crooked House Theatre Company. The young people aimed to connect with asylum seekers living in Newbridge by facilitating drama workshops for asylum seekers. The main objective was to address the isolation experienced by asylum seekers and also to address and seek to increase the local community's awareness of asylum seekers. To read more about this project, visit the Léargas blog: <https://www.leargas.ie/blog/room-community-drama>

Budget

The total budget granted for this project was €5,928

Here's what a group of young people in Tallaght did with their Volunteering project

2030 Leaders

The five young people who created this project wanted to design and build a programme to empower young people to become change agents in their own community. They set out to inform young people in their community about the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), give them the skills and tools to teach others about the SDGs, and build solidarity. The young people facilitated Development classes aimed at 8-14 year olds, covering citizenship and democratic participation. Learners were encouraged to think beyond their community and to think of themselves as European citizens. The group used informal learning techniques such as games and other activities. This group worked with a coach to support them in their project.

Budget

The total budget granted for this project was €8,892

Traineeships

Traineeships are periods of full-time work practice of between two and six months. This type of activity must include a learning and training component. This is to help the participant gain relevant experience and professional development. It should be based on a written traineeship agreement that is in line with the regulations of the country where the traineeship takes place. Traineeships must not replace previously existing jobs. The participant must be paid by the host organisation.



Traineeships FAQ

What is involved?

Full-time work practice.

Who can apply?

Young people between 18 and 30

How many organisations?

One hosting organisation.

For how long?

Total project: 6 to 24 months.

Placement: from 2 to 6 months. In some cases, activities can last 12 months

Where?

In-country and cross-border.

What is funded?

Travel, organisational support and other relevant supports.

How does your organisation apply for funding?

Organisations can apply for funding by filling in the online application form. There are a number of funding deadlines each year. All the information you need to get started is on our European Solidarity Corps website www.europeansolidarity.ie.

Jobs

Jobs last from 3 to 12 months, paid for by the participating organisation employing the European Solidarity Corps young person. The jobs must include a learning and training component and be based on a written employment contract, which respects all the terms and conditions of employment as defined in national law of the country in which the job is being carried out.

Jobs FAQ

What is involved?

Full-time work practice.

Who can apply?

Young people aged between 18 and 30

How many organisations?

One hosting organisation.

For how long?

Total project: 6 to 24 months.

Placement: from 3 to 12 months.

Where?

In-country and cross-border.

What is funded?

Travel, organisational support and other relevant supports.

How does your organisation apply for funding?

Organisations can apply for funding by filling in the online application form. There are a number of funding deadlines each year. All the information you need to get started is on our European Solidarity Corps website www.europeansolidarity.ie.

How to Find Partners or Participants

European Voluntary Service Database

Organisations that hold the Quality Label can access the European Voluntary Service Database to look for partners. This database contains information on all Quality Label holder organisations, where they are located and their experience in European Programmes.

For more information, visit:

www.europa.eu/youth/volunteering/evs-organisation_en

Placement Administration and Support System (PASS)

PASS is designed to make it easy for eligible organisations to search for and recruit European Solidarity Corps participants for their placements. To access the system, organisations must first hold a Quality Label for one of the strands linked to the European Solidarity Corps.

For more information, visit:

www.europa.eu/youth/solidarity/organisation_info

OTLAS

This is an online partner finding tool on the SALTO website.

For more information, visit:

www.salto-youth.net

European Youth Portal

Find a sending or receiving organisation using the online volunteering database on the European Youth Portal (europa.eu/youth/). This database lets you view dates, times, locations and application deadlines for volunteering projects on a range of topics.



Training Opportunities

One of the key features of the European Solidarity Corps is that it offers training and evaluation to participating organisations and participants. This training helps guide young participants through a non-formal learning process before, during and after their period of activity. The training also helps Quality Label organisations develop and carry out qualitative projects, and gives them the opportunity to exchange and network with their peers.

Training and Evaluation Cycle for participants

The Training and Evaluation Cycle for participants is:

- Pre-departure training (only cross-border activities)
- On-arrival training (activity of 2 months and longer)
- Mid-term evaluation (activity of 6 months and longer)
- Annual European Solidarity Corps events.

Training for organisations holding the European Solidarity Corps Quality Label

For a project to be successful and the experiences to be positive for all involved, Quality Label organisations need to have a thorough understanding of the core values and features of the Corps. These organisations are offered training that focuses on the elements needed for a successful experience and on how their project should be thought through and developed.

Networking Activities

Networking Activities are events arranged by National Agencies to bring added value and increase quality in the implementation of the European Solidarity Corps, and so contribute to increasing impact at systemic level.

There are two types:

Transnational Networking Activities between National Agencies (TNA)

National Networking Activities and events organised by a National Agency (NNA)

TNAs and NNAs can take the form of:

- Training, support and contact seminars for potential organisations and participants
- Thematic activities to raise awareness and exchange of good practices linked to the objectives, priority target groups and themes of the programme
- Establishment and implementation of alumni networks and post-placement guidance and support
- Strategic dissemination and evidence-based analysis of results and impact of the programme (including Quality Label activities).

Get in Touch

✉ skavanagh@leargas.ie
nocallaghan@leargas.ie

☎ 01 887 1260

🌐 europeansolidarity.ie

📘 Leargas.Ireland

🐦 @Leargas

📷 leargas.ireland

📍 Léargas
King's Inns House
Parnell Street
Dublin 1
D01 A3Y8



