

**Feedback of member organisations of the  
Network of European Voluntary Service Organisations (NEVSO)  
to the legal framework of the European Solidarity Corps and its concept note**

NEVSO is a network of European long-term voluntary service organisations that is following the development of the European Solidarity Corps (ESC) with great interest.

As a network we are in favour of the implementation of the ESC.

We have welcomed the administrative facilities of the Strategic EVS with enthusiasm and would very much appreciate the continuation of this particular structure within the ESC. We explicitly welcome considerations of the Commission in this regard.

We would also like to underline positively that according to the concept note<sup>1</sup> on the ESC, European networks will in the future be able to make conjoint applications directly at the Commission for their cross-border sending and hosting projects. Therefore, a solid basis is secured for the further development of a qualitative and strengthened European network.

**In the following points we see an urgent need for modifications or clarifications in the legal framework or the concept note on the ESC:**

1. We request a review of the range of participating countries in the ESC. The ESC does not allow Partner Countries to participate in the European Voluntary Service, unless they conclude bilateral agreements. With regard to a positive presence of the EU, international understanding and intercultural learning we would welcome an integration of Partner Countries as is the case within EVS. At present, as the European Union is often criticised for having closed borders, we see the accessibility of this programme as indispensable and as a strong signal for European unity.
2. Sending organisations should acquire a binding legal status within ESC. Sending and hosting organisations as well as the placements of volunteers play a decisive role in the European Voluntary Service and in the future European Solidarity Corps with regard to quality assurance and further development of the programme. Moreover, volunteers often decide deliberately for a certain sending organisation because of its specific profile and it is in this way that they find their way to the programme. Therefore, the role of these organisations should be integrated in the legal system. Up to now the sending organisations are not explicitly acknowledged by the current legal basis.
3. Preparation, accompanying and evaluation seminars should be carried out by sending and coordinating or hosting organisations from civil society and as such facilitated and financed.

Cross-border long-term voluntary services of six months or longer offer many educational and orienting opportunities. Through preparation, including pedagogical seminars organised by sending organisations, a contact between education staff members and volunteers is established, which is decisive for the further support and, therefore, the success of the ESC during the year - also beyond the seminars. The individual support as well as the accompanying seminars enable the hosting organisations to accompany the volunteers individually and also in groups during their voluntary service and respond to their specific needs. The sending organisations support volunteers after their return and complete the voluntary services by evaluating their experiences in seminars. We underline the importance of cooperation with civil society organisations whose qualified staff members are able to pass on and convey the desired contents. Therefore, they should have the possibility to offer seminars themselves that need to be funded.

Those organisations which cannot or are not willing to provide seminars themselves should,

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<sup>1</sup> SWD(2017) 168 final; Commission Staff Working Document. Concept note – Main Actions Implementing the European Solidarity Corps; Brussels 30.5.2017

alternatively, have the possibility to use the seminars offered by the National Agencies.

4. Educational work, non-formal education and language courses cannot be replaced by e-learning and applications. E-learning is, when applied reasonably, rather an addition to direct educational work and face-to-face language courses.
5. To support volunteers in their choice in the best way, it should be possible to use the newly introduced ESC-database as well as the well-proven selection procedures of sending and hosting organisations.

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