European Solidarity Corps

2017/0102(COD) - 11/09/2018 - Text adopted by Parliament, 1st reading/single reading

The European Parliament adopted by 519 votes to 132, with 32 abstentions, a legislative resolution on the proposal for a regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council laying down the legal framework of the European Solidarity Corps and amending Regulations (EU) No 1288/2013, (EU) No 1293/2013, (EU) No 1303/2013, (EU) No 1305/2013, (EU) No 1306/2013 and Decision No 1313/2013/EU.

The European Parliament's position adopted at first reading under the ordinary legislative procedure amended the Commission proposal as follows:

Objectives: the European Solidarity Corps shall enhance the engagement of young people and organisations in accessible and high-quality solidarity activities with a view to contributing to **strengthening cohesion, solidarity and democracy in Europe, with particular effort to the promotion of social inclusion**.

It shall support solidarity activities which:

- present a clear **European added value**, for example by virtue of their transnational character or an approach with regard to involving young people from different backgrounds;
- contribute to promoting young people's initiative and active citizenship;
- provide young people with the opportunity to improve their **skills** and competences for their personal, social, civic and professional development, including an important learning and training dimension and for it to be properly validated.

Participation: young people residing legally in a participating country may register from the age of 17 on the European Solidarity Corps Portal but they should be **over 18 (and not over 30)** at the beginning of their voluntary or professional activity. The European Solidarity Corps shall be more accessible to young people with **fewer opportunities** who need additional support because of disadvantages such as disability, health problems, educational difficulties, cultural differences, economic, social or geographical barriers, including young people from marginalised communities or those at risk of discrimination.

Actions: the European Solidarity Corps shall pursue its objectives through the following types of actions: (i) volunteering; (ii) traineeships and jobs; (iii) solidarity projects and (iv) networking activities; and (v) quality and support measures.

The volunteer period would be limited to 12 months. The activity shall not replace a traineeship or employment and shall be based on a **written voluntary agreement**. It may take place either in a country other than the participant's country of residence (cross-border level) or in the participant's country of residence (national level). Volunteering and solidarity projects shall cover the participants' expenditure arising from participation in such solidarity activities but should not provide them with salaries or an economic benefit.

Traineeships shall be between 2 and 6 months. They shall: (i) include a learning and training component to help the participant to gain experience in areas such as environmental protection, climate change mitigation or strengthening social inclusion; (ii) be based on a **written traineeship agreement** concluded at the beginning of the internship and specifying the educational objectives, working conditions, duration of the traineeship, the participant's remuneration and the rights and obligations of the parties. Traineeships shall under no circumstances be a substitute for employment.

As far as jobs are concerned, Parliament has imposed a **minimum employment contract of 3 months**. Financial support to participating organisations offering jobs may not exceed 12 months.

Budget: the Parliament approved an overall budget of **EUR 375.6 million** for the period 2018-2020, of which 90% would be allocated to voluntary activities and 10% to traineeships or jobs, with a maximum of 20% for in-country activities.

Quality label: any entity willing to participate in the European Solidarity Corps, whether funded from the European Solidarity Corps budget, by another Union programme or by a different funding source, shall receive a quality label, provided that the specific requirements are fulfilled. The attributed quality label shall be reassessed periodically and it shall be possible to revoke the quality label where the conditions that led to its attribution are no longer fulfilled.

The process for attributing a quality label should be carried out by the implementing bodies of the European Solidarity Corps in an accessible and transparent manner. An application from an entity to become a participating organisation shall be assessed by the competent implementing body of the European Solidarity Corps on the basis of the **principles** of: (i) equal treatment; (ii) equal opportunities and non-discrimination; (iii) avoidance of job substitution; (iv) provision of high-quality activities with learning dimension focusing on personal, socio-educational and professional development; (v) adequate training, working and volunteering arrangements; (vi) safe and decent environment and conditions; and, (vii) the 'no-profit principle'.