## Let's EVS

# Tool

Volunteering process guide

Hi my dear reader;

We want to introduce you this tool created during the YE Let's EVS, done in Málaga in September 2017 (18th-25th). In this project we have been working about all the EVS process in order to improve it as much as possible. We wanted to set up something that could help both, future volunteers and associations working with EVS. If you are part of this groups here you are going to find a tool with information, thoughts, feelings and advice that our participants shared in ours activities. We put our heart in the whole process and we think that the results are really useful. We hope you will find in it what you are looking for. Enjoy it  $\bigcirc$ 

Regards from Asociación Juvenil Almenaras' team.



### Introduction;

Let's start from the beginning; What is an EVS?

The EVS (European Volunteer Service) program is a part of Erasmus+ that allows young people (17-30 years old) to go abroad in order to collaborate in an NGO's work during a limited time. Sounds great, eh? But here is the most amazing fact; the program finances everything! They give you budget for the trip, food and even pocket money. It also covers language lessons for the mother tongue of the country where you go, an insurance and even public transport to the work place if it is needed!

Too good to be true... What are they expecting from you?

Actually, this program has some objectives. The European Commission is looking for an increase of your knowledge about democratic values, they want you to develop your skills and knowledge in the professional and personal field. They also want you to get closer to new cultures, learn more languages and feel part of Europe. Could you afford this?

Of course, you will need to be part of a very special and skilled group to participate in these projects. Are you between 17 and 30 and you are living in Europe?? Then YES, you can apply!

What can you do? There are millions of projects and you can live your experience in many different ways! They can be individual or group projects, it can be short term (up to 59 days) or long term (between 2 and 12 months) and... there are thousands of TOPICS as well (environment, gender equality, youth work, cultural, rescue animal centers...).

We are sure you are thinking now where you can find those opportunities, ah?

## PORTALS WHERE YOU CAN FIND PROJECTS



www.evsdatabase.eu

The principal tool of the commission

www.salto-youth.net/tools/otlas-partner-finding/

Another tool of the commission, but in this case associations have more control in their profile.

https://eurodesk.eu/partners#3/35.94/-3.04

You could find here multipliers and national offices. Also approved projects that are searching participants.

http://www.yesforevs.eu/www\_volunteering.php

Platform dedicated to EVS stuffs.

This program has been created to support people with fewer opportunities so;

- Organizations have the right to select youngsters that will send or host, even though European Commission recommends to search and choose youngsters with fewer opportunities.
- Associations can search aspirants with a profile that fits their interests, but **never any person can be discriminated** in any way (religion, gender, ethnics, social status...).
- Aspirants don't have to know the mother tongue of the country where they are going, and it's forbidden to choose them just because their studies or occupation.

There are **4 parts that form an EVS Process**, and each one has their own obligations.

- 1. <u>Sending organization;</u>
  - ✓ Help volunteers to find and contact with the hosting organization.
  - ✓ Make the volunteers attend to a pre-departure training.
  - ✓ Keep the contact with the volunteers and the coordinating organization.
  - ✓ Give volunteers a platform to share their experience.
  - ✓ Involve volunteers in the diffusion and utilization of results.
  - $\checkmark$  Offers information and strategies to use the knowledge and skills acquired during the EVS process in a professional way.

#### 2. <u>Hosting organization;</u>

- Provides the activity.
- Offers supervision and orientation to their volunteers.
- Gives personal and cultural support
- Creates opportunities of integration in the hosting community.
- Promotes the contact between volunteers.



• Creates an activity agreement together with the coordinating organization.



3. <u>Coordinating organization</u>; This part of the EVS process is in charge of setting up an activity agreement in order to split with the hosting organization the following tasks:

Management of language lessons



Manage the transport to the association

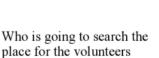
Pay the bills



Make evaluations



Search a mentor





Organize the assistance of the volunteers of arrival and mid-term trainings



Decide who is going to give the money and/or food to the volunteers

Organize agreements with volunteers during the process (free days ,for example)



#### 4. The last and most important one... YOU!! The volunteer

Rights	Duties	
Receive information, orientation and the necessary support	Respect the activity agreenment.	
Be treated without discrimination and with respect	Respect the rights of the other parts of programs.	
Participate actively in the organization of their project	Respect the laws of Confidentiality of the information	
To be insured	Do not accept or do any kind of activity that produce him/her some monetary benefits	
Have the budget for the travel	Acting in a solidarity way	
Do not pay for nothing that form his activity as volunteer	Be part of all the formatives activities	
Realize his activity in conditions of security, hygiene and respect	Respect and act in a correct and respectful way	

Now that you know what it is and all the parts involved, let's start with the process.

## Searching time!

The next step after knowing the program is to **search the perfect project for you**.

This is a **critical moment** and you will need to spend a bit of time on it if you really want to find that project that is waiting for you. It's a moment for **self-reflexion**! To ask yourself a few question about what you are looking for  $\bigcirc$ 

Our participants did a really cool work during this workshop and now we are going to share the results. We provided them 6 different topics to think about and write down what a future EVS volunteer has to consider regarding to each of those fields.

The first question was the most important one!

#### 1. <u>Reasons to do an EVS</u>

- ☑ Willing to help
- ☑ Curiosity for new cultures.
- ☑ Find new friends.
- ☑ Discovering yourself.
- ☑ Discovering new countries.
- ☑ Experiencing new ways of living.
- Coming out from your comfort zone.
- ☑ Challenging yourself.
- ☑ Organizing your life.
- Developing professionals skills and working experience, getting new competences.
- ☑ Improving language skills
- ☑ Contributing in different communities.
- ☑ Independence.
- ☑ Having a good time.
- ☑ Finding connections from different countries.
- ☑ Taking a break from reality.
- ☑ Finding new interests.
- ☑ Travelling.

- $\blacksquare$  Changing your live.
- ✓ Learning how to manage your emotions and feelings.
- ☑ Finding your calling.
- $\blacksquare$  Growing up.
- ☑ Learning to order a beer in other languages! (the most useful thing).
- ☑ Everything is covered!! (everyone can do it ☺)
- ☑ Increasing cultural awareness.
- Getting the experience of working and living in an intercultural team.
- ☑ Making the world a better place!



#### AND THE MOST IMPORTANT ONE; WHY NOT?

So, if you find this kind of reasons suitable to make and EVS... JUST DO IT!!

#### 2. Activity that I want to do

Another thing which is really important to think about is what you want to do in your future EVS process! Here you have a few things to consider, and you can have even more!!

- Learn and teach how to live in the nature.
- ☑ Organize an event.
- ☑ Teach my mother tongue.
- Discover our new skills.
- ☑ Coach volunteers.
- ☑ Meet new people.
- ☑ Dance
- ☑ To do self-development workshop for young people.
- ☑ Make a better environment.
- ☑ Learn Spanish.
- ☑ Develop a personal project.
- Drinking beer (just to know the culture).
- ☑ Work with children.
- ☑ Work with elderly people.
- ☑ Visit other countries.
- ☑ Improve my English.
- ☑ Learn about local culture.
- New languages.

- ☑ Find yourself.
- $\blacksquare$  Theater and art.
- ☑ Hold problem-solving lessons.
- Read and write.
- ☑ Party.
- ☑ Travelling.
- ☑ Get along with locals.
- ☑ Sunbathing.
- ☑ Requalification workshops.
- ☑ Make music record.
- ☑ Environmental activities.
- $\blacksquare$  Work with the community.
- ☑ Help and support immigrants/asylum.
- $\blacksquare$  Work for the community.
- $\blacksquare$  Work with disabled people.
- ☑ Youth association.
- ☑ Do some sports.
- ☑ Write a blog.

#### 3. <u>Environment</u>

The background of the place in which you will spend such a lot of time is a really important thing to evaluate. Do you want to be in a rural area, or in a big city? And so on... So... let's think about...

- ☑ Would you like to live in a town, in a big city or in a village (without infrastructure and civilization)? :O
- ☑ What kind of climate do you prefer?
- ☑ What kind of culture do you prefer?
- ☑ It is expensive or cheap to live in that place?
- ☑ Food specifics (Remember that you can not find everything everywhere!!)
- Do you know the language? / Are you interested in learning it?

- ☑ Do you want to visit the countries around yours?
- ☑ What is the level of development of the country and how important this is for you?
- ☑ Health issues (allergies, humidity).
- ☑ Is it safe to travel/be in that country?
- ☑ Is the help needed in that country?

- Are there people from my country or hometown there?
  (Maybe this is going to make easier the adaptation process).
- Am I going to share my bedroom? Is this a problem for me?
- ☑ How far is my flat from the office, city, shops...?
- ☑ Basic facilities.
- $\blacksquare$  Political situation.
- ☑ Will my pocket money be enough?

#### 4. What are my limits?

Time to think about yourself... this process sometimes is going to be hard. It is really important to know yourself and your limits. Ask yourself these things:

- ☑ Do I find reasonable the amount of money according to the project?
- ☑ Family issues.
- ☑ Cultural shock.
- Self-doubt about project expectations.
- Personal values.
- Health issues.
- ☑ Work according your responsibilities.
- ☑ Level of work qualification.
- ☑ Development of the area.
- ☑ Physical limits.
- ☑ Knowledge of the language.
- ☑ Project duration.
- 5. How the association is working

- ☑ Weather.
- ☑ Unhealthy environment.
- ☑ Can I have good relationship with my future roommates?



Often we can find ex-volunteers that went to the same association, know what is going on and how the hosting organization works so it is a good idea to ask them about:

- ☑ Activity
  - What kind of activities does the association do?
  - What activities will I do?
- ☑ Number of people involved.
- ☑ Languages spoken.
- ☑ Working days/ hours and holidays.
- ☑ Talk with former volunteers/ people who have worked there before.
- Really important: Check if they actually work!

- ☑ Make use of the material provided.
- ☑ Are they doing a good mentoring process?
- ☑ How long the NGO has been working?
- ☑ Did they have other projects before?
- ☑ How responsive are they?
- Are they willing to comply to volunteers demands or needs?
- ☑ Are they caring?
- $\blacksquare$  Are they consistent?
- Are they polite or considerate?

#### 6. Free time

You will have to deal with a lot of free time in a different country for maybe 9 months... So you will have to search something "COOL" to do during this free time, our participants recommend you to:

- $\blacksquare$  Explore the city.
- ☑ Do sports.
- ☑ Go to the library.
- ☑ Have fun with locals.
- ☑ Mediate.
- Discover national cuisine.
- ☑ Socialize.
- ☑ Join local activities.
- ☑ Rest.
- ☑ Explore nature.
- ☑ Improve.
- Go to visit neighbor countries.
- ☑ Go to museums.
- ☑ Play board games/videogames.

- Express yourself with art/music.
- ☑ Watch movies with roommates.
- ☑ Hang out with locals!
- ☑ Make us of the sharing economy.
- Experience the geographical particularities of the region.
- ☑ Start new hobbies.
- ☑ Drink.
- ☑ Siesta and fiesta :O ---GO TO LOCAL FAIRS
- Discover how to move around.



MAKING A PLAN FOR YOUR FREE TIME IT'S REALLY

**IMPORTANT!** (Think about how much free time you will have and how many days off you will enjoy and once you do... plan what to do with it!!)

## Let's "sell" ourselves!

Sending your CV and Motivation Letter is usually the way of applying for an EVS project. Let's talk about them.

- CV: Is usually a document used when we are applying for an employment. The CV contains detailed information about the person who is applying, mostly about his/her education and work history.
- Motivation Letter: Is a document more focused on the project itself. Is there where you will explain why you want to participate in that specific project and the reasons why you are the perfect one for it.

#### EVS CV'S recommendations

- 1. Show your personality in a creative way; a video-CV can be a good idea! It gives you a lot of freedom to express yourself!
- 2. Synthesize!!
- 3. Define your receiver; if it's possible make your CV especially for the organization you have chosen, so you can highlight all the capacities that make you the perfect volunteer for them.
- 4. Do not make a list of jobs and certificates, use more creative formats.
- 5. Prepare what are you going to say and how are you going to say it. You are talking to people, not to a computer or a camera.
- 6. If you do a video, remember that the first seconds are the most important to keep the viewers' attention.
- 7. Make as easy as possible to contact you, every effort is useless if you do not make the viewers able contact you easily.
- 8. Europass is be good format for EVS projects!!

https://europass.cedefop.europa.eu/documents/curriculum-vitae

Here you a can see a really cool VIDEO CV that has everything important in a CV.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=c\_PZTAW5piQ

#### Motivation letter time!

This is the most important part of the application form. In this document you have to show the hosting organization why YOU are the best candidate to take that place. And now it's the moment to be as creative as possible!!

A complete motivation letter must have the following parts:

- Basic information about you. (Experience, previous volunteering, talents, hobbies, skills, knowledge...)
- You have to talk about why you like the project you are applying for and what you can bring to it.
- You have to speak as well about the people you are writing to. It is going to be good if you talk about their organization and why you want to work with them.
- It is also going to be useful to speak about the country, but not too much (you are not going there just to do tourism!), why you would like to do your EVS in the hosting town, city or country.
- Describe your expectations. What do you expect from this process? What do you want to learn and develop during your EVS?

We have a really cool presentation to help you to make this, so here you have ;) Enjoy and take some ideas to make a cool application yourself!

### https://drive.google.com/open?id=oByFXhSGhClauXzhIWVEzeEdWdFE



## <u>Arrival moment!</u>

The arrival moment is a really important step because it is the time in which you will start being part of your new community, so we made a workshop in order to make our participants aware of the importance of this process.... And how did we do it??!!

It is the funny part!, we prepared a gymkhana in the city of Málaga !!! And what did they have to do in that gymkhana??? MISSIONS!! :D

We prepared 6 points in some important points of Málaga.



Pedro Luis Alfonso Gardens



Cathedral of Málaga



Málaga's Roman Theater



"La Farola"



La Malagueta



La Noria of Málaga

In each of these spots they had to achieve one of the following tasks:

- 1. Meet a local pedestrian.
- 2. Get a local food recipe.
- 3. Learn 3 typical expressions from Málaga.
- 4. Ask locals for one symbol of the city.
- 5. Ask locals where Erasmus Youngers usually go out.
- 6. Ask locals about a famous or historic character from Málaga.

After the activity, in the evaluation, all the participants told us that knowing these things it would be easier to start an adventure like an EVS project!!

Our advice and conclusions after this scientific experiment is .... **know the place you are going to live as soon as possible**!! It is even good "force" yourself a bit in order to get know things like the ones we found out in this activity, because it is going to make easier your adaptation to your new home C.

#### Learning process

We arrived and now we know our town and we are part of the community. It's time to structure our learning process!

• EVS is a **learning process**. It's a tool that European Commission gives the youngsters in order to improve their competences, and Erasmus + and the European Commission offer us a tools to make our own learning plan!

You can see here a part of the tool that European Commission created for EVS. It's the volunteer, with the help of his/her mentor, who have to fulfill this table in order to set up their own learner ship. The participants of Let's EVS project fulfilled this plan in order to set up what they wanted to learn in our project, and in case that you were wondering, it is not necessary that you write only stuffs related to the topic of the project you are taking part in.

en do I plan to do it?

Now you are your own teacher!! So just make a plan of what you really want to learn and follow it! 😳

Here you have a link to the whole tool;

http://erasmusplus.injuve.es/opencms/export/download/materiales/evs-learningnotebook-online.pdf

#### Team work session!!

In every EVS project you will need to team with a team, people from the NGO, other EVS volunteers, or even people who are not part of the project (maybe you want to make something for the community, something that was, or not, planned in the project).

So, what did we do? We went to the Mountains of Malaga and we made a survival simulation there, in the Wild Nature!!

They had a lot of tasks such as making fire, setting up a tent, creating a trap, recollecting fruits, etc. And to achieve them, they had to cooperate with their teams. It was a great team-work experience and here you can see some of the results!



#### Conclusions of team work activity!!

What we experienced is that some groups could complete all the activities but some others could achieve just a few of them. You will not choose the people you are going to work with, so you will have to adapt yourself to the rest, and the rest will have to adapt to you as well.



So in this teamwork process you will have to analyze what you can offer to the team and see what the rest of the team can offer to you that maybe you do not have  $\bigcirc$ 

## Management of problems in EVS

As we said millions times (we are a bit tiresome with that :D), EVS is a learning process and, of course, you will have problems to face. You will have a lot of time working with other people, living with other people, sharing things with others and so on and some things will not be as perfect as it seems in the first moments.

We couldn't forget this topic in the development of our project and we had a Workshop about this field of management of problems.

We gave to our participants 6 really common problems or bad situation that can appear in a EVS project;

- 1. The activity is not what I was waiting for.
- 2. The home I am living does not have all the basics it should.
- 3. Idiom lessons are not happening.
- 4. Problems in the relationship with roommates (for example someone does not respect the rules of the house) and/or stuffs of association.
- 5. There are more working areas than the specified in the E+ rules.
- 6. After a couple of month, I do not feel myself really motivated with EVS and I am thinking go home.

Each group had one of this questions end that had to search actions or strategies to face them!

- 1. The activity is not was I was waiting for;
  - a. Speak with the hosting organization.
  - b. Invent new activities by yourself.
  - c. Ask sending association what to do.
  - d. Focus on your own personal project.
  - e. Think about if that new thing (not what you expected) can help you in your development.

- 2. The home I am living does not have all the basics it should;
  - a. Fix the house.
  - b. Change the house.
  - c. Communicate to agents to change/fix.
  - d. Be persistent to change.
  - e. Speak directly to owners of the house.
- 3. Idiom lessons are not happening.
  - a. Complain everyone above the organization.
  - b. Contact former volunteers.
  - c. Ask locals to teach you and spend time with them.
  - d. Learn online.
  - e. Ask the organization why they are not happening.
  - f. Go to public schools.
  - g. Practice together with others volunteers.
  - h. Watch the TV.
  - i. Listen to music.
  - j. Attend local events.
  - k. Read books and newspaper.
- **4.** <u>Problems in the relationship with roommates</u> (for example someone does not respect the rules of the house) and/or stuffs of association.
  - a. Remember the connivance rules.
  - b. Speak with the people is no respecting the rules and see why they are not doing it.
  - c. New agreements.
  - d. Speak with the mentor.
  - e. Speak with the hosting association.
- 5. <u>There are more working hours that E+ rules said</u>.
  - a. Speak with the mentor about this problem.
  - b. Speak with the sending association for advices.
  - c. Ask others volunteers what to do.
  - d. Speak with the hosting association to ask why this is happening.
- 6. <u>After a couple of month, I do not feel myself really motivated with EVS and I am</u> thinking go home.
  - a. Dig deeper.
  - b. Talk to relatives, friends from home ightarrow Ask them for advices
  - c. Find a hobby/Sport that you like, search new hobbies!
  - d. Learn new things.

- e. Ask your mentor for support.
- f. It is normal to feel like this in some points, when you are far away from home it is not strange that you suffer bad or more down after 2 months, so feel free to share this with your mentor, sending association, friends and Family.

Participants really gave a lot of good approaches about different problems we presented, and after the presentation we gave them Feedback about recommendation of European Comission about management of problems.

#### They recommend us follow the following steps:

- 1. Trying to solve the problem directly with the person/Institution what is creating that situation;
  - Be as much kindly as possible.
  - Try to solve the problem when it appears.
- If the problem does not go better → Mentor; a 3th person who should be totally neutral. They have to have tools and skills that allow them to be a good mediator between all the parts of the problem.
- 3. In the third level, if none of the attempts have solved the problem, you can ask the National Agency to act as mediator.

When you have been telling



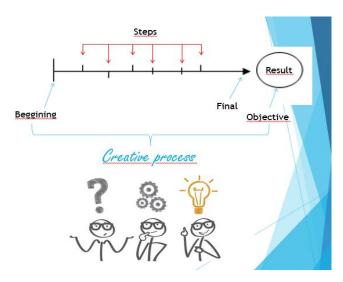
## Time to present your own Project!

During every EVS project, you will have the opportunity to propose your own personal project. This is going to be part of the EVS learning process and it can bring you more learning and knowledge because you will be the one who is going to create an activity or resource to make a difference! But... **Step by step**.

#### What is a project?

A project is a group of planned activities that are developed in order to get a specific result. It has a beginning, steps and defined objectives.

So... What is the difference between a project and a mechanic process, like can be the steps to build a mobile Phone? Easy, my dear Watson! The difference is that when you do a project you create something NEW, so the results of your project are not going to be the same results as other projects'.



#### And.... What can be a **result**??

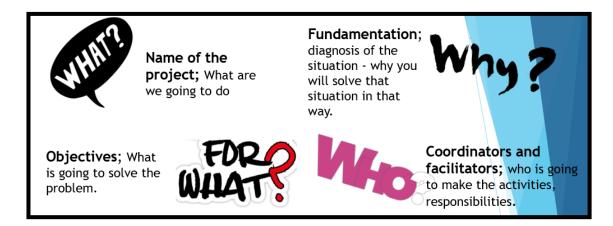
Service (Like can be a new method of teaching).

Product (Like can be this guide).

Transformation (Like can be a change of mentality, like raising our awareness of climate change).

We had one full day of project proposal! In order to create a really cool tool for everybody.

In the first part of the project they had to **discover what points you have to consider** in order to set up a project, and we can summarise saying that you will need to solve some questions!



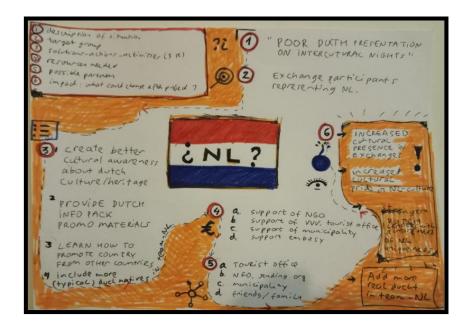


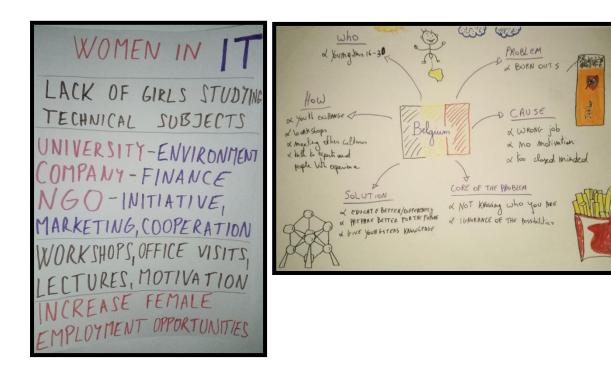
Then, we were talking about **diagnosis of situations or problems** that need to be approached. To experience this, we splitted participants in groups of their own countries in order to make them search a real problem they have in their communities and we asked them to try to propose some solution for these situations.

In this workshop they had to identify and plan the following things:

- People that are affected for this situation, directly on indirectly.
- What kind of organism (Governmental or not) are working to solve this situation, analyze then and analyze their actions (are the actions good?, they are working? They have a good approach?)
- What kind of materials or resources will you need?
- Who could support you? What kind of support can they give to you?
- Impact expected.

You can see here some results!, so just to take ideas ;)





In the last part of the **project proposal workshop** the participants created their own activities in order to.... MAKE THEM REAL THE NEXT DAY OF PROJECT!!

Our participants did really a cool job with this and we are going to share with you the tool they were using to plan the activities ;

NAME OF THE PROJECT		
Day		
Date		
Time		
Aim		
Detail of Programme		
Time	Title	Detail
Materials		
Notes		

With that tool our participant did really nice activities to disseminate Erasmus +, getting to youngsters of the local community of Rincón de la Victoria.

When you see a problem and you can identify it, you can also solve that questions to set up the project, and after that, in order to plan de activities of the project you can use that tool to write down what you are going to do, when you are going to do it (what day of the project and at what time, description of each activity, materials you will need and notes!).

## <u>YOUTHPASS</u>

Youthpass? What is that? **Youthpass is a tool to document and recognize learning outcomes from youth work activities**. It is available for projects funded by Erasmus+: Youth in Action (2014-2020) and Youth in Action (2007-2013) programs. It is a part of the European Commission's strategy to foster the recognition of non-formal learning, putting policy into practice and practice into policy:

- While creating their Youthpass certificate together with a support person, project participants are given the possibility to describe what they have done in their project and which competences they have acquired. Thus, Youthpass supports the reflection upon the personal non-formal learning process and outcomes.
- As a Europe-wide recognition instrument for non-formal learning in the youth field, Youthpass strengthens the **social recognition of youth work**.
- Youthpass supports **active European citizenship** of young people and of youth workers by describing the added value of their project.
- Youthpass also aims at supporting the **employability** of young people and of youth workers by raising their awareness of and helping to describe their competences, and by documenting their acquisition of key competences on a certificate.

We had a Workshop about this tool in which participants could put all their knowledge and skills acquired during the exchange in the Key competences of YouthPass. For more information about this tool here you have a really nice tool created for European Commission!

https://www.youthpass.eu/downloads/13-62-64/Youthpass%20Guide%2018-10-2011.pdf

Now you have everything you need so.... Let's do it!

# Let's EVS!