

PROVIDING ON-ARRIVAL TRAINING TO SHORT-TERM ESC VOLUNTEERS

Practical info-kit for organisations hosting volunteers

This info-kit is for organisations hosting European Solidarity Corps (ESC) volunteers whose volunteering activity lasts less than two months. It summarises the relevant provisions of the European Solidarity Corps Programme Guide 2026 and offers practical suggestions for preparing an effective on-arrival training.

1. Who is responsible, and is the training mandatory?

The Programme Guide 2026 states that for volunteering activities lasting less than two months, the host or support organisation must organise on-arrival training in line with the minimum quality standards in the Guide.

For short-term individual volunteering, the host organisation is responsible for organising on-arrival training. For volunteering teams, the host or support organisation organises it. Check the arrangements for your specific activity and project.

Participants have the right and obligation to attend the applicable training sessions, and participating organisations must ensure that they take part in the Training and Evaluation Cycle where it applies.

2. When and how should it take place?

Organise the training as soon as reasonably possible after arrival, so volunteers receive essential information before they need to make decisions or carry out project-related tasks. Adapt the length and format to the activity, participants' needs, and the local context. A shorter, focused programme may be appropriate for short-term activities.

If you cannot deliver all elements yourself, coordinate with the support organisation, other experienced ESC organisations, or relevant local services.

3. What should the training cover?

Use the checklist below to make sure participants have the information and opportunities described in the Programme Guide 2026. Adapt the depth and format to the project and participants' needs.

On-arrival training checklist

- ☐ Programme and documents: explain the objectives and principles of the European Solidarity Corps, the participant's role, and the relevant documents in the [ESC Info-Kit](#).
- ☐ Legal and practical arrangements: give participants the opportunity to ask questions about visas, residence permits, their legal status, their activity agreement, insurance, and practical matters affecting their stay.
- ☐ Insurance and health: explain the applicable insurance and claims procedures. Check that volunteers know where to find their insurance documents and whom to contact for help.
- ☐ Rights, responsibilities and working environment: explain participants' rights and obligations, the roles of participating organisations, expectations in the host working environment, working arrangements, and useful contacts for settling in.
- ☐ Support and contacts: Give participants names and contact details for their mentor, project coordinator, emergency contact and other relevant support people. Explain existence of National Agencies, SALTOs and EACEA in management and implementation of the European Solidarity Corps.
- ☐ Host country and local community: introduce the host country's history, political and social context, key aspects of local culture, and practical ways to get involved in the local community.
- ☐ Intercultural learning and conflict: discuss cultural differences, communication, conflict prevention and how to seek help if a difficulty or disagreement arises.
- ☐ Crisis management: explain the relevant crisis-management arrangements and what participants should do in an emergency. Make sure they know how to contact you as a hosting organisation and local emergency services.

- ☐ Environmental sustainability: explain environmentally sustainable behaviour encouraged by the Programme and any practical expectations relevant to the project and accommodation.
- ☐ Peer contact and networking: provide opportunities to meet and connect with other ESC volunteers in the country, where possible.
- ☐ Learning goals and recognition: support participants to identify clear learning goals for the activity and explain how learning outcomes can be recorded and recognised, especially through Youthpass and Europass.
- ☐ Language support: organise appropriate activity or local language support to ensure are able to take part in project activities

4. Additional practical good practice for host organisations

These suggestions complement the Guide's expected achievements; they are practical recommendations rather than a separate list of formal training requirements.

- ☐ Before or at arrival, check that the volunteer knows where they will stay, how to travel to the activity location, how to access food and essential services, and whom to contact about practical problems.
- ☐ Explain safeguarding arrangements and boundaries relevant to the project: how to raise a concern, who will respond, how confidentiality is handled, and what to do if the volunteer feels unsafe or experiences inappropriate behaviour. Tailor this to the actual activity and the people the volunteer work with.
- ☐ Discuss the volunteer's tasks, supervision, schedule, breaks, and how to ask for clarification or support. Ensure tasks are appropriate to the agreed activity and do not replace paid staff.
- ☐ Invite questions and check understanding rather than only delivering information. Share key contacts and essential information in writing, in a format the volunteer can consult later.
- ☐ Keep a simple record that the training took place, what topics were covered, and any follow-up actions agreed. This is a practical organisational measure, not a specific record format prescribed by the Guide.

5. Quick preparation checklist for the coordinator

- ☐ Before the volunteer arrives: confirm who will organise and deliver the training; prepare the schedule and relevant documents; coordinate with the support organisation; and identify any individual support or accessibility needs.
- ☐ During the training: cover the checklist topics; explain emergency and support arrangements; encourage questions; agree learning goals; and make sure volunteers know where to find information after the session.
- ☐ After the training: follow up on unanswered questions, missing documents or practical needs. Check that volunteers can contact their mentor or coordinator and know how to raise concerns.

Reference

Primary source: [European Solidarity Corps Programme Guide 2026](#), Part D – Quality and Support Measures, “Training and Evaluation Cycle for Participants”, especially “On-arrival training” and “Expected achievements” (pp. 90–97 in the English PDF).

Official Guide and other reference documents: https://youth.europa.eu/solidarity/organisations/documents-resources_en

This info-kit is a practical summary, not a substitute for the Programme Guide, the grant agreement, the relevant Quality Label commitments, or instructions from the responsible National Agency/SALTO. If requirements or arrangements differ for a particular activity, check the applicable project documentation and ask the responsible body.