

Dear Future Participant of a mobility project,

Participating in mobility projects offers incredible opportunities for personal growth, learning, and cultural exchange. These projects allow you to explore different countries, meet new people, and develop valuable skills while gaining a deeper understanding of diverse cultures. We believe that disability should not be a barrier to experiencing these amazing opportunities.

We understand that each individual's journey is unique, and that is why we will provide you with a quick guidance on how to get involved in a mobility project.

If you have any questions or need further assistance, we encourage you to reach out to the appropriate organisations and experts who specialize in supporting disabled individuals in mobility projects.

So, let's embark on this journey together! Open your mind to new experiences, embrace the possibilities, and discover the incredible world of mobility projects awaiting you.

EXPECTATIONS OF YOU:

First and foremost, none of the programmes have any prior expectations for the participating young people with disabilities.

THE TWO RECOMMENDED PROGRAMMES:

1. ERASMUS+: YOUTH EXCHANGE
2. EUROPEAN SOLIDARITY CORPS: SHORT-TERM VOLUNTEERING

1. ERASMUS+

Youth exchanges provide groups of young people (aged between 13 and 30) from different countries the opportunity to meet and get to know each other. These meetings happen out of the formal education environment (school, universities or vocational education and training). During a youth exchange, the participants organise a series of activities around a topic in which they have a common interest.

Youth exchanges can be organised with already only two organisations from two different countries (minimum). They offer an experience of international mobility in the safety of a group. The relatively short duration of the mobility (between 1 and 3 weeks) makes the participation of young people easier. Youth exchange represents a short-term learning experience that is likely to create favourable conditions to discussions and learning about topics such as inclusion, equality, sport, environment, culture etc.

HOW TO PARTICIPATE?

To participate in a youth exchange, you cannot apply directly for a grant as an individual. Applications must be made by an organisation or a group of young people who in turn select who will participate in the exchange.

HOWEVER, you can talk to a supporting and sending organisation that you already know or find one in your city.

You can search for projects on the website of the European Youth Portal.

You can also select here by country where you would like to participate in a youth exchange.

2. EUROPEAN SOLIDARITY CORPS (ESC):

It is the new volunteering programme funded by the EU for all the young Europeans aged 18-30. It gives the chance to engage in a mobility and service experience in another country. It enables them to discover another culture and to develop various competencies. This volunteering experience generally lasts between 2 and 12 months. However, it is possible to have a shorter programme experience as a group (at least two weeks) if the participants are young people with fewer opportunities.

HOW TO FIND A PROPER SENDING ORGANISATION?

Contact Your Educational Institution: Many educational institutions (schools, daycare services) have their own international offices or Erasmus coordinators who can guide you through the process. They often have partnerships with sending organisations and can recommend reputable ones.

Online Research (online databases): Search for sending organisations that specialize in mobility programmes like Erasmus. Search for organisations that have a good reputation, positive reviews from past participants, and a clear focus on providing support for mobility projects.

Erasmus+ National Agencies: Each participating country has a National Agency that manages Erasmus+ programmes. They can provide information about accredited sending organisations and help you connect with suitable ones.

Network with Peers: Reach out to fellow students or peers who have already participated in Erasmus projects. They might be able to recommend sending organisations based on their own experiences.

Contact Sending Organisations: Once you've identified potential sending organisations, reach out to them directly. Ask about their programs, application process, available support, and any specific accommodations for participants with disabilities if applicable.

Ask Questions: Don't hesitate to ask questions about the organisation's experience, the number of participants they've sent abroad, and the level of support they provide throughout the process.

HOW TO PREPARE FOR THE JOURNEY?

When you get to know about attending and participating in a mobility project, you will need to take some preparations in order to gain an unforgettable and smooth experience.

Documentation and Paperwork:

Passport and Visa: Ensure your passport is valid for the entire duration of your stay. If a visa is required, apply well in advance and gather all necessary documents.

Insurance:

European Health Insurance Card (EHIC)

A free card that gives you access to medically necessary, state-provided healthcare during a temporary stay in any of the 27 EU countries, Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway and Switzerland or the United Kingdom under the same conditions and at the same cost (free in some countries) as people insured in that country.

Cards are issued by your national health insurance provider.

It's optional to take further health and travel insurance that covers the entire duration of your stay abroad.

As an Erasmus+ volunteer or a European Solidarity Corps participant, you are covered during the entire period of your cross-border mobility, provided by the EU Commission, for free of charge.

ID Cards: Carry your student ID, national ID, and any other identification documents you might need. Ensure your ID is valid.

Health and Safety:

Health Check: Visit your doctor for a health check-up and discuss any necessary vaccinations or medications.

Prescriptions: If you have any medications, ensure you have enough supply for your entire stay.

Emergency Contacts: Keep a list of emergency contacts both at your home country and your destination.

Finances:

Banking: Inform your bank about your travel dates and destination to avoid any issues with your accounts while abroad.

In case of volunteering, the volunteers receive either a certain amount of pocket money and mostly paid in cash or an account is opened in the host country.

Currency: Familiarize yourself with the local currency and exchange rates.

Budgeting: The programmes are fully covered as for travels, accommodation, meals and activities up to a specified amount, however in certain projects, it may be necessary to advance part of the travel cost in order to ensure participation which will be reimbursed later on.

Communication:

The receiving organisation is obliged to provide a communication option. There is no roaming fee within the EU, in the case of a short-term stay the use of the participants' own SIM card is recommended however in the case of long-term volunteering, the use of local SIM card can be recommended.

Phone and Internet: Check if your phone plan works abroad or consider getting a local SIM card.

Email and Messaging: Set up communication channels to stay in touch with family, friends, and contacts from your home country.

Cultural and Language Preparation:

Research: Learn about the local culture, customs, and traditions of your destination in advance to familiarize with your destination. During the project, the hosting organization also has the task of introducing the local culture, on the other hand participants must also be prepared to present their own culture and be able to pass it on.

Language Skills: Brush up on basic phrases in the local language if it's different from your native language.

In case of long-term volunteering projects, the receiving organisation is obliged to provide either online or face to face language classes.

Packing:

Climate: Pack clothing suitable for the destination's weather during your stay.

Essentials: Pack personal items, toiletries, and any items that might be difficult to find abroad.

Academic and Work Preparation:

Learn about the organisation and the programme you are going to participate in. Do some research in the field of the given topic and be present at all meetings arranged by both the sending and the hosting organisation.

Emergency Plans:

Contacts: Keep a list of local emergency numbers, as well as the contact information of your country's embassy or consulate.

Mindset and Attitude:

Open-Mindedness: Approach the experience with an open mind and a positive attitude.

Flexibility: Be prepared for unexpected changes and challenges that might arise during your journey.