



*Brussels, 29 November 2017  
C(2017) 7931 final*

*Dear President,*

*The Commission would like to thank the Senát for its Opinion on the Proposal to the European Parliament and the Council laying down the legal framework of the European Solidarity Corps {COM(2017) 262 final}.*

*The proposal delivers on the commitment made by President Juncker during his 2016 State of the Union address to create a European Solidarity Corps, offering young people between the age of 18 and 30 the opportunity to take part in a wide range of solidarity activities across the European Union.*

*Building on 20 years of solid experience gained through the European Voluntary Service, with the European Solidarity Corps, the Commission seeks to establish an inclusive framework for solidarity activities in Europe underpinning the values upon which Europe is founded. The European Solidarity Corps will enable young people across Europe to engage with communities and address societal challenges. At the same time it will help improve the skills and competences young people need for their personal and professional development at the beginning of their careers.*

*The European Solidarity Corps is receiving vivid interest from young people with more than 36,000 young people already having signed up for it.*

*The Commission notes the doubts expressed by the Senát relating to the financing mechanism of the European Solidarity Corps, its geographical scope, the future of the European Voluntary Service, as well as the distinction between voluntary activities and job placements. The Commission is pleased to have this opportunity to provide a number of clarifications regarding its proposal and trusts that these will allay the concerns of the Senát.*

*As regards the proposed financing mechanism, the Commission would like to underline that, considering the amounts involved, budgetary redeployments to the European Solidarity Corps will have no substantial impact on the capacity of the concerned programmes to attain their objectives. In particular, the volunteering opportunities available within Erasmus+ will also be transferred to the European Solidarity Corps along with the corresponding appropriations, leaving the activities which will remain under Erasmus+ untouched.*

*Mr Milan ŠTĚCH  
President of the Senát  
Valdštejnské náměstí 17/4  
CZ – 118 01 PRAGUE 1*

*In response to the Senát's concerns about the geographical scope of the European Solidarity Corps, the Commission would like to clarify that the limitation to European Union Member States is only temporary due to the fact this is a new initiative. In a subsequent phase, based on the provision in the proposed Regulation establishing the European Solidarity Corps, this programme shall be open for the participation of other countries on the basis of bilateral agreements.*

*The Commission would also like to point out that the European Solidarity Corps not only consolidates the achievements of the European Voluntary Service; it will further strengthen volunteering at several levels, by providing more funding for volunteering as a whole and by setting the ground for more innovative volunteering activities. Besides, the European Solidarity Corps will stimulate synergies across volunteering, traineeships and jobs. It will, in particular, bring more stakeholders from different fields to work together for young people, which will help broaden the opportunities that will be made available for them and will also result in more accessibility, impact, visibility and cost-efficiency.*

*The Commission is aware of the importance of avoiding job substitution and will monitor this aspect closely. Organisations wanting to participate in the European Solidarity Corps will have to apply for a quality label, which should constitute a safeguard against job substitution. Job offers within the European Solidarity Corps must comply with national laws, regulations and collective agreements. European Solidarity Corps traineeships will be paid and aligned with the Council Recommendation on a Quality Framework for Traineeships<sup>1</sup>.*

*The Commission hopes that these clarifications address the issues raised by the Senát and looks forward to continuing our political dialogue in the future.*

*Yours faithfully,*

*Frans Timmermans  
First Vice-President*

*Tibor Navracsics  
Member of the Commission*

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<sup>1</sup> [https://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms\\_data/docs/pressdata/en/lssa/141424.pdf](https://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_data/docs/pressdata/en/lssa/141424.pdf)