

European Solidarity Corps Quality Label – How can it ensure high quality traineeships

Solidarity is an important value of the EU, it is like the glue holding the EU together.

Main aim of the program is to offer more possibilities to young people to become active and engage in solidarity activities & benefit for community.

One of the specific objectives of the Solidarity Corps as stated in the Programme Guide is to ensure that the solidarity activities that are offered to the participants are of **high quality, properly validated and respect the principles** of the program.

Principles: equal treatment, equal opportunities and non-discrimination, **avoidance of job substitution, provision of high-quality activities with learning dimension focusing on personal, socio-educational and professional development, adequate training, working and volunteering arrangements**, safe and decent environment and conditions, and, the 'no-profit principle'.

What is supported under the European Solidarity Corps?

- Volunteering
- Traineeships & Jobs
- Solidarity Projects

Who can participate

National and local authorities and bodies, non-governmental organisations and companies established in EU-MSTs.

Traineeships could also be facilitated by relevant labour market actors, in particular public and private employment services, social partners and Chambers of Commerce, as well as the member organisations of EURES. These actors – on the condition of holding a Quality Label – may submit a project in view of **intermediating** between registered candidates and employers offering traineeships and jobs.

What are Traineeships in the Solidarity Corps?

Solidarity activities that provide young people full-time work practice opportunities. Opportunity to gain experience and make a start on the labour market while contributing to address important societal challenges. Projects in a broad range of areas, such as integration of migrants, education and youth activities, environmental protection, prevention of natural disasters, climate change mitigation and social inclusion, but do not include activities that are part of curricula in formal education, vocational education and training systems and activities for emergency response.

Any occupation, regardless of whether it is one requiring high skilled workers or low-skilled workers, and regardless of the sector it belongs to, can be regarded as a solidarity-related activity provided the **nature and/or scope of that particular activity reflects a clear desire to commit to the common good and serve others.**

Traineeships are work practices between two and six months (renewable once up to twelve months). They can be cross-boarder or in-country activities.

Conditions: Traineeships

- are **remunerated** by the organisation providing the traineeship;
- include a **learning and a training** component to help the participant gain relevant experience with a view to developing competences useful for the participants' personal, educational, social, civic and professional development;
- are based on a **written traineeship agreement** concluded at the beginning of the traineeship in accordance with the applicable regulatory framework of the country where the traineeship takes place, as appropriate; indicating the educational objectives, the working conditions, the duration of the traineeship, the remuneration of the participant and the rights and obligations of the parties and taking into account the principles outlined in the Council Recommendation of 10 March 2014 on a Quality Framework for Traineeships²³;
- should be clearly separated from volunteering, both from a financial and organisational point of view and should never lead to job substitution.

Traineeships should be accompanied by adequate preparation, on-the-job training and support upon return.

The Quality Label for Traineeships

The QL certifies that an organisation is able to ensure the necessary quality framework for participants and is its entry ticket to the programme. It does not automatically lead to a project grant. A separate project grant application is needed and will be assessed based on the criteria of the Solidarity Corps.

A Quality Label can be submitted on a continuous basis, project applications have to stick to three deadlines per year. It can be approved by NA or by COM, depends on the organisation.

An online application plus a visit on site are part of the process to guarantee that quality standards will be fulfilled.

Some tasks for organisations holding a QL:

Project management

- Ensure effective coordination
- Practical arrangements

Before the activity

- Ensure that the participant signs the traineeship agreement (employment contract) - including a learning and training component

- in accordance with the national regulatory framework of the country where the activity takes place
- support in carrying out language preparation
- online training
- insurance (EHIC)

During the activity

- Learning, mentoring & support
- Make sure participants attends the Training and Evaluation Circle
- Design appropriate tasks
- Define a mentor for personal support; on-the-job training & support to carry out self-reflection
- Make sure remuneration is given to trainee
- Support and monitoring

After the activity

- Assist the participant in job search
- Provide guidance regarding further education, training or employment opportunities
- Encourage trainee to become a multiplier

How to get the QL for Traineeships

1st get EU login & a PIC (Organisations wishing to apply under European Solidarity Corps need to be registered in order to receive a Participant Identification Code (PIC) through the Participant Portal. The PIC code is a unique identifier for the organisation and should be requested only once per organisation and used in all applications for European Solidarity Corps actions and calls. (Business Registration Number + Registration Date + Registration Authority + organisation type + Documents for Financial Identification and Legal Entity)

2nd inform yourself about Solidarity Corps principles and objectives of the Solidarity Corps

3rd apply via online form for a Quality Label - The application form consists of the following main sections:

- Context: This section asks for general information about your proposal and about the Agency that will receive, assess and decide on your request for Quality Label.
- Participating Organisations: Organisations details: This section asks for information about the organisations concerned by this application.
- Quality Label details: This section asks about the scope and role of the Quality Label requested.
- The motivations behind your application for a Quality Label & solidarity aspect.
- The Project Management: you will be asked to provide further information on certain aspects of the approach taken by your organisation to project management.

Information such as the overall support to participants or the protection against possible risks should be detailed in this section.

- The Participants you can support and / or host.

4th feedback plus on site visit from NA

5th feedback & approval of QL

6th possibility to apply for project(s)

There can be regular or punctual controls to verify that the organisations holding a Quality Label still meet the quality standards. Following these controls, the Quality Label may be temporarily suspended or withdrawn by the awarding bodies (e.g. National Agency or Executive Agency).

- ➔ *Not every org needs to have QL, org with QL needs to guarantee high quality implementation (e.g. working with intermediates, like public employment services)*

The Solidarity Corps Portal

To facilitate partner-finding, profiles of all organisations holding a QL are published in a database. Additionally, QL organisations have access to the Solidarity Corps Portal where young motivated Europeans are registered. Through this Portal matches between orgs and youngsters can be made.

CONCLUSION

The following elements of the Quality Label support high quality traineeships in the European Solidarity:

- Long process
- Project must be well designed and thought through
- Quality Label refers to Quality framework for Traineeships and national law and e.g. guarantees remuneration for trainees
- Guidelines and principles of Solidarity Corps have to be taken seriously
- Mentoring and learning dimension plus monitoring procedures by NA
- Support for trainees, before, during and after the traineeship