



PRESS RELEASE

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What we need for a better European Solidarity Corps

The European Youth Forum welcomes the launch of the European Solidarity Corps (ESC) putting the spotlight on the value of volunteering and young people's contribution to society. However, following the European Commission's announcement today of the proposed legal basis of the ESC, key concerns and priorities put forward by the Youth Forum and its Members still lack real clarification.

To create a ESC young people want and deserve, we urge the European Commission to uphold its promises and provide answers to the following:

Where is the involvement of key stakeholders? The crucial role of youth organisations, volunteer based organisations and organisations of the solidarity sector cannot be understated for the success of ESC. They are not, however, meaningfully included in the development and management of the ESC which might make their access to the programme more difficult.

Why does more money for youth mean reducing the Erasmus+ budget? The announcement of new investment in youth is welcome, but this is achieved largely through the reallocation of EVS budget from Erasmus+ from 2018 onwards. This makes us question where the priorities of the Commission are at a time when success rates in other parts of the current Youth Chapter of Erasmus+ are rapidly decreasing and many quality projects go unfunded. We believe that investing in the ESC budget must not come at the expense of programmes already offering invaluable opportunities to young people, particularly Erasmus+ which is already underfunded.

Will all young people truly benefit from ESC? President Juncker promised that the ESC would offer participants an "opportunity to develop skills and gain an invaluable human experience". There is not yet enough detail on how each young participant (particularly those from disadvantaged backgrounds and with specific needs) will be guaranteed a beneficial and recognised quality experience through the Solidarity Corps.

The European Youth Forum believes that the ESC will not be able to achieve the high goals the Commission has set without addressing these serious concerns. We will be closely following developments over the coming months and we hope that young people will be able to contribute to a #betterESC.

Luis Alvarado, European Youth Forum President

“It is excellent to have a new initiative for young people at European level, however, a proper programme would have involved young people from the start. Going forward what we need is to get young people and youth organisations fully involved in the implementation, ensure that the Corps budget is separate and does not endanger funding increases needed for other youth projects, and that we do not confuse volunteering for quality jobs.”

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Notes to editors

About the European Youth Forum

The European Youth Forum is the platform of youth organisations in Europe. Independent, democratic, youth-led, it represents over 100 National Youth Councils and international youth organisations from across the continent. The Forum works to empower young people to participate actively in society to improve their own lives, by representing and advocating their needs and interests and those of their organisations towards the European Union, the Council of Europe and the United Nations. For more information, visit www.youthforum.org