

# European Solidarity Corps: three years on

Tomorrow is the third anniversary of President **Juncker's** [2016 State of the Union](#) announcement to set up a European Solidarity Corps, offering young people the opportunity to take part in a wide range of solidarity activities across the EU.

Since then, more than 161,000 young people between 18 and 30 have signed up to join the Corps, and the initiative has made a difference in many people's lives. Most of the activities funded offer opportunities to volunteer – individually or in teams. But young people can also benefit from traineeships and jobs. Moreover, young people themselves can set up solidarity projects where they initiate, develop and run activities to contribute to positive change in their community, while living abroad and gaining valuable skills.

Commissioner for Education, Culture, Youth and Sport, Tibor **Navracsics**, said: *"We have achieved a lot in the last three years. In record time we put in place a new programme opening up opportunities for young people and organisations to support others, helping us build a more cohesive, caring society. I am proud to see so many young people eager to get involved and active in projects on the ground. Their enthusiasm is truly inspiring. This is why I have proposed to extend and strengthen the European Solidarity Corps after 2020."*

Inclusion is one of the most common topics tackled by European Solidarity Corps projects but not the only one. Other topics are youth work, climate change, community development, citizenship, education and culture. Tens of thousands more opportunities are expected to be created in the following months and years in these fields. Moreover, one in three of the activities funded by the European Solidarity Corps are reserved for participants with fewer opportunities who face obstacles such as disabilities, educational difficulties, or economic, social or geographical obstacles.

For instance, in Latvia, a project entitled "A special place for special people" promotes the integration of young people with disabilities into the labour market by employing them and involving them in all the activities of a social enterprise café in Riga. In Greece, volunteers help protect the forest of Xylokastro and Derveni by taking care of watering and planting trees, as well as cleaning the forest paths. And in Sweden, through the project "Climate Awareness", volunteers learn about climate change and biodiversity by helping in the organic garden and ecovillage and participating in outreach activities. As an example of a project initiated by volunteers themselves, in Lithuania, five participants from a centre for disabled young people set up their [own Solidarity Coffee project](#), enabling them to form new friendships and build personal connections with the wider community.

Background

In his State of the Union address of September 2016, President **Juncker** announced the creation of a European Solidarity Corps, providing opportunities for young Europeans to engage in solidarity activities and contribute to society as part of the Commission's broader strategy to invest in young people. The Corps responds to a real interest among young people to engage in social projects. In a [Eurobarometer survey](#) published in spring 2019, more than half of the young respondents said they had participated in volunteering activities or local community projects. Three in four stated that they had been engaged in organised movements or volunteering.

A mere 3 months after President **Juncker's** announcement, on 7 December 2016, the Solidarity Corps was launched, with the aim of having 100,000 young people taking part by the end of 2020. During an initial phase, eight different EU funding programmes were mobilised to offer volunteering, traineeship or job opportunities.

On 30 May 2017, the Commission put forward a proposal to equip the European Solidarity Corps with a single legal base, its own financing mechanism and a broader set of solidarity activities. The new [Regulation](#) came into force on 5 October 2018 and the Corps has its own budget of €375.6 million until 2020.

The first calls for proposals were launched in August and November 2018, creating some 20,000 new opportunities. Another [call for proposals](#) is currently open, with an application deadline of 1 October 2019, and is set to create another 7,000 opportunities. This call invites organisations with a [quality label](#) to apply for grants and set up projects for young people to volunteer, work or go on traineeships. Groups of young people can also apply to run a solidarity project themselves. Young people interested in taking part in a funded project can directly sign up on the European Solidarity Corps Portal.

On 11 June 2018, the Commission put forward its [proposal](#) for the European Solidarity Corps under the EU's next long-term budget 2021-2027, allocating €1.26 billion to enable about 350,000 young people to go on a solidarity placement over seven years.

For more information

[Factsheet](#)

[European Solidarity Corps portal](#)