



Your Volunteering Team assignment

INFO PACK

You have decided to get involved in a Volunteering Team. In this info pack, we will explain the concept behind the European Solidarity Corps and what your role as a volunteer entails. You will also find tips for planning your trip, preparing, and packing for your project.



IBG

Internationale Begegnung
in Gemeinschaftsdiensten e.V.



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VOLUNTEERING TEAMS

Through the European Solidarity Corps (ESC), you can participate in 'Volunteering Teams' or engage in longer volunteer placements abroad in Europe. Volunteering Teams are often very **similar to traditional 'Work-camps'**: a group of at least 10 young volunteers works together on a **community project for a minimum of 2 weeks**. Volunteers **aged 18 to 30** from countries participating in the European Solidarity Corps can take part. Your travel expenses will be reimbursed, and you will receive a small allowance for your participation.

A successful Volunteering Team has a **sustainable, positive impact** both on the project location and its people, as well as on you as a participant.

Spending vacation time **meaningfully, discovering new countries, improving language skills**, the desire to **meet new people and cultures...** Every participant has their **own individual reasons** for joining an international volunteer project. What is your motivation?

Our association

Volunteering in international projects is not only a **valuable and unforgettable experience** but also an opportunity for all of us to **learn something new**. We aim to **break down prejudices and barriers** and promote tolerance and openness. Under the motto "**...peacing the world together!**" IBG wants to empower young people worldwide to contribute to a more peaceful world.



Our network

In other countries, there are **non-profit organizations that pursue similar goals to IBG**. Non-profit organizations worldwide have come together under an umbrella organization called the "ALLIANCE of European Voluntary Service Organisations." These over 50 organizations share common goals, principles, values, and standards. They all organize international Workcamps and exchange volunteers for international volunteer projects. Many organizations in EU countries offer not only work camps but also assignments in volunteering teams.

RIGHTS & RESPONSIBILITIES

Participating in a **community project** such as a **Volunteering Team** entails **responsibility**. Here we have listed the **rights and responsibilities** that are important for your participation:

As a volunteer in a Volunteering Team, you have the right to...

- to be provided with **appropriate accommodation and meals** for the duration of the project.
- to be **informed about important changes** to the project.
- to have the **purpose of the project** explained.
- to receive **health and safety instructions** regarding the work project.
- to **express opinions and thoughts freely** regarding the group process and project and to be involved in decisions.
- to have your **data and information treated confidentially**.
- not to be subjected to **discriminatory, exclusionary, or disadvantageous behaviors**.

In your "**Volunteering Agreement**," all details regarding the project and the rights and responsibilities of all parties involved are documented.

As a volunteer in a Volunteering Team, it is expected of you to...

- register in the ESC database and accept the official offer from your "Hosting Organisation" there.
- inform us whether you are legally or privately insured.
- accept the rules and conditions of the project.
- inform your "Sending Organisation" (IBG) about any relevant health restrictions or risks on your part.
- obtain information about the project and the region independently.
- organize your own travel and arrive at the agreed meeting point at the agreed time.
- be able and willing to plan leisure activities independently within the group.
- behave with respect for the cultural expectations and laws of the country.
- provide feedback on your volunteering team and fill out the "Mobility Report" after the project.

You may encounter people in your project with a completely different gender identity, sexual orientation, cultural or social background, religion, and beliefs than your own. You may also meet people with disabilities or other physical and health conditions different from yours.

We expect you to be open-minded and to respect the identity and abilities of all volunteers, even if they are unfamiliar to you! A Volunteering Team is the perfect place to learn more about the world and its people.

So, be open, respectful, and curious.



TRAVEL PLANNING

You will receive the info sheet with the exact details about the meeting point for your volunteering team no later than 3-4 weeks before the project starts. However, you can plan your travel to the region beforehand. Generally, it's best to schedule your arrival in the region for the afternoon.

Connections that arrive in the evening often make it impossible for you to continue traveling to the meeting point. In that case, it's best to travel one day earlier and plan for an overnight stay to continue to the project the next morning.

Travel expense reimbursement

Your travel expenses will be reimbursed to you after your service in the Volunteering Team. For travel to and from your project, the ESC programme provides for reimbursement of travel expenses up to a certain maximum amount, depending on the distance (as the crow flies) between your place of residence and the project location and the year when the project funding got granted. You can find the specific amounts that can be reimbursed in the respective call for volunteers for your project or you can ask us for them.

Anything beyond that maximum amount you have to pay for yourself.

For 'Green Travel', which includes traveling by train and bus, or even by bicycle or on foot, higher flat rates apply. This often takes a bit longer, especially within Europe, but it's quite feasible.

To process the reimbursement of your travel expenses, we will need your bank details, your "Mobility Report" must be filled out, and your travel receipts must be complete.

If it is foreseeable during your planning that your travel expenses will be much higher than the maximum amount, or if it is a significant obstacle for you to cover the travel costs until after the project, please contact us.



PACKING LIST

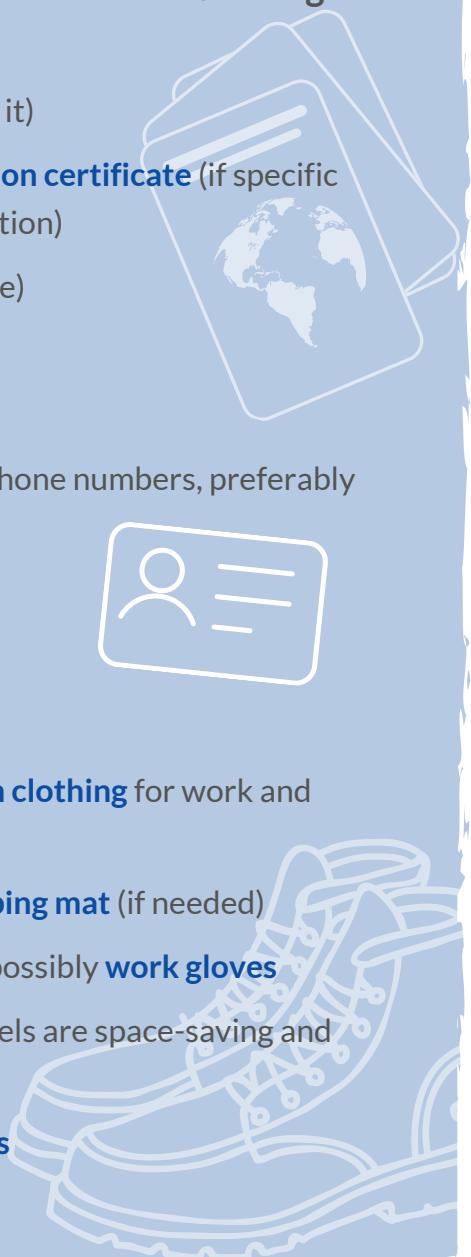
Before you set off, besides your travel planning, packing your backpack probably raises some questions. **What things will be important? What should you definitely not forget?**

For every volunteering team, you should remember to bring the following items:

- o **Passport / ID card** (and a copy in case you lose it)
- o **Possibly vaccination record / digital vaccination certificate** (if specific vaccinations are recommended for your destination)
- o **Travel documents** (printed and/or saved online)
- o **European Health Insurance Card**
- o **Info sheet** for your project
- o **Emergency numbers** (write down important phone numbers, preferably also on paper)
- o **Pocket money**
- o **Student ID / School ID** (if available)
- o **Driver's license** (if available)

Depending on the work and local weather conditions, there are often some specific items you may need. Always remember to also refer to the **packing list in the info sheet of your project**.

- o **Waterproof and warm clothing** for work and leisure
- o **Sleeping bag** and **sleeping mat** (if needed)
- o **Sturdy footwear** and possibly **work gloves**
- o **Towel** (microfiber towels are space-saving and lightweight)
- o **Swimsuit** and **flip-flops**



o **Medications and personal care items** (e.g., allergy tablets, contact lens case and solution, contraceptives, headache medication, nausea medication...)

o **Small first aid kit** (with tick removal tool for areas with a lot of ticks)

o **Hygiene items** (toothbrush, toothpaste, shampoo, soap...)

o **Laundry detergent** (e.g. in a tube)

o **Earplugs**

o **Charger** for your phone

o **Possibly an adapter for plugs** (find out beforehand which plugs are used in your destination country)

o **Small backpack or bag** for day trips

o **Flashlight**

o Reusable **water bottle**

o All **other items** mentioned in your **info sheet**

It's also nice to have:

o **Recipes** (preferably easy to cook and typical for your region or country)

o **Photos, postcards, maps** of your country

o **Sweets** (chocolate, gummy bears, gingerbread, marzipan... there are surely regional specialties you can bring for your Volunteering Team group)

o **Music / Instruments / Games**



Tips for You

Here are some tips listed for you that can be **useful for your assignment**:

- **Know your motivation, desires, and expectations.** Why did you sign up for your Volunteering Team? **What do you hope to gain from the experience?** Assess what you want to achieve realistically.
- **Inform yourself about your destination.** Learn a few words and phrases in the local language before your departure. This can facilitate communication during the trip and is often greatly appreciated by the local population.
- Be prepared to **face emotional and physical challenges.** Feeling "foreign" in a new situation is entirely normal in the initial phase of an international project. **Allow yourself enough time to arrive and explore** the new environment once on-site.
- Be aware of your (pre-)judgments towards other people/cultures and actively work to break them down. Be **mindful of your actions and communication**, and consider how both can be perceived. Signal respect and acceptance towards different or unfamiliar behavior.
- Be **flexible and prepared for organizational changes** that may occur.

Use the project as an opportunity to **overcome yourself**, to face new challenges, and to gain new experiences.

Several weeks in an international group can be exhausting. At the same time, **this intensive time together is also what makes the international volunteering project special**. If you approach others with an open mind, close relationships will quickly develop, enriching both you and the entire group.

And after the project...?

We're always curious: How was your Volunteering Team? Did it meet your expectations? Did you learn something you'd like to share? We would be delighted if you'd like to send us a few pictures and a brief report of your experience.



Reimbursement of your travel expenses

From the ESC database, you will be asked to fill out a **"Mobility Report"** after the end of your project. This mainly consists of multiple-choice questions and must be completed by you before the travel expense reimbursement can be paid out.

In order for us to reimburse your travel expenses, you need to **send us all receipts, tickets, boarding passes, etc.** Electronic receipts and scans/images can be sent via email. All receipts that you only have in paper form should be sent by post to the IBG office.

Reflect on your experience

The National Agency for the ESC Program, which coordinates, invites all volunteers to the **'Comeback'** event every November. This is an **event for everyone who has been active with the European Solidarity Corps that year.**

Every year, at the **end of September or beginning of October**, we organize our **Volunteers' Weekend** at IBG. This weekend is your opportunity to evaluate the experiences from your ESC project and **reflect on what you have learned during this time**. You can exchange ideas with other volunteers and us, learn more about IBG - and of course, have a **lot of fun again**.



IBG is an association of and for volunteers. Therefore, **we are very pleased if you are interested in getting further involved in the association**. For example, **as a camp leader** of an international work camp in Germany, you can show international volunteers your home. Or you can **support IBG with training sessions, preparation seminars, and information events**. And of course, you can also **become a member of the association and participate in discussions and decisions about the work of IBG and the work camps of the future**.

If you just want to stay up to date on current projects and available spots in other camps, **you can simply subscribe to our newsletter or follow us on social media**.

But for now, we wish you a safe journey and an exciting time in your volunteering team!

Your IBG Team



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