



Education and Culture DG

'Youth in Action' Programme

Dear volunteer!

Congratulations for having been selected for participation in the European Voluntary Service (EVS). The next weeks and months might be a life-changing experience for you. Through your participation in EVS you will get the chance to live in another country, get to know a new culture and a new language. You will meet new friends – within and beyond your Host Organisation. You will provide a service to the benefit of your Host Organisation and the local community at the same time as you will develop your own personal, social and professional skills.

This Info-Kit will help you prepare for the EVS experience. It gives you important information about what you can expect from your Sending and Host Organisation and what they can expect from you. It is meant to complement and support the activities organised by your Sending Organisation to prepare you for EVS. With this regard, it is recommended that you go through and discuss the Info-Kit with the EVS coordinator of the Sending Organisation.

The Info-kit is composed of three parts:

- § Part I – "What to expect from EVS": a document providing clear information to volunteers and promoters about what can be expected in general terms before, during and after the European Voluntary Service period;
- § Part II "Youthpass in EVS": a brief document describing the scope of Youthpass and how to obtain a Youthpass Certificate at the end of the EVS experience;
- § Part III "EVS insurance plan: guidelines for volunteers": offering detailed information about the insurance scheme provided to all EVS volunteers during their stay abroad.

Besides this Info-kit, there are several important documents concerning EVS that you should be aware of:

- § the Youth in Action Programme Guide (available at http://ec.europa.eu/youth/youth-in-action-programme/doc443_en.htm), which presents the formal definitions and criteria of European Voluntary Service, including the funding rules;
- § the EVS Charter, which highlights the roles of EVS Sending, Host and Coordinating Organisations and the main principles and quality standards of EVS. The Charter is a part of the Programme Guide.

The Info-Kit is among several supporting documents which complements the information in the Programme Guide and provides inputs for improving the quality and successful implementation of an EVS project.

Youth in Action

As you might know, EVS is part of the Youth in Action Programme (YiA) - the EU Programme for young people aged 13-30. The programme aims to inspire a sense of active citizenship, solidarity and tolerance among young Europeans and to involve them in shaping the Union's future.

Youth in Action promotes mobility within and beyond the EU borders. It is based on non-formal learning and intercultural dialogue, and it encourages the inclusion of all young people, regardless of their educational, social or cultural background.

Youth in Action has five different Actions, where EVS is Action 2 of the programme.

The programme is decentralised, meaning that most volunteers participate in a project granted by the National Agency in one of the 33 Programme Countries. Depending on the status of the applicant and the nationality of the project partners, the EVS project can also be granted by the Executive Agency located in Brussels. The National and Executive Agencies are promoting the programme, supporting applicants, managing applications and following-up the projects. In case a serious situation arises, you or the organisations involved may contact the granting agency or the agency of the host country.

There are also 8 SALTO Resource Centers, supporting National Agencies and promoters in working with a neighbouring region or a particular thematic. More information about the role of the different programme structures can be found in the Youth in Action Programme Guide and on the website of the European Commission; <http://ec.europa.eu/youth>.

EVS

The European Voluntary Service (EVS) provides young people aged 18-30 with an opportunity to express personal commitment through full-time voluntary activities in a foreign country within or beyond the borders of the European Union.

The European Union offers such an opportunity to young people because volunteering is valued as a non-formal learning experience enhancing volunteers' professional skills and competences, thus contributing to their employability. At the same time, it increases their sense of solidarity, develops their social skills and promotes active participation in society. It is a win-win situation, where both the volunteer and the community benefits.

2011 marks the 15th anniversary of the European Voluntary Service illustrating the Commission's long commitment to offering volunteering opportunities to young people. During the last 15 years 50 000 young people got the opportunity to do a voluntary service abroad through EVS. Adding a European dimension to volunteering in this way has considerable added-value.

We hope that you will take the best from this experience and we wish you good luck!