

National Funding Strategy for the European Solidarity Corps in the UK

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On 4 October 2018, Regulation (EU) 2018/1475 of the European Parliament and of the Council established the legal framework of the European Solidarity Corps programme. It states that young people should be provided with easily accessible opportunities to engage in high quality solidarity activities to contribute to cohesion, solidarity, social inclusion and democracy to the benefit of local communities (Article 4a).

The Regulation stipulates that 10% of funding will be provided for traineeships and jobs (Article 9.2) and that the actions of the European Solidarity Corps shall be consistent with, and complementary to, the relevant national-level policies, programmes and instruments (Article 5.2).

The Regulation also states that the programme should not substitute similar national solidarity, volunteering, civic service and mobility schemes (Paragraph 9). Traineeships offered under the European Solidarity Corps should always be paid by the participating organisation hosting the participant. Traineeships should be based on a written traineeship agreement in accordance with the applicable regulatory framework of the country where the traineeship takes place, as appropriate, and should follow the principles outlined in the Council Recommendation of 10 March 2014 on a Quality Framework for Traineeships (Paragraph 13).

In the UK, traineeships are a national programme in their respective areas to help tackle youth unemployment and support progression to employment and apprenticeships. Traineeships support 16-24 year-olds who are considered to be within 6 months of the labour market, and have attainment below European Qualifications Framework Level 3. Traineeships provide a work placement of up to 240 hours with work preparation training, with English and maths development where required. Traineeships provide the opportunity for occupational education and training in a chosen sector. Traineeship programmes across the UK vary in terms of programme duration from 6 weeks to 2 years.

In order to maintain consistency and complementarity between the national traineeship programmes in the UK and European Solidarity Corps Traineeships, European Solidarity Corps Traineeships must be defined as 'European Solidarity Corps Traineeships' when the placement opportunities are promoted on the UK website to make a clear distinction from national (domestic) traineeship programmes in the UK. European Solidarity Corps Traineeship placements in the UK are only possible where the applicant clearly demonstrate complementary to the national programmes. Therefore, placements in the UK should only support 25-30 years-olds to maintain this distinction from national traineeship programmes in the UK.