

2021-27 Strategy

SALTO European Solidarity Corps

SALTO ESC's strategy encompasses five long-term goals for 2027.

The strategy builds on experience of the first years of implementation as well as on the changes to the 2021 programme.



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1. SALTO European Solidarity Corps Resource Centre

Organisational Context

When the European Solidarity Corps programme was established in 2018, the legal framework¹ foresaw the setup of Resource Centres for the programme as a quality and support measure. Resource Centres are designated National Agencies which take on additional tasks to support the development, implementation and quality of actions in a programme.

The European Solidarity Corps benefits from the already well-established network of SALTO Resources Centres (short: SALTOs) under the Erasmus+ programme. The SALTOs now act as hubs of expertise that are common across the two programmes, contributing directly and indirectly to the implementation of the European Solidarity Corps.

The European Commission conducted a call for National Agencies to establish a Resource Centre for the European Solidarity Corps in 2018, which was won by the Austrian NGO IZ – Verein zur Förderung von Vielfalt, Dialog und Bildung, which hosted the National Agency at the time. The National Agency's deputy director, Melanie Jacobs, managed the establishment of the Resource Centre and coordinated it for the next two years.

In the pilot phase of the European Solidarity Corps Programme 2018-20, the Resource Centre supported the strategic implementation of the programme. A major focus was on coordinating the NETworking activities between National Agencies and ensuring that all programme aspects were covered. In addition, the Resource Centre supported the implementation of jobs and traineeships activities within the programme through several networking meetings and training programmes. Nevertheless, the jobs and traineeship activities could not be established equally well in all participating countries within the short period of two years. When it became clear that the budget for the upcoming programme period would not be increased, this strand was discontinued after 2020.

In 2021, the European Solidarity Corps Resource Centre was integrated into the OeAD-GmbH – Austria's Agency for Education and Internationalisation. Since then, the OeAD is the national agency for the implementation of Erasmus+ and the European Solidarity Corps in Austria. To align the Resource Centre with the other SALTOs, the name SALTO European Solidarity Corps (SALTO ESC) is used in communication from that point onwards.

With the second 2021-27 programme period the European Solidarity Corps programme unifies all major European volunteering opportunities under one programme. SALTO ESC responded to the changes in the programme with the development of a new strategy for this programme period.

¹ European Solidarity Corps Legal base, article 8 (c)



For further information on services and activities, please visit: <https://www.salto-youth.net/solidarity/>

Background

The 2021-2027 development strategy is building on a needs analysis², set up by the Resource Centre in 2019 and filled by 21 network stakeholders - National Agencies for Erasmus Plus and European Solidarity Corps programmes (NA) and SALTO Resource Centres.

This needs analysis resulted in an overview of the priorities identified by NAs for this pilot phase of the implementation of the programme and highlighted the new programme elements: jobs and traineeships, in-country projects and volunteering projects. The Resource Centre developed a strategic set-up with objectives: EXPLORING the potential of solidarity (studies on solidarity, solidarity in humanitarian aids, synergies with other actors), PROMOTING ESC as a tool for understanding, acting and living solidarity (solidarity projects, reaching new partners, more cooperation, Youth Goals, campaigns), SUPPORTING QUALITY IMPLEMENTATION for sustainable and long term impact (training programmes, connecting training programmes – QL, experts, best practices, mentoring, support groups, webinars), STRATEGICALLY NETWORKING to support the quality implementation of the programme and engaging new actors (bridging, linking activities, cooperation and reaching out to new partners), BUILDING COMMUNITY around and beyond ESC with core values of solidarity (NET activities, good practices, going beyond national level of community understanding to European community, publications on community building, aspects of solidarity (inclusion, sustainability).

It is worth highlighting that “Creating a common narrative and understanding of solidarity in the network” was indicated as the highest priority in the answers that the NAs provided in this needs analysis.

By the end of the programme pilot phase (2020), a number of particularly successful activities were completed by the Resource Centre that serve as a foundation for the upcoming years:

- **4thoughts for solidarity**³, a study on the concepts of solidarity was published. Videos and illustrations were developed to support the dissemination of the content of the study.
- **TOSCA**⁴, a concept for the capacity building training and support for organisations active in the Solidarity Corps was developed and organised 5-7 times annually in various countries.

² IZ - Verein zur Förderung von Vielfalt, Dialog und Bildung (2019): Starting the Solidarity Corps. European Solidarity Corps Resource Centre Needs Analysis. http://www.salto-youth.net/download/4263/Survey_Starting+the+Solidarity+Corps.pdf

³ IZ – Verein zur Förderung von Vielfalt, Dialog und Bildung (2020): 4thoughts for solidarity. <https://www.salto-youth.net/downloads/4-17-4062/4TDS%20Study%2020200501.pdf>

⁴ SALTO-YOUTH - TOSCA - Training and support for organisations active in the Solidarity Corps

- **Staff Meetings** and similar events for NA staff were coordinated, including an annual ESC staff meeting, Informal Colleague Support Meetings (ICSOMs), and an Expert Working Group on the Quality Label.
- A working cooperation within the **SALTO network** including all SALTOs serving the European Solidarity Corps programme was established.
- A **pre-study**⁵ for the Research-based Analysis and Monitoring of the European Solidarity Corps (RAY) was developed.

Other important links have been the different strategies and priorities on European Level, such as the programme strategies, the key priorities in the new programmes, the European Youth Strategy and the European Youth Work Agenda⁶.

Strategy Development Process

The development of the recent strategic orientation of SALTO ESC started with a joint two-day workshop in July 2021 with the team of SALTO ESC (Barbara Eglitis, Romina Matei and Georg Feiner) facilitated by Sabrina Apitz. As part of the workshop, the head of unit Gerhard Moßhammer as well as the director of the Austrian national agency Ernst Gesslbauer were consulted and their feedback incorporated into the strategy. The workshop included a stakeholder analysis and mapping, as well as a closer look on the 2021 Solidarity Corps Programme changes and its possible effects on the field. The goals, outcomes and activities have been collaboratively developed based on the Theory of Change⁷. Using this approach, long-term goals were defined and then necessary preconditions were identified by reverse mapping. In the strategy development process, the Advisory Group of the SALTO ESC has been consulted and the feedback incorporated in autumn 2021. A first draft of the strategy document was provided by Sabrina Apitz and finalised by the team of SALTO ESC.

2. Outline of Goals, Outcomes and Activities

SALTO ESC has developed five long-term goals to be achieved until 2027, the end of the programme period of the European Solidarity Corps, based on experience of the first years of implementation as well as on the changes to the 2021 programme.

The following desired impact guides the work of SALTO ESC for the upcoming years.

⁵ Generation and Educational Science Institute (2019): Exploring the implementation of the European Solidarity Corps during its first year. Summary. <http://www.salto-youth.net/download/4264/01+RAY+Summary+20200608.pdf>

⁶ See chapter 3.2 Related European strategies and policies in the field of youth

⁷ Theory of Change is a methodology for planning, participation, and evaluation that is used in companies, philanthropy, not-for-profit, research, and government sectors to promote social change. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Theory_of_change

1. **Shaping solidarity:** a European Narrative of Solidarity is established, and the value of solidarity is recognised.
2. **Strengthening European Volunteering:** the conditions for volunteering across Europe and partner regions are improved.
3. **Embedding solidarity:** the value of solidarity across all actions and activities of the EU youth programmes is promoted.
4. **Supporting quality implementation:** effective support for NAs and (regional) SALTOs in the implementation to maximise the impact of the ESC programme.
5. **Supporting the building of a community of practice:** a thriving European community of practice around the Solidarity Corps is built.

In order to support these goals, SALTO ESC cooperates with partners on an international level and ensures communication about the work through different channels.

Goal 1: Shaping Solidarity

SALTO ESC aims to establish a European narrative of solidarity and strengthen the recognition of its value. SALTO ESC generates know-how, builds expertise and performs research on solidarity in the ESC. SALTO ESC offers activities to reflect and challenge the concept of solidarity in the ESC. Regular events on solidarity are coordinated and publications are made to close the research gaps.

Target group:

European Solidarity Corps community of practice (NA staff, researchers, youth workers, trainers, volunteers, etc.)

Outcome	Activities
1.1 SALTO ESC recognises solidarity as a living concept and offers regular structured space for dialogue in the context of the EU youth programmes in its activities for NA staff.	
	SALTO ESC disseminates information material and publications on solidarity through various channels, e.g. through campaigns and podcasts.
	On solidarity, SALTO ESC will provide webinars for NA colleagues about solidarity, with a focus on newcomers.
	SALTO ESC will collect and produce relevant resources on solidarity in an

	online solidarity library accessible to NA staff and other stakeholders.
	SALTO ESC provides a continuation of knowledge and evidence-based data on solidarity.
1.2 The support for NAs to cooperate on solidarity has been provided.	
	SALTO ESC supports NAs to implement different activities on solidarity, for example a conference (Europe Talks) and publications.
1.3 The research gaps on solidarity identified in the <i>4Thoughts for solidarity</i> study are narrowed.	
	SALTO ESC conducts a call for papers/ research in order to close knowledge gaps identified in the 4thought for solidarity study.

Goal 2: Strengthening European Volunteering

SALTO ESC aims to improve the conditions for volunteering across Europe and partner regions and to spread awareness about the ESC programme and its impact. Long-term strategic partnership supports the implementation of the Council Recommendation on Youth Volunteering 2022 and the knowledge exchange around European volunteering and solidarity. National volunteering policies and relevant EU strategies in the field of youth and volunteering are closely linked, thus fostering stronger collaboration among stakeholders on different levels.

Target group:

Policy makers, NAs implementing European Solidarity Corps, organisations active in the field of volunteering, organisers of solidarity projects.

Outcome	Activities
2.1 Transfer and development of knowledge on value-based European volunteering among NAs and other stakeholders is ensured.	



	SALTO ESC coordinates long-term partnership on volunteering with adequate activities in order to contribute to the objective of strengthening volunteering.
	SALTO ESC establishes a Working Group on European Volunteering.
	SALTO ESC organises regular events (e.g. a biannual conference) on volunteering within ESC.
	SALTO ESC supports NAs in planning, developing and executing cooperation activities under the NET format.
	SALTO ESC generates know-how and builds expertise and performs research on European volunteering and the impact of the ESC programme on volunteering.
	SALTO ESC engages with partners on the topic of volunteering and join relevant meetings online and offline.
2.2 The societal advantage of European volunteering is communicated publicly.	
	SALTO ESC provides visibility on the topic of value-based volunteering and the community impact of volunteering through its communication channels.
	SALTO ESC supports NAs in enhancing the visibility of European volunteering.
2.3 The learnings of the ESC programme are taken into consideration in volunteering policies, especially at European and national level.	
	SALTO ESC provides input to the development of the European Youth Strategy post-2027 and programmes post



	2027 when it comes to European volunteering.
	SALTO ESC contributes to the implementation of the most recent Council conclusions on volunteering.
	SALTO ESC is developing a recommendation paper on European volunteering post 2027.
	SALTO ESC organises networking events for policy makers on volunteering practices/policies.
	SALTO ESC offers support for national volunteering policies across the Member States.
2.4 NA staff have access to resources on the links between volunteering and solidarity.	
	SALTO ESC gathers best practices and insights that highlight the link between volunteering and solidarity.

Goal 3: **Embedding Solidarity**

Solidarity as a shared value of the European Union and is reflected in all its programmes. SALTO ESC aims to promote the value of solidarity across all actions and activities of the EU youth programmes by supporting their synergies.

Target group:

NA staff as well as the broader European Solidarity Corps community of practice (researchers, youth workers, volunteers, trainers etc.)

Outcome	Activities
3.1 National Agencies are effective at using the programmes to promote solidarity in their countries and collaborating with national stakeholders on this topic.	



	SALTO ESC provides material on solidarity for new NA staff of all EU youth programmes.
	SALTO ESC provides support for NAs on solidarity elements in Erasmus+ Youth and explores synergies between the two youth programmes, e.g. youth participation and solidarity projects as well as between the Training and Evaluation Cycle (TEC) activities in the Solidarity Corps and Discover EU.
	SALTO ESC supports the dissemination of the new T-kit on value-based learning mobility together with partners.
	SALTO ESC provides promotional and/or learning materials on solidarity for EU youth programmes.
3.2 The value of solidarity has a strong place in both programmes.	
	SALTO ESC supports developing NET/TCA activities between NAs on promoting the value of solidarity across all actions and activities of the EU youth programmes.
	SALTO ESC supports a regular transfer of knowledge and experience between the NA staff of both programmes.
	SALTO ESC produces a publication on solidarity elements in Erasmus+ Youth.
	SALTO ESC engages in relevant meetings with partners on the topic.
3.3 Applicants, beneficiaries and other stakeholders from both programmes have access to (educational) material and sources on the concept of solidarity (and the link between	



solidarity and volunteering) provided by SALTO ESC

SALTO ESC disseminates information material and publications on solidarity through different channels, e.g. through campaigns and podcasts.

SALTO ESC will collect and produce relevant resources on solidarity in an online solidarity library accessible to NA staff and other stakeholders.

Goal 4: Supporting Quality Implementation

SALTO ESC aims to provide effective support for NAs and regional SALTOs in the implementation to maximise the impact of the ESC. Being a hub of information, SALTO ESC offers space to explore the programme priorities and the different aspects of solidarity through regular staff trainings, provision of support and material to NAs.

Target group:


NAs implementing European Solidarity Corps and regional SALTOs, trainers

Outcome	Activities
4.1 NAs have a better understanding of the full potential of the possibilities within ESC by providing best practice examples from the different areas and topics aligned to the needs of the NAs.	
	SALTO ESC organises regular Informal Colleague Support Meetings (ICSOMs) on Quality Label (QL), Volunteering, Training and Evaluation Cycle (TEC) and about how to use the ESC programme at its maximum capacity.
	SALTO ESC coordinates the QL working group and QL related activities among the

	NA network to support quality implementation.
	SALTO ESC promotes best practices identified through the annual SALTO awards.
4.2 NAs receive guidance in assessing the solidarity dimension in projects or in organisations when assessing the Quality Label (QL).	
	SALTO ESC develops the grid for "assessing solidarity".
	SALTO ESC coordinates the international QL Working Group (WG) and QL-related activities among the NA network to support quality implementation.
	SALTO ESC supports the implementation of the QL by co-organising meetings for internal and external QL experts; coordination of the international QL WG.
	SALTO ESC organises online courses/modules for QL newcomers.
	SALTO ESC organises annual capacity building training for QL experts.
	SALTO ESC provides materials for QL experts.
4.3 NAs have access to good practices of programme implementation from across Europe.	
	SALTO ESC contributes to the collection of inspirational project examples.
	SALTO ESC publishes best practice examples on solidarity and volunteering.
	SALTO ESC advances work on a solidarity assessment grid.



	SALTO ESC gets involved in the 2022 and future editions of the SALTO awards.
4.4 NAs have platforms (including regular events) for international exchange and professional improvement.	
	SALTO ESC provides support to NA staff by fostering international exchange among staff members. This is being done by supporting the preparation and organisation of staff meetings, providing an online exchange space for NA staff, contributing to relevant working groups like TCA/NET and youth pass, as well as supporting the organisation of thematic meetings, e.g. on Quality Label, volunteering, TEC etc.
	SALTO ESC coordinates the annual ESC Staff Meeting and supporting online exchange platform(s).
	SALTO ESC adds elements of community building to ESC Staff Meetings.
4.5 The quality implementation of the programme is supported by coordinated networking activities of NAs.	
	SALTO ESC proposes select NET activities to the NA Network
	SALTO ESC provides an overview of NET activities in the network of NAs to identify any gaps
	SALTO ESC contributes to the planning and preparation of the annual TCA/NET meetings in order to ensure adequate coverage of the NET co-operations.
	SALTO ESC engages regularly with the TCA/NET Working group and SNAC coordinators.



	SALTO ESC provides online exchange space for NAs.
4.6 NAs are provided with information material on the overall policy priorities of the ESC programme.	
	SALTO ESC provides information material and publications on the overall policy priorities of the ESC programme.
	SALTO ESC contributes to the horizontal priority on inclusion by participating in relevant meetings like the ID steering group hosted by SALTO ID or the horizontal working group on inclusion, as applicable.
4.7 Knowledge and best practice transfer towards the humanitarian strand of the ESC programme is ensured.	
	SALTO ESC provides material on humanitarian aid volunteering and shares it with colleagues at European level.

Goal 5: Supporting the Building of a Community of Practice

SALTO ESC aims to build a thriving European community of practice around ESC, including organisations, mentors, trainers, municipalities, solidarity project organisers. NET-Activities⁸ designed for the different roles of the communities are designed and organised together with NAs.

Target group:

NA staff, trainers, mentors, municipalities, organisations (sending/ hosting/ coordinating), and other members in the European Solidarity Corps community of practice

⁸ NET-Activities are NETworking activities organised by SALTOs and National Agencies and covered the European Solidarity Corps Programme. The aim of this activities is to support the quality implementation of ESC.

Outcome	Activities
5.1 Sustainable community of Training and Evaluation Cycle (TEC) trainers as well as quality of TEC is established and ensured.	
	SALTO ESC organises the TEC Forum on a regular basis (annually or biannually).
	SALTO ESC organises training courses for trainers' competence development on solidarity.
5.2 Support for mentors is ensured.	
	SALTO ESC continues the support for the NET cooperation <i>Mentoring under Construction</i> and future events connected with mentoring.
5.3 Training offers on quality development for organisations are ensured.	
	SALTO ESC provides training courses for hosting and supporting organisations on quality development (TOSCA training) on a regular basis.
5.4 Strengthened civil society through the network possibilities and peer support among the community of sending/ hosting/ supporting organisations is ensured.	
	SALTO ESC is providing a technical online platform for exchange and communication between the communities.
5.5 Sustainable community around municipalities is ensured.	
	SALTO ESC continues the support for the NET-cooperation "Activating Citizens".

5.6 Sustainable community around solidarity projects is ensured.

SALTO ESC supports the NET activities to foster a community around solidarity projects, for example by supporting the “Coaches in Solidarity Project” cooperation or the international solidarity project meet-up for solidarity project groups.

5.7 Community impact indicators and recognition are better understood.

SALTO ESC contributes to the process of identifying community impact indicators / community impact recognition under the Solidarity Corps project.

3.Strategy Implementation

Use of the Strategy

The strategy was used as the basis for developing the multi-annual work plan of SALTO ESC 2022-2027 that was submitted to the European Commission in autumn 2021. In the annual planning, responsibilities and timelines are developed. In order to monitor and evaluate the activities of SALTO ESC, a monitoring system framework is scheduled to be developed in 2022.

The strategy will be implemented in partnership with all stakeholders of SALTO ESC, including the network of National Agencies for the Erasmus+ Youth and European Solidarity Corps programme as well as the European Commission and other partners.

Related European Youth Strategies and Policies

The developed goals of this strategy aim to lay the pathways for supporting a number of strategies and priorities on a European Level.

- European Youth Strategy⁹
- Inclusion & Diversity Strategy¹⁰

⁹ [EU Youth Strategy | European Youth Portal \(europa.eu\)](https://european-council.europa.eu/media/1000000000/1/related_content/eu-youth-strategy_en.pdf)

¹⁰ [SALTO-YOUTH - Inclusion and Diversity Strategy 2021-2027](#)

- Youth Participation Strategy¹¹
- Key priorities in the Programmes Erasmus+¹² and the European Solidarity Corps¹³ 2021-2027
- Council Recommendation on the mobility of young volunteers across the European Union 2022¹⁴
- European Training Strategy¹⁵
- Youthpass Strategy¹⁶
- European Youth Work Agenda¹⁷
- Cooperation with Neighbouring countries¹⁸

Communication of the Strategy

The strategy primarily serves internal purposes of guiding the work of SALTO ESC, but will be made publicly available for transparency reasons.

Editorial

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¹¹ [Youth Participation Strategy - SALTO \(participationpool.eu\)](https://participationpool.eu)

¹² [Priorities of the Erasmus+ Programme | Erasmus+ \(europa.eu\)](https://europa.eu)

¹³ [European Solidarity Corps 2021-2027 launched | European Youth Portal \(europa.eu\)](https://europa.eu)

¹⁴ [Action for high quality and inclusive youth volunteering \(europa.eu\)](https://europa.eu)

¹⁵ [SALTO-YOUTH - European Training Strategy in the Field of Youth](https://salto-youth.eu)

¹⁶ [Youthpass Strategy – Youthpass](https://salto-youth.eu)

¹⁷ [European Youth Work Agenda \(eywc2020.eu\)](https://eywc2020.eu)

¹⁸ [SALTO-YOUTH - Interregional cooperation](https://salto-youth.eu)

