

Asociația pentru Promovarea Economiei Cunoașterii

“Voluntari pentru Viitor”

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EVS guide for volunteers



EVS. What is it?

European Voluntary Service or in a short way “EVS” is a full-time volunteering opportunity where a volunteer has the chance to experience a new culture, to learn a new language or to improve his life skills already acquired while benefiting the local community in another country. EVS is a unique experience available to young people under European Commission’s Youth in Action non-formal learning programme. Also, within the EVS, young people can spend up to 12 months abroad as European volunteers doing something useful in society, helping in local projects in various fields. It may be cultural, environmental, social, sporting activities.



EVS is not...

- EVS is not occasional, unstructured, part-time volunteering.
- EVS is not an internship in an enterprise.
- EVS is not a paid job and must not substitute paid jobs.
- EVS is not a recreation or tourist activity.
- EVS is not a free language course.
- EVS is not exploitation of cheap work force.
- EVS is not a period of study or vocational training abroad.
- EVS is not simply a funding scheme, but a quality model of transnational voluntary service.

How does it work?

The EVS programme operates with three partners: you, your Sending Organisation and Host Organisation. Each project has to involve at least these three key actors, but a larger number of organisations and/or volunteers can be involved. The relationship of sending



organisation, volunteer and host organisation is a triangular partnership. The organisations will be responsible for different aspects of your EVS experience: for example, the SO tell you how you can search for projects, give you advice when needed, help with your preparation and organize your insurance and flights and, in turn, the HO will nominate a personal Mentor for you. There

are also National Agencies which oversee EVS within a country and deal with finances, applications, reporting and quality of EVS. So, after clarified all practical arrangements, your Sending Organisation and Host Organisation will submit grant applications seeking European Commission funding.

There are 3 deadlines for submitting applications each year:

Deadline	For activities starting between:
1 February	May 1 and September 30
1 May	August 1 and January 31
1 October	January 31 and June 30

EVS does not cost you anything, at least, no money. You receive a European Commission grant to cover your costs like travel, insurance, board and lodging, training and your pocket money ("volunteer allowances" for varies depending on your destination). The EVS activity abroad should have a minimum duration of 2 months and a maximum overall duration of 12 months (excluding preparation and evaluation). If you're a young person with fewer opportunities, for example: people with a disability, those with no educational qualification, those who are homeless, placements can be as short as 2 weeks, additional support can be provided to make it easier for you to take part and such placements can be used as preparation for a longer-term placement.



Who is eligible to volunteer under EVS?

EVS is open to you if you're aged between 18-30 years. It is aimed mainly at the "Programme countries", but young people from the "Neighbouring Partner countries" can also participate in EVS projects. The so-called "Programme countries" is formed by all the Member States of the European Union and the EEA/EFTA countries and preaccession countries. Also, one of the following groups are the right candidate:

- Youth workers, youth leaders, trainers, project managers or organisers in the field of youth and non-formal education;
- Non-profit-making youth organizations;
- Other non-profit-making organisations, associations and structures experienced in the field of youth and non-formal education.



In which country may you do EVS?

You can do an EVS project in each "Programme Country" of the Youth in Action Programme: Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovak Republic, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, United Kingdom, Iceland, Malta, Liechtenstein);

You also can go on EVS in a "Neighbouring Partner Country" of the EU. There are 3 regions: South East Europe (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Former Yug. Rep. of Macedonia (FYROM), Kosovo, Montenegro, Serbia) Eastern Europe and Caucasus (Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova, Russian Federation, Ukraine) and Mediterranean Partner Countries (Algeria, Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, Palestinian Authority of the West Bank and Gaza Strip, Syria, Tunisia).



- **Why does EVS exists?**

Through this programme, the European Union creates a non-formal learning opportunities for young people and supports an intercultural learning. Paradoxically, learning about others in a different cultural context involves also important learning about oneself and vice versa.



This is exactly the process your volunteer might be facing during the EVS.

You might not be aware of your own culture and cultural identity unless you are confronted with another culture. So, if you are interested and willing to learn another language, curious about other countries and cultures, are open minded, motivated and enjoy meeting new people EVS has an incredible array of opportunities!

EVS is a way for young people to do something useful in society and gain new and useful skills. As an EVS volunteer you will have the opportunity to understand different cultures, live in another country and be an active European citizen!

Why volunteering?

People volunteer for different reasons. Most part of the volunteers wants to acquire new knowledge, skills and competencies, which will help them later in the career. All the same time, it may be to help the community where they are living, to offer something back to the humanity. Through volunteering, people expand their horizons, know themselves better and grow as human beings.

Briefly, here are the benefits of a volunteer:

- You will learn to work in teams
- You'll make new friends
- You will gain a better ability to make decisions
- You will enrich your resume
- You will become more responsible and thoughtful
- You'll experience new things and acquire new knowledge
- You will help the community in which you live



Your fundamental rights as an EVS volunteer

The rights listed below are compiled by the European Commission.

- The participant has the right to respect for his or her physical and mental integrity;
- The participant has the right to the protection of personal data concerning him or her;
- The participant's dignity must be respected;



- The participant shall not be subjected to inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment;
- The participant has the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion;
- The participant shall not be discriminated against on any grounds such as gender, race, colour, ethnic or social origin, genetic features, language, religion or belief, political or any other opinion, membership of a national minority, property, birth, disability, sexual orientation;
- The participant has the right not to participate in activities likely to harm his/her safety, health or physical, mental, moral or social well-being;



BEFORE EVS

Advices for potential EVS volunteers

When you have decided you want to become an EVS volunteer think about your motivation for doing EVS. Next, we give young people some reflection points to consider before applying for EVS:

- Before going further, it might be good to be well informed about EVS and the possibilities;
- When you look for an organisation that can host you, you need to verify if it is accredited;
- Prepare yourself properly for a stay abroad, for the biggest challenges;
- Found a project which interests you and think about why you have applied to that; Be realistic with yourself and put a lot of thought into your search. It is the best way to get to a successful experience.
- Think about the experiences you would like to gain from the placement; It is wise to look to a project from a learning point of view: what can you offer, which competencies do you have in that theme, and to which extend can you still learn within that theme and benefit from the project? You can reach one of the following themes: health, environment, youth sports, youth leisure, gender equality, minority rights, art and cultures, media and communications, social integration and exclusion, urban and rural development, european awareness, civil protection etc. It's good to have some idea of the type of thing you're interested in, but also try to be open-minded and flexible in your approach.



- Talk about issues and worries with friends and family. They may have experiences or advice than can offer which will make you re-think how you are feeling;
- You co-operate closely with your Sending organization in order to develop details of your individual project;
- Take some time to think about all the people who can support you during your placement, especially if there are any problems.
- Be proactive in contacting your Hosting Organisation. Also, you are entitled to clear information about the Hosting Organisation, its activities and the tasks that you will be expected to carry out in organization. Also, you don't be afraid of asking questions like: where will I live?, who will be my supervisor?, are there any other volunteers in my placement? and will I receive any training?.
- Try to find out if there are EVS volunteers in the project already - often they can help with very practical information about how life really is within the project.
- It's good to reflect upon some cultural aspects in advance so as you avoid what is called "culture shock." You need to answer yourself some of these questions to help focus your mind: Have you also already some intercultural experiences? Have you worked already together with people from other cultural backgrounds?
- Another question to put yourself before you start looking for a EVS project: For how long are you ready to commit yourself in a EVS project with all its stages: the preparation, the service and the follow-up? Ex-EVS'ers are telling that 12 months is a long period, and especially during special days as Christmas, New Year, Easter,... home sickness can appear when staying abroad without returning to home. But, you should be aware that understanding and living in satisfying relation with the local community requires more time to discover and interact with the community.
- Begin a diary or blog (there's even www.myevs.net which is a blogging site specifically for EVS volunteers) - it will be amazing in the future to look back at your feelings, your new experiences and your learning!

Don't forget, you have the right to be prepared for your EVS experience. After this reflection, you should know if EVS is the perfect opportunity for you right now, otherwise you should choose another programme that is more appropriate. Take some time to reflect it is very important, the chance for a disappointment during a project is much lower!

Fears and expectations at the beginning of the EVS stage. Yours is?

Commonly, the fears of the volunteers before to participate in a stage is about living for a long time without family, especially for young people just graduating the high school, or is about their capacity to adapt to a new culture or is about the language of the host country.

If you are afraid you will not able to learn the language of the country of destination and thus will be impossible for you to communicate with people from the community, to make new friends and to integrate in the community where you have to live for the stage, we have an advice:

- Practice the language! Even if you don't speak any of the language of your new country, begin to learn basic words and phrases. Or if you have a basic knowledge of the language, try to practice it to become more confident and more fluent.
- Attention! Language learning within EVS should not be the only reason for you to apply to this programme. Language learning is a consequence.

DURING EVS

Rights During the EVS	Responsibilities During the EVS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The volunteer has the right to an explanation concerning the grant received by the organisation and the use of this grant for the benefit of the volunteer's project 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The volunteer is expected to respect the organisational policy of the host organisation.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The volunteer has the right to language training 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The volunteer must respect the health and safety regulations of the host organisation / country.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The volunteer has the right to adequate training to enable him/her to carry out the agreed tasks and a right to attend the on-arrival and mid-term seminars offered by the National Agency. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The volunteer must not act in any way could put others or him/herself at the risk of being injured.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The volunteer should have adequate supervision related to his/her tasks, by the local host organisation in the project. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The volunteer has the responsibility to fulfil the terms of the tri-partite agreement and is expected to remain in the project for the agreed duration unless there is good reason for the volunteer to leave the project.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The volunteer must be assigned a tutor 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The volunteer is expected to be reliable,

<p>by the local host organisation, and should have frequent contact with him/her.</p>	<p>including notifying the appropriate persons (tutors, NA) of his/her intention to withdraw from the EVS.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The volunteer is entitled to support from his/her tutor and the National Agency in the event of unforeseen circumstances. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The volunteer must keep his/her tutor informed about his/her whereabouts during the EVS period.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The volunteer should expect his/her sending organisation to stay in contact with him/her for the duration of the project. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The volunteer has responsibility towards the host organisation and should show willingness to adapt to his/her surroundings and to carry out the agreed tasks. While the volunteer will be involved in interesting activities, some of the tasks could be routine but important to the running of the organisation.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The volunteer should not be coerced into participating in activities against his/her convictions which were not previously agreed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The volunteer has the responsibility to seek guidance when necessary. if the volunteer has a problem s/he should discuss it with his/her tutor as the host organisation can only act when it is aware of a problem.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The volunteer has the right to receive pocket money from his/her host organisation on a weekly or monthly basis corresponding to the monthly rate set by the European Commission for each participating country in the EVS. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The volunteer is expected to meet regularly with his/her tutor.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All local travel costs related to the EVS project are covered by the host organisation.. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The volunteer should report serious difficulties to the National Agency.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The volunteer is entitled to two consecutive whole days off per week and two days holiday per month of service (to be taken within the EVS period, with prior agreement of the host organisation); during this time off, the volunteer is entitled to receive his/her pocket money and all other allowances offered by the programme. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The volunteer must attend all the activities foreseen by the programme and the events organised by the National Agency (on-arrival, mid-term meetings), in order to learn, share his/her difficulties and to exchange his/her experiences.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> It is possible for the volunteer to end his/her project for a good reason, after having consulted his/her host organisation, sending organisation and the National Agency. 	

AFTER EVS

Rights After the EVS	Responsibilities After the EVS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The volunteer is entitled to receive support from his/her sending organisation after completion of his/her project. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The volunteer must respect the agreement with the sending organisation about reporting and returning experience to the sending organisation.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Following the completion of his/her EVS, the volunteer is entitled to a certificate attesting the skills and experience that the volunteer has acquired during this period. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The volunteer must complete a final report at the end of the EVS project.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The volunteer can apply for Future Capital up to two years after the end of his/her project. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The volunteer must contact the sending organisation on his/her return or at the end of the EVS project

What does volunteering in Romania?

In Romania, many organizations are already aware of the importance of volunteering. The young romanians are driven by the wish to express their solidarity contribute positively, actively participate and learn by doing.

Volunteer Opportunities in Romania

In Romania widespread poverty, unemployment, and corruption have made it difficult for the country to move forward and have created a real need for the kind of work done by volunteers. If you plan to work as a volunteer in Romania, you should know that you have many opportunities, you can do all kind of projects that: working in a care placement, tutoring of students with problems, promoting democratic principles in the community, cleaning the parks, development campaigns to promote recycling of various materials, to prevent children's rights, to promote healthy eating etc.

Romanian tourism



Authentic, Natural and Cultural are the words that best capture the essence of Romania, a dynamic country rich in history, arts and scenic beauty. Romania offers countless unique travel experiences that are waiting to be discovered.

A journey of a few hours by car or train can take you from the Danube River to a beautiful, intact, medieval town in Transylvania; from Bucharest - Romania's capital city - to the Black Sea; from Southern Transylvania to Bucovina or Maramures. Take a step back in time

as you visit one of the world's famous painted monasteries in Bucovina, the ancient, hilltop citadel in Sighisoara or an authentic, centuries-old, folkloric village in Maramures.

Explore Romania's many architectural treasures and experience its vibrant and flourishing arts scene. Moreover, alpine tourism in Romania benefits of very good developmental conditions, thanks to the potential offered by the three Carpathian sectors, each with its own specific features and landscapes.

We will say something about the main attractions:

➤ **The Danube Delta**

The Danube Delta is a wildlife enthusiast's (especially a bird watcher's) paradise. The maze of canals bordered by thatch, willows and oaks entangled in lianas, offers the perfect breeding ground for countless species of birds, some of them from as far away as China and Africa. Millions of Egyptian white pelicans arrive here every spring to raise their young, while equal numbers of Arctic geese come here to escape the harsh winters of Northern Europe. The Delta is formed around the three main channels of the Danube, named after their respective ports: Chilia (in the north), Sulina (in the middle), and Sfantu Gheorghe (in the south).



➤ **The Painted Monasteries**

Among the most picturesque treasures of Romania are the Painted Monasteries of Bucovina (*in northeastern Romania*). Their painted exterior walls are decorated with elaborate 15th and 16th century frescoes featuring portraits of saints and prophets, scenes from the life of Jesus, images of angels and demons, and heaven and hell. Whether you are interested in religion, history, art or architecture, you will be intrigued by the construction and decor — exterior and interior — of these edifices.

➤ Castles and Fortresses of Romania



Romania's collection of castles and fortresses perhaps best illustrates the rich medieval heritage of the country. The most popular include the Corvinesti Castle, the Peles Castle, the Bran Castle and legendary home to Bram Stoker's Count Dracula.

➤ Black Sea

Warm climate, miles of sand beaches, ancient monuments, vineyards and modern resorts invite travelers to seriously consider Romania's Black Sea Coast as their summer vacation destination. Beaches, stretching from Mangalia to Mamaia, are dotted with fine resorts and hotels, and countless sports and entertainment facilities.

Besides, here are the main regions and cities in Romania: Transylvania, Banat & Crisana, Bucovina & Moldova, Dobrogea, Maramures, Walachia, Bucharest, Alba Iulia, Arad, Baia Mare, Brasov, Braila, Cluj, Constanta, Craiova, Galati, Iasi, Oradea, Satu Mare, Sibiu, Sighisoara, Suceava, Timisoara, Targu Jiu, Targu Mures, Tulcea.

