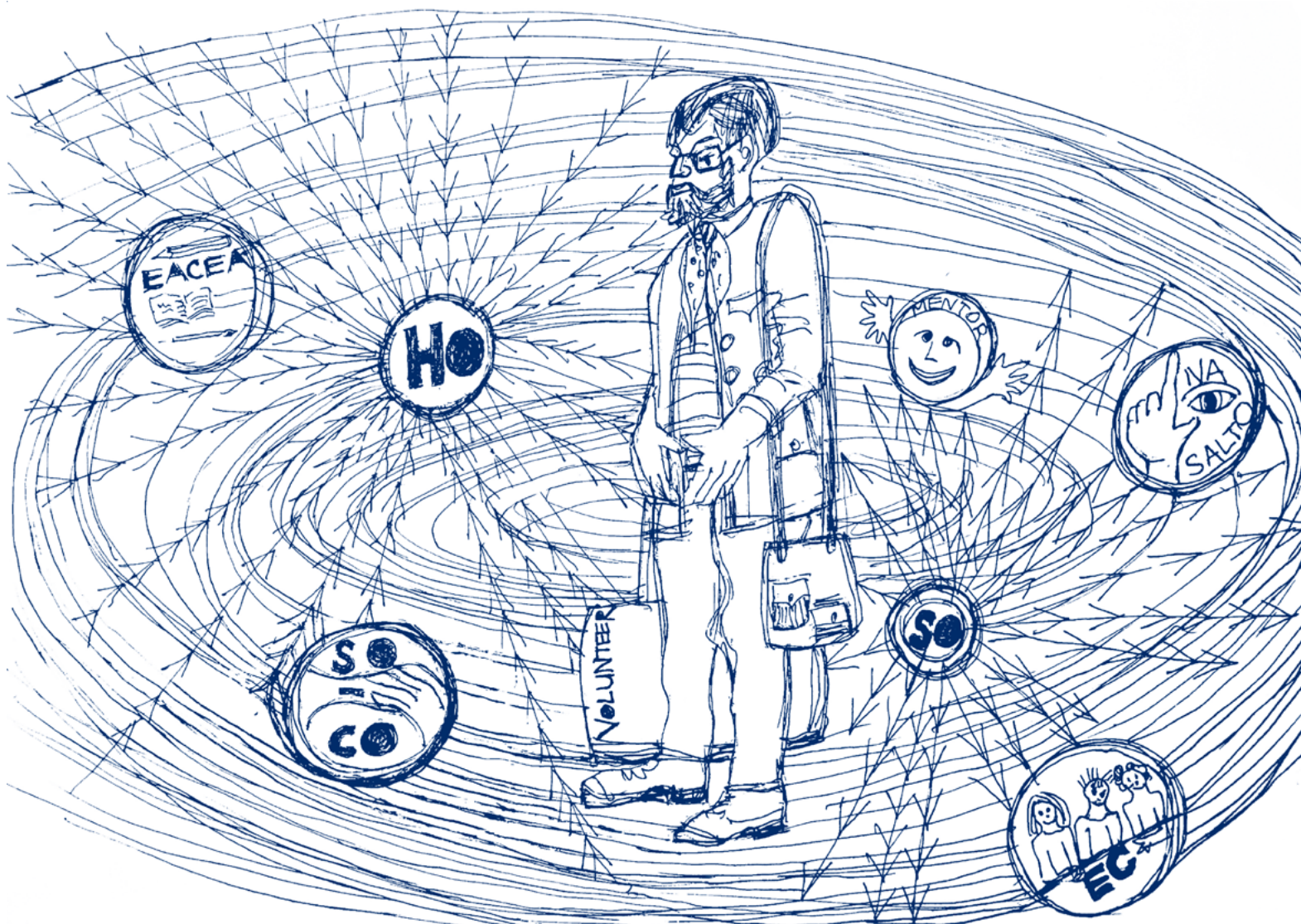


# European Solidarity Corps Galaxy

As you can see in the picture bellow, European Solidarity Corps (ESC) volunteers enjoy systematic support from various actors (supporting organisations, hosting organisations, mentors, National Agencies, SALTO Resource Centres, EACEA, European Commission...) during all phases of an ESC project. Such support helps ESC volunteers successfully participate in their projects and has proved to be beneficial whenever there is a need to clarify misunderstandings or resolve conflict situations. The diagram also shows a possible problem resolution procedure involving various ESC actors.

In the preparatory phase, it is usually the supporting organisation (SO) that is in direct personal contact with the ESC volunteer (clarification of the volunteer's motivation to take part in an ESC project, his or her expectations, help with contacting foreign receiving organisations, choosing the right ESC project...). Later, before departure for the ESC project, the supporting organisation helps the volunteer with preparations (sharing ESC project content / ensuring pre-departure training support, preparing for life in a different culture, assistance with arranging travel to the hosting organisation...) and with practicalities (insurance, visa, if required, etc.).



During the ESC activity, the ESC volunteer is supported primarily by the hosting organisation (HO) and a mentor (M). The hosting organisation provides support to ESC volunteers mainly in the following areas: involvement of the volunteer in the planned activities/work, education, integration in the local community and in the host culture (in collaboration with the mentor), practicalities like language support, finding appropriate boarding, etc. The mentor supports ESC volunteers mainly in personal and social life, helps with the adaptation process in the hosting country, with his or her integration in the local community, with reflecting on the learning process including intercultural aspects of the ESC experience, and provides support to the volunteer in conflict/crisis situations. There are usually several people around ESC volunteers who provide hands-on support. The key and closest people from the hosting organisation typically include the mentor and an ESC coordinator (task-related support, main contact, supervisor... someone who is responsible for planning tasks/flow of ESC projects). At the same time, these people can usually effectively help resolve various issues, misunderstandings or possible conflict situations the ESC volunteer may run into in the host country. Open and clear communication and sharing of impressions and feelings of the ESC volunteer as well as building trust between the volunteer, mentor and staff of the hosting organisation have proved to lower the risk of conflicts significantly.

A separate "supporting organisation in the coordination role" is involved in some ESC projects. In such cases, this organisation provides methodological support throughout the ESC process in the local hosting organisation(s), including provision of continuous support to ESC volunteers. The "supporting organisation in the coordination role" and the local hosting organisation(s) usually make an agreement on the division of tasks, leadership of the ESC project, support and practicalities. It is highly recommended to share such agreement on the roles of these organisations with the ESC volunteers before or immediately upon their arrival to the hosting organisation. This can also help prevent possible misunderstandings and problems in ESC projects.

Besides a close contact with the mentor and the hosting organisation, the ESC volunteer as well as the hosting organisation should be in regular contact with the supporting organisation during the ESC project in the host country. The supporting organisation plays an important role in solving serious problems or conflict situations that may arise and can intervene if the ESC volunteer, mentor and hosting organisation are unable to find a solution acceptable for all parties involved.

Should very serious problems occur, when the ESC volunteer, mentor, hosting organisation, "supporting organisation in coordinating role" (if involved in the project) and the supporting organisation are not able to find an acceptable solution or provide necessary support to the ESC volunteer, it is possible to contact national and European authorities – the National Agency (NA of the host country or the sending country), SALTO Resource Centres, Executive Agency (Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency), or representatives of the European Commission (EC). Those organizations can help by analysing the case and providing feedback and official recommendations to resolve the situation.

The supporting organisation continues to play a very important role even after the ESC volunteer returns home. The organisation is expected to evaluate the ESC project with the ex-volunteer, provide support with his or her re-integration process and to motivate him or her to make use of the ESC experience. Besides the possibility to attend an annual European Solidarity Corps evaluation event (held by sending NAs or SALTO centres), it is usually beneficial for both the ESC volunteer and the supporting organisation if the supporting organisation offers involvement in its various activities or supports the ex-ESC volunteer in his or her own follow-up activity.

With this systematic approach, the European Solidarity Corps programme represents a unique, safe opportunity for young people to volunteer in a foreign country, with a strong educational process on the part of ESC volunteers as well as the hosting organisations and local communities, including intercultural learning within a safe project environment.

## Resources

European Solidarity Corps Guide 2020

[https://ec.europa.eu/youth/sites/youth/files/european-solidarity-corps-guide\\_2020\\_en.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/youth/sites/youth/files/european-solidarity-corps-guide_2020_en.pdf)

Hopscotch to Quality in EVS 2.0 (A practical Handbook for enhancing quality in European Voluntary Service)

<https://www.salto-youth.net/rc/see/resources/hopscotch/hopscotch2.0/>

European Solidarity Corps Resource Centre

<https://www.salto-youth.net/rc/solidarity/>

## Abbreviations

SO – supporting organisation

HO – hosting organisation

SO-CO – supporting organisation in the coordination role

M – mentor

SO-NA – National Agency in sending country

HO-NA – National Agency in hosting country

SALTO RC – Support, Advanced Learning and Training Opportunities for Youth Resource Centres

EACEA – Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency (Executive Agency)

EC – European Commission

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