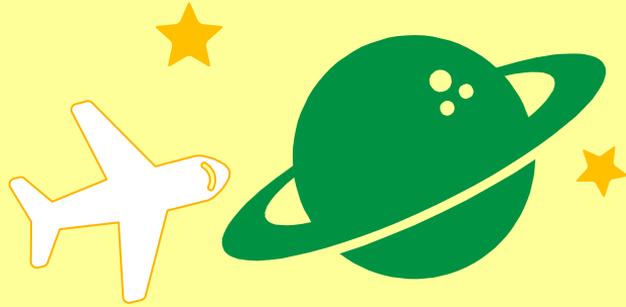


European Solidarity Corps
Long-term volunteering
opportunity
“The Green Project”
INFOPACK

Sofia, Bulgaria
2022-2023



EUROPEAN
SOLIDARITY
CORPS



Who and when?

- 4 international and 2 Bulgarian volunteers for each of these two periods:**
- January 2023 - June 2023 (6 months)**
 - July 2023 - December 2023 (6 months)**



- ❖ **Hosting organization:** Association “Professional Forum for Education”, in collaboration with the Institute of Mineralogy and Crystallography of the Bulgarian Academy of Science
- ❖ **Target group:** Young people and youth workers between 18 - 30 years old residing in: Albania, Algeria, Armenia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Belgium, Belarus, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Egypt, Estonia, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Jordan, Kosovo, Latvia, Lebanon, Libya, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Moldova, Montenegro, Morocco, Netherlands, North Macedonia, Norway, Palestine, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Tunisia, Turkey, Ukraine.
- ❖ **Location:** Sofia, Bulgaria
- ❖ **Expenses included:** Visa cost, flight tickets, health insurance (only for international volunteers), transportation card, accommodation, and monthly allowance are covered by the European Solidarity Corps Programme of the European Union.
- ❖ **To apply:** please fill in the application form in the following link by November 20: <https://forms.gle/9dRN7tmATDdbM7u78>



Youthpass



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Specific objectives of the project

- To build the skills of the participating volunteers in line with the **8 Key Competences** of Youthpass
- To use and promote **non-formal educational** methods as a valuable asset to the formal curricula (through working with young people aged 14-30 on the local level)
- To promote **environmental sustainability** and **green** practices among the local community in Bulgaria
- To encourage **social inclusion**, tolerance, respect for diversity and non-discrimination, integration of young people facing difficulties (both volunteers and local youth)
- To encourage **young people's** sense of initiative and **raise awareness** about the positive contribution that they can make through their participation in society
- To reinforce a more inclusive society and cooperation with schools, universities, other organizations, etc.
- To create tangible positive **changes** in the local environment through improving and developing **poorly maintained public spaces**
- To address important issues related to **digitalization** and the digital transformation, through working with young people on topics connected to digital resilience and mindful use of digital media



Project activities

The Green Project is funded by European Solidarity Corps, an initiative of the European Union which creates opportunities for young people to volunteer or work in projects in their own country or abroad that benefit communities and people around Europe.

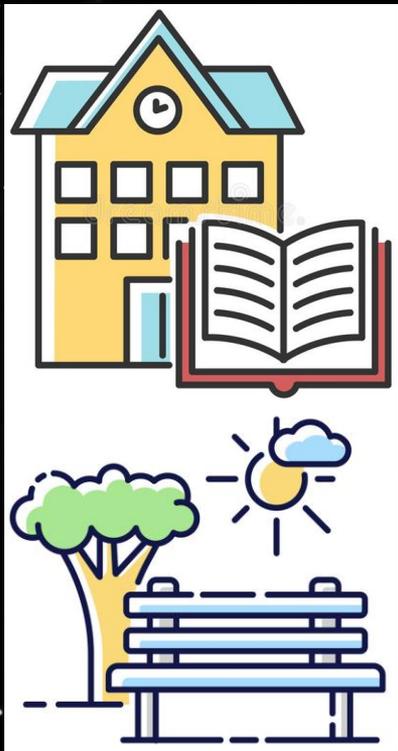
During your voluntary experience, you will be engaged in the following main activities:

- Organize **online and offline activities** and events for **young people** aged 14-30, for promoting **environmental sustainability and green practices**, such as urban gardening and composting, recycling and upcycling, being responsible consumers, spending time in nature, etc.
- **Promote STEM** (science, technology, engineering and math) in a interactive way among youngsters (geography, chemistry, geology, etc.). This will be done in cooperation with the Bulgarian Academy of Science, including through field trips in the nature.
- Participate in the improvement or **renovation of poorly maintained public areas** - schools, parks, universities, institutes, etc.
- **Organize activities** related to the healthy and mindful use of digital media, minimizing its negative effects and ensuring that adolescents and youth are aware about the importance of their digital wellbeing and resilience.
- Support the regular work of the hosting organization, promote intercultural dialogue, volunteering and mobility opportunities in Europe and beyond.



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Practical work on improvement of public spaces



Wood working

planning, cutting and constructing different wooden thing: bird houses, insect houses, formwork for concrete, furnitures, etc.



Soil working

digging, cleaning weed and bushes, soil enrichment, planning vegetation and other processes



Planting

seeds spreading, plant cuttings, flowers, vegetables, trees, technical crops, build improvements, etc.



Concrete working

fixing pathways, stairs or other damaged objects; prepare improvements – containers, benches, etc.



Renovation

cleaning, brushing, painting, improvements, fixing not working things, improvements



Urban gardening, workshops with young people on sustainability and STEM-related topics, field trips



Preparing seed bombs with kids from local primary school



Experimental Urban garden in the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences campus



Urban gardening, workshops with young people on sustainability and STEM-related topics, field trips



Our First Concrete Bee Hive in the garden



Maintaining our bees in the concrete hive



Urban gardening, workshops with young people on sustainability and STEM-related topics, field trips



Polishing minerals found in a field trip with geologists from the Bulgarian Academy of Science



Organized field-trip for collecting fossils - giant bivalves was found and donated to a local museum



Workshops at schools, events at Eduspace – the co-working space of the association



Who we are

Association “Professional Forum for Education” was established in 2002 as a non-profit organization which has a wide range of activities related to the youth work, education and culture.

Partners of ours are many schools and NGOs in Bulgaria, with whom we collaborate on a regular basis, as well as with the Bulgarian Academy of Science.

The Association aims to involve young people in non-formal educational processes promoting intercultural dialogue, youth mobility, volunteering, entrepreneurship, active citizenship, environmental sustainability, tolerance and appreciation of diversity. These objectives are realized by a number of specific activities provided by our organization, such as seminars, training courses, conferences, summer and winter trainings for teachers and youth workers, as well as youth activities on the local and national level. We also focus on innovations in education and on digitalization. Our activities are designed both for educators who would like to integrate non-formal educational methods in their work, and for young people who are motivated to learn more on these subjects and to be an active part of society.

We work in the field of international youth projects and we regularly organize Erasmus+ youth exchanges and training courses. We also already implemented two international volunteering projects, hosting young people from Italy, Spain, Tunisia and Bulgaria.





Eligibility Criteria:

- ✓ Resident in one of the eligible countries mentioned above;
- ✓ Between 18 and 30 years;
- ✓ Possess good command of English (ability to clearly understand and communicate with others in English);
- ✓ Have basic knowledge and experience using different digital tools such as Zoom, Google Meet, etc.); design and video editing skills will be an advantage;
- ✓ Demonstrate ability to appreciate the variations of human experience and personal identities, including: age, income, race, ethnicity, religion, creed, gender identity, sexual orientation, disability, and geographic home region;
- ✓ Able to engage a group in an educational process, appreciate an interactive model of learning, create a comfortable environment, convey accurate information, mediate conflict and understand group dynamics;
- ✓ Willing to fulfill the role in all project phases, be accountable to transfer further knowledge and skills to other youth in their country.



Required skills

Digital skills

computer and software competences,
social media,
communication online,
finding and using
information online, etc.

Social skills

communication and
interaction, body
language, active
listening, empathy,
respect, etc.

Motivation

initiative, proactivity,
pursuing goals,
personal growth,
self-determination,
career development,
inspiration, etc.

Organization skills

Team management,
decision making, project
management, problem
solving, team work,
strategic thinking,
etc.

Planning skills

setting goals, managing
priorities, establishing
objectives, organization
skills , etc.



Practical Arrangements for local volunteers (Bulgarian residents)



- During the volunteering period, you will be provided with a transportation card, as well as with monthly allowance for your living expenses.
- Accommodation and transportation expenses outside Sofia are not covered for national volunteers.
- The monthly allowance for your living expenses is 500 BGN (1 EUR is around 1.95 BGN).
- Please note that health insurance is not covered for national volunteers in the frame of the European Solidarity Corps projects.



Practical Arrangements for international volunteers

- During the period of your voluntary service, you will be provided with accommodation in a shared apartment with other volunteers, a transportation card, as well as with monthly allowance for your living expenses.
- The amount of the monthly allowance is 500 BGN (leva), which is equivalent to approx. 250 EUR (1 EUR is around 1.95 BGN).
- Travel expenses from your home country to Sofia, and back will be reimbursed once you are in Sofia, within the limit that the European Union calculated for participants from your country, based on presented original tickets and boarding passes.
- We will also cover your visa fees, up to 200 EUR per person. Please note that you will need to apply for the visa in the Bulgarian Embassy in your country, and you will need sufficient time for receiving it before coming here (the procedure might take around 1 month). We will provide you with an official invitation letter for this purpose.
- You will be provided with health insurance through the Cigna system that is working on the European level for all volunteers. In case you have any medical conditions or special needs, please inform us before you come to Bulgaria.



Key Moments

❖ During your project you will have the support of our team, as well as a mentor, a young person who will have regular meetings with you and will make sure that all your needs are discussed and hopefully met. Your mentor will assist you with any issues you might have.

❖ You will have an on-arrival training and/or a mid-term training, organized by the Bulgarian National Agency that manages the European Solidarity Corps, together with other volunteers based in Bulgaria. The schedule and organization of these activities depends entirely on the National Agency.

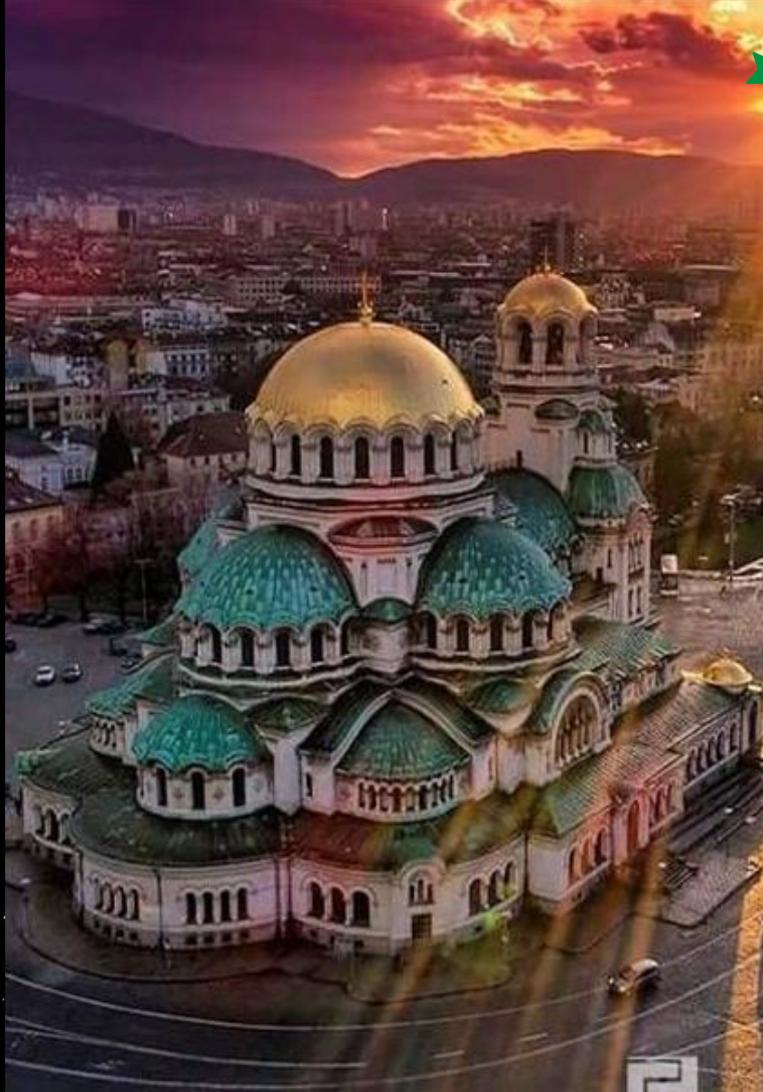
❖ For the international volunteers: you will have the opportunity to learn Bulgarian through online courses that are provided for free to the volunteers. Since most of our work will be in English, you will practice your English on a daily basis.

❖ YOUTH PASS

In the end of your project, you will be awarded with a YOUTHPASS certificate which is used in European youth projects and is an official recognition of the skills and knowledge you acquired. You can find more information about it [here](#).



Living in Sofia and exploring Bulgaria



The weather in Bulgaria changes a lot throughout the 4 seasons, so be prepared, depending on the period of the year when you will be here. In summer the average temperature is high, around 25 -30 °C. In autumn the temperature is unstable, it might be rainy. When there is sun, the temperature can get up to 20 °C but when it is cloudy and windy it can be around 5 -10 °C. In winter usually the temperatures are between 0 and 10 °C, but it can get warmer or colder, and there is usually snow during some weeks of the winter period. In spring the weather gets better and the temperatures rise, they are usually between 10 and 20 °C. Bring the most suitable clothes for the weather here, so that you are prepared.

Traditional Food



The Bulgarian cuisine is representative of the cuisine of Eastern Europe. It shares characteristics with other Balkan cuisines. Bulgarian cooking traditions are diverse because of geographical factors such as climatic conditions suitable for a variety of vegetables, herbs and fruit. Aside from the vast variety of local Bulgarian dishes, Bulgarian cuisine shares a number of dishes with Persian, Turkish, and Greek cuisine. Bulgarian food often incorporates salads as appetizers and is also noted for the prominence of dairy products, wines and other alcoholic drinks such as rakia. The cuisine also features a variety of soups, such as the cold soup tarator, and pastries, such as the filo dough based banitsa.

Similarly to other Balkan cultures, the per capita consumption of yogurt (kiselo mlyako in Bulgarian, lit. "sour milk") among Bulgarians is traditionally higher than the rest of Europe.

The country is notable as the historical namesake for *Lactobacillus bulgaricus*, a microorganism chiefly responsible for the local variety of the dairy product. White brine cheese called sirene, similar to feta, is also a popular ingredient used in salads and a variety of pastries.

Attractions



Sofia is our capital, a city where around 1.5 million people currently live. It is a cultural and administrative center, with a rich history and many attractions. It has had many names throughout the centuries, and the current name is pronounced by Bulgarians with a stress on the 'o', in contrast with the tendency of foreigners to place the stress on 'i'. The female given name "Sofia" is pronounced by Bulgarians with a stress on the 'i'.

- There are many things to do in Sofia, cultural events, museums, parks, interesting historical sights. In the city center everything is within walking distance, but we also have buses, trams, trolleybuses and metro.
- We definitely recommend the free walking tours, organized by youth NGOs in the capital, such as the Free Sofia Tour and the Balkan Bites free food tour. They are a good introduction for the history of Bulgaria and Sofia, to our traditions and cuisine. And the best thing, of course, is to explore on your own (and/or with your friends and colleagues).
- During weekends, you can also visit other towns and cities in Bulgaria, which are not far away, and also offer beautiful sights and historic places, such as Plovdiv or Veliko Tarnovo. You could go hiking in the Rila Mountain (see the Rila Monastery or the Seven Rila Lakes) or go to the seaside if it is summer (see Nessebar and Sozopol). The most important thing is to be open for this new experience and to enjoy it to the maximum!



THE TEAM



Yuliya Andzhekarska
Coordinator



Anmar Khalid
Mentor



**Aleksandar Nikolov
(Dr. Sashko)**
Coordinator





Useful Information

For queries, please contact us at exchangespfe@gmail.com or WhatsApp
+359878569577



<https://www.facebook.com/4forexspfe>

Thank you!

**We are looking
forward to
having you in
Bulgaria soon!**