

# Youthpass for the European Solidarity Corps

## - A guide for mentors and participants







## Introduction to Youthpass

The Youthpass is a tool designed to support the learning processes of young people during activities carried out through the European Solidarity Corps. Youthpass has been developed to help young people reflect over, and document, a set of key competences that can be acquired, when they take part in solidarity-related activities. The Youthpass can also help young people identify, describe, and communicate their new competences to i.e. future employers or educational institutions.

This guide provides the reader with the background and purpose of the development of key competences. Firstly, the reasonings of the European Commission behind the key competences will be described and, secondly, the concept of competence and competence development will be described more generally. Hereafter, this publication will guide the reader through each Key Competence in the Youthpass, providing examples, illustrating how a young person's competences can be described.

### **YOUTHPASS IN THE EUROPEAN SOLIDARITY CORPS**

The foundations of the European Union are based on solidarity; a common value which can be observed across European societies. The characteristics of solidarity in European projects create the group unity, which is needed to cope with current and future crises.

The European Solidarity Corps enables young people to participate in solidarity activities, where they can express their commitment to e.g. the community, while at the same time gaining experience and competences that benefit their personal, educational, social, civic, and professional development. The Youthpass provides young people with a tool which enables them to put into words, and document, their newly acquired skills and describe their professional and personal development. All young people, who participate in European Solidarity Corps activities, are entitled to receive a Youthpass.



# Key Competences



## KEY COMPETENCES IN AN EU POLITICAL CONTEXT

The key competences used in Youthpass have been adopted by the European Commission to strengthen the development of both common and national education policies. A number of EU programs, including Erasmus+ and the European Solidarity Corps, support the opportunities for children, young people, and adults to build, maintain and extend these key competences through both concrete learning experiences and method development – throughout life. Key competences define a range of skills that individuals can use in personal development, active citizenship, social inclusion, and the labour market.

## KEY COMPETENCES IN THE EUROPEAN SOLIDARITY CORPS

The key competences support the process of describing and documenting the personal and professional learning that young people have attained whilst participating in activities in the European Solidarity Corps. The advantage of using the same concepts of competence as in e.g. Erasmus+ is that the experience of the European Solidarity Corps can directly support the individual's awareness of their own competences on a comparable basis with the qualification descriptions of formal education. In this way Youthpass can help support the transition from non-formal to formal learning or to the labour market.

## THE 8 KEY COMPETENCES ARE:

- **Literacy competence**
- **Multilingual competence**
- **Mathematical competence and competence in science, technology and engineering**
- **Digital competence**
- **Personal, social and learning to learn competence**
- **Citizenship competence**
- **Entrepreneurship competence**
- **Cultural awareness and expression competence**

Some of the key competences are most relevant in a formal education context, but most can meaningfully be "translated" into a non-formal learning context.

## CONCEPT OF COMPETENCE

The EU Commission's development of key competences is in line with the general focus on competence in recent years as part of a change in the traditional understanding of school, education, knowledge, skills, and qualifications. Traditionally, knowledge and skills are seen as something which is acquired through school and education and can be standardised and measured. However, the concept of competence goes further and is about how to put your knowledge and skills into practice. Here, attitudes play a role. Attitudes are seen as expressions of personal settings and thoughts that make one act and react in a particular way in relation to ideas, people and situations. It is therefore about one's ability to solve specific tasks in and outside of the working world. This is a shift from "what should I learn?" to "what should I be able to do?"

## COMPETENCES IN PRACTICE

Competence is the capability which enables someone to tackle a concrete situation in a satisfying way. One uses one's (professional) knowledge and skills to overcome challenges that may appear in a particular situation, and perhaps also the ability to deal with uncertainty and unpredictable situations. This means that it is not only about learning content but also to be able to use it in a variety of relevant contexts.

A concrete example is the mathematical competence, such as adding and subtracting. When these competences are brought into play, they can be identified as competences in budget planning or the ability to appraise the value of a new burger, based on commodities, possible loss, etc.

Since these can often be complex and unpredictable situations, assessing what's at stake in the situation and the ability to make informed decisions about what to do is a key part of the concept of competence. Similarly, flexibility and the ability to adapt and function appropriately in different and changing (social) situations are central.

These can be assessments in relation to how the budget should be set to meet various internal and external requirements, or decisions about whether the new burger should be marketed at a low initial entry price to attract new customers.

As it is a question of putting one's qualifications into play in different situations, one also puts oneself into play. Many people often possess the same specific knowledge and skills, and these are often documented with official exam papers. However, how these are put

into use in the different situations varies from individual to individual. Thus, one develops one's skills in a personal way depending on attitude, outlook and mindset.

For example, there are many constructive ways to get started with team collaboration for the purpose of completing a task or day to day operations. One can, for example, be the type of person who motivates others and lifts the spirits of the team, the one who provides quality control, ensures the timely completion of a task, or who generates ideas and locates resources in the surrounding environment.

## PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Professional development requires commitment, opportunity for practice and reflection on what has been learned.

In order to achieve commitment, what needs to be learned must be perceived as relevant to the learner. In connection with the young person's participation in solidarity activities, it is therefore a good idea for the person in question to be supported in the setting of learning goals and in acquiring co-ownership and responsibility for the learning process from the beginning. At the same time, it is important to foster an understanding of the correlations between acquired theoretical knowledge and its practical application.

Therefore, practice is central. I.e. it is important that the young person is offered opportunities, where these can be put into use. Such situations can be based on that which the young person is passionate about, in relation to new challenges. At the same time, support



must be given by setting frameworks, clarifying resources and expectations, perhaps by giving ideas in the form of examples of other solidarity activities.

Last but not least, the development of competences also requires time to reflect on practice. It is therefore necessary for the young person to receive relevant and positive feedback on their learning activities, to gain an overview of the practices that have been part of what has been done, which results have been created, and whether this corresponds to the young person's intentions.

### FROM CONCRETE TASK TO COMPETENCE

As mentioned earlier, Youthpass can be a good tool for describing a young person's personal and professional development. However, there may be some "translation" work in providing an accurate description of the competences rather than the tasks that the young person has solved – i.e. how the individual puts their knowledge and skills into practice in their own personal way.

At the same time, this "translation" work can bring value to the young person in terms of generating reflection on the development of competence. This should enable the individual to describe their competences in a useful and relevant way to e.g. future employers and educational institutions.

Just think of an employment situation; the employer receives between 50 and 200 applications, many of which present almost identical qualifications. How can one help the young person stand out with a positive and unique portrayal?

### THIS CAN BE DONE BY FOLLOWING THE FOLLOWING STEPS:

1. **Make a detailed list of the different tasks that the young person has performed during the project (and possibly in their spare time).**
2. **Which competences did the young person gain?**
  - What were the most important learnings?
  - How were the acquired knowledge and skills brought into play?
  - Which challenges should be assessed and what was eventually decided upon?
  - What was special about the way the young person solved the task (think about attitudes, outlooks and mindset)?
3. **What about the Youthpass? Choose the most relevant information, based on what can be most useful in a variety of contexts or in relation to the young person's future plans.**

It is a good idea to start the reflection process on developments early on, although in the beginning, putting these into words can be challenging. During monthly scheduled meetings between the young person and the mentor, both parties could prepare a list of keywords describing e.g. specific tasks or competences, on which discussions can be based.

### KEY COMPETENCES IN THE YOUTHPASS

Below, each competence will be described and "translated" based on the following model:

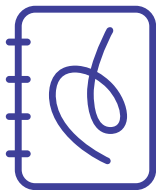
- EU Commission's description of each Key Competence
- Examples of specific work tasks
- Examples of how a specific key competence can be described (note that some of the same examples are used for several key competences).







# Literacy competence



## DESCRIBED BY THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION

Literacy is the ability to identify, understand, express, create and interpret concepts, feelings, facts and opinions in both oral and written forms, using visual, sound/ audio and digital materials across disciplines and contexts. It implies the ability to communicate and connect effectively with others in an appropriate and creative way.

Development of literacy forms the basis for further learning and further linguistic interaction. Depending on the context, literacy competence can be developed in the mother tongue, the language of schooling, and/or the official language in a country or region.

### THE TASKS OF THE YOUNG PERSON

*Florian from Germany is volunteering at an after-school centre for youths as an assistant teacher in English and German.*

*Florian's primary tasks consist of taking part in the students' group work initiated by the language teacher, thus stimulating the students' conversational skills in German and English. In addition, he is responsible for preparing and conducting various interactive group exercises with the students.*

*During his stay, Florian blogs about his experiences, and he also manages to publish an article in a local newspaper from his hometown.*

### COMPETENCES

- Teaching German in an inclusive way to foreigners
- Ability to simplify German in order to lead meaningful conversations with non-natives
- Written dissemination of experiences to a wide audience through various media



# Multilingual Competence



## DESCRIBED BY THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION

This competence defines the ability to use different languages appropriately and effectively for communication. It broadly shares the main skill dimensions of literacy: it is based on the ability to understand, express and interpret concepts, thoughts, feelings, facts and opinions in both oral and written form (listening, speaking, reading and writing) in an appropriate range of societal and cultural contexts according to one's wants or needs. Language competences integrate a historical

dimension and intercultural competences. It relies on the ability to mediate between different languages and media, as outlined in the Common European Framework of Reference. As appropriate, it can include maintaining and further developing mother tongue competences, as well as the acquisition of a country's official language(s).



## THE TASKS OF THE YOUNG PERSON

*Florian from Germany is volunteering at an after-school centre for youths as an assistant teacher in English and German.*

*Florian from Germany is volunteering at an after-school centre for youths as an assistant teacher in English and German.*

*Florian's primary tasks are to take part in the students' group work initiated by the language teacher, thus stimulating their conversations in German and English. In addition, he is responsible for preparing and conducting various interactive group activities with the students. Florian quickly learns Danish and can engage more and more with teachers and pupils in Danish.*

## COMPETENCES

- Teaching English in an inclusive way to foreigners (15-16 years)
- Ability to communicate verbally in Danish in a work context
- By having lived with other Europeans, Florian has developed an awareness of different cultures and the ability to communicate and interact respectfully with people from diverse backgrounds.

## THE TASKS OF THE YOUNG PERSON

*Pavel from the Czech Republic is volunteering in a youth centre, which organises local and international projects for local youths. He is part of a team of four Danish employees and two other European volunteers.*

*Pavel's primary responsibilities are related to project applications and management of various projects. His tasks range widely from idea development, project descriptions and preparation of budgets, to everything practical about finding and selecting applicants, managing participants, booking airline tickets, hotels, conference rooms, purchasing materials, etc. He also makes sure everything in the project is going as planned. Most of the work is done in English.*

## COMPETENCES

- Good formal written communication in relation to international project applications
- Written and oral communication and cooperation in English with a diverse range of people from different European countries
- Sense of adapting communication to different cultural contexts



# Mathematical Competence and Competence in Science, Technology and Engineering



## DESCRIBED BY THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION

**A. Mathematical competence** is the ability to develop and apply mathematical thinking and insight in order to solve a range of problems in everyday situations. Building on a sound mastery of numeracy, the emphasis is on process and activity, as well as knowledge. Mathematical competence involves, to different degrees, the ability and willingness to use mathematical modes of thought and presentation (formulae models, constructs, graphs, charts).

**B. Competence in science** refers to the ability and willingness to explain the natural world by making use of the body of knowledge and methodology employed, including observation and experimentation, in order to identify questions and to draw evidence-based conclusions. Competences in technology and engineering are applications of that knowledge and methodology in response to perceived human wants or needs. Competence in science, technology, and engineering involves an understanding of the changes caused by human activity and responsibility as an individual citizen.



### THE TASKS OF THE YOUNG PERSON

Florian from Germany is volunteering at an after-school centre for youths as an assistant teacher in English and German.

Furthermore, Florian provides extra technical training for a group of dyslexic youths. Since he is fond of riding motorcycles and often likes to work on fixing them himself, the teaching involves researching and repairing engines and other technical equipment on mopeds. In this way, Florian is able to place focus on hands-on experience with various mathematical and technical concepts.

### COMPETENCES

- Practical technical skills in relation to moped repair
- Ability to pass on mathematical and technical concepts related to practice-based teaching
- Curious, investigative and critical to new issues
- Ability to seek relevant knowledge where necessary

### THE TASKS OF THE YOUNG PERSON

Anna from Austria works at a not-for-profit café frequented by a wide range of people from the local community, each with different needs and expectations. In the evening, the café transforms into a small music venue.

Most of Anna's tasks consist of performing the daily tasks of managing the café. Anna plays a more central role in the café compared to the many young volunteers from Denmark, who only come in a few hours a week. During her volunteering period Anna has also contributed to the regular menu by introducing some new dishes.

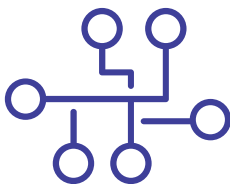
In addition, she is responsible for event management several evenings a month. In connection with these events, she is responsible for marketing, advertising in newsletters and the technical measures in relation to music and sound.

### COMPETENCES

- Check sales data and the day's sales
- Good understanding of determining the price of goods in relation to expenses, losses and profits
- Planning inventory and ordering and purchasing in right quantities, keeping in mind adjustments in relation to special events
- Responsible budget compliance
- Can set up light and sound in connection with music events and tackle unforeseen challenges during concerts



# Digital Competence



## DESCRIBED BY THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION

Digital competence involves the confident, critical, and responsible use of, and engagement with, digital technologies for learning, at work, and for participation in society. It includes information and data literacy, communication and collaboration, media literacy, digital content creation (including programming), safety (including digital well-being and competences related to cybersecurity), intellectual property related questions, problem solving and critical thinking.



Photo: Kim Wendt

### THE TASKS OF THE YOUNG PERSON

*Pavel from the Czech Republic works in a youth centre, which organizes both local and international projects for local youths. Pavel's primary responsibilities are related to project applications and management of various projects.*

*Since Pavel has a special interest in IT and various media. He has also been given the responsibility to document the youth centre's various events by taking photographs and making video recordings, as well to update and disseminate the projects on the centre's website.*

### COMPETENCES

- Use of digital camera and camcorder with a good artistic angle
- Good knowledge of video editing with focus on short, informative and motivational stories from events
- Website update
- Knowledge of the GDPR and the importance of protecting and storing the project participants' personal data
- Demonstrate ethical responsibility for obtaining consent in relation to sharing image material

### THE TASKS OF THE YOUNG PERSON

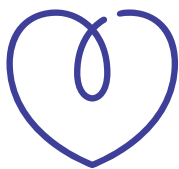
*Anna from Austria volunteers at a not-for-profit café, frequented by a wide range of people from the local community, each with different needs and expectations. In the evening, the café transforms into a small music venue.*

*In addition, she is responsible for event management several evenings a month. In connection with these events she has, among other things, been responsible for marketing, advertising in newsletters and the technical measures in relation to music and sound.*

### COMPETENCES

- Layout of newsletters in Microsoft Office Publisher
- Updating website, including knowledge of html codes
- Use of social media such as Facebook and Twitter to promote events

# Personal, Social and Learning to Learn Competence



## DESCRIBED BY THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION

Personal, social and learning to learn competence is the ability to reflect upon oneself, effectively manage time and information, work with others in a constructive way, remain resilient and manage one's own learning and career. It includes the ability to cope with uncertainty and

complexity, learn to learn, support one's physical and emotional well-being, to maintain physical and mental health, and to be able to lead a health-conscious, future-oriented life, empathize and manage conflict in an inclusive and supportive context.



### THE TASKS OF THE YOUNG PERSON

*Igor from Ukraine volunteers at an open-air centre, which partly involves team building for both youths and adults, and partly with environmental awareness and sustainable development.*

*In addition, Igor is responsible for some practical tasks in the form of maintenance and cleaning of the centre - both buildings and the outdoor areas.*

*Igor is involved in team building activities for the visiting groups. He is responsible for introducing participants to the various activities, managing the process, and reflecting on learning points with the group after completion of the activity.*

*He has also been asked to plan an individual project and thereby to leave his impression on the host project.*

### COMPETENCES

- Self-confidence that enables him to embark on new tasks and take responsibility
- Know his skills and limitations and seek guidance from others if necessary
- Good at identifying resources and know-how of others and use this knowledge in order to efficiently complete tasks
- Receives feedback from both learners and colleagues in an acknowledging, constructive and inquisitive way
- Good understanding of time management both in regard to routine and more challenging tasks
- Ability to flexibly adapt facilitation styles to the situation and the needs of different groups
- Flexible handling of conflicts with students - can balance between making demands, specifying frameworks, and empathetic listening
- Good at working with and respecting people of all ages and with different attitudes
- Collaborative style: listening to everyone, bridging and motivating others

### THE TASKS OF THE YOUNG PERSON

*Pavel from the Czech Republic volunteers at a youth centre, which organises local and international projects for local youths.*

*Pavel's primary responsibilities are related to project applications and management of various projects.*

*In relation to this work, Pavel holds numerous meetings with his mentor, talking about his interests, learning goals, and how he can focus on this in the projects he is working on.*

### COMPETENCES

- Devotion to duty both in relation to routine tasks as well as developmental work with young people
- Collaborative, is good at making everyone feel comfortable and heard in the team
- Take responsibility for own learning process by setting goals and following up on them
- Uses the mentor as a guide without expecting this individual to have all the answers
- Ability to accept uncertainty (you cannot know everything in advance) and take this into account in your planning
- Asking questions and having a critical outlook on the challenges and solutions he is presented with
- Have good insight into own learning styles: needs some instruction and then opportunity to test in practice and be able to go back to get feedback
- Often gets independent ideas in relation to problem solving
- Learning readiness: investigative and reflective



# Citizenship Competence



## DESCRIBED BY THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION

Citizenship competence is the ability to act as responsible citizens and to fully participate in civic and social life, based on understanding of social, economic, legal and political concepts and structures, as well as global developments and sustainability.



### THE TASKS OF THE YOUNG PERSON

*Alicia from Spain is volunteering for nine months in a drop-in centre for young people and adults with mental disabilities. The venue is run partly by a team of five employees, partly by volunteers, and by the users themselves.*

*Alicia's work on the project includes practical tasks related to the daily operation of the kitchen, such as making coffee, tea and serving food for the users as well as being responsible for cleaning and washing up. Most of the time, however, is spent on social interaction with the users, where she is available for a chat or a game of cards. She feels that both the individual supportive conversations and more conflicting interactions bring value to the users.*

*Through her collaboration with other staff and volunteers at the venue, she gains insight into the various political and social issues surrounding this vulnerable group, as well as the ideas behind the cafe's practice of user involvement.*

### COMPETENCES

- Good and empathetic listener in relation to socially and mentally vulnerable people
- Ability to bridge vulnerable citizens from different cultural backgrounds
- Can create an inclusive atmosphere by meeting everyone with respect
- Is aware of different functions and roles in the workplace and can act appropriately in the different roles
- Good understanding of the organisation's democratic structure among employees and in relation to user involvement - and thus also understanding of the organisation's decision-making processes
- Ability to argue persuasively about one's own attitudes, listen to the opinions of others, and possibly revise own attitudes
- Ability to work loyally based on common decisions
- Knowledge of the representative democratic model and opportunities to represent and protect the interests of vulnerable citizens
- Awareness of the citizens' demands and rights in Denmark

### THE TASKS OF THE YOUNG PERSON

*Emanuella from Italy volunteers in a kindergarten. She provides a helping hand which enables the kindergarten to launch new projects for their children's groups.*

*Emanuella spends some time on socialising, playing, laughing and engaging with the children, and through conversations and reflection with the educators, she gains insight into the importance of recognising pedagogy and its practical execution.*

*Emanuella has been scouting in her home country and is therefore beginning to organise an outdoor project with a group of the oldest children. This project runs over two days for eight weeks. The focus of the project is physical activity combined with the topic of sustainability.*

*Emanuella lives with three other European volunteers in the area.*

### COMPETENCES

- Empathetic to both children and parents during individual conversations (regardless of social, economic, and cultural background)
- Experience in leading / facilitating groups of children in organised play or activities where all children feel included
- Paying close attention to children with special needs (mental, linguistic or social challenges)
- Ability to disseminate knowledge about climate change and sustainability to children
- Experience in providing realistic and constructive ideas for greater sustainability in everyday life (for both children and adults)
- Awareness of differences within the pedagogy in various European countries
- Insight into the democratic involvement of children in a defined framework



# Entrepreneurship Competence

## DESCRIBED BY THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION

Entrepreneurship competence refers to the capacity to act upon opportunities and ideas, and to transform them into values for others. It is founded on creativity, critical thinking and problem solving, taking initiative and perseverance and the ability to work collaboratively in order to plan and manage projects that are of cultural, social or financial value.



Photo: Adobe Stock

## THE TASKS OF THE YOUNG PERSON

*Alicia from Spain is volunteering for nine months in a drop-in centre for young people and adults with mental disabilities. The venue is run partly by a team of five employees, partly by volunteers and by the users themselves.*

*After Alicia has been at the drop-in centre for a few months and her Danish has improved a great deal and she has begun organising evening activities twice a month. The activities are decided upon during monthly user meetings, where involvement of the users' own ideas is a high priority. Alicia attends these meetings and is then responsible for the practical implementation of activities such as cinema visits, walks, creative evenings, etc.*

## COMPETENCES

- Competent facilitator during discussions, listens to everyone, summarises and ensures that decisions are made with support from the group
- Good negotiation capacity in situations of disagreements
- Action oriented in relation to following up on decisions and involving employees
- Shows great commitment to translating ideas into practice
- Carefully examines opportunities and limitations and looks for alternatives with a can-do attitude
- Good understanding of opportunities within a given framework and resources
- Creative and innovative in thinking about alternative resources and opportunities
- Ability to evaluate completed assignments with all parties involved and to draw learning points into the future assignments

## THE TASKS OF THE YOUNG PERSON

*Igor from Ukraine volunteers at an open-air centre, which partly involves team building for both youths and adults and partly with environmental awareness and sustainable development.*

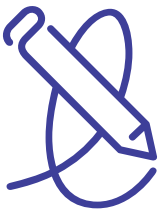
*He has also been asked to prepare an individual project and thereby leave his mark on the host project. He gets the idea to build rafts for the lake. This is a project that requires more preparation than he immediately imagined. He must first obtain information on possible designs, safety and sustainable materials. At the same time, it is not possible for him to perform the task on his own, so he must involve, motivate and coordinate several of the site's young volunteers.*

## COMPETENCES

- Ability to translate a good idea into practice in a thorough and results-oriented manner
- Knowledge-seeking with good sense of analysis, quality and sustainability - decisions are made on an informed basis
- Good planning skills with a great eye for both the goal, time consumption and details
- A purposeful initiator and leader who manages to engage and motivate others in relation to his goals
- Good at handling many tasks at once



# Cultural Awareness and Expression Competence



## DESCRIBED BY THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION

Competence in cultural awareness and expression involves having an understanding of, and respect for, how ideas and meaning are creatively expressed and communicated in different cultures and through a range of arts and other cultural forms. It involves being engaged in understanding, developing and expressing one's own ideas and sense of place or role in society in a variety of ways and contexts.



### THE TASKS OF THE YOUNG PERSON

*Anna from Austria volunteers at a not-for-profit café, frequented by a wide range of people from the local community, each with different needs and expectations. In the evening, the café transforms into a small music venue.*

*Anna is very interested in art and music. She has helped to refresh the interior of the café, for example by redecorating the walls. She has also been responsible for event management several nights a month, where she has taken the initiative to arrange alternative European music evenings - and she has also appeared on stage herself.*

### COMPETENCES

- Use her own creativity to refresh the rooms and interiors
- Good sense of design, interior and art in relation to the customers of the workplace and in respect for the current style
- Knowledge of various European musical styles
- Ability to create own expressions through music

### THE TASKS OF THE YOUNG PERSON

*Emanuella from Italy volunteers in a kindergarten. She provides a helping hand which enables the kindergarten to launch new projects for their children's groups.*

*Emanuella cooks with the children twice a month. She prepares Italian dishes and is responsible for the recipe, shopping list, planning the session and the involvement of the children. At the same time, togetherness in the kitchen is used to convey knowledge of Italy to the children - including music and dance.*

### COMPETENCES

- Communicating own values and culture through cooking - including the importance of togetherness around food
- Use of music, song and dance to engage children

### **[www.youthpass.eu](http://www.youthpass.eu)**

This is the Youthpass website, where you can find everything about Youthpass, including references to European Commission documents on Key Competences. The project contact person can create the Youthpass from this page using their project number

### **[www.ufm.dk/solidaritetskorp](http://www.ufm.dk/solidaritetskorp)**

Danish Agency for Science & Higher Education web-page with information about the European Solidarity Corps.

Contact (questions pertaining to funding opportunities in the youth sector under Erasmus+ and the European Solidarity Corps): **[ungdom@ufm.dk](mailto:ungdom@ufm.dk)**