

Cross-Border Mobility & Volunteering

Erasmus+, European Solidarity Corps, ESF+ – job shadowing, traineeships, apprentice mobility and voluntary service between Austria and Hungary

Nothing dismantles borders as effectively as the direct exchange of people: staff members shadowing a partner organisation, apprentices completing a traineeship in the neighbouring country, volunteers supporting a community across the border. This infosheet explains the most important instruments, how they work and what accreditation offers – with practical examples and the right contact points in Austria and Hungary. It is aimed at associations, social organisations, church-based providers, municipalities, schools and training companies in the Com(p)AGE environment.

A · Erasmus+ mobility (Key Action 1): staff & learners

Erasmus+ funds learning mobility in school education, vocational education and training (VET), adult education and youth. For organisations in elderly care and the social economy, adult education (staff and learners) or VET (apprentices, care and social professions) is usually the right sector.

Job shadowing & staff mobility

Staff and volunteers spend 2 to 60 days observing at a host institution abroad, attend courses and training, or take on teaching/training assignments. Funding covers travel (incl. green-travel top-up), individual support (daily rates) and organisational lump sums. Practical rule: job shadowing requires a clearly named mentor – a maximum of two people may shadow per mentor at the same time.

Apprentices & traineeships (VET)

Learners in vocational education – including apprentices in care, social, kitchen or administrative professions – complete placements abroad of 10 days to 3 months; ErasmusPro enables long-term stays of 3 to 12 months. The training company or school applies for the grant; the Learning Agreement, insurance and recognition (Europass) are part of the package. Top-ups for participants with fewer opportunities lower the barriers.

Adult education: learners can travel too

Besides staff, adult learners – for example volunteers or participants of education programmes, primarily people with fewer opportunities – can visit a partner organisation individually or in groups. This can fund, for example, intergenerational encounters or exchange visits of volunteers within the Com(p)AGE network.

Youth exchanges & youth worker mobility

Youth exchanges (ages 13–30) and mobility of youth workers complete the spectrum – for instance for joint projects of young people from Burgenland and Vas against loneliness in old age.

B · European Solidarity Corps (ESC): voluntary service

Volunteering in the neighbouring country

Young people aged 18 to 30 volunteer for 2 to 12 months (or 2 weeks to 2 months in teams or for people with fewer opportunities) in non-profit projects – for example in social centres, visiting services or community work. The EU covers accommodation, food, pocket money, travel, insurance and language support. Requirement for organisations: the Quality Label as a host and/or supporting organisation – can be applied for at the national agency on a rolling basis.

Solidarity Projects

Groups of at least five young people implement local solidarity projects (2–12 months) – a low-threshold entry that can also address border-area topics such as neighbourhood help and encounters between generations.

C · ESF+ and further instruments

European Social Fund Plus (ESF+)

The ESF+ supports qualification, labour-market integration and social inclusion – implemented through national and regional programmes: in Austria via "ESF+ Beschäftigung Österreich 2021–2027", in Hungary primarily via the GINOP Plusz and EFOP Plusz programmes (calls at palyazat.gov.hu). Relevant for social-sector providers for staff qualification, volunteer coordination and inclusion projects – here mobility is a building block, not the main purpose.

ALMA – Aim, Learn, Master, Achieve

An ESF+-funded initiative for young people (18–29) not in employment, education or training (NEETs): a supervised stay abroad of 2–6 months with a host organisation, including preparation and follow-up. Providers can participate as sending or hosting institutions – an opportunity to bring disadvantaged young people into cross-border experience.

EURES – cross-border job placement

The European network of employment services (AT: AMS, HU: Nemzeti Foglalkoztatási Szolgálat) advises on jobs, traineeships and apprenticeships in the neighbouring country and supports cross-border commuters.

How Erasmus accreditation works – step by step

Accreditation (KA120 for school education, VET and adult education; KA150 for the youth field) is the "membership card" for Erasmus+: once obtained, it secures simplified, plannable access to annual mobility budgets until 2027.

1. Choose the sector: adult education, VET, school education or youth – depending on the organisation's target group and mission.
2. Draw up an Erasmus Plan: describe objectives, planned activities (job shadowing, courses, traineeships), expected impact and quality standards.
3. Submit the application to the national agency: OeAD (AT) or Tempus Public Foundation (HU); deadline usually in October each year.
4. After approval: annual budget request (KA121/KA151) with a much simplified form, deadline usually in February – no new full application.
5. Alternative for newcomers: short-term projects (KA122) without accreditation – up to 30 participants, 6–18 months duration, max. 3 projects in 5 years; ideal for trying things out.
6. For ESC voluntary service: apply for the Quality Label instead of accreditation – possible on a rolling basis.

Consortia are possible: an accredited coordinating institution (e.g. an umbrella organisation or a diocese) can bundle mobilities for several member organisations – so small associations without application experience benefit as well.



Three examples from the AT-HU context

Job shadowing Styria → Szombathely: The volunteer coordinator of a Styrian social association spends a week shadowing at a partner organisation in Szombathely (adult education, KA122 or accredited), learns their model of neighbourhood help and organises the return visit – exactly the format foreseen in the Com(p)AGE sustainability strategy.

Apprentice traineeship Vas → Graz: Two apprentices from Vas County (care assistance and kitchen) complete a four-week placement in a Graz senior-care facility (VET); ErasmusPro would allow a longer stay. Europass documents the learning outcomes.

ESC volunteering Burgenland ↔ Vas: A 24-year-old supports a community centre in Vas County for six months with programmes against loneliness among older people; the host organisation holds the Quality Label, and the EU finances accommodation, pocket money and a language course.

Further links - Austria & Hungary

National agencies Erasmus+ & ESC

- OeAD – Austrian National Agency: <https://erasmusplus.at>
- Tempus Public Foundation – Hungarian National Agency: <https://erasmusplusz.hu>
- Erasmus+ Programme Guide & portal: <https://erasmus-plus.ec.europa.eu>

Volunteering & youth

- European Solidarity Corps (incl. Quality Label): https://youth.europa.eu/solidarity_en
- SALTO / Otlas – partner finding in the youth field: <https://www.salto-youth.net/tools/otlas-partner-finding/>

ESF+, ALMA & work

- ESF+ Austria: <https://www.esf.at>
- Hungary: Széchenyi Terv Plusz / calls: <https://www.palyazat.gov.hu>
- ALMA (European Commission): <https://ec.europa.eu/european-social-fund-plus/en/alma>
- EURES – jobs & traineeships in Europe: <https://eures.europa.eu>

Recognition & quality

- Europass: <https://europass.europa.eu>
- EPAL – ePlatform for Adult Learning in Europe: <https://epale.ec.europa.eu>

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