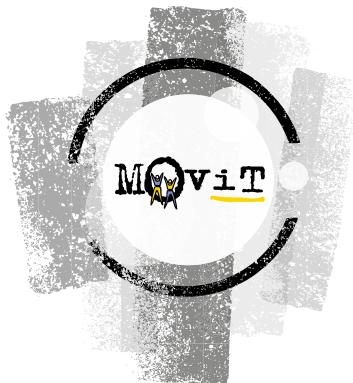




APPROVED



VOLUNTEERING

IN COUNTRIES OF THE WESTERN BALKANS

Guidelines for obtaining residence permits for volunteers within
Erasmus+: Youth in Action and the European Solidarity Corps



OF THE PUBLICATION & SHORT OVERVIEW OF THE STRUCTURE

This publication is intended for all organizations from the Western Balkans, which are hosting volunteers from EU countries within the framework of the programmes Erasmus+:Youth in Action and European Solidarity Corps, and are as such required to help them through the process of obtaining the residence permits for their stay during their volunteering period.

The main reason for creating this publication comes from the recurrent feedback from the hosting organizations in the WB on how difficult it is to get this procedure done in a timely and efficient way. These administrative processes are often costly, time consuming and frustrating in terms of the amount of bureaucracy there is for all sides: sending and receiving organizations, as well as the volunteer.

The purpose of this publication is to facilitate this process as much as possible, by providing all the relevant information to the stakeholders involved in this process in a clear, step-by-step manner.

The publication addresses the process of obtaining the residence permit for the volunteers staying in the countries of Western Balkans, namely Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo and Montenegro.

The creation of this publication would not have been possible, first without the valuable initial input coming from of our Contact Points for E+:YIA from all 4 respective countries, and second, without consultations with experienced hosting organizations which made sure that the gathered information is tested in reality. Thanks a lot to everyone; the list of contributors can be found in the acknowledgements at end of this publication.

The structure of the publication is simple and hopefully you will find it easy to use: the first part contains a set of general instructions relevant for all hosting organizations across the respective countries of the Western Balkans; this is followed by country specific information.

ABOUT

THE PROCEDURE IN GENERAL: USEFUL INSTRUCTIONS AND ADVICE

In this section, you can find a set of instructions and advice, relevant for all hosting organizations in the Western Balkans. Please have them in mind throughout the entire volunteering project cycle; from the very first phase of writing a project proposal (these costs need to be foreseen in the section - exceptional costs!) to the moment when the volunteer prepares to leave home for their volunteering project until the successful finalization of the process, resulting in obtaining a relevant residence permit.

- This publication is based on publically available information, as well as on the experience of the hosting organizations. The information should serve you as a guide, but should not be taken as officially legal guideline. Therefore, please note that the relevant state bodies have the right to ask for additional documents, the duration of the procedure may vary from case to case, as well as the costs incurred could be different in practice, just as they can also change over time. In addition, the procedures can slightly differ from region to region within the same country; therefore, it is best to check what is the actual procedure with the relevant authorities in their local communities.
- Although each country proscribes a specific timeframe in which the volunteer has to apply for the residence permit after his arrival in the hosting country, it is highly advised that the process starts as soon as possible.

- The mentor or somebody from the hosting organization should always accompany the volunteer when visiting institutions for obtaining the residence permit. This will prevent delays in the procedure and avoid potential misunderstandings because of the language barrier or ignorance of the local context. Because of the latter, we recommend you to accompany the volunteer, even if they speak the language of the hosting country.
- Many of the submitted documents must be originals or notarized copies, as well as translated officially in the local language. Alongside official translations, originals are often requested for viewing.
- When dealing with institutions, the volunteer should be ready to offer details such as the address in the volunteer's home country, parents' names, educational background and information about the tasks and responsibilities they will have in the hosting organization. It is advisable to prepare this information in advance.
- Organizations are highly advised to check the legal regulations for the cases when the volunteer is leaving the country while being in the process of acquisition of a residence permit. It is quite likely, that the volunteer will have to register at the relevant authority each time they leave and enter the country.
- In some countries, residence permits are given for a period of time which is shorter than the volunteer's stay in the country. Therefore, organizations are advised to keep track of the expiry date of the volunteer's residence permit and to start in good time with a request for its prolongation.

KOSOVO

This area is regulated by the Law on
Foreigners (National Gazette No. 04/ L 219,
Government of Kosovo.



*Aerial View of Durdevica Tara Arc Bridge in the Mountains,
Foto: ronedya, Fotolia*



WHAT TO PREPARE BEFORE THE VOLUNTEER'S ARRIVAL?

The volunteer must also get a certificate from their home country proving they had not been criminally prosecuted. The certificate is obtained from the relevant bodies within their home country. The certificate should be translated into Serbian or Albanian which can be done in Kosovo.



IMMEDIATELY UPON ARRIVAL

A volunteer is obliged to register at the local police station immediately upon their arrival. This is the informative meeting serving the purpose of informing the police that the foreigner is residing in their territory. The volunteer should have their passport and should inform the police about the purpose of their stay as well as the address they will be staying at. It is highly recommended that the volunteer is accompanied by someone from the hosting organization for ease of communication.



PROCEDURE FOR THE RESIDENCE PERMIT APPLICATION

Volunteers coming from EU countries have a visa free regime with Kosovo, which actually means that the process is initiated upon the volunteer's arrival and it is processed by the Division of Foreign Nationals at the Department for Citizenship, Asylum and Migration (DCAM) - Ministry of Internal Affairs.

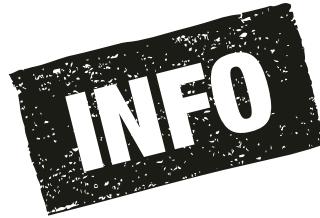
The documents necessary for this process are:

- A valid travel document (passport or biometric ID);
- Copy of the travel document;
- A valid health insurance;
- A document issued by the host organization stating the purpose of the volunteer's stay, dates, his duties and tasks, costs, etc.;
- A document stating that the volunteer has not been criminally charged and is not under investigation, obtained from the volunteer's home country. This document needs to be officially translated;
- A notarized copy of the proof of the registration of the host organization;

- A letter of confirmation from the Ministry of Public Administration for the host organization stating that the HO is active (This can be obtained online by the HO);
- A tenancy agreement containing the volunteer's name (original or notarized copy);
- A proof of vaccination (in case the volunteer is coming from a country with an epidemic situation);

COSTS & DURATION

The relevant Ministry is obliged to respond to the request within 30 days of the submission of the documents. Persons applying for a temporary residence permit for the purpose of performing volunteer work are exempt from paying the administrative fee. However, the organization should bear in mind that they will have to cover the costs for the translation and certification of the documents.



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The SALTO South East Europe Resource Centre promotes cooperation with the Western Balkan countries within the Erasmus+ Programme in the field of youth and the European Solidarity Corps through training and partner-finding activities and various other support measures, tools and resources. It aims to contribute to youth work and youth policy development in the Western Balkan region, in collaboration with relevant stakeholders and with the help of pools of trainers and accreditors as well as Contact Points located in Erasmus+ Partner countries of the region.

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