

# EUROPEAN SOLIDARITY CORPS INTERNATIONAL VOLUNTEERING



## VESSEL

Volunteering as an Engine for Solidarity, Social Engagement and  
Learning opportunities

### Guide for Volunteers



Dear future volunteers,

We are super motivated and eager to welcome you to our second home. It is a place where we not only work, but share ideas, knowledge, experience, skills, have fun, realise our plans and visions.

Until now we have hosted several generations of international volunteers, and now we will continue hosting young people for volunteering activities under the European Solidarity Corps.

During your international volunteering, you will have a multitude of opportunities to evolve and develop yourself at different levels. Every day brings new challenges, situations to handle and chances to meet a mosaic of cultures and personalities, offer to the community your knowledge and skills, while at the same time receive more knowledge and fun in return.

As you are expected to stay for a year, do not be worried about getting homesick – it is a normal temporary stage when abroad. It is important to note that you are not going to be alone and you can always count on us for moral support and advice. Don't focus on trivial things and be ready to embrace this experience and what it has to offer. The local community is pretty much familiar with our work, so acceptance will surely not be an issue, which means in short time you will feel part of it.

That is why our former volunteers wanted to share their experience in a few words:

Mika, Cyprus:

*“The International Volunteering is a lifetime experience that cannot be described with words. You have to live it to feel it!”*



Betsabé, Spain:



*“The International Volunteering experience was amazing and cannot be compared to any other in my life. It allowed me to grow as a person, meet people that will stay in my heart forever. It's a present that should not be wasted away.”*

Buşra, Turkey:

*“If you want to change yourself, then the right choice is to do International Volunteering. Be calm, stay positive because the MOJU powers are always with you. Just go with the flow and accept all the experiences this programme has to offer and it offers quite a lot!”*



Valeria, Italy:

*“What really made a change in my International Volunteering is the language: learn Portuguese! At the beginning I was just playing with the children, and I don't hide it was fun. Everyone needs to find their own way, and they often need to be guided for that. But every individual makes the group, a group that needs to work very well in order to develop the individual's skills. In order to promote the harmony of the group, you can propose some team-building activities to help them live fairly in the society they live in. Do not feel frustrated if they don't understand your purpose. Try again and again, be patient and ask the staff to support you in everything you need to develop your ideas.*



## **Introduction to MOJU: who we are and what we do**

MOJU is a youth organization founded by a group of young people who strongly believe in the importance of youth participation in society. It is a non-governmental organization which works at three levels: local, national and international. As such, MOJU is a member of the Federation of Youth Organizations of Algarve, of the National Federation of Youth Organizations and of YEU – *Youth for Exchange and Understanding*.

In short, MOJU's objectives are the following:

- Encourage and stimulate youth participation in society
- Develop activities in the field of inter(culture), education, sports, environment that aim at global youth development
- Promote debate and spreading information on youth's needs and aspirations, in terms of contributing to the development and implementation of local policies
- Promote gender equality, citizenship, social inclusion and non-discrimination
- Contribute to youth mobility as a tool for personal and professional development, as well as to the promotion of intercultural dialogue
- Promote equal opportunities through providing training to socially engaged citizens
- Cooperate with public and private entities, national or international, aiming to develop and implement the aforementioned objectives.



## International Volunteering @ MOJU

We started our experience in 2012 with the previous programme EVS - European Voluntary Service and our expectation is to continue in the new program Erasmus+ - Youth in Action, under European Solidarity Corps, in order to send and receive volunteers.

The persons in charge of the International Volunteering Program of MOJU have considerable experience in these actions because he has been coordinating it since 2012 and has been responsible for several projects during this time.



### Project introduction and description

VESSEL is a long term International Volunteering project with several volunteers, involving one hosting organization (Portugal) and different sending organisations from several countries. The volunteers will be placed for a maximum **12 month period in the southern Portuguese city of Olhão**, where they'll have the opportunity to experience a totally different culture and way of living, to learn and experience new things, and to use the knowledge and experience gained in their countries so that they can act as a liaison between partner organisations.

The volunteers will be involved in the activities and projects developed by the Hosting Organization, helping in the daily life of a wildlife rescue centre, and will be encouraged to develop and implement their own projects/ ideas.

The project location is inside a Natural Park, so this project is perfect for those who like to be in contact with nature.



During the first weeks there will be some meetings to verify attitudes, interests and abilities of every volunteer and will introduce at the project's activity, subsequently volunteer will begin the following activities. The project is multifaceted and volunteers will learn about working at a wildlife rehabilitation centre and they will also be able to develop activities and projects related to their studies. As they will be working in a new culture it will demonstrated that they can work hard at a multicultural environment.

We intend to offer our volunteers the chance to be part of the team, feel valued, as new ideas are very important for us and of course to encourage them in the process of self-learning and of self-development.

### **Specific tasks to be delivered by the volunteers:**

The role of the volunteers will be to participate and help in the daily tasks of the centre, which includes the following tasks:

related to the welfare of the animals

- . Preparing and distributing the food for the animals;
- . Helping in the maintenance and cleaning of the centre;
- . Building fences;
- . Building equipment for cages environmental enrichment;
- . Go to the field to do birds surveys;
- . Databases' management

related with environmental education

- . Helping in the activities of environmental education with local schools and local population in general;
- . Translation of leaflets to inform tourists;
- . Helping to organize workshops or activities;
- . Receive and guide visitors at the Environmental Interpretative Centre.

Additionally, we expect the volunteers to be responsible for carrying out the project duties, contribute is time, energy and enthusiasm towards the aims and objectives of the project activities. Attend training and meetings with partners. Inform the Sending Organization of special needs that could affect the project, agree on the information, which can or should be forwarded (diet, illnesses for which precautions need to be taken, and others), and follow the rules of conduct.

### **Volunteers' profile**

The volunteer's selection process is intended to be transparent and open to all involved. There are no preferences regarding gender, age or study areas. However, a special concern will be took in the analysis of volunteers' expressed interest in working with promoting education and training related to environment and nature conservation and the propagation of culture and rural traditions, volunteering and associativism, since these will be the main goal of the proposed activities. Take in consideration that working with animals is not easy and sometimes it can be very demanding. We consider

that this work will be more rewarding for those with veterinary or biology background, but even if not we are very happy to receive you on our team.

The information on the project will be published on the international database of the European Voluntary Service and European Solidarity Corps. At the same time a call for interested volunteers of partner organizations will be launched. Then, volunteers (with support from the Sending Organization, will supply a Curriculum Vitae and a motivation letter in English, for a preliminary analysis of the application. After that, the candidates may be requested to fill in an application form with supplementary information.

**Very Important: In order to be selected to participate in the project, the candidate needs to be part of the international database of the European Solidarity Corps.**

### **Working hours:**

The volunteers will work 5 days per week for a maximum of 35 hours. Weekends are free, except for some events that may take place during weekends. In such a case, the volunteers will be compensated with a day off during the week.

Moreover, the volunteers, according to the Activity Agreement have 2 days off per month during the year. These days can be gathered and used all together or in different times, but always agreeing with the Hosting Organization.

### **Accommodation**

MOJU as coordinating organization is responsible for providing the volunteers with accommodation in a safe environment. The volunteer will live in a furnished rented flat shared with other Volunteers, close from the office and not far from the centre of the town. The flat contains all the necessary amenities and is divided in different rooms, kitchen and bathroom. The volunteers will have their own bedroom or share it with another volunteer, a shared kitchen and bathroom.

### **Food allowance and pocket money**

The house where the volunteers will live have a kitchen that can be used. A monthly contribution for food will be given to every volunteer in the amount of 130 Euros.

The volunteer will receive during his stay in Olhão, a monthly pocket money. The amount is stipulated by the Erasmus + Programme and is equal to 150 Euros. The Coordinating Organization will be responsible to pay the pocket money at the end of each month.

## **Travel Costs**

For travel costs, there is contribution based on the travel distance per participant from their place of origin to the venue of the activity and return.

Before completing the purchase of the ticket (just one-way) volunteers or the Sending Organization will have to contact us, we will give the authorization to go on with the purchase of the ticket. Reimbursement of travel costs will only be done upon presentation of the original tickets with boarding passes and receipt/invoices.

Reimbursement will be done in EUR, regardless of the currency indicated on your ticket and receipt/invoice.

## **Language Course**

Volunteers are welcome to learn Portuguese before and during the project. Before coming to Portugal, volunteers can practice using several online tools (Duolingo, Babbel).

Before coming, each volunteer will receive an email by Online Linguistic Support (OLS) with the link for the “Assessment Test”. After filling it, each volunteer will receive another email to start the online course provided by Erasmus+ (<http://erasmusplusols.eu/>). OLS will be the official tool to use to learn Portuguese during the Project. Two weeks before the end of the project, each volunteer will receive an email with the final linguistic test to fill, in order to receive the final level of Portuguese.

## **Insurance**

Volunteers from EU countries have to apply for the European Health Insurance Card.

Instead of and/or in addition to the European Health Insurance Card, the volunteers are medically insured – including third party and accidents - by the European Commission Erasmus+ Insurance called Cigna insurance.

Sending organizations will register you for this insurance. Please read carefully the insurance guide in order to get informed on what it covers and what it doesn't cover.

## **European Youth Card**

Besides the insurance, every EVS volunteer is supposed to get a European youth card. What does this mean? Basically, as an owner of this card you can obtain numerous discounts on culture, accommodation, transportation, food and more. In order to get the card, you need to be first registered with the health insurance by the sending organisation. If the registration has been done in advance, it may be sent to your sending



organisation. If, however, you were registered two weeks before your service starts, then the card is sent to your hosting organisation.

For more info, please visit:

<https://www.eyca.org/youth-mobility/evs>

## **Other additional useful information**

### **About Portugal**

- Portugal belongs to the Western Time Zone (GMT +1)
- Residential electricity is 230V, 50 Hz
- The dialing code is +351
- Portugal uses the standard European 2 point socket
- Tap water is potable.

### **Mobile networks**

Once you arrive, we recommend that you buy a Portuguese sim card. The Portuguese mobile phone networks are: Vodafone, Nos, Meo, Lycamobile.

Links to their websites:

<http://www.vodafone.pt/main/Ajuda/english-section.html>

<https://www.nos.pt/particulares/Pages/home.aspx>

<http://www.lycamobile.pt/por/>

<https://www.meo.pt/>

### **Some information on Algarve and Olhão**

As Olhão is situated in Algarve, let us first give you some facts and information on it. It is the southern region in Portugal famous for its sunny weather, with more over 3000 sunny hours per year, beaches, tourism, surfing, delicious seafood, islands, caves, hiking trails and unique landscapes. The capital of this region is Faro being the largest city. The total population in Algarve is 451,006. Apart from Faro, other famous cities visited by tourists are Lagos, Albufeira, Tavira, Portimão and many more. Because of its mild weather, Algarve is a tourist destination not only in the summer, but throughout the year, so it's no wonder that there are tourists even in November and December. Getting around this region is quite easy because there are good train and bus connections and another advantage is that young people and students get discount on public transportation tickets.



Olhão is located just 10 minutes from Faro by car. It is in fact the largest fishing port in Algarve. This city, whose population is 45,396, is also famous for its houses built in Moorish style. Algarve used to be under Moorish occupation back in the 8th century so the marks that the Moorish people left are still present.



Right by the port, you will find Olhão's landmark: its two markets: the fish market and the one of locally grown fresh fruit and vegetables. As it is known for its fish so this market is the best place to get fresh fish and seafood. Around the markets there are lots of cafés, bars and restaurants. The islands of Armona and Farol/Culatra are just 30 minutes away by boat. Olhão itself doesn't have a beach because it is on the Ria Formosa lagoon system. But that is why the above-mentioned islands are heaven on Earth, a true paradise whose beaches boast blue, clear water.

Another thing in Olhão that catches the eye of tourists is the Legends Way or Caminho das Lendas. This represents a short trail through Olhão's small and narrow streets which if you follow, you will see several sculptures and thus discover the amazing legends.

### **How to get to Olhão?**

The closest airport is in Faro, so getting to Olhão is quite simple. Shuttle buses from Faro airport to the city centre run every 20 minutes, once you arrive in Faro, you can reach Olhão by train, or by bus.

**Check the shuttle bus schedule here:**

[http://www.proximo.pt/uploads/schedules/Linha\\_16\\_3.pdf](http://www.proximo.pt/uploads/schedules/Linha_16_3.pdf)

**Faro - Olhão bus schedule:**

[http://eva-bus.com/gen\\_pdf.php?SERV=9&ORIGEM=Faro&DESTINO=Olh%C3%A3o&VAR=0](http://eva-bus.com/gen_pdf.php?SERV=9&ORIGEM=Faro&DESTINO=Olh%C3%A3o&VAR=0)

**For the Faro – Olhão train schedule, check here:**

<http://www.cp.pt/passageiros/pt>

If you happen to arrive at Lisbon airport, again you have two options to come to Olhão: by train or by bus.

**Lisbon – Olhão bus schedule:**

[http://eva-bus.com/gen\\_pdf.php?SERV=1&ORIGEM=Lisboa&DESTINO=Olh%C3%A3o&VAR=1](http://eva-bus.com/gen_pdf.php?SERV=1&ORIGEM=Lisboa&DESTINO=Olh%C3%A3o&VAR=1)

**Lisbon – Olhão train schedule:**

<http://www.cp.pt/passageiros/pt>

**What to bring from home?**

One year is a long period of time. We advise the ones that tend to get a bit nostalgic to get some things that usually cannot be found outside of their home country. As for clothes, even though winters can be mild, do bring warm clothes. You can also bring with you some basic pills and medication such as paracetamol, aspirin, or ibuprofen. And last but not least, motivation and willingness to get out of your comfort zone and experience something new and different.

Até breve!

See you soon!

