



## Youth Exchanges through European Voluntary Service (EVS)

Helpful information and guidelines for you who are interested in applying for an EVS exchange. As a first step toward an inspiring voluntary work experience abroad, please read this through carefully. Good luck!

*TEH supports youth mobility within the network by sending and hosting young persons through EVS - European Voluntary Service. EVS is part of the EU Programme Youth in Action and with the help of this mobility scheme young people aged 18-30 can work abroad for 2-12 months with all expenses such as travel, food, accommodation and pocket-money covered. For more information about EVS, please visit the website of [Youth in Action](#).*



Education and Culture DG

'Youth in Action' Programme

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## Introduction: Youth Exchanges through European Voluntary Service

Thanks to the network's dedicated sending and hosting organisations, young persons aged 18-30 are given the opportunity to work at another TEH centre for 2-12 months through European Voluntary Service (EVS). EVS is part of the [EU Programme Youth in Action](#)<sup>1</sup>.

With the help of EVS you can go abroad and work in another TEH centre with all expenses covered. All costs during your stay abroad such as your travel, food, accommodation, insurance, language-training, local transports and pocket-money will be covered by EVS. EVS is open to all young people aged 18-30 and you can stay abroad for 2-12 months.

In TEH we give priority to young people who are active in the centres of the network. To go and work abroad at another centre of the network you need a TEH centre to act as your sending organisation. The TEH centres that are sending and hosting young people are listed under 'EVS Youth Exchanges'<sup>2</sup> on the TEH website.

If you are not active in a centre of the network you can either:

1. Find your nearest TEH centre under Members and contact their EVS Contact person to discuss the matter. In many cases it's possible to become engaged in the different activities of the centres on voluntary basis. Once the centre gets to know you they might also be willing to act as your sending organisation.

2. Find a sending and hosting organisation outside TEH. EVS is not something for TEH exclusively but there are hundreds of organisations working with EVS all over Europe, not only in the field of culture. To find out more, please visit this database or contact your National Agency.

## How it all works

EVS works like an agreement between three partners - a sending organisation, a hosting organisation and a young person. To find out which TEH cultural centres are sending and hosting young people through EVS, please follow links 'Who can help you to go?' and 'Where can you go?' above.

### Sending organisation

The young person and the sending organisation communicate with the hosting organisation to agree on the practical arrangements, the duration of the stay and possible tasks and projects that the young person could get involved in during his/her stay abroad. Once the young person, the sending organisation and the hosting organisation have agreed on the formalities an application is sent to a National Agency in accordance with one of the five annual deadlines (1st of February, 1st of April, 1st of June, 1st of September and 1st of November). You usually get an answer to if the application has been approved within 6-8 weeks. The young person can start to work abroad three months after the deadline at the earliest. The sending organisation is responsible for preparing the young person before departure, for keeping in contact with the young person while abroad and for follow-up and writing a report to the National Agency once the young person comes back home.

### Hosting organisation

The hosting organisation communicates with the young person and the sending organisation to agree on the practical arrangements, the duration of the stay and possible tasks and projects that the young person could get involved in during his/her stay abroad. Once the hosting organisation, the volunteer and the sending organisation have agreed on the formalities an application is sent to a National Agency. The hosting organisation is responsible for the supervision of the young person as well as for making the appropriate arrangements concerning board, lodging and language training.

<sup>1</sup> [http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/youth/index\\_en.php](http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/youth/index_en.php)

<sup>2</sup> <http://teh.net/Projects/EVSYouthExchanges/tabid/208/Default.aspx>

### **Young person**

The idea with EVS is that it shouldn't cost anything for the young person to go abroad. Apart from getting full board, lodging and pocket-money, all costs such as travel costs and insurance are covered by the EVS-scheme. It is a good idea to involve the young person as much as possible in the application procedure and to discuss what kind of tasks and projects the young person could get involved in at the hosting organisation together. EVS is neither an internship nor a job - it is an intercultural experience for young people where the integration of the young person in the hosting organisation as well as in the local community is of great importance. All EVS-projects should aim at a good balance between the needs and interests of the organisation that hosts the young person and the personal development of the young person.

### **How to become a sending and hosting organisation**

To be able to start to send and host young people with the help of the EVS-scheme you need to be accredited by your National Agency to do so. The accreditation process consists of filling out an application form. The application form looks different from country to country, so you need to contact your own National Agency to get the form that is used in your country (which is usually possible to download from the website of the National Agency). In the application form you choose whether to become sending or hosting organisation or both.

You also answer questions about your organisation and why you are interested in international youth work. If you choose to become a hosting organisation you also answer questions about how you will solve practical details such as accommodation etc. Sometimes you also get a visit from a person working at the National Agency, as they usually want to get to know the organisations that they approve as hosting organisations. It normally takes about 6-8 weeks to get an answer to your application, even if this varies from country to country and in some cases, unfortunately, takes a lot longer.

### **Youth in Action Programme**

The Youth in Action Programme<sup>3</sup> that EVS is a part of consists of many different actions that can be used to help realize different project ideas that you might get during your EVS. It can also help sending and hosting organisations to become even more engaged in international youth work. For instance, if you've done your EVS working with film in a cultural centre in Serbia you might want to invite a group of young journalists that you got to know there to your cultural centre for a youth exchange. Or you might want to strengthen your cultural centre's contacts with cultural operators in South America and realize an activity together with them within the action Youth in the World. The possibilities are endless!

For more information, please contact your National Agency or visit the website of Youth in Action. Please also feel free to discuss your project ideas with the TEH Coordination Office and we will try to guide you to an appropriate action that could support your project.

Action 1 - Youth for Europe: supporting exchanges and youth initiatives and encouraging young people's participation in democratic life.

Action 2 - European Voluntary Service: encouraging young people to take part in a voluntary activity abroad that benefits the general public.

Action 3 - Youth in the World: encouraging cooperation with Partner Countries by building networks, promoting the exchange of information and assisting with cross-border activities.

Action 4 - Youth Support Systems: promoting the development of exchange, training and information schemes plus support for bodies active at European level in the field of youth.

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<sup>3</sup> [http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/youth/index\\_en.php](http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/youth/index_en.php)

Action 5 – Support for European Cooperation in the youth field contributing to the development of policy cooperation in the youth field.

## **Q&A Youth Exchanges**

### **What is EVS?**

EVS - European Voluntary Service - is part of the EU-programme Youth in Action. EVS gives all young persons aged 18-30 the possibility to work abroad for 2-12 months.

EVS is neither an internship nor an ordinary job - it is an intercultural experience for young people where the integration of the young person in the hosting organisation as well as in the local community is of great importance. All EVS-projects should aim at a good balance between the needs and interests of the organisation that hosts the young person and the personal development of the young person.

### **Who can go abroad through EVS?**

EVS is open to all young people aged 18-30 and you don't need any special competencies or language skills to participate. In TEH we give priority to young people who are active in the centres of the network. To go and work abroad at another centre of the network you need a TEH centre to act as your sending organisation.

If you are not active in a centre of the network you can either:

1. Find your nearest TEH centre under Members and contact their EVS contact person to discuss the matter. In many cases it's possible to become engaged in the different activities of the centres on voluntary basis. Once the centre gets to know you they might also be willing to act as your sending organisation.
2. Find a sending and hosting organisation outside TEH. EVS is not something for TEH exclusively but there are hundreds of organisations working with EVS all over Europe, not only in the field of culture. To find out more, please visit this database or contact your National Agency.

### **How long can I go abroad for?**

Minimum 2 months - maximum 12 months.

### **How do I apply?**

To apply you need a sending organisation to help you. If you are active in a TEH centre you can ask them to help you. If they have not worked with EVS before contact the TEH Coordination Office for more information.

If you are not active in a TEH centre you can either try to get engaged in your nearest TEH centre or find a sending and a hosting organisation outside TEH. EVS is not something for TEH exclusively but there are hundreds of organisations working with EVS all over Europe, not only in the field of culture. To find out more, please visit the database<sup>4</sup> or contact your National Agency<sup>5</sup>.

### **Where can I go?**

The places you can go to within TEH are listed under 'Hosting organisations' on the TEH website<sup>6</sup> When you have found a sending organisation and a place that you would like to go to, you should send your CV and

<sup>4</sup> [http://ec.europa.eu/youth/evs/aod/hei\\_en.cfm](http://ec.europa.eu/youth/evs/aod/hei_en.cfm)

<sup>5</sup> [http://ec.europa.eu/youth/youth/doc152\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/youth/youth/doc152_en.htm)

<sup>6</sup> <http://teh.net/Projects/EVSYouthExchanges/tabid/208/Default.aspx>

motivation letter to that centre's EVS contact person. For information about all places you can go to in Europe through EVS, please visit this database<sup>7</sup>.

#### **What can I work with during my time abroad?**

To read more about what you can work with at the different centres abroad, please go to the list of Hosting organizations on the TEH website<sup>8</sup> and click on the individual centres.

#### **Does it cost anything to participate?**

No, all costs including your travel, food and lodging, pocket-money, insurance, local transports and language training are covered by EVS.

#### **Do I have to know the language spoken in the country where I'm going?**

No, you don't, and language training is included in EVS so should rather see it as an opportunity to learn a new language! Of course it always helps to have a language in common, and in most cases you can get around with English.

#### **When can I apply and how long does it take before I can start?**

There are five deadlines every year (1st of February, 1st of April, 1st of June, 1st of September and 1st of November). When you apply for a certain deadline you can start to work abroad three months after that date the earliest. So, if you apply in February you can go abroad in May, if you apply in April you can go abroad in July and so on.

If your question isn't answered above, please send a message to the [TEH Contact point](#)<sup>9</sup>.

#### **Volunteers' stories at the Youth Exchange Blog**

Get the perspective of the volunteers at the Youth Exchange Blog! Below you can get a taste of what they have written so far.

#### **Quotes from Inga Lace at [Mains D'Oeuvres](#)<sup>10</sup>, St Ouen (France):**

04/05/2011

Describing in my own words, Mains d'Œuvres is an organization that has a very rich programme of concerts, contemporary dance and theatre events, exhibitions, workshops and a centre for digital art and development ("something digital" as I said for the first time when I tried to explain it) and a lot of interdisciplinary projects as well.

Also, it makes me delighted every time I think of the many and different possibilities of spending time in here and finding exactly the things that are interesting for me. There have already been contemporary art exhibition openings, lectures of artists from different countries, discovering a special "somethingyoushouldknow" mailing list, dance shows, concert of a completely lovely British band "Lulu and the Lampshades", artistic squats, looking to Paris from above, going to the Sunday's fresh vegetable market, learning to see the difference between modern, postmodern and contemporary architecture and a lot more.

<sup>7</sup> [http://ec.europa.eu/youth/evs/aod/hei\\_en.cfm](http://ec.europa.eu/youth/evs/aod/hei_en.cfm)

<sup>8</sup> <http://teh.net/Projects/EVSYouthExchanges/tabid/208/Default.aspx>

<sup>9</sup> Mail to [info@teh.net](mailto:info@teh.net)

<sup>10</sup> <http://www.mainsdoeuvres.org/>

**Quotes from Marian Söderholm at [UfaFabrik](#)<sup>11</sup>, Berlin (Germany):**

02/25/2010

This is a space for public thought and personal reflection, and I hope it will inspire others to take the chance, if and when it presents itself, to travel and work in another country for a while, however short. It's worth it, I promise.

I have, as I mentioned, been in Berlin for just over one month now. During this time I have experienced snow, sunshine, early morning coffee and late night dancing, Turkish food markets and vegetable kebabs, birthday parties and bookshop parties, language lessons and street dance classes, new housemates and old friends, film festivals and German hip-hop, sculpture and S-bahns, theatre premieres and pony stables. And that's not even half of it.

03/05/2010

Today I will be conducting my first two interviews on the theme "ecology in the ufaFabrik", which is quite exciting. Not only will I be practising my interviewing skills, I will also get to sit down with a lot of people in the organisation that I usually wouldn't get the chance to talk to, and find out more about their work and ideas on how to develop their ecological and environmental impact on a day-to-day basis.

03/25/2010

I have just over a month left to go here at ufaFabrik. A lot has to be done before then. Writing reports, planning seminars, theatre festivals, hosting of Changing Room-exchangees, documentation, evaluation, preparation...and of course, the Trans Europe Halles meeting in Budapest.

**Quotes from Martina Prokopová at Culture Center [Rex](#)<sup>12</sup>, Belgrade (Serbia):**

Most of my EVS activities in culture center Rex consist of work on the Free Zone project, [...] The Free Zone Festival is a festival of documentary films engaged in human rights topics. It is a festival with no TV shows or low-budget videos, but with the latest documentaries, feature and short films of reputable directors.

Thanks to EVS I had opportunity to lend a hand on the fifth year of Free Zone. With other members of team I worked on a catalogue of the festival, contact list of volunteers, promotion of the festival, I was interviewing the audience during the festival and assisting in office = CybeRex for two months. I could follow small successes and disasters which occurred daily the whole time, I could follow different approaches of the team members.

**Quotes from Florence Jauberthie at [Mejeriet](#)<sup>13</sup>, Lund (Sweden):**

Changing country, changing language, changing "room", changing food. Indeed, changing life. That's something I've never experienced in my life. And I might say after seven months living here that I'm proud of myself, dared to change my habits and to broaden my mind. It's like to learn life again... And that one's of the amazing and best thing that I have done in my life! Nothing ventured, nothing gained!

I might say that I'm the typical cliché of the Frenchwoman, because I can't live without cheese, wine and "baguette". But since I live in Sweden, I have learned to live without (or with less, let's say!), and I discover an other way of life... [...] Here, I've learned a new word: « Fika ». And I can't live without now!

**The Life Abroad**

When living and working in another country, every day is full of new impressions. While developing your

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<sup>11</sup> <http://www.ufafabrik.de/en/index.php>

<sup>12</sup> <http://www.rex.b92.net/en.html>

<sup>13</sup> <http://www.kulturmejeriet.se/index.php/english/>

skills, exploring a new country, finding a new favourite café and getting to know your new co-workers, you also often feel like sharing your experiences with others. You can read more about the life abroad in this file.

#### **THE LIFT HANDBOOK – Sharing Experiences of a youth exchange network project**

Within the network project The Lift (2006-2008), young people who are active at different Trans Europe Halles centres were given the chance to go abroad and work at another Trans Europe Halles centre through the mobility scheme European Voluntary Service (EVS). A large number of Trans Europe Halles centres were involved in The Lift and the experiences from the project have now resulted in a handbook about networking through EVS. The aim of the handbook is to offer a tool for other organisations that would like to start similar projects in the future. To download the handbook, please go to TEH website and see 'Publications'<sup>14</sup>.

#### **And finally, for further information...**

If something there is still something unclear on your mind or you want more detailed information on EVS possibilities, do not hesitate to contact us at [TEH Coordination Office](#)<sup>15</sup>. We will answer your questions or direct to further. We also encourage you to have a look at the [EVS blog](#)<sup>16</sup> to get further acquainted with young people who already have done an EVS exchange.

EVS is a fantastic opportunity to broaden your horizons by doing something useful and intriguing within the European cultural sector. The EVS exchange programme can even serve as a base for future employment, project and European cultural cooperation. Don't miss the chance to take part in that!

Good luck!

Kind Regards,

Trans Europe Halles Coordination Office  
December 2011  
Lund, Sweden

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<sup>14</sup> <http://www.teh.net/Publications/tabid/183/Default.aspx>

<sup>15</sup> Mail to [info@teh.net](mailto:info@teh.net)

<sup>16</sup> <http://changingroom.teh.net/blog/?cat=14>