

Europe is **OPEN**  
to **YOU**



**eurodesk**  
Ireland



# Introduction

Welcome to the 'Europe is open to you' guide, which has been compiled to help you explore your European opportunities.

In this booklet, you will find information, tips, useful websites, and links to services you can contact to help you volunteer, work, train, study, or travel in Europe.

**We hope it won't be long until you're packing your bags for a new adventure across Europe!**

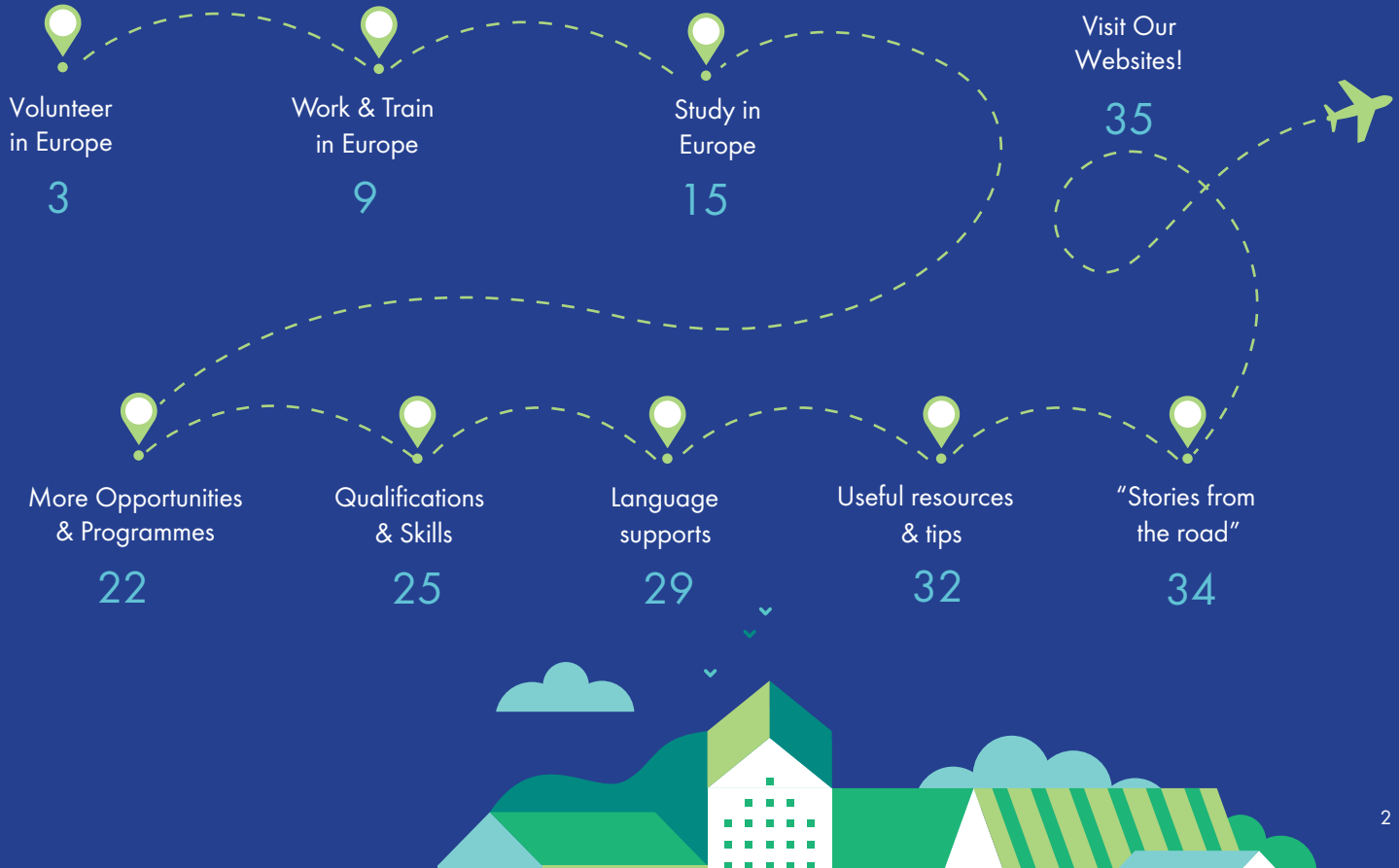
We thank all past and present contributors of this publication for their invaluable information.

Should you have any queries about the information provided in this booklet, please e-mail [eurodesk@leargas.ie](mailto:eurodesk@leargas.ie)

**A digital version  
of this booklet is  
available at [eurodesk.ie](http://eurodesk.ie)**



# Inside....



# Volunteer in Europe

Thinking about volunteering and exploring Europe and beyond? There are programmes that provide you with structured opportunities to volunteer within a wide variety of organisations across Europe, with lots of supports available to help you get there!

Take the chance to visit another European country, make new friends, and have exciting experiences.



## Benefits of volunteering

Through volunteering, young people contribute to strengthening communities while gaining experience, skills, and competences for their own personal, educational, social, civic, and professional development.

Volunteering will help you to:

- make a real difference in the communities that you are volunteering for
- open opportunities to gain new experiences and develop new skills
- increase your employability by showing future employers that you are adaptable and brave and have life experience
- introduce you to new friends from different countries take you out of your comfort zone
- find a sense of direction (for further study or a career)
- become more independent
- appreciate and better understand other cultures

# What opportunities are there?



## European Solidarity Corps

The [European Solidarity Corps](#) Programme is an EU volunteering programme that provides support and funding for young people to spend some time doing voluntary work in their own country or abroad in projects that benefit communities and people.

Once you are accepted onto a European Solidarity Corps project, all your expenses (rent, food, transport, insurance, visa procedures, and language classes) are covered by the project, and you even get a bit of pocket money to enjoy your experience fully! Your travel costs are also covered, although there may be a minimal contribution required.

Volunteering teams are solidarity activities that allow teams of 10 to 40 European Solidarity Corps participants from at least two different countries to volunteer together for a period of between two weeks and two months. Such solidarity activities could especially contribute to the inclusion of young people with fewer opportunities.

To find out more information, please go to the [European Youth Portal](#).

## Who can apply?

The minimum age to participate in a Solidarity project is 18. The programme is open to those between 18 and 30 years. Young people can register if they are legally resident in the EU or in Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway, Turkey, or the Republic of North Macedonia, or if they hold the nationality of third countries neighbouring the EU.

## Where can I go?

You can go anywhere in the EU. You can also go to many other places in the world under the European Voluntary Humanitarian Aid Corps, which may involve a more complicated application process.

## Examples of European Solidarity Corps projects

There are a wide range of activities, organisations, and topics to choose from, e.g. creativity, arts & culture, community development, climate change, green skills, and digital skills.



## Duration of European Solidarity Corps projects

European Solidarity Corps projects can range from two to twelve months.

For young people with fewer opportunities, volunteering activities of two weeks to two months can be designed for them.

These solidarity activities give young people the chance to take part in the daily work of organisations and perform tasks that can have a real impact.

An advanced planning preparation visit can also be arranged for the young person and a support worker. This takes place a month beforehand, over one to two days.

Solidarity activities can take place in Ireland or another European Country.

## How do I apply?

1. Register with the [European Solidarity Corps](#)
2. Create a profile – take some time to fill in the personal information on your profile, and attach an updated CV. Take diligent care with it to show the ‘receiving organisations’ that you are interested. Help is available to you during this process.
3. Search the [European Solidarity Corps Database](#) - by ‘county’ for European Solidarity Corps vacancies or opportunities.
4. Find a supporting organisation here in Ireland – your [local Eurodesk Multipliers](#) can help you do this.
5. Contact the overseas organisation (they will be your host) – your sending organisation will help you with this.
6. Send your [Europass Profile](#) or CV and a motivational letter (about half a page) describing why you would like to do European Solidarity Corps with this organisation. Remember that European Solidarity Corps is not about qualifications or how much experience you have. Projects look for volunteers who are motivated, willing, and enthusiastic, and who will fit in well with their organisation.
7. Plan and prepare – it can take from two to six months to apply for and go on a European Solidarity Corps project. Your sending organisation will explain everything to you and support you throughout the process. They will also carry out some ‘pre-departure’ training with you, to help you be more fully prepared. [Youth Information Services](#) and [Youth Info Chat](#) can also help you during this time with different things, like budgeting, cooking a meal, etc. However, occasionally projects can start after just two weeks!

## Tips for searching for a project

Ask your supporting organisation to help you find one that might suit you.

The more flexible you are about where you want to go and what you want to do – the easier it may be for you to find a project.

European Solidarity Corps projects fill up quickly, and competition for places may be strong.

Search the [European Solidarity Corps Database of Organisations](#) on a regular basis and choose as many as possible to allow you to secure a volunteering opportunity. Think carefully about those you choose so they match your interests and skills.

## Can I do a European Solidarity project within Ireland?

YES! You can also participate in a European Solidarity Corps project within Ireland. This could be helpful for you to build up your confidence and teamwork skills.

Young people can also carry out their own projects as volunteers in Ireland – find out more at [leargas.ie](#).

## Who can help me find out more on what is available or what to do next?

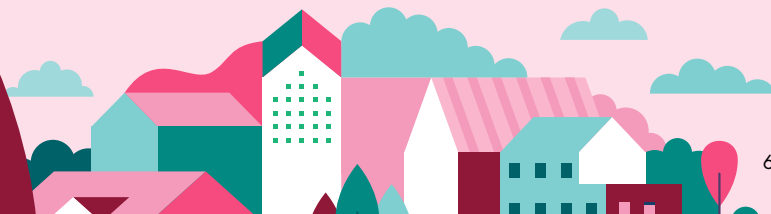
Your local Eurodesk Multipliers are an excellent place to start – they are based in local Youth Information Services and have a specialised knowledge on volunteering opportunities in Europe available to young people.

See the [map of multipliers](#). You can also visit [europeansolidarity.ie](#).

If you are in a school or FET setting, speak to your Guidance Counsellor, who will be able to guide you.

## European Solidarity Corps for people with fewer opportunities or additional needs

When considering your options, focus on your abilities, and know what supports you require to be able to participate fully in a European Solidarity Corps project. You know your disability and abilities best, and it would be useful to consider some of the supports you might need to assist you. These might include equipment, services, or strategies you use already in daily life. You can explain these needs to any organisation that you contact.



### Young people with disabilities

Young people with disabilities are encouraged to take part in European Solidarity Corps. Specific supports are provided for them as part of the overall programme. Sometimes they can volunteer their time and expertise with organisations that specialise in working with or supporting other young people with disabilities.

More information can be found at [EU Solidarity Corps - Inclusion Europe](#).

### Young people with fewer opportunities

European Solidarity Corps provides young people with fewer opportunities with easy access options to help them participate. These include tailor-made projects to suit their specific skills and qualities. They also include additional financial and other support as required to encourage them to take part in European Solidarity Corps. For more see [Europe for all – Integrating young people into the European Solidarity Corps](#).

### Inclusive EU

For most EU youth programmes (Erasmus+ Youth, ESC, DiscoverEU), the requirement is that participants must be legally resident in a participating country – not necessarily a citizen of that country. Proof may be requested (residence card, confirmation of school enrolment, etc.).



## Other volunteering opportunities

Volunteer work in return for board...

There are many opportunities to volunteer in exchange for accommodation and food. These allow you to explore the country in your free time.

You can do a range of tasks, such as doing up an old cottage, helping on an organic farm, au-pairing for a family, doing maintenance work on a holiday centre, carrying out general duties in a hostel, helping in an orphanage, being a guide for tourists, doing photography projects, and much more. Examples of sites that list these opportunities are [WorkAway](#) and [HelpX](#).

[WWOOF](#) ...ing – which stands for Worldwide Opportunities on Organic Farms – is where a volunteer works on an organic farm in exchange for accommodation and food. Many hosts only require four to six hours' work per day for five days. However, this differs between hosts and depends on whether they offer accommodation and food or just accommodation. The sites listed may require a small fee for viewing all details of hosts.

## Other opportunities

[Voluntary Service International](#) (VSI) offers short and long-term volunteering opportunities, and these are available worldwide. VSI also supports young people as a sending organisation for the European Solidarity Corps.

[Comhlámh](#) is an organisation that encourages, promotes, and assists volunteering in overseas projects. It also campaigns for volunteer organisations to sign up to its [Code of Good Practice](#), ensuring the safety and welfare of its volunteers.

[United Nations Volunteers \(UNV\)](#) has many different areas in which you can volunteer, from emergency relief to ICT.

To get a sense of what volunteering can do for you, watch the [Eurodesk video on Volunteering](#).



# Work & Train in Europe

## EURES

The [EURES Network](#) was established by the European Commission to help European citizens find work in another country of the European Union (EU)/European Economic Area (EEA).

[EURES Ireland](#) has a network of EURES advisers. These advisers can give you information and advice on your job search in Europe and help you to contact European employers. They can give you more general practical information on living and working conditions in another EU/EEA country, for example, on social security, pay levels, taxes, and recruitment practices. They can also provide pre-departure and on-arrival advice.

For more information and contact details for your local EURES adviser, visit [www.euresireland.ie](http://www.euresireland.ie) or email [eures@welfare.ie](mailto:eures@welfare.ie).



## The EURES Portal

The [EURES Portal](#) gives you access to more than 3 million job opportunities all over Europe. You can search for job vacancies in a wide range of occupations and sectors, across all EU/EEA countries. You can get in touch directly with the employer or through the Public Employment Services Office listed in each vacancy. You can also contact one of the European EURES Advisers who will provide more detailed advice on job opportunities, searching for a job in their country or they may recommend you to potential employers.

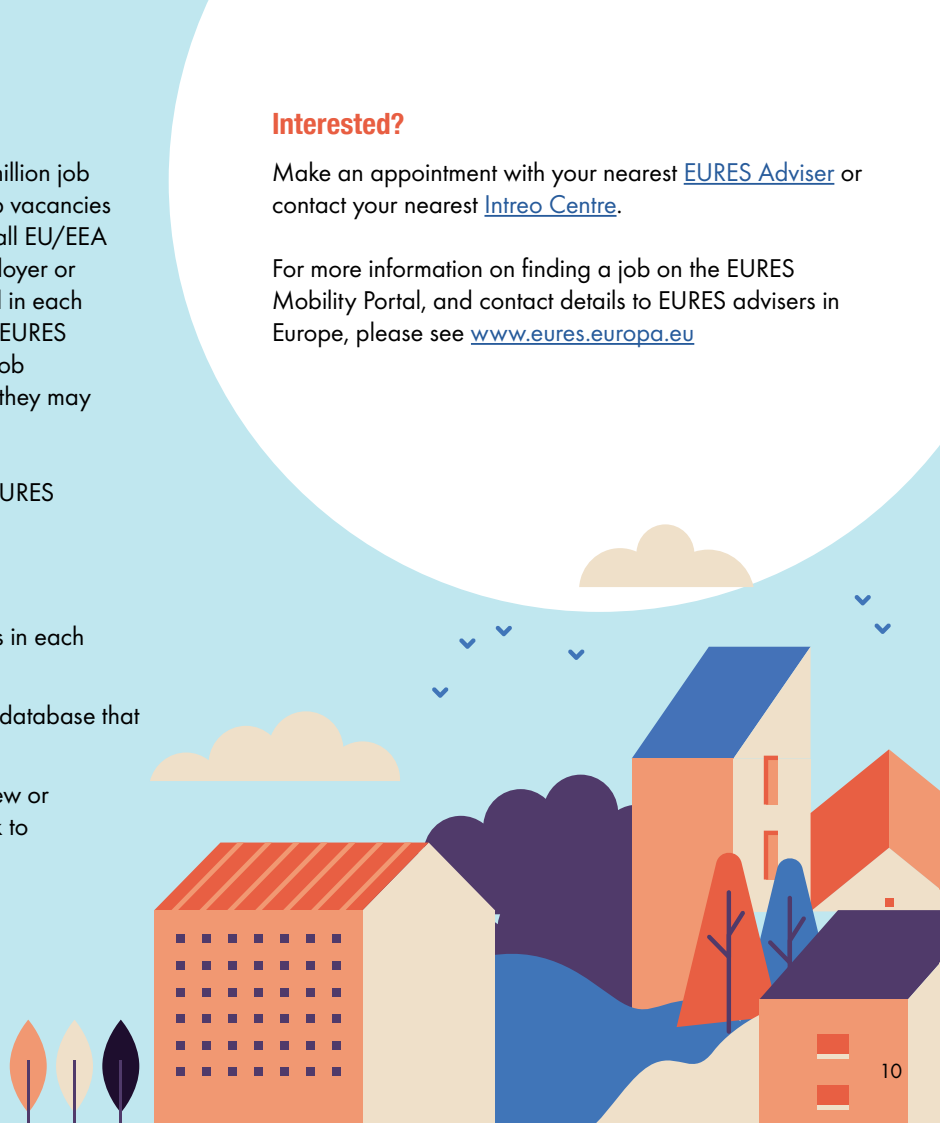
If you are looking for a job in Europe, you can use EURES Ireland and the EURES portal to:

- access a database of jobs across Europe
- find information on living and working conditions in each EU and EEA country
- include your Europass Profile/CV in a European database that can be seen by European employers
- avail of job mobility supports (such as an interview or relocation allowance) if you are moving for work to another EU or EEA country
- take part in on-site or online recruitment events across Europe (see [europeanjobdays.eu](#) for more information)

## Interested?

Make an appointment with your nearest [EURES Adviser](#) or contact your nearest [Intreo Centre](#).

For more information on finding a job on the EURES Mobility Portal, and contact details to EURES advisers in Europe, please see [www.eures.europa.eu](http://www.eures.europa.eu)



## EURES Targeted Mobility Scheme

The [EURES Targeted Mobility Scheme](#) (TMS) is a European Union job mobility scheme that offers financial assistance to EU citizens aged 18+ who are relocating for work or travelling to an interview in another EU country, Norway, or Iceland.

Supports include:

- financial allowances for travel to an interview and/or relocation to another country for work
- language training allowance (if required), family support allowance and recognition of qualifications allowance
- information on living and working abroad

You must apply for financial support before you leave your country and before the starting date of your new job/interview date. You cannot apply after you have moved to your new country of work.

For more information and to apply you can email: [tms@welfare.ie](mailto:tms@welfare.ie)

## Europass

Want to work or train abroad? Europass has the tools you need!

The Europass platform is a one-stop-shop of tools and information, making your search and application process for learning and working opportunities across Europe easier. Use Europass to take the next step in your career or learning journey by:

- exploring job and learning opportunities across Europe with the Europass Job and Course Search
- researching information on working or learning in your preferred country
- setting up your Europass Profile to easily create CVs and cover letters.
- organising your documents using the Application Manager and tracking deadlines, so you don't miss out!
- sharing your Europass CV securely with job platforms like EURES, employers, and education providers.
- Start searching for your next step today on the [Europass](https://europass.europa.eu) (europass.europa.eu) platform!



europass

# Career opportunities in the EU

## What do EU officials do?

Officials working in the EU's institutions and agencies pursue rewarding international careers in a uniquely multicultural and multilingual environment. EU officials serve 450 million EU citizens across 27 Member States and develop and implement policies that have a real impact on people's lives.

The work of the EU is very wide-ranging. The institutions therefore require staff with a variety of backgrounds and skill sets. Linguists and lawyers are, of course, always in demand, but so are economists, ICT specialists, scientists, and veterinarians, as well as administrative and support staff with more general backgrounds.

Visit the [EU Jobs website](#) of the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade to learn more.



## How can I apply to work with the EU?

EU institutions do not usually recruit to fill individual posts. Instead, they hold competitions (called 'concours') to identify panels of qualified candidates, who can then be recruited by the institutions as the need arises. The [European Personnel Selection Office](#) (EPSO) is the recruitment service of the EU institutions and manages this process. To apply for a position within the EU, you must be a citizen of an EU country and fulfil the language requirements of the post. Most positions need a thorough knowledge (C1) of one official EU language and satisfactory knowledge (B2) of a second official language. For instance, if English is your mother tongue and you speak a good level of Irish, French, etc., this would satisfy the language requirement in most cases. Similarly, if Polish is your mother tongue and you have a good level of fluency in English, this would also satisfy the language requirement.

Educational requirements vary according to the position, but positions are available for both graduates and non-graduates.



## Are traineeships available?

Most EU institutions offer paid traineeships (known as 'stages') of three to five months for university graduates. Undertaking a stage can be an excellent way to gain experience of working life in Brussels. For many, it can act as the launch pad to an EU career. Even if you're not sure if an EU career is for you, a stage can develop your professional and personal skills, as well as giving you the opportunity to live and work in a vibrant European city.

Trainees, or 'stagiaires', work in a wide range of fields, with opportunities in law, finance, human resources, environmental policy, communications, and many more. The work of a stagiaire can include everything from preparing policy and position papers to coordinating visits.

More information about the stages can be found on the [DFAT Website](#) and on the websites of the institutions. There are also internships available specifically for Irish speakers interested in working as a linguist in the EU. Organised annually by the Department of Rural and Community Development and the Gaeltacht, these internships give up to ten graduates (depending on demand, requirements of the institutions, and budgetary constraints) the opportunity to work on translation, conference interpreting, and proofreading in Irish. Further details of this scheme, known as Scéim Intéirneachta in Institiúidí an Aontais Eorpaigh, can be found via [Department of Rural and Community Development and the Gaeltacht](#).

## 'A Career for EU'

'[A Career for EU](#)' is a strategy launched by the Irish Government in May 2021 that aims to promote career opportunities in the European Union to Irish graduates. The strategy also contains several practical supports to assist candidates as they navigate the application process. It aims to increase the level of Irish representation in the EU's institutions and contains several structured measures to aid Irish applicants to improve their chances of securing a position within the EU.

These measures include:

- information sessions with EPSO staff about competitions as they open
- practice material (available in 24 languages) for preliminary stages of competitions
- training webinars on later stages of competitions
- interview coaching, including in an applicant's second language (where possible)
- making preparatory resources available 'as Gaeilge'
- full scholarships to undertake master's programmes at the College of Europe in Bruges, Belgium or Natolin, Poland.

## Where can I get more information about opportunities in the EU?

The Department of Foreign Affairs has a website dedicated to [Job Opportunities in the EU](#). You can [subscribe](#) to their mailing list via the website to receive event invitations directly to your inbox. They also post regularly to their social media (@EUJobsIreland) with details of upcoming competitions, traineeships, and information sessions.

Other useful resources include European Movement Ireland's (EMI) jobs list and the European Personnel Selection Office's (EPSO) website. EMI's jobs list is updated weekly on their website and via their [mailing list](#). EPSO's [website](#) provides details of current job opportunities and career profiles in the EU so you can understand what role would fit your skills best.

Finally, feel free to send any questions you have to [eujobs@dfa.ie](mailto:eujobs@dfa.ie).



# Study in Europe

A stylized, flat-design illustration of a European cityscape. The scene features various buildings in shades of green, blue, and white, some with grid patterns. There are also trees, rolling hills, and a large teal semi-circle in the background. A dashed line with an airplane icon at the end curves across the right side of the image.

## What's in it for you?

- Choosing to study in Europe can be a transformative opportunity – and international experience offers a significant boost to your career.
- You'll come away with enhanced skills, a strong appreciation for our different cultures, increased curiosity about the world, personal development, and perhaps most importantly, fun and adventure.



## Comparing your study abroad options

Type	Erasmus+ Mobility	Erasmus+ BIP/Blended Intensive Programme	Full-Degree Study Abroad (Not Erasmus+)
Duration	2-12 months	A flexible alternative to the typical Erasmus+ mobility – combines short-term in-person study (5-30 days) with virtual learning	Entire undergraduate or postgraduate degree
Tuition Fees	No extra tuition – you continue paying fees to your home university	No extra tuition – you continue paying fees to your home university	Varies by country – some offer free or low-cost tuition
Financial Support	Erasmus+ grants available	Erasmus+ grants available	<a href="#">SUSI Maintenance Grant</a> may be available, if you're <a href="#">eligible</a>
Language	Learn through your language of study/many courses taught in English	Learn through your language of study/many courses taught in English	Varies by course – many programmes taught in English
Career Benefits	Gain international experience, improve employability, and build global networks	Develop international collaboration skills, improve employability, and build global networks	Full cultural immersion, international degree, improve employability, and build global network
Personal Growth	Independence, cultural awareness, new experiences	Improved communication and digital skills, global perspective, civic engagement	Independence, adaptability, deep understanding of another culture
Best For ...	Students wanting a short-term international experience while earning credits for their home degree	Students looking for a more accessible international learning experience with minimal travel commitment and reduced financial and logistical barriers	Students wanting a fully immersive experience and who are open to relocating for their entire degree

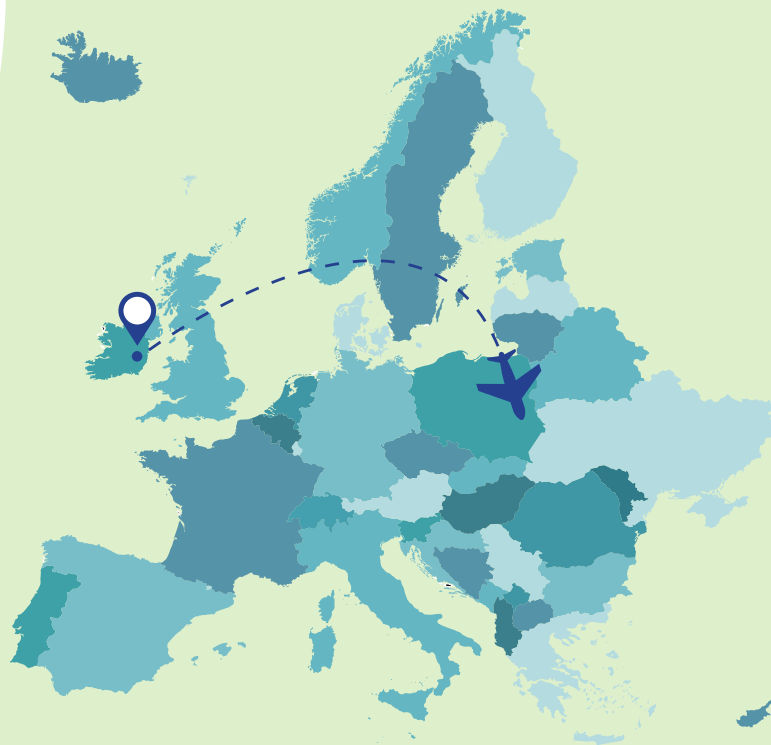
## Don't believe us? See the following...

- [How to take part in Erasmus+](#)
- [Erasmus+ Fact Sheets](#)
- [The Léargas report 'Tracing the Impact of European Work Placements on the Skills, Attitudes, Education and Career Paths of Vocational Learners from Ireland'](#)

**HEA** | An tÚdarás um Ard-Oideachas  
The Higher Education Authority



## Where can I study?



**Anywhere in the EU**

# Financial Support for Studying Abroad

The financial support available depends on which option you choose and on the duration of your study abroad.

## For Erasmus+:

- The Erasmus+ grant can help cover travel and living costs for eligible students participating in Erasmus+ physical mobilities or BIPs. Check directly with your institution's International Office for funding options.
- Students with disabilities or special needs may be entitled to apply for extra funds from the programme.

## For Full-Time Study in Another EU Country:

- Fees vary from place to place – some European universities offer free or low-cost tuition. See the [Studying outside Ireland](#) page on [citizensinformation.ie](https://citizensinformation.ie) to begin researching your options. Student loans or country-specific financial aid might be available – check directly with your chosen university.
- Application processes to universities across Europe differ significantly. See the [Your Europe – University page](#) on [europa.eu](https://europa.eu) for information about the application processes.



# Key Initiatives Supporting Study in Europe

## European Universities Initiative

The [European Universities Initiative](#) offers opportunities to students across different university campuses for mobility and learning in new and innovative ways. Irish higher education institutions are part of this, providing students with access to mobility, courses, and projects with higher education institutions in other countries.

Ask your university, or those you are considering applying to, for more information.

## Euroguidance

[Euroguidance](#) supports the development of lifelong guidance and competency development of career guidance practitioners. They promote the mobility of career guidance practitioners in Europe, enhancing European networking and collaboration and fostering the exchange of good practices.

## European Student Card

The European Student Card makes mobility easier, more efficient, and greener – from the application stage to the issuing of your study credentials. It facilitates access to student services across Europe.

More information is available on the Erasmus Plus website.



## Where to get more information

Need help with ...	Who to ask
Grants and financial aid	<a href="#">HEA.ie Student Finance page</a> /Your university's Finance Office/ Your local <a href="#">Youth Information Office</a>
Disability-related support	Your university's Disability Support Office
Choosing the right study abroad option	Guidance counsellor/Your university
Erasmus+ (Physical and BIPs)	Your university's International Office
Full-degree study abroad	The Admissions team at the host university



# Europass

## Ready to explore learning opportunities in Europe? Europass Can Help!

[Europass](#) helps you explore learning opportunities across Europe and ensures you can easily explain your qualifications to education providers and employers. Discover how Europass makes it easier to learn abroad:

- Use the Europass Course Search to explore courses and learning opportunities across Europe that match your interests and goals.
- Get information on your further education and vocational qualifications with the Europass Certificate Supplement, making it easier for education providers and employers to understand what you have achieved.

- Use the Europass Diploma Supplement to provide a clear and standardised description of your higher education qualification, helping you to explain to employers and education providers what you have learned.
- If you spend time abroad in an exchange programme during your studies, such as Erasmus+, you can receive a Europass Mobility document to describe the learning and skills gained during your mobility experience.
- If you hold a [European Digital Credential for Learning](#), you can safely receive and store it in the Europass platform.

Visit Europass  
to learn more



## Good to know...

Europass Library is a helpful free resource which lets you build a digital backpack of documents related to your learning and career. You can securely share links to files stored in your library with others.

# More Opportunities & Programmes

## DiscoverEU

DiscoverEU is part of the Erasmus+ programme that gives the opportunity to young people aged 18 to discover Europe and its landscapes and culture through travelling predominantly by rail. (There are exceptions to allow those living on islands or in remote areas.)

Young people who are 18 and are long-term legal residents of an Erasmus+ programme country or citizens of an EU country, can apply during the two application rounds that take place each year. Successful applicants are awarded a train travel pass. Selected applicants who are resident in Ireland can travel by plane to begin their DiscoverEU journey in a European country of their choice. They can start and finish their journey in two different countries!

DiscoverEU offers you the opportunity to participate in a travel experience that will enable you to take advantage of the freedom of movement throughout the European Union, explore the diversity of Europe, learn about European cultural heritage and history, and connect with people from all over the continent.

Furthermore, DiscoverEU enables you, as a young person, to develop life skills of value to your future, such as independence, confidence, and openness to other cultures. Find out more on the [European Youth Portal](#).



## Youth Exchanges

A 'Youth Exchange' is a type of Erasmus+ Mobility project that brings together groups of young people from different countries to live and work together for a short period (usually 5–21 days).

Through non-formal learning activities such as workshops, discussions, role-plays, outdoor activities, and cultural exchanges, participants explore topics of shared interest, develop new skills, and build intercultural understanding.

Youth Exchanges are designed for young people aged 13–30 and are coordinated by youth organisations or informal groups, with the focus on learning, participation, and inclusion rather than formal education or tourism.

Youth Exchanges are open to all young people, with a special focus on those with fewer opportunities. Find out more at [leargas.ie](https://leargas.ie).

## Eurodesk Opportunities Finder

In the [Eurodesk Opportunity Finder](#), you can find current EU and international opportunities and programmes divided into sections for young people and adults.

## Europe Direct – Meet, Ask, Discuss

How do I get a job in another European country? Is it safe to shop online in another EU country? Are there any EU rules that guarantee the quality of our food? My flight has been cancelled – what are my rights?

These are some typical questions people have about the EU, and Europe Direct can answer them!

There are eight Europe Direct Centres in Ireland, located in libraries in Ballinasloe, Blanchardstown, Clones, Letterkenny, Limerick, Portlaoise, Sligo, and Waterford.

Europe Direct centres are also your starting point for exploring the EU, and they serve as a direct link between you and the EU institutions. They can answer questions about EU policies, programmes, and priorities. They organise a wide range of events throughout the year to encourage active citizenship. So if you are interested in climate change, farming, democracy, or Digital Europe, drop into your local Europe Direct centre to get involved.

More information on finding your local Europe Direct can be found at [https://european-union.europa.eu/contact-eu/meet-us\\_en](https://european-union.europa.eu/contact-eu/meet-us_en).





## Erasmus for Young Entrepreneurs

The [Erasmus for Young Entrepreneurs](#) (EYE) is an EU-funded programme to help aspiring European Entrepreneurs with the skills to start and/or successfully run a small business in Europe. The programme provides practical and financial assistance for the new entrepreneur while they gather and exchange knowledge and business ideas with an experienced host entrepreneur in another [country](#). The young entrepreneur stays and collaborates with their host for a period of one to six months.

The stay is partly financed by the European Commission.

New Entrepreneurs (NEs) are entrepreneurs in the early stages of their business. They include both 'would-be' entrepreneurs, who are firmly planning to start their own business based on a viable business plan, and entrepreneurs who have recently started their own business (for not more than three years). Whether planned or already existing, the business can be in any sector.

Host Entrepreneurs (HEs) are successful and experienced entrepreneurs (ideally owners of a micro or small enterprise) or individuals directly involved in entrepreneurship at SME board level with more than three years of entrepreneurial experience (not employee).

## How can I apply to be part of the EYE programme?

Both New and Host Entrepreneurs must submit their application online. As part of the [registration](#), the NE or HE must choose one of the Intermediary Organisations (IOs) active in their country of residence. The chosen IO will act as guide and contact throughout the process.

## What information is required and how does it work?

The IOs are responsible for assessing the quality of the potential relationship they approve in the programme. Participants will be eligible if they have shown sufficient entrepreneurial skills in the documentation they submit. This information, submitted via the online [registration form](#), includes:

- a CV
- a business plan
- details about relevant skills, experience, education, and language knowledge
- current sector of activity
- motivation to participate in the programme
- expected outcomes from participation

Application and participation in the programme are free of charge. Please read the [programme guide](#) for more information on conditions of participation.



# Qualifications & Skills

## What is a qualification?

A qualification is a formal record awarded following a period of successful study or training. Qualifications recognise the knowledge and skills that have been achieved and can be practised by a learner. In Ireland, the terms 'qualification' and 'award' are often used interchangeably.

## Wondering how to understand your qualification?

In Ireland, we describe the qualifications used in our education and training system through the [Irish National Framework of Qualifications \(NFQ\)](#).

The NFQ classifies the level, class of award, and type of qualifications in Ireland from Level 1 right up to Level 10

**Scan the QR code to learn more about the Irish NFQ**



Dearbhú Cáilíochta  
agus Cáilíochtaí Éireann  
Quality and  
Qualifications Ireland



European  
Qualifications  
Framework



National Framework  
of Qualifications

This 10-level Irish National Framework of Qualifications helps you to compare different qualifications. It shows you how you can progress from one level to another. The NFQ can also help you to compare a foreign qualification with its Irish equivalent and can help with the recognition of Irish qualifications abroad.

The qualifications included in the NFQ and the programmes leading to them are listed in the [Irish Register of Qualifications \(IRQ.ie\)](https://www.irq.ie/). If a qualification is on the IRQ, you can be sure it is included in the NFQ!

Providers of education listed on the IRQ have been quality assured by [Quality and Qualifications Ireland \(QQI.ie\)](https://www.qqi.ie/). [Qualifax.ie](https://www.qualifax.ie/) also provides a detailed database of courses in Ireland where you can explore your options and different learning pathways.

## Looking to take a course abroad or move abroad for work?

It is important that you can explain your qualification so that it is recognised.

Across Europe, countries have different National Qualifications Frameworks (NQFs). The [European Qualifications Framework \(EQF\)](https://www.european-council.europa.eu/media/1468437/attachment/data/00000001/1/en/european-qualifications-framework.pdf) is an 8-level, learning outcomes-based framework for qualifications. It allows comparison across different national qualifications frameworks.

With the help of the Europass [Compare Qualifications tool](https://european-council.europa.eu/media/1468437/attachment/data/00000001/1/en/european-qualifications-framework.pdf), you can see how qualifications included in national frameworks are referenced to the EQF and relate to one another.

Scan the QR code to learn more about the EQF



europass

**QUALIFAX**  
EVERY COURSE EXPLAINED



## Looking to get your foreign qualification recognised in Ireland?

[NARIC Ireland](#) provides advice on the academic recognition of a foreign qualification by comparing it, where possible, to a major award type and level on the Irish National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ). A comparability statement is available for each listed qualification; please follow the steps outlined.

Step 1: Search the [NARIC Ireland Database](#) by selecting the country where your qualification was issued.

Step 2: If your qualification is listed in the NARIC Ireland database, it has already been compared to a similar award type and level on the Irish NFQ.

Step 3: Download your comparability statement to help employers or education providers understand your qualification in terms of the Irish NFQ.

## Looking to get your Irish qualification recognised abroad?

NARIC Ireland is a member of ENIC-NARIC, the European Network of Information Centres-National Academic Recognition Information Centres. This network offers advice on the recognition of qualifications across Europe by providing information on education, training, and qualifications systems within individual countries. It uses the Lisbon Recognition Convention (LRC) to ensure qualifications obtained in one country are recognised in all the others.

If you would like to have your Irish Higher Education qualification recognised abroad, visit [ENIC-NARIC.net](#) and select your destination country. For recognition of Further Education and Training qualifications, visit [Europass \(europass.europa.eu\)](#) to find the National Reference Point for the country in question.



## Skills: You've got more than you think

Whether you've volunteered, been in a youth group, played on a team, helped organise something, or simply figured out how to get through a tough situation – you've built skills. And those skills matter.

Skills are, simply put, your ability to do something well. Some are called hard (or technical) skills, like speaking a language, using software, or knowing how to make a perfect coffee. Others are [transversal skills](#) (also called soft or 21st-century skills), like teamwork, communication, adaptability, and leadership. These are the skills that help you succeed in any job, in any country, and in life in general.

Volunteering, working, studying, or training in another country pushes you to grow in ways you never imagined: building confidence, independence, cultural awareness, and the ability to work with all kinds of people. In Ireland, Europe, and beyond, these transversal skills are just as important or often even more important than technical know-how.

The good news? You already have them! Even better? You'll gain loads more when you take part in opportunities abroad!

## That's where helpful national and international tools come in.

[Skills Summary](#) is an online platform that helps you learn about transversal skills, reflect on your experiences, and recognise your strengths, to turn them into something you can talk about: in job applications, in interviews, or when applying for a programme abroad. It even gives you a personal skills profile you can download and use.



[Youthpass](#) is a European recognition instrument for identifying and documenting learning outcomes that are acquired in projects under the Erasmus+ Youth and the European Solidarity Corps programmes.

[Skills Box](#) provides you with a set of Career Charts that outline the Further Education and Training (FET) skills courses available through the Education and Training Boards (ETBs) nationwide. They provide you with an insight into the various pathways and career options accessible through the local ETB.

[Europass](#) has tools to help you reflect on, identify and highlight your skills in a clear way.

**Don't underestimate yourself. You've already got truly valuable skills, and you're about to gain even more.**

# Language supports

## Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR)

This framework was set up by the European Commission to indicate the level of understanding you have in language. CEFR is becoming more commonly used across Europe by students, colleges, and employers, and you can use it in your Europass profile if you are going to work abroad.



See how you can assess your own levels of competency in a language on the [Council of Europe Website](#).



## Online Linguistic Support

The [Online Linguistic Support](#) (OLS) tool is designed to assist Erasmus+ and European Solidarity Corps participants in improving their knowledge of the language in which they will work, study, or volunteer abroad so that they can make the most out of this experience.

OLS is available in all official EU languages and can be accessed before and during the mobility project. The course gives access to Live Coaching activities, tutoring sessions, and interactive massive open online courses (MOOCs). The participants can evaluate their language skills before and after their mobility, giving them a clear picture of the impact of their Erasmus+ mobility on their language skills.

More than 350,000 Erasmus+ participants assess their language skills with OLS every year and can improve their level with OLS language courses. On average, participants who follow courses actively improve their proficiency by at least one CEFR level (Common European Framework of Reference for Languages).

## Other useful linguistic resources:

- [Languages Pathways](#): contains links to other resources, catering to learners of French, German, Italian, and Spanish
- [Europass \(europass.europa.eu\)](#) offers a free Language Self-Assessment resource. It uses the European Language Levels for description of language skills – CEFR. To self-assess your skills, you reflect on your skills and describe your skill levels.
- [Explore Languages](#) and have [Fun with Languages](#), resources compiled by Languages Connect contain foreign languages music playlists, vocabulary, app recommendations, and social media accounts to follow
- [ALLO at Home](#): fun language learning, language awareness, and lateral thinking puzzles
- [BBC Languages – Free online lessons to learn and study](#)
- Free English courses can be found at local [Education Training Board centres](#).



## Targeted Mobility Scheme (TMS) Language Allowance

If you are recruited or pre-selected for a job in another EU country, Norway, or Iceland, you may be eligible to apply for financial support if you have a need to attend a language course to facilitate the job in the new country. Such a language course:

- may take place in your country of residence before your relocation
- may take place in your country of destination, but must start within six weeks of your job start/relocation
- must be short and intensive, max 8 to 12 weeks must offer good learning at reasonable cost, i.e. provide good value

The financial support consists of reimbursement of actual declared costs up to max €2,200 per jobseeker (correct as of August 2023).

For further details, see [EURES Targeted Mobility Scheme](#).





# Useful resources & tips

## Erasmus+ App



The [Erasmus+ App](#) can simplify your Erasmus+ experience, providing easy access to information and key documentation on different opportunities offered by the Erasmus+ programme, including studying abroad, youth exchanges, etc. The app offers access to special deals and offers, enabling participation in events, social activities, and volunteering. The Erasmus+ app 'tips competition' gives its users a chance to share tips with each other to enhance the Erasmus+ experience. The competition has a monthly prize of a €50 Amazon voucher or a bi-yearly prize of an interrailing voucher.

## European Youth Portal



Check the European Commission [European Youth Portal](#) for the most recent European youth news and articles on European mobility opportunities for young people, EU youth policies, and events. Here you will find information on working, travelling, studying, and volunteering in many European countries, in English and other EU languages, as well as inspiring stories from young people, information on competitions, and much more!

## Useful Eurodesk Ireland resources

To find out practical information on working, volunteering, studying, and more in Europe, check out Eurodesk Ireland Network online resources, including information on who you can contact for one-to-one support:

[Working in Europe](#)

[Volunteering in Europe](#)

[Studying in Europe Europe at your fingertips](#)

[Practical and travelling information](#)

## Who can help:

Young people can get in touch with [Eurodesk local information points](#) located in Youth Information Services and Europe Direct Centres across Ireland to receive individual support and information.

You can also contact the Eurodesk Ireland national office by phone +353 87 188 3748 or email [eurodesk@leargas.ie](mailto:eurodesk@leargas.ie).

## Erasmus+ Higher Education Websites

EUR<sup>+</sup>Ireland

[EURIreland.ie](http://EURIreland.ie) is the website of the Erasmus+ Irish National Agency for Higher Education, which is managed by the [Higher Education Authority](#). The website provides a wide range of information on Erasmus+ from a Higher Education perspective, as well as student testimonials. To learn more about Erasmus+ for studies and traineeships, please visit the [Erasmus+ Student](#) section.



## Léargas' website

[Léargas](#) is the Irish National Agency for Erasmus+ Youth, Education and Training and [European Solidarity Corps](#). Their website provides details on different EU-funded opportunities available to young people.



# “Stories from the road”

Now that you know a little more about the opportunities available to you, it's time to hear what it's really like to study, work or volunteer abroad! Listen to the stories of young people from Ireland and beyond who took the plunge, and learn about how their experiences abroad shaped them and their futures. Are you ready to follow in their footsteps?

## What is it like to take part in Erasmus+ Opportunities?

[TU Dublin student Kevin McGrath explores space on his Erasmus+ Traineeship](#)

[Life as an ESC Volunteer in Ireland](#)

[Taking part in Erasmus Opportunities](#)



# Visit Our Websites!

## **Eurodesk Ireland – European opportunities for young people**

<https://eurodesk.ie/>

## **Léargas – European Solidarity Corps, Erasmus+, DiscoverEU**

[Léargas - Insight through exchange, Erasmus+, ESC. Volunteering \(leargas.ie\)](#)

## **Higher Education Authority – Erasmus+ for students**

[EURIreland - Higher Education Authority, National Agency for Erasmus+ Higher Education in Ireland](#)

## **EURES Ireland – Working and training abroad**

[www.euresireland.ie](http://www.euresireland.ie)

## **Consumer rights for shopping and travel in the EU**

<https://www.eccnet.eu/>  
[Air Passenger Rights](#)

## **Department of Foreign Affairs - EU Jobs**

[Contact Us - Department of Foreign Affairs \(dfa.ie\)](#)

## **Qualifications and Quality Ireland (QQI) – Irish EQF-NCP I Irish National Europass Centre I IRQ I NARIC Ireland I Qualifax**

[www.qqi.ie](http://www.qqi.ie)  
[www.Qualifax.ie](http://www.Qualifax.ie)  
[www.irq.ie](http://www.irq.ie)

## **National Youth Council of Ireland – Skills Summary**

[www.skillssummary.ie](http://www.skillssummary.ie)

## **Crosscare – Information and support for young people**

[Youth Information - Crosscare](#)

## **Europe Direct**

[Europe Direct | Libraries Ireland](#)

## **Erasmus for Young Entrepreneurs**

<https://www.erasmus-entrepreneurs.eu/>



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An Roinn Gnóthaí Eachtracha  
Department of Foreign Affairs

HEA

An tÚdarás um Ard-Oideachas  
The Higher Education Authority



Dearbhú Cáilíochta  
agus Cáilíochtaí Éireann  
Quality and  
Qualifications Ireland



Rialtas na hÉireann  
Government of Ireland



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