

Interreg

EUROPEAN UNION

Volunteer Youth



IVY Policies



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Purpose and objectives of the policies

At AEBR, we support IVY volunteers and mentors before, during and after their experience.

We strive for every mentor and volunteer to have a positive experience; one which is based on growth, respect and solidarity and aims to promote European Territorial Cooperation.

The IVY policies guide AEBR's team, volunteers and mentors through the set of norms, rules and responsibilities that apply to any individual taking part in the Interreg Volunteer Youth initiative.

Our objective is to ensure that every person feels safe, included and respected throughout their IVY experience.

With the policies, we also want to ensure that the objectives of the IVY volunteering programme are met and their principles respected.

OBJECTIVES OF IVY

- promote concrete achievements of Interreg programmes and projects;
- strengthen the visibility of Interreg programmes and projects among the general public;
- provide Interreg projects and programmes with the support of volunteers;
- provide young people with solidarity-engagement opportunities.

PRINCIPLES OF IVY

- maintain the voluntary nature of the experience, meaning that the primary goal of hosting a volunteer is to enhance European Territorial Cooperation through solidarity;
- no job substitution: volunteers complement and supplement regular work and are not intended to replace paid staff or to perform work that would otherwise be done by paid staff;
- co-shaping: we aim to enable young people to shape European Territorial Cooperation and cohesion through their experience.



With these policies, we are committed to implementing DG REGIO's volunteering programme, ensuring transparency, full participation and accessibility for every person involved.

Please note that the IVY Policies will be regularly updated, so changes might occur.



IVY is the first volunteering programme of the European Commission's DG REGIO and has been set up to support European Territorial Cooperation. It aims to promote Interreg, thanks to the solidarity and civic engagement of young people.

IVY is centred around the volunteers who commit their time and lend their competences to benefit and promote Interreg and the host organisations, which enables volunteers to help shape cooperation policy.

Volunteers carry out activities with the goal of promoting Interreg. It is important to note that a volunteering activity is undertaken for a non-profit cause and does not replace paid staff. Equally, volunteering is not a learning activity, but provides the opportunity to contribute to European Territorial Cooperation. In this sense, the general objective of volunteering activities in IVY is expected to be the promotion of Interreg.

To enable a successful IVY experience, the involvement of IVY volunteers must respect the following conditions:

- the volunteering nature of the initiative: volunteers support the host organisation with additional tasks, but do not replace staff (see 'No job substitution policy' for details);
- activities are in line with the principles and objectives of IVY: host organisations plan the tasks of the volunteer ahead of time, when applying to host a volunteer. AEBR monitors compliance with the principles and objectives of IVY and gives feedback accordingly;
- tasks exclusively promote Interreg: IVY volunteers will only be involved in tasks directly related to the implementation of the Interreg programme or project the host organisation is responsible for, in accordance with the tasks agreed upon in the application form.



The general tasks are previously agreed upon between AEBR and the host organisation and must be upheld. The specific content of the task description should be ultimately developed and agreed upon together by the host organisation and the volunteer to allow the volunteer to have an active say in their experience. However, specific tasks will need to be coherent with those outlined and agreed upon in the Programme or Project Note.

Changes to the tasks agreed upon should be communicated in a timely manner to AEBR's team in order to ensure transparency, collaboration and a quality experience for everyone. If new tasks do not respect the conditions outlined above, AEBR will reject the changes and will ensure that the original tasks are carried out in line with IVY's principles and objectives.

As a general rule, IVY volunteers' tasks shall aim to:

- Support the communication and visibility of Interreg and its benefits;
- Support the implementation of Interreg projects.

Volunteers' tasks are expected to demonstrate the benefits of cooperation and highlight the solidarity dimension of Interreg. Some examples are:

- communication about Interreg (articles, newsletters, posts for social media, support for event organisation);
- communication with project partners;
- promotion of projects with local media and stakeholders;
- implementation of activities that reflect the solidarity aspects of projects.





Eligibility and participation criteria

AEBR is responsible for the involvement of host organisations and volunteers in the programme. Their selection is based on adherence to IVY's principles and objectives to best reflect the European Commission's and AEBR's values of volunteerism and cooperation.

POLICIES OF PARTICIPATION OF INTERREG PROGRAMME AND PROJECTS

- Eligibility criteria for host organisations:
- Any Interreg programme
- Any beneficiary of an ongoing Interreg project
- Any Macro-Regional Strategy

PARTICIPATION CRITERIA FOR HOST ORGANISATIONS

Host organisations wishing to host a volunteer in the framework of the IVY initiative are expected to adhere to the principles of IVY and deploy the volunteers in line with the objectives of the volunteering programme, as follows:

OBJECTIVES OF IVY

- promote concrete achievements within Interreg programmes and projects;
- strengthen the visibility of Interreg programmes and projects among the general public;
- allow young volunteers to provide support to Interreg projects and programmes;
- provide young people with solidarity-engagement opportunities.

PRINCIPLES OF IVY

- voluntary nature of the experience, meaning that the primary goal of hosting a volunteer is to foster European Territorial Cooperation through solidarity;
- no job substitution: volunteers complement and supplement regular work and are not intended to replace paid staff or to perform work that would otherwise be done by paid staff;
- co-shaping: we aim to enable young people to shape European Territorial Cooperation and cohesion through their experience.

Every host organisation must also adhere to the additional principles laid out by AEBR, referenced from the [European Solidarity Corps Charter](#), the [European Charter on the Rights and Responsibilities of Volunteers](#) by the Youth Forum with the support of the Council of Europe and the European Commission, and the [Charter of the European Voluntary Service](#) (EVS).

The additional principles are outlined in the Programme and Projects application notes and include:

- Respect for the criteria to identify tasks, among which activities must be in line with IVY's objectives, tasks must be outlined clearly for candidates and discussed in-depth with the selected volunteer, and volunteers should be allowed to suggest specific tasks that align with their interests and skills.
- Compliance with standards and principles to implement in order to select and empower the volunteer, such as: selecting the volunteer in compliance with the principles of equal treatment, equal opportunities and non-discrimination, and based on the competences and interests of the candidates, as well as valuing the volunteers' contributions and recognising their support.
- Commitment to ensure guidance, including support and feedback.
- Offer support to engage the volunteer, including ensuring a decent and safe environment, integrating the volunteer in the organisation and the local community, and actively involving them.
- Respect for the participants: volunteers shall not bear any costs related to participation in IVY, and their data must be stored in a way that protects their rights.

The full list of principles can be viewed [here](#).

Host organisations are selected based on the information provided in the application documents, the Programme Note and Project Note for Interreg programmes and project beneficiaries, respectively. AEBR's team reviews the submitted documents on the basis of the IVY principles and objectives to ensure that the applicant demonstrates the capacity to host volunteers in the framework of IVY and in full respect of its values.

POLICIES OF PARTICIPATION FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

Eligibility criteria for young people:

- A citizen or resident of an eligible participant country (see the full list of eligible countries [here](#));
- Between 18 and 30 years old;
- Must not have participated in IVY before.

Selection criteria for volunteers:

- Candidates are expected to share a passion for cooperation;
- People with different cultural backgrounds, competences, experiences and interests are recruited, depending on the specific projects;
- For some offers, certain relevant competences may be required, as well as language proficiency;
- IVY volunteers must show a commitment to the principles and values of volunteerism and European Territorial Cooperation.

Candidates are screened and recommended to the host organisation by AEHR's IVY team, based on the information provided by the applicants, namely their curriculum vitae (CV) and, if attached, additional information such as motivation letters or similar documentation.

EXCEPTIONS

- Volunteers may be recommended directly by the host organisation or the mentor. To avoid misuse and to foster complete alignment with the volunteering programme, the IVY team will assess the candidate's profile and motivation to ensure that they are suitable for the position. AEHR may suggest different candidates to the host organisation if the one proposed initially is not suitable for the placement offer and/or does not respect the principles of the IVY programme.
- Volunteers may carry out an internship in parallel with the host organisation while volunteering, if the tasks of the internship are the same as those outlined in the volunteering agreement and are therefore in line with the principles of the IVY initiative.

A parallel contract may be made if needed, but the activities and conditions outlined must be the same as those included in the IVY volunteering agreement, unless explicitly agreed upon differently with the IVY team.

Organisations hosting a volunteer who is also an intern will be expected to uphold the volunteering principles of IVY (voluntary nature of the experience, no job substitution and co-creation).

In the case of a parallel internship, it is important to ensure that there is no double-funding: the participant shall not receive funds from EU resources for expenses that are already covered by the IVY programme (that is, organisational and personal support for food, accommodation and local transport).

AS PARTICIPANTS OF THE INTERREG VOLUNTEER YOUTH PROGRAMME, VOLUNTEERS SHALL UPHOLD THE FOLLOWING PRINCIPLES

- embrace the values of solidarity, respect for human dignity and human rights, and believe in the promotion of a fair and equal society in which pluralism, non-discrimination, tolerance, justice, solidarity and equality prevail;
- strive to enhance solidarity between people, while respecting their cultures and their traditions, and aim to build a community of shared responsibilities and mutual support;
- be willing to make meaningful contributions to society and show solidarity, cooperation and mutual understanding.

Measures to support volunteers in need of tailored assistance are in place (see details in the chapter 'Compensation, support and benefits'). Volunteers who would like to request assistance can inform AEER's team at ivy@aebr.eu.

CODE OF CONDUCT, PARTICIPATION POLICY AND RESPONSIBILITIES

To guarantee that everyone involved feels safe and respected, AEBR, volunteers and host organisations must comply with the following set of norms and responsibilities:

- not act in any way that could put others or themselves at risk of being harmed;
- respect the rules, organisational structure and practices that govern the host organisation, also bearing in mind that this framework may be necessary to respect the personal health, safety and dignity of individuals involved in the activity;
- abide by the laws in force in the host country;
- joining the Interreg Volunteer Youth initiative must always be the voluntary choice of a young person, who is free to resign from the initiative. They have the right to refuse to accept any offer of deployment without affecting their chance of receiving other offers in the future;
- participation in this initiative does not involve the payment of any fee;
- at the end of their placement, volunteers are entitled to receive a certificate, confirming their participation in the activity;
- when accepting a placement for a volunteering activity, the mentor or the legal representative of the host organisation and volunteers will sign an agreement with AEBR and the other parties, detailing the conditions of the activity, in line with the principles of the IVY initiative;
- prior to the start of the activity and during their deployment, volunteers will receive clear information about the tasks they will carry out and, where appropriate, adequate training.



Volunteering commitment

Volunteering is an activity that a person undertakes not for profit but out of solidarity. Respecting the framework within which a person volunteers is key to a successful experience. For IVY, there is a set of rules that aims to ensure a fair commitment to all participants. This includes the following aspects:

- The volunteering activity is full-time, with a minimum of 29 hours and a maximum of 35 hours per week.
- Each volunteering experience has a duration of 2 to 6 consecutive months. The start and end dates are decided by both mentor and volunteer ahead of time.
- Volunteers are entitled to two days of holidays per month.
- Volunteers receive financial support in the form of a stipend, based on the country in which they are deployed, which is calculated based on the number of days they volunteer for. The stipend covers the entire duration of the volunteering activity. That is, if the volunteer is deployed for 60 calendar days, then the stipend will cover each of the 60 days.

- Each volunteer is covered by health, accident and liability insurance.
- Volunteers also receive a stipend for travel costs, based on the distance they travel to relocate to the volunteering location.
- The experience is in-person: the volunteering activity will take place on the premises of the host organisation.
- Each volunteer is assigned to a mentor.

SOME EXCEPTIONS ARE POSSIBLE AND SHOULD BE REQUESTED TO THE IVY TEAM. THESE INCLUDE:

- Part-time volunteering:

We understand that volunteering part-time might be a necessity for certain people to be able to volunteer, and for this reason it is possible to volunteer part-time.

There are some considerations to be taken into account regarding part-time volunteering:

- (a) A minimum of 60 volunteering days is mandatory;
- (b) the financial support for the volunteer will be reduced accordingly, based on the actual volunteering time;
- (c) allowances are calculated and distributed as follows: volunteers will receive an amount which corresponds to the percentage of volunteering days per week, including the weekends;
- (d) a minimum amount of volunteering time must be ensured: volunteers must volunteer at least 14 hours per week (equivalent to two working days);
- (e) cap on hours: volunteers deployed on a part-time basis can volunteer up to a maximum of 28 hours per week (equivalent to four days). This will prevent exploitation and ensure fairness;
- (f) The request to volunteer part-time must come from the candidate only, and can only be considered if the host agrees.

- Interruptions or extensions:

Extensions of the volunteering period up to a maximum of six months are possible, as well as interruptions. To change the duration of the volunteering experience, the volunteer must contact the IVY team to arrange this.

- Remote volunteering:

A maximum of 5 days per month can be performed remotely, including in a home-office setting, if the host organisation and the volunteer both agree to it. The days of remote volunteering can be consecutive or split up within a month, but cannot be transferred to other months: if they are not used, they expire at the end of each month. The arrangement should be decided by volunteers and mentors.

Volunteers must also be fully covered by insurance when volunteering remotely. If they are located in a different country than the one in which they are insured for the volunteering activity, even temporarily,

they must guarantee that they are covered. If they are not covered, volunteers must arrange their own health, accident and liability insurance for the period during which they are outside of the country they are otherwise insured in. AEBR's IVY team can help organise a policy, but costs will be borne by the volunteer. AEBR shall not be deemed liable for any accidents or damages occurring while the volunteer is in a different country than the one in which they are covered for their volunteering activity while working remotely. The financial support will remain unaffected.





The volunteers' role and measures to avoid abuse

Volunteering is a unique opportunity for young people to have an impact on cooperation policy. To ensure that everyone involved feels included and respected during the experiences, and with these IVY policies, we are committed to supporting volunteers and mentors to make the most of the IVY programme.

THE ROLE OF VOLUNTEERS AND THE MEANING OF VOLUNTEERING

With IVY, we aim to support Interreg programmes and projects through the contributions of volunteers. The role of volunteers is to enrich European Territorial Cooperation with their unique competences and perspectives. For them, it is an experience of civic engagement in which they contribute to Interreg, and by doing so, learn more about cooperation.

Involving volunteers has the potential to bring benefits, such as broadening participation, creating more inclusive working environments, improving Interreg projects and providing additional support and resources.

It is important to keep in mind that volunteers are not a substitute for paid staff. Volunteers cooperate with the staff, and should not be expected to have the same responsibilities as employees.

Volunteers provide additional support; they complement and supplement the work of paid staff, bringing the added value of involving young people in the process and therefore gaining a new perspective.

As such, the goal of the IVY volunteering programme is to provide opportunities for individuals to contribute their time and skills to Interreg, while also gaining valuable experience and making a positive impact on the community.

At AEBR, we value the diverse contribution of each volunteer, recognising that everyone brings unique competences and perspectives.

To support the role of volunteers, our aim is to facilitate a fulfilling and impactful volunteering experience, fostering an environment where each individual feels empowered to contribute in ways that resonate with their personal goals and values. In this sense, we respect the choice of volunteers to carry out tasks that align with their interests and skills.

NO JOB SUBSTITUTION POLICY

Volunteers complement and supplement regular work of paid staff by providing additional support and resources: they will carry out tasks which aim to support the activities carried out by paid staff in the framework of the Interreg programme or project they are involved in.

The volunteer's role and activities must not be used to fulfil the core work of paid staff. Volunteers will not be assigned responsibilities that are currently held by, or have been previously performed by, or that would otherwise be done by, paid staff in a regular capacity.

DEFINITION AND SCOPE OF WHAT CONSTITUTES JOB SUBSTITUTION

At IVY, we are committed to avoiding instances of job substitutions and aim to offer a fulfilling volunteering experience. Job substitution refers to the practice of replacing paid staff with volunteers.

Job substitution occurs when a volunteer is asked to perform tasks that are outside the scope of their role or responsibilities. Here are some examples of what might be considered job substitution:

- A volunteer is asked to perform tasks that are typically performed by paid staff, such as tasks that are already foreseen within the project or programme management (basic communication, management, reporting, administration);
- A volunteer is asked to have a specialised training or certification to perform a task.

For each volunteering experience, the scope of volunteer roles versus paid positions should be clearly defined by the host organisation. In general, volunteer roles are less formal and less structured than paid positions. Volunteers may be asked to perform a wide range of tasks depending on their skills and interests. Paid positions, on the other hand, are typically more specialised and require a higher level of expertise and training.

Volunteers are not paid for their work and we wish to build a programme in which their contributions are valued and recognised.

POLICIES TO AVOID ABUSE

To avoid conflicts, we encourage transparency and open communication. Volunteers and mentors should disclose any potential conflicts, including:

- Parallel or previous contracts between the volunteer and the host organisation;
- Family ties and relevant relationships;
- Clashing interests.

PROTOCOL TO RESPOND TO REPORTS OF JOB SUBSTITUTION AND ABUSE

Reporting: Volunteers are encouraged to report any concern regarding a potential job substitution by contacting AEBR's IVY team at ivy@aebr.eu.

Investigating: AEBR's team will investigate all reports of job substitution, promptly and thoroughly gathering all relevant information.

Corrective action: If job substitution has occurred, AEBR's team will encourage the host organisation to take corrective action immediately. This could include redefining the volunteer's role, clarifying the involvement's policies, or terminating the volunteer's involvement in the programme.

AEBR's team communicates regularly with volunteers, ensuring that no job substitution occurs. If this happens, the team will respond promptly following the protocol outlined above.





Compensation, support and benefits

The Interreg Volunteer Youth programme is unique in its objectives of supporting Interreg and empowering young people's participation in cooperation policy. AEBR and the European Commission are committed to offer an enriching experience to volunteers and host organisations thanks to measures ensuring accessibility, inclusiveness and support to all persons involved.

SUPPORT MEASURES FOR IVY VOLUNTEERS

Every volunteer receives support to be able to make the most of their experience. Such support includes:

- Financial support:

A stipend to cover costs of food, accommodation and personal expenses. The amount provided depends on the country of deployment and ranges from 23 to 39 € per day – the rates applicable to each country can be viewed [here](#). The financial support is a stipend, not a salary. As such, it is not taxable as a salary.

The financial support is transferred to the volunteer in two or three instalments, depending on the total length of the volunteering period.

- Contribution to travel costs to relocate:

An amount corresponding to a fixed rate, based on the linear distance between the host organisation and the place of residence of the volunteer at the start of the initiative. The rates applicable to each category can be viewed [here](#).

Volunteers whose initial place of residence is located 100 km or more from the location of the host organisation will also receive financial support for one travel day before the activity and one travel day following the activity to relocate.

- Insurance:

AEBR arranges health, liability and accident insurance for the duration of the volunteering experience (see details in the chapter 'Liability, risk management and safety'). Volunteers who are already covered by such insurance before the experience can claim a reimbursement for the coverage during the volunteering period. Private health insurances will not be covered if the volunteer is covered under universal health care in the country of deployment.

- Training and mentoring:

Relevant information will be provided to the volunteer both by AEBR and the host organisation prior to the start of the experience (see details in the chapters 'Supervision and problem-solving' and 'Training and orientation').

The mentor will accompany the IVY volunteers during their entire stay, helping them settle in, make progress in their activities and develop ideas.

- Tailored assistance for people with disabilities:

Equipment or extra medical expenses can be covered for volunteers in need of tailored assistance. Volunteers who would like to request assistance can inform AEBR's team at ivy@aebr.eu.

- Tailored assistance for integration:

A lump sum of 150 € can be requested by volunteers to attend language courses of level A1 or A2 if the volunteer relocates to a country where they do not speak the language. AEBR will request proof of attendance of the course to justify the costs. Volunteers will receive the established lump sum rate regardless of the costs of the language course.

- Reimbursement of costs related to visas:

Costs to request a visa to relocate to the country of deployment are covered by the IVY programme. Costs incurred to travel to the embassy to apply for the visa are also reimbursed.

- Additional pocket money for missions:

The daily rate of the country where the volunteers travel to for the mission is transferred to the volunteer for each travel day, and is in addition to the regular financial support they receive. The rates range from 3 to 6 € per day and can be viewed [here](#).

Additionally, in the event that volunteers are extended an invitation by either AEBR or their host organisation to take part in various activities, including but not limited to events, meetings, and missions, it is anticipated that the inviting party will cover the costs of participation, including travel costs and accommodation, and provide comprehensive meal coverage for the volunteers to facilitate their participation.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE VOLUNTEERS TO BE ARRANGED AUTONOMOUSLY

Volunteers are responsible for arranging the experience, including:

- travel and relocation to the location of the host organisation;
- accommodation, as this is not provided. However, the host organisations provide helpful information to find an accommodation;
- residence permit, with the support of AEBR's team.

SUPPORT FOR HOST ORGANISATIONS

AEBR enables and facilitates the hosting of volunteers by undertaking the following tasks for the benefit of the host organisation:

- search for candidates that suit the need of the host organisations;
- preselection of approximately 6 candidates that best fulfil the placement offer;
- preparation of all necessary administrative documents, including the volunteering agreement to be signed by the host organisation, the volunteer and AEBR;
- provide the volunteer with health, accident and liability insurance for the whole duration of the experience;
- transfer the financial support directly to the volunteer for the experience (corresponding to approximately 700 to 1,000 € per month, depending on the country of deployment);
- provide initial information to the volunteer about Interreg;
- provide support when needed via the dedicated help desk.



In the case of specific requests, AEBR can offer tailored support to host organisations and volunteers, including cooperation agreements. For more information, the IVY team is available at ivy@aebr.eu.

BENEFITS FOR IVY MENTORS AND HOST ORGANISATIONS

- Additional resources: IVY volunteers bring new perspectives and fresh ideas along with their skills and creativity to contribute to European Territorial Cooperation, and support the host organisation with additional resources to supplement regular work. Former hosts have been grateful for the impact on improved communication and for the innovation provided by volunteers.
- Personal and professional growth for mentors: hosting a volunteer is an enriching experience for both the host and the volunteer to foster cooperation, and contributes to empowering youth in Interreg.
- Enhancement of European values of solidarity and cooperation: sharing knowledge and skills regarding Interreg with young people reinforces solidarity across generations and is an investment in the sustainability of cooperation in the future, while helping uphold the values of the EU and of Interreg.
- Connect with the community: volunteers can enable the host organisation to better connect with the community and the target group of the Interreg programme/project. The programme can help build relationships with people who share similar values and goals.

BENEFITS OF PARTICIPATING IN INTERREG VOLUNTEER YOUTH FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

- Unique experience to support European Territorial Cooperation: volunteers are involved in cooperation projects and programmes, supporting Cohesion Policy and enhancing the awareness of cooperation in the EU and its neighbouring regions. By doing so, IVY volunteers contribute to this by representing young people's perspectives, sharing new ideas and bringing fresh points of view.
- Recognition: IVY volunteers gain a unique life experience with a long-lasting impact, building a better future for all, together. Throughout their service in solidarity actions across Europe, volunteers develop new skills on both a personal and professional level related to the field of cooperation they are involved in. As a recognition and proof of their commitment, IVY volunteers receive a certificate and a badge of participation at the end of the experience.
- European dimension: IVY volunteers make a truly European experience contributing to projects that promote local development in an international context, collaborating with partners from different countries to build better services for Europe's citizens. IVY volunteers step out of their comfort zone and explore different fields of cooperation in the EU and its neighbouring countries – even when they volunteer from their home country.



- Become part of a dynamic network: AEBR has set up a network of former IVY volunteers so that they can exchange relevant information on events and opportunities, and support one another. We also involve IVY volunteers in various initiatives we are part of, such as the group meetings following up on the implementation of the Youth Manifesto on Cooperation Policy, Youth4Cooperation, writing articles for the Stories of European Cooperation published by Interact and more.
- Get a grant to organise your own local event: The European Commission and AEBR provide additional funds for IVY volunteers who, during their volunteering experience, wish to organise local events – known as Citizens' Engagement Activities – informing citizens of the achievements of the European regional policy.





Supervision and Problem-Solving

Volunteers and mentors are supported throughout the whole experience: we strive to be available and present for questions and problems, if any arise.

SUPERVISION POLICIES PROVIDED BY AEBR

AEBR supports volunteers and host organisations with administrative tasks, problem-solving and a dedicated help desk.

As the coordinating organisation, AEBR is responsible for the following measures:

- the preparation of administrative documents;
- monitoring all volunteering experiences through a mid-term individual call with each volunteer and the collection of a final report by volunteers and mentors;
- ensuring tailored support when needed (see below);
- the organisation of additional actions to integrate volunteers in European Territorial Cooperation.

SUPPORT AND SUPERVISION POLICIES TO BE PROVIDED BY THE HOST ORGANISATION

To guarantee support, the following main measures must be ensured:

- Regular support/supervision is available to each volunteer, both through the mentor and AEBR.
- Each volunteer must have a clearly identified mentor who is responsible for the day-to-day guidance of the volunteer, and who oversees the integration of the volunteer.

Within the host organisation, two persons should be identified to offer support to the volunteer: the mentor and the legal representative. Their role will be as follows:

MENTOR

The role of the mentor is to provide support, guidance, encouragement and information to the volunteer. The mentor will also supervise the volunteer during the deployment and be in daily contact with them. Their role is crucial in helping volunteers integrate both within the organisation and the local community, as well as to enable them to contribute to the organisation's mission.

Because the mentor is the main point of contact for the volunteer, the volunteer is to be integrated in the same department and/or working on the same project as their mentor.

LEGAL REPRESENTATIVE

This person is responsible for signing the volunteering agreement and amending it if needed. The legal representative oversees the general integration of the volunteer and is expected to offer additional support when needed. Additionally, the legal representative replaces the mentor in their absence from the office and should be available if difficulties between the volunteer and the mentor arise.

The mentor should be a different person than the legal representative. In exceptional cases and on a case-by-case basis, one person may serve as both mentor and legal representative.

The mentor is particularly important to provide support and guidance to volunteers. The mentor, as the main contact person for the volunteer in the host organisation, is expected to:

- help familiarise the volunteer with the environment of the organisation and of the project/programme they are involved in;
- assign the tasks to the volunteer and discuss the volunteer's contribution;
- provide feedback and guidance to the volunteer;
- listen actively and offer support to the volunteer in case of doubts or difficulties;
- arrange regular meetings to check in with the volunteer so as to ensure a strong and fruitful collaboration with them.

The volunteer will complement and supplement the work of the mentor. For this reason, the mentor must work in the same department and/or on the same project in which the volunteer is involved.



For additional support, especially if the volunteer is not comfortable discussing certain aspects with the mentor or the legal representative of the host organisation, volunteers are encouraged to contact AEBR's team at ivy@aebr.eu.

Host organisations are expected to provide supervision and support to volunteers throughout their experience at the host organisation. This is key to a successful collaboration.

To offer support successfully, each host organisation participating in IVY is expected to implement the following measures:

- identify a mentor who is responsible for the volunteer;
- offer supervision and guidance to the volunteer;
- provide personal support during the learning process to the volunteer;
- help the volunteer integrate into the local community;
- ensure participation of the volunteer in training and evaluation activities.





The IVY programme is based on the values of respect, equality, accessibility and inclusiveness. These policies will guide participants to guarantee these values throughout the whole experience.

POLICIES FOR TRAINING IMPLEMENTED BY AEBR

Before starting, each volunteer receives an Info Pack, a folder with significant information which will be useful to the volunteer during their experience. This includes general information about the European Union and Interreg, as well as guidelines and tips to guide them throughout the activity.

Additionally, the IVY team organises an extensive video call with the volunteers prior to their start. The main aim of this call is to get to know each other and make sure that the volunteers clear up any doubts about their assignment. The call is also an occasion to illustrate once more what Interreg is and to advise volunteers about their role in the host organisation, and how they can enhance the solidarity dimension of territorial cooperation.

POLICIES FOR TRAINING AND ORIENTATION BY THE HOST ORGANISATION

Specific training and orientation are expected to be provided by the host organisation, with the aim of helping the volunteer become familiar with the organisation and its work. It is important that the volunteer is involved in the working environment to enable them to become familiar with the host organisation.

Some measures that are helpful for the volunteer to gain confidence are:

- Welcome them and introduce them to key personnel in the office as well as to partners;
- Inform them about the organisation's history, mission, values and structure;
- Offer an overview of relevant policies of your organisation;
- Show them the office and inform them about your work procedures, including software and specific programmes used for basic work;
- Review the activities foreseen with them and clearly discuss the role and responsibilities of the volunteer and mutual expectations;
- Provide guidance on the specific Interreg project/programme the volunteer will be involved in, including introducing them to the partners, explaining the objectives of the programme/project, the state of play, etc;
- Offer specific task-related training.

We encourage mentors and host organisations to ensure a welcoming, informative and supportive environment for the volunteer to become familiar with your work. In turn, this will help the volunteer quickly adapt and contribute to your mission with confidence.



AEBR implements the Interreg Volunteer Youth programme in accordance with the principles of equal treatment, equal opportunities and non-discrimination. The volunteering programme promotes equality, welcomes diversity, and strives to be inclusive and accessible.

Specific measures guarantee that IVY's principles are met:

- To ensure equal opportunities, the volunteering programme is open to eligible candidates, regardless of their gender, race, religion, sexual orientation, or any other characteristic. The recruitment process is fair and transparent, open through our online portal and easily accessible. All candidates and volunteers are treated equally. To enable participation, each participant receives financial support and a contribution to travel costs, based on criteria applied to each participant equally.
- To foster diversity, the volunteering programme welcomes volunteers from diverse backgrounds and many nationalities. Where possible, some measures were introduced to make the programme flexible and adaptable to the needs of different volunteers.
- To grant inclusion and make the programme more accessible, extra resources have been made available to support additional requests, including support for language courses, and additional medical expenses and equipment for participants requesting tailored assistance (see details in the chapter 'Compensation, support and benefits'). Each volunteer also receives a full insurance package and training, both from AEBR as the coordinating organisation and the host organisation. AEBR strives to create an environment where everyone feels welcome and valued.

Requests in this sense can be sent to ivy@aebr.eu.





Protection, health and safety of participants

The protection, health and safety of participants involved in the volunteering activities in the framework of Interreg Volunteer Youth are key elements of the programme. All persons participating in the Interreg Volunteer Youth should have the opportunity to take full advantage of the possibilities for personal and professional development offered through the volunteering experience. This should be assured in a safe environment which respects and protects the rights of all persons, their physical and emotional integrity, their mental health and their wellbeing.

Specific measures ensure the health and safety of volunteers during their experience. With these policies, we aim for every person to feel safe and cared for – both volunteers and mentors.

RISK MANAGEMENT AND AVOIDANCE OF HARMFUL ACTIVITIES

Security and safety of the participants must be ensured. All volunteering activities should comply with the 'do no harm' principle and should be implemented with due consideration for the impact of unforeseen circumstances such as environmental crises, conflicts or pandemics. All the tasks and activities carried out by IVY volunteers must be planned on the basis of risk assessments and undertaken in a way that ensures that there is a high level of safety and security for volunteers.

Volunteers should not be deployed in operations conducted in areas of international and non-international armed conflicts or in facilities that contravene international human rights standards.

To ensure the safety of young people, volunteering in the framework of IVY, may only take place in countries:

- where Interreg programmes, Interreg projects and macro-regional strategies are currently implemented; and
- where there are no ongoing international or non-international armed conflicts.



The host organisation is responsible for supporting the coordinating organisation AEBR in taking the necessary measures to ensure the safety of volunteers in accordance with national legislation.

The participating organisation must adhere to the EU values mentioned in the Article 2 of the [TEU](#) and the [EU Charter of Fundamental Rights](#).

PREVENTION POLICY: INSURANCE FOR VOLUNTEERS

AEBR is committed to securing the best policy coverage, with the support of participating organizations and volunteers. Participating organizations are required to inform AEBR of the legal framework governing insurance coverage in their respective countries, whether it is present through the national system or through private insurance scheme. In the event that this framework does not meet the initiative's minimum safety standards, specifically concerning health, accident, and liability insurance, this must be communicated to AEBR and special measures may be adopted to ensure the safety of all participants.

Such measures may include restricting the framework of the mobility experience or home-country deployment within the hosting country, depending on the feasibility of adopting an insurance scheme that meets the minimum standards required by the Interreg Volunteer Youth programme (as stated in the paragraph Minimum standards for safety and protection).

AEBR reserves the right to decline the deployment of volunteers in a host organization, should the minimum standards of safety and security required by the IVY initiative fail to be met.



MINIMUM STANDARDS FOR SAFETY AND PROTECTION

All volunteers participating in the programme are covered by insurance policies for health, accident and liability in the country of deployment and during missions.

A health insurance policy provides help should any medical emergency arise due to illness, an injury or an accident.

With accident insurance, we aim to activate a policy that offers a pay-out in case a volunteer is injured due to an accident.

Liability insurance means that we want to protect volunteers from potential claims in case of damages to third parties and persons – for example, damages that could occur to the rented accommodation, but also to other people's properties, in case of personal accidents.

Volunteers deployed in a different country in which they normally live are covered by a policy provided by the insuring company Dr Walter GmbH.

Volunteers deployed in the same country in which they already live are covered by national policies on a case-by-case basis. AEHR, in consultation with the host organisation and the volunteer, will look for the best options offered by national insurances schemes: the policies with higher premiums in relation to best price–quality ratio criteria will be selected. AEHR will ensure that each policy respects the minimum standards to ensure that each volunteer is guaranteed protection, as follows:

Health insurance benefits should include at least inpatient/outpatient medical treatment, including operations and transport costs to the nearest hospital (e.g. with ambulance vehicles).

Accident insurance should include the following conditions: disability benefit, accidental death benefit, and rescue costs if these are not covered by health insurance.

Liability policies should include personal liability insurance, with a lump

sum for personal injury and/or property damage that will vary from country to country. If possible, the policy should explicitly cover damage linked to the volunteering activity.

The programme covers the costs of the policies with dedicated funding. Volunteers who are not yet covered receive a new policy arranged by the IVY team, while volunteers who already possess a policy are reimbursed the existing costs if they pay out-of-pocket for such costs. It should be noted that AEBR is not liable for purchasing a private policy for health insurance if universal coverage applies. However, if needed and upon internal approval, AEBR covers additional costs for necessary treatments and medicines prescribed by a doctor which are not covered by the national health system. AEBR strives to ensure the same conditions for each volunteer to the greatest extent possible, to guarantee a safe and protected environment for the volunteers and their host organisations.

PROCEDURES TO PREVENT CONFLICT AND RESPOND TO RISKS

Rights and responsibilities are outlined in the IVY volunteering agreement and must be fully observed by all parties.

Any breach should be communicated to AEBR's IVY team at ivy@aebr.eu. AEBR will react promptly to help identify corrective measures.

The following measures are designed to prevent conflict, and AEBR makes these clear to both volunteers and host organisations:

- the volunteer must not act in any way that could put others or themselves at risk of being injured;
- if a conflict situation arises, the volunteer may ask their mentor to facilitate communication between the volunteer and the local environment or other parties at the host organisation. The mentor should be able to provide an independent and objective evaluation of the situation;

- if a conflict arises between the volunteer and the mentor, the volunteer can ask to have another person appointed as their mentor – the legal representative of the organisation, for example. In the event of a conflict situation, the volunteer should be supported and must cooperate actively with the coordinating and host organisations to avoid communication problems;
- volunteers, mentors and legal representatives always have the possibility to report problems/issues to AEBR;
- if a serious incident occurs, the volunteer can expect the mentor to establish and maintain appropriate contact with the coordinating organisation, their next of kin (if required or requested) and the insurance company, if necessary.

AEBR's IVY team can be reached at ivy@aebr.eu.

If an alternative contact at AEBR is needed because of conflicts with the IVY team members, please contact other members of AEBR's team at info@aebr.eu. The information will be treated with confidentiality.





Confidentiality and Data protection

The Interreg Volunteer Youth programme is built on the principle that each participant – AEBR, host organisations and volunteers - respects the confidentiality of personal and organisational information of the other actors involved, in particular regarding legal affairs and concerning personal data of members, staff and beneficiaries of volunteering activities.



SPECIFIC MEASURES ENSURE THAT THIS PRINCIPLE IS MET

- Confidentiality: AEBR, host organisations and volunteers should keep all information related to volunteers, the organisations and the people involved confidential.
- Data protection: AEBR and host organisations should comply with the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) guidelines. All personal information collected and stored should be kept secure and used only for the purpose for which it was collected.
- Access to information: Volunteers should have access to the information they need to perform their tasks effectively. However, they should not have access to information that is not relevant to their work.
- Sharing information: AEBR, host organisations and volunteers should not share information about the people involved and the organisations or other people involved with anyone outside the programme without prior permission.
- Reporting: Host organisations and volunteers can report any breach of confidentiality or data protection to the programme manager at ivy@aebr.eu. AEBR will react promptly to help identify corrective measures.





Recognition

AEBR is grateful to each mentor and volunteer who participates in the programme. We understand that it is an investment that each individual makes, an extra effort that requires dedication on a personal level.

For this, we are excited and thankful for each person who embarks on this adventure with us and we strive to make the experience as positive as possible.

We would like to express our sincere appreciation to all the volunteers and mentors who have taken part in the Interreg Volunteer Youth programme. Your contributions and dedication have made a significant impact on the Interreg community and on cooperation.

To show our recognition and participation in IVY, we distribute a certificate and a digital badge to each volunteer – and a digital badge to each mentor who request it. With these, we want to highlight the participants' engagement in building a Europe that is based on solidarity across borders.

These certify certain competences acquired by participating and reward participants.

Online badges can be displayed on LinkedIn and websites, and be shared on all social media channels.

We use other occasions as well to show our gratitude and recognition through testimonials, social media and communication.



A young man with short brown hair, wearing a white t-shirt, is smiling and looking towards a woman with long brown hair whose back is to the camera. They are in a social setting with warm, blurred lights in the background. The man's t-shirt has a logo that says "I am an interreg Volunteer Youth".

Internal communication, reporting and evaluation mechanisms

Each volunteering experience is unique and deserves to be a positive one for both the volunteer and the host organisation.

To enable everyone to feel safe and confident throughout the activity, we encourage open communication and transparency between all the actors involved: the volunteers and mentors, as well as AEBR's IVY team and, when relevant, colleagues of the European Commission.

To achieve open communication and transparency, AEBR's team stays in regular contact with volunteers and mentors during the experience.

Beyond emails, we also have an individual call around the first half of the deployment with each volunteer to hear about their experience, and ask both volunteer and mentor to fill in a report at the end of the volunteering period.

The reports allow us to understand if each experience is in line with the initiative's objectives, as well as to evaluate them and collect information about the volunteering programme.

If we see that a participant is not happy or that the experience is not going as expected, we will contact the other parties and look for a solution together to improve the situation.

Volunteers and host organisations must sign the “Confirmation of Volunteering Experience”, Annex VII to the IVY Agreement, Annex VII to the IVY Agreement. The document serves as final confirmation of the completed mission and must be properly filled in and signed by the volunteer and the host organization within 14 days after the end of the volunteering experience.





Violations of the policies will be addressed, holding participants accountable for their actions in case of misuse, while safeguarding respect for the principles and rules set out to make the programme a safe environment for each participant.

Volunteers and mentors are invited to report any instances of violations by contacting AEBR's IVY team at ivy@aebr.eu.

AEBR's team will investigate all reports of violations promptly and thoroughly, gathering all relevant information. Based on this first appraisal, AEBR will assess what the consequences will be.

THE FOLLOWING CONSEQUENCES FOR NON-COMPLIANCE ARE FORESEEN IF VIOLATIONS OCCUR

- Warning: AEBR's team will contact the party who has committed the violation and encourage them to take corrective action immediately.
- Suspension from the volunteering programme: if the violation has caused damages to others, AEBR's team will consider applying a suspension from the volunteering programme to implement corrective actions.
- Termination of involvement in the volunteering programme: should the corrective actions not be enough and the violation persists, AEBR will terminate the volunteering activity, with interruption of the agreement. The financial support will be stopped and recalculated on the basis of the actual duration of the mobility period, taking into consideration the new end date.

In the case of violations from a mentor or host organisation, AEBR will consider suspending future participation of the host organisation.

Volunteers and mentors have the right to appeal any sanctions that are imposed. Appeals will be reviewed by an independent arbitrator.





AEBR contacts

For all questions related to IVY email
the IVY team at ivy@aebr.eu,
or call +49 1764 20 90 666.





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