



APPROVED



VOLUNTEERING

IN COUNTRIES OF THE WESTERN BALKANS

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



OF THE PUBLICATION & SHORT OVERVIEW OF THE STRUCTURE

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

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

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

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

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

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

ABOUT

THE PROCEDURE IN GENERAL: USEFUL INSTRUCTIONS AND ADVICE

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

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

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



ALBANIA

Obtaining residence permits in Albania is regulated by the Law on Foreigners (National Gazette No. 74/16)



The Old Mes Bridge in Shkoder, Foto: adonis_abril, Fotolia

WHAT TO PREPARE BEFORE THE VOLUNTEER'S ARRIVAL?

The hosting organization must ensure that the volunteer has a passport valid for the whole duration of their stay in Albania.

The volunteer must also get a certificate from their home country proving they had not been criminally prosecuted.



IMMEDIATELY UPON ARRIVAL

The volunteer is obliged to register at the local police unit immediately upon their arrival, within the first 24 hours. This is only an informative visit in order for the local authorities to be aware of the foreigner's stay in the country, but the volunteer needs to present their ID or passport as well as the details of their stay including their current address in Albania, contact details, details of the work they will be performing, etc.

PROCEDURE FOR THE RESIDENCE PERMIT APPLICATION

Step 1:

Within a maximum two weeks of their stay (although it is advised to do it sooner) the volunteer needs to go to the Regional Border and Migration Office where they are given an application form and the list of documents necessary for the residence permit.

Step 2:

After completing the form and collecting all the documents, the volunteer needs to file an official application containing:

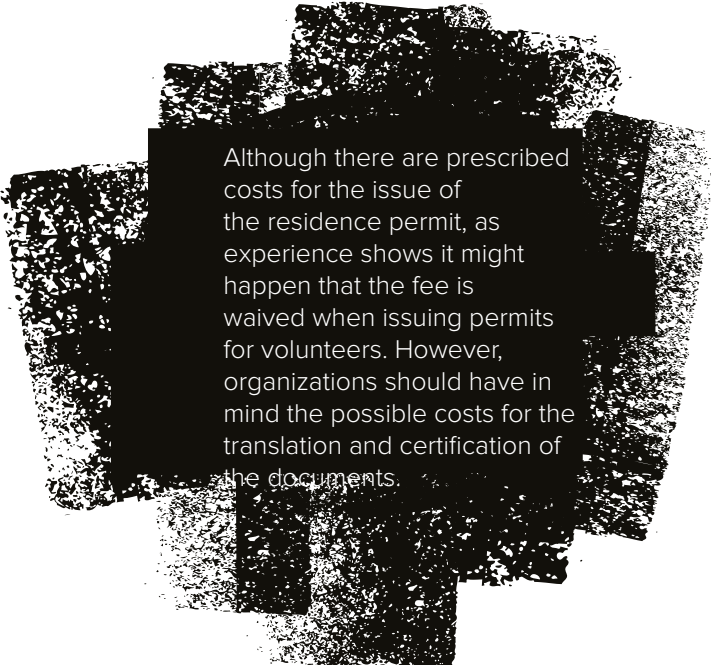
- Official filled-in application form;
- A copy of their passport;
- Two passport size photos;
- A confirmation that the volunteer has not been criminally prosecuted;
- An Activity Agreement containing the financial part, translated into Albanian and notarized,
- An Insurance Registration certificate, translated into Albanian and notarized;

- Confirmation of the residence (tenancy agreement containing the name of the volunteer, address, telephone bill, etc.);
- A document provided by the hosting organization certifying that the applicant is volunteering to work on a project supported by the European Union – indicating the exact key action;
- A document proving that the HO is eligible for participation in this programme, such as an EVS accreditation Certificate (also translated into the Albanian language);
- A copy of the legal registration certificate of the hosting organization;
- A copy of the “NIPT” certificate of the organization (proof of the registration within the Tax Administration Office).

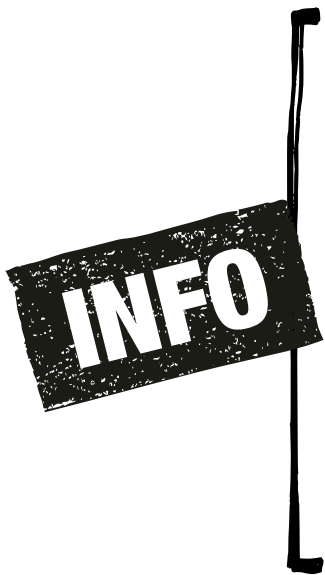
After completing the application process, a volunteer is issued with a temporary residence permit.

COSTS & DURATION

Typically, the process lasts between two and three weeks after which the volunteer is given a Residence Permit. The cost of the process depends on the period the permit is issued for. For the six-month-long permits, the cost is 5,000 AL (approximately EUR 36) and for the twelve-month-long residence permit the cost is around 10,000 AL (approximately EUR 76). These are only estimations, which means they can change over time.



Although there are prescribed costs for the issue of the residence permit, as experience shows it might happen that the fee is waived when issuing permits for volunteers. However, organizations should have in mind the possible costs for the translation and certification of the documents.



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

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