



"We have here a unique opportunity to send a positive signal in these times of financial crises and increasing humanitarian crises: The EU Aid Volunteers will express European solidarity with concrete deeds helping those most in need. And they will at the same time learn invaluable skills and competencies:

Saving lives is a life changing experience that they will never forget."

- Kristalina Georgieva, European Commissioner for International Cooperation, Humanitarian Aid and Crisis Response.

What is new?

The European Commission proposes to develop European standards for dealing with volunteers in humanitarian projects and a European training programme. Trained volunteers will be deployed as EU Aid Volunteers in humanitarian projects worldwide. A network of EU Aid Volunteers will be created, so that they can interact with and support each other before, during and after deployment. Other people coming from any place in the world can also get involved through online volunteering and support volunteers who are already in the field or helping humanitarian organisations with tasks that can be done from home on a computer.

Who can apply?

- EU Aid Volunteers candidates have to be over 18 years of age and be citizens of EU Member States, acceding countries, candidate countries, potential candidate countries and partner countries of the European Neighbourhood Policy, or countries included in the European Free Trade Association. Citizens from other European countries not included in the above mentioned agreements can also apply to become EU Aid Volunteers, subject to the conclusion of bilateral agreements on their participation with those countries.
- The initiative is open for a variety of profiles: candidates can be newcomers wanting to gain experience in the humanitarian sector, they can be experts in any field connected to humanitarian aid, or retired citizens who want to help out with their acquired knowledge. Preparation and deployment opportunities will depend on the level of skills and competences of candidates. Inexperienced volunteers will not be sent to projects where security is a concern.

How will it work?

- The European Commission proposes to certify humanitarian organisations that adhere to the European standards of dealing with humanitarian volunteers. These organisations will in turn identify suitable humanitarian projects and apply for EU grants to deploy EU Aid Volunteers.
- EU Aid Volunteers will first be trained and then tested as to their readiness to be deployed. Where needed, the training will include a first experience in the European Headquarters of the humanitarian organisation, before going to the field.
- The proposed initiative also includes training of local staff and volunteers of organisations in countries hit by disasters where the EU Aid Volunteers will work.

Who will benefit and how?

- EU Aid Volunteers will get professional training and experience in the field.
- Humanitarian organisations and disaster-struck communities will get more and better-trained volunteers.
- From 2014 to 2020, there will be over 3 950 deployments of EU citizens to disaster affected countries, and more than 1 990 humanitarian apprenticeships offered within the EU.
- Another 10 000 people are expected to support the EU Aid Volunteers as 'online volunteers' with tasks that can be done from home on a computer, for example helping out with translations, graphic designs or providing advice and support.
- 4 400 people from local organisations in non-EU, disaster affected countries will also benefit from the chance to undertake training and job shadowing within European humanitarian organisations.

Funding

The provisional budget proposed for the EU Aid Volunteers initiative is €147.9 million from 2014 to 2020. This budget does not affect the standard EU budget for humanitarian aid operations. If approved, this funding will be used for putting in place an extensive training package (€54.8 million), deploying EU volunteers (€60.9 million), building the capacities of disaster-affected communities and local organisations in non-EU countries (€26.3 million) and other elements.