

Guide for Volunteers



**VESSEL - Volunteering as an Engine for Solidarity, Social
Engagement and Learning opportunities
@ Rias - Wildlife Rescue Centre**



**CORPO
EUROPEU
DE SOLIDARIEDADE**



Dear future volunteer,

We are super motivated and eager to welcome you to our second home. It is a place where we not only work, but share ideas, knowledge, experience, skills, have fun, and realize our plans and visions.

Until now we have hosted several generations of international volunteers, and now we will continue hosting young people for volunteering activities under the European Solidarity Corps.

During your international volunteering, you will have a multitude of opportunities to evolve and develop yourself at different levels. Every day brings new challenges, situations to handle and chances to meet a mosaic of cultures and personalities, offer to the community your knowledge and skills, while at the same time receive more knowledge and fun in return.

As you are expected to stay for a year, do not be worried about getting homesick – it is a normal temporary stage when abroad. It is important to note that you are not going to be alone, and you can always count on us for moral support and advice. Don't focus on trivial things and be ready to embrace this experience and what it has to offer. The local community is pretty much familiar with our work, so acceptance will surely not be an issue, which means that in a short time you will feel part of our city.

That is why our previous volunteers wanted to share their experience in a few words:

Fabienne, Austria:

"To work at RIAS is a unique experience. Almost every day we receive different animals which we treat, feed and release back to nature when they are recovered. Especially releasing them after seeing their recovery process is such a rewarding and amazing moment which I can't even express in words.



This year is also a great experience to gain more knowledge about environmental topics, new cultures and languages and of course it is an amazing opportunity to meet new people, travel and have unforgettable adventures with them. Nevertheless, there are also some obstacles for example the different language, a different culture, to live with people from other backgrounds or even to live alone for the first time, but all those things shouldn't demotivate you because you will gain so much out of this year! So if there is one thing I can advise, it's to be open to new things and not to give up!"

E-mail: fabiennetilg@gmail.com

Fiach, Ireland:

"It's amazing what can be built and accomplished by a small, but extremely dedicated team of people. RIAS has provided me with the perfect example of this during my ESC project. My workplace and the people I've met over the past year have made my time in Portugal such a rewarding experience, and one that I am so grateful for."



Patricia, Spain:



"For me, working at RIAS has been a great challenge that has allowed me to rediscover and improve myself day after day. Working with life animals is my biggest passion in my life and this is a great experience if you would like to work in this exciting world of conservation. It has allowed me to be a better biologist, feel part of the RIAS family, and develop my language skills. An experience that everyone should live at least once in their life."

E-mail: patryheavymetal4ever@gmail.com

If you have more questions and would like to discuss some things about volunteering with people who experienced it feel free to contact them! ☺

Introduction to MOJU: who we are and what we do

MOJU is a youth organization founded by a group of young people who strongly believe in the importance of youth participation in society. It is a non-governmental organization which works at three levels: local, national and international. As such, MOJU is a member of the Federation of Youth Organizations of Algarve, of the National Federation of Youth Organizations and of YEU – Youth for Exchange and Understanding.

In short, MOJU's objectives are the following:

- Encourage and stimulate youth participation in society
- Develop activities in the field of inter(culture), education, sports, environment that aim at global youth development
- Promote debate and spreading information on youth's needs and aspirations, in terms of contributing to the development and implementation of local policies
- Promote gender equality, citizenship, social inclusion and non-discrimination
- Contribute to youth mobility as a tool for personal and professional development, as well as to the promotion of intercultural dialogue
- Promote equal opportunities through providing training to socially engaged citizens
- Cooperate with public and private entities, national or international, aiming to develop and implement the aforementioned objectives.



International Volunteering @ MOJU

We started our experience in 2012 with the previous program ‘EVS - European Voluntary Service’ and our expectation is to continue in the new program ‘European Solidarity Corps’, in order to send and receive volunteers.

The person in charge of the International Volunteering Program of MOJU has considerable experience in these actions because she was also a volunteer herself, in the EVS program as well as in Erasmus+ projects, as a participant/trainer/facilitator and coordinator. She also has the experience of other types of long and short-term volunteering projects, meaning that she knows how it is and what a volunteer expects and fears in these kinds of projects. Apart from it, we have a team of youth workers that are used to the international environment of our organization therefore, they will be supporting you to integrate in the team.



Project introduction and description

Project name: VESSEL - Volunteering as an Engine for Solidarity, Social Engagement and Learning opportunities @ Rias - Wildlife Rescue Centre

Duration of the project: 12 months

Social media:

Blog - <http://rias-aldeia.blogspot.com/p/en.html>

Facebook - <https://www.facebook.com/rias.olhao>

Instagram - https://www.instagram.com/rias_olhao

The volunteers will be living in the Southern Portuguese city of Olhão, where they will have the opportunity to experience a totally different culture and way of living, to learn and experience new things, and to use the knowledge and experience gained in their countries so that they can act as a liaison between partner organizations.

The volunteers will be involved in the activities and projects developed by the Hosting Organization, helping in the daily life of a wildlife rescue centre, and will be encouraged to develop and implement their own projects/ ideas.

The project location is inside a Natural Park, so this project is perfect for those who like to be in contact with nature.



During the first weeks, the volunteers will be trained and the staff of RIAS will be verifying attitudes, interests and abilities of everyone and will introduce them at the project's activity, subsequently volunteers will begin the following activities. The project is multifaceted, and volunteers will learn about working at a wildlife rehabilitation centre and they will also be able to develop activities and projects related to their studies. As they will be working in a new culture it will demonstrate that they can work hard in a multicultural environment.

We intend to offer our volunteers the chance to be part of a team, feel valued, as new ideas are very important for us and of course to encourage them in the process of self-learning and of self-development.

Specific tasks to be delivered by the volunteers

The role of the volunteers will be to participate and help in the daily tasks of the centre, which includes the following tasks, related to the welfare of the animals:



- Preparing and distributing the food for the animals;
- Helping in the maintenance of the center, building fences
- Daily cleaning of the facilities
- Go to the field to do birds surveys;
- Helping in the activities of environmental education with local schools and local population in general;
- Helping to organize workshops or activities;
- Receive and guide visitors at the Environmental Interpretive Centre.
- Help the Vet during the animals' treatments.



Additionally, volunteers will have the opportunity to experience other types of volunteering activities while in the project as well as disseminate at the local level the European Solidarity Corps program.

We expect the volunteers to be responsible for carrying out the project duties, contributing their time, energy and enthusiasm towards the aims and objectives of the project activities. Attend training and meetings with partners. Inform the Sending Organization of special needs that could affect the project, agree on the information, which can or should be forwarded (diet, illnesses for which precautions need to be taken, and others), and follow the rules of conduct.

Volunteers' profile

The volunteer's selection process is intended to be transparent and open to all involved. We consider that this work will be more rewarding for those with veterinary or biology background or experience in similar positions/centers. Take into consideration that working with animals is not easy and sometimes is very demanding. Special concern will be taken on the analysis of volunteers' interest in working with promoting education and training related to environment and nature conservation and the propagation of culture and rural tradition and volunteering. No preference regarding gender or ages - between the limits of: 18 to 30 years old.



A good English level is necessary for communication with colleagues.

The information on the project will be published on the international database of the European Solidarity Corps. At the same time, a call for interested volunteers of partner organizations will be launched. Then, volunteers (with support from the Sending Organization, will supply a Curriculum Vitae and a motivation letter in English, for a preliminary analysis of the application. After that, the candidates may be requested to fill in an application form with supplementary information.

Very Important: In order to be selected to participate in the project, the candidate needs to be part of the international database of the European Solidarity Corps and conclude the General Online Training provided by the program.

Working hours

The volunteers will work 5 days per week for a maximum of 35 hours. The weekends are usually free, except for some events that may take place during weekends or the schedule of each week. In such a case, the volunteers will be compensated with a day off during the week.

Moreover, the volunteers, according to the Activity Agreement have 2 days off per month during the year. These days can be gathered and used all together or in different times, but always agreeing with the Hosting Organization.

Accommodation

MOJU as coordinating organization is responsible for providing the volunteers with accommodation in a safe environment. The volunteer will live in a furnished rented flat shared with other Volunteers, not very far from the office and not far from the center of the city. The flat contains all the necessary amenities and is divided in different rooms,

kitchen and bathrooms. The volunteers will have their own bedroom or share it with another volunteer, a shared kitchen and bathroom.

Personal towels and bed sheets are provided!

Food allowance and pocket money

The house where the volunteers will live has a kitchen that can be used. A monthly contribution for food will be given to every volunteer in the amount of 150 Euros.

The volunteer will receive during his stay in Olhão, a monthly pocket money. The amount is stipulated by the European Solidarity Corps Program and is equal to 150 Euros. The Coordinating Organization will be responsible to pay the pocket money at the end of each month.

Travel Costs

Contribution to the travel costs of participants from their place of origin to the venue of the activity and return will be reimbursed, based on the travel distance per participant. Travel distances are calculated using the distance calculator supported by the European Commission.

The Coordinating Organization will be providing the budget for traveling for each of the volunteers.

Reimbursement of travel costs will only be done upon presentation of the original tickets with boarding passes and receipt/invoices. Reimbursement will be done in EUR, regardless of the currency indicated on your ticket and receipt/invoice.

Language Course

Volunteers are welcome to learn Portuguese before and during the project. Before coming to Portugal, volunteers can practice using several online tools (Drops, Babbel).

After the volunteers' arrival, they will receive an email by Online Linguistic Support (OLS) with the link for the "Assessment Test". After filling it, each volunteer will receive another email to start the online course provided by Erasmus+ (<http://erasmusplusols.eu/>). OLS will be the official tool to use to learn Portuguese during the Project. Two weeks before the end of the project, each volunteer will receive an email with the final linguistic test to fill, in order to receive the final level of Portuguese.

Since the project activities require work and communication with other people, it is necessary and important that the volunteers try to speak in order to perform their duties.

Insurance

Volunteers from EU countries must apply for the European Health Insurance Card.

In addition to the European Health Insurance Card or for non-EU citizens, the volunteers are medically insured – including third party and accidents - by European Solidarity Corps which is provided by the European Commission through the insurance company 'Cigna'.

MOJU as hosting organizations will register you for this insurance. Please read carefully the insurance guide in order to get informed on what it covers and what it doesn't cover.

European Youth Card

Besides the insurance, every ESC volunteer is supposed to get a European youth card. What does this mean? Basically, as an owner of this card you can obtain numerous discounts on culture, accommodation, transportation, food and more. In order to get the card, you need to be first registered with the health insurance by the sending organization. If the registration has been done in advance, it may be sent to your sending organization. If, however, you were registered two weeks before your service starts, then the card is sent to your hosting organization.

For more info, please visit: <https://www.eyca.org/volunteers-card>

Also check information about other discount card for Erasmus and ESC volunteers: <https://esncard.org/>

Other additional useful information about Portugal

- Portugal belongs to the Western Time Zone (GMT +1)
- Residential electricity is 230V, 50 Hz
- The dialing code is +351
- Portugal uses the standard European 2 point socket
- Tap water is potable.

Mobile networks

Once you arrive, we recommend that you buy a Portuguese sim card. The Portuguese mobile phone networks are: Vodafone, Nos, Meo, Lycamobile.

Links to their websites:

<http://www.vodafone.pt/main/Ajuda/english-section.html>

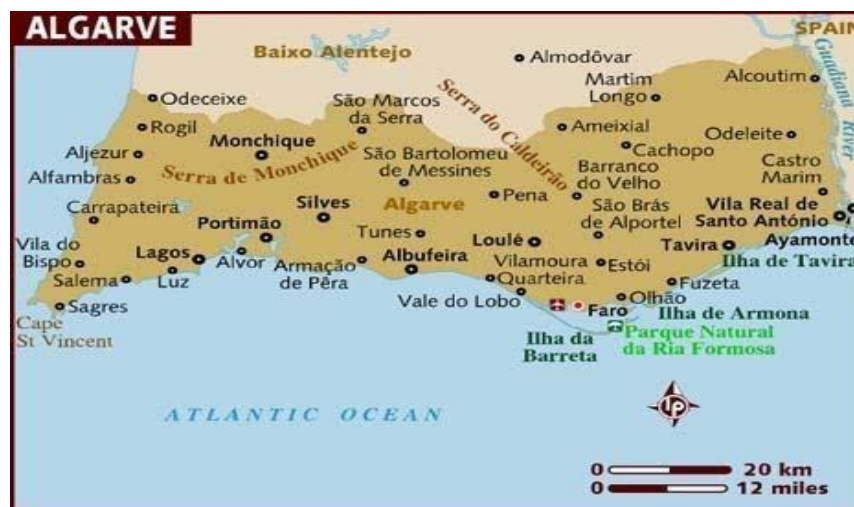
<https://www.nos.pt/particulares/Pages/home.aspx>

<http://www.lycamobile.pt/por/>

<https://www.meo.pt/>

Some information on Algarve and Olhão

As Olhão is situated in Algarve, let us first give you some facts and information on it. It is the southern region in Portugal famous for its sunny weather, with more than 3000 sunny hours per year, beaches, tourism, surfing, delicious seafood, islands, caves, hiking trails and unique landscapes. The capital of this region is Faro being the largest city. The total population in Algarve is 451,006. Apart from Faro, other famous cities visited by tourists are Lagos, Albufeira, Tavira, Portimão and many more. Because of its mild weather, Algarve is a tourist destination not only in the summer, but throughout the year, so it's no wonder that there are tourists even in November and December. Getting around this region is quite easy because there are good train and bus connections and another advantage is that young people and students get discounts on public transportation tickets.



Olhão is located just 10 minutes from Faro by car. It is in fact the largest fishing port in Algarve. This city, whose population is 45,396, is also famous for its houses built in Moorish style. Algarve used to be under Moorish occupation back in the 8th century so the marks that the Moorish people left are still present.



Right by the port, you will find Olhão's landmark: its two markets: the fish market and the one of locally grown fresh fruit and vegetables. As it is known for its fish so this market is the best place to get fresh fish and seafood. Around the markets there are lots of cafés, bars and restaurants. The islands of Armona and Farol/Culatra are just 30 minutes away by boat. Olhão itself doesn't have a beach because it is on the Ria Formosa lagoon system. But that is why the above-mentioned islands are heaven on Earth, a true paradise whose beaches boast blue, clear water.

Another thing in Olhão that catches the eye of tourists is the Legends Path or 'Caminho das Lendas'. This represents a short trail through Olhão's small and narrow streets which if you follow, you will see several sculptures and thus discover the amazing legends.

How to get to Olhão?

The closest airport is in Faro, so getting to Olhão is quite simple. Shuttle buses from Faro airport to the city center run every 20 minutes, once you arrive in Faro, you can reach Olhão by train, or by bus.

Check the shuttle bus schedule here:

http://www.proximo.pt/uploads/schedules/Linha_16_3.pdf

Faro - Olhão bus schedule:

http://eva-bus.com/gen_pdf.php?SERV=9&ORIGEM=Faro&DESTINO=Olh%C3%A3o&VAR=0

For the Faro – Olhão train schedule, check here:

<http://www.cp.pt/passageiros/pt>

If you happen to arrive at Lisbon airport, again you have two options to come to Olhão: by train or by bus.

Lisbon – Olhão bus schedule:

http://eva-bus.com/gen_pdf.php?SERV=1&ORIGEM=Lisboa&DESTINO=Olh%C3%A3o&VAR=1

Lisbon – Olhão train schedule:

<http://www.cp.pt/passageiros/pt>

What to bring from home?

One year is a long period of time. We advise the ones that tend to get a bit nostalgic to get some things that usually cannot be found outside of their home country. As for clothes, even though winters can be mild, do bring warm and comfortable clothes. You can also bring with you some basic pills and medication such as paracetamol, aspirin, or ibuprofen. And last but not least, motivation and willingness to get out of your comfort zone and experience something new and different.

Até breve!

See you soon!

