
Salamanca European Volunteering Capital Candidate 2025 Jury Feedback | Brussels, 5 December 2023

Salamanca has demonstrated good awareness of the essential factors for volunteering development. There is evidence of suitable mechanisms for supporting the local volunteer sector and actors in the field. The policies, programmes and strategies related to volunteering are in line both with the SDGs and European values which is positive.

The City Council has been collaborating closely with the volunteering sector since 2005 and this successful partnership has led to the establishment of the Municipal Volunteering Agency in 2013. This provides a public and free municipal service, focusing its actions both on citizenship and volunteer bodies in Salamanca which demonstrates good practice. The jury highlights the good example of the establishment of Salamanca Volunteering Round Table, giving space for dialogue and coordination between different local and regional stakeholders. Another good practice is the creation of the Municipal Volunteering Programme “VoluntaS”, aiming to accommodate those citizens who on a general level wish to attain an active voice in the improvement of certain situations or areas, acting as a driving force to foster the values upon which voluntary actions are grounded, namely solidarity, participation, altruism, and social cohesion.

The candidacy of Salamanca has shown that the City Council is creating social awareness actions on the positive impact of volunteering activities and is encouraging citizens’ participation in this area. There is clear evidence that the Municipality is implementing and expanding new lines of cross sector and cross field coordination between different relevant entities and the Salamanca Social Volunteering Network which shows promise in the right direction.

The Municipality is promoting participation in the European Solidarity Corps through different bodies in the city, welcoming and referring young people to act as ambassadors of social and solidarity focussed values. The jury encourages the Municipality to further develop their participation in the ESC program not only as a promoter, but as a coordinator as well.

The Municipality’s volunteering strategy has been positively assessed by the jury given that it is part of a long-term strategy with Volunteering being mainstreamed and incorporated into a wide range of strategic documents. Moreover, the strategy has clear objectives and priorities and new approaches for collaboration and communication with the volunteering networks have been continuously updated and put into practice. In general, the jury considers that Salamanca is a good example of a municipality with an ambitious, forward thinking and at the same time realistic volunteering strategy and approach.

ABOUT THE COMPETITION:

CEV launched the European Volunteering Capital Competition to strengthen, inspire and celebrate volunteering and the impact made by volunteers at the local level by giving recognition to municipalities that support and strengthen volunteering, especially through partnerships with stakeholders from different sectors such as volunteer centres, volunteer-involving organisations and the for-profit sector.

The judging criteria are the extent of their strategies, policies, and programmes in connection to the Blueprint for European Volunteering 2030 and to the CEV Volunteering Policy Statements. Evidence about their engagement with, and support for, the European Solidarity Corps when the applicant comes from an EU member state is also required. Applicants are also asked to indicate if they are signatories of the Integrating Cities Charter.

The awarded municipality is chosen from the candidates by an **international jury of key personalities** connected with volunteering, representing civil society, the private, for-profit sector, as well as the EU institutions: Michel Lefranc (CEV Board), Daniele Antonozzi (CEV Board), Lena Karnalova (CEV Board), Tine Radinja (Mayor of Škofja Loka, Slovenia & EU Committee of the Regions member), Krzysztof Pater (EESC Member, Rapporteur Opinion "Volunteering - Citizens Building

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the Future of Europe"), Brando Benifei (Member of the European Parliament, S&D), Barbara Eglitis (Coordinator, European Solidarity Corps Resource Centre), Piotr Sadowski (Member of the Standing Committee the Conference of INGOs, Council of Europe), Begona Barbera Garcia (Iberdrola Social Projects Manager, Employee Volunteering European Network (EVEN)), Morten Wolden (Trondheim Municipal Director).

The previous winners are: Trento 2024 - Trondheim 2023 - Gdansk 2022 - Berlin 2021 - Padova 2020 - Košice 2019 - Aarhus 2018 - Sligo 2017 - London 2016 - Lisbon 2015 - Barcelona 2014.

The Centre for European Volunteering (CEV) is the European network of over 60 organisations dedicated to the promotion of, and support to, volunteers and volunteering in Europe at European, national or regional level. Through our network we work together to ensure that: the value of quality volunteering as an expression of Solidarity and European values is understood, supported and celebrated; policies & programmes, together with the European social environment, inspires, encourages and supports quality European Volunteering; Individuals and organisations that are active in the volunteering and civil society sphere share, learn and are inspired from one another in the framework of CEV . In this way we reach out to the many thousands of volunteers and volunteer organisations in Europe as a source of support bringing the European dimension to their work.