



GEPEC

grup d'estudi
i protecció
dels ecosistemes
catalans



EdC Ecologistes
de Catalunya

Volunteering for the conservation of biodiversity and environment in southern Catalonia (Tarragona)

This document is aimed at young people, from 18 to 30 years old, interested in Nature and Environment, and at Europeans who want to come to the south of Catalonia to volunteer for 9 months, from January/February 2024 to September/October 2024, with our environmental NGO (www.gepec.cat) in the European Solidarity Corps project.

One of the places is for young people with fewer opportunities.

Our European identification code is 2023-1-ES02-ESC51-VTJ-000121975.

Our contact person is Anna Bachs (email: voluntariateuropeu@gepec.cat) and she is the one to whom you have to send your motivation letter and your curriculum vitae for later selection. If this is not your case but it is the one of someone you know, we would appreciate if you would send this document to them. Thank you very much in advance. A Mediterranean hug.

Presentation

1. What is GEPEC-EdC?

The Grup d'Estudi i Protecció dels Ecosistemes Catalans - Ecologistes de Catalunya (GEPEC-EdC) is an environmental organization that has been working for more than 35 years, independently and non-profit, to defend and preserve the natural heritage and the environment. We are also part of the Ecologistes de Catalunya federation, of which we are founding members, as well as the Xarxa per la Conservació de la Natura.

We are an active citizens movement: the organization, made up of partners, volunteers and sympathizers, strives to solve the environmental problems of southern Catalonia. We act from the point of environmental defence, avoiding and denouncing aggressions in the territory.

Year after year we work on preservation projects to protect endangered species and to improve their habitats and ecosystems. All without losing sight of the goal of a cleaner, greener and healthier planet. For a sustainable future, we also promote environmental education in everything we do.

2. Our mission and values

The main objective of GEPEC-EdC is to protect and to improve the environment. In order to reach this milestone, we implement conservation projects and we promote awareness among people with peacefully protest through public or legal reporting of environmental conflicts.

We have always been an independent and transparent entity. Therefore, we act without political affiliations, governed by ethical and sustainability principles based on respect for nature, environmentalism and society.

To carry out all this work, the essential pieces are the partners and the volunteers: the real engine to defend the nature from any aggression and to maintain the independence of the GEPEC-EdC.

3. Entity's timeline

Our organization has more than 35 years of tireless work to protect the environment that surrounds us. GEPEC-EdC has been adapting to the different realities of each period from the 80s to the present day. Environmentalism, commitment to the territory, defence of the environment, altruism and volunteering have continued to be the main values of our entity.

This ONG was growing territorially from the north of the province of Tarragona until it covered the rest of the regions, including those surrounding the Ebro River. It also grew in themes, incorporating climate change, pollution, urban planning, organic production, etc. From the initial 30 members it grew to the current 800.

4. Areas of action

GEPEC-EdC work is structured in the following areas:

4.1 Environmental defence



We ensure compliance with laws and regulations that improve and protect the health of ecosystems and people. A team of volunteers and technicians work from a technical and legal point of view in public and/or legal pressure strategies, where we attack the root of the problem in order to find solutions.

4.2 Conservation projects



Conservation projects include tasks such as improving habitats, regenerating ecosystems, supporting the reproduction of flora and fauna, removing invasive species, research to improve preservation methods and managing the relationship between people and the natural environment.

Conservation projects work in 4 main lines:

- a. Animal species: we work for the conservation of many endangered species that need help, such as the Kentish plover, the Loggerhead turtle, the Bonelli's eagle, bats, and pollinators among others.
- b. Habitats: we sign custody agreements to preserve the natural values of spaces that need it and we draw up management plans to determine actions to be taken.
- c. Urban nature: we restore urban and peri-urban areas, such as schoolyards.
- d. Social projects: everyone is more than welcome in the study and in the conservation of the ecosystem. Therefore, we promote projects aimed to involve different groups of people at risk of exclusion for the restoration and conservation of both species and habitats.

4.3 Environmental education



Educating the future generations is one of the priorities of GEPEC-EdC, since they will be in charge of managing our future. We work on various educational projects to sensitize and inspire children to ecological values and to respect for territory and nature.

L'Escola de Naturalistes of GEPEC-EdC is an after-school activity that brings the children closer to the environment where they live in, but that at the same time it's unknown for them, as well as to the cultural values of the

natural heritage. Respect for children and the environment is a fundamental priority for us. We propose attractive materials and games so that, in a natural way, without impositions and intuitively, children get to know and to connect with nature around them.

4.4 Activities



We organize all kinds of activities that bring nature closer to everyone. We offer to the public a wide range of activities so that people of all ages can discover the environment from a careful and professional point of view. Our activities are located throughout the Tarragona and the Terres de l'Ebre areas in order to reach as many people as possible.

4.5 Volunteering



Volunteering is a large part of the soul of GEPEC-EdC, essential for the organization to work optimally. It was thanks to volunteers that the organization was founded in 1985, and its effort helps many projects.

We adapt as much as possible to the interests of people who want to contribute. For this reason, we organize different volunteer groups focused on the different areas of action of our organization:

conservation projects for endangered species such as the loggerhead turtle or the Kentish plover, environmental defense, etc.

Every year, we welcome European volunteers within the European Solidarity Corps (ESC) program. During their 9-month stay, they support the organization's various projects and actions. We are very grateful to them for their solidarity and effort.

Our motivation to host European volunteers

GEPEC-EdC is an organization that has relied on volunteers since its inception in 1985 and considers the volunteer as a structural figure in the development of its mission. The volunteers themselves run the association. In this sense, the motivation of the organization for its participation in the CES, the objectives and the impacts it wants to achieve are summarized in three points:

- Spread the mission and the entity itself beyond its usual dissemination capacity



GEPEC-EdC was the host entity for many EVS program volunteers between 2003 and 2017. In 2017, the PROA association that carried out its volunteer management stopped working, and the work of GEPEC-EdC in this regard was reduced. The possibility of participating in the CES is a particularly interesting occasion to recover the rhythm of the metabolism achieved a few years back with the help of these volunteers, and thus to break boundaries

and to encourage a greater dissemination of GEPEC-EdC. From January to November 2021, GEPEC-EdC recovered European volunteering by hosting 4 young people for 9 months within the framework of this ESC program.

The participation of an international volunteer in the organization makes it possible to spread the message of the entity to its country of origin, but it is also a very interesting opportunity to

highlight the organization's work in its territory, thus facilitating broadening the impact framework of organizing, motivating local volunteers and learning new ways of working and thinking (such as was the case with the EVS program). It also allows the expansion of the work to other fields such as the exchange of information with other organizations from other countries, preparing and participating in international projects and campaigns, etc.

- Share actions and experiences in favour of sustainable development in collaboration with other initiatives on a European scale

We believe that the participation of a volunteer during a long stay will allow him/her to understand the entity's structure in detail, as well as its organization, operation of the organization, mission and activities. This should allow the volunteer, when he/she returns to his country of origin, to propose actions or projects that can have a positive impact for the conservation of natural heritage and sustainable development in his/her reality.

- Encourage the personal growth of the GEPEC-EdC volunteers and professional team with experiences from other territories



Through the participation of people from other realities in EU territories we also intend to achieve a growth of our technical team, which allows it to be even more open to a European perspective, while also indirectly impacting the community of which the organization is part as well as the creation of lasting bonds.

Volunteer profile

Previous note: As all volunteers are going to work with minors at some point and in compliance with the Spanish legal framework, they must present a Criminal Certificate from their country to be eligible for this volunteering.

The number of volunteers that we would like to include in the project is 8.

We're looking for people motivated with the conservation of biodiversity and sustainable development, who appreciate environmental values and that want to actively learn how to spread awareness about environmental problems and their possible solutions.

We are looking for people capable of carrying out practical actions and to understand the value of their permanent achievement, who are involved with the organization and that are capable of developing teamwork, continuously and with a desire of personal improvement but also of the

team improvement and of the fulfilment of the organization's mission. Committed people, who without receiving a salary during their staying, know how to commit and to fulfill one hundred percent, who are willing to work five days a week including weekends and holidays (for example from Wednesday to Sunday), taking into account that there will be a wide variety of jobs that could include from hard physical work abroad (cold, heat, rain, mosquitoes...) to computer work, with people of all kinds (children, adults, people with functional diversity ...), with wild and domestic animals, live, injured or dead animals, buildings, etc.



We are looking to that young people that have an interest in knowing the Catalan culture and language as well as in learning the Spanish language.

In short, we are looking for profiles with the will to grow personally by learning the value of social and environmental sustainability for our society and the need to develop practical examples in the territory that favour a dynamic towards sustainable development.

Accommodation, financing and activities spaces

Currently two of the main fieldwork sites are very close to each other in two contiguous municipalities: Altafulla and Torredembarra.



Altafulla: GEPEC-EdC has a custody agreement with the owner (Altafulla's city council) of an idyllic 13,000m² estate (El Canyadell) consisting of a pine forest that leads to a cove of the same name, surrounded by the suburbs. The activities of one of the GEPEC-EdC's Naturalists Schools take place on this land, as well as the experimental nursery for native plants, a shelter for bats, etc. In addition to the classroom where the children keep their materials, a furnished apartment has been set up for the reception of 8 volunteers. In it there are 2 kitchens, 8 single bedrooms and 2

bathrooms like other common spaces. In addition to be a very beautiful environment, this place is located at 5 minutes by bike from the train station and at 15 minutes by train to Tarragona and 1 hour to Barcelona.

Volunteers will be paid for the round trip to Torredembarra according to the European Solidarity Corps travel table, and during their staying they will be paid 150 € each per month for food, plus 6 € per day for personal expenses.

Torredembarra: the entity has two premises also on the beach: an office (Cal Bofill) and a small storage room (Cal Freu). Both 10 minutes by bike from the former Canyadell estate. These places are the work centre especially of the Protected Area of Els Muntanyans (natural beach with dunes and marshes and strong human pressure).



In parallel, since the association works throughout the geography of southern Catalonia as a result of these projects and campaigns, it is usual to leave these two municipalities, either to help with field work in the mountains, as well as to help with activities at the central office in Reus (30 min by train) or secondary office in Roquetes (1h by train and bus), or with the activities on the northern beaches of Calafell, Cunit, Cubelles and Sitges or on the estates with monumental olive trees 100km to the south.

Description of the Activities

Throughout this project, depending on training and experience, the volunteer will be involved three days a week in ONE specific line of work from those shown below:

1. Organization of the bibliographic documentation and support to Administration.
2. International marketing, web and multimedia graphic design, and support for communication processes on social networks and in the press.
3. Support for the activities of the School of Naturalists and environmental education.
4. Support to technicians and volunteers of projects
5. Support to technicians and volunteers of environmental defence

The other two days of the week, our purpose is to implement some activities in which to a lesser or greater extent we want all the volunteers to participate:

6. Maintenance and restoration of the Canyadell farm.
7. Maintenance of Cal Freu and Cal Bofill and opening to the public of Cal Bofill.
8. Support for local volunteer groups.
9. Support for dissemination activities (fairs, congresses, etc.)
10. Activities with ONADA fundation

These are some necessary tasks but flexibility could be present in the schedule.

1) Organization of the bibliographic documentation of our environmental organization and support to Administration

Profile: Archivist, administrative.

The GEPEC-EdC has 35 years of history and is the only organization that has kept files in its office. Now there is a need for a reorganization of documents and a transfer of data in digital format. For this task, a national volunteer who can more easily manage a large number of documents in the Catalan language and who has experience in archiving activities would be ideal. As well as experience in Administration.

Location

Reus office (3 days a week)

2) International marketing, web and multimedia graphic design and Support for communication processes on social networks and in the press

Profile: Marketing and Communication Manager.

The GEPEC-EdC is renewing its entire communication line, both in corporate image and in social networks, press articles, etc. In this period in which taking care of the environment turns out to be a global social priority, in which climate emergency is ever more accentuate, with the pressure of the large oligopolies of wind and solar energies, environmental organizations have to achieve economic independence, fundraising procedures, with entities that meet the environmental requirements. The ultimate goal is to try to give visibility to the organization throughout Europe and USA. Moreover there are tasks that, without having some knowledge of Catalan or Spanish, can still be performed and that can be of great value for the communication and administration areas: support in the distribution of materials, organisation of events, management of social networks, recording and editing of videos, etc.

Location

Reus office (3 days a week)

3) Support for the activities of the School of Naturalists and environmental education



Profile: Educator, monitor.

We have a School of Naturalists next to the volunteers accommodation, where activities with the children are planned some afternoon after school and some Saturday (2 hours in the afternoon and Saturday morning) also during the month of July. Complementarily, the preparation of didactic materials such as games or naturalistic field materials, can be arbitrated also for the rest of the activities that are organized for children, families and adults.

Location

Canyadell farm and puntually province of Tarragona

4) Support to technicians and volunteers of projects



Profile: biologists, environmentalists, agroforestry technicians

Every year the technicians and volunteers of projects obtain funding, material and human resources to carry out projects and campaigns of different type: conservation of fauna and flora (as *Caretta caretta* turtle or *Charadrius alexandrinus* bird protection), habitats (as protection of Els Muntanyans dunes), agricultural improvement with wild pollinators (helping in this with insect hotel building), conservation of rivers and monumental olive trees, identification of animal species (as all bats species

present in this area).

Every year is a surprise and the collaboration of young Europeans can sometimes make the difference between working alone or in good company, learning from each other while moving forward with the projects. In the project area, the volunteers will obtain a complete vision by collaborating from the beginning: starting from collecting information to write the draft of the project to the practical execution of it. Both at the field and office work level.

Location

Tarragona Province

5) Environmental defence tasks

Profile: project editor, law studies, environmental studies

The volunteer working in this area will help in the redaction of allegations and other administrative documents related to project of public interest of high environmental impact. And he/she will provide support to the defence unit regarding researching topics of interest and bibliography.

Location

Cal Bofill and Roquetes offices

6) Maintenance and restoration of the Canyadell farm



The 13,000m² pine forest needs continuous maintenance work. Some of these activities are: extraction of invasive flora (*Arundo donax*, *Senecio angulatus*, *Campsis radicans*, *Lantana camara*, *Kalanchoe*), taking care of the greenhouse and vegetable garden, cleaning spaces for public use, updating the external and internal signage, cleaning and filling the beverage points for the animals, taking care of the chickens, restorate of dry stone walls, cleaning the farm floor, etc.

Location

Canyadell farm

7) Maintenance of Cal Freu and Cal Bofill and opening of Cal Bofill to the public

These two premises are continuously used by volunteers and other people so they need continuous cleaning and maintenance work, decoration, care of the plants, updating of the available information, organization of documents and materials, and attention to visitors in order to give them the best attention, as well as creation and improvement of the exhibitions present in them.

Location

Cal Freu and Cal Bofill (Torredembarra)

8) Support for local volunteer groups

Support for local volunteer groups.

We have 4 group of volunteers divided in these areas:

1. Kentish plover protection
2. Threatened flora protection
3. Loggerhead turtle protection
4. Canyadell maintenance

Many of them will appreciate the participation of young Europeans.



Kentish plover: This bird only nests on the beaches and between the months of March and August. Due to the extraordinary pressure it is under, it is necessary to monitor and protect it physically with the installation of protective cages for nests and fencing with sticks and ropes, among other complementary surveillance and information tasks.

- Loggerhead turtle: like the Kentish plover, the loggerhead turtle also nests on our beaches starting in June and its protection begins by informing beach users, distributing and hanging informational posters, making nighttime transects (walks) along the beach to find traces, and through the traces locate possible nests. If nests are found, the European volunteers will support the local volunteers in the custody and surveillance of the nests during the 2 months the eggs take to hatch.

Location

Province of Tarragona and beaches in the north of the province of Tarragona and south of Barcelona.

9) Support for dissemination activities (fairs, congresses, etc.)



GEPEC-EdC participates periodically in naturalistic and environmental events, with the aim of showing to people the actions carried out by the entity in the Tarragona territory, and of attracting new members who want to collaborate in the protection of nature. In general, a stand is placed with items for sale related to the initiatives generated by the entity.

Location

Province of Tarragona

10) Activities with ONADA foundation

One day per week there will be activities with people belonging to this association (<https://www.fundacionnada.org/>) such as: maintenance of the Canyadell farm, planting trees or small plants, taking care of the garden, water the plants surrounding the farm and other tasks that may be necessary in that moment.

Location

Canyadell farm

Photo gallery of Canyadell farm









