

VOLUNTEERING IN PARK ISTRRA

EUROPEAN SOLIDARITY CORPS 2024

What is the project about?

Park Istra is a charity project in a beautiful Istria peninsula. Our main goals are to promote solidarity and active citizenship and to empower volunteers who visit Park Istra.

Our mission is to help people in need and to support everything good that is happening in our region. We support best local organizations, great local projects and people with good ideas.

In 2021 our project Solidarity in Primorska was nominated for Salto Award as one of five best European volunteering projects.

Dates of arrival and departure of our volunteers

6.5.2024 to 5.7.2024

Volunteers will join Park Istra through EU solidarity corps program for min 61 days. Your organisation will be your supporting and coordinating organisation and Park Istra will be your hosting organisation. We will host up to 15 volunteers.

Who can join us?

Project welcomes volunteers age 18 to 30 from EU and neighboring countries. The main characteristics that we will look for in volunteers is high motivation to help others, being ready to work hard and being able to live in an international community of volunteers. You don't need any specific knowledge, just willingness to learn and try new things.

What will I do in the project?

We will help people in need, help locals with farming, help people with construction and renovation, organize workshops for kids, help in animal shelters, help local Red Cross and other NGO-s, participate at local cultural events, clean overgrown terraces and paths, organize clean-up actions, help in elderly homes... To do all that we need many helping hands.

Have in mind that most of the work we do is with our hands, but we will also work with kids, elderly, especially if you are interested in it. If you decide so, you can also work on your personal project.

Our work is really diverse, so we are not looking for specific profiles, but we are searching for volunteers who have enthusiasm, motivation for hard work and a will to learn new skills.

Do I need any special skills to join a project?

No, we accept everyone that is willing to work hard and learn. Our work is diverse, so you will have many opportunities to experience new things. Volunteers live in a community of volunteers from all around the

world with different backgrounds. Learning from each other, sharing, taking care for each other, resolving conflicts, compromises –we will practice all this during your stay in Park Istra 😊

How many hours will I work per day?

Normally we work for 5,5 hours/day. Usually, we work from 8.00 to 13.30. After work volunteers are free to do sports, join workshops that other volunteers organize or to discover Istria and other nearby regions. Sunday and Monday are work-free days.

Are there any language requirements?

We communicate in English, so you should be able to speak at least basic English.

If you would like to learn some Slovenian or any other EU language, join [online language](#) support organised by the EU solidarity corps.

What will I get when I arrive to Park Istra?

- three vegetarian meals and access to a communal fridge if you need to grab a snack between the meals;
- accommodation;
- blankets, pillows and sheets for beds;
- tools and safety gear;
- internet access;
- pocket money (5 eur per day);
- 20 eur extra per month to buy extra food of your choice;
- Your supporting organisation will help you to organise transport to Park Istra. Volunteers buy sometimes tickets alone and later supporting organisation refunds you the costs. Sometimes your supporting organisation will buy tickets for you. Talk with them about it. Keep in mind you will need to save and send them all invoices. In case you fly do not forget to give them also your boarding pass. More about transport costs below.
- In Park Istra you can use the following things: piano, guitar, ukulele, a drum, slack line, trampoline, bicycle, balls, board games, handicraft materials and tools...

What should I bring?

Documents:

- Personal ID.
- Driving licence, in case you have it.
- EU Health Insurance Card, which is issued for free by your national health insurance provider, will cover your basic health insurance.
- We will take care for additional insurance. The costs for it are covered through the project. In case you are not from EU, additional insurance will cover also your basic insurance.

Other things:

- spring and fall in Istria can be quite cold, so bring **warm clothes** with you;

- summer (lasting from June till the end of September) is hot, so bring summer clothes with you;
- bring good shoes and work clothes that can get dirty;
- swimming suit;
- a towel;
- things that you need for your personal hygiene (shampoo, toothbrush...);
- if you like to do handicraft or play instrument, you can bring the materials or your instrument;
- you can also bring some traditional sweets/snacks so you can share it with other volunteers;
- if you have a board game you like, bring it with you.

We have “free shop” where you can get some work clothes. If you would like to travel around Slovenia, the cheapest way is to bring your tent, mat and sleeping bag.

What type of accommodation will be provided?

Your accommodation will be in our volunteer center, which is located in the village of Kastelec. On average we host 15 volunteers from all around the world. Volunteers sleep in shared rooms. We have communal kitchen, 2 toilets and 2 showers, communal room, relaxation room, 3 bedrooms for 2 volunteers and 2 for 6 volunteers. We have a playground behind the volunteer center and a beautiful nature just next to it.

Will I have tools for work?

Yes, we will provide materials, tools and safety gear.

What kind of food is provided in the project?

Vegetarian food. We all help with cooking. Every volunteer helps in the kitchen one to two times a week. We will include you in the cooking shifts after you arrive.

Why is the food vegetarian?

We would like to be an example of sustainability, not only with our voluntary work, but also with the lifestyle we lead. We would like to show our volunteers that living a bit more sustainable life can be easy and fun. Eating vegetarian protects the environment, while it can also be very tasty and interesting new experience.

What if I am on a special diet?

We can adapt to some extent. Let us know before you arrive and we will discuss it.

Does my disability stop me from participating in the project?

Depends on the disability, please notify us about your disability and we will discuss it.

What are the main activities that I can do during my free time?

Adriatic coast with its many beaches is less than 15 minutes by car or 30 minutes by bus from Kastelec. Our location is only a few kilometres away from world level climbing area of Osp valley. Historical coastal town of Piran and UNESCO World Heritage site Škocjan caves (our volunteers have 50 % discount for entrance fee) are 30 min away by car. There are numerous trekking and cycling options in Slovenian and Croatian Istria. Towns of Ljubljana, Venice and Julian Alps with Triglav national park are 1 to 2 hours away. In the free time after lunch and in the evenings we share with one another our knowledge, talents, sing by the bonfire, play social games, walk on the slack line, go swimming, climbing, play volleyball, read, watch movies and talk. You are welcome to share your talents, skills, stories...

How can I travel around and discover Slovenia?

You can travel by bus, train or shared car. Many times, volunteers rent a van together. One day rent costs 70 EUR that you share between 9 people and 1 day rent for a car costs 30 EUR.

Can I drink tap water?

Yes, tap water is safe everywhere in Slovenia.

At which hour I should arrive/leave the project?

The best is if you arrive in afternoon. We don't expect you to volunteer on the day of your arrival and on the day when you leave the project. Note that the day of arrival is counted as the first day of your stay and the day of departure as the last day of your stay.

What about safety in the project?

ESC Volunteers need to bring EU health card and are additionally insured by special insurance covered by ESC (Henner). That said, we make sure that the work is as safe as possible and we give instructions how to work safely. We've had only one accident (broken finger) in all the years since our project started. In case of need, hospitals in Slovenia are of a quite high quality.

Alcohol/drugs policies in Park Istra?

Bringing alcohol or drugs to the project premises is **strictly not allowed**.

How is the weather in Istria?

Winters can be cold, with temperatures as low as 0 degrees. Summers are hot and dry with temperatures around 35 degrees, so it is good that the Adriatic Sea is close. Springs and falls are nice, with temperatures around 20 degrees during the day and 10 degrees at night.

Is there internet and mobile signal in the project?

Yes, we have both.

Is there a shop nearby the project?

The closest shop is in Koper, which is about 15-minute car drive away. We go shopping for food every few days, so if volunteers have any special requests they can tell us and we can buy it for them.

Is there a pharmacy?

There is a pharmacy in Koper, which is about 15-minute drive away.

Are there any wild or/and poisonous animals around?

There are no dangerous animals in Slovenia. There are some snakes and scorpions, but they are not very poisonous. There are also wild deers, boars and bears, but you must be lucky to see them.

In case of rain would I have anything to work on as most of the activities are outside?

We try to plan our work so, that we have some work inside in case of rain.

Is the sea dangerous to swim in?

No. Adriatic Sea is very safe.

Where can I get more information about the project?

You can find more information about our project on:

Web: www.parkistra.com/en,

FB: <https://www.facebook.com/parkistra>

Instagram: parkistra

Videos, photos: <http://parkistra.com/en/gallery/>

Guide book: [highlights around Park Istra](#)

What about transportation? How do I get to the project place?

1. KASTELEC – VOLUNTEER CENTER

Volunteer center is located in village of Kastelec. Address is [Kastelec 21](#), 6275 Črni Kal.

In Kastelec enter the village and walk towards the church tower. From there walk 100 m uphill to the highest house in the village. To find us follow the signs for Volunteer center or search **Google maps** for [Park Istra](#).

2.KOPER – KASTELEC (VOLUNTEER CENTER)

Koper is the closest city. If you are in Koper, there are two direct buses to Kastelec from the main bus station in Koper at 15.05 and 20.05 (0.80 eur) – only from Monday to Friday. There are also a few buses, that go from Koper to Kastelec Crossroad (Kastelec Križišče) – the ride costs around 3 eur. Check <https://www.ap-ljubljana.si/en/> for the timetable. If there won't be any appropriate transportation, you can get taxi from the main bus station in Koper to Kastelec 21 (Park Istra) for 20 eur: +386 41 447 872 (this company is usually the cheapest).

3.LJUBLJANA – KASTELEC (DIRECTION KOPER)

If you are coming from Ljubljana, you can take bus or car share to Kastelec Križišče (Kastelec crossroad). Note that all buses that go to Koper do not stop in Kastelec crossroad.

a) BUS

For bus timetable check <https://www.ap-ljubljana.si/en/>. Your destination is Kastelec križišče. Tell bus driver you would like to get off the bus in Kastelec križišče (Kastelec crossroad). Bus costs around 10 eur.

b) CAR SHARE (direction Koper)

Car sharing is the cheapest (it costs 5-7 eur) and fastest option. You need to register on prevoz.org to be able to see the telephone number of your potential driver. Call him and ask him to pick you up at the main bus station in Ljubljana (driver will pick you up at the end of the bus station where the taxis wait). Tell the driver that you are going to Kastelec and kindly ask them to exit highway and leave you on the road that goes to Kastelec. Some drivers will even give you a ride (500 m) to Kastelec.

4.KASTELEC CROSSROAD – KASTELEC

From [Kastelec Crossroad walk to the village Kastelec](#) (15 min) by the main road (with very little traffic) or call me on 0038640 420 500. We will be happy to pick you up in case we will be around.

5.TRIESTE (Italy) – PREBENICO – KASTELEC

Our volunteer center is only 3 km away from Italian village Prebenico and 30 min away from Trieste. You can take city bus number 40 or 41 from Trieste central bus station (Trieste centrale) to [Prebenico](#) (make sure it really goes to Prebenico) and then walk 3 km to village Kastelec. For bus timetable check https://moovitapp.com/index/en/public_transit-Prebenico_Prebene-Trieste_e_Gorizia-site_9479499-2182

There are also buses from Trieste to Koper.

6. FROM YOUR HOME TO SLOVENIA

To reach Slovenia first consider more sustainable options than flying:

- [Flix bus](#) is one of the cheapest and fastest options. Check for buses that leave from the closest town to your home in a direction of Koper or Trieste (these are the closest cities to Park Istra). If this is not an option check also Ljubljana and Venice.

- Train: check [Deutsche bahn](#) website for train connections in Europe. The closest city would be Koper, Trieste or Ljubljana.

- Shared car: [blabla car](#).

7.AIRPORTS

If you cannot avoid flying, the closest airports are Ljubljana (Slovenia), Trieste (Italy) or Venice (Italy, usually the cheapest).

a. LJUBLJANA (Slovenia)

From Ljubljana airport take the bus to Ljubljana main bus station and then follow instructions Ljubljana – Kastelec.

b. VENICE (Italy)

If you will go to Park Istra **from Venice**, the cheapest option is to take [Flix](#) bus from Venice to Koper and then bus from Koper to Kastelec. The other option is also [GoOpti](#), shared transportation, that can bring you directly to Park Istra (Kastelec 21, 6275 Črni Kal) for around 40 eur. It will take around 2.5 h from Venice to Koper or Kastelec.

c. TRIESTE (Italy)

If you are coming from Trieste airport take bus to Trieste centrale. From there follow instructions Trieste – Kastelec.

You can also book in advance [GoOpti](#) shared transportation from Trieste airport, which can take you for around 30 eur directly to Kastelec 21, 6275 Črni kal (our volunteer center).

What about travel costs?

Eastpackers will cover your costs of transportation from your home to Park Istra (up to the agreed amount). They will need all the invoices. In case you fly do not forget to give us also your boarding pass.

In case of green travels (using train or bus) the amount for travel costs is a bit higher.

Sometimes it is better to buy one way ticket since after your stay in Park Istra finishes, volunteers like to spend few more days together traveling around.

Travel rates (the distance is calculated as a one way distance from your hometown to Kastelec (Slovenija) – [link](#)):

Table 1 – Travel rates

Travel rates (EUR per participant)		
Travel distances	Amount (standard)	Amount (green traveling)
Between 0 and 99 KM	23 EUR	N/A
Between 100 and 499 KM	180 EUR	210 EUR
Between 500 and 1 999 KM	275 EUR	320 EUR
Between 2 000 and 2 999 KM	360 EUR	410 EUR
Between 3 000 and 3 999 KM	530 EUR	610 EUR
Between 4 000 and 7 999 KM	820 EUR	N/A
8 000 KM or more	1 500 EUR	N/A

What are the emergency numbers in Slovenia?

Park Istra:

Petra: 00386 51 212 921

Janez: 00386 40 420 500

Email: volunteers@parkistra.com

Address: Kastelec 21, 6275 Črni Kal (in google maps write down Park Istra and you will find us)

Urgent health conditions, firefighters

112

In case of illness, injury (bring EU health insurance card)

From Monday to Friday - 7:00 to 20:00: Bonifika, Ljubljanska cesta 6a, Koper, T: +386 5 664 74 40;

From Monday to Friday: 20:00 to 7:00, Hospital Izola: +386 5 6606 000

Saturday, Sunday and holidays: Hospital Izola: +386 5 6606 000

Local bus

[Bus from Piran, Koper, Ljubljana to Kastelec Križišče \(Kastelec crossroad- 1 km walk to Park Istra\)](#)

[Direct bus from Koper to Kastelec](#)

[Bus from Trieste \(Italy\) to Prebenico](#) (village in Italy, 3 km walk to Park Istra)

Local Taxi – 00386 41 447 872 or 00386 41 520 213 (tell them you are from volunteer center)

Taxi from KASTELEC to KOPER:

- 1 to 4 people: 15 EUR

- 1 to 6 people: 20 EUR

Taxi from KASTELEC to PIRAN:

- 1 to 4 people: 50 EUR

- 1 to 6 people: 60 EUR

VAN or CAR TO RENT (to explore Slovenia) <https://avtogruntar.com/najem-kombija/>