Organisation

PIC number	918569437
OID	**E10040561**
Email	info@smokinya.com

Profile

Type of Organisation	Foundation
Is the partner organisation a public body?	no
Is the partner organisation a non-profit?	yes

Accreditation

Has the organisation received any type of accreditation before submitting this application?

Accreditation type	Accreditation Reference
ERAPLUS-EVS-CHARTER 2017-2020	2017-1-BG01-KA110-047002
ESC QL 2021-2027 Support	2020-1-BG01-ESC52-078038
Erasmus Accreditation in the field of youth	2020-1-BG01-KA150-YOU-095265
ESC QL 2022-2027 Lead	2021-1-BG01-ESC50-095414

Legal Representative

Title	Mr
Gender	Male
First Name	Tihomir
Family Name	Georgiev
Department	Director
Position	Director of Smokinya Foundation
Email	tisho@smokinya.com
Telephone 1	00 359 88 865 3280

Contact person for the project

Title	Ms
Gender	Female
First Name	Anna
Family Name	Sipos
Department	Youth work
Position	Head Trainer
Email	info@smokinya.com
Telephone 1	00 359 87 701 7694

Please briefly present the organisation / the group.

Smokinya Foundation contributes to creating a world that works for everyone, out of love, care, and cooperation. We hold an **Erasmus+ Accreditation in the field of Youth** and a **Quality Label as a Lead Organisation under the European Solidarity Corps**, both valid until 2027.

We are a **learning platform for young people** facing the challenges of the digital age, climate change, and global uncertainty. Our mission is to create opportunities and provide space for people to **learn, contribute, and grow** through participation, volunteering, and leadership.

Our approach
Our work is grounded in **heuristic and experiential learning** – enabling individuals to discover and develop for themselves. We promote **heutagogy** (self-determined learning) as a foundation for lifelong growth and maturity.
We combine **hands-on learning** with innovative educational methods to support young people (16–35), particularly those with fewer opportunities.

What we do
Smokinya Foundation carries out its vision by offering high-quality educational mobility for youth and adults. We train, coach, mentor, and support participants in developing skills, competences, and the ability to make conscious life, education, and career choices.

Our aims are to:

- Support personal growth through mobility and volunteering
- Foster a lasting interest in lifelong learning
- Build the capacity of NGOs through innovative training, coaching, and mentoring
- Encourage cross-sector networking for innovation, inclusion, and cooperation
- Promote the **EU Youth Strategy**, the **UN Sustainable Development Goals**, and the **11 EU Youth Goals**
- Include and empower disadvantaged rural youth
- Provide education on contemporary digital tools and emerging technologies, including AI
- Raise awareness and accountability for climate change
- Nurture civic engagement and youth participation at local and regional levels
- Empower youth to take responsibility for their own lives through mentoring and apprenticeships

How we achieve this

- Hosting and partnering in local and international projects and initiatives
- Engaging young people with fewer opportunities and NEETs in volunteering
- Participating in training activities and bringing innovative methods into our practice
- Networking and cooperating with NGOs, businesses, and experts in education, training, and coaching
- Organizing seminars, workshops, and trainings on personal and organisational development

Target group
Young people aged 16–35, especially those with fewer opportunities, facing transitions due to economic, social, geographical, cultural, or educational circumstances. This includes young people seeking their first job, changing careers, relocating, gaining new qualifications, or feeling lost, inactive, or disconnected in today's dynamic world.

Our methods
Experiential learning, coaching and mentoring, **NLP**, outdoor and adventure learning, systemic constellations, arts (theatre, dance, performance), creativity, and spontaneity.
https://smokinya.com/about/method/ .

Experience
In the last 10 years, Smokinya Foundation has partnered in over **185 projects**, sending more than **1100 participants** to opportunities worldwide. We continue to expand our activities and provide quality learning experiences for youth, youth workers, educators, and volunteers.

Rural development focus
Since 2023, we have been active in **revitalising rural areas** by bringing international youth to the village of **Mrachenik** (population: 50). The local school, abandoned since 1986, is now being transformed into an international youth training and volunteering centre. Here, we organise short-term educational mobilities (courses, exchanges, visits) and long-term activities (volunteering, internships, camps). Our aim is to rebuild missing infrastructure for culture and education in rural Bulgaria.

What are the activities and experience of the partner organisation in youth work? Please provide information on your organisation's / group's regular youth work activities at local level.

Smokinya Foundation recognises **non-formal education** and **experiential learning** as powerful tools for personal and professional development. We focus on **competences for the future (2040)** and apply **heutagogy** and **heuristic methods** to help young people discover their talents and potential.

Our approach and methods
We use a variety of approaches:
- Non-formal and experiential learning
- Arts and creativity
- Outdoor and adventure learning
- Coaching and mentoring

Through these rich sources of learning, we aim to **Reach**, **Engage**, **Connect**, and **Empower** young people in line with the **EU Youth Strategy 2030**, with strong attention to the **environment** and the **17 UN Sustainable Development Goals**.

Smokinya Foundation holds an **Erasmus+ Accreditation in the Youth field (2021–2027)** and a **Quality Label as a Lead Organisation under the European Solidarity Corps (until 2027)**.

Rural development focus
Since 2023, we have been active in the rural village of **Mrachenik (population: 50)**, where we are transforming a former village school into an **international educational and volunteering centre**. Here, we build partnerships with local stakeholders and organise activities that bring **renewal, connection, and vitality** both for locals and internationals.

Our work in the village includes:
- Practical, hands-on skill development
- Support for the local elderly
- Environmental actions
- Promotion of multiculturalism, education, and mobility

We host both **short-term mobilities** (courses, exchanges, study visits) and **long-term mobilities** (volunteering, internships, camps).

Local impact
In Plovdiv and other Bulgarian cities, we regularly organise events gathering **40–60 young people**, both Erasmus+ alumni and newcomers, to **share, network, and inspire** each other. These activities strengthen peer-to-peer learning and youth participation.

Digital competences
We also develop and promote digital competences by using and training others in tools such as

WordPress, Slack, Slite, Google Suite, Canva, AI, and more.
We ensure transparency and outreach through our active online presence:

- https://smokinya.com/
- https://www.instagram.com/smokinya_foundation/
- https://www.linkedin.com/company/smokinya-foundation
- https://www.facebook.com/smokinyafoundation/
- https://www.youtube.com/@smokinyafoundation
- https://linktr.ee/Smokinya

Regular activities

- On-the-job competence building: recruiting and mentoring motivated young people in active roles within the Foundation
- Promotion of youth mobility (youth exchanges, training courses, volunteering, solidarity activities, traineeships, internships)
- Training, counselling, and guidance on education and career paths
- Networking events for youth to brainstorm, exchange, and co-create initiatives
- Coordination of international project partnerships
- School and university visits to bridge the gap between formal and non-formal education

Expected impact from partnerships
By partnering and sending participants in our projects, we aim to:

- Strengthen cooperation with international partners
- Exchange innovative methods, tools, and practices
- Raise participants' motivation, interest, and active involvement
- Support follow-up and dissemination activities with new ideas and initiatives
- Reach a wider range of youth who have not yet joined Erasmus+ or ESC
- Transform ideas into actions, leading to **new projects and collaborations**

Please give information on the key staff/persons involved in this application and on the competences and previous experience that they will bring to the project.

Team and Management

Tihomir Georgiev – *Founder & Director*

- **Background**: BA in History, MA in Rhetoric and Communication.
- **Experience**: Trainer in the **Bulgarian NA pool** since 2014, active member of several European youth networks.
- **Expertise**: Over 21 years of volunteering experience (since 2004). Trained in experiential learning methods, certified in coaching and mentoring, and applying approaches from **NLP, systemic work, and body movement**. Holds a **professional certification in psychological counselling of youth** (Medical University of Plovdiv).
- **Role**: Legal representative of Smokinya Foundation. Signs partnership agreements and mandates, supervises projects, and monitors all stages: promotion, selection, preparation, sending, follow-up, evaluation, dissemination, closure, and reporting.

Anna Sipos – *Youth Trainer & Project Manager*

- **Background**: Master's degree in **Adult Education Management**.
- **Experience**: Internship at the **Flemish Ministry of Education** with a focus on programme tailoring and curriculum development. Over 10 years of experience as a youth trainer.
- **Expertise**: Works with creative recycling as a methodology in diverse areas: personal development, social entrepreneurship, sustainability, arts, and design.

- **Role**: Leads youth trainings and supports the educational dimension of Smokinya's projects.

Maria Stefanova – *Board Member & Consultant*

- **Background**: Education in **Business and Humanities**.
- **Experience**: Over 18 years of living and working abroad for NGOs in the UK, Spain, Thailand and worldwide.
- **Expertise**: International development, community work, partnership building.
- **Role**: Provides consultancy, oversees strategic development, and strengthens partnerships.

Stanislava Petrova – *Youth Worker & Coordinator*

- **Background**: Professional psychologist.
- **Role**: Manages daily operations, provides coordination and task-oriented support, and ensures smooth office and project implementation with a strong results-oriented approach.

Volunteers & Community

- Since 2018, Smokinya Foundation has hosted **5 long-term ESC volunteers annually**, plus several **short-term ESC/EVS volunteer camps** (3 weeks). Volunteers contribute to **administration, coordination, and promotion activities**.
- The foundation maintains a **community of youth workers, trainers, and volunteers**, engaged on a project basis.
- Active youth leaders self-organise into **informal groups**, coordinating and delivering non-formal learning programmes based on common interests and vision.

Dissemination and Visibility

Smokinya Foundation ensures high visibility and outreach through a strong **online presence** and community network.

- **Mailing list**: Over **3,000 subscribers** (participants, volunteers, NGOs, supporters, donors) → reaching at least **5,000 young people directly and indirectly**.
- **Online channels**:

- https://smokinya.com/
- https://www.instagram.com/smokinya_foundation/
- https://www.linkedin.com/company/smokinya-foundation
- https://www.facebook.com/smokinyafoundation/
- https://www.youtube.com/@smokinyafoundation
- https://linktr.ee/Smokinya

These platforms provide **high reach, visibility, and transparency**, while also making it easy to **track and evaluate dissemination impact** through engagement statistics.

Follow-up and dissemination strategy

- During activities, participants are encouraged to plan **follow-up and dissemination actions** with new ideas and tools.
- After returning home, participants meet with Smokinya staff for **support, encouragement, and mentoring** to ensure dissemination activities are carried out promptly.

Target Groups

- Young people aged **16–35**, especially those with **fewer opportunities**.
- Youth in **transition phases**: unemployed, changing educational degrees, considering new career paths, or relocating.
- Those who need **support, motivation, and fresh learning experiences** to gain clarity, confidence, and direction in today's dynamic world.

Why and how will participants sent by Smokinya benefit from this project?

Smokinya Foundation maintains a **local youth community of over 60 active members** who regularly join our events, support with volunteering, and participate in diverse initiatives.

We host and attend events across **Plovdiv, Pleven, Sofia, Stara Zagora, Varna, and Blagoevgrad**, creating strong connections with youth throughout Bulgaria.

As an accredited EVS/ESC host, we welcome international volunteers who actively promote **educational mobility** and the **Erasmus+ programme** at local level.

Becoming a partner in this project builds on a long-standing good practice:

- To date, we have sent **over 1100 young people** to projects in more than **35 countries**.
- This experience allows us to prepare and guide **first-time participants** in understanding mobility, non-formal education, and experiential learning.
- Each project is closed with structured **follow-up and dissemination**, where participants share their living examples to **inspire other youth to join**.

This creates a **sustainable cycle of engagement**: from first-time participants → to active volunteers → to interns and project coordinators within Smokinya Foundation.

How does the proposed project match with your needs, interest and mission? What do you expect as outcomes of this project?

Smokinya Foundation applies a wide range of **non-formal education and experiential learning approaches** to reach and engage young people. Through this new partnership and project, we aim to **gain new competences, innovative methods, and valuable contacts** that will strengthen and enrich our local work.

We expect to:

- Develop a **new set of educational tools** and practices
- Enhance our expertise in **planning, project design, and writing**
- Integrate these competences into our routine activities such as:
    - Networking and community events for youth
    - Cultural and educational activities promoting healthy behaviours
    - Youth mobility opportunities both within and outside the EU

By achieving these goals, Smokinya Foundation will expand its capacity to support youth, provide higher-quality opportunities, and contribute more effectively to **sustainable international cooperation**.

What do you expect to be the direct impact and benefit of this project on you and your target group?

Through this project we expect to **enrich our toolbox of methods, tools, and practices**, which will increase the quality and diversity of opportunities we can offer to young people. This will make Smokinya Foundation a **more engaging, innovative, and preferred youth NGO** locally in Plovdiv, at regional level in Bulgaria, and internationally among our partner networks.

For **our organisation**, the project will:

- Strengthen our **capacity in project design, implementation, and dissemination**
- Enhance our **methodological expertise** in non-formal education and experiential learning
- Expand our **network of partners**, bringing fresh ideas and resources to our local work
- Increase our visibility and recognition as a reliable organisation within Erasmus+ and ESC

For **our target group of young people (16–35, especially those with fewer opportunities)**, the project will:

- Provide access to **new and innovative learning methods** that are engaging, inclusive, and relevant to their needs
- Increase their **motivation to participate** in youth mobility, volunteering, and non-formal education
- Offer opportunities for **personal growth, skill development, and empowerment**
- Strengthen their sense of **belonging and civic engagement** in their local communities

This partnership will help us create a **sustainable cycle of engagement** where young people first experience mobility, then share their learning with peers, and eventually take on roles as volunteers, youth leaders, and coordinators within Smokinya Foundation. This ensures that the benefits of the project will have a **long-lasting and multiplying impact** both locally and internationally.

Please describe at least one concrete dissemination or follow-up activity you might implement as a result of our project and how many people would be involved?

Knowledge sharing workshop where our participants from the project will share their experience and learning with peers 17 to 30 years old. We also will create a promo video of the workshop and further share this topic and how is it useful in youth work. We expect that we can directly reach out to and bring to the workshop a group of 60-100 young people – high school graduates, university students, unemployed youth.

Why do we want to be part of this project? How does the project fit the needs of our organisations.

As a follow-up activity, we organise a **Knowledge-Sharing Workshop** where participants who took part in the project will present their experiences, insights, and new learning to their peers aged

16–35. The workshop will combine interactive presentations, practical exercises, and open discussion on how the acquired methods can be applied in youth work and daily life.

We will produce a **short promotional video** capturing the highlights of the workshop and the key messages from participants. This video will be shared through our social media channels and mailing lists to ensure wider outreach and long-term visibility.

We expect to directly engage **60–100 young people** (including high school graduates, university students, and unemployed youth) in the workshop itself, and to reach **several thousand more** indirectly through our online platforms.

How have you identified these needs?

We identify the needs of young people through a combination of empirical observation, partner collaboration, and evidence-based research.

- Network collaboration: Smokinya Foundation is part of a network of over 50 NGOs across the EU and beyond. We hold regular meetings, share experiences, and align on common visions, values, and approaches to youth work. Together, we exchange data and observations on challenges faced by young people, including those with fewer opportunities and disabilities.
- Empirical observation & practice: Through our daily interaction with youth in Bulgaria and across Europe, we continuously monitor behaviours, trends, and emerging problematics related to mental health, physical wellbeing, and social inclusion. We actively test and pilot new methods and innovative practices to address these needs and improve the quality of our support.
- Evidence-based research: Our work is guided by reliable data from internationally recognised sources such as Eurostat, the World Health Organization (WHO), and academic research from universities. These provide a scientific basis to complement our practical experience.

By combining first-hand experience, partner input, and research data, we ensure that our activities respond directly to the real and current needs of young people — both locally in Bulgaria and within the broader European context.

How being part of this project could benefit our organisation? How could it benefit your local area?

For **Smokinya Foundation**, participation in this project will:

- Keep us **up to date with innovative and attractive methods** in non-formal education
- Strengthen our **capacity** to design and deliver high-quality youth activities
- Sustain and expand our **local and international partnerships**
- Ensure our community remains **active, motivated, and engaged** through new opportunities
- Provide our staff and participants with valuable **experience, skills, and competences** that can be transferred to future initiatives

For our **local area and community**, the benefits will include:

- **Youth engagement**: young people will be directly involved in the project's implementation, follow-up, and dissemination activities, gaining motivation and inspiration through participation and peer learning

- **Visibility and inspiration**: first-hand stories and examples from our participants will encourage more local youth to join Erasmus+ and non-formal learning opportunities
- **Community enrichment**: intercultural exchange and cooperation with international partners will bring new ideas, perspectives, and practices to Plovdiv and the wider region
- **Institutional impact**: local authorities and the governmental youth department will gain **greater awareness and understanding** of the benefits of the Erasmus+ Programme and its Key Actions, strengthening support for youth mobility at local level

This project partnership helps Smokinya Foundation to **grow as a competent, innovative youth organisation** while ensuring that our **local community in Mrachenik, and Karlovo municipality benefits from international knowledge, practices, and opportunities**.