



the European Solidarity Corps Volunteers'

Info Pack



Welcome

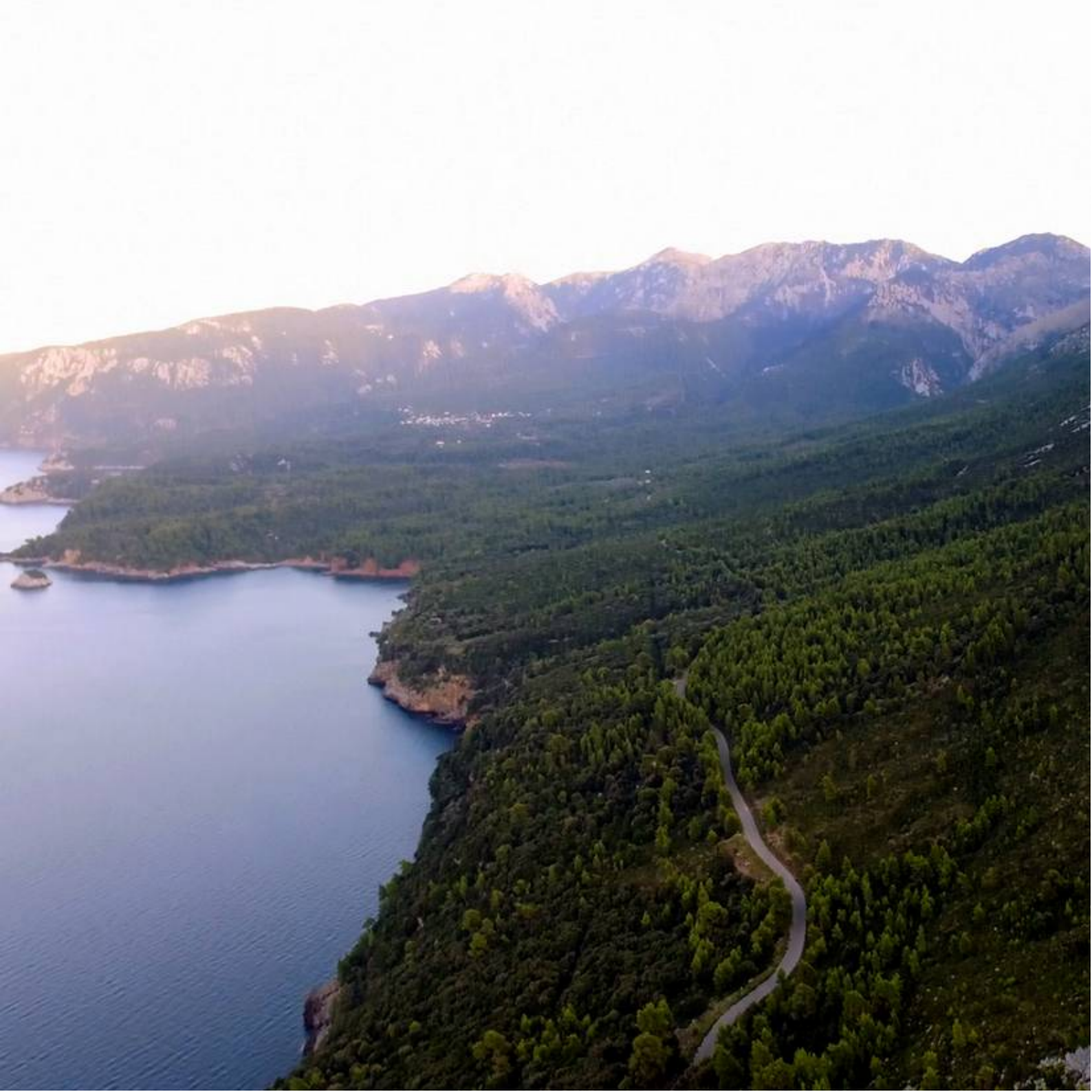
Welcome to the info pack for the Volunteers from the ESC to the Stagones Project.

Stagones was established as an informal group in Vlachia, Evia in the spring of 2013 and it took the legal form of a Social Cooperative in 2019.

The intention of Stagones is to create a framework for rethinking and reinventing life in rural Greece. Autonomy, self-sufficiency, sustainability, healthy and harmonic living conditions, respect to human values and the ecosystem have been major drivers to the formation of Stagones as a project. Therefore, Stagones is involved in many ongoing projects and partnerships that include natural building, organic farming and self-directed education.

Through a deep engagement in the cultural, societal and landscape contexts of the Greek rural condition, Stagones wishes to manifest compelling responses to the issues of dwelling, material, place, environment, learning, autarky. How can we inhabit rural areas in a contemporary manner? What aspects of tradition should we keep or evolve? What are our real needs? What is a human's connection with nature? How autonomous can one be? How many things can we make with our hands and why is it important? How much indoor space do we really need? What does it really mean to be connected? How much high- or low-tech should we get? How can we co-exist? How can we evolve our relationships and selves?

The Stagones team is working on gaining understanding of the issues and debates surrounding ruralism and the practices of sustainability. Moreover, everyday lifestyle at Stagones aims to provoke a personal interest in developing a true sense of place, a comprehensive awareness of self and surroundings.



Location

Stagones is located near the village of Vlachia, in a beautiful rural part of the region of North Evia Island, in central Greece. It is on the hillside of Mount Pixarias, facing North to the Aegean Sea and overlooking the islands of Sporades. The two sites are inside the forest, a few kilometres from the coast. Distances to villages and towns are:

Vlachia (1km) nearest village with a small shop/cafe and a taverna during the summer

Makrisyalos (5 km) the beach of Vlachia with a taverna and cantine during the summer

Pili (10 km) nearest village with grocery shop, mini market and bakery

Prokopi (20km) village with bus connection to Chalkida (1½ hour) and Athens (3 hours) and post office

Mantoudi (35 km) town with post office and banks

Limni (50 km) vibrant town on the coast facing mainland

Aidipsos (80 km) small neoclassical bath town with famous thermal springs

Chalkida (80 km) large coastal town with rail and bus connection to Athens

Athens (150 km) city with airport

Stagones surrounding area is a traditional Greek farmland and pasturage countryside with areas of woodland and beautiful beaches. It is situated within a Natura 2000 reserve area. Culturally the area is a mix, including traditional farming families and people who have moved to the area for its wilderness landscape, sea and forest.



Transport

Unfortunately Stagones is most easily accessed by car. Cycling is possible, but the hilly countryside means it is only really possible for the committed and fit. Transport to and from Athens or Chalkida is usually by bus, which requires a taxi or hitchhike ride to the nearest bus station at Prokopi. (Please inform Stagones if you need a lift.) Busses are not very regular, 2 or 3 times a day. Local transport between the locations of the project or serving other needs will be available upon arrangement with the Stagones team.





Facilities

At the moment we are developing 3 main locations in the north area of Evia Island. Our main living, farming and natural building test sites are two premises located just outside the village of Vlachia. They are 700m distance apart and are connected through a footpath in the forest. One of them (which we will refer to as Katochori) is located next to the main road, while the other one (which we will refer to as Panochori) is accessed by a 1km dirt road and a 400m footpath. In these two sites dwell 3 families with young kids.

Katochori consists of the following communal facilities: a covered outdoor kitchen, a semi-open gathering/lounge space, 2 caravans, 1 indoor bathroom, 2 compost loos, 1 outdoor shower, 1 tree house/deck, 1 events platform, renewable energy production with solar panels, botanical garden and vegetable garden. There are also 1 straw bale private house, 1 wooden private house and a private food-storage room. Katochori is off-grid regarding electricity.

Panochori consists of the following communal facilities: a covered outdoor kitchen with a lounge area, 2 compost loos, 2 outdoor showers, renewable energy production with solar panels, botanical and vegetable garden. There are also 2 straw-bale private houses. Panochori is off-grid regarding electricity and water.

Around 40km away from the main sites in Vlachia, at Krya Vrysi, the pomegranate farms and processing plant are situated. Apart from endless pomegranate trees, one can find there a concrete-frame-straw-bale-infill building, which consists of one private house, one rent-out and the processing plant. At the processing plant is where various Stagones products are made: pomegranate juice, vinegar and syrup and packed pomegranate seeds.



Accommodation & nutrition

The volunteers will be accommodated on site of the project at Vlachia, in fully equipped caravans or tents at Katochori and in a large 10 -person tent at Panochori, shared by two people.

Daily nutritional needs will be met by a vegan/vegetarian diet: A wholesome breakfast (tee and coffee, fruits, muesli, bread, honey, eggs or yoghurt), a full meal (seasonal salad, soup, legumes, pasta, etc) and a light dinner. Snacks, like dry nuts, juices, cacao and seasonal herbs would be provided as needed.

Showers are available for use with tap-temperature whenever needed. Hot water for shower is available once – twice a week during colder months upon arrangement

Laundry of small clothing is mainly done by hand. A washing machine is available to use every 10 days on a sunny day.

Both residential sites are run on autonomous solar systems for electricity. Electricity is available for charging small scale devices such as cell phones, cameras etc. Please make sure you charge when the sun is out.





What to bring with you

- **Torch** (preferably head-torch)
- Hat
- Sunscreen and Insect repellent
- Natural or Biodegradable Shampoo / Shower gel / Soap (grey waters are used unfiltered for watering the gardens)[*Self-care products and herbs are also available from Stagones handmade/handpicked collection*]
- Working /durable everyday pair of shoes (the terrain here is rocky)
- Working clothes
- Swimming suit
- Sleeping bag and towel (we can also provide upon arrangement)
- hammock, mosquito net (if you have)

Expect chilly spring and autumn evenings and hot summer days, meaning a range of 10-35°C. Select outfits accordingly.





On site life

Life on site goes with the flow of the seasons and varies accordingly. During autumn one will mostly find our team at Krya Vrisi, picking pomegranates and juicing or at Vlachia finishing up summer projects and doing winter preparations, ex. collecting firewood. Winters are usually dull and wet in Vlachia, so they are mostly a time to retreat to our personal interests, spend time with friends and make plans for the next seasons. In spring starts all the gardening and pruning preparation, while on- or off-site building projects take place. Summer is usually the time for hosting workshops and seminars on our sites, harvesting crops, distributing pomegranate juice and continuing with building projects.





Working day

Each volunteer will be involved in a rotation schedule and get a chance to participate in all working groups. The leader of each working group presents the specific knowledge and details of each group to all volunteers. Individual projects may be assigned depending on the volunteer's experience, knowledge, background and flexibility. All volunteers are expected to participate in the weekly meetings of the Stagones team. Volunteers can communicate with the leader of their working group daily, to address day to day problems and challenges.

Volunteers coming from abroad within the ESC framework will be involved in every aspect of everyday life of Stagones. There is broad variety of activities within that, which includes:

- gardening and pruning
- firewood collection
- herbs, mushrooms and wild plants picking
- making remedies
- opening/cleaning footpaths
- food preparation
- taking care for areas of accommodation, cleaning common and personal utility areas
- carrying materials
- building
- regular maintenance work on tools, hardware, buildings and terraces
- preparation for workshops and facilitation, event planning and organization



Everyday living and working routine is an on-going experiential learning process through applying facets of sustainability, self-sufficiency, moral values. Every task, activity, event, workshop is consequentially an educational experience. The volunteers will acquire both formal knowledge and the less tangible 'know-how' gained by hands-on making. The Stagones team will guide and support the volunteers every step of this perceptive procedure.

Volunteers will be living in a small community and will be expected to co-exist and co-create with a variety of cultures, backgrounds and languages. Furthermore they will be expected to respect the pace and values of the families permanently living on site. Thoughtfulness of the local natural environment and the local community of the nearby village would also be appreciated.





What ESC covers

The ESC program covers:

- Linguistic and cultural training
- The bulk of travel costs, depending on the mileage, transition to the country of the program and return from it.
- Accommodation, meals and a monthly allowance of 5€ per day ~ 150€ per month
- Health insurance for the period of voluntary service
- A certificate certifying participation in the program
- after-return support to capitalize on your experience.

Youthpass:

Youthpass is a tool to document and recognise learning outcomes from youth work and solidarity activities. While creating their Youthpass certificate together with a support person, project participants are given the possibility to describe what they have done in their project and which competences they have acquired. Thus, Youthpass supports the reflection upon the personal non-formal learning process and outcomes.

<https://www.youthpass.eu/en/help/faqs/evs/>

Insurance:

The ESC program is covering the insurance costs of the participants. Information and guidelines about the insurance scheme provided to all Erasmus+ volunteers during their stay abroad (complementary to the mandatory European Health Insurance Card) can be found on the insurance provider website:

<https://www.cignahealthbenefits.com/en/plan-members>



We are looking forward to welcome you at Stagones and join forces! Our aim is to co-create a sustainable living space for us and for others where voices are heard and actions towards a healthy and balanced way of community-living are taken. We consider this process valuable for everyone and hope for a fruitful collaboration with you.

Through this platform we wish to build bridges and open doors for enhancing our network of wonderful people, upgrade our facilities, learn new crafts, enjoy community experience and expand our horizon. We are eagerly looking forward to our collaboration and spending the next period of time together here on our farm in Evia.

Please do not hesitate to contact us for more information. [volunteering@stagones.org]

