



ROADMAP 2010

Volunteering and Participation in the EU

Drafted at Eurofestation 2004, 7 to 9 November 2004



SENDER OF THE ROADMAP 2010

Stakeholders in volunteering from the public, private and volunteering sector present at the Invitational Conference on 'Policies, Partnerships and Participation' (Eurofestation 2004) in MECC, Maastricht¹.

OWNERSHIP AND CONTINUATION

The following organisations are responsible for critically monitoring progress and following up on the actions proposed: CEV (European Volunteer Centre) and CSR Europe. United Nations Volunteers (UNV), as the focal point for IYV follow-up, will be invited to collaborate as appropriate. A meeting will be held annually in December to discuss progress and to develop an action plan for the following year.

EUROFESTATION 2004

The goal of Eurofestation 2004 is to show, build and increase awareness of volunteering on the EU political agenda. Its focus is on the social sustainability of Europe; the transfer of knowledge for stimulating volunteer effort; the volunteer component of corporate community involvement in EU member states; and the contribution of volunteerism to overseas development assistance. A sustainable and healthy social environment is of major importance for economic development; it is even more important for a knowledge-driven economy.

As a major event in an ongoing process, Eurofestation 2004 has produced a Roadmap 2010 to outline the further development of volunteering policy in the EU. To help formulate the Roadmap and to promote knowledge about volunteering and volunteering policy, research was conducted in all 25 member states of the EU. Eurofestation 2004, the preliminary conference held in Dublin on 3 - 4 June 2004, and the research on volunteering policies and partnerships in the member states are three building blocks for improving volunteering and volunteering policy in the EU.

The purpose of the Roadmap is to prioritise the issues that must be addressed and to present an action plan. It includes a description of the next steps that must be taken at all levels in the EU to further the process.

Together with the help of all the European stakeholders, we hope that these efforts will generate the attention necessary to secure the rightful place of volunteering on government agendas in the EU and its member states.

¹ Eurofestation 2004 is organised by the Netherlands Association of Municipalities (VNG) and CIVIQ (the Dutch Volunteer Centre), under the auspices of the Dutch Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport (VWS).

INTRODUCTION

Millions of citizens throughout Europe are actively involved in volunteering. It is clear that volunteering plays an important role in finding solutions to societal issues. Volunteering strengthens social cohesion, increases social involvement, stimulates active citizenship, improves the quantity and quality of services, and helps individuals develop new competences. Recognition, facilitation, networking and promotion of volunteering and volunteerism are essential to meeting these objectives. It is also clear that the process could be made both more efficient and more effective were governments to adopt coherent and adequately resourced strategies for supporting the many forms of voluntary action through official policies.

VOLUNTEERING POLICY IN EUROPEAN UNION MEMBER STATES

Factors that influence the nature of volunteering in a country include its economic, social and political landscape (social origin), as well as its stage of development. Considerable diversity exists in the field of volunteering and it is not possible to specify a single, universal model for supporting it. What works in one country with its own unique historical background and societal issues may not work in another.

In many EU member states, governments attempt to influence and stimulate volunteering by exploring possibilities for providing support. Research shows that government efforts are increasing. A number of activities and events have contributed to the increased attention, including the following:

- ❑ **Resolution of the European Parliament, 1983**
This resolution recognised the general-interest nature of volunteering and the contribution of an adequate infrastructure to effective policies on volunteering. The Resolution also called for a European 'Statute for voluntary work', to cover the reimbursement of expenses and social insurance for volunteers.
- ❑ **Communication of the EU Commission on 'Promoting the Role of Voluntary Organisations and Foundations' 1997, COM (1997) 241**
Through this the political, economic and social significance of voluntary action for 'developing a cohesive and inclusive European society based on active citizenship' was recognized.
- ❑ **IYV 2001**
The United Nations 2001 International Year of Volunteers (IYV) was an important catalyst for increasing attention for volunteering, and it provided an opportunity to highlight the achievements of volunteer work. In addition, IYV generated many suggestions based upon actual experiments for the further support and development of volunteering potential. Nearly 130 countries took part in IYV2001, and more than 500 committees were established at the national, regional and local levels to plan and coordinate a host of activities and events. The IYV2001 goals – promotion, recognition, facilitation and networking – provided the framework for significant achievements and measures that are contributing to strengthening the global volunteer movement.



□ **General Assembly UN 2002**

In *November 2002*, 142 Member Countries of the United Nations co-sponsored a General Assembly resolution (RES 57/106) in follow-up to the successful International IYV2001. Its recommendations include the following:

- Governments, non-governmental organisations (NGOs), the private sector and researchers must promote volunteer work.
- Improvements are needed in volunteer working conditions (e.g., laws and regulations, research, volunteer centres, internet and corporate volunteering).
- Volunteering should be factored into reports on the implementation of the Millennium Declaration.

□ **Manifesto for Volunteering in Europe (CEV) 2003**

CEV is a European umbrella organisation of National and Regional Volunteer Centres across Europe. In 2003, it published a Manifesto that outlined ways in which members of the European Parliament can approach volunteering strategically as a means of enhancing resources, addressing local, national and global needs and issues, while improving the quality of life for all residents of Europe.

□ **Eurofestation 2004**

Eurofestation proposes a shared European Roadmap 2010 for the EU, national member states, (multi)national corporations, national volunteer centres, (national) volunteer-involving organisations and supporting infrastructure. This Roadmap to 2010 is intended to be an influential tool for further policy developments, events and activities in Europe around the theme of volunteering.



EUROPEAN ROADMAP TO 2010

Volunteering is vital for building the trust and confidence necessary to develop governance and communities. It is generally understood that the value of volunteering lies not only (or maybe not at all) in rendering services.

Volunteering is important in all EU member states, particularly at the grassroots level. This recognition should be translated in a volunteering policy – an official recognition of the concept of volunteering and citizen participation – and the incorporation of volunteering into the official national budget activities of the member states.

A shared broad vision of the scope and importance of volunteering by the different European stakeholders is needed (e.g. the significance of volunteering for building social capital; volunteering as service delivery; operating mutual benefit organizations and being active in the political arena; volunteering as part of other formal organisations, including education and return-to-work schemes).

PROMOTION AND RECOGNITION

In some parts of Europe, historical and cultural factors profoundly affect the general image of volunteering. The contribution of volunteering to society is often expressed in terms of social capital or its role in creating a socially cohesive society. It is necessary to broaden such perceptions to acknowledge the individual-level advantages and benefits of volunteering as well.

Reliable facts and figures are an important instrument for putting volunteering on the agenda. National governments and other involved parties should improve their ability to monitor developments in volunteering and to evaluate the value that volunteering and participation add to the national economies. In this respect, governments are encouraged to implement the UN handbook on non-profit institutions in the system of national accounts through the establishment of a satellite account, including the volunteer component.

Some member states organise annual events (e.g., 'Volunteers' Day' or 'Volunteers' Week') to promoting volunteering. This practice requires broader attention, particularly with regard to the possibility of designating a European Year of Volunteers. In this way, the EU could set an example that could encourage national governments to pay more attention to volunteering.

In this regard, special attention must be directed towards developing a system for officially recognising the skills and knowledge developed through non-formal learning experiences. Some European countries have made much more progress in this area than others.

ACTIONS (EUROPEAN UNION²)

- Actively recognise and promote volunteer activity, underlining the importance of volunteering for society at the international, national, regional and local levels.
- Continue special volunteering programmes targeted at young people, and develop similar programmes for other groups (e.g., the elderly and people with disabilities). EU programmes should be more inclusive.
- Support International Volunteer Day (5 December), declare a European Year of Volunteers and support the creation of a European award for volunteers.
- Support certification schemes for volunteers aimed at recognising the development of competencies through volunteering in the educational systems of the member states.
- Include support for volunteering in international development aid policies.
- Develop a European framework for validating informal and non-formal learning (e.g., volunteer engagement), building upon the common principles already adopted by the Education, Youth and Culture Council³.
- Develop alternative economic indicators that can better recognise such socially useful activities as non-formal work in the non-profit sector, informal caring activities and all volunteering activities in general.
- In EU policies, acknowledge the role of volunteering in contributing to the employability of people engaged in any kind of volunteering and in fostering the development of skills needed within modern society.
- Investigate how to promote activities that will lead to a better understanding of the role and the impact of volunteer engagement on the integration of migrants and facilitate the exchange of experience between migrant organisations, NGOs and national, regional and local authorities in member states.
- Ensure a robust European contribution to the report of the UN Secretary General to the General Assembly in 2005 on the implementation of IYV outcome recommendations.

ACTIONS (NATIONAL AND LOCAL GOVERNMENTS)

- Follow up on commitments associated with the UN resolutions that they have signed, including incorporating volunteering into their programmes for overseas development aid.
- Follow up on EU resolutions and communications.
- Promote both the benefits of volunteering, including the provision of added value and values to service provision (instead of saving costs), as well as personal development and other 'gains' for volunteers.
- Support International Volunteer Day, 5 December.
- Ensure that every citizen has the opportunity to volunteer. Develop special programmes to increase the accessibility of organisations and areas of service to various groups and to stimulate the participation of these groups in volunteering.
- Incorporate the economic value of volunteering to the system of national accounts.
- Recognise the contribution of volunteering in the field of informal and non-formal learning.

² Some of the proposed actions could also be supported by the Council of Europe.

³ Education, Youth and Culture Council, 27-28 May 2004



ACTIONS (VOLUNTEER-INVOLVING ORGANISATIONS)

- Promote volunteering as a mutually beneficial experience for both volunteers and the direct beneficiaries of their efforts.
- Enhance promotion to increase the attractiveness for special target groups, for instance young people.
- Appreciate and recognise all voluntary work in different sectors.

ACTIONS (CORPORATE SECTOR)

- Contribute to sustaining and developing volunteerism in the business environment, based upon the concept of 'self interest rightly understood'.
- Take action to prevent working schedules (or work pressure in general) from blocking the participation of employees in society. It is a strategic option for companies to be pro-active in this regard by offering their employees the opportunity to volunteer as part of their paid work obligations.

SUPPORT AND FACILITATION

In many countries, the public and private sectors are cooperatively exploring ways to facilitate and support volunteer work through the development of policies and the implementation of legislation. These efforts involve identifying the necessary legal positions, clarifying the respective roles of various parties and allocating the necessary financial support. These activities amount to facilitation in the form of both enabling the participation of employees and removing obstacles to their participation. In recent years, the corporate sector has become more active in the field of volunteering.

The need for an infrastructure to support volunteers, volunteering and volunteerism is generally recognised. Such infrastructure should include a recognized legal position for volunteering, which could be developed for the EU as a whole without drafting an official European definition. Research shows that not all member states have official definitions and that interpretations also differ concerning which actions are considered part of volunteering.

Not all member states have national volunteer centres or entities that perform supporting and facilitation functions for volunteering in general. Even fewer countries have the infrastructure necessary to provide local-level support for volunteering. These national and/or local centres make it possible to exchange information concerning 'good practices', to have a 'voice' towards other stakeholders, to raise funds more efficiently, and to facilitate new developments.

Easier access to European-level funding sources to volunteering is needed. With the exception of one programme for young volunteers, such access is currently problematic.

ACTIONS (EUROPEAN UNION⁴)

- Stimulate national governments to formulate national volunteering policies and create the infrastructure needed to implement these policies.
- Publish a White Paper on Voluntary Action to review the scale and importance of voluntary action. This would contribute to the development of a community action strategy to encourage cooperation between Member States and associated countries to promote and enable volunteering. This would build on the above-mentioned Commission Communication COM (1997) 241.
- Allocate resources for a Volunteer Centre Fund (including matching funds for national governments) aimed at developing infrastructure to support and facilitate volunteering.
- Develop European principles regarding charitable fundraising, particularly regarding cross-border practices.
- Link external aid policies and programmes to volunteering, particular with regard to achieving the Millennium Development Goals.
- Actively promote the further expansion of corporate community involvement and corporate volunteering.

⁴ Some of the proposed actions could also be supported by the Council of Europe.



ACTIONS (NATIONAL AND LOCAL GOVERNMENTS)

- Enable and facilitate the necessary framework; create a stimulating environment while providing further support to organisations.
- Formulate a code of agreement that will keep the powers of governments within boundaries and monitor the effects of their influence and strategy on the freedom of the volunteer-involving organisations.
- Recognise that active communities and citizens are very positive.
- Actively promote the further expansion of corporate volunteering.
- Support the inclusion of volunteering in overseas development aid programmes.

ACTIONS (VOLUNTEER-INVOLVING ORGANISATIONS)

- Strive to (partially) finance their own infrastructure through independent fundraising and, in some cases, charging fees for service.
- Actively cooperate with other volunteer-involving organisations to exchange and develop instruments to support and facilitate volunteering.
- Strive to increase the attractiveness of volunteering; adapting to societal trends and to attract special target groups.
- Advocate and lobby with governments and represent the voice of volunteering.
- Provide information, facts and intelligence on volunteering to governments to ensure their decisions that affect volunteering are based on evidence.

ACTIONS (CORPORATE SECTOR)

- Corporations can support and facilitate the role of volunteer-involving organisations by providing access to their resources, knowledge, technical systems, meeting and office space and the use of transportation facilities.
- Develop strategy on corporate community involvement and act upon it.
- Establish a link between the regional economic and social policy focussing on the competitiveness of a region.
- Need for professional associations to be engaged in corporate community involvement.

NETWORKING

Much work remains to be done to further strengthen the base of volunteering at all levels (local, national and European), particularly with regard to the 'voice' of volunteer-involving organisations in Europe. National associations should be more active in their attempts to influence and motivate their national EU deputies. In particular, the roles of European networks (e.g., CEV and, to a lesser extent, CSR) should be strengthened to facilitate the exchange of knowledge and provide an effective voice and lobby for volunteering at the EU level. And links should be established with existing international networks and organizations (e.g. IAVE, CIVICUS and UNV). Efforts at the EU level, in turn, can have a positive influence at the national level.

ACTIONS (EUROPEAN UNION⁵)

- Promote the exchange of ideas and knowledge about volunteering among all EU member states; this demands no formal steps from the EU.
- Promote a special focus on the role of volunteering in the Open Methods of Coordination in the fields of Employment, Social Affairs and Education.
- Develop programmes and mechanisms for non-profit sector outreach, both within and beyond the EU.
- Facilitate a European exchange of information on good (and bad) practices.
- Develop consultation mechanisms concerning active citizenship.
- Actively continue to encourage and support relationships between corporations and volunteer-involving organizations and local communities.

ACTIONS (NATIONAL AND LOCAL GOVERNMENTS)

- Work together with, and listen to, volunteer-involving organisations.
- Establish more partnerships with non-profit and for-profit organisations.
- Promote the development of partnerships between for-profit and non-profit organisations and communities.
- Facilitate the exchange of knowledge and ideas for volunteer-involving organizations.
- Improve governance by actively inviting volunteer-involving organizations and the corporate sector to participate in the formulation and implementation of policy which impacts on their volunteer activities.

ACTIONS (VOLUNTEER-INVOLVING ORGANISATIONS)

- Actively exchange ideas and (good) practices among EU member states.
- Define and clarify the brokerage role of volunteering infrastructure organisations (volunteer centres, volunteer development agencies) in relation to the corporate sector.

ACTIONS (CORPORATE SECTOR)

- Stimulate more dialogue and partnerships between volunteer-involving organizations and corporate sector.
- Leaders from the business community should play an active role in the stakeholder dialogue for the development of their own (business and living) environments in order to achieve or maintain their competitive edge based upon the local situation.
- Develop CSR strategies in consultation with volunteering infrastructure organisations and local governments.
- Companies should report on their local impact (local CSR accountability).

⁵ Some of the proposed actions could also be supported by the Council of Europe.