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# Who will you vote for? What is their **Volunteer Vision**?

**2024**  
**EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT ELECTIONS**

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# INTRODUCTION

In the European Year of Volunteering 2011 CEV created the **Policy Agenda for Volunteering in Europe (PAVE)** which provides recommendations for a more efficient and effective European policy framework to support and promote volunteers, volunteering, volunteer-involving organisations and their partners.

In 2021 CEV developed the **Blueprint for European Volunteering 2030** that needs to be considered complementary to PAVE. The Blueprint increased focus on the heart and soul of volunteering: what values are being expressed through volunteering; and how volunteering is an expression of democracy and solidarity. This Blueprint is organised around 5 thematic concepts: **Independent and inclusive engagement; New volunteers and methods; Empowerment; Appreciation of contribution; Resources & Coordination**. It serves as guidance to CEV and other stakeholders concerned with volunteering, especially policymakers, regarding the steps that need to be taken for volunteering to reach its true potential.

# VALUABLE CONTRIBUTION



**SOCIETAL CHALLENGES & COMMUNICATION:** Volunteering provides a unique response to societal challenges. Indeed volunteers should not be depicted as “amateurs” playing a side role to “professional” employees but rather a complementary approach adding value as a unique resource.

**BEYOND SERVICE DELIVERY:** Volunteers, volunteer-involving organisations and volunteer infrastructure organisations need to be implicated as key stakeholders in improving society. Policy makers should also understand, not only the practical outputs of volunteering, but also the role that volunteering has to play in social cohesion, in interpersonal relationships, in bringing people together and keeping the communication and dialogue open between ourselves and each other - making European values a reality.

# VALUABLE CONTRIBUTION



**VALIDATION OF LEARNING:** Volunteering provides a unique setting for civic education, is an important space for acquisition of skills and competences.

**RESEARCH AND MEASUREMENT:** The continued lack of coordination at the EU level regarding volunteering programmes, policies and data gathering makes it impossible to have a realistic assessment and measure of the true transformative effect of volunteering in Europe.

**PROPOSAL 2025 EUROPEAN YEAR OF VOLUNTEERS** This would be a fitting tribute to the efforts and impact of volunteers during the COVID19 crisis and the crises caused by the war in Ukraine where people's lives and well being have been in grave danger. The European Year of Volunteers 2025 will shine the spotlight on the essential collective actions of volunteers leading to increased health and well being in Europe and provide a suitable framework to better celebrate and reinforce positive recognition of volunteers in Europe.

# IMPORTANCE OF EMPOWERMENT



**ENABLING:** When information about, and access to, volunteering is increased in volume and quality, citizens can gain a deeper understanding of the importance and power of volunteering, adding to the richness and diversity of the volunteering environment in Europe.

**INCLUSION:** Volunteering makes an enormous contribution to social inclusion but volunteering itself needs to become more accessible to people of different backgrounds, ages and diverse personal situations.

# IMPORTANCE OF EMPOWERMENT



**STABILITY AND SUSTAINABILITY:** The ability to provide quality, long term and sustainable impact as well as appropriate responses to community need requires volunteering organisations to be stable, well-established and well-regarded not only in the community, but also and particularly, by local, regional and national authorities.

**LEGAL AND POLICY FRAMEWORK:** Legal and policy frameworks need to be responsive to the reality of changing volunteer eco systems. Change in volunteering can be particularly seen in the growth of informal initiatives and on-line volunteering where volunteering plays a particular role in giving a voice to excluded groups and/or the means to campaign for a cause and/or the development of mutual aid initiatives.

# SOCIETAL RESOURCES



**INVESTING FOR SOCIAL IMPACT:** Public funding should reflect the true cost of volunteering, the true value of the contribution of volunteers, and the needs of infrastructure organisations.

**COMMUNITY RESILIENCE:** Volunteering is an important part of community resilience. It is crucial therefore for volunteering to be an integral part of the community planning for crisis prevention and response. Volunteering in crisis situations needs special attention, planning and organisation.

**VOLUNTEER MANAGERS AND MENTORS PHYSICAL, MENTAL & SOCIAL SAFETY:** Volunteer infrastructure and Volunteer Involving Organisations should continue investing in the development of the quality of the role and practice of volunteer managers and mentors that will help cultivate thriving and relevant volunteer programmes leading to high impact.



# SOCIETAL RESOURCES



**PHYSICAL, MENTAL & SOCIAL SAFETY:** Funding partnerships for resourcing volunteer insurance are developed and there is progress with insurance providers to develop market products that provide insurance to volunteers regardless of their circumstances and in an inclusive way.

**ONLINE MATCHING SYSTEMS:** It is understood that onlinematching systems are one of the possibilities to give volunteers access to engagement opportunities and there are good examples from volunteering organisations in Europe that ensure the quality, transparency & complementarity of the process.

**EUROPEAN SOLIDARITY CORPS & EUROPEAN VOLUNTEERING POLICY:** The European Solidarity Corps should be a starting point for broader and more comprehensive European policy for volunteering.

# INTERGROUP



The creation of a **European Parliament Intergroup on Volunteering** is necessary to ensure an on-going commitment of the European Parliament towards the further development of a comprehensive EU agenda on volunteering.

A cross-cutting issue as volunteering, needs an official and structured intergroup, in order to have the financial resources to facilitate the activities. The intergroup will be a **crucial cross-party and cross-Committee framework for ensuring the good implementation of the European Solidarity Corps**.



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# OVERALL ENGAGEMENT



**DEMOCRATIC ENGAGEMENT:** Volunteering is an essential component for European democracy and an expression of European Values. The active engagement of citizens both in practical actions and in policy development leading to systemic change is crucial.

**DIGNITY & FREEDOM:** The contribution of volunteers should be accepted as a key part of the team effort and a trusted partner for social cohesion. Volunteers should be seen as actors in their own destiny engaging in participatory democracy alongside representative democracy to improve quality of life for all.

**TRANSPARENT & DEMOCRATIC STATE FUNDING:** Transparent and democratically distributed state funding to democratic and inclusive volunteering initiatives with clear and transparent procedures is essential for quality volunteering to thrive.

# OVERALL ENGAGEMENT



**COLLABORATIVE NETWORKING:** Pre-existing and trustful cross-sector collaboration has proved crucial in enabling communities to respond to existing and new requests for help and assistance.

**LOCAL COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT:** As highlighted in the European Volunteering Capital competition, good cross-sector collaboration at the local level between the public and private sectors (profit and not for profit), for communities of all sizes and situations, has high potential as a driver of value creation that is crucial for sustainable development, as well as for disaster preparedness and risk reduction.

**TRANSNATIONAL COOPERATION & SOLIDARITY:** Around the world, we are witnessing the increase of activism and volunteering crossing borders and connecting people motivated to respond to global challenges such as climate change, migration and COVID-19 pandemic.



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# NEW VOLUNTEERS AND METHODS



**NON-FORMAL VOLUNTEERING:** Digitalization and social networks have facilitated an increased amount of non-formal volunteering activities.

**DIGITALISATION:** Digital technology can be used to ease access to, and increase the quality of volunteering. Digital development has shown the potential to mobilise more participation and support social movements.

**QUALITY FOR NEW WAYS OF ENGAGEMENT:** To ensure quality volunteering experiences for new volunteers they need to be prepared and educated for their roles ensuring at all times that they are helped to understand how volunteering contributes to the common good.

# NEW VOLUNTEERS AND METHODS



**NEW EMPLOYMENT SITUATIONS:** Changing employment regulations and working cultures are leading to a new reality of employment with more flexibility for some, but also more unpredictable and varying paid working hours for others.

**WELFARE & HEALTH POLICY SINERGIES:** People claiming benefits or any other kind of state support such as integration processes for newcomers should not be excluded or prevented from volunteering.

**VOLUNTOURISM:** There is a growth of supply and demand of “Voluntourism” - volunteering opportunities taken up as part of the main purpose of travel or engaged in whilst travelling in the volunteers’ own country or another. Volunteering and tourism are both phenomena motivated by passion and interest in a particular subject and are both something that people generally engage with in their free time.