

7 December 2016

Brussels, Belgium

Speech by Gabriella Civico, CEV Director

**Launch of European Solidarity Corps (ESC)
Skyshtelter Dome Rond Point Schuman Brussels**

5 Years ago, in Warsaw, at the end of EYV 2011, I presented to Commissioner Georgieva "PAVE", the Policy Agenda for Volunteering in Europe, on behalf of the EYV 2011 Alliance of European networks active in volunteering. I am very happy that 5 years later volunteering is once again at the top of the EU political agenda!

Volunteers are the lungs of Europe. Whilst asking for nothing in return, they breathe life, energy and positivity into this wonderful continent, expressing their solidarity with those in need, and with the needs of our environment and communities !

The European Solidarity Corps, and the increased coordination at the EU level on volunteering issues that will be required for it to be a success, will be of benefit to all volunteers and volunteer organisations in Europe. More importantly, the European Solidarity Corps will contribute to giving due recognition to the contributions of volunteers of all ages across the EU and help us understand better the policy needs in order to make the most of the vast resource.

As it says in the Policy Agenda for Volunteering in Europe:

"The spirit of volunteering runs deeper than financial cuts and economic hardship and generates social capital that while almost impossible to accurately measure is an intrinsic and necessary aspect of European life. Times of hardship provide increasing occasions for citizens to demonstrate their selflessness, acting in solidarity with one another. The widespread wish to be active citizens in society rather than passive consumers is clearly demonstrated through the diversity of people who volunteer their time and expertise when and where it is needed."

We are thankful that, through the development of volunteering opportunities in the framework of the European Solidarity Corps, even more citizens will be able to express their solidarity with others through volunteering. At CEV we are ready to work with EU institutions, volunteer organisations, all of you, to provide meaningful volunteering opportunities, contributing to genuine need and expressing our European values in the best way we know how!

Thank you.