

# VOLEUNTEER VISION

[thistimeimvoting.eu](http://thistimeimvoting.eu)

Toolkit for CEV members and other Volunteer-Involving Organisations to discover and develop the European Parliament candidates' opinions on volunteering for 2019 EP Election, with reference to the Policy Agenda on Volunteering in Europe (PAVE) & the "Helping Hands EYV 2011 5-Year Review" and the 5R Policy Priorities.

## ✓ Who will you vote for?

## ✓ What is their Volunteer Vision?



Real Value



Regulatory Framework



Recognition



Resources



Refugees

Recent times have shown the fact that volunteers are the backbone to the support being offered to people seeking sanctuary in Europe. It is a current example, and visible symbol, of the importance of volunteers and the way that they embody European values, contribute to resilience, and are available to offer flexible and pragmatic solutions to shared challenges.

Europe is reminded through this situation that if the potential of these volunteer Helping Hands to offer HOPE for Europe is to be maximised, then there needs to be the organisational infrastructure available to welcome, recognise and value them. Only in this way will enough, suitable, quality volunteering experiences, with the capability to harness their enthusiasm, commitment and energy, be provided. Implementing CEV's '5R' policy priorities will bring Europe closer to this goal of the enabling environment for volunteering in Europe that citizens want - and Europe deserves!

For this to be a reality the European Union needs Members of the European Parliament with a clear and supportive Volunteer Vision!

# VALUE



## Volunteering has a value for:

**The evidence base for volunteering policies should be improved whereby the contribution of volunteering to the economy and social cohesion and convergence be measured and better understood.**

- ✓ Individuals, communities, the economy and society at large as one of the most visible expressions of solidarity.
- ✓ The promotion and facilitation of social inclusion, building social capital and producing a transformative effect on society.
- ✓ The development of a thriving civil society that can offer creative and innovative solutions to common challenges.
- ✓ Economic growth and as such deserves specific and targeted measurement in terms of both economic and social capital.

## Volunteer Measurement

Volunteering in the EU has reached a level of development that not only allows for, but also requires, comparable qualitative and quantitative indicators for volunteering, and regular data gathering in order to monitor the size, scope, dynamics, impact and value of volunteering in all its form.

The full potential of volunteering as a promoter of solidarity, facilitator of social inclusion, and creator of social capital, cannot be reached in the absence of appropriate measurement of volunteering [at all levels and by appropriate institutions at the European level (e.g. EUROSTAT) and the member state level.

## Value of Corporate Social Responsibility and Volunteering

Employee volunteering is a core component of Corporate Social Responsibility and we ask for appropriate consideration of volunteering as a CSR tool in all policies related to CSR at EU and member state levels

## Value of Research

In-depth qualitative research is needed to better understand the impact of volunteering on individuals, community, and society at large and encourage universities and research institutes Europe-wide to engage in long-term research projects with the volunteer sector and appropriate European institutions.

Although there is already some valuable knowledge on volunteering it is not structured or easily available. We encourage the EU to invest in a European Knowledge Institute on Volunteering that would gather, structure and make widely available the existing knowledge and to add to that carry out systematic research on volunteering. In such as way to act as a repository of good practice and knowledge on volunteering, thus serving as a reference focal point for evidence-based policy decision at EU and member state levels

# INFRASTRUCTURE



**The evidence base for volunteering Europe still requires a co-ordinated volunteering policy with a single contact point in the EU institutions.**

**Local volunteering strategies need to be rewarded when they are well developed in line with PAVE recommendations, and supported to improve when they are not in order to continue to ensure quality volunteering standards.**

## Volunteering infrastructure should:

- ✓ Be recognised as part of an enabling environment for volunteering.
- ✓ Involve appropriate and necessary support mechanisms for volunteers and volunteer involving organisations, including appropriate and sustainable funding.
- ✓ Provide coherent and cross-cutting policy approaches that reduce barriers to volunteering and involve the development of appropriate frameworks for volunteers and volunteer involving organisations, which include recognising their rights and responsibilities.

## Supporting Volunteering

Volunteering is a strong component of a successful European Pillar of Social Rights and its contribution will be meaningful and successful only if appropriate funding is secured for the core volunteering infrastructure across Europe (i.e. organisations matching the supply and demand of volunteers, creating organised volunteering opportunities based on local needs and expertise and facilitating engagement of citizen groups for solving a common problem etc.)

Sustainable funding for volunteering infrastructure is, and should be seen, by all institutions at EU and member state levels as strategic long term investments, appropriate time-span should be allowed to measure impact and return on investment, and the amount and range of funding programmes and mechanisms for volunteering should be improved.

## Co-ordination between the EU Institutions

The size of the volunteer movement across Europe and the impact of volunteering in a variety of strategic fields (such as education, employability, social inclusion, youth, environment etc.) substantiates the inclusion of volunteering among the EU policy fields, using the Open Method of Co-ordination (OMC).

The full potential of volunteering as a key resource for the European Pillar of Social Rights can only be reached through a co-ordinated and pro-active approach towards volunteering policy, achievable through the establishment of a permanent volunteering unit / contact point within the European Commission complemented by the required policy structures in the other EU institutions and corresponding structures at member state level.

# SKILLS



**The learning achieved by volunteers needs to be properly recognised and accredited when desired.**

**The roadmap for the implementation of the recommendation on the recognition and validation of non-formal and informal learning should be fully implemented.**

- ✓ Volunteering is an outstanding source of learning and a contributor to personal and professional development.
- ✓ It is important to recognise volunteering as a source of non-formal and informal learning, and develop European tools that will allow for better recognition and validation of learning achieved whilst volunteering.

## Recognition of skills acquired through volunteering

The role of volunteering in fostering development of skills and competences needed within a knowledge-based society and in contributing to employability should be acknowledged. Appropriate tools should be developed at the European level to facilitate and encourage citizens who have acquired skills and competencies through volunteering to be able to demonstrate that fact.

## Validation of non-formal and informal learning

Volunteering provides informal and non-formal learning opportunities and is therefore a crucial instrument in the life-long learning strategy within the EU. The Recommendation on the Validation of informal and Non-Formal learning should be fully implemented as soon as possible and appropriately connected with the EQF. Providers of informal and non-formal learning opportunities, particularly non-state actors including civil society and volunteering organisations and associations should be better engaged as interested and expert stakeholders in its development and implementation. The European Credit Transfer Accumulation System should incorporate a standard mechanism for recognizing learning achieved through volunteering.

## Europass

Europass should incorporate a specific element to recognize learning and skills acquired through volunteering.

# INTERGROUP

**Candidate MEPs are encouraged to complete the pledge for a 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 & Voluntary Service (European Solidarity Corps).

I (name) .....  
MEP candidate for .....  
in the event of my election in the 2019 European Parliament elections, commit to supporting and promoting the establishment of an EP intergroup on volunteering.

Signed:

Contact Details

Telephone:

Stamp:

Email: .....

Social media: .....

Date and place:

.....  
.....

# OVOLUNTEERING ERSEAS

## EU Aid Volunteers

We Care, We Act



**EUROPEAN  
SOLIDARITY  
CORPS**

- ✓ Cross-Border volunteering is an important opportunity available to young people in Europe that is supported by European programmes, most strongly by the newly established European Solidarity & Voluntary Service that builds on the previous experience of EVS.
- ✓ Volunteering plays a major role in adding a distinctive solidarity dimension to humanitarian aid and emergency response as it does to tackling development and peace building matters, contributing to capacity building in the countries of deployment and on promoting local volunteering.

### European Solidarity and Voluntary Service (European Solidarity Corps)

The short and longer term full time voluntary service experiences, as well as the part-time, local solidarity projects, with a clear European added value, based on the efforts of volunteers are an important part of this new programme. Taking place in a not-for-profit context with a clear impact on local community needs, as well as contributing to the personal and learning development of the volunteers concerned, the volunteering opportunities funded under the scheme should adhere to quality volunteering principles and ensure that the necessary pre and post placement support is provided. The placements should ideally take place in initiatives that already involve local volunteers in order to further increase the outreach and impact. The programme design should take account of the fact that the experience in another country should realise its full potential as a gateway to further engagement as a volunteer in the country of origin or overseas.

The incorporation of the opportunities previously offered under the [EU Aid Volunteers](#) into the ESC initiative is an excellent way to strengthen the sense of belonging of citizens to the European Union. With inclusive and accessible recruitment and selection procedures and appropriate financial support, even more citizens from all EU states will be able to take part in the programme. Volunteering is a powerful means to build local capacity in the countries outside of Europe where ESC volunteers will be deployed and we urge future funded projects to include this element and to enable volunteering agencies from all EU states to be able to contribute in the continued functioning of the initiative. We also ask for a strengthened focus on the potential of Employee Volunteers either as deployed volunteers or as online volunteers or providing support to participating organisations in the EU. If online volunteering will continue to remain a possibility then capacities in online volunteering should be included as part of the quality label criteria. Clear guidelines for good practice online volunteering should be developed for this purpose.

# NEW EU PROGRAMMES



**Volunteering should not be a fall-back for public spending cuts and volunteers and their organisations, including infrastructure organisations providing advice, support and training for volunteering, deserve to be properly funded and supported.**

## Europe for Citizens 2020 +

Volunteering should continue to be included as a priority within Europe for Citizens and/ or its successor programme. Volunteering is a crucial element of the expression of European values and enables citizens to come together to show solidarity as active citizens who are concerned about the environment and well-being of others. European funding in this context should serve to demonstrate the added value of a thriving civil society that when co-funded with public funds is better able to maintain its independence and focus on its true goals and mission as a contribution to the common good.

## Erasmus+ 2020 +

The boosted Erasmus+ programme post 2020 should continue to support and fund volunteering. Life-long learning programmes that enable cross-border mobility of volunteers of all ages should be reinstated and it should be ensured that volunteer organisations that are not registered as educational organisations can access funding and that non-paid staff members i.e. volunteers can participate. The systemic incorporation of local volunteering as an essential element of Erasmus Student overseas placements should be properly explored.

## European Solidarity Corps

This new combined volunteering programme, incorporating opportunities previously offered under European Voluntary Service and EU Aid Volunteers, in addition to some new possibilities to express solidarity through volunteering with the support of EU funding, should be the epicentre of co-ordinated volunteering policies and programmes across the work of the EU institutions. It should support different models of volunteering including local, part-time and free time volunteering, as well as short and longer term full time voluntary service experiences. The volunteering should be undertaken in a not-for-profit context with a clear impact on local community needs, as well as contributing to the personal and learning development of the volunteers concerned. Opportunities funded under the scheme should adhere to quality volunteering principles and should take place in initiatives that already involve local volunteers in order to further increase the outreach and impact. A clear focus on the post-activity legacy should be developed in order to ensure that participation in these programmes has the best chance of leading to a stronger solidarity culture and further volunteering commitments for the citizens concerned. In order to support this objective, and to ensure the widest possible take-up of the opportunities offered under this new integrated programme aiming to support and promote solidarity and volunteering, co-funding for the operating costs of European networks with the main aim to support and promote solidarity and volunteering, such as the European Volunteer Centre (CEV), should be provided.

- ✓ The proposed frameworks for new EU programmes as part of the post 2020 MFF should recognise the important role that volunteering plays in building social and human capital, delivering services, promoting active citizenship, and achieving social cohesion.
- ✓ New EU programmes need to provide opportunities to Europeans of all ages to participate in the life of their community and to express their solidarity through volunteering and should serve to equip civil society organisations in EU and Accession countries with the means to properly support and engage volunteers especially in those countries suffering from 'shrinking civic space'.
- ✓ The possibility for volunteer time to co-fund European grants should be fully exploited in order that even greater impact can be achieved through more organisations being able to access the opportunities offered by the EU funding programmes.



Europe  
for Citizens



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European elections

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