



## **A statement on the eve of the International Volunteer Day 2023**

### **Make the change - Be a Volunteer!**

Greetings to all volunteers and those who will become volunteers!

My name is Lidija Pavić-Rogošić, director of ODRAZ-Sustainable community development from Croatia and a member of the European Economic and Social Committee (EESC). In both of these roles, I promote volunteering together with my colleagues. I am also a member of the Supervisory body of the Croatian Volunteer Development Centre.

I have been volunteering for many years, starting more seriously in my local community when I saw the need to organise activities for young people. So I started, I found like-minded young people and we organised a series of activities for children and youth. Some of them are also volunteers today. For me, it is about intrinsic motivation, not only related to my curiosity, desire for knowledge and personal development, but also to try to alleviate problem or help other human beings. The part of that motivation comes from my personal upbringing and social environment. Therefore we need to transfer our experience and knowledge to young people, showing them benefits - beauty and challenges - of being volunteer. We also have to advocate and fight to get support and infrastructure in local communities to make it easier for young people, but also for all other age groups, to actively get involved in volunteer activities.

For the last ten years, I have been volunteering in an association that supports women and girls. My last volunteer activity was to design and implement a project supporting women entrepreneurs in earthquake-affected region, for which we won one European award. Working in ODRAZ, a civil society organisation that was established by me and my colleagues, we often volunteer for different purposes (but that goes without saying being active in civil society).

# EUROPEAN VOLUNTEERING AMBASSADOR 2023

LIDIJA  
PAVIĆ-ROGOŠIĆ



I would also like to emphasise the work of European Economic and Social Committee (EESC), which brings together representatives of organised civil society from all EU countries. Among other things, we adopted an Opinion on volunteering and have organised a whole series of events, like the conference on volunteering last year in Gdańsk, where CEV actively participated, as well. We also called on the EU to declare 2025 the "European Year of Volunteers". I personally strongly support that idea.

This year the Centre for European Volunteering chose me as European Volunteering Ambassador, therefore I would like to thank for that recognition.

From my past experience I have learned that in local communities solidarity has existed, which is connected to trust, developed bonds and networks among people, within and outside the community. This is our almost biological/social human need. Where social capital is strong, there are also collective actions. It is a wealth that sustains us and should be built and preserved.

At the end, I would like to remind ourselves why is volunteering important? Volunteering is important because it helps worthy causes, people in need and the wider community.

Volunteering on a personal level provides a healthy boost to our self-confidence, self-esteem and life satisfaction. We do good for others and the community, which gives us a sense of purpose. The role of a volunteer also gives a sense of pride and identity. If you are already a volunteer, then you know what the benefits are. If you are not volunteering yet, join many people who are volunteering all over the world! The areas in which you can volunteer are really wide, get involved in those activities that are close to your heart and enjoy!

We can together help and inspire others to leave their comfort zone and get over the fear zone, to enjoy the growth zone, where they can find their purpose, set new goals and live their dreams of a better world with other volunteers.



**Let's work together to make the  
European Year of Volunteers 2025 a reality!**

*Lidija Pavić-Rogošić*