

Oeiras European Volunteering Capital Candidate 2023 Jury Feedback | Brussels, 5 December 2021

The Municipality of Oeiras in Portugal demonstrates a very well-developed recognition system for both volunteers and volunteering organisations. Volunteers have access to activities and initiatives organised by the municipality, which also provides them with training delivered by a suitably prepared volunteer organisation and validated by certificates. **The municipality supports organisations that promote skills development through volunteering in accordance with its regulation for receiving access to support.**

The instruments it provides to promote and ensure quality volunteering are varied and well incorporated in municipality activities. They include an online volunteer platform and training for volunteers and organisations. The municipality uses the data presented in the volunteer organisations' annual reports to measure the value of volunteering and its social impact. **Oeiras demonstrates a significant network of stakeholders involved both in the promotion and recognition of volunteering efforts in the municipality.** Volunteering in the community is perceived as a form of civic engagement that not only enhances the delivery of services but also promotes the values that underpin social cohesion and well-being. **Greater promotion and recognition of volunteering is achieved through the participatory budget system applied in the municipality.** In general, **the application demonstrates the municipality's profound understanding and commitment to the real value of volunteering.**

The municipality clearly ensures an enabling environment for volunteering by providing infrastructure, support and networks for volunteers and volunteer organisations. A good example of this is the Oeiras' Social Network which encourages public-sector bodies, solidarity institutions and other organisations to promote local social development. The presence of volunteer organisations within this network shows the **transparency and integrity of shared values**.

Although there are various financial instruments to support those organisations and institutions promoting volunteering, as well as for developing projects making a strong social impact on the communities they address, co-funding from volunteer time is not taken into account. The municipality has put in place criteria and mechanisms for assessing applications for funding received from different volunteer organisations and institutions but more information about how transparency and accountability are assured would have been beneficial. **The Oeiras Solidária programme is a good example of a corporate social responsibility initiative that promotes volunteering among employees.**

The information provided on social inclusion issues is too general. There are no concrete examples of initiatives/programmes focused both on encouraging volunteering among migrants and other vulnerable groups and on supporting volunteering organisations in their efforts with these target groups. Although there have been some initiatives in the field, they are not presented clearly enough to demonstrate real impact across the target groups. There is also a lack of support for new forms of volunteering initiatives, such as informal groups or online volunteering. **The jury sees the municipality's intention to apply for the ESC Quality Label as a positive step towards developing and engaging with the EU's volunteering policies.**

The strategy for the future growth of volunteering is very well prepared and structured with an ambitious and coherent programme that is presented clearly. However, more information could have been provided about the procedures/steps in the delivery of the programme.

About the competition

CEV launched the **European Volunteering Capital Competition to strengthen, inspire and celebrate volunteering** and the impact made by volunteers at the local level by giving recognition to municipalities that support and strengthen volunteering, especially through partnerships with stakeholders from different sectors such as volunteer centres, volunteer-involving organisations and the for-profit sector. The judging criteria are the recommendations in the Policy Agenda for Volunteering in Europe (PAVE), CEV's 5R policy recommendations and the planned engagement with the European Solidarity Corps.

The awarded municipality is chosen from the candidates by an **international jury** of key personalities connected with volunteering, representing civil society, the private, for-profit sector, as well as the EU institutions: Michel Lefranc (CEV Board), Jan Verdée (CEV Board), Lena Karnalova (CEV Board), George Thomson (CEV Board), Kieran McCarthy (Cork City Councillor & EU Committee of the Regions member), Krzysztof Pater (EESC Rapporteur on "Volunteers . Building the Future of Europe"), Predrag Fred Matic (MEP), Barbara Eglitis (Program officer SALTO European Solidarity Corps), Rares Craiu (Member of the

Bureau of the Conference of INGOs, Council of Europe), Begona Barbera Garcia (Iberdrola Social Projects Manager, Employee Volunteering European Network (EVEN)), Monica Lallai (Business Development for Religious and Third Sector/Non Profit Organizations Business Unit. Cattolica Assicurazioni Spa), Sawsan Chebli (Berlin State Secretary for Civic and International Affairs).

The previous winners are: Gdansk 2022 - Berlin 2021- Padova 2020 - Košice 2019 - Aarhus 2018 - Sligo 2017 London - 2016 Lisbon - 2015 and Barcelona- 2014.

The Centre for European Volunteering (CEV) is the European network of over 60 organisations dedicated to the promotion of, and support to, volunteers and volunteering in Europe at European, national or regional level. Through our network we work together to ensure that: the value of quality volunteering as an expression of Solidarity and European values is understood, supported and celebrated; policies & programmes, together with the European social environment, inspires, encourages and supports quality European Volunteering; Individuals and organisations that are active in the volunteering and civil society sphere share, learn and are inspired from one another in the framework of CEV . In this way we reach out to the many thousands of volunteers and volunteer organisations in Europe as a source of support bringing the European dimension to their work.