



CEV Policy Statement : Standing for Peace and Solidarity

(Approved by the CEV General Assembly 7 March 2022)

Strengthening, Inspiring and Celebrating
VOLUNTEERING & SOLIDARITY since 1992



CEV expresses our solidarity with all those suffering from the war in Ukraine and by any other armed conflict in the world, and with the volunteers and all those acting to stand against violence and offer support and refuge.

We honour all the volunteers in the front line of humanitarian support within and outside Ukraine who are showing human compassion & love to those who are suffering.

You represent the very best in the volunteering spirit, and solidarity.

Our deep commitment to democracy and freedom requires us to state our belief that volunteering requires a democratic society and a full democratic Europe everywhere.

The fundamental values of the Council of Europe and the European Union are peace, human rights, democracy, the rule of law and the well-being of people, and as such represent our guiding lights in volunteer engagement.

We call on the international community to ensure support to organisations and volunteers in first lines of humanitarian response and in the ongoing and long term support that will be needed.

We call for increased efforts to find solutions for a lasting peace that will protect lives and ensure dignity and respect for human rights for all those affected. Indifference is never an option.

CEV notes that:

1. Volunteers of all ages and backgrounds are playing a crucial role in alleviating this suffering in Ukraine as well as in neighbouring states and other countries in Europe that are providing refuge to displaced people. Volunteers across the world are standing for peace, opposing violence and violation of human rights, fighting oppression.
2. Volunteers are active in providing basic needs to Ukrainian citizens displaced and/or injured by the violence, supporting people in Ukraine with their practical, medical and psychological needs. Volunteers donate their own time, skills and other resources without expectation of personal gain.
3. In places where cross-sector collaboration was already established, and the volunteering infrastructure and volunteer-involving organisations are properly supported in their roles by the public authorities, the ability to meet the needs of refugees has been more agile and comprehensive.
4. Civil society organisations are operating at maximum capacity to meet needs and are not able to engage all those people who are willing to volunteer at this time.
5. The flexibility that many associations have been able to exercise in adapting their regular activities to meet emerging needs is a testament to the commitment, sense of solidarity and "professional" competence by everyone involved.
6. Informal initiatives led by volunteers outside of established structures are playing an important and complementary role.
7. Monitoring of the situation in Ukraine and neighbouring countries is of critical importance in order for CEV and other stakeholders to be able to take appropriate actions in the future in supporting the Ukrainian people.

CEV asks and hopes for:

1. More volunteering inspired and powered by fundamental values of peace, justice and solidarity, promoting and protecting nonviolence, human rights and democracy.
2. European policymakers recognise the importance of volunteers for the protection of EU values and for the quality of our response during this crisis and find policy relevant ways to acknowledge the role that volunteers have played, are playing and will play in making our society more humane, resilient and sustainable.
3. Public authorities at all levels across Europe look to the good examples of others as regards support for volunteers and volunteering, and take the Blueprint for European Volunteering 2030 as a main guidance on how to support volunteers and volunteering going forward.
4. The protection of the safety, health and well-being of volunteers is important as volunteers will be needed just as much even when the immediate crisis is over.
5. The European Union and the Council of Europe make more of an effort to support all volunteering and enable civil society organisations to harness the immense outpouring of willingness to act in solidarity through volunteering that this crisis has once again highlighted.
6. The European Union institutions, the Member States and the Council of Europe and its members, should not exploit volunteering or instrumentalise it, and governments should not give incorrect guidance for volunteering, nor take away initiatives from the organisations that are the true experts in the field.
7. The European Union institutions, the Member States and the Council of Europe and its members, help keep volunteering ethical and values based keeping a clear distinction between volunteering and paid work.
8. Volunteers are also supported in engaging with local communities that are host to refugees from Ukraine to ensure that inclusion and social needs are also addressed as well as immediate basic needs.