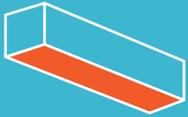




EUROPEAN VOLUNTEER CENTRE

2



CHAPTER

4



RO

VOLUNTEERING  
INFRASTRUCTURE  
IN EUROPE

M

A

N

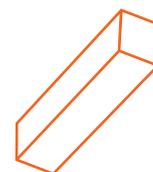


I

A

AUTHOR  
Cristina Rigman,  
VOLUM Federation -  
The Federation of  
Organisations  
Supporting the  
Development of  
Volunteering in  
Romania





# 1. VOLUNTEERING INFRASTRUCTURE CONCEPT DEFINITION

Volunteering infrastructure is a rather new concept in Romania and its use is restricted currently to those directly involved in the development of volunteering in the country. However, elements of volunteering infrastructure existed for quite some time in Romania, although they are not necessarily perceived as being part of the volunteering infrastructure. No formal definition or discussion has been initiated so far in Romania with regards to what volunteering infrastructure is, what are its main roles and functions and what are its main components.

The national resource centre for volunteering, *Pro Vobis*, has been using the term volunteering infrastructure in defining one of its strategic directions since 2007. The actions included under this label referred to the development of local volunteer centres, the development of a national web portal on volunteering, and the facilitation of networking among volunteer centres and volunteer-involving organisations. The concept gained momentum during 2010 when a new actor emerged in the volunteering landscape in Romania, *Federatia VOLUM – Federatia Organizatiilor care Sprijina Dezvoltarea Voluntariatului in Romania* (VOLUM Federation – the Federation of Organisations Supporting the Development of Volunteering), the national umbrella body for volunteer centres and volunteer-involving organisations in the country. Following its legal registration in December 2010, VOLUM Federation became a lead actor in promoting the concept of volunteering infrastructure, especially during the activities implemented to celebrate the European Year of Volunteering (EYV) 2011 in Romania.

Considering the discussions and debates held during recent years around the concept of volunteering infrastructure in Romania, we can advance the following definition: volunteering infrastructure includes a set of resources and a combination of mobilising actors and networks that provide a particular sense of empowerment of volunteers and volunteering organisations and function according to voluntarily assumed self-regulatory principles.

The resources included refer to enabling legal frameworks, appropriate financial support mechanisms at all levels, access to appropriate logistics (such as office space, communication facilities, skilled staff etc.) and proper media coverage of volunteering as a social movement. The mobilisation actors and networks include the volunteer involving organisations and institutions that provide organised volunteering opportunities for all the people interested in getting involved as volunteers and their respective networks that facilitate cooperation and exchange of good practices.

The sense of empowerment that the resources and mobilisation actors provide together refers to a shared understanding of volunteering within society and the appropriate public recognition of the value of volunteering for the individual and the society, alongside a positive social valorisation of volunteers and volunteering and a reasonable level of social responsibility at both individual and corporate levels. The self-regulatory principles are codes of ethics and good practice standards voluntarily assumed by all mobilisation actors, established volunteer management processes aimed at ensuring quality volunteering experiences for volunteers and well established monitoring and evaluation tools for regular assessment of the value and impact of volunteering in the country.

### Components of volunteering infrastructure

Resources	Enabling legal framework (nationally and at the European level)
	Appropriate financial support mechanisms in place
	Access to appropriate logistics (office space, skilled staff, communications etc.)
	Proper media coverage of volunteer action
Sense of empowerment	Shared understanding of volunteering within the society
	Recognition of the value of volunteer work
	Positive social valorisation of volunteer involvement
	Reasonable levels of social responsibility at individual and corporate levels
Mobilisation actors / Networks	Volunteer centres (local, regional, national)
	Affiliation with networks of volunteer centres (regional, national, international)
	Volunteer involving organisations and/or volunteer involving public institutions
	Established recruitment and/or recognition events
Self-regulatory Principles	Codes of conduct for volunteer-involving actors
	Principles of good practice in working with volunteers
	Established volunteer management process (training, principles, tools etc.)
	Monitoring and evaluation tools for assessing the volunteer management process and the volunteer work

Major functions that the volunteering infrastructure needs to fulfil include providing regular organised and quality volunteering opportunities for all the people who want to get involved as volunteers, ensure the existence, functioning and regular updating of an enabling regulatory framework for volunteering, providing proper guidance to volunteering stakeholders and coordinating their efforts and actions for achieving a sustainable development of volunteering in the country, ensuring regular nationwide volunteering promotion events, implementing adequate public recognition events aimed at raising the profile of volunteers and volunteering, developing and implementing adequate self-regulatory tools and mechanisms that ensure quality of volunteering, recognition of volunteering and impact of volunteering.

## 2. VOLUNTEERING LANDSCAPE

One of the issues faced by volunteering in Romania is providing a reliable answer to the question “How many volunteers are in Romania?” and the answer is far from being straightforward. The simplest answer would be 20% of the population as indicated by the Eurobarometer no 73<sup>1</sup> from November 2010. According to this survey approximately 4 million Romanians declared they had volunteered during the previous twelve months. Despite the trust in the methodology of the survey and the reliability and professionalism of its authors its reliability can be doubted. Such doubts stem from the terminological tangle surrounding volunteering in Romania. It is very difficult to clearly state what exactly volunteering means in Romania and even more difficult to picture how it is represented in the minds of Romanians. When one declares to have been involved in volunteering activities, the activity reported as volunteering can range from being a member in an association to participating in an awareness raising campaign, from helping a person in need or helping your neighbour to giving money to the beggar at the corner of the street or in front of the church.

---

*The so called “patriotic work” was a compulsory activity during the communist regime, imposed to all citizens. Participation was strictly monitored by the representatives of the Communist party and consequences for not attending were severe.*

---

The definition problems come from a variety of sources. First, the Romanian Law on Volunteering (Law 195/2001) defines volunteering as “the public interest activity carried out of free will by any individual, for the benefit of others, without any financial benefit.” The law only refers to the volunteering activities carried out in an organised setting, namely in the frame of a legal non-profit entity or public institution. This is very limiting since informal volunteering activities are left out. However, survey respondents would report they have been volunteering even if they carry out informal volunteering outside the coverage of the law. Second, the misuse of the term volunteer in the public discourse of various state actors increases the confusion. Laws on the “voluntary military service” state that the “volunteer soldiers will receive a monthly payment” for their contracted services, thus contradicting the definition cited above and increasing the confusion as the soldiers are actually employed under a work contract, but the decision to join the army as an employee is a voluntary (e.g. free will) one<sup>2</sup>.

The Romanian Language Dictionary<sup>3</sup> explains the term volunteer as follows: I. about people: acting out of own free will; about actions: without constraint, based on free will, conscious; II. Person joining the army out of free will or performing a service willingly and unselfishly. Only the first definition somehow touches the meaning of volunteering as approached by this chapter, but it refers exclusively to the free will component of volunteering, leaving out other defining features such as the public benefit or the absence of remuneration.

1. Eurobarometer no. 73, vol. 2, November 2010. Available at [http://ec.europa.eu/public\\_opinion/archives/eb/eb73/eb73\\_vol2\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/public_opinion/archives/eb/eb73/eb73_vol2_en.pdf)

2. Law no. 384/2006 regarding the status of voluntary soldiers. Available at: [http://www.dreptonline.ro/legislatie/statut\\_soldati\\_gradati\\_voluntari.php](http://www.dreptonline.ro/legislatie/statut_soldati_gradati_voluntari.php)

3. Available at <http://dexonline.ro/search.php?cuv=voluntar>.

Thirdly, the communist legacy of the former compulsory “*patriotic work*”<sup>4</sup> is still shading the true meaning of the term volunteer. Fourthly, the terms volunteer and member in an association have a surprisingly unclear relationship, varying from mutual exclusion to complete overlapping, making it very hard to clarify what exactly being a volunteer means in Romania. The terminological tangle surrounding the terms volunteer/voluntary is far from being solved despite this however, the movement continues and benefits from constant development.

A 2007 study<sup>5</sup> on the state of the volunteering field in Romania allows us to draw the profile of the Romanian volunteers. There are slightly more female volunteers than male volunteers. They are mostly young, 71.4% being aged between 19 and 25, 8.1% between 26 and 35, and less than 4% in the other age groups, except for the teenage group with 9.3%. Volunteers are either highly educated or still in the educational system. Over half have already completed high school and 21.5% have already completed the university studies, and 5.4% have obtained their post graduate diplomas. Another 14.4% are still in school at various levels, while only 4.2% have not graduated high school. 34% of the volunteers are employed either full time or part time, while 58.8% are currently pupils or students, and only 3.7% are retirees.



There are three potential explanations for the high percentage of young and highly educated volunteers. Firstly, the communist legacy still influences the way people who experienced the compulsory work look at volunteering, while younger people have limited or no memory at all regarding the compulsory work. Secondly, the overwhelming majority of volunteering opportunities are suitable for dynamic people; most of the times require computer literacy or foreign language skills which are mostly found in the younger cohorts. Thirdly, volunteering involving organisations are located mostly in the urban area. The most active associative life can be found in large university cities, making thus volunteering opportunities available to a given category of individuals most probably young and educated. Organisations make efforts to increase the rate of adult and elderly volunteering, but the overwhelming majority goes for the skilled young volunteers, easily accessible and very dynamic. However, more recent data from 2010 provided by the Civil Society Development Foundation<sup>6</sup> shows that the most active age group in volunteering starts to slowly shift from the 15 to 25 year olds towards 25 to 35 year olds, while volunteering among the elderly starts to grow especially around church. In terms of types of activities volunteers get involved in, the top activity performed by volunteers is the direct work with beneficiaries of various kinds (29.7%) followed by the organisation of events (15.9%), management or coordination of activities (12%), communications/public relations activities (11.8%), public awareness campaigns (7.62%), office management (6.15%), and document drafting (5.16%).

Public perception of volunteering in Romania is quite difficult to assess. A few assertions can be made however, based on relevant practical experiences from the field. Volunteering is not high

4. The so called “patriotic work” was a compulsory type of activity during the communist regime, imposed to all categories of citizens. For example, every September the start of school year was marked by two weeks of “practice in agriculture” where all pupils were taken with their teachers to do works such as harvesting corn, potatoes or apples. Same type of actions was imposed to workers in factories. In addition, every citizen had to perform a certain amount of work for the community within ones neighbourhood. Participation was compulsory and strictly monitored by the representatives of the Communist party and consequences for not attending could be severe.

5. The study “Volunteering in Romania – The State of the Field” was part of a project implemented by Pro Vobis National Volunteer Center in 2007 and financed by United States Agency for International Development and World Learning through the Romanian Civil Society Strengthening Program. The research was conducted by the Center for Democracy Study at Babes-Bolyai University in Cluj-Napoca during May-July 2007. The study consisted of an organizational sample and a volunteer sample. Overall there were 427 volunteers and 62 NGOs from 12 cities across Romania responding to questionnaires. Data analysis has been performed by the author. The sample is not representative and the findings cannot be generalized. However, the results provide descriptive information on the profile of volunteers in Romania quite accurately.

6. Civil Society Development Foundation. 2010. „România 2010. Sectorul neguvernamental – profil, tendințe, provocări” [Romania 2010. The Nongovernmental Sector – Profile, Trends, Challenges]. Available at: [http://www.fdsc.ro/library/conferinta%20vio%207%20oct/Romania%202010\\_Sectorul%20neguvernamental1.pdf](http://www.fdsc.ro/library/conferinta%20vio%207%20oct/Romania%202010_Sectorul%20neguvernamental1.pdf)

on the decision-makers' agenda in Romania. A very clear indicator of this is the fact that no high level officials have participated in the official events of the European Year of Volunteering 2011 in Romania, but only second or even third level public employees. This is despite significant efforts by the organisers to secure the presence of a minister to the opening and the closing conferences of the EYV 2011 in Romania. The Media covers volunteering sporadically. Most coverage is done by local or regional media and national media very seldom features volunteering in prime time. Some individual or sponsored corporate efforts has led to national media broadcasting volunteering-related TV shows, but their duration was short and coverage determined by either the individual champion (always a well known public figure) or as long as the corporate sponsorship was secured<sup>7</sup>.

### 3. LEGAL FRAMEWORK FOR VOLUNTEERING AND ITS IMPLEMENTATION

Volunteering in Romania is governed by a set of laws and regulations. The most important piece of legislation is the framework law adopted in 2001, Law on Volunteering no. 195. Since its adoption, the law has been changed in 2002 and 2006, but changes have not been significant. The law was adopted in the light of Romania's closeness to the European Union (EU) and the need for a regulatory framework to govern the participation of Romania in the Youth Programme of the EU and more specifically for international exchanges of young volunteers. This context is very weighty in the text of the law which refers explicitly and repeatedly to young volunteers. Other inconsistencies of the law refer to its unclear provisions related to how volunteering activity should be monitored and reported and how can volunteering be supported by the public authorities at all levels. Despite its problems, the law has marked an important progress in the development of volunteering in Romania as it allowed volunteer organisations to change their discourse aimed at promoting volunteering and have a very significant argument for the Romanian public discourse, the very existence of the law. Volunteering had thus entered into legality and it became legitimate to be organised, promoted, and to request support for its further development. One other extremely important effect of the existence of a law on volunteering was the opening of public institutions such as schools, hospitals, museums etc. towards involving volunteers.

---

From 2001, volunteering has entered legality and it has become legitimate to be organised, promoted, and to request support for its further development.

---

In addition to this framework law, there are other pieces of legislation touching upon volunteering. These regulations are mainly concerned with social protection, provision of social services, provision of home care for the elderly, civil protection and disaster relief, environment and consumer protection, voluntary military personnel. The recently adopted Law on National Education<sup>8</sup> No. 1/2011 gives universities the possibilities to grant transferable credits to students participating in volunteering activities. These aspects are to be regulated by each institutions, in its "University Charter". Other sets of regulations refer mostly to issues generally related to the wider civil society and include norms for consultation with civil society, transparency of decision making processes, and funding for civil society from public



7. One such example is the TV show "Profession: Volunteer" sponsored by the Vodafone Foundation and broadcasted in 2010. The impact of this show is disputable, however, because the program is based on a misuse of the concept volunteer. The Vodafone Foundation chooses specialists from companies and pays their salary for 6 month so they can work in a non-profit organization. The program is based on legal work contracts that the foundation signs with the participants, thus questioning the status of 'volunteers' that these people have.

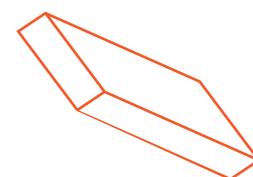
8. "Legea Nr. 1 din 5 ianuarie 2011, Legea educației naționale" published in the Official Monitor of Romania Nr. 18 of 10 January 2011, Art 203 (9), pag. 69

budgets at all levels. One of the major problems entailed by so many regulations touching upon volunteering is their lack of coordination with the framework law and the contradictions in defining volunteering that we find in at least two of these additional regulations. The laws on civil protection and voluntary military personnel redefine volunteering by eluding to the provision of non-financial reward, included in the definition provided by the framework law, and regulating the types of financial rewards that people employed as “voluntary soldiers” or “volunteers in civil protection” can receive, thus creating significant confusion<sup>9</sup>.

Since 2009, the framework law on volunteering has been subject to several revision initiatives. Most coordinated efforts have been conducted in 2009 by Pro Vobis-the National Resource Centre for Volunteering and by the EYV coordination group in Romania during 2011. Following these efforts, at the end of 2011 the process of changing the Law on Volunteering has been officially launched by the Romanian government and the responsible institution to manage the consultation process is the National Authority for Sports and Youth, part of the Ministry of Education, Research, Sports and Youth. Throughout 2011, a thematic working group gathering experts from non-profit sector and public institutions worked to put together a new law on volunteering, correcting most of the shortcomings of the current law and adding improvements and updates according to the changing volunteering landscape in the country. Two public debates will be organised in 2012 by the responsible institution before submitting the new text of the law for the approval of the Parliament. The major changes included in the proposed law are:

- *Official recognition of the importance of volunteering as an activity that creates social capital, develops individual skills and communities;*
- *Elimination of all explicit references to youth volunteering and clear definition of volunteering for all ages as a principle of the law;*
- *Inclusion of references to ensuring quality of volunteering (the need for a designated volunteer coordinator either employed or volunteer, the clarification of mandatory rights and responsibilities of the volunteer and the host organisation, mandatory volunteer contract, mandatory induction/ orientation of volunteers);*
- *Inclusion of provisions referring to employee volunteering (which is not mentioned in the current law and creates problems for employers developing employee volunteering schemes);*
- *Clarification of the distinction between volunteering and internship or professional traineeship;*
- *Clarification of the supportive role of the state in the development of volunteering;*
- *Request for implementation norms and methodology to be created in order to clarify the implementation of the provisions of the law.*

The development of this new proposal has been a successful exercise of collaboration between non-profit organisations and the responsible public institutions. However, it is not clear whether the institution responsible with the consultation process will further have a role in implementing the new law or in developing the norms for its implementation, as the final decision related to the content of the law and competences for its implementation depend on the Parliament’s decisions.



9. For a detailed discussion and a list of all regulations touching upon volunteering please see Radu, M.B. and C.R. 2010. “Politici publice cu privire la voluntariat in Romania si Uniunea Europeana – o perspective comparata” [Public Policies on Volunteering in Romania and the European Union – A Comparative Perspective], published by VOLUM Federation, November 2010.

## 4. STRUCTURE OF THE NON-PROFIT SECTOR INVOLVED IN VOLUNTEERING

The non-profit entities in Romania are registered to the local juridical authorities and there is a National Register of Non-Profit Entities under the competence of the Ministry of Justice. The register is to be updated constantly and provide reliable and up to date information on the number of non-profit entities active in Romania. This is not always the case especially because of changes in the legal provisions for the non-profit sector in the last 20 years and also because the register has not been regularly updated for certain periods of time and because the legal provisions regulating the closing down of a non-profit entity are not clear and there are lots of organisations included in the register but not being active for quite some time. This register<sup>10</sup> is the most reliable source of information related to the number of registered non-profit entities in Romania.

---

**In January 2010 Romania had a number of 62,680 registered non-profit entities - 90% of them involved volunteers in their activities, while 68% functioned exclusively on volunteering.**

---

A study<sup>11</sup> conducted in 2010 by the *Civil Society Development Foundation* (CSDF), Fundatia pentru Dezvoltarea Societatii Civile (FDSC), shows that in January 2010 Romania had a number of 62,680 registered non-profit entities, as follows: 44,271 associations, 16,785 foundations, 758 federations, 633 unions, and 213 other type of non-profit entities. The most accelerated growth in the number of registered associations and foundations was registered between 2002 and 2005, when their number grew five-fold. The associative life is more prominent in the urban regions, where 87% of all registered non-profits in Romania are located. Regarding the coverage of their actions, 24.13% of the registered non-profits act at the national level, 17.95% at the regional level, 22.73 at the country level and 20,94% at the local level. It is very difficult to assess how many of the registered entities are

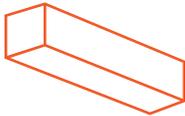
actually active currently in Romania as there are no regulations regarding regular reporting or other type of provisions that may allow authorities to have updated information on this matter. One indicator, even if not very precise, is the number of non-profit entities registering their financial situation annually with the Ministry of Finance. In 2008 almost a third of the legally established entities, 21,319 non-profit organisations (NGOs), registered their closed annual accounts with the Ministry of Finance. As registration of annual accounts is not compulsory, it is unclear how many of those not registering their accounts are still active.

The same study conducted by CSDF in 2010 contains a special section on non-profit sector leaders, their responses show that 90% of the non-profits in Romania involve volunteers in their activities, while 68% of them function exclusively based on volunteering, not having any employed staff. Findings in this section also show that the supply and demand of volunteers are not well balanced, the number of people willing to engage overtaking the number of available organised opportunities. Thus, 63.3% of non-profit leaders declare that volunteers address organisations personally, 50% state that their organisations have enough volunteers and do not find difficulty in attracting volunteers, while 3.3% declare they have more volunteers than they need or have the capacity to involve.

10. Available at: <http://www.just.ro/MeniuStanga/PersonnelInformation/tabid/91/Default.aspx>

11. Civil Society Development Foundation. 2010. „România 2010. Sectorul neguvernamental – profil, tendințe, provocări”. Available at: [http://www.fdsc.ro/library/conferinta%20vio%207%20oct/Romania%202010\\_Sectorul%20neguvernamental1.pdf](http://www.fdsc.ro/library/conferinta%20vio%207%20oct/Romania%202010_Sectorul%20neguvernamental1.pdf), pages 21-28.

Within the registered non-profit entities, there are organisations, such as *Pro Vobis-National Resource Centre for Volunteering*, the *National Network of Local Volunteer Centres*, and *VOLUM Federation*, which represent the core of volunteering infrastructure. The first volunteer centre in Romania became active in 1997 and it was set up as department of the Humanitarian Association Pro Vobis based in Cluj-Napoca. In 2001 the organisation changed its name and its mission, registering as the first volunteer centre in Romania under the name of Pro Vobis Volunteer Centre. Following extensive activity in promoting volunteering and providing services related to volunteer involvement and training, Pro Vobis expanded its activity at the national level and, since 2004 became a resource centre for volunteering, volunteering promotion, training and consultancy for volunteering development, pilot projects in volunteering, and advocacy for volunteering. Pro Vobis' main action directions are volunteering promotion, development of volunteering infrastructure, "professionalisation" of volunteer management processes, and providing training and consultancy for volunteer involving organisations and public institutions.



During 1999 and 2011 Pro Vobis has provided support in the setting up of 35 local volunteer centres out of which 25 are still active. Most of the local volunteer centres are departments within larger non-profit organisations, while very few are registered exclusively as volunteer centres. Some of the volunteer centres are registered as association, being membership-based; some are departments within foundations which do not have a wide membership base. Their main role is to act as brokers at the local level, matching volunteers and volunteer opportunities. Some of the volunteer centres function in small cities and in rural areas, where there not many, if any, other legal entities (public or non-profit). Most of the volunteer centres also run their own volunteer programmes offering volunteering opportunities at the local level. In 2001, four local volunteer centres created the National Network of Local Volunteer Centres in Romania. The network is an informal structure facilitating the exchange of practice between volunteer centres, being a forum for debate and a platform for cooperation for national volunteering promotion events. The network did not become a driving force in the promotion of volunteering, limiting its role to annual events and exchange of experiences among its members. This is due to capacity limitation in being strong enough to take the public stand in advocating and even lobbying for volunteering.



In the light of the European Year of Volunteering 2011 and aware of the need for a legally registered, representative entity to act as a national umbrella body for volunteering, Pro Vobis initiated in 2010 the set-up of *VOLUM Federation-The Federation of Organisations Supporting the Development of Volunteering in Romania*<sup>12</sup>, officially registered in December 2010, after a year long consultation process, having 25 founding members and other 13 organisations joining immediately after its registration. *VOLUM Federation* used the unique momentum provided by the EYV 2011 and became a recognised actor in volunteering, profiling itself as the dialogue partner of national authorities on volunteering matters, and playing a key role in the development and implementation of Romania's national EYV 2011 action plan of Romania. *VOLUM's* mission is to facilitate dialogue and coordination of volunteering stakeholders, in order to ensure sustainable volunteering development in Romania. *VOLUM Federation* was set up in the unique context of the European Year of Volunteering 2011 with the aim of pushing volunteering on the public agenda and facilitating the adoption of a national strategy for the development of volunteering in Romania. *VOLUM Federation* has currently 46 members,

12. More information on *VOLUM Federation* can be found on its web site [www.federatiavolum.ro](http://www.federatiavolum.ro). The website is available only in Romanian, brief English description of the federation is available on the web page of CEV – The European Volunteer Center, as the federation is a full members of CEV since February 2011, at the following link: [http://www.cev.be/9-members\\_volum\\_121-EN.html](http://www.cev.be/9-members_volum_121-EN.html)

volunteer involving organisations active in fields like social services, education, youth, environment, health, human rights and targeting a wide variety of target groups. The federation has four main strategic directions: (1) building its legitimacy as a representative body for volunteering in Romania; (2) creating an enabling environment for volunteering in Romania; (3) developing the capacity of its members and increasing the quality of volunteering in Romania; (4) acquiring public recognition of the contribution volunteering makes to individual and social development. Data from 2011 shows that VOLUM member organisations have 83,394 individual members, employ 402 people, and involve 13,497 volunteers in their current activities. From its 46 members, 7 act nationally and internationally, 12 act nationally, 9 regionally, and 18 locally, being registered in 21 different localities, 43 in the urban area and 3 in the rural area. Nine of VOLUM's members are local volunteer centres. VOLUM Federation works in close cooperation with Pro Vobis with a clear division of tasks and responsibilities, VOLUM being dedicated to lobbying and advocacy for volunteering, while Pro Vobis is specialised in providing resources for volunteer involving organisations.

Some of Romania's largest volunteer involving organisations are branches of well-known international organisations such as the *Red Cross*, *Save the Children*, *Caritas Federation*, *World Vision*, *Habitat for Humanity*, *Hospices of Hope*, but also national organisations such as the *Foundation for Community Support* (Fundăția de Sprijin Comunitar), *More Green Association* (Asociația Mai Mult Verde) or *New Horizons Foundation* (Fundăția Noi Orizonturi). Most of these organisations are VOLUM members.

## 5. OTHER STAKEHOLDERS

Apart from non-profit organisations which remain the major vehicle for citizens' volunteer involvement, there are other stakeholders involved in providing voluntary activities and promoting volunteering. Public institutions, such as social assistance providers, public hospitals, public cultural institutions such as museums, botanical and zoological gardens and education institutions organise volunteering activities and promote volunteering. Some businesses are developing employee volunteering programmes and are cooperating with non-profits in implementing such programmes.

### Public institutions

Among the public social assistance service providers, the most open to volunteering are the directions for child protection cooperate with local NGOs to involve volunteers in service providing. One of the most successful hospital volunteering programmes is run by Little People Association in cooperation with hospitals in Bucharest, Cluj-Napoca and Timisoara. They involve volunteers in providing assistance and recreational activities to children in oncology sections of these hospitals. Another pilot project is run by Pro Vobis National Resource Centre for Volunteering in cooperation with the British organisation Volunteer for Mental Health involving volunteers in providing assistance and recreational activities to patients in the closed wards of a psychiatric hospital. The Romanian Peasant Museum in Bucharest runs a successful volunteering programme for promotion and preserving Romanian folk traditions; the Botanical Garden in Bucharest organises every year the spring clean-up, a volunteer involving project gathering hundreds of volunteers.

## Educational institutions

Volunteering in educational institutions is characterised by two dominant trends: teachers' individual initiatives to join national volunteering programmes such as the National Volunteer Week (Saptamana Nationala a Voluntariatului, SNV), an annual nationwide volunteering programme initiated and coordinated by Pro Vobis, and an official programme run by the Ministry of Education under the National Strategy for Community Action. The involvement of schools in programmes initiated and run by NGOs is also increased in the past years. SNV, a spring programme aimed at mobilising as many actors and as many volunteers across the country, reaching its 10th edition in 2011, has seen an increase in the number of schools joining the programme, from 33 activities in 2009 to 85 activities in 2010 and 173 activities organised by 101 schools in 2011.

The *National Strategy for Community Action* (Strategia Nationala de Actiune Comunitara) run by the Ministry of Education is an optional programme that schools can join. The programme started in 2003 with a pilot project implemented in Craiova and became an official national strategy in 2004. Between 2004 and 2007 the programme was scattered between individual teachers' initiatives and was followed, in 2007, by more precise directions given by the Ministry. The aim of the strategy was to engage teachers and pupils in undergraduate levels of education in activities than facilitate social integration and inclusion and have educational objectives, such as arts and crafts, drama, music, dance and sports. Activities reported by teachers go beyond these types of action to charitable activities such as collection of food for the poor, charitable concerts for fund raising etc. The Ministry of Education reported that in 2009 a number of 56,541 volunteers (students enrolled in the formal education system) and 14,654 beneficiaries from 650 schools and 350 special schools (for children with special needs). The programme is guided by the following principle: *"If I am told, I forget; if I am taught, I remember; if I am involved, I learn"*. The actions under this programme are organised outside classes.

There are no subjects on volunteering taught in schools, but there are individual initiatives of teachers who propose to and are approved by educational authorities, teaching optional subjects on volunteering and social engagement. One such good example is that of a teacher who designed and is teaching an optional class on volunteering in a high school in Oradea since 2009. University volunteering is even more scattered, most of students' volunteer engagement being organised as part of student associations, sometimes receiving logistical support from universities such as meeting space or communication facilities, but not having any official link with the university administration or the curricula. The majority of students get involved in volunteering opportunities provided by NGOs, cities with large universities being some of the most active places for student volunteering in Romania.

## Business sector

Businesses' involvement in volunteering is almost always part of corporate social responsibility (CSR) policies of companies and sometimes is conducted in cooperation with non-profits<sup>13</sup>. A few trends can be identified in this regard: setting up corporate foundations which run community programmes or grant-making programmes, such as Ronald McDonald Foundation, Sensiblue Foundation, Vodafone Foundation; setting up corporate managed grant-making programmes for non-profits, such as Raiffeisen Communities, Orange Grants, Rompetrol "Together for everyone"; setting up employee volunteering programmes implemented in cooperation with NGOs or public institutions hosting volunteers; managing own CSR programmes with

---

*The National Strategy for Community Action is an educational program that guides its activities by the following principle: "If I am told, I forget; if I am taught, I remember; if I am involved, I learn".*

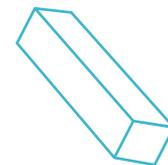
---

13. Details on programs of corporate social responsibility, company profiles and case studied can be found on the special website [www.responsabilitatesociala.ro](http://www.responsabilitatesociala.ro)

volunteering components, like for instance Petrom “Andrew’s Country”, UnicreditTiriac “Gift Matching”, Mol Romania “Green Spaces”; development of joint ventures for wider social impact between companies or their corporate foundations and non-profits or public services of major importance such as emergency services or civil protection units, as is the case of the Vodafone and the Mobile Emergency Service for Resuscitation and Descarceration (Serviciul Mobil de Urgenta, Reanimare si Descarcerare, SMURD) - “Partnership for Life”.

State authorities at national, regional, local level are not very much involved in promoting or supporting volunteering. Sometimes volunteering is taken into consideration as a resource for local development strategies, but this is the results of intensive efforts of local non-governmental organisations and not a common approach of local authorities towards considering volunteering a resource for the development of the local communities. Political parties recently started to include volunteering in their public discourse in direct connection with the need to mobilise people to help in their electoral campaigns. Collaboration with political parties is a sensitive issue for NGOs in Romania as allegations and suspicion can easily stem from such collaboration and most organisations deliberately choose to keep away from political parties and any collaboration that can lead to political activism. Some organisations deliberately choose to collaborate with or publicly stand for certain political parties, generating confusion and allowing political parties to speculate in their public discourse that they enjoy the support of “civil society”. Politics and political activism are sensitive topics in Romania and the core of the volunteering movement described in this chapter deliberately remains outside the political arena, limiting its interaction with political parties to formal interaction with the state institutions they lead at various times, as a consequence of their success in elections, and not to them as political entities as such.

## 6. FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES



One of the biases surrounding volunteering in Romania is the perception that money is not needed if volunteers are involved. While there is a wide consensus on the non-remunerated nature of volunteering, the fact that supporting volunteering is not cost-free is not so widely understood in Romania. This public perception might be one of the reasons why volunteering regulations and funding programmes are almost nonexistent in Romania. The provisions we find and the funds disbursed from public budgets at national or local levels are directed toward the non-profit sector in general and do not mention volunteering specifically. There are two pieces of legislation regulating public funding for civil society, none of them containing the word “volunteer/volunteering” not even as accepted in kind contribution. The laws included refer to funding from public budgets of non-profit activities of general interest (Law 350/2005)<sup>14</sup> and funding from public budgets of activities of organised Romanian communities abroad (Law 321/2006)<sup>15</sup>. All funding dispersed under the regulations of these two laws are project based, no core funding provisions being available. Every Ministry has funds which can fund NGO activities within their specific area according to Law 350/2005, but volunteering is not one of the priorities of such funds, given that volunteering is not formally included in the competence portfolio of any ministry. Public funding for volunteering activities can be obtained if NGOs include a volunteering component in their project proposals. Projects have to correspond to the field of activity of the particular ministry disbursing funds, thus volunteering is secondary and

14. Available at: <http://www.mmuncii.ro/pub/imagemanager/images/file/Legislatie/LEGI/L350-2005.pdf>

15. Available at: [http://www.dprp.gov.ro/wp-content/uploads/2010/03/Legea-321\\_2006.pdf](http://www.dprp.gov.ro/wp-content/uploads/2010/03/Legea-321_2006.pdf)

no specific, core funding is available to support volunteer involving organisations or volunteer infrastructure organisations.

Romanian Fiscal Code<sup>16</sup> gives individuals who are tax-payers the possibility to redirect 2% of their income tax to a non-profit organisation. This legal provision gives Romanian citizens the possibility to redirect part of the money that would otherwise go to the public budget, to an organisation that serves a cause they consider important. This is a source of income for non-profit organisations, including volunteer centres, being as well a motivating factor for the NGOs to better communicate their activities and to increase transparency. According to data released by the Romanian Ministry of Public Finance, in 2011 more than 1.6 million Romanians (over 25% of the tax-payers) re-directed the 2% of their 2010 income tax to non-profit organisations, which amounted to more than 26 million EUR.

---

**In 2011, more than 1,6 million Romanians (about 25% of tax-payers) re-directed 2% of their income tax to non-profit entities, which amounted to more than 26 million EUR**

---

Funding for volunteering in Romania is available from external sources. One of the donor organisations active for a long time and investing significant amounts in supporting volunteering development is the *Charles Stewart Mott Foundation of the United States of America (USA)*. For the past 20 years donors such as *Soros Foundation, United States Agency for International Development (USAID), the Embassies of Netherlands, United Kingdom, France or the USA* have been providing financial support for volunteering development both as core funding and on project funding.

Another significant source of support has been the *European Union (EU) programmes*, such as the pre-accession Programme of Community aid to the countries of Central and Eastern Europe (PHARE), and the current European Social Fund. None of these however has specific funding streams for volunteering as such, but their priorities allow for volunteering to be included as significant project component. More recently, the *Financial Mechanism of the European Economic Area*, including funding provided by the governments of Iceland, Lichtenstein, and Norway, has been supporting the development of volunteering in Romania, as has the *Trust for Civil Society in Central and Eastern Europe* and the *Balkan Trust for Democracy*, private funding initiatives of several trusts and foundations.

One accessible EU source of funding prioritising volunteering is the *Youth in Action* programme, managed in Romania by the National Agency for Community Programmes in the Field of Education and Vocational Training (Agentia Nationala pentru Programe Comunitare in Domeniul Educatiei si Formarii Profesionale, ANPCDEFP). The Youth in Action programme has specific funding stream dedicated to the promotion of volunteering and support for developing training and mentoring programmes for volunteers included in the European Voluntary Service, an international exchange programme for volunteers below the age of 30. Other Youth in Action funding streams also prioritise volunteering as project proposal evaluation criteria. This programme is accessed also by small organisations run by volunteers, as the programme does not cover staff costs. In addition to the funding programmes, ANPCDEFP also supports a network of trainers providing, on request, training for local NGOs on a variety of topics, including volunteer management.

There are two recent trends in local resource mobilisation in Romania. One of them is the set-up of community foundations. Romania has begun to develop community foundations as local fund-raising mechanisms, with the financial support of the Charles Stewart Mott Foundation.

---

16. Ministry of Public Finance (Ministerul Finanelor Publice), National Agency for Fiscal Administration (Agenția Națională de Administrare Fiscală, ANAF) [www.anaf.ro](http://www.anaf.ro). See also: [www.doilasuta.ro](http://www.doilasuta.ro)

There are currently seven community foundations in Romania established during the four years since the programme was initiated in Romania. Funding provided by community foundations contributed to local volunteering development not only by funding volunteering programmes, but also by promoting social responsibility and community activism which results in increased levels of civic activism. The other trend is the organisation of fund-raising campaigns supported by public figures and/or TV stations organised as television shows aimed at raising funds via telephone calls during the show. Some examples of successful shows are a campaign organised by the United Nations Children Fund (UNICEF), raising funds for children and the campaign “You are better in Reality” initiated by Realitatea TV, a news TV station raising in-kind donations for people affected by floods and heavy snow or money for providing assistance and medical supplies and services to children in remote areas of Romania. Such examples are stimulating the individual social responsibility and cultivating the civic spirit of the wider population and, although they are not centred on volunteering promotion or support, volunteers always play a very important role either in organising such campaigns or in distributing the goods collected.



Funding for volunteering is neither stable nor reliable in Romania, as it depends on the funding priorities and programmes of international donors and on project funds with very few opportunities for core funding being available. In addition to the instability, the funds are also difficult to access for some NGOs, especially the local grass-roots organisations, as project grant applications are most of the times very demanding to complete and the implementation and reporting requirements very specialised. The funds made available through the European Social Fund are currently the largest funds available in Romania for non-profit organisations, but their accession and management is marked by two major problems: the amount of co-funding needed and the reimbursement system which requires advancing significant amounts of money to implement activities as planned, creating significant cash flow problems. These problems are more significant in Romania than in other countries because the Romanian state has no support schemes in place to facilitate accession of European Funds by providing co-funding or advance instalments to allow regular cash flow until reimbursements are made. In addition, the management of the programmes is inadequate, reimbursements registering significant delays and procedures changing unpredictably during the project implementation period, thus making it even more difficult for non-profits to cope with the management of such funds.

## 7. REGULAR AND SYSTEMATIC RESEARCH

Since 1995 several attempts to measure volunteering in Romania have been initiated by a variety of actors. One of the first attempts is the one conducted in 1995 by the Johns Hopkins University Centre for Civil Society Studies<sup>17</sup>. However, the focus of this research is the overall non-profit sector in Romania.

References to the volunteer activity in Romania are based on a separate research conducted by the Civil Society Development Foundation (CSDF)<sup>18</sup> in 1996, reporting that 33.5% of the Romanians volunteer. The fact that, according to the research, there were approximately 5.7 million volunteers at the time, raises questions about the validity of the tools used for measuring the volunteer activity and the appropriateness of the populations’ understanding of volunteering. All following research indicates at most half of the amount of volunteering reported by the CSDF research in 1996. A bird’s eye view from inside the sector supports the

17. The findings for Romania are presented in Chapter 17 of the volume “Global Civil Society: Dimensions of the Nonprofit Sector” by Lester Salamon et al. published in 1999.

18. Available at <http://www.fdsc.ro/documente/24.pdf>

hypothesis of constant growth in the amount of volunteer work throughout Romania since 1996 rather than a decrease. Subsequent research findings provide different figures for volunteering in Romania. The European Values Survey indicates in 1999 that only 10% of the Romanian population was engaged in volunteer activities<sup>19</sup>. A national survey conducted in 2001 in the frame of the Civil Society Development on the Black Sea Project<sup>20</sup> indicates that 13% of the Romanian population took part in volunteer activities. Another research on philanthropic behaviour in Romania conducted by Allavida and the Association for Community Relations in 2002 indicated only 8% of Romanians reporting volunteer activities. Other figures show 14.4% of population reporting volunteering in the past 12 month, as the spring 2007 Public Opinion Barometer conducted by the Open Society Foundation reports. The most recent figure remains the 20%, according to the data provided by the Eurobarometer from November 2010.

As this overview shows, research on volunteering in Romania is scattered and contradictory in its findings, both because of the methodologies used and the manner of framing the questions, but also because of the unclear perception of the population on what volunteering is and what it is not. The problems of distinguishing between formal and informal volunteering, civic activism of various types and actual volunteering as defined by the framework law and the difficulties in clarifying the relationship between membership in associations and volunteer involvement mark all the research on volunteering conducted in Romania. Apart from surveys such as Eurobarometers or European Values Surveys which are conducted regularly by international institutions and include sometimes questions about volunteering, although very few and most of the times only one measuring involvement in the past 12 month, there is no regular and systematic research on volunteering conducted in Romania. The existing data does not allow the calculation of the economic value of volunteering and is not sufficient to assess the social impact of volunteering. Some volunteer involving organisations conduct their own assessments of the impact of volunteering in their activities and also the economic value of volunteering, but this is scattered data of several organisations, not enough extended and systematic to provide a significant overview of the value and impact of volunteering in Romania.

---

*Research on volunteering in Romania is scattered and contradictory in its findings, both because of the methodologies used and the manner of framing the questions, but also because of the unclear perception of the population on what volunteering is and what it is not.*

---

## 8. ETHICS AND QUALITY STANDARDS FOR VOLUNTEERING

Ethics and quality standards for volunteering have not been a top priority of the volunteering sector in Romania, although in recent NGO meetings, such as conferences or round tables, questions about ensuring the quality of volunteering experiences for volunteers and avoiding volunteers' disappointment, were raised. Recently Pro Vobis National Resource Centre for Volunteering included quality volunteering among its priority lines and the topic made its way into the official calendar of EYV 2011 activities in Romania. Apart from scattered quality standards set at organisational level by large volunteer involving organisations and common sense ethical principles followed mostly by inertia than by deliberate design by several organisations, no coordinated and consistent action to set up ethical codes for volunteering existed in Romania before 2011.

During the EYV 2011 activities one thematic working group active has focused on developing

---

19. Voicu, M. and Voicu, B. 2003. "Volunteering in Romania: a rara avis". in Dekker, P. and Loek Halman (Eds.) *The Values of Volunteering. Cross-Cultural Perspective*. New York: Kluwer Academic, pp. 143-160

20. The data from the Civil Society Development on the Black Sea Project has been made available by Prof. Gabriel Badescu, project coordinator for Romania.

an ethical code for organisers of volunteering activities<sup>21</sup>. The ethical code drafted in 2011 aims to contribute to the creation of an accepted and unified vision on what ethical principles should govern volunteer involvement, to raise the quality of the services provided by volunteer involving organisations to both volunteers and beneficiaries, to improve communication and collaboration among volunteer involving organisations, and to increase the degree of transparency and responsibility of volunteer involving organisations. The code is structured according to six principles: transparency, responsibility, legality, equity and dignity, and confidentiality. The code includes recommendations for volunteer involving organisations, structured according to the main phases of the volunteer management process, including practical suggestions such as useful tools that can be used in volunteer management in order to ensure fair and ethical treatment for all parties (volunteers, host organisations' personnel, and beneficiaries).

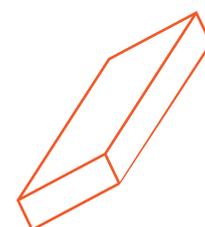
Most importantly, the experts involved in drafting the ethical code wish that its voluntary adoption by as many volunteer involving organisations active in Romania as possible will serve as a public declaration of the importance given to volunteer involvement. This is an addition to it also being a public declaration of the responsibility assumed in offering quality volunteering experiences, and the necessity to manage this extraordinary resource in an ethical manner. Throughout 2012 the working group efforts will continue with identifying criteria and indicators for the principles and behaviour recommended by the code, in order to allow organisations to go through an evaluation process assessing the degree of compliance of organisations with the provisions of the ethical code. The action will be followed by extensive promotion and support provided to organisations aiming to improve their operations so as to meet the standards included in the ethical code. The practical arrangements related to the entity entitled to monitor the adoption of the ethical code and the compliance of volunteer organisations with its provisions are not clarified yet, although throughout 2011 an expectation towards VOLUM Federation to assume this role has been formulated several times.

21. The product of the working group is available on line in Romanian here: [http://www.voluntariat.ro/download/Codul\\_Etic\\_al\\_organizatorilor\\_activitatilor\\_de\\_voluntariat.pdf](http://www.voluntariat.ro/download/Codul_Etic_al_organizatorilor_activitatilor_de_voluntariat.pdf)

## 9. AWARENESS OF VOLUNTEERING OPPORTUNITIES

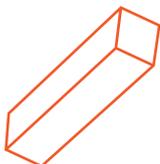
Awareness of volunteering opportunities in Romania is based on a combination of tools managed by different stakeholders. We can identify three main tools used to raise awareness about volunteering: web portals, national campaigns, and special events.

The most well known source of information about volunteering in Romania is the web portal [www.voluntariat.ro](http://www.voluntariat.ro). The portal has been launched in 2001 by Pro Vobis who has been managing it ever since and is available only in Romanian. The portal has been changed in structure and design several times since its launching and is structured according to four main sections: 1. resources on volunteering (including targeted information for volunteers, volunteer managers, volunteer involving organisations, public institutions, companies, donors and sponsors); 2. information about the National Network of Local Volunteer Centres (including information about the



members of the network, meeting reports, joint projects, criteria for adhering to the network); 3. the National Volunteer Week (including information about event, reports of past editions, bank of ideas for activities, useful information about the current edition such as identity, national calendar of events, promotional materials); and 4. special volunteering events-during 2001 this section has been dedicated to European Year of Volunteering 2011, and in the past to projects like national promotion campaigns or the national caravan of volunteers. The portal also contains specific sections with information about what is volunteering, legal framework for volunteering, volunteer centres, and information about volunteering in the world. The portal has had an average of 200 visitors per day in the past two years and its home page features the latest news of the volunteering movement in Romania.

During 2011 the matching portal [www.evoluntar.ro](http://www.evoluntar.ro) was developed. The portal was initiated a couple of years ago by Save the Children Romania and was a matching portal specialised in volunteering opportunities in child protection activities. As the range of opportunities was not too wide and the portal was underused, its managers decided to open it up to all fields of volunteering and worked throughout 2011 to develop the portal, change its technical features to be more user friendly, and widely promote it to become the most used matching tool for volunteers in Romania. The portal allows volunteer involving organisations to create a profile and post their volunteering opportunities and to volunteers to create a profile and post their interest. Volunteers can search for suitable opportunities, they get automatically signaled when a new volunteering opportunity in their field of interest has been posted, while volunteer involving organisations can search for volunteers and get automatically notice when a new volunteer has indicated interests in their field of action. Currently the portal has 239 profiles of organisations and 808 volunteer profiles created.



Pro Vobis created in 2010 a web site specialised on information on the European Voluntary Service, [www.voluntareuropean.ro](http://www.voluntareuropean.ro). The web-site has two sections, the one dedicated to volunteering in Romania and the other dedicated to the European Voluntary Service. The section on volunteering in Romania contains information about what is a volunteer, what are the “myths” of volunteering in Romania, what volunteers can do in Romania, what are the rights and responsibilities of volunteers, what kind of competences can be developed through volunteering, volunteer stories, and a glossary of terms. The section on European Voluntary Service contains information about the service and the steps one has to take in order to enter the programme, how to look for volunteering opportunities in Europe, how can you develop personally through this service, volunteer stories of Romanian volunteers abroad and of European volunteers in Romania, and a specialised glossary of terms. This web site is aimed to be volunteer friendly and provide specific and personalised information to volunteers.



Two national campaigns to promote volunteering have been organised by the Pro Vobis National Resource Centre for Volunteering and the National Network of Local Volunteer Centres in 2007/2008 and 2009. The first campaign, organised under the slogan “*It’s time to be different! Noble acts are not for money*”, was a series of debate seminars on what volunteering is and what it is not, a national conference on volunteering, an itinerant photo exhibition on volunteering projects, volunteering events organised throughout the country and culminating with the National Week of Volunteering. The campaign reached over 38 localities in 24 counties and involved over 6000 volunteers, gathering 300 volunteering activities organised throughout the country, and 400 media items, mostly in local and regional media.

The second campaign organised in 2009 by the same partnership was the “*Make a Difference*

*Caravan*”, going to 14 locations in the country and organising volunteering events that make a visible difference in the local community within only one day of action. The main results of the actions include books collection for school libraries in rural areas, safe playgrounds for children in rural schools, recreational rooms for children in the hospital, rehabilitated facilities for activities with persons with special needs, or marking of tourist routes. The caravan has been widely promoted and featured live on social networks. Both campaigns have been financially supported by Trust for Civil Society in Central and Eastern Europe ([www.ceetrust.org](http://www.ceetrust.org)).

There are two special events promoting volunteering in Romania. The *National Volunteer Week* is organised by Pro Vobis every spring since 2001 and has seen a significant increase in the amount of volunteers involved and volunteer organisations mobilised to join the event nationwide. In 2011 the event reached its 10th edition and was marked for the first time in all 40 counties of Romania by several events. The 2011 edition of the event mobilised 150 local partners managing local events. There were 570 volunteering activities organised during this week and over 4500 volunteers involved, and the event was part of the national action plan for EYV 2011 in Romania.

During 2011 a *National Gala Awards for Volunteers* was organised for the first time, celebrating International Volunteer Day on 5 December. The National Gala Awards for Volunteers was part of the EYV2011 action plan and awards were structured according to 4 sections and 22 categories as follows: Awards for Volunteers: junior, senior, arts and culture, social, environment protection, sport, education, health, civic activism and human rights, mutual support and youth; Awards for Volunteer Projects: arts and culture, social, environment protection, sport, education, health, civic activism and human rights, mutual support and youth; Awards for Volunteer Coordinators and Awards for Volunteer Centres. Over 200 nominations were received and an independent jury chose the winners who received their awards during a high-profile event. All the pre-selected nominees were included in the booklet “Volunteer Portraits”, an annual publication issued by Pro Vobis. VOLUM Federation undertook the responsibility to continue this project and make the National Gala Awards for Volunteers an annual event in Romania, aimed at recognising volunteers.

---

*The communist past cannot be used any more to explain the present and Romanians have matured under democracy enough to understand that they have the choice of a responsible behaviour which, although it is not limited to it, includes volunteering.*

---

## 10. ADDITIONAL COUNTRY SPECIFICITIES

For quite a long time the communist past of Romania has been offered as an explanation for the low level of civic engagement generally and volunteer involvement particularly of the population of Romania. Twenty three years after the fall of the communism, invoking the past has become an obsolete excuse. We already have a generation of young people born in democracy or witnessing the changing of regimes at an early age, youth who have known communism only from history books and stories from others. Adult generations could already understand the different system our country now has and are fully capable to make the difference between the past compulsory ‘patriotic work’ and the current free-will based voluntary activity. The elderly, who have been strongly affected by the communism, start to get involved because they see the value of volunteering in providing them a sense of usefulness and in helping them fight solitude and social isolation. The past cannot be used any more to explain the present and Romanian people have matured under democracy enough to understand that they have the choice of a responsible behaviour which, although it is not limited to it, includes volunteering.

# 11. RECOMMENDATIONS

Romania has a lot to do to ensure a sustainable development of the volunteering in the country. There are shortcomings in the legal framework, in the funding systems, in the cooperation and consultation mechanisms between the volunteer involving organisations and decision makers, but also there is disequilibrium of the supply and demand of volunteers and with regard to needs of organisations and expectations of volunteers, and very limited capacities and tools of measuring impact of volunteering.

Recommendations for decision makers include:

- *Adopt a strategy for the development and support of volunteering in Romania as an official public policy<sup>22</sup>;*
- *Recognise volunteering as a policy area within the competence of a clearly identified public institution at the national level to allow coordination and coherence of approaches to volunteering;*
- *Implement public, stable and reliable funding schemes for volunteering infrastructure;*
- *Implement official measurement mechanisms enabling regular assessment of the impact of volunteering for the individual and the society overall;*
- *Implement European regulations supportive for volunteering development even if they are not mandatory*

Recommendations for volunteer organisations:

- *Build credibility based on transparency, responsibility, and voluntarily assumed codes of ethics;*
- *Constantly monitor the contribution of volunteering to the development and impact of each organisation and build mechanisms to collect such data sector-wide;*
- *Increase the quality of volunteer opportunities, volunteer management, and services provided with volunteer involvement;*
- *Find an adequate balance between the needs of organisations and volunteers' expectations and interests;*
- *Collaborate more under the existing umbrella bodies to coordinate efforts and advocate strongly with a unified voice for support of volunteering development from public funds.*



22. The results of the thematic working groups organized during 2011 on various topics has been gathered into a document called "Public Agenda for Volunteering in Romania 2012-2020" which is aimed to serve as a basis for this national strategy. The document is available in Romanian here: [http://www.voluntariat.ro/download/Agenda\\_Publica\\_pt\\_Voluntariat\\_in\\_Romania\\_2012\\_2020.pdf](http://www.voluntariat.ro/download/Agenda_Publica_pt_Voluntariat_in_Romania_2012_2020.pdf)

## Resources

Civil Society Development Foundation. 2010. „România 2010. Sectorul neguvernamental – profil, tendințe, provocări” [Romania 2010. The Nongovernmental Sector – Profile, Trends, Challenges] available at [http://www.fdsc.ro/library/conferinta%20vio%207%20oct/Romania%202010\\_Sectorul%20neguvernamental1.pdf](http://www.fdsc.ro/library/conferinta%20vio%207%20oct/Romania%202010_Sectorul%20neguvernamental1.pdf)

Eurobarometer no. 73, vol. 2, November 2010. Available at: [http://ec.europa.eu/public\\_opinion/archives/eb/eb73/eb73\\_vol2\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/public_opinion/archives/eb/eb73/eb73_vol2_en.pdf)

Law no. 384/2006 regarding the status of voluntary soldiers. Available at: [http://www.dreptonline.ro/legislatie/statut\\_soldati\\_gradati\\_voluntari.php](http://www.dreptonline.ro/legislatie/statut_soldati_gradati_voluntari.php)

Pro Vobis. 2007. “Volunteering in Romania – The State of the Field”

Radu, M.B. and C.R. 2010. “Politici publice cu privire la voluntariat in Romania si Uniunea Europeana - o perspectiva comparata” [Public Policies on Volunteerism in Romania and the European Union – A Comparative Perspective], published by VOLUM Federation

Salamon, Lester et al. 1999. “Global Civil Society: Dimensions of the Nonprofit Sector”

Voicu, M. and Voicu, B. 2003. “Volunteering in Romania: a rara avis”. in Dekker, P. and Loek Halman (Eds.) *The Values of Volunteering. Cross-Cultural Perspective*. New York: Kluwer Academic.

[www.voluntariat.ro](http://www.voluntariat.ro)

[www.evolutar.ro](http://www.evolutar.ro)

[www.voluntareuropean.ro](http://www.voluntareuropean.ro)

[www.cev.be](http://www.cev.be)

[www.federatiavolum.ro](http://www.federatiavolum.ro)

[www.responsabilitatesociala.ro](http://www.responsabilitatesociala.ro)

