



EUROPEAN VOLUNTEER CENTRE

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CHAPTER

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VOLUNTEERING  
INFRASTRUCTURE  
IN EUROPE



AUTHORS

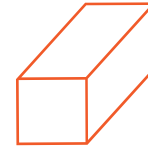
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# 1. VOLUNTEERING INFRASTRUCTURE

## CONCEPT DEFINITION

The Volunteering Infrastructure (VI), following a definition used by Regional Volunteer Centres in Croatia, encompasses the different systems, mechanisms and instruments needed to ensure an environment where volunteering can grow and flourish. It stimulates cross-sectoral cooperation and the engagement of different stakeholders, in an attempt to promote volunteering possibilities and citizen engagement.

The following volunteering infrastructure elements already exist in Croatia, or are in the development process:

- *Volunteering legislation and a regulatory framework*
- *Government policies on volunteering*
- *Organisers of volunteering activities: organisations and networks at local, regional and national level; local/regional/national institutions*
- *Volunteering centres and the Croatian network of volunteer centres*
- *Volunteering opportunities and brokering mechanisms between (potential) volunteers and volunteering opportunities, including on-line placement databases*
- *Volunteering promotion and raising public awareness of the value of volunteering*
- *Funding to ensure volunteering programs sustainability*
- *Academic and civil society organisations (CSO) research projects*

The role of the volunteering infrastructure is to create an enabling environment (political, social, and economic) in order to support, increase and develop volunteerism in the country. Although Croatia has greatly developed its volunteering infrastructure throughout the last couple of years, relevant elements of volunteering infrastructure are still missing: (I) cross-sectoral cooperation between stakeholders, in particular the involvement of businesses and universities, (II) recognition of volunteering, (III) longitudinal (academic) research projects acting as an empirical support tool for further infrastructure development.

## 2. VOLUNTEERING LANDSCAPE

The Law on Volunteering (The Official Gazette NN 58/07) was adopted by the Croatian Parliament on 18 May 2007. It stipulates the following definition:

*Volunteering is an investment in personal time, effort, knowledge and skills out of free will to carry out services and activities for the well-being of another person or the wider public, and are executed by the persons without existence of any conditions of a financial reward or any other material benefit for the work done, unless otherwise stated by the Law. (Article 3, p. 3)*

Besides the principles embedded in the definition, the Law on Volunteering defines additional basic volunteering principles, such as:

- *The principle of non-discrimination of volunteers and volunteering beneficiaries*
- *The principle of non-exploitation of volunteering*
- *The principle of education for volunteering purposes (educating for values)*
- *The principle of the protection of minor volunteers and volunteers who are completely or partially deprived of the capacity to exercise their rights*
- *The principle of non-chargeability for volunteering*
- *The principle of free will and solidarity of volunteering*
- *The principle of mobility of volunteers*

Croatia is seriously lagging behind in conducting longitudinal research projects on volunteerism and therefore the relevant empirical data is missing. Most research was conducted by CSOs' various methodologies, resulting in inconsistencies in defining and understanding volunteering work. In fact the percentage of people declaring engagement in volunteering activities varies from 5% to more than 40%.

Research projects conducted in 2001 and 2007 (Ledić) suggest that there is no significant difference among the gender quotas or particular age group ratios. Being a member of associations has been found to be helpful; citizens who are members of associations are keener to volunteer on a more regular basis. Men usually volunteer for a political party and the local community, while women volunteer for kindergartens, schools and churches. Younger age groups (below 35) are more inclined to participate in organised activities while pensioners often help the church and volunteer for the local community in non-formal settings. Research studies conducted so far demonstrate a positive attitude of Croatian citizens towards volunteering and a relatively high interest in volunteering.

“*Research on civil participation in community initiatives through volunteering*” conducted by SMART in 2001 showed a positive attitude of the population towards volunteering. Nevertheless the people interviewed also admitted to having been surrounded by people having a negative attitude while volunteering. Among the reasons why people do not engage in volunteering we find: (I) economic crisis and hard living conditions, (II) crisis of values and (III) insufficient information on volunteering opportunities (Ledić, 2001). In a 2003 research study, “*Volunteerism and public institutions*”, the Volunteer Centre Zagreb illustrated a general positive perception of volunteerism and highlighted the openness of public institutions towards volunteers' involvement. Research on volunteerism conducted by the National Foundation for Civil Society Development in 2005 shows that Croatian people consider volunteering as respectful community work, and see volunteering as a way to contribute to the development of the whole society. The study “*Volunteerism and local community development – civil participation in community initiatives*” conducted by SMART in 2006 showed that the positive perception of volunteering was preserved at similar levels to 2001, but that the attitude towards volunteering was getting more negative among the young and more sceptical among the elderly. A good amount of spare time and financial stability, alongside with a sincere interest, are seen as prerequisites for volunteering (Forčić, 2007). Another study from 2007 conducted by the Association MI-Split and Association MOST confirmed the positive attitude towards volunteering and the belief that volunteering is important and can help solve community problems.

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*Among the reasons why people do not engage in volunteering we find: hard living conditions, the crisis of values but also insufficient information on volunteering opportunities*

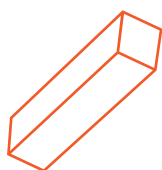
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### 3. LEGAL FRAMEWORK FOR VOLUNTEERING AND ITS IMPLEMENTATION



*The Law on Volunteering* (The Official Gazette NN 58/07) was adopted by the Croatian Parliament on 18 May 2007.

The approval of this law was a process that lasted for several years. It started as an initiative within civil society to create an enabling environment for volunteering in Croatia. An initial draft of the Law on Volunteering was defined by the National Board for Volunteering Development in cooperation with the expert team from the International Centre for Not-for-Profit Law (ICNL) in 2001. In 2004, the draft was sent to the Ministry of the Family, Veterans' Affairs and Intergenerational Solidarity, the institution that proposed the law to the Croatian Parliament. During the two-year process, the Law underwent public debate and was revised several times, a new text being worked out in 2006 by a newly formed working group. The Croatian Parliament finally adopted the Law on Volunteering on 18 May 2007. The Law on Volunteering defines organised or formal volunteering and does not cover non-formal or spontaneous volunteering and voluntary undertaken activities with the main purpose of individual professional advancement, this type of involvement being regulated in Croatia under the Labour Law.



The Law on Volunteering contains: a definition of volunteering, principles and conditions for volunteering, the rights and obligations of volunteers and volunteer implementing organisations, the conditions for conclusion of volunteering contracts, the adoption of a Code of Ethics for volunteers, the issuing of a volunteering certificate, a national volunteer award as well as means for supervising the implementation of this law. The Law on Volunteering in Croatia has encouraged other organisations, particularly social care institutions, to open their doors to volunteers. Furthermore, there are also individual cases of local, regional, and national public bodies involving volunteers.

The Ministry of Social Policy and Youth (until January 2012, The Ministry of the Family, Veterans' Affairs and Intergenerational Solidarity) ensures the implementation of this law and other regulations deriving from it. Furthermore, the Ministry monitors the implementation of the law and collects feedback from the implementing organisations about the consequences of its implementation. The Ministry's tasks, amongst others, are:

- *ensuring the implementation of this law and other regulations deriving from it*
- *monitoring and proposing adequate measures*
- *collecting data on the number of volunteering implementing organisations and the number of volunteers in the Republic of Croatia and the citizens of the Republic of Croatia who are volunteering abroad, based on yearly reports*
- *convening the inaugural session of the National Board for the Development of Volunteerism*
- *implementing activities and measures to develop and implement this law*
- *acting as a coordinator and technical support for the National Board for the Development of Volunteerism.*

Beside the Law on Volunteering, there are other volunteering regulations, which all together form a national policy on volunteerism development:

### *The National Strategy for the Creation of an Enabling Environment for Civil Society Development*

2006 - 2011 and its *Operational Implementation Plan* provided basic guidelines which were to be attained by 2011 in order to improve the existing legal, financial and institutional mechanisms, to support civil society development and to achieve the enabling environment for civil society development in Croatia. Within the National Strategy, there is a chapter on volunteer development, philanthropy and foundations, defining the following goals for volunteer development<sup>1</sup>:

- *strengthening volunteer centres in Croatia as a needed infrastructure for volunteer work*
- *developing a system of values for common wellbeing through the educational system, in order to accustom children and young people to volunteering values*
- *creating financing programmes which promote volunteering for the purpose of strengthening social capital*
- *providing a pattern for the institutional recognition of volunteer work as a prerequisite for a long term development and for receiving service or employment benefits*
- *developing a method to collect information on the frequency and extent of volunteering activities*
- *including the economic value of volunteer work into the GDP*
- *encouraging and developing volunteer programmes for public institutions*
- *supporting research and education to enhance the knowledge on volunteerism.*

The new National Strategy for the Creation of an Enabling Environment for Civil Society Development 2012/2013 - 2017/2018 is in the process of development. Volunteering will be incorporated as a part of different chapters in the new Strategy document. Furthermore, based on the recommendation by National Coordinating Body for EYV2011, Croatia will start work in 2012 on the development of a National Strategy focused solely on volunteering.

*Volunteer Code of Ethics* (The Official Gazette No. 55/08) prescribes rules of conduct for volunteers, volunteer organisers and beneficiaries in accordance with the principles of volunteering from the Law on Volunteering.

Regulation on the content and form of the *Report from Volunteer Organisers* (The Official Gazette No. 106/07, 121/07, 101/08) on accomplished services and activities for volunteer organisers, the period and deadline for delivering the reports as well as other related issues.

The *Regulation of the National Volunteer Award* (The Official Gazette No. 106/07) regulates the procedure, how to publish the call of proposals, selection criteria, value of the prize, and the awarding of medals and certificates.

The *National Youth Programme for Action*<sup>2</sup>, in place since August 2004, allows youth organisations to participate in the development of the programme. Section 2.7.2. of the National Youth Programme for Action deals with youth volunteer work and states how this is especially important for acquiring work experience and skills, for facilitating active participation by young people in social development and social solidarity affirmation. Through volunteering, young people are given an opportunity to express their professional interests, help others and improve their community activities.

1. Source: The Government of the Republic of Croatia, 2006. National Strategy for the Creation of an Enabling Environment for Civil Society Development 2006 – 2011 and the Operational Implementation Plan, Zagreb

2. A new National Youth Programme for Action is in the process of making under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Family Affairs, Veterans' Affairs and Intergenerational Solidarity

Besides the Ministry of Social Policy and Youth, the main public bodies responsible for supporting volunteering in Croatia are:

### **The National Foundation for Civil Society Development**

was founded by the Croatian Parliament on 16 October 2003 with a special law (The Official Gazette, 173/03), as a public foundation with the purpose of promoting and developing civil society in Croatia. The National Foundation offers professional and financial support to programmes which encourage sustainability of the non-profit sector, inter-sectoral collaboration, civil initiatives, philanthropy, volunteerism and which improve democratic institutions. It is financed from the national budget, provided by the Office for Cooperation with Civil Society Organisations, from the earnings of games such as prize games, from the main assets, donations and other funding, in accordance with Article 16 of the Law on Foundations and Funds. In collaboration with regional volunteer centres it takes part in (co-)organising the national conferences on volunteerism in Croatia. In accordance with its strategic objectives, it grants the annual award 'School - a friend of the community' through which it selects, and presents to the public the most innovative volunteering initiatives in elementary schools and models of youth volunteering in high schools in Croatia.

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*Various governmental bodies are responsible for supporting volunteering using project funding, project partnerships and exchanges of experience and information.*

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### **The Office for Cooperation with Civil Society Organisations**

was founded by a Regulation on the Office for Cooperation with Civil Society Organisations in 1998, to attend to expert assignments from the Government of the Republic of Croatia, with regards to creating conditions for cooperation and partnership with the non-governmental and non-profit sectors, and especially with civil society organisations. The office has a wide range of activities: from proposing new legal framework for non-profit nongovernmental operations, to monitoring the implementation of the National Strategy for the 'Creation of an Enabling Environment for Civil Society Development' and measures of the Operational Implementation of the Strategy, to developing financing activities through the national budget, other public sources and European Union (EU) funds.

### **The National Board for the Development of Volunteerism**

is an advisory body for the Croatian Government. Its activities are public and it implements measures and activities with the purpose of promoting and further developing volunteerism. In collaboration with authorities, The National Board for the Development of Volunteerism proposes measures for the advancement of volunteers' status in society, it proposes regulations on volunteer privileges, it decides about the National Volunteer Award, it initiates new regulations concerning volunteerism or changes the existing ones, introduces the Volunteer Code of Ethics within which the Ethics Committee operates, and it undertakes other activities for promoting volunteerism. The National Board for the Development of Volunteerism has 19 members, representatives of the public sector, civil society organisations or independent experts, appointed by the Government of the Republic of Croatia. The Board has a president and a vice-president elected by the members of the Board.

### **The Council for Civil Society Development**

is a qualified advisory body of the Government of the Republic of Croatia. The Council works for the development and implementation of the collaboration programme between the Croatian Government and the non-profit sector. The programme deals with the implementation of the National Strategy for the Creation of an Enabling Environment for Civil Society Development, with development of philanthropy, social capital, partnerships and intersectoral collaboration. The Council has 23 members and a president elected by the members of the council.

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*Only 6% of the organisations who had cooperated with the public sector reported that this collaboration had been smooth.*

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According to the national study “Assessment of the development level of CSOs in Croatia”<sup>3</sup>, which examined the issue of cooperation between CSOs and the government, a large majority of the CSOs surveyed had experience of cooperation with governmental bodies. In most cases this refers to cooperation at the national level. The most common form of cooperation with the public sector was project funding, followed by project partnerships, and exchanges of experience and information. It is interesting to note that only 6% of all associations who had experience of cooperation with the public sector mentioned that the collaboration had been smooth. One of the most common problems, highlighted by a quarter of the associations who had this experience, refers to the prevalence of personal contacts over the institutional relationship, also identified as a problem in several other studies on civil society in Croatia.

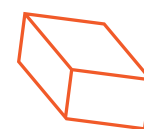
The Ministry of the Family, Veterans’ Affairs and Intergenerational Solidarity have a close cooperation with four regional volunteer centres, based on the signed contract of regional volunteer centres co-financing. The other listed bodies/institutions have a very open, encouraging and supporting attitude and work well with a wide range of civil society organisations.

3. Source: National Foundation for civil society development (2007). National study “Assessment of the development level of CSOs in Croatia.”

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

Croatia has neither a National Volunteer Centre nor a national umbrella organisation for structures involved in volunteering, but has an informal Croatian Volunteer Centres Network (CVCN). This network has been established as a result of a collaboration of civil society organisations from four major cities in Croatia, which have been improving and promoting volunteerism for a number of years already. CVNC encourages the development of volunteerism in Croatia by (I) influencing public policies and legal settings, (II) promoting and establishing educational standards in the area of volunteerism and volunteer management, (III) informing the public, (IV) ensuring the quality standards of the services provided by volunteer centres, as well as (V) developing good practice examples.

In Croatia there are four regional volunteer centres (RVC), which are either wide-ranging RVCs - all activities of the centres are focused on volunteering - or in-house RVCs, where activities of volunteer centres are part of the wider program of the organisation. The main purpose of the regional volunteer centres is promoting and developing volunteerism on the local, regional and national level. This is done through education in the area of volunteer management, educating the public about volunteerism, matching potential volunteers with available volunteering opportunities, organising informational and promotional campaigns, editing publications and conducting research on volunteerism. Regional volunteer centres take proactive steps by offering their support in organising volunteering. Regional volunteer centres closely cooperate through the Croatian Volunteer Centres Network.



Apart from the regional volunteer centres there are eight local volunteer centres (LVCs) in Croatia, conducting activities on a regular basis in Slatina, Zabok, Gvozd, Samobor, Zadar, Omiš, Sinj and Dubrovnik. All of them are volunteer-based, with most of their activities focused on the promotion of volunteerism. RVCs serve as an information basis for the LVCs, especially through the framework of CVCN. There is a lack of cooperation between LVCs themselves at the moment. Based on the yearly reports of volunteer involving organisations collected by the Ministry of the Family, Veterans' Affairs and Intergenerational Solidarity the biggest volunteer involving organisations are<sup>4</sup>:

Name of organisation	Number of volunteers
Croatian Red Cross (different local branch offices throughout Croatia)	912
Regional Volunteer Centres (4 RVC)	435
Association of Croatian Homeland War Veterans	679
Krila - therapeutic horse riding for physically disadvantaged people	136
Cube - association for children and youth	134
Scout Association of Croatia	131
GONG	120
Croatian Caritas	119

According to the national study "Assessment of the development level of CSOs in Croatia"<sup>5</sup>, 90% of the surveyed CSOs had been engaged in some kind of cooperation with other CSOs. The main motivation for such cooperation was shared interests, followed by effective use of available resources, and mutual support. In most cases, cooperation involved implementation of joint projects, provision of training, and networking.

Regional volunteer centres have established cooperation with a wide range of organisations that involve volunteers on a regular basis.

## 5. OTHER STAKEHOLDERS

Based on the yearly reports of volunteer-involving organisations, collected by the Ministry for Social Policy and Youth (until January 2012 The Ministry of the Family, Veterans' Affairs and Intergenerational Solidarity) in 2009, twenty-seven public bodies involved volunteers in different activities: seven local/regional governments, five governmental bodies and fifteen public institutions. Volunteers were engaged in administrative work or on specific projects carried out by the above-mentioned entities (stakeholders)<sup>6</sup>.

Involvement of businesses in volunteering is still at the early stage. Businesses are beginning to recognise the benefits of social responsibility programmes for the company's competitiveness. Regional volunteer centres inform businesses on volunteering related issues through several

4. Yearly report on volunteer involving organisations for 2009, The Ministry of Family Affairs, Veterans' Affairs and Intergenerational Solidarity. The report was used for the first time in 2009, which was considered as a testing year. There is still a need to find the appropriate promotional mechanism to encourage volunteer involving organisations to send their reports.

5. Source: national study "Assessment of the development level of CSOs in Croatia which was carried out by the National Foundation for civil society development in 2007,

6. Yearly report of the volunteer involving organisation for 2009, be Ministry of Family Affairs, Veterans' Affairs and Intergenerational Solidarity



promotional activities, with the aim of showing them how any investment in the community may have a positive return for the company, and can also build a bridge between a business and the local community.

There are no institutional models established for the promotion of volunteerism or formal assessment of the volunteer contribution in the Croatian educational system. Different initiatives at different educational levels are rather individual efforts and not institutional or systemic ones. Several service-learning initiatives are found at universities, with students receiving European Credit Transfer System (ECTS) credits for community work.

The National Foundation for Civil Society Development has had a significant role in promoting youth volunteering across elementary and secondary schools in Croatia. In 2006 the National Foundation established an annual award 'School - a friend of the community' for the recognition of volunteering initiatives in elementary schools, followed one year later, by a similar initiative for secondary schools. The award consists of 10,000 HRK per school project (around 1,500 EUR).

National government and local authorities have been involved in promoting volunteering, usually in cooperation with RVCs, through annual regional awards for volunteer contribution. There are currently regional awards for volunteerism in three counties/regions, all of them initiated by the CSOs currently members of CNVC:

*Splitsko-dalmatinska County* – the award for the Split area has been given by civil society organisations in collaboration with the City of Split from 2000.

*Osiječko-baranjska County* – the annual volunteer award, created in 2006, is given by the Volunteer Centre Osijek and supported by the regional Council for the Development of Volunteerism, whose members are reputable community members. It is awarded under the sponsorship of the City of Osijek in the following categories: volunteering involvement of the individual, the award for a successful inclusion of volunteers and the award for the business contribution to volunteerism.

*Primorsko-goranska County* – the award 'Volunteer of the year', started in 2007, is presented by the Association for Civil Society Development SMART in collaboration with the City of Rijeka and Primorsko-goranska county (local authorities). There are six awards in total: three for the volunteers of the year for the area of Rijeka and three for the regional level of Primorsko-goranska county.

These regional awards coexist with the *National Volunteer Award*, which is awarded annually as part of the official Governmental protocol for the celebration of the International Volunteer Day. The Ministry of the Family, Veterans' Affairs and Intergenerational Solidarity award the National Award for individual volunteer contribution and the National Award for an organisation involving volunteers.

During 2011, in cooperation with the Delegation of the European Union to the Republic of Croatia, the Croatian Network of Volunteer Centres and Ministry of the Family, Veterans' Affairs and Intergenerational Solidarity, established the *European Year of Volunteering Journalist Award*. The above listed partner organisations issued calls for the award in order to raise awareness of the importance of volunteering and to make their own contribution to the European Year of Volunteering, 2011. This award aimed to give credit to Croatian journalists who have raised

public awareness of the importance of volunteering and to encourage the media to report on this relevant issue. The award had two categories: best written report on volunteering in 2011 and the best report on volunteering in audio-visual media. Marking the International Volunteers' Day (5 December), the Head of the EU Delegation to Croatia, Ambassador Paul Vandoren, and the representatives of the other partner institutions presented the award at the State Volunteering Awards ceremony.

Besides the national and regional annual awards, National Conferences on Volunteerism have played a significant role in volunteering promotion. Conferences are organised by the National Foundation for Civil Society Development, the Ministry of the Family, Veterans' Affairs and Intergenerational Solidarity, and the Croatian Network of Volunteer Centres.

## 6. FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

The main national provider of financial support for volunteering is the Ministry of the Family, Veterans' Affairs and Intergenerational Solidarity. The budget line 'Volunteering development' is part of the national budget, with an annual allocation of 985,000.00 HRK in 2010 (approximately 132,000 EUR).

These financial resources have been included in the yearly national budget, approved by the Croatian Parliament and Government and announced in The Official Gazette. These financial resources do not fully cover all the volunteering activity within the country, but allow for proper implementation of basic activities as defined by the Law on Volunteering. A large part of the budget is allocated through a public call for proposals for (I) local community volunteer projects and (II) co-funding institutional grants for supporting regional volunteer centres' development. Other possible funding sources include local budgets, the National Foundation for Civil Society Development, businesses and EU funds.

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The budget line 'Volunteering development' is part of the national budget with an annual allocation of circa 132,000 EUR.

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## 7. REGULAR AND SYSTEMATIC RESEARCH

Over the last ten years research on volunteering has been conducted primarily by civil society organisations. However, measurement of volunteering and its impact are still a neglected area in Croatia. There is no research conducted on a regular basis, civil society not being considered an important research area by the academic community. Research initiatives by CSOs are subject to a limitation of expertise in this field and are marked by different methodologies and sampling, which makes comparisons very difficult.

The Ministry of the Family, Veterans' Affairs and Intergenerational Solidarity show interest in taking steps to improve data collection systems. However, one important challenge is the insufficient statistics related to civil society sector in Croatia.



## 8. ETHICS AND QUALITY STANDARDS FOR VOLUNTEERING

*Volunteering opportunities are published on online databases and promoted through the media or public events.*

Regional volunteer centres have developed a national curriculum for the training programme on volunteer management. The training programme has been continuously implemented over the last three years throughout Croatia. It consists of 3 training modules lasting 2 days. During 2008 and 2009 there were 168 volunteer-involving organisation beneficiaries of the training programme. Evaluation indicates a great influence of such educational inputs for the development of volunteering programmes. Participants also receive different toolkits to help them in involving and managing volunteers.

The Croatian Volunteer Centres Network created the Quality standard for volunteer centres and is responsible for monitoring the process of ensuring quality standards. The standards offer detailed information and guidelines for their implementation. The standards were developed in order to: (I) facilitate a common approach to volunteering, which includes vision, values and basic abilities; (II) set up the basis for organisational and programme excellence, (III) professionalise the work of volunteer centres and strengthen their impact; (IV) standardise the membership criteria for the CVCN.

In addition, there is a Volunteer Code of Ethics (published in the Official Gazette No. 55/08) of Croatia. It prescribes rules of conduct for volunteers, volunteer organisations and beneficiaries in accordance with the principles of volunteering from the Law on Volunteering. The National Board for Volunteering Development is responsible for ensuring that the Code of Ethics is properly implemented.

## 9. AWARENESS OF VOLUNTEERING OPPORTUNITIES

RVCs manage regional online databases, which include data on the supply and demand of volunteers. Databases allow for searching, filtering and sorting information according to several criteria. Media coverage works better at regional and local level than it does on the national level. There are several public events aimed at raising awareness about volunteering.

The following promotional tools/mechanisms are in place in Croatia:

- *Celebrating International Volunteer Day (5 December) – Regional volunteer centres organise a public campaign with the purpose of informing and promoting volunteerism and encouraging citizens and stakeholders to take part in it. As a part of the campaign, regional awards for volunteer contribution are presented. Each year, a great number of volunteers are involved in the campaign*
- *Local, regional and national Volunteer Awards*
- *Volunteer Fairs*
- *Promotional products such as leaflets, posters, T-shirts, balloons, bookmarks, calendars, postcards, maps, linen bags, caps, chocolates, invitations, newsletters etc.*
- *TV and radio spots/jingles (broadcasted also in local cinemas)*
- *National Conference on Volunteerism - since 2001*
- *Marking the European Year of Volunteering 2011- members of CNVC, co-organised the campaign 'Croatia's volunteering'.*

There are several websites displaying useful information on volunteerism:

[www.smart.hr](http://www.smart.hr) - Association for Civil Society Development, SMART

[www.udruga-mi.hr](http://www.udruga-mi.hr) – Association MI

[www.vcz.hr](http://www.vcz.hr) – Volunteer Centre Zagreb

[www.osvolonteri.com](http://www.osvolonteri.com) – Volunteer Centre Osijek

[www.hmvc.net](http://www.hmvc.net) – Croatian Network of Volunteer Centres

[www.mobms.hr](http://www.mobms.hr) - Ministry of the Family, Veterans' Affairs and Intergenerational Solidarity

## 10. ADDITIONAL COUNTRY SPECIFICITIES

The most important challenges to volunteerism development in Croatia are:

1. *Establishing systematic research on volunteerism and data collection*
2. *Increasing cross-sectoral cooperation among stakeholders, in particular businesses and universities*
3. *Recognising volunteerism, particularly in the process of employment and education*
4. *Adopting a system for measurement of the economic value of volunteering*
5. *Ensuring diversity of funding opportunities for volunteerism*

## 11. RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendations for improvement of the volunteering infrastructure in Croatia are to:

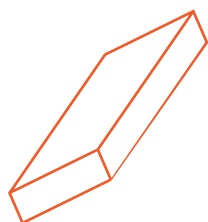
- strengthen volunteer centres as part of the volunteer infrastructure (particularly important in engaging with policy makers to create the conditions for volunteering)
- promote the law and inform volunteer involving organisations about the law
- encourage/develop policies and programmes for volunteering in schools
- recognise volunteering in the process of employment and formal education
- increase frequency of volunteering
- set up a system for information collection, especially related to volunteer profile, frequency of volunteering, motivation, types of activities
- set up a system for assessing the economic value of volunteering
- increase volunteering in public institutions (i.e. health and social care and local and regional government)
- strengthen the partnership and cooperation between different stakeholders (cross-sectoral cooperation)
- secure sustainable funding

One of the mechanisms which should be put in place is a national volunteering policy, which should be adopted by the government in order to stimulate and influence volunteering development.

Recommendations on a European level are to:

- promote volunteering infrastructure as a tool for encouraging citizens to volunteer
- ensure basic elements of a volunteering infrastructure
- achieve a common understanding at a European level about what is meant by 'volunteering infrastructure' and what are its main roles and elements
- support the good balance between spontaneity of volunteering and organised volunteering
- showcase good practice examples as well as bad practice ones in order to improve quality of volunteering

These types of recommendations are particularly important for the countries such as Croatia that still lag behind other EU countries in terms of volunteerism development.



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## Resources

Forčić, G., 2007. *Volonterstvo i razvoj zajednice - rezultati istraživanja uključenosti građana u civilne inicijative u zajednici kroz volonterski rad*

Ledić, J., 2001. *Biti volonter/volonterka? Istraživanje uključenosti građana u civilne inicijative u zajednici kroz volonterski rad*

Ledić, J., 2007. *Zašto (ne) volontiramo. Stavovi javnosti o volonterstvu*

National Board of Volunteering Development, 2009. *Annual Report of the National Board of Volunteering Development, November 9th 2007 till October 25th 2009*

National Foundation for Civil Society Development, 2007. *Assessment of the development level of CSOs in Croatia*

The Government of the Republic of Croatia, 2006. *National Strategy for the Creation of an Enabling Environment for Civil Society Development 2006 - 2011 and the Operational Implementation Plan*

The Ministry of the Family, Veterans' Affairs and Intergenerational Solidarity, 2009. *Yearly report of the volunteer involving organisation*

The Ministry of the Family, Veterans' Affairs and Intergenerational Solidarity, 2004. *National Youth Programme for Action*