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Partnership between the European Commission
and the Council of Europe in the field of Youth

INFORMATION SHEET

VOLUNTEERING OF YOUNG PEOPLE

AUSTRIA



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1. Volunteering of young people in Austria

Give an overview on volunteering of young people (13 – 30) in your country on the national and regional level (in federal states) answering the following questions:

- Are there official national/regional recommendations (policies) concerning volunteering of young people?

On national level: no

On regional level: no

BUT

On the basis of the need for action analysed by the working groups in the International Year of Volunteers 2001 and summarised in the "Volunteers' Manifesto", four committees have drawn up specific recommendations for its implementation. This was unanimously approved as the "Voluntary work action programme" by the Austrian Council for Voluntary Work at its second meeting on 20 October 2004.

The "Voluntary work action programme" is structured according to three categories. Primary, it is necessary to create a legally valid definition of voluntary work and honorary office. On this basis, the legal safeguarding of voluntary work can be done, particularly concerning personal liability and accident insurance, but also within the framework of employment legislation.

When the recommended measures for the improvement of the framework conditions for voluntary work have been implemented, an image campaign to increase the perceived value of voluntary work is to be carried out with the objective of finding new activists, young and old.

For the implementation of this "Voluntary work action programme", concerted cooperation is required at the level of the federal government, the provinces, the towns/cities and municipalities, interest groups and the NGOs themselves, in order to then be able to find new activists for all areas of voluntary work via the above-mentioned image campaign to raise the perceived value of voluntary work.

- Is volunteering usually paid?

Volunteering is not paid in Austria, but normally the organisations offering opportunities for volunteering cover all costs and sometimes also offer some incentives – like vouchers. With the ongoing debate on the abolition of mandatory military service (which can be substituted through civil service) also the discussion about paying for voluntary activities was initiated.

- Is there any National voluntary service?

Yes, the Freiwilligenweb, the Austrian Network for Voluntary activity informs about opportunities and projects for people interested in volunteering.

-What is the legal / financial (fiscal) / social security status of volunteers?

In many cases if volunteers are working for organisations which have special insurance for accidents in the time of their voluntary work.

For the volunteers, who make a "Freiwilliges Soziales Jahr" www.fsj.at, exists the same social protection system as for all employees. Otherwise no social security system exists for volunteers. A legislative solution for the problem of social protection of volunteers is aimed for.

2. Main actors and networks

- *Who are the main actors (institutional and NGOs) in the field of volunteering of young people on the different levels?*

National:

Federal Ministry of Social Affairs and Consumer Protection – Department of voluntary work - <http://www.bmsk.gv.at/> tel: +43/1/71100-0

Main Actors in the youth field for volunteering:

National Level – financial support, youth programs

Federal Ministry for Economy, Family and Youth – Department II/5 (youth politics) –

www.bmwfj.gv.at tel: +43/1/711003327

Austrian Development Agency www.ada.gv.at tel:+43/1/903990

Regional:

Vienna – Federal state government - MA 13 (Education and extracurricular youth services) – Department of youth and education - +43/4000/84341

Lower Austria: Federal state government – Department of youth; +43/2742/9005/13267

Upper Austria: Federal state government – Department of education and Society - +43/732/7720/15501

Burgenland – Federal state government – Department 2; +43/2682/6002902 -

Styria – Federal state government – Department 6A (youth, women, family and generation) – +43/316/877/2647

Carinthia – Federal state government – Department of youth - +43/50/536/41361

Salzburg – Federal state government - Department 2/07 (youth) - +43/662/8042/2117

Tyrol – Federal state government – Department of education, culture and sports – JUFF +43/512/508-3560

Vorarlberg - Federal state government – Department of youth and family – +43/5574/511/24125

There are many different nongovernmental actors in every field of voluntary activities of young people in Austria, which range from emergency response to sports.

- *Are any organisations in this field specifically targeting youth (as participants in voluntary activities and voluntary services)?*

The main youth NGOs are member organisations of the Austrian Youth Council (*Bundesjugendvertretung*) and a list of these youth NGOs can be found on the web-page of that umbrella organisation. Most of these organisations are very active in providing opportunities for young people to volunteer in different fields.

Especially those organisations active in health care and emergency response and rescue service (e.g. Red Cross, Green Cross, Arbeitersamariterbund), fire brigades, environmental organisations and human rights as well as animal protection NGOs are of high interest for young people doing voluntary activities.

- *Do networks and/or co-operations exist for supporting volunteering of young people in your country?*

The Freiwilligenweb, the network for volunteers in Austria, helps and supports with information on opportunities and on the legal status of volunteering.

- *What is the legal / financial (fiscal) status of organisations promoting volunteering?*

Organised on the basis of the private law relating to associations, NGOs have special tax grants because of their public usefulness and non-profit-making. Any compensation for voluntary activities is liable to taxes as all other income.

3. Promotion of volunteering of young people

- Which methods among the one listed below are the most used to promote volunteering of young people in your country? Explain and provide examples for each of the box ticked.

By national policies:

- Advertisement campaigns
- Education
- Youth information centres
- funding of NGOs
- Other: awards
- None

Especially in the year 2011, which is the European year of volunteering, the advertisement campaigning for voluntary activities and engagement are stronger. TV, billboards and internet campaigns are the main means for informing about the value of volunteering for the society and the personal development. The yearly project "72 Stunden ohne Kompromiss" (72 hours without compromise) that is conducted and organised by a network of (youth) NGOs receives a broad support by the Austrian Broadcasting Company ORF through coverage, reporting and advertisement.

The youth information centres provide information on volunteering in Austria and international.

NGOs receive funding for activities that are carried out with volunteers as voluntary service.

By NGOs:

- Advertisement campaigns
- Education
- Youth information centres
- Other:
- None

Fire brigades, emergency response and rescue services campaign for volunteering via billboards, TV and the internet. With the debate on the cancellation of the mandatory military service that very often is substituted with voluntary service in NGOs many of those organisations that works with these *Zivildienster* now try even stronger to attract young people for the tasks.

- Which among the followings are methods of recognition of volunteering of young people in your country? (Explain and provide examples for each of the box ticked.)

- European Youth Pass
- Certificates
- Credits in the formal education system
- Awards
- Incentives
- They are valued in the CV
- Other:
- They are not recognised

The award for special achievements through voluntary activities is provided yearly. This award ceremony is covered by print and electronic media.

Incentives are typical methods to attract people for volunteering. They can be small gadgets for mountaineering, a telephone card or vouchers for some cultural or sport events provided by sponsors from the economic field. In many cases it is free lodging and meals during the trainings and the time of work.

- What obstacles to young people's engagement in volunteering do exist and how are these faced by national policies?

Still no nation wide curricula for trainings of volunteers exist.

The problems of the legal status and the social protection of volunteers are not completely solved.

For the problem of social protection of volunteers a legislative solution is worked on.

4. Mobility of young volunteers

- Is there any national monitoring of how mobility of young volunteers takes place?

Non except those connected to the European Union Programme Youth in Action.

- What are these monitoring mechanisms? If yes, please explain.

5. Sources of information

Bundesministerium für Arbeit, Soziales und Konsumentenschutz (Hrsg.): Freiwilliges Engagement in Österreich, 1. Freiwilligenbericht. Wien 2009 (Federal Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Consumer Protection (ed.): Voluntary engagement in Austria, 1st Report on Voluntarism)

www.bmsk.gv.at

www.freiwilligenweb.at