

# The European Knowledge Centre for Youth Policy

Key priorities for youth policies answers on  
**Voluntary Activities**



Partnership between the European Commission and the Council of Europe in the field of youth policy, youth research and youth work.

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## **FINLAND, 2006**

### **1 Statistics**

#### **1.1 Different types of voluntary activities that exist for young people**

|                | Voluntary activities | Voluntary service | Civic service |
|----------------|----------------------|-------------------|---------------|
| <b>Exists?</b> | Yes                  | Yes               | Yes           |

#### **1.2 Number of young people who engage in voluntary activities**

|                     |                    |
|---------------------|--------------------|
| <b>Total Number</b> | n/a <i>persons</i> |
| <b>Total Female</b> | n/a <i>persons</i> |
| <b>Total Male</b>   | n/a <i>persons</i> |

#### **1.3 Number of young people who engage in voluntary service**

|                     |                    |
|---------------------|--------------------|
| <b>Total Number</b> | n/a <i>persons</i> |
| <b>Total Female</b> | n/a <i>persons</i> |
| <b>Total Male</b>   | n/a <i>persons</i> |

#### **1.4 Number of young people who engage in voluntary service abroad (excluding European Voluntary Service)**

|                     |                    |
|---------------------|--------------------|
| <b>Total Number</b> | n/a <i>persons</i> |
| <b>Total Female</b> | n/a <i>persons</i> |
| <b>Total Male</b>   | n/a <i>persons</i> |

#### **1.5 Number of young people who engage in national voluntary civic service**

|                     |                    |
|---------------------|--------------------|
| <b>Total Number</b> | n/a <i>persons</i> |
| <b>Total Female</b> | n/a <i>persons</i> |
| <b>Total Male</b>   | n/a <i>persons</i> |

##### **1.5.1 Number of young people who carry out their service period abroad**

|                     |                    |
|---------------------|--------------------|
| <b>Total Number</b> | n/a <i>persons</i> |
| <b>Total Female</b> | n/a <i>persons</i> |
| <b>Total Male</b>   | n/a <i>persons</i> |

### 1.5.2 Is the national voluntary civic service open to young people from outside the country?

~~Yes~~ No

### 1.5.3 If yes, number of young people from outside the country participating in your national voluntary civic service

|              |                    |
|--------------|--------------------|
| Total Number | n/a <i>persons</i> |
| Total Female | n/a <i>persons</i> |
| Total Male   | n/a <i>persons</i> |

### 1.6 Clarification of the statistics used

Approximately 37% of Finns engage in some form of voluntary activity (in 2000). Young people actively participate in various associations and are interested in a number of groups. According to a survey carried out by the Advisory Council for Youth Affairs, more than every second (52.4%) young person between 10 and 29 years of age is in one way or another involved in association activities.

## 2 Range of voluntary activities

### 2.1 Voluntary activities engaged in by young people and approximate number of people involved

|  | Exists? | Number |
|--|---------|--------|
| a. Community activity                  | Yes     | n/a    |
| b. Participation/self-governance       | Yes     | 3 000  |
| c. Emergency response                  | Yes     | n/a    |
| d. Community peacekeeping              | No      | n/a    |
| e. Social assistance                   | Yes     | n/a    |
| f. Personal assistance                 | Yes     | n/a    |
| g. Children and youth                  | Yes     | n/a    |
| h. Environment                         | Yes     | 40 000 |
| i. Human rights, advocacy and politics | Yes     | 20 000 |
| j. Economic justice                    | Yes     | n/a    |
| k. Development aid                     | Yes     | n/a    |
| l. Humanitarian aid                    | Yes     | 50 000 |

|                                  | Exists? | Number  |
|----------------------------------|---------|---------|
| <b>m. Religious volunteering</b> | Yes     | n/a     |
| <b>n. Education</b>              | Yes     | 150 000 |
| <b>o. Arts/culture</b>           | Yes     | n/a     |
| <b>p. Sports</b>                 | Yes     | 350 000 |
| <b>q. Recreation</b>             | Yes     | n/a     |

Other voluntary activities

Animal rights, street work against drugs and violence, support for immigrants etc.

## 3 Finance

### 3.1 Amount of finance that is annually available for voluntary activities and allocation of this finance

**Total :** n/a

Explanation

Voluntary activities are funded by a wide number of sources, which makes it difficult to state one certain amount of finance. State funding for youth organizations is approximately 17 Million euros. This sum is constantly increasing. Approximately 2/3 of their funding comes from public sources, 1/3 from their own sources. There are ca 70 youth organizations receiving state funding. The finance goes to the regional level, not directly to the local level. The total turnover of the civic activities sector is some 5 Billion euros, of which approximately 1.6 Billion euros comes from public financing. Independent fund-raising is important for associations.

### 3.2 Sources of finance

On a national level, Finland's Slot Machine Association RAY ([www.ray.fi](http://www.ray.fi)) and Finnish National Lottery Veikkaus ([www.veikkaus.fi](http://www.veikkaus.fi)) are significant public funding sources. According to the Lotteries Act, they have the monopoly on slot machines, casino, lottery and other gaming activities. Their profits are channelled to the public good through the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health and the Ministry of Education. The Evangelic-Lutheran church is an important player in Finnish society, both as a civil activity forum and an organiser of services. The church has the right to levy taxes just as does the state. Municipalities provide facilities for voluntary and other activities. Municipalities also grant funds for local cultural, youth and sports associations. Both international and local businesses can play a significant role in terms of marketing, advertising and sponsorship. E.g. Nokia and Telia-Sonera are among the most conspicuous players in this respect.

## 4 Main Actors

### 4.1 Main actors of voluntary activities of young people

Governmental actors

Ministry of Social Affairs and Health [www.stm.fi](http://www.stm.fi) Ministry of Education [www.minedu.fi](http://www.minedu.fi) Ministry of



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Justice is in charge of Finnish government's Citizen Participation Policy Programme [www.om.fi](http://www.om.fi)  
Non governmental actors

Finnish Youth Cooperation Allianssi is a national service and interest organisation in youth work and independent of any political and denominational affiliation. Almost all national youth or education organisations are its members, the total number of which is ca. 100. [www.alli.fi](http://www.alli.fi) The Evangelic-Lutheran church is an important player in Finnish society, both as a civil activity forum and an organiser of services. <http://evl.fi/> Young Advocates (Nuoret vaikuttajat) <http://nuva.mindnet.net/main.asp> Finnish Sports Federation is a co-operation, interest and service organisation for sports organisations, with promotion of civic sports activities as its main mission. Established in 1993, FSF has 127 member organisations and through them more than 1.1 million individual members. [www.slu.fi](http://www.slu.fi) Service Centre for Development Cooperation is an umbrella organisation for Finnish NGOs involved in development co-operation or other global issues. [www.kepa.fi](http://www.kepa.fi) Youth Academy is a co-operation organisation aiming at building bridges between spare time activities, education and working life. The young person learns independently and by working together with others. <http://www.nuortenakatemia.fi/>

## 5 Legal basis/legislation for voluntary activities in general and for young people in particular

### 5.1 Legal status of volunteers

In practice, the legal status of volunteers is ambiguous. Volunteers are often regarded as (corresponded to) employees, and voluntary service has usually been treated according to the taxation practices of the Employment Contracts Act. According to the definition in the Employment Contracts Act, an employment contract is characterised by working against remuneration. Neighbourly help, for example, has not been regarded as subject to employment contract legislation, even if the parties had clearly agreed on the benefits and responsibilities involved. In case of accidents, this is often problematic, as in most cases there is no insurance. According to Hannu Tapani Klami, problems may also arise when defining whether the situation involves an employment contract when a person does unpaid work for, say, a sports association, while the association charges a fee from a third party. With regard to unpaid work, the responsibility of the person doing the work is lighter than usual. Yet the person may be liable to paying damages irrespective of the fact that the work was unpaid. Persons doing work without payment should see to securing their liability insurance. When it comes to voluntary work, social security is another crucial problem. The Associations Act controls the activities of associations, including their voluntary activities.

### 5.2 Taxation/tax exemptions for volunteers and volunteer organisations

The taxation of voluntary work is subject to a number of different interpretations. The Finnish Centre for Pensions has stated that voluntary activity should not be compared with a contract of employment and related pensions legislation, thus, does not apply. Voluntary activity should correspond to education. The opportunity provided for a young volunteer to learn non-formally is



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not equal to a contract of employment. The pocket money received by the volunteer cannot be regarded as valid remuneration for the work. Furthermore, work performed by a volunteer cannot replace the basic functions of the receiving organisation. Despite the instructions provided by taxation authorities, which state, among other things, that a grant received by a foreign volunteer from his home country or pocket money paid by the EU should not be taxed in Finland, voluntary service has mostly been treated according to the Employment Contracts Act: the pocket money and fringe benefits earned by volunteers participating in the EVS programme have been taxed, even to the extent that the amount of taxes has exceeded the pocket money received.

### **5.3 Existence of social protection of volunteers**

No specific social security system exists for volunteers.

### **5.4 Legal situation of unemployed young people participating in voluntary activities**

Unemployed young people are treated the same way as other volunteers.

## **6 Programmes**

### **6.1 Programmes and plans on volunteering (national, regional, local)**

A great number of youth organisations have programmes on volunteering. More information e.g. here: [http://www.alli.fi/sivu.php?artikkeli\\_id=326](http://www.alli.fi/sivu.php?artikkeli_id=326) (Finnish Youth Cooperation Allianssi is a national service and interest organisation in youth work and independent of any political and denominational affiliation. Almost all national youth or education organisations are its members, the total number of which is ca. 100.) [www.kepa.fi](http://www.kepa.fi) (KEPA, or the Service Centre for Development Cooperation, is a service base for Finnish NGOs interested in development work and global issues)

## **7 Relationship between different types of voluntary services**

### **7.1 Relationship between military service, civilian service, civic service and voluntary service**

Military service is compulsory for men, but a person who for religious or ethical reasons refuses to serve in the Finnish Defence Forces can choose civilian service. Personal conviction against the use of weapons no longer needs to be proven. The service performed must consist of work that benefits the public interest ? generally in the government or municipalities. The men serve considerably longer than those in the defence forces. Currently, the duty extends over a period of 395 days. From 1995, women are able to volunteer for military service, but not for civilian service. The concept of voluntary service is somewhat alien to Finnish society. Yet there are a number of voluntary work programmes arranged by several bodies that can be categorised as voluntary service.



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## 7.2 Perspectives for the creation of a voluntary civic service in countries where it does not exist

No.

## 8 Development of voluntary activities, including standards/instruments aiming at securing and enhancing quality in voluntary activities

### 8.1 Recent (this year) developments in the area of voluntary activities

n/a

### 8.2 What are the trends concerning the range of voluntary activities?

Increasing ~~Decreasing~~ ~~Stable~~

Explanation

The number of young people participating in youth organizations is increasing. It is estimated, that without volunteers, some 80% of the activities of organisations would be dropped.

### 8.3 Description of quality standards used in voluntary activities

Methods for assessing the quantity and quality of civic activity are under constant development. An national evaluation system does not exist as such; civic activity is traditionally not under state guidance. The state has a result-based support system, which provides means for assessing the impact of the activities carried out by associations receiving funding from the state. Associations are continuously carrying out self-evaluations. The State Provincial Offices are responsible for evaluating their services according to the State Provincial Offices Act (348/2000). These evaluations produce local information on the youth work services of municipalities. In this connection, information on youth activities, including voluntary activities, is received. Associations must fulfill certain criterias to receive state funding. On the organisational level, young people can participate in both decision-making and actual operation.

### 8.4 Description of measures to improve the quality of voluntary activities for young people

The Finnish Red Cross provides volunteers with training, support and work counselling. The Centre for International Mobility CIMO provides training for (EVS) volunteers going abroad and for both receiving and sending organisations. The Evangelic-Lutheran church arranges courses on social skills for young volunteers. They provide volunteer club leaders with an opportunity for personal growth and developing their interpersonal and social skills. Volunteers in social work are provided with training and particularly those who serve as visiting friends or in corresponding tasks with work counselling. [http://www.nuortenkeskus.fi/index.php?lk\\_id=4](http://www.nuortenkeskus.fi/index.php?lk_id=4) Finnish Youth Cooperation Allianssi organizes training and courses for its member organizations. Ministry of



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Education organizes training for organisations in fund raising.

## 9 Removing obstacles to young people's voluntary engagement

### 9.1 The facilitation of young people's voluntary engagement

The Youth Policy Division of the Ministry of Education provides funding for civic action by young people and development projects in youth work (such as the participation projects). Municipalities support local youth organisations and groups. The idea is to support organisations so that they could focus on arranging actual activities instead of fund-raising alone. Thanks to these, many organisations have a full-time employee and many operate in their own facilities paid for by the city. The Recreational Activity Study Book of the Youth Academy, where young people can gain entries for activities they have been involved in. It gives the reader a broad view of the young person's skills and learning experiences. Many educational institutions and employers appreciate active young people who are able to present a reference of what they have been involved in and learnt outside school. In Finland, 70,000 young people already use the Study Book. The Youth Academy currently has 250 partner educational establishments, which recognise the study book entries in admissions or studies. The International Award for Young People ([www.intaward.org](http://www.intaward.org)), which is a method of youth work allowing young people to develop their social skills through various voluntary and recreational activities. Promoting the Award as a youth work method is one of the development projects of the Ministry of Education. The ENNE network organised by the Centre for International Mobility CIMO. The network consists of youth work volunteers and professionals, who have committed to distributing information on the EU Youth Programme for their own interest and target groups through different channels and providing young people and those working with the young with assistance.

### 9.2 Recent (this year) measures to remove obstacles to young people's volunteering

The Government Action Programme includes a Civic Participation Policy Programme ([www.vn.fi](http://www.vn.fi)), which seeks to promote representative democracy and improve the opportunities for the participation of NGOs and individual citizens. The ministry in charge of implementing the programme is the Ministry of Justice - the ministry that is responsible for the electoral system. The Ministry of Education is closely involved in the work of the steering committee of the programme and emphasises the development of interaction with NGOs and the bringing up of children and young people into active and critical citizenship.

### 9.3 Existing obstacles

In practice, the legal status of volunteers is ambiguous. The taxation of voluntary work is subject to a number of different interpretations. Most young people who are not currently engaged in organisational activities would like to participate, but have not found a suitable form of activity. On the other hand, according to survey the most common reason (44%) not to participate in voluntary



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activities is the lack of time.

## 10 Promotion of voluntary activities for young people

### 10.1 Information channels and contacts for voluntary activities of young people

Young people receive information from the media and educational establishments. Organisations and congregations maintain websites, which are frequently updated. Finnish Youth Cooperation Allianssi [www.alli.fi](http://www.alli.fi) and individual organisations distribute information on current forms of voluntary activities. Youth information service centres are also an important forum. Positive word of mouth communication is also an important channel. Youth Academy (Nuorten Akatemia) is a co-operation organisation aiming at building bridges between spare time activities, education and working life. [http://www.nuortenakatemia.fi/index.php?lk\\_id=64](http://www.nuortenakatemia.fi/index.php?lk_id=64) The ENNE network organised by the Centre for International Mobility CIMO. The network consists of youth work volunteers and professionals, who have committed to distributing information on the EU Youth Programme for their own interest and target groups through different channels and providing young people and those working with the young with assistance. The participants in the network give advice and guidance in their respective areas within their resources.

### 10.2 Promotion activities for voluntary activities

International Volunteer Day for Economic and Social Development (5.12.) Annual reward of voluntary activities in Helsinki <http://www.vapaaehtoistoiminta.fi/> The International Award for Young People ([www.intaward.org](http://www.intaward.org)), which is a method of youth work allowing young people to develop their social skills through various voluntary and recreational activities. Young people participating in this scheme acquire certificates from their achievements defined in different levels. Promoting the Award as a youth work method is one of the development projects of the Ministry of Education.

### 10.3 Initiatives to promote voluntary activities among young people from disadvantaged backgrounds

n/a

## 11 Recognition of voluntary activities of young people

### 11.1 Initiatives for recognition 'good practices'

The Recreational Activity Study Book of the Youth Academy, where young people can gain entries for activities they have been involved in. It gives the reader a broad view of the young person's skills and learning experiences. It serves as a CV, as participation in all forms of recreational activities can be recorded in it. Many educational institutions and employers appreciate active young people who are able to present a reference of what they have been involved in and learnt outside school. The Study Book is aimed at all young people above 13 years of age who are



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involved in recreational and voluntary activities. In Finland, 70,000 young people already use the Study Book. The Youth Academy currently has 250 partner educational establishments, which recognise the study book entries in admissions or studies. The International Award for Young People ([www.intaward.org](http://www.intaward.org)), which is a method of youth work allowing young people to develop their social skills through various voluntary and recreational activities. Young people participating in this scheme acquire certificates from their achievements defined in different levels. Promoting the Award as a youth work method is one of the development projects of the Ministry of Education. According to the Information Strategy for Education and Research 1999-2004 ([www.minedu.fi](http://www.minedu.fi)) the assessment and recognition of knowledge should be developed in a manner that allows young people and adults to make use of the knowledge they have acquired earlier in work, civic activity or studies. The Upper Secondary Schools Act (629/1998) and the Vocational Education Act (811/1998) stipulate that a student whom the educational establishment considers having sufficient capabilities of pursuing studies, can be admitted as a student. The student has also the right to transfer earlier studies, that correspond to the aims and content of the study programme, as credits needed for the degree.

### 11.2 Measures of societal recognition

The International Award for Young People ([www.intaward.org](http://www.intaward.org)), which is a method of youth work allowing young people to develop their social skills through various voluntary and recreational activities. Young people participating in this scheme acquire certificates from their achievements defined in different levels. Promoting the Award as a youth work method is one of the development projects of the Ministry of Education. International Volunteer Day for Economic and Social Development (December 5th). Annual reward of voluntary activities in Helsinki <http://www.vapaaehtoistoiminta.fi/>

## 12 Co-operations and networks, exchange of volunteers, transnational and international cooperation

### 12.1 Networks who promote voluntary activities of young people

Finnish organisations actively engage in international activities through their own networks or umbrella organisations as well as through the United Nations system. Finnish organisations also participate in a number of European youth activity structures such as the Youth Forum Jeunesse (YFJ), European Youth Card Association, European Youth Information and Counselling Agency. Allianssi Youth Exchanges. It is a youth exchange agency providing young Finns opportunities to work abroad. Annually it recruit about 1000 young Finns in our programmes abroad, and places about 100 international volunteers in work camps in Finland every year. Those volunteers are recruited from the member and partner organisations of the Alliance of the European Voluntary Service Organisations. [http://www.alli.fi/index.php?lk\\_id=30](http://www.alli.fi/index.php?lk_id=30) Finnish Branch of Service Civil International (KVT) is a peace organisation that aims to promote equality, social acceptance and respect for the environment. KVT's most important activity is organising international workcamps in Finland and sending volunteers to workcamps abroad. In addition, KVT coordinates long-term



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volunteering. KVT is run by volunteers working in various working groups and local groups. European Voluntary Service project (EVS). The European Union supports non-formal education opportunities for young people through transnational voluntary service which directly and actively involves young people in activities designed to meet the needs of society in a wide range of fields. The EVS Action is open to all young people who are legally resident in a Programme country or in an eligible third country and are, in principle, aged between 18 and 25. International Cultural Youth Exchange, ICYE (Maailmanvaihto) is an international non-profit youth exchange organisation promoting youth mobility, intercultural learning and international voluntary service.

### 12.2 Exchange of information, experience and good practices

Organisations and congregations maintain websites, which are frequently updated. Finnish Youth Cooperation Allianssi [www.alli.fi](http://www.alli.fi) and individual organisations distribute information on current forms of voluntary activities. Youth information service centres are also an important forum. The ENNE network organised by the Centre for International Mobility CIMO. The network consists of youth work volunteers and professionals, who have committed to distributing information on the EU Youth Programme for their own interest and target groups through different channels and providing young people and those working with the young with assistance. The participants in the network give advice and guidance in their respective areas within their resources. The Centre for International Mobility CIMO also has a web information service for young people going abroad [www.maailmalle.net](http://www.maailmalle.net)

### 12.3 Exchange for young volunteers: at all levels (transnational, national, regional, between communities)

Allianssi Youth Exchanges. It is a youth exchange agency providing young Finns opportunities to work abroad. Annually it recruit about 1000 young Finns in our programmes abroad, and places about 100 international volunteers in work camps in Finland every year. Those volunteers are recruited from the member and partner organisations of the Alliance of the European Voluntary Service Organisations. [http://www.alli.fi/index.php?lk\\_id=30](http://www.alli.fi/index.php?lk_id=30) Finnish Branch of Service Civil International (KVT) is a peace organisation that aims to promote equality, social acceptance and respect for the environment. KVT's most important activity is organising international workcamps in Finland and sending volunteers to workcamps abroad. In addition, KVT coordinates long-term volunteering. KVT is run by volunteers working in various working groups and local groups. European Voluntary Service project (EVS). The European Union supports non-formal education opportunities for young people through transnational voluntary service which directly and actively involves young people in activities designed to meet the needs of society in a wide range of fields. International Cultural Youth Exchange, ICYE (Maailmanvaihto) is an international non-profit youth exchange organisation promoting youth mobility, intercultural learning and international voluntary service.

### 12.4 Collective volunteering projects



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### **12.4.1 Collective volunteering projects (where large numbers of volunteers jointly assist in cultural or sporting events, or where they help in humanitarian/natural disaster situations)**

Description of projects (including future projects)

There is a great variety of NGOs which organise events for large number of volunteers. Some examples: - Finnish Natural League (nature protection and environmental education NGO for young people) has many collective projects. - The Finnish Red Cross has approximately 12 000 under 30 years old members, and thousands of active volunteers for such projects as ?Hunger day? fund raising and first aid groups. - Sport events, such as Helsinki 2005 Wold Championships in athletics, are assisted by volunteers and sport clubs.

Details of programme/project

n/a

### **12.4.2 Possibilities for involvement of international volunteers in these projects**

Yes. In addition to various NGOs projects, there are ca 150-200 volunteers in Finland per year in international workcamps organized by Finnish Branch of Service Civil International. The number is ca 140 per year in international workcamps organized by Finnish Youth Co-operation Allianssi ry (a national youth council).

## **12.5 International solidarity volunteer service**

### **12.5.1 International solidarity voluntary service in the EU and the world (e.g. in human/natural disaster situations, civil protection, humanitarian aid, development assistance, capacity-building etc.)**

n/a

Details of programme/project

n/a

### **12.5.2 Major NGOs and/or NGO platforms active in the field of international solidarity service in non-EU countries**

KEPA, or the Service Centre for Development Cooperation, is a service base for Finnish NGOs interested in development work and global issues. Over 200 such organisations belong to KEPA. These organisations vary greatly in character - large and small, local and national, professional and ideological. KEPA itself is a politically and ideologically non-aligned organisation that operates with funding from the Finnish foreign ministry.

### **12.5.3 The degree of involvement of the government/state institutions in supporting international solidarity service in non-EU countries**

The Service Centre for Development Cooperation (KEPA), operates with funding from the Finnish



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foreign ministry.

## 13 Studies & Surveys

### 13.1 Recent surveys or research on the topic of voluntary activities

EUYOUPART (data collected 2004-2005, published in 2006), a comparative study on different forms of participation in 8 European countries. Finnish report by Paakkunainen, Kari. Harju, Aaro (2003) Yhteisellä asialla. Kansalaistoiminta ja sen haasteet. Kansanvalistusseura. (Civic Activity And Its Challenges) Yeung, Anne Birgitta (2002) Vapaaehtoistoiminta osana kansalaisyhteiskuntaa, ihanteita vai todellisuutta? Sosiaali-ja terveystieteiden tutkimuskeskus YTY ry. (Voluntary Activity As A Part of Civic Society) Pehkonen, Juhani (2001): Nuorten järjestökiinnostuneisuus. Ministry of Education. (Youth, Memberships and Globalisation)



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