

Youth Partnership

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



CONTRIBUTION OF NON-PROGRAMME COUNTRIES TO EU YOUTH WIKI

BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA

CHAPTER I I: VOLUNTARY ACTIVITIES

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At the proposal of the European Commission, the EU-CoE youth partnership network of country correspondents in the European Knowledge Centre on Youth Policy (EKCY) is contributing to the EU Youth Wiki with knowledge and information on a number of Erasmus+ non-programme countries from South-East Europe and Eastern Europe and the Caucasus. The contributors use the guidelines of the EU Youth Wiki when drafting their country contributions, but due to limited resources and support, present lighter versions of the required information. This chapter is part of piloting the EU Youth Wiki contributions for Bosnia and Herzegovina.

2.1 GENERAL CONTEXT

Volunteerism has a long history in Bosnia and Herzegovina, linked to strong community solidarity. Family members and neighbours supported those in need (for example to organise big social events such as weddings or funerals). This well-rooted custom is called “moba” and was particularly common in rural areas. Traditionally, religious institutions also encouraged volunteering. The four primary religions represented in Bosnia and Herzegovina (Islam, Orthodox, Catholicism and Judaism) formed “the basis for certain social norms such as mutual help and voluntary work for the benefit of the wider community”, in particular, organised assistance to the most vulnerable. This tradition continues today, with volunteer activities organised by a wide range of civil society organisations.

After the Second World War, in the newly founded Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, religious groups lost their significance and volunteerism was overseen by the State. However, community volunteering opportunities continued to exist, particularly for youth, although they were unrecognised legally. State authorities organised and controlled unpaid work through several government associations, for example, the Socialist Union of the Working People of Yugoslavia (SSRNJ). Work was organised on multiple levels of state administration. Children and youth participated in mainly environmental activities through obligatory school programmes; members of the Union of the Socialist Youth (SSO) participated in popular Youth Labour Actions (Omladinske Radne Akcije), which supported large-scale community works that involved construction and reconstruction. Youth participation was viewed as highly positive, although most so-called “volunteer” work was organised by the central government, and lacked social or democratic involvement or community ownership. Understandably since that time, volunteerism has been viewed as reactive, not proactive, which in part explains why the Bosnian voluntary sector is underdeveloped. After the 1990s conflict and during the successful implementation of the Dayton Peace Agreement, civil society development and volunteerism focused on humanitarian aid for reconstruction and development. Since Bosnia and Herzegovina local and entity governments have limited resources to provide social services using existing infrastructure, non-governmental and voluntary sectors assumed a major role in social services and community development activities.

From 1995, after the end of the conflict in Bosnia and Herzegovina, and together with the processes of civil society development and democratisation, volunteering has become more popular, especially amongst youth. According to the [Socio-economic Perceptions of Young People in Bosnia and Herzegovina](#) published by UNDP Bosnia and Herzegovina in 2017, 13.8% of young people took part in some voluntary activity in the last 12 months. This is a huge improvement compared to [National Human Development Report – The Ties That Bind:](#)

[Social Capital in Bosnia and Herzegovina](#), published by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), where around 4.5% of Bosnian citizens stated that they were doing or did some kind of voluntary work in 2008.

While 13.8% of young respondents from Bosnia and Herzegovina stated that they were involved in volunteering activities, at the level of the EU this percentage is almost twice as high. The information from the [European Youth Flash Eurobarometer](#), a survey conducted in 2014, shows that 25% of young people from EU were involved in volunteering activities in the 12 preceding months.

In Bosnia and Herzegovina, volunteer work is not a new concept; it has deep cultural roots. However, a strategic and structured approach to volunteerism has yet to be developed, including a national framework with robust legal and institutional guidelines.

There is no national law on volunteering that gives the definition of volunteerism. The Law on Volunteering in the Republika Srpska and Law on Volunteering in the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina define volunteering as: organised activity in the interest and common benefit of the Republika Srpska and the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina that contributes to improvement of living quality, active citizens' participation and development of a more humanistic and more equal democratic society.

2.2 ADMINISTRATION AND GOVERNANCE OF YOUTH VOLUNTEERING

The relevant ministries for administration and governance of laws on voluntarism in Bosnia and Herzegovina are: the [Federal Ministry of Justice](#) (Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina) and the [Ministry of Family, Youth and Sports of the Republika Srpska](#).

There are no national or regional authorities responsible for youth volunteering and the majority of voluntary activities are administered and governed by youth non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and civil society organisations (CSOs).

[The Law on associations of citizens and foundations](#) (Zakon o udruženjima i fondacijama Bosne i Hercegovine) defines the non-profit sector in Bosnia and Herzegovina. This law regulates procedures for the registration of NGOs or CSOs and the general framework for their operation. Furthermore, in both entities of Bosnia and Herzegovina there is a Law on Youth, which regulates the registration of and operational framework for youth organisations. Besides CSOs, the non-profit sector includes other types of legal entity such as sports clubs and public institutions operating in different sectors, such as education, health, social care or culture.

According to the Law on Volunteering in the Republika Srpska and the Law on Volunteering in the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, all the legal entities mentioned above are allowed to be volunteering organisers and to engage volunteers.

Beside the local voluntary sector in Bosnia and Herzegovina, there are other stakeholders influencing the promotion and development of volunteering. A few of these are governmental stakeholders that support volunteering, such as the following.

In the Republika Srpska, the [Law on Higher Education](#) defines the possibility for obtaining ECTS credits through volunteering.

In the same entity, the Ministry for Family, Youth and Sport delivers the annual awards for an outstanding volunteer and one volunteering organiser on 5 December, International Volunteer Day. The same ministry provides financial support, every year, in the form of small grants for voluntary activities planned and implemented by secondary school students' councils.

Other stakeholders

Regarding the profit sector, there are not many examples of their support towards volunteering. Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) is still something new in Bosnia and Herzegovina and not so much used at this point. Some of the international corporations that operate in Bosnia and Herzegovina include CSR in their policies, but this has not been done in a systematic way and nor has it been promoted within the communities. In the future, CSR will definitely be an interesting topic to be developed and promoted by the business sector. The civil society sector in Bosnia and Herzegovina is not entirely prepared for these processes, with some exceptions, such as CSR Plus, the consultancy agency focused on the promotion and development of CSR in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Regarding the international organisations and institutions actively involved in promotion and development of volunteering, these are [United Nations Volunteers \(UNV\) in Bosnia and Herzegovina](#) and the [Office for Security and Co-operation in Europe \(OSCE\) Bosnia and Herzegovina](#). These two international organisations, through their various programmes, provided support to volunteering, especially in the area of lobbying for a volunteering legal framework and for the recognition of volunteering by local governments.

The Delegation of the European Commission in Bosnia and Herzegovina does not provide specific funding for promotion and development of volunteering in Bosnia and Herzegovina, even if some of the projects funded by this institution include volunteering as a tool or methodology for project implementation. This is mainly due to the non-recognition of volunteering by the state government, which is the one defining priorities for the Instrument for Pre-accession (IPA) funding, in negotiation with the European Union.

The secondary school students' councils and university students' organisations form another part of the non-profit sector, relevant to volunteering. These structures are usually based on voluntary work, and the results they achieve through implementation of their programmes would not be possible without volunteers.

Regarding the structures focused on the promotion and development of volunteering, there are local volunteer services operating in the country, and they are united through the informal network named "[Volontiram!](#)"

There is no other specialised structure, although many NGOs use volunteers for the planning and the implementation of various programmes focused on local community needs.

2.3 NATIONAL STRATEGY ON YOUTH VOLUNTEERING

The Strategy on Volunteering is drafted and adopted only at the level of the Republika Srpska – [“Strategy for improvement and development of volunteering in the Republika Srpska for the period 2014-2018”](#) (Strategija za unapređenje i razvoj volontiranja u Republici Srpskoj). It is not a specific youth volunteering strategy; however, youth volunteering is covered.

The overall goal of the strategy is to provide support to sustainable promotion and development of volunteering, as well as to increase the volunteering engagements in the Republika Srpska.

This overall goal will be achieved by the following strategic directions and objectives:

1. Legal framework for volunteering
Strategic objective: established harmonised and adequate legal framework of volunteering that in an effective and adequate way supports continuous and sustainable promotion and development of volunteering in the Republika Srpska.
2. Volunteering infrastructure
Strategic objective: defined and established adequate and effective volunteering infrastructure at local and republic level that enables conditions and possibilities for continuous and sustainable promotion and development of volunteering in the Republika Srpska.
3. Volunteering in formal and non-formal educational systems
Strategic objective: established frameworks and methodologies for transfer of knowledge, experience and information on volunteering in systems of formal and non-formal education, as well as clearly positioning the role of volunteering in processes of life-long learning in the Republika Srpska.
4. Volunteering promotion
Strategic objective: knowledge, possibilities, examples of good practice and other relevant information on volunteering continuously promoted in a qualitative and adequate way by existing and available electronic, written and other media, as well as by other promotional activities.

Each strategic direction and its overall objective is followed by a set of measures/activities whose implementation and expected results will contribute to achieving the overall objective. Nevertheless, the Action plan for implementation of the strategy clearly defines indicators, timeline, funds, responsible body and the result for each defined measure/activity.

Total financial value of the strategy is €455 050.

For purposes of qualitative implementation of the strategy, the [Volunteer Centre of the Republika Srpska](#) (Volonterski servis Republike Srpske) was established in 2014. It was established as a network of [12 local volunteer services](#) that operate in the Republika Srpska. The Volunteer Centre of the Republika Srpska is the main partner to the [Ministry of Family, Youth and Sport in the Republika Srpska Government](#) (Ministarstvo porodice, omladine i sporta Vlade Republike Srpske) for implementation of the strategy.

The main obstacle in the process of strategy implementation relates to lack of funds. In the period 2014-2017 only €75 000 has been secured for strategy implementation by the Government of the Republika Srpska. Furthermore, initial expectation to attract significant contribution from foreign donors did not materialise. . The main reason is that volunteering is not recognised and supported as a priority in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

2.4 LAWS AND REGULATIONS ON YOUTH VOLUNTEERING

Volunteering of youth in Bosnia and Herzegovina is defined by the Law on Volunteering, adopted at the level of two entities (Republika Srpska and Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina). At the level of Brcko District, the Law on Volunteering is in the process of being drafted.

The [Law on Volunteering in the Republika Srpska](#) (Zakon o volontiranju Republike Srpske)

The National Assembly of the Republika Srpska adopted the [Law on Volunteering](#) (Zakon o volontiranju) in 2008 (Official Gazette of the Republika Srpska No. 73/08). In 2013, the National Assembly of the Republika Srpska adopted a new [Law on Volunteering](#) (Zakon o volontiranju), since over 50% of previous law had been changed (Official Gazette of the Republika Srpska No. 89/13), which is recognised as the most flexible and adequate Law on Volunteering in the Balkans region. The new law has been drafted to respond to many disadvantages identified as obstacles to adequate law implementation.

The law covers the basic definitions related to volunteering, conditions for volunteering, principles for organising volunteering, conditions for volunteering contracts, rights and obligations of volunteers and volunteering organisers, recognition, support and development of volunteering and penalty provisions for possible law violations.

The terms “volunteer” and “volunteering” are defined only by this law, but there are still different understandings of what volunteer or volunteering is. That is the consequence of previous labour laws (at all governmental levels in the country) which also used this term for unpaid internships. The present [Law on Labour](#) (Zakon o radu) does not use this term any more. However, the Law on Volunteering defines which situations cannot be defined as volunteering:

- practical work and professional development without employment contract (unpaid internship as defined by the Law on Labour);
- the performance of services or activities that a person is obliged to provide to another person;
- execution of courts and other decisions of the competent authorities;
- the performance of services or activities common in the family, friendly and neighbourly relations;
- the performance of services or activities that relate to donation of properties and money or providing the properties for use free of charge.

The law defines volunteering as organised activity in the interest and common benefit of the Republika Srpska that contributes to improvement of living quality, active citizens' participation and development of more humanistic and more equal democratic society. Nevertheless, the definition highlights the three ultimate characteristics of volunteering activity:

1. It is done by free will and on a voluntary basis.
2. It provides aid to another person or it is for the common benefit and interest.
3. It is not motivated by the gain of financial or any other material benefits.

According to the law, volunteering can be by any person, domestic or foreign, aged 15 and above. Therefore, the law covers youth volunteering (youth age 15-30), even if that is not explicitly defined as such. However, there are also strict principles that define which conditions should be met to engage the juveniles as volunteers (age 15-18).

Regarding the timeline of volunteering, the law states that volunteers can be engaged in working for a maximum of 30 hours per week.

The organisers of volunteering can be any legal person registered as a citizens' association or foundation, any republic or local governmental body, public institution, private institution that works in the area of health and education and any religious community. Besides these, the law also recognises trends in developed countries such as corporate volunteering and therefore it also defines what conditions should be met to engage profit-making companies as volunteering organisers.

The law recognises the importance of establishing effective mechanisms for promotion and information sharing, resource development, networking and co-ordination in the area of volunteering. Therefore, the law defines local volunteer services as structures with the role of informing and connecting citizens interested in volunteering with adequate volunteering activities or volunteering organisers. These structures can be established only within non-profit legal entities and provide their services free of charge.

The volunteering contract is not an obligatory written form that defines contractual rights and obligations amongst volunteer and volunteering organisers. However, it is obligatory as such when beneficiaries of volunteering activities are those recognised as part of vulnerable groups of citizens (children, persons with physical disabilities, persons with mental difficulties, elderly, medical patients and people who have completely or partially lost their ability to work). Also, a volunteering contract is obligatory when volunteering organisers engage juveniles as volunteers.

Even though volunteering activity is unpaid activity, the law defines possible situations for financial compensation of volunteers' costs incurred in direct relation to volunteering. These costs could be costs of travel and food, purchase of working clothes, equipment and tools for protection during volunteering, costs of medical services and vaccines, costs of trainings, etc. Financial compensation of volunteers' costs is not obligatory and therefore it is subject to agreement between the volunteer and the volunteering organiser.

With regards to recognition, support and development of volunteering, the law defines various mechanisms that do not exclude each others and additional ones that might not be mentioned in the law:

- strategies and policies at the level of the Republika Srpska and local municipalities;
- support for the establishment, work and networking of local volunteer services;
- rewarding the legal and individual persons that significantly contributed to development of volunteering at republic or local level (republic and local rewards for volunteering);
- raising awareness of the role and importance of volunteering to children and youth through formal and non-formal education;

- possibility of financial donations by the profit-making sector to volunteering organisers with the purpose of support to the development and promotion of volunteering;
- establishment of a unique volunteers' ID that records all volunteering engagements as well as competences and skills gained (on the basis of the eight key competencies framework defined at EU level).

Administrative responsibility for the implementation of the Law lies with the Ministry of Family, Youth and Sports and inspection is conducted by the Republic Administration for Inspection. Finally, the law defines penal provisions for possible law violations.

The Law on Volunteering in the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina (Zakon o volontiranju Federacije Bosne i Hercegovine)

As the [Law on Volunteering in the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina](#) (Zakon o volontiranju Federacije Bosne i Hercegovine) is similar to the [Law on Volunteering in the Republika Srpska](#) (Zakon o volontiranju Republike Srpske), only the differences between these two laws will be highlighted here.

The [Law on Volunteering in the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina](#) (Zakon o volontiranju Federacije Bosne i Hercegovine) was adopted in 2012 (Official Gazette of Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, No 110 published on 21 December 2012).

The law covers the basic definitions relating to volunteering, conditions for volunteering, principles for organising volunteering, support measures to volunteering, volunteering contracts, rights and obligations of volunteers and volunteering organisers, conditions for signing of volunteering contracts, managing the records on volunteering, reporting on volunteering, using the volunteer ID, issuing the confirmation letter on volunteering, administrative control on law implementation and penalty provisions for possible law violations.

There are the following differences between the Laws on Volunteering in the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina and the Republika Srpska (RS Law):

- religious communities, private institutions that work in the area of health and education and the profitable sector (corporate volunteering) are not defined as volunteering organisers in Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina Law;
- Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina Law defines the term “long-term volunteering” as continuous volunteering activity of longer than 240 hours in a period of at least three months. This type of volunteering is recognised as official work experience proved by a confirmation letter issued by the Ministry of Justice, as the administrative control body, after the end of the volunteering activity. Therefore, Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina Law defines that each organiser of long-term volunteering is obliged to obtain accreditation for conducting the long-term volunteering valid for a period of 5 years and issued by the above mentioned Ministry.
- Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina Law defines “volunteer ID” as the personal document of a volunteer engaged only in long-term volunteering activities. A confirmation letter on volunteering is not an obligatory document and it is issued upon request of the volunteer for any type of volunteering (short- or long-term);
- Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina Law states that volunteering organisers are obliged to submit an annual report on volunteering to the Ministry of Justice;

- Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina Law defines volunteering contracts as obligatory in all situations and volunteering organisers are obliged to submit a copy of each volunteer contract to the Ministry of Justice (in the case of long-term volunteering only);
- Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina Law defines only Reward for volunteering and recognition of long-term volunteering as work experience as a mechanism for recognition, support and development of volunteering.

Other laws and regulations

It is important to mention some other laws and regulations that define volunteering.

- The [Law on University Education of the Republika Srpska](#) (Zakon o visokom obrazovanju Republike Srpske) defines the possibility of obtaining of ECTS credit points through volunteering. Therefore, all public universities and a certain number of private universities draft and adopt rules and procedures on students' volunteering activities for the purposes of obtaining ECTS points through volunteering.
- The [Law on Youth of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina](#) (Zakon o mladima Federacije Bosne i Hercegovine) states that one of its goals is strengthening youth volunteering.
- The [Law on Youth of Brcko District](#) (Zakon o mladima Brcko distrikta) states that one of the obligations of youth organisations is affirmation of youth volunteering.

2.5 YOUTH VOLUNTEERING AT NATIONAL LEVEL

There is no national programme for youth volunteering in Bosnia and Herzegovina. As a response to the growing need and requirements of the processes of promotion and development of volunteering in Bosnia and Herzegovina, the local youth NGO – [Youth Communication Centre](#) – has been supporting the development of volunteering infrastructure since 2005. This has resulted in the development of local volunteer services in different cities, which formed a network called “Volontiram!” There are currently 14 local volunteer services in the network, established across the country, in Banja Luka, Bihac, Bijeljina, Brcko, Bugojno, Derventa, Doboj, Mostar, Mrkonjic Grad, Sarajevo, Srebrenica, Trebinje, Tuzla and Zenica.

A local volunteer service (LVS) represents a basic structure for the encouragement of citizens to volunteer (in accordance with the main principles of organised work with volunteers) and for the creation of volunteering programmes in accordance with the needs of the community in which they live.

The vision of the “Volontiram!” network is a humane and equal democratic society which actively includes its citizens in society processes. “Volontiram!” is an informal network of local voluntary services in Bosnia and Herzegovina, which contributes to the development of social capacities through activities of promotion and development of volunteering, as a condition for the improvement of the quality of life and for the development of society.

The strategic objectives of the “Volontiram!” Network are:

- an established and applied legal framework of volunteering in Bosnia and Herzegovina

- volunteering recognised and accepted as a positive social value
- an established unitary system of volunteering management in Bosnia and Herzegovina
- a strong “Volontiram!” network that consists of sustainable local voluntary services in Bosnia and Herzegovina
- the “Volontiram!” network recognised as the centre for information, exchange of experiences and development of innovative methodologies in the area of volunteering on the national and international levels.

Local volunteer services in the “Volontiram!” network define and use volunteer management systems which aim to establish quality standards for volunteering. These local volunteer services provide support and training on volunteer management quality standards to interested CSOs and other non-profit parties motivated to engage volunteers or which already actively include volunteers in their work.

Some CSOs, through their internal rules and procedures, define principles and quality standards related to engagement and work with volunteers. There is no empirical data that can illustrate percentages of these CSOs and implementation of these internal rules and procedures in reality.

Since 2011 the “Volontiram!” network has been actively focused on the development of its own internal capacities and the reinforcement of its role regarding development and promotion of volunteering in Bosnia and Herzegovina, as well as on the consolidation of co-operation with all relevant participants in Bosnian society.

According to the [Socio-economic Perceptions of Young People in Bosnia and Herzegovina](#), published by UNDP Bosnia and Herzegovina in 2017, areas that respondents who did volunteer work most often list include charity work, humanitarian and development assistance (27.7%), education and training (21.1%), and culture and arts (18.7%). Men are more likely than women to state that they volunteered in the area of sports (10.4% vs 2.2%) while respondents holding university degrees are more likely to state that they volunteered in the domain of education or training when compared to those who completed secondary education (34.3% vs 13.1%).

In comparison with respondents from the EU, young people from Bosnia and Herzegovina are more likely to state that they volunteered in the area of culture and arts (18.7% Bosnia and Herzegovina vs 15% EU). On the other hand, young people from the EU are more likely to state that they volunteered in any other area. More significant differences are observed in the area of the animal welfare (9% in EU vs 1.8% in Bosnia and Herzegovina), politics (8% EU vs 1.8% Bosnia and Herzegovina), and religion (12% EU vs 0.6% Bosnia and Herzegovina).

Young people who were focus group participants of this research rarely take part in volunteering activities. Although a majority of respondents stated that they have participated in certain activities relating to environmental protection and ecology at least once, these were mostly short-term activities lasting one or two days at most, or they were focused on direct assistance to the local community, such as assistance in flood relief or humanitarian activities.

Young people highlight general inactivity and the lack of will as the reason for not participating in volunteer activities, although activities are an opportunity to gain needed work experience.

Focus groups participants who participated as volunteers in such activities state that they had complete and clear information about those activities. They knew who organised given activities, what their goals were, how those goals would be achieved, etc. When they thought they were not sufficiently informed, young people actively looked for information and managed to get the information they required.

2.6 CROSS-BORDER MOBILITY PROGRAMMES

Organisations from Bosnia and Herzegovina can take part in the [Erasmus+: Youth in Action Programme](#) as:

1) Partners in the following activities:

- Youth Exchanges, European Voluntary Service or Mobility of Youth workers in projects within Key Action 1;
- strategic partnerships in the field of youth in projects within Key Action 2 (under specific conditions);
- meetings between young people and decision makers in the field of youth in projects within Key Action 3

2) Applicants in the following projects:

Capacity-building in the field of youth, in particular in the context of the Western Balkans Youth Window, within Key Action 2. Each project has to include at least one mobility activity: Youth Exchange, European Voluntary Service or Mobility of Youth workers, corresponding to the activities within Key Action 1.

The contact point for the Erasmus+ Youth in Action Programme is the [PRONI Centre for Youth Development](#).

The total number of young people from Bosnia and Herzegovina that have participated in activities of the Erasmus+ Youth programme in the period 2014-2016 is 3 369. Of that number, 2 661 young people participated in Key Action 1, 24 young people participated in Key Action 3 and 684 young people participated in the Western Balkans Youth Window component.

With regard to the mobility of students, Bosnia and Herzegovina is the only country in the Western Balkans which has not joined fully the Erasmus+ EU Programme, the Youth component. With this, it has limited access to mobility of young people through this programme, as a Partner Country.

Nevertheless, the Bosnian academic community has signed numerous bilateral agreements on international co-operation with foreign institutions from, for example, Austria, Croatia, Egypt, Italy, Slovenia, Switzerland (mutual agreements between faculties/colleges, universities, institutes, etc.) that also cover the field of science and research, as well as joint projects. This type of co-operation agreement mainly involves individual participation of Bosnian researchers in research projects. The greatest involvement in this type of co-operation is in the biomedical and technical sciences.

[The Law on Foreigners of Bosnia and Herzegovina](#) (Zakon o strancima Bosne i Hercegovine) defines the legal framework applying to foreign volunteers.

Article 49 of this law defines general requirements for granting temporary residence and Article 57 defines the temporary residence of volunteers:

“Temporary residence may be granted to any foreigner who, along with the requirements of Article 49 (General requirements for granting temporary residence) of this Law, also fulfils the following conditions:

- a) he/she is not under 18 nor over 65 years of age,
- b) he/she possesses a volunteering contract concluded with an agency, institution, humanitarian organisation, association or foundation in Bosnia and Herzegovina which he/she is volunteering,
- c) encloses a project where he/she is engaged, or a document providing the volunteering work scheme, job description and accompanying duties, number of agents, volunteering period, mentorship and working hours,
- d) the organisation in which the foreigner is volunteering has signed a policy of obligatory insurance and assumed the responsibility for the foreigner during the volunteering period, including the costs of subsistence, accommodation, health insurance and return.

Temporary residence shall be granted to a foreign volunteer for a period not exceeding one year and may exceptionally be extended under the same conditions applied for approval of residence if the project of the foreigner’s engagement lasts longer than a year.”

2.7 RAISING AWARENESS ABOUT YOUTH VOLUNTEERING OPPORTUNITIES

In Bosnia and Herzegovina there is still very little information on volunteering possibilities from local to national level.

The Laws on Volunteering in the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina and the Republika Srpska state that local, cantonal and entity-level governments are responsible for supporting and stimulating voluntary activities so both laws have an award for volunteering and promotion of volunteering. These awards are granted to organisations and individuals at annual events organised by the relevant ministries and some local authorities, usually on 5 December – International Volunteer Day.

Through the development of the local volunteer services and of the “Volontiram!” network, qualitative and quantitative information on volunteering opportunities has been increased at least in the communities where these structures operate. Through these structures, citizens interested in volunteering can obtain information on where, how and when they can volunteer in their local communities. At this point around 5 000 citizens are recorded in databases of local volunteer services as willing to volunteer. In their work, local volunteer services are continuously confronted with a lack of volunteering possibilities, meaning that there are more volunteers than placements available.

In a large number of communities that do not have local volunteer services, awareness about volunteering opportunities is mainly raised by individual CSOs and youth NGOs in the framework of their recruitment campaigns. These campaigns are mostly promoted through internet presentations. However, there are some positive examples of when these campaigns were widely promoted through various national and local media (written and electronic).

Regarding the promotion of volunteering and its coverage in the media, volunteering is not considered an interesting topic to cover. From time to time, the media follows up on some of the volunteering programmes; this is not done on a regular basis and it is more sporadic and

ad hoc. Furthermore, there is a general lack of information and knowledge resources available on the internet in the local language, especially in relation to volunteer management system, legislation and research.

One of the biggest voluntary awareness campaigns was: “The Challenge: Choose the Cause, Be the Effect” – a campaign that encourages the people of Bosnia and Herzegovina, especially its youth, to spread the culture of solidarity, caring and to engage in community service projects by donating their time/resources/knowledge to the benefit of their communities by doing special projects which range from environmental clean-up, helping vulnerable people, mentoring, reading, providing free cultural and artistic performances, or just giving a helping hand in making a community better. Celebrating 20 years of peace in Bosnia and Herzegovina, the [US Embassy in Bosnia and Herzegovina](#) brought together 20 000 volunteers engaged in community service from 19 January to 21 November 2015. The US Embassy acknowledged all groups and held a mid-term and a final party to acknowledge the distinguished volunteers, NVO/informal group/schools and/or organisations. Information about the challenge was posted on the wall of the “[Izazov](#)” Facebook group, while summary information was posted on the US Embassy Facebook and web page.

2.8 SKILLS RECOGNITION

There is no co-ordinated national initiative or framework for recognising competences gained through volunteering, but there are certain regulations.

- The YouthPass gained from participating in the European Voluntary Service Programme (EVS), centrally organised through the Erasmus+ programme; all the accredited hosting organisations are required to issue a Youth Pass to an EVS volunteer.
- Regarding the recognition of young people’s skills gained through voluntary activities, in the Republika Srpska, the Law on Higher Education gives the possibility of obtaining credits under the European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS) through volunteering in the community, if the relevant activity is carried out according to the Law on Volunteering.
- The Laws on Volunteering in the Republika Srpska and the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina also define the “Volunteer ID” – a document that keeps track of volunteer activities and skills gained. In both the Republika Srpska and the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina there are established rules on issuing such voluntary IDs.

2.9 CURRENT DEBATES AND REFORMS

The definition of “volunteering” implies work, effort and commitment without being paid. The current economic situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina, with high unemployment and low growth, may be one factor that discourages young people from volunteering, as their lack of financial resources places greater importance on paid positions. Furthermore, a lack of information and institutional support with regard to these opportunities are additional factors that contribute to Bosnia and Herzegovina’s underdeveloped culture of volunteerism.

Unemployment among young people in Bosnia and Herzegovina is the highest in the region. According to the Bosnia and Herzegovina [Directorate for Economic Planning newsletter](#) from 2017, 54% of young people (aged 15-24) are unemployed.

It is important to emphasise that Bosnia and Herzegovina's cultural lack of volunteerism is due not only to insufficient support from institutions, but also to unawareness of the positive effects of volunteering on young people. Academic institutions in particular are not providing enough information about the potential of volunteering, nor are they emphasising the importance of volunteering with regard to the cultural benefits.

Volunteerism not only benefits those seeking hands-on experience but also the host institutions, as they can then employ volunteers who have gained the specific skills required by their institution, through their voluntary experience.

Volunteerism can therefore enable individuals to display an ability to work successfully within a team, provide practical experience of situations requiring critical and analytical thinking, show flexibility and organisational skills and foster potential for innovation. These attributes may prove beneficial to applicants looking to secure paid employment in a high unemployment job market, whilst providing host institutions with passionate, dedicated individuals that can enhance their work in many different ways. Further developing and encouraging a culture of volunteerism in Bosnia therefore appears to be a win-win situation.

Establishing the legal regulation for volunteering on all Bosnia and Herzegovina territory would be a key condition for encouragement of the development of volunteering, which is important for the development of society in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The newly proposed "[Law on voluntary activities organised by associations and foundations, churches and religious communities and institutions of Bosnia and Herzegovina](#)" by the Bosnia and Herzegovina [Ministry Council](#) is currently an initiative at state level.

GLOSSARY

BiH – Bosnia and Herzegovina

Corporate Social Responsibility – often abbreviated to “CSR”, is a corporation’s initiatives to assess and take responsibility for the company’s effects on environmental and social well-being.

Dayton Peace Agreement – The General Framework Agreement for Peace in Bosnia and Herzegovina, also known as the Dayton Peace Agreement (DPA), Dayton Accords, Paris Protocol or Dayton–Paris Agreement, is the peace agreement reached at Wright–Patterson Air Force Base near Dayton, Ohio, United States, in November 1995, and formally signed in Paris on 14 December 1995. These accords put an end to the 3½-year-long Bosnian War, one of the armed conflicts in the former Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. The current Constitution of Bosnia and Herzegovina is at Annex 4 of the DPA.

ECTS – The European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System is a credit system designed to make it easier for students to move between different countries. Since they are based on the learning achievements and workload of a course, a student can transfer their ECTS credits from one university to another so they are added up to contribute to an individual’s degree programme or training. ECTS helps to make learning more student-centred. It is a central tool in the Bologna process, which aims to make national systems more compatible. ECTS also helps with the planning, delivery and evaluation of study programmes, and makes them more transparent.

European Voluntary Service – is the European Commission’s project that allows a young person (17-30 years) to become a volunteer in another country for a specified period, normally between 2 and 12 months.

Instrument for Pre-accession – The Instrument for Pre-accession Assistance (IPA) is the means by which the EU supports reforms in the “enlargement countries” with financial and technical help. The IPA funds build up the capacities of the countries throughout the accession process, resulting in progressive, positive developments in the region.

Local Volunteer Service – Local Volunteer Services provide services to organisers of volunteering, volunteers and beneficiaries of volunteering free of charge.

Moba – an old-fashioned custom of helping each other in rural households. Moba is a help in jobs that require more workforce, joint work.

US Embassy – United States Embassy

Volunteer ID – personal register of volunteer activities

Volunteerism – organised voluntary activity or provision of services or performance of activities with the aim of general and common welfare or that of another person without monetary compensation or material gain.

Youth Pass – Youth pass is a tool to document and recognise learning outcomes from youth work activities. It is available for projects funded by Erasmus+: Youth in Action (2014-2020) and Youth in Action (2007-2013) programmes. It is a part of the European Commission's strategy to foster the recognition of non-formal learning, putting policy into practice and practice into policy.