

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 CHAPTER II: MONTENEGRO VOLUNTARY ACTIVITIES

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INTRODUCTION

One of the general objectives of the [EU Youth Strategy](#) is to support and better recognise young people's voluntary activities for their value as an important form of non-formal learning. The strategy states that obstacles to voluntary activities should be removed and the cross-border mobility of young people promoted.

In order to achieve these aims, EU Member States and the other participating countries have agreed – in the EU Strategy and in subsequent council resolutions – to implement policy measures promoting the recognition of skills acquired through voluntary activities, assuring the protection of young volunteers and the quality in voluntary activities, and raising awareness about the value of voluntary activities.

At the proposal of the [European Commission](#), the [EU-CoE youth partnership](#) network of country correspondents in the European Knowledge Centre on Youth Policy (EKCYP) 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 “Light” contributions for Montenegro.

2.1 General context

Historical developments

The history and roots of voluntarism in Montenegro, as in most South-Slavic countries, are connected with the tradition of solidarity as one of the most recognisable cultural characteristics of these nations ([Voluntarism and public institutions \(2005\)](#), published by the Association for Democratic Prosperity – Zid (ADP-Zid) and the South East European Youth Network (SEEYN)). One of the typical forms of voluntary work in the past was “moba” (voluntary, co-operative work group on a farm), which even today is still very characteristic in rural areas. This type of work is based on mutual help between community members during work that is too large in scale for one family on its own (harvesting or similar). If we look at the period before the Second World War, people in local communities in Montenegro usually worked together on building roads, or buildings of importance for the community (e.g. members of both the Orthodox and Catholic communities built churches for common use; they had two altars and both communities held services there). Sometimes even the ruling class in Montenegro voluntarily participated in this kind of activity, and there are data that Scepan the Little (Šćepan Mali), the false emperor who ruled in Montenegro from 1767 until 1774, was one of the biggest supporters and participants of voluntary activities. On one occasion his arm and eye were injured during construction of road and mining.

In the period after Second World War, young people were actively taking part in “youth working action” (in Montenegrin: Omladinske Radne Akcije (ORA)) organised annually with the aim of contributing to the renovation of the devastated country. How much they were

voluntary actions and how much that was expected and obligatory in some way is a question of interpretation of the history and political ambient of that time. Although ORA, besides clear voluntary engagement, also had a patriotic character and contained significant elements of political belief, those were occasions where young people from all regions of the country used to gather, work together, socialise, develop communication and other skills, take steps towards the transition to adulthood. Taking part in these actions was a matter of representation in society and the recognition tool were “outstanding worker badges. Those actions were, and still are, a big inspiration for some young musicians and activists (for example, listen to [Atheist Rap - ORA je pravi nacin da!](#) and [Songs from youth working actions](#)).

At that time, voluntarism was stimulated and implemented through community organisations very active during the communist period in Montenegro such as the Scout Association, the “Gorani” Association, and the Red Cross. These organisations included in their work a large number of young people and their importance was recognised and also financially supported by the state.

According to some authors, with the beginning of the conflict and the disintegration of SFR Yugoslavia, interest in voluntarism fell suddenly, both in community organisations (transformed into NGOs in the middle of the 1990s) and in other types of community engagement. “Low standards, examples of corruption, the sudden enrichment of some individuals, economic collapse, etc. all resulted in a huge loss of trust of people in state and public institutions. In most cases it contributed to the feeling that voluntarism was an ‘illusion for naive people’ or ‘work for nothing’” (ADP-Zid and SEEYN, “Voluntarism and public institutions”).

The period of 1990s in Montenegro is recognised by the establishment of new civil society organisations – NGOs, with a strong base in human rights, promotion of peace, solidarity – that emerged as an answer to violent actions of leading political structures in the country and their colleagues in neighbouring countries (war in Bosnia and Herzegovina etc). Many volunteers were engaged in providing support to refugees but also Montenegrin women, children and youth that were facing extreme poverty and political discrimination during those years. In that period the most recognisable voluntary work was the one led and implemented by women and youth NGOs, especially in the sphere of promotion of non-violence and peace building (ANIMA from Kotor, SOS telephone for women and children victims of violence from Podgorica, Niksic, Montenegrin women’s lobby, Post-pessimists of Montenegro and many other NGOs). During that period, young people were organising themselves into non-formal groups, NGOs, or they were joining already established organisations in order to volunteer and support those in need, or to make their voices heard.

Since the UN General Assembly proclaimed 2001 as the International Year of Volunteers, Montenegrin society is slowly going back to the idea that volunteering is not just some relic from communist times, but something important and necessary for the development of democratic society.

Volunteering was in the focus of several civil society organisations during that decade, and hundreds of volunteers were engaged in national voluntary activities every year through short-term and long-term volunteering programmes of the organisations. Through establishment of the National Voluntary Service ADP-Zid in 2001 and its partnership with and membership of European and worldwide voluntary service organisations’ networks (Alliance of Voluntary

Service Organisations, Service Civil International (SCI), International Cultural Youth Exchange (ICYE)), youngsters got the opportunity to take part in facilitated short-term and mid-term volunteering abroad.

Through the work of the South East European Youth Network (SEEYN) in the period from its establishment in 1999 until 2017, hundreds of young people have taken part in a regional exchange of volunteers that was financed by the Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs via the FRESTA programme for peace and stability. These exchanges of volunteers were short-term, but also long-term (for example, one-year long) and included organisations from Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia, Macedonia, Kosovo*, Montenegro and Albania at the beginning of the programme, and after first couple of years these activities has expanded to more countries (Bulgaria, Greece, Slovenia and Turkey).

The YOUTH programme of the EU, and later Youth in Action, were used a lot for long-term volunteering through the European Voluntary Service (EVS). It is to be noted that since the EVS programme became part of a restructured Youth in Action under the Erasmus+ programme, the number of young people from Montenegro taking part in EVS is significantly lower than in previous EU youth programmes.

Nowadays, there are no official statistics about how many young people volunteer on a local or national level in Montenegro; where; for how long; how many of them volunteer abroad; or how many international volunteers contribute to Montenegrin society. Although the general picture that the media is sending is that youngsters are uninterested in participation, inactive, always on their smartphones and other electronic devices, the fact is that there is a high number of young volunteers active in civil society organisations and also according to data published in [National Youth Strategy \(2017-2021\)](#) 73% of young people in Montenegro consulted in previously implemented research have participated at least once in different humanitarian and volunteer activities.

The importance of volunteering is recognised by the civil society and the state in general, and the proof is that Montenegro was the first country in the region to adopt [National Strategy for Volunteerism Development \(2010-2015\)](#) (Strategija razvoja volonterizma u Crnoj Gori 2010-2015). When it comes to young people, at the policy level a special focus on youth volunteering was made in the [National Action Plan for Youth in Montenegro \(2006-2011\)](#) (Nacionalni plan akcije za mlade u Crnoj Gori 2006-2011). Montenegro was among the first countries in the WB region to adopt the Law on voluntary work (Zakon o volonterskom radu).

Main concepts

According to Article 2 of the [Law on voluntary work, “Official Gazette of Montenegro”, No. 26/2010, 31/2010 and 14/2012 \(Zakon o volonterskom radu, “Službeni list Crne Gore, broj 26/2010, 31/2010 and 14/2012\)](#) “Volunteering is voluntary and free investment of time, knowledge and skills for performing of services or activities in favour of another person or for the general welfare of society” and in the document this type of engagement is referred to as “Volunteering services”.

According to Article 3 of the Law on voluntary work, volunteering shall be performed without right to be paid for the work done.

This Law states that: “A volunteer shall be a person who shall voluntarily and free of charge perform volunteering services. The volunteer may be a domestic or foreign natural person of working age or a person with a disability who is qualified for performing particular voluntary work.” (Article 4).

Unfortunately, Montenegrin legislation does not support corporate volunteering, and the law states that “The organiser of volunteering may be: a state authority, public administration, local government, institution in the field of social and child welfare, health care, culture, sports, religious communities, local and international non-governmental organisations registered in Montenegro, as well as other domestic and foreign legal entities whose main goal is not to gain or distribute profit”. However, there are many cases of positive practice of companies and small and medium enterprises to organise corporate volunteering as a part of their Corporate Social Responsibility programmes, and they usually organise it in co-operation with civil society organisations (such as National Voluntary Service ADP-Zid, Red Cross, different local CSO etc.), or in co-operation with some institution (day care centre for children and youth or similar).

According to the Montenegrin Law on voluntary work (Article 11) following actions shall not be considered as volunteering:

- 1) the performance of services or activities that one person is required to provide to another person under the law or other regulations;
- 2) the performance of specific obligations in accordance with court decisions and judgments;
- 3) the performance of services or activities that are common in family, friendly or neighbourly relations (free help of group of friends and neighbours, etc.).

The general problem is that the Law on voluntary work is not in line with practice and has failed to regulate the existing volunteering framework in the country and to create a favourable environment for its development.

The general problem is that the law itself is regulating “voluntary service”, not “volunteering” activities, which creates misunderstanding and problems in its implementation. The distinction between “volunteering” and “voluntary service” was obviously poorly known by the authors of this law, and structures that should implement it. The easiest to understand description of the differences can be found in the [T-KiT on International voluntary service](#), published by the Youth Partnership.

It is concluded in several reports that the Montenegrin Law on voluntary work treats volunteering as a special form of labour-law relations, rather than a voluntary, individual citizens’ initiative ([Balkan Civil Society Acquis Strengthening the Advocacy and Monitoring Potential and Capacities of CSOs, Monitoring Matrix on Enabling Environment for Civil Society Development: Montenegro Report](#)). Many initiatives were implemented since 2010, when this law was adopted, that resulted in changes and amendments to the law, including also initiatives and plans for writing the new law that will regulate this area.

2.2 Administration and governance of youth volunteering

There is no functional established system of youth volunteering organised in the country.

Creation of the Law on voluntary work was initiated by civil society organisations, and led by the Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare. When it comes to organised volunteering, the Employment Agency of Montenegro shall keep a central database of the organisers, beneficiaries of volunteering and volunteers, based on data provided by the organiser of volunteering (history of development of this law and its influence on youth volunteering development can be found in the section on legal framework).

When it comes to youth as a target group and youth volunteering as such, the Ministry of Sport – Directorate for Youth is recognised as a main actor involved in policy making. The National Youth Strategy, proposed by this ministry, defines that local municipalities are developing their Local Youth Action Plans, where youth volunteering could be recognised.

There is no central database or other place where one could find accurate information on how many young volunteers are in the country.

Following the needs of young people and Montenegrin society, the Montenegrin NGO ADP-Zid was working on developing a partnership with the [International Labour Organization \(ILO\)](#) and the [National Statistical Office](#) (Zavod za statistiku Crne Gore MONSTAT) in order to improve statistics, and work on a standardised methodology for research into volunteer work on the basis of the [ILO Manual on the Measurement of Volunteer Work](#), that was translated in 2011 into Montenegrin ([ILO Manual on the Measurement of Volunteer Work: Montenegrin version](#)) (Priručnik o mjerenju volonterskog rada). It is to be noted that more than three years after translation into Montenegrin and efforts implemented in Montenegro, in June 2014, the European Economic and Social Committee on Statistical gives the opinion on tools for measuring volunteering in EU: [Opinion of the European Economic and Social Committee on Statistical tools for measuring volunteering \(2014/C 170/02\), Official Journal of the European Union](#). It states that “volunteering makes a major contribution to that part of social welfare that is not measured by GDP, and has a major influence on the quality of people’s lives ... and the EESC urges the European Commission and call on Member States to develop research into volunteering on the basis of the ILO Manual, over the next few years, to work on a standardised methodology for research into volunteer work and to ensure its adoption via an appropriate regulation for the purpose of regular research conducted by the Member States.”

In Montenegro we must say that there is no cross-sectoral co-operation between ministries, departments, agencies involved in defining policies and measures on youth volunteering. Attempts by civil society in co-operation with ILO and MONSTAT to set up a system for measurement of volunteering value were mentioned above.

2.3 National strategy on youth volunteering

There is no national strategy on youth volunteering in Montenegro.

However, the importance of youth volunteering was recognised in the last decade by the Government of Montenegro and the [National Strategy for Volunteerism Development](#) was adopted to be implemented in 2010-2016, with one of the main objectives (General Objective

VI) being: *“By developing volunteer work to contribute to increasing the quality of youth education, the development of culture and greater integration of citizens into society”*. This strategy had one of the objectives *“To increase the mobility of volunteers and distance volunteering”*, and measures planned were:

- volunteering in support of the development of the concept of inter-culturalism;
- increase the number of volunteer programmes in the fight against racism, nationalism;
- through volunteer work to provide assistance to refugees when adapting to a new environment;
- volunteer programmes in the function of preserving cultural heritage;
- increase the educational level of children, youth and adults through the development and realisation of voluntary sections in schools, volunteer clubs;
- improving social protection of children by including volunteers in social services and support programmes etc.

Unfortunately, the budget for the implementation of this strategy was never allocated and the ministry in charge, the Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare, did not even develop an action plan for the implementation of this strategy, did not report on its accomplishment in this area either during the mentioned period. Representatives of the civil society are willing to take part in evaluation of the implementation of the strategy and developing a new one, but the general opinion to be found in many reports from the conferences and seminars organised on the topic of volunteerism is that this area should be given to some other department in the government to be in charge for its development for example Ministry of Public Administration.

However, the [National Youth Strategy 2017-2021](#) (Strategija za mlade 2017-2021, www.strategijazamlade.me) adopted by the Government of Montenegro in September 2016 states that in accordance with the [Youth Law “Official Gazette of Montenegro, No. 42/2016”](#) of 7 November 2016 (Zakon o mladima, “Službeni list Crne Gore, broj 42/2016” od 11.7.2016. god) Montenegrin youth policy, and thus the National Youth Strategy as well, are based on the principles of: equality, volunteerism, solidarity, partnership, ability and scientific findings, for voluntary participation of youth in all areas of social life, in accordance with their own choices.

The National Youth Strategy (2017-2021) defies six key priorities – key outcomes – in regard to Montenegrin youth, and some of them are including measures that consider volunteering, specifically Key Outcome C: “Young people are active citizens, involved, motivated, proactive and participate in decision-making and community development processes, in creation of policies and their implementation.” Focus of the youth policy in that area is on “putting in place mechanisms/systems for fostering activism: so that activism can become a value that is systematically fostered, prized and promoted among youth; so that institutional mechanisms for participation in public decision making can be made more approachable and more adequate to young people; and in order to foster and promote volunteerism”.

It is recognised in the Youth Strategy that volunteerism is not that well developed among youth, and that young people participate in volunteering principally through the activities of NGOs, therefore the mechanisms for youth volunteering should be improved within the formal education system and other environments. It is necessary to promote the system of values of volunteerism and how volunteering can benefit both the individuals and the state.

The National Youth Strategy has planned, as one of the main desired outcomes, that young people have access to quality cultural content as creators and consumers. In order to achieve this, it is planned to work on supporting young creators of culture and media contents and to develop a culture of volunteering in cultural institutions, significant festivals and manifestations. The strategy recognises that young people have limited access to mentors and role models in the domain of culture, and in addition to that, the culture and practice of volunteering would enable young people to gain certain knowledge, skills and experience.

It is to be noted that the National Youth Strategy does not recognise volunteering as one of the key priorities, contrary to the previous national youth strategy [NPAM - National Action Plan for Youth in Montenegro \(2006-2011\)](#), which had a clear focus on volunteering. It had objectives connected to promotion of volunteering, enabling environment for it, and supporting of youth volunteering, including intergenerational solidarity and inclusion. Since local youth action plans developed by municipalities were created in line with the national one, youth volunteering was mentioned in all national youth action plans developed until 2016.

Somehow, the focus in the last couple of years has moved from value-based volunteering to seeing volunteering not as a purpose but purely as a tool for gaining skills and knowledge that would increase youth employability. Policies related to volunteering and support for volunteering programmes were designed as well having those areas as a focus. In order to support development of volunteering it is important to get back to the roots and understanding of complexity of this area, and run away from promoting and implementing volunteering simply as a tool for gaining skills that would answer to economic market needs, or the tool that will just bridge the gaps created by wrong formal education strategies.

Youth policy in Montenegro is implemented mostly through activities on the local level, and also volunteering usually starts at the local level and contributes to local community development. Therefore, there is a big role of local government units to develop and implement local youth policy that is fostering youth volunteering. The main instrument of local youth policy, as mentioned above, are so-called Local Action Plans for Youth. Montenegrin municipalities in the last decade have developed these plans, and volunteering as well as mobility of youth is an important segment. Unfortunately, they are struggling with implementation since the budgets of the majority of local self-governments are limited, and in some of them there are delays in payments of even regular salaries of employees and contracted grants to NGOs. In some of them the situation is that there are funds available and spaces that could be used by young people but local decision makers do not put youth issues and particularly youth volunteering on the list of priorities.

Since volunteerism is essential for the work of civil society organisations, this topic has for many years also been mentioned in the governmental national strategy for co-operation with NGOs. The last strategy, [Strategy for development of non-governmental organisations in Montenegro \(2014-2016\)](#), has as one of the priorities “Development of volunteering” and one of the main goals is “Create enabling legal framework for the development of volunteering in Montenegro”. It is recognised by this strategy that the existing law that regulates voluntary work, “contrary to its purpose, instead of contributing to the development of a culture of volunteering in Montenegro, is to a large extent an obstacle to its further development”.

2.4 Laws and regulations on youth volunteering

Volunteering in general since 2010 has been regulated by the [Law on voluntary work](#) “Official Gazette of Montenegro”, Nos 26/2010, 31/2010 and 14/2012 ([Zakon o volonterskom radu](#) “Službeni list Crne Gore”, broj 26/2010, 31/2010 and 14/2012). This law defines a number of institutes and issues relevant to volunteerism, e.g. definition of volunteers, their rights and obligations, the definition of the organisers of volunteer work, rights and obligations, the definition of user voluntary services, mandatory elements of the volunteering, international volunteering, development and monitoring of volunteerism, etc.

Two years after adoption, in 2012, the government adopted [the Law on Amendments to the Law on Voluntary Work](#) “Official Gazette of Montenegro, No. 14/2012” of 7 March 2012 (Zakon o izmjenama i dopunama Zakona o volonterskom radu “Službeni list Crne Gore, broj 14/2012” od 7.3.2012. god) introducing the additional form: “Special Contract on volunteering” stating that “Contract on the volunteering may also be concluded with a person who wants to gain professional education and special knowledge and skills to work in his

profession (Article 12a). Volunteering performed pursuant to Paragraph 1 of this Article shall be recognised as work experience and as a prerequisite for taking the qualification exam.” In Article 7 after Paragraph 1 a new paragraph was added: “If the Contract on volunteering is concluded as in the case of Article 12a of this Law, volunteering may not exceed 40 hours a week.”

Before this was introduced, the law adopted in 2010 stated that volunteering may last up to six hours per day and no longer than 25 hours per week.

This novelty of going to 40 hours a week opened the door for the replacement of paid staff with unpaid staff, and included violation of the labour rights of young persons, since the “volunteer” is working full time – eight hours per day, five days per week without having the other rights that he/she would have if they had a contract signed in accordance with the Labour law. Despite criticism and reactions from the civil sector and request of Union of Free Trade Unions of Montenegro that was sent to the Parliament of Montenegro - this regulation was adopted and is still being implemented in Montenegro.

Misunderstanding of the concept of volunteering and the overall approach to this topic in this law can be seen from the fact that the law stipulates that the Employment Agency of Montenegro shall keep a central database of the organisers, beneficiaries of volunteering and volunteers, based on data provided by the organiser of volunteering; and supervision over the implementation of this law and regulations governing the volunteering is performed by the Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare, through the Labour Inspectorate.

According to Article 9 of the Law on voluntary work, a juvenile volunteer shall be a person aged 15 to 18 years and may conclude a Contract on volunteering only with the written consent of a parent, adoptive parent or guardian. Children under 15 years of age shall not be engaged in volunteering.

The new [Law on Amendments to the Law on Volunteer Work](#) that came into force in 2015 – “Official Gazette of Montenegro”, No. 48/2015 of 21 August 2015 (Zakon o izmjenama i dopunama Zakona o volonterskom radu “Službeni list Crne Gore”, br. 48/2015 od 21.8.2015) in Article 34a, which deals with penalty provisions, foresees, among other things, that: “a legal entity organiser of voluntary work shall be fined for a misdemeanour in the amount €500 to €20 000 if: it concludes a contract on volunteer work with a minor without the written consent of the parent, adopter or guardian; if children under the age of 15 are engaged in volunteer work” (Article 9, paragraph 3).

Yet, Article 10 on prohibition of discrimination of a volunteer and a beneficiary of volunteering states that “any direct or indirect discrimination of a volunteer and beneficiary of volunteering, in terms of gender, origin, language, race, religion, colour, age ... is prohibited” etc.

However, volunteering has developed and is present in elementary and high school as a part of regular extracurricular activities in numerous schools and there are lists of schools that for many years have active Volunteers Clubs (for example, the Volunteers Club in Gimnasium “Slobodan Skerovic” in Podgorica in 2017 celebrated 10 years of active work). Implementation of voluntary activities in schools since 2010 is also supported with a detailed programme on implementation for elementary and high schools, developed by a multisectoral team of experts from the [Bureau for Education Services](#) and the [Centre for Vocational](#)

[Education](#) and [ADP-Zid](#) and financed by Foundation Open Society Institute office in Podgorica:

- “Voluntarism in School” – Education programme for elementary school extracurricular activities for pupils in VII and IX grade; and
- “Voluntarism and Youth” – Education programme for extracurricular activities in gymnasiums and vocational high schools.

These two programmes are followed by an accredited programme for professional development of teachers: “Teacher training on how to organise volunteer programmes in elementary and secondary schools”, adopted by the National Council of Education, and implemented continually from 2011 up to 2017. This programme is regularly updated with new methodology, re-accredited for every school year and published in the “Catalogue of programmes for teachers’ professional development training” (Katalog programa stručnog usavršavanja nastavnika) published by the Bureau for education services.

In the [Catalogue for training programmes for school 2017-2018 and 2018-2019](#) there are two accredited programmes: “Teacher training for the organisation of volunteer programmes and content in primary and secondary school” (Milošević I., Gligorović A., Rakočević V.) and “Volunteer work in the community” (Mićanović V., Vučković D.)

Since 2010 there has also been an adult education programme implemented in Montenegro that is accredited by the National Council for Adult Education: “Education programme for voluntary work and volunteer management” (Gligorovic A., Milosevic I., Garic Lj., Boskovic G.) that is created for all institutions, organisations and individuals interested in volunteering and volunteer management. This programme is created in co-operation with the Centre for Vocational Education, and accompanied by the manual: “Volunteer management handbook” (Gligorovic A. 2010).

The [Youth Law](#) “Official Gazette of Montenegro, No. 42/2016” of 7 November 2016 (Zakon o mladima, “Službeni list Crne Gore, broj 42/2016” od 11.7.2016. godine) adopted in 2016 promotes volunteering of young people and stipulates that “young people actively contribute to building and nurturing social values and development of society through different forms of volunteer activities, expressing inter-generational solidarity and working on creating the conditions for equal participation in all aspects of social life of young people with disabilities, national minorities and other persons and social groups at risk from discriminatory treatment”.

This law also states that “youth policy is based on the principles of: equality, volunteerism, solidarity, partnership, ability and scientific findings for voluntary participation of youth in all areas of social life, in accordance with their own choices”.

In addition to mentioned above, the [Law on non-governmental organisations](#) “Official Gazette of Montenegro”, No. 039/11 dated 4 August 2011, 037/17 dated 14.06.2017 (Zakon o nevladinim organizacijama, “Službeni list Crne Gore”, br. 039/11 od 04.08.2011, 037/17 od 14.06.2017)) gives the possibility to young people who are 14 and over to be founders of non-governmental organisations, which creates a legal framework for implementing youth-led voluntary activities and achieving a higher level of direct involvement of young people in community development.

2.5 Youth volunteering at national level

Volunteering at national level is closely connected to the work of civil society organisations.

There are no strategically allocated funds from the national budget for support of development of voluntary programmes and implementation of voluntary activities, but there were many projects that are financed from the National Lottery Fund and foreign donors that included this segment. Since there are no funds that are provided to cover administrative costs of CSOs in Montenegro (only project activity costs), for the last 20 years the organisations have been relying on voluntary work of their members, and short-term projects that give them a chance to have paid staff for a certain period. The negative aspect is that capacities of youth NGOs are quite low since there is no long-term financial security for core team and their paid staff is always at risk to not have the project to implement and honoraria for the next month or next year. This is slowing down the development of a quality-based organised system for volunteer management.

Young volunteers included in the work of CSOs are of different types: short-term – included in campaigns and other short-term activities, or long-term – involved in the work of organisations for many years. Looking from the competence prism, there are organisations that involve non-specialised volunteers (volunteers with no specific knowledge and skills needed to perform the task) and organisations that are asking for specialised volunteers and provide special training for their volunteers before performing their voluntary work.

In line with the type of the activities they are implementing and their goals and type of membership, organisations have or do not have a volunteer management policy as a part of their strategic documents. The job of volunteer manager is usually attached to other responsibilities of the president of the organisation, the director or the programme manager.

There is National Voluntary Service in the country that serves as a centre of knowledge in this area, and a pool of available volunteers for many volunteer actions implemented on the national level, but although it was planned by the National strategy for volunteerism development the government so far has not provided funds or space for its work.

Although the Youth law and Youth strategy have recognised the importance of youth volunteering, among 36 projects that promote, develop and improve youth policies at the national and local levels that were financed by the Ministry of Sport – Directorate for Youth in the amount of €170 000 in 2017 – there were no funds distributed for youth volunteering projects. Nevertheless, the Directorate in the previous period supported the opening of youth clubs in several municipalities and that can be seen as one of the ways to indirectly work on the development of structure for youth volunteering. In the Action plan for 2017 this ministry included celebrating International Volunteer Day (5 December).

2.6 Cross-border mobility programmes

The largest number of young people that volunteer abroad are taking part in international short-term volunteering opportunities: international work camps. Every year hundreds of youngsters from Montenegro are volunteering abroad through National Voluntary Service (ADP-Zid) that is a member of the two biggest volunteering networks: the [Alliance of](#)

[European voluntary service organisations](#) and [Service Civil International \(SCI\)](#). These two networks are also offering possibilities of international mid-term and long-term volunteering. Through these channels, cross-border volunteer exchange with neighbouring countries is also facilitated.

Montenegro is taking part in the Erasmus+ programme, and in line with that there are several organisations accredited for sending EVS volunteers (an up-to-date list can be found at [EUROPEAN YOUTH PORTAL – search for European Volunteering Service accredited organisations](#)).

The number of young people taking part in EVS could be much bigger, but the budget for this type of activity, which is distributed through calls for project proposals from EACEA - Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency in Brussels (from centralised level) for co-operation with neighbouring countries, is limited. Additionally, national priority of national agencies in programme countries very often is not in co-operation with non-program countries from the Western Balkan (Montenegro is not an Erasmus+ programme country and doesn't have a national agency thus there is no fund allocated for this programme by the government).

2.7 Raising awareness about youth volunteering opportunities

Awareness-raising activities about youth volunteering are implemented by different civil society organisations on the local and national levels. The biggest campaign that includes the largest number of volunteers is the [Let's do it campaign](#) – a worldwide campaign that started in Estonia in 2008, and since then has spread around the world. Until 2016 a total of 113 countries and over 16 million people have joined us to clean up illegal waste. In Montenegro it started in 2014, and since then it is organised on regular basis. In 2016 alone more than 10 800 people in Montenegro participated in Let's do it! actions and about 1 850 m³ of rubbish was collected. The activities in Montenegro are co-ordinated by the [Let's do it Montenegro team](#), and supported by many institutions, organisations and business companies. For example, in 2016 the campaign was supported in preparation and implementation by: Bildstudio, Metropolis, Cineplexx, TV Atlas, Foundation Petrović Njegoš, Erste Bank, Delegation of EU in Montenegro, Water Suza, DHL, Mtel, Montenegro Stars Hotel Group, Nikšićko pivo, Capital of Montenegro – Podgorica i Touristic organization Podgorica.

Besides the above-mentioned, many civil society organisations, especially on the local level, organise campaigns for attracting volunteers which are mainly involved in environmental projects or projects that include provision of social services to some of the vulnerable groups.

[International Volunteer Day](#), mandated by the UN General Assembly, has been celebrated on 5 December in Montenegro for more than 15 years. It is viewed as a unique chance for volunteers and organisations to celebrate their efforts, to share their values, and to promote their work among their communities, non-governmental organisations (NGOs), United Nations agencies, government authorities and the private sector. As planned by National strategy for volunteerism development, National voluntary service on that day give the annual volunteer prize to the “best volunteer”, “best volunteer action”, “corporate volunteering award” etc.

In the education system, teachers are promoting volunteerism through promotion of their extracurricular activities in the school environment, local community but also through media – traditional (printed and TV) and social media (Facebook, Twitter, Youtube, Instagram etc.). In 2004 one short movie was created and promoted all over the country: [“We would also volunteer if we had money”](#) (I mi bi volontirali da imamo para).

Young people are using their voice in promotion of volunteering and you can find on Youtube statements like [Statement by the member of the volunteer club “Slobodan Skerovic” Gymnasium Andree Micanovic](#) or other examples, especially in the area of the “No hate online – no hate offline” project and campaign that this volunteer club implemented.

2.8 Skills recognition

There is a possibility of verifying the non-formally and informally gained knowledge and skills leading to a professional qualification in Montenegro. This procedure is carried out by the Examination Centre of Montenegro. So far, 120 persons have acquired the certificate of national vocational qualification. But, as stated in the National Youth Strategy, there is no mechanism for the recognition and validation of knowledge and skills that young people acquire through non-formal learning programmes, not only after additional job training and retraining as part of the employment, but in the context of various programmes at national and international level, organised by different actors, which encourage personal development, but also social inclusion and employability (educational programmes that lead to the acquisition of key skills and to the improvement of key competencies; educational programmes for acquiring knowledge and skills for civic democracy, environmental protection, sustainable development, family life, successful social integration, improving the quality of life, health education, social skills, and so on.) The YouthPass certificate is issued by youth organisations that participate in the Erasmus+ programme but is not recognised as valuable by the formal education and business sector.

According to the Law on voluntary work, volunteers and organisers of volunteering may be granted a special reward for contribution to and promotion of volunteering. This reward shall be granted by the volunteering service, as a rule, once a year in accordance with its regulations.

In Article 29 of the law it is stated that volunteers shall have a volunteer booklet. The form of this volunteer booklet shall be prescribed by the state administration authority in charge of labour affairs (the ministry). The volunteer booklet shall be issued by the local authority. The Employment Agency of Montenegro (hereinafter referred to as the Agency) shall keep a central database of the organisers, beneficiaries of volunteering and volunteers, based on data provided by the organiser of volunteering.

After termination of volunteering, an organiser of volunteering shall enter information in a volunteer booklet (in Montenegrin language: volonterska knjizica) about the time period of volunteering service, the type of volunteering and training that the volunteer gained during volunteering.

If the contract on volunteering is concluded with a person who wants to obtain special education and skills to work in their profession, according to Article 12a of the Law on voluntary work, volunteering performed pursuant to Paragraph 1 of this Article (“Contract on

volunteering concluded in writing between the volunteers and organisers of volunteering”) shall be recognised as work experience and as a condition for taking the qualification exam.

As stated in the Youth Strategy, the procedures for recognition and alignment should be simplified and easily accessible, implemented by high-quality and qualified services and in places suitable for verification of non-formal and informal learning, i.e. prior learning. Information about the possibilities of recognising and aligning the formally and non-formally acquired knowledge should be made available to various target groups through qualified mass services and information services in public and private sectors.

2.9 Current debates and reforms

The Law on voluntary work has been and still is the subject of many criticisms because it failed to take into account the needs and demands of volunteers themselves and civil society organisations that are mostly based on the work of volunteers, have a tradition of including young people in volunteer programmes at the local, national, European and world level.

National Strategy for co-operation with NGOs has foreseen development of new Law on volunteering, because “instead of contributing to the development of the volunteering culture in Montenegro the Law on voluntary work to a great extent creates a barrier for its further development” since “the Law overregulates the role of the state in regulating volunteering and imposes unreasonably high transaction costs on the organiser of volunteering” and many other reasons that are mentioned in the strategy.

It should be noted that the governmental Action Plan for Chapter 23 for the EU approximation process, covering Judiciary and Fundamental Rights, envisages the activity “Drafting a new Law on Volunteerism in order to create an incentive framework for civic activism and the sustainability of civil society organisations”.

GLOSSARY

The Alliance of Voluntary Service organisations is an international non-governmental youth organisation that represents national organisations which promote intercultural education, understanding and peace through voluntary service.

Civil society organisations (CSOs) include all non-market and non-state organisations and structures in which people organise to pursue shared objectives and ideals, including non-governmental organisations (NGOs), professional associations, community-based organisations, farmers’ associations, environmental groups, independent research institutes, universities, faith-based organisations, labour unions, and the not-for-profit media etc.

Corporate volunteering (sometimes called employee volunteering) is a way for businesses to contribute to the community. Companies give their employees an allowance of paid time off annually which they use to volunteer: at a civil society organisation of their choice; at the volunteering activities organized by the company itself or in cooperation with volunteer centres or other organisations or charities.

EU Youth Strategy is a policy document agreed by EU ministers named: “An EU Strategy for Youth – Investing and Empowering” which sets out a framework for co-operation covering the years 2010-2018 with two main objectives: to provide more and equal opportunities for young people in education and the job market; to encourage young people to actively participate in society. However, it does not replace Member States’ overall responsibility for youth policy.

The European Commission is the institution of the EU’s politically independent executive arm. It is alone responsible for drawing up proposals for new European legislation, and it implements the decisions of the European Parliament and the Council of the EU.

European Economic and Social Committee on Statistical (EESC) is a consultative body of the European Union (EU) established in 1958. It is an advisory assembly composed of "social partners", namely: employers (employers' organisations), employees (trade unions) and representatives of various other interests.

Informal volunteering – voluntary activities performed on an individual or non-structured basis.

International Year of Volunteers – the UN General Assembly resolution (A/RES/52/17), adopted 20 November 1997, declaring 2001 the International Year of Volunteers designated the United Nations Volunteers (UNV) programme, the volunteer arm of the UN, as the focal point. The objectives of the Year are increased promotion, recognition, facilitation and networking of voluntary action worldwide.

International Cultural Youth Exchange (ICYE) – is an international, non-profit, youth exchange organisation that provides youth mobility, intercultural learning and international voluntary service opportunities to help people break down prejudices and develop intercultural understanding and competence for a more just and peaceful world.

Voluntary service – structured activity during a fixed period of time, based on an agreement that provides all the parties involved with an appropriate framework of rules and procedures that inform all the partners about their duties and rights; usually implemented by specialised voluntary service organisations that people can join in order to respond to their personal wish for volunteering.

Voluntarism is the “principle or system of doing something by or relying on voluntary action or volunteers” (Merriam Webster).

Non-governmental organisations (NGOs) are non-profit, citizen-based groups that function independently of government, organised on community, national and international levels to serve specific social or political purposes. Examples of NGOs include those that support human rights, advocate for improved health or encourage political participation.

Service Civil International (SCI) is an international volunteer organisation dedicated to promoting a culture of peace by organising international voluntary projects for people of all ages and backgrounds.