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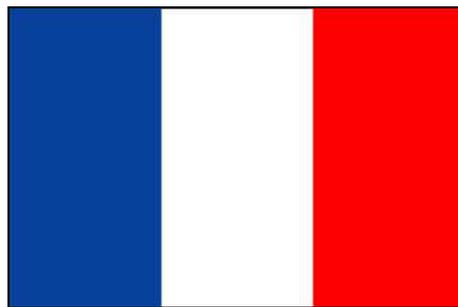
European Union  
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Partnership between the European Commission  
and the Council of Europe in the field of Youth

# INFORMATION SHEET

## VOLUNTEERING OF YOUNG PEOPLE

### France



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# 1. Volunteering of young people in France

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

An important precision has to be brought related to volunteering in France: two types are to be distinguished.

A volunteering which is a completely free involvement is named “bénévolat” There is no legal status for it, only a few laws and frameworks which give some benefits in kind in specific cases.

On another hand, the “service civique” volunteering relates to a specific status and therefore brings a few guarantees to the volunteer who gets involved in a non-profit organization during several months. This volunteering is different from the totally free involvement and from the status of an employee. This difference is really important. The status of an employee has to fit with the frame of several laws and regulations which protect people. Service civique is not a form of employment for young people having difficulties to find a job. The assignments should not replace a former or a new job. When people are registered as unemployed, they find back their financial rights to unemployment after the assignment.

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

*On national level: **Yes***

In France, volunteering is totally free. The State has not to interfere within this proper choice of each citizen. Nevertheless, it has adopted several frameworks which encourage and facilitate the volunteering for any individual and the Parliament has voted a law which promotes a specific volunteering, the “service civique”.

The working population below 25 involved in associations in the field of non formal education, youth or sports can benefit from days off (up to 6 days) to benefit from a training to improve its skills within such associations. Like all volunteers in France, they can take days off to represent their association. They can benefit from training paid by the State. They can have their expenses linked to their volunteering reimbursed by the State through their income taxes, under specific conditions. Associations may give vouchers to their volunteers, promoted by the State. Encouraged by official recommendations from the ministry in charge, several universities recognise the volunteering of students within diplomas.

A law has been voted in March 2010 to create a “service civique” which is a form of voluntary service. It is opened to any individual. The State promotes more particularly the service civique

done by young people from 16 to 25 years old: such young people engaged in a French legal entity which has received the agreement, doing a mission of public interest during 6 to 12 months at least 24 hours a week, benefits from a compensation and social security mainly paid by the State.

Within the framework of the service civique, other forms of volunteering exist. The compensation is variable according each of them. So is the inclusion within health insurance.

- *On regional level:* The same frameworks are promoted.

- *Is volunteering usually paid?* **No**

In France, volunteering is unpaid.

In the case of “bénévolat”, it is totally free. Volunteers may have their expenses linked to their volunteering reimbursed by the State through income taxes, under specific conditions. Volunteers who manage their NGOs may benefit from compensation, or sometimes from a salary but under very specific conditions.

In the case of the service civique, volunteers between 16 to 25 years old benefit from a compensation which is around 540 Euros and sometimes from benefits in kind. For those who are more than 25 years old, the compensation and/or allowances depend on NGOs.

- *Is there any National voluntary service?* **Yes**

A law has been voted in March 2010 to create a “service civique” which is a form of voluntary service. It is opened to any individual. The State promotes more particularly the service civique done by young people from 16 to 25 years old: such young people engaged in a French legal entity which has received the agreement, doing a mission of public interest during 6 to 12 months at least 24 hours a week, benefits from a compensation and social security mainly paid by the State.

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

The volunteer is not recognised as a status by the fiscal authority.

Nevertheless, under specific conditions, he may receive a compensation which is not taxed. Service civique volunteers benefit from a compensation (not taxed), health insurance and pension.

## 2. Main actors and networks

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

National, regional and local:

Institutions:

- The ministry in charge of NGOs and of the promotion of volunteering (the ministry of Education, Youth and NGOs) and its local delegates within the regions and the departments (local level of administration);
- The Service Civique Agency which depends on this ministry and is in charge of the service civique;
- Apart from the State, each local authority (regions, departments and cities) elaborates and implements its own policy.

NGOs:

For volunteers under 18 years old, the Réseau National des Juniors Associations (this association helps minors to create associations and give them advice related to legal and financial aspects);

For all young volunteers: France Bénévolat, Espace Bénévolat, Animafac (students), Afev (students), Unis-cité (young service civique volunteers) are a few examples of the numerous NGOs which promote the volunteering of young people.

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

Espace bénévolat, Animafac (students), Afev (students), Unis-cité (young service civique volunteers)

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

Financial partnerships may exist between the State and associations to promote the volunteering of the youngster.

Concerning the service civique, legal entities willing to receive young volunteers within their structures have to receive a specific agreement from the Agency of the service civique. When they have such an agreement, the legal entities can admit volunteers and more particularly young

volunteers between 16 and 25 years old whose compensation and social insurance will be taken in charge by the State.

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

Any actor of the society may promote volunteering: NGOs, public institutions, companies, etc.

NGOs willing to benefit from the legal and fiscal frameworks indicated in the question n°1 have to be non-profit.

### 3. Promotion of volunteering of young people

- Which methods among the one listed below are the most used to promote volunteering of young people in your country?

By national policies:

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

By NGOs:

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

*Explain and provide examples for each of the box ticked.*

An advertisement campaign, through several medias, has been organised by the Agency of service civique to promote this type of volunteering towards the young.

In universities, information is distributed, frameworks are implemented to facilitate volunteering on campus and to recognize it through diplomas.

Youth information centres and volunteering information centres distribute information everywhere in France.

- Which among the followings are methods of recognition of volunteering of young people in your country?

- European Youth Pass
- Certificates
- Credits in the formal education system
- Awards
- Incentives
- They are valued in the CV
- ~~Other:~~

~~They are not recognised~~

*Explain and provide examples for each of the box ticked.*

European Youth pass is used in the context of the European Voluntary Service (EVS).

A few NGOs give certificates to their volunteers recognizing their involvement and the tasks done, and its duration. Young volunteers doing a service civique also receive an attestation.

Credits may be given in a several universities.

Incentives: see above.

Awards are organized by a few NGOs in the context of the European year of volunteering to recognize the involvement of young people.

Its volunteering experience may be indicated in CVs by the young volunteer. Companies may take this experience into account or not, it depends on the strategy of each of them.

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

The volunteering of the young people under 18 may be difficult since they are minors.

Nevertheless, a NGO, the Réseau national des juniors associations, lightens the legal obstacles, bringing advice to the minors and taking the legal responsibilities when necessary.

On another hand, the creation of an association by minors was not allowed up to now. A legal text is about to be adopted which should facilitate for minors to manage an association.

## 4. Mobility of young volunteers

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

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

In the case of “service civique”, since only legal entities with a specific agreement from the Agency of service civique can receive volunteers, a minimum of conditions concerning the security of young volunteers are included in the criteria.

The public institutions in charge monitor the mobility of young volunteers each year.

## 5. Sources of information

The governmental website:

<http://www.associations.gouv.fr>

<http://www.associations.gouv.fr/960-nouvel-article.html>

The publications produced by the ministry to inform on the frameworks facilitating volunteering:

[http://www.associations.gouv.fr/IMG/pdf/Livret\\_Benevole\\_2011.pdf](http://www.associations.gouv.fr/IMG/pdf/Livret_Benevole_2011.pdf)

<http://www.associations.gouv.fr/IMG/pdf/guide-du-benevole-2011-2.pdf>

The agency of service civique website: <http://www.service-civique.gouv.fr>

The firemen organisation website: <http://www.pompiers.fr/index.php?id=21978>

The other websites:

<http://www.france-volontaires.org/>

<http://www.civiweb.com/FR/index.aspx>