



YouthPartnership

QUESTIONNAIRE

“VOLUNTARY ACTIVITIES”

BELGIUM-FLANDERS



YouthPartnership
Council of Europe
European Commission



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1. Statistics

1.1 Which of the kinds of voluntary activities exist in your country for young people?

Voluntary activities Yes

Voluntary Service Yes

Civic service No

1.2 Number of young people who engage in voluntary activities per year (13-30 years old) M-F

Total Number	Total Female	Total Male
N/I	N/I	N/I

1.3 Number of young people who engage in voluntary service in your country (13-30 years old) M – F

Total Number	Total Female	Total Male
55	23	22

1.4 Number of young people who engage in voluntary service abroad (excluding European Voluntary Service) (13-30 years old) M – F

Total Number	Total Female	Total Male

1.5 Number of young people who engage in national voluntary civic service, where it exists (13-30 years old) M – F

Total Number	Total Female	Total Male
0	0	0

1.5.1 Number of young people who carry out their service period abroad (13-30 years old) M – F

Total Number	Total Female	Total Male
0	0	0

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

Flanders does not have a national voluntary civic service.

1.5.3 If yes, number of young people from outside the country participating in your national voluntary civic service (13-30 years old) M – F

Total Number	Total Female	Total Male
N/A	N/A	N/A

Sources :

Smits, W. (2004). Maatschappelijke participatie van jongeren. Brussel: VUB, TOR-groep.

Smits, W. (2004). Participatie en onbehagen. Brussel: VUB, TOR-groep.

2. Range of voluntary activities

2.1 Tick the voluntary activities engaged in by young people and then indicate the approximate number of people involved.

	Exists	Number
a. Community activity	Yes	BOX
b. Participation/self-governance	Yes	BOX
c. Emergency response	Yes	BOX
d. Community peacekeeping	Yes	BOX
e. Social assistance	Yes	BOX
f. Personal assistance	Yes	BOX
g. Children and youth	Yes	BOX
h. Environment	Yes	BOX
i. Human rights, advocacy and politics	Yes	755
j. Economic justice	Yes	100
k. Development aid	Yes	BOX
l. Humanitarian aid	Yes	BOX
m. Religious volunteering	Yes	BOX
n. Education	Yes	BOX
o. Arts/culture	Yes	BOX
p. Sports	Yes	BOX
q. Recreation	Yes	BOX

Questionnaire on Voluntary Activities– Belgium Flanders

Other voluntary activities (please state)

There is a great diversity in voluntary activities undertaken by young people, both with regard to objectives and to shapes. The types of voluntary activities that are provided are primarily generated in the socio-cultural not-for-profit sector. Young volunteers are found mainly in social life, namely in youth work and especially in youth movements. In addition, they are involved in various youth associations, sports associations, action groups such as third world organisations, human rights organisations, peace organisations, antiracist groups, environmental movements, hobby clubs, welfare and health care, the arts and cultural sector, the civil sector (unions, political parties, ...). Voluntary commitment of youngsters can also be linked to temporary projects/events, e.g. the organisation of a festival.

3. Finance

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

Total: N/I Euros

Explanation

The 2006 general expenditure budget of the Flemish Community included a grant to Vlaams Steunpunt Vrijwilligerswerk of EUR 99,000, the grants to the provincial support centres for volunteer work amounting to EUR 148,000 and the grant to organised volunteer work in the framework of welfare and health sector to EUR 781,000. From 2007 onwards, the annual spendable budget has been increased with EUR 250,000. - Grants to volunteer associations for educational and awareness raising projects in the monuments and sites sector totalled EUR 50,000. These grants are for volunteer work in general. Grants allocated to youth (work) initiatives also indirectly support volunteer work undertaken by young people. In 2006, grants to local youth work were worth EUR 17,054,000 and grants to nationally organised youth work EUR 18,933,000. The funding of the European Volunteer Service amounted to approximately 33 million euro in 2004.

3.2 Main public and private sources of finance

The Flemish Government is the main funding source of voluntary work. In addition, there are a number of (semi)public and private organisations that support volunteer work/voluntary activities. One of the major sources is the Koning Boudewijnstichting (King Baudouin Foundation), an independent and pluralist foundation that aims at improving the living conditions of the population.

Sources :

<http://www.kbs-frb.be>

<http://www.wvg.vlaanderen.be>

<http://www.vrijwilligerswerk.be>

4. Main Actors

4.1 Main actors of voluntary activities of young people (all levels: national, regional, local, e.g. Ministries, organisations, etc...with description of main activity, contact person, address, telephone and fax number, e-mail, website)

Ministries or other governmental actors

The Federal Public Service for Social Security is responsible for all regulations on the legal status of volunteers.

FOD Sociale Zekerheid, Directie-Generaal Sociaal Beleid

Eurostation II

Victor Hortaplein 40 bus 20, 1060 Brussel

tel + 32 2 528 63 00 - fax + 32 2 528 69 68

mail: dg-soc@minsoc.fed.be

<http://socialsecurity.fgov.be/>

The High Council for Volunteers is operational at federal level and collects, systemizes and analyses information on volunteers and voluntary work; it

undertakes research into specific problems which volunteers and voluntary work may face; gives advice with regard to volunteers and voluntary work.

Hoge Raad voor Vrijwilligers (secretariaat)

Eurostation II

Victor Hortaplein 40 bus 20, 1060 Brussel

Christian Dekeyser, tel : 02/528.64.68, fax : 02/528.69.77

mail: Christian.Dekeyser@minsoc.fed.be

http://socialsecurity.fgov.be/NL/specifieke_info/vrijwilligers/hoge_raad/

The funding of voluntary activities and volunteer groups in the welfare and health care sectors (organized volunteer work) is laid down in Flemish Parliament Acts of the Flemish Community.

Ministerie van de Vlaamse Gemeenschap, Departement Welzijn

Volksgezondheid en Cultuur, Administratie Gezin en Maatschappelijk

welzijn, Afdeling Algemeen Welzijnsbeleid

Markiesstraat 1, 1000 Brussel

tel + 32 2 553 33 30

mail: welzijnszorg@vlaanderen.be

<http://www.vlaanderen.be/vrijwilligers>

The Youth Division of the Flemish Community helps create youth volunteer work opportunities through the recognition and funding of youth (work) initiatives.

Vlaams Ministerie van Cultuur, Jeugd, Sport en Media; Agentschap Sociaal-cultureel werk voor jeugd en volwassenen; Afdeling Jeugd;

Arenbergstraat 9, 1000 Brussel

tel +32 2 553 41 30 - fax +32 2 553 41 17

mail: jeugdensport@vlaanderen.be

<http://www.wvg.vlaanderen.be/jeugdbeleid/>

Local and provincial youth services play a crucial role in the distribution of information and the support of initiatives launched by young people.

Non governmental actors

Most initiatives are based on volunteers (work) in general. The King Baudouin Foundation has a number of publications on volunteer work and supports projects. It also lends financial support to the following website <http://www.vrijwilligerswerk.be/>, a partnership between 5 provincial support centres for volunteer work, Het Punt (Brussels Support Centre) and the Vlaams Steunpunt Vrijwilligerswerk (Flemish Support Centre for volunteer work). This site contains among other things an online database on vacant posts for volunteers and associations.

Koning Boudewijnstichting
Brederodestraat 21, 1000 Brussel
tel. +32 2 511 18 40 - fax +32 2 511 52 51
<http://www.kbs-frb.be>
info@kbs-frb.be

The Vlaams Steunpunt Vrijwilligerswerk gives support to voluntary activities and consists of advice, information and training. Volunteer work is also promoted by the annual "Week of the Volunteer". The Vlaams Steunpunt watches over the interests of volunteer work, e.g. by monitoring policy developments. Also cross-sectoral networking is a key pillar.

Vlaams Steunpunt Vrijwilligerswerk,
Amerikalei 164, 2000 Antwerpen
tel +32 3 218 59 01
info@vsvw.be
www.vrijwilligersweb.be

Five provincial support centres and one Brussels support centre co-ordinate voluntary activities in the Flemish provinces and Brussels. They manage a decentralized database, act as a mediator between organisations and candidate volunteers, get more people involved in volunteering and help organisations enhance the quality of their activities by providing information and training and by setting up certain initiatives. Finally, there are local support centres for volunteering.

Many organisations with a special focus on young people are commissioned to set up, support and monitor volunteer work within youth work: the 'Vlaamse Jeugdraad' (Flemish Youth Council), het 'Steunpunt Jeugd' (Youth Support Centre), JINT (Co-ordination body for International Youth Work), nationally organised youth associations, NGOs in the field of development co-operation.

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

5.1 Is there a specific legal status for volunteers or are they assimilated to other categories of people (students, workers, trainees etc?)

A vote was taken on the Act on the rights of volunteers on 3 July 2005, after which it was published in the Belgian Official Gazette on 29 August 2005. Afterwards, the federal Bill of 8/05/06 DOC 2496/001 amending the Act of 3 July 2005 was unanimously passed by the House of Representatives on 8 June 2006. The Act has been effective since 1 August 2006. In this Act on the rights of volunteers, volunteer work in Belgium is described as follows: "Volunteering is a non-compulsory activity which is unsalaried and accomplished to the benefit of third parties, set up by an organisation, and which is not carried out by the same person and for the same organisation in the framework of a contract of employment, a contract of service or permanent appointment." Volunteering is thus distinguished from professional activity (paid), voluntary involvement

(unorganised) and paid voluntary involvement (a remuneration exceeding the costs). Liability, insurance, fees for volunteers are now legally defined, as well as the proportion between volunteer work and labour and social security. Please note: The regulation on liability and insurances has been effective since 1 January 2007.

5.2 Taxation/tax exemptions for volunteers and volunteer organisations

Volunteers can obtain a fixed allowance – free of tax - as compensation for costs incurred. The amount of expenses actually incurred does not have to be proved if the total amount of allowances received does not exceed € 29.05 per day or € 1161.82 per year (from 01-01-2008 onwards)

(<http://www.vrijwilligersweb.be/wetgeving.htm>). However, proof has to be provided for allowances exceeding the above-mentioned amounts.

5.3 Existence of social protection of volunteers

The new Act on the rights of volunteers contains provisions that refer to the legal status and social protection of volunteers.

In principle, liability for damage caused to third parties by a volunteer lies with the organisation (= immunity principle). If deceit, gross fault or recurrent minor faults are involved, the volunteer him/herself can be held accountable. In the framework of international volunteering, the provisions of international private law are applicable. The type of organisation in which the volunteer is active, also plays a role in the immunity principle: for organisations in which volunteers do not have immunity (small spontaneous initiatives), the rules of common law apply. So, a volunteer may be held personally liable in civil proceedings for errors he/she commits during volunteering activities for these associations. Liability does not apply to the so-called contractual liability. The Act is silent about criminal liability. A volunteer who commits a violation of the Penal Code, may be held individually liable for this. The Act makes insurance compulsory for every organisation. Currently, an organisation is only obliged to enter into an insurance policy covering civil liability which is not included in the contract. Compulsory insurance is only applicable to organisations in which volunteers are immune under the new Act.

People living on social security benefits (unemployment benefit, early retirement pension, pension, incapacity for work benefit, income support) are allowed to do volunteer work and keep their allowance if they fulfil certain requirements. Volunteers do not lose the right to receive family benefit.

5.4 Legal situation of unemployed young people participating in voluntary activities

There is no difference between younger and older unemployed as far as the legal status of the volunteer is concerned. Unemployed people entitled to unemployment benefits are allowed to do volunteer work, provided that they report this in writing to the unemployment agency of the National Employment Office (RVA – Rijksdienst voor Arbeidsvoorziening). The request can only be rejected if the RVA is able to prove that the applicant wants to do volunteer work which is not officially defined, that the activity cannot be considered as voluntary due to its nature, volume or frequency; that the unemployed person becomes less available to the labour market due to volunteer work. The onus of proof lies with the RVA, which is an important achievement of the new law passed in 2005. Formerly, the onus of proof fell on the candidate volunteer him/herself.

Sources :

- Belgian House of Representatives, 3rd meeting of the 51st session, 19 May 2005. Bill on the rights of volunteers, text adopted in plenary meeting and transferred to the senate. (DOC 51 – 0455/011)
- http://socialsecurity.fgov.be/NL/specifieke_info/vrijwilligers/vergoedingen.htm

6. Programmes

6.1 What Programmes and plans are there in your country on volunteering (national, regional, local)

In Flanders, there are no action plans at national, regional and local level focusing on volunteer work by young people in particular. However, Flemish authorities campaign for the promotion of volunteer work in Flanders in co-operation with the Vlaams Steunpunt Vrijwilligerswerk (Flemish Support Centre for Volunteer Work) and the Provinciale Steunpunten (Provincial Support Centres).

The not-for-profit organisation JINT is responsible in Flanders for the European Youth Programme – European volunteer work component: information and promotion, allocation of funds, evaluation. To this end, JINT works together with the European Commission and agencies in 29 European countries.

<http://www.wvc.vlaanderen.be/vrijwilligers/vlaamsbeleid/index.htm>

<http://vrijwilligerweb.be>

<http://www.jint.be>

7. Relationship between different services

7.1 What is the relationship between military service, civilian service, civic service and voluntary service in your country?

We cannot describe any relationship as there is no voluntary civic service and both the obligatory military service and civilian service have been abolished for many years now. We have Civil Protection though that acts in case of disasters, catastrophes and accidents. The Civil Protection team is composed of a professional staff, completed with a large number of trained volunteers who have the rank of policeman.

7.2 If a voluntary civic service does not exist, are there plans to create one? Please provide a description.

During the preceding term of office, the Act of 11 April 2003 establishing a voluntary public service was voted. The government recently voiced its intention to activate this Act.

Moreover, the Act of 27 December 2005 established a voluntary service within development co-operation (VDOS). The project was set up after the tsunami disaster and the solidarity movement generated among the population in general and young people in particular. The length of this service performed in a partner country of the Belgian development co-operation agency is one to 3 years. Applicants must be aged between 20 and 30 years. In concrete terms, this means that 55 individuals were selected (an equal number of women and men, of whom a small majority were French-speaking) and departure was scheduled for late 2006.

Volunteers will be allocated to the projects and programmes managed by the Belgische Technische Coöperatie (BTC- Belgian Technical Co-operation).

At Parliamentary level, a Bill governing voluntary civil service was introduced in the Senate. This Bill provides for a voluntary service for young people from 18 to 30 years old, consisting of the performance of tasks of general interest during a period of 3 to 12 months in relation to solidarity, culture, environment and quality of life, both in public services and abroad. In December 2007, Defence Minister Pieter De Crem relaunched the idea of a voluntary military service

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

8.1 Description of recent (this year) developments in the area of voluntary activities

One of the main accomplishments is the Act on the rights of volunteers (2005), as it provides volunteers with a proper legal position. The Act of 27/12/2005 containing various provisions made substantial changes to the original Bill of 3 July 2005. This resulted in a consolidated version. The Act has been applicable since 1 August 2006.

In order to promote co-operation between associations covering the different spheres of social life (including the youth sector) and the authorities, a Charter was signed between the Flemish government and the "Verenigde Verenigingen" (a partnership of a large number of associations). The Charter serves as good basis for developing co-operation between associations of different spheres of social life and the authorities on the grounds of shared values and mutual respect.

In 2007, an information campaign of EUR 60,000 was launched to inform volunteers on the consequences of the federal Act for their activities. In addition, a project was set up in 2007 with the aim to provide clear information to volunteers with regard to their obligations of professional secrecy and client confidentiality.

In the 2006-2010 Flemish Youth Policy Plan it is stated that the Flemish government supports training opportunities for young volunteers and their mentors in order to improve the quality of voluntary activities and their organizational framework.

8.2 Is the range of voluntary activities increasing/decreasing?

increasing Yes decreasing No

We can speak of a 'new kind of volunteer' who zaps and shops between different short-term initiatives. Voluntary commitment of people is often ad hoc and flexible, stimulates networking and becomes less predictable. A number of demographic developments and the creation of new organisational forms (e.g. self-organisations of immigrants) give birth to new forms of volunteer work. So we can conclude that the range of possible voluntary activities is broadened. A number of shifts within voluntary work are simply due to changes in society without necessarily implying that (new) obstacles have emerged. Our finding is that large numbers of young people continue to get involved in voluntary work and that the trend is upward in the short term.

9. Removing obstacles to young people's voluntary engagement

9.1 How is young people's voluntary engagement facilitated?

From research it appears that is important for the voluntary engagement of young people that volunteer work is tailored to personal interests. Unselfish commitment is not outmoded but young people also aim for a win-win relationship that turns their volunteer work into an opportunity to enhance their personality development. Young people want to engage in concrete, feasible actions rather than to set themselves abstract or vague social goals. They want to make a clear-cut commitment. Simplicity, uniformity and transparency are the starting points.

Volunteer work for young people is encouraged by the Act of 14 February 2003 supporting and stimulating the municipal, intermunicipal and provincial youth policy and youth work policy

as amended by the Act of 23 December 2005 and the Act of 29 March 2002 on Flemish youth policy. These Acts put an emphasis on the promotion of youth work, experiential projects and international youth work. On 16 December 2005, the Flemish government adopted the second Flemish Youth Policy Plan as proposed by the Minister for Youth. With regard to voluntary activities in youth work, the Youth Policy Plan contains the following objective: "The Flemish government encourages voluntary work in the youth sector." In order to facilitate voluntary work in a permanent and effective way, the Flemish government commits itself to the UN objectives with regard to voluntary work. The 2006-2010 Flemish Youth Policy Plan states that Steunpunt Jeugd and other relevant actors pay attention to youth work in the framework of their mission with the aim of familiarizing young people with voluntary work, informing them on concrete opportunities for performing voluntary work, giving them advice and promoting a positive image of voluntary work.

9.2 What recent (this year) measures have been taken to remove obstacles to young people's volunteering? (legal, administrative measures, etc...)

In recent years, the Flemish government has been devoting more attention to the quality of regulations and to limiting their number. The web site www.samenvereenvoudigen.be was created. In 2007 priority is given to the reduction, simplification and in particular to the improvement of the rules on associations and volunteers. The Steunpunt Jeugd makes an inventory of federal, Flemish and Walloon forms of legislation, as well as of good and bad examples of local regulations that generate restrictive or superfluous consequences for youth work. The Steunpunt Jeugd audits Flemish regulations and checks them on superfluous or strongly restrictive provisions. If possible, the Flemish government repeals or simplifies superfluous or strongly restrictive provisions and proposes alternatives where necessary. The Vlaamse Jeugdraad urges that acts passed cause as little administrative burden as possible.

9.3 What obstacles still exist?

- Due to increased legislation in various fields, it is becoming increasingly difficult to encourage young volunteers in different types of youth work. The legislator treats youth centres and youth associations on an equal footing as all kinds of commercial initiatives and in some cases they must meet the same conditions regarding environmental legislation, copyright, legislation on health and safety ... apart from other detailed regulations.

- Due to the fact that training is not legally provided for in all sectors, volunteer work often is not treated with the esteem it deserves. Societal recognition is more than once linked to high quality training.
- The heavy demands placed on youngsters by education can be seen as an obstacle to their leisure time. Moreover, the available provision of volunteer work has to compete with various commercial leisure time activities.
- The knowledge of youngsters about volunteer work is often limited. The over-legalistic approach of the legal status of volunteers does not tell anything about the social or societal value of volunteering.
- People also think that the status of volunteers is mainly favourable to large, strongly organised bodies, thus leaving the reality of local youth work initiatives being uncovered by law. Certain forms of voluntary engagement in society such as voluntary involvement in the neighbourhood, at work, ... are not recognised by this Act.

10. Promotion of voluntary activities of young people

10.1 Information channels for voluntary activities of young people (organisations, links, contact persons, etc...)

Mouth to mouth publicity is the most powerful means to attract young people.

In addition, promotion is done at local level, in particular by the associations themselves, by means of flyers, posters, the holiday newspaper, the volunteer newspaper, signposting ... The information is collected on the Internet at www.vrijwilligerswerk.be from which various links are made to a number of organisations and to informative sites on volunteer work (JINT, VIA,...).

Initiatives that are specifically aimed at informing young people often also contain information on volunteer work. This concerns organisations such as the Youth

Support Centre, the not-for-profit JINT , youth work organisations, Youth Information Point, ... In addition, there are several sites that offer information on volunteer work : www.jeugdwerknet.be ; www.jips.be ; www.jongereninformatie.be ; www.jongerenplaneet.be

10.2 Promotion activities for voluntary activities (events, support for promotion actions, contact persons)

Promotion of voluntary work (the Week of the Volunteer being the yearly apex) is one of the objectives of Vlaamse Steunpunt Vrijwilligerswerk. (Flemish Support Centre for Volunteer Work). This is done by providing information and/or support to initiatives aimed at linking volunteer work to specific target groups, by co-operating in specific initiatives in which volunteers/voluntary activities play a special part and by managing www.vrijwilligerswerk.be in view of an efficient use and maintenance of the database. Also the Provincial Support Centres and the Brussels 'Punt' perform a key task in promoting volunteer work. Provincial youth services set up training programmes together with the provincial support centres for volunteer work. In this way, the not-for-profit organisation JES (Jeugd en Stad), which supports youth initiatives in cities, together with Het Punt (Steunpunt Vrijwilligerswerk Brussel), organised in June 2006 a training programme under the heading "Jongeren strikken voor vrijwilligerswerk" (get young people involved in volunteer work)

- 'De Pluim' is an initiative of the Koning Boudewijnstichting and the ten Flemish regional broadcasters. All those who involve themselves in an open and pleasant society can obtain a *feather in their cap*.
- 'Kom uit uw Kot' is a campaign of the Verenigde Verenigingen, a partnership of hundreds of associations in Flanders, among which a large number of youth associations.

- The 'Vrijwilligersbeurs' (Volunteers Fair) has been organised in recent years by a number of provinces. During such a fair, all volunteer organisations of the province introduce themselves to applicant volunteers.
- The 'Dag van de Jeugdbeweging' (Day of the youth movement) is a supportive initiative that focuses explicitly on young people and youth work. Both at provincial and local level, a large number of actions are set up to focus on the power of the youth movement.

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

The youth policy of the Flemish Government provides a framework to value (cultural) diversity. A number of initiatives are aimed at promoting the participation of young people from 'disadvantaged backgrounds' in youth work. In 2005, Steunpunt Jeugd together with the Youth and Sports Division gave an impetus to the cultural diversity process in the youth work sector. This led to the Flemish action plan on interculturalisation launched by Bert Anciaux in February 2006.

In the Act of 29 March 2002 on Flemish Youth Policy, funding possibilities for experiential youth work are provided.

The not-for-profit organisation 'Kif Kif' started an intercultural web radio, which is run by an intercultural group of volunteers.

- The House of Colours of the non-profit Arnica is an intercultural youth association for young people who actively choose to support a multicultural society. Social art is used as a means to bring young people closer together.
- The non-profit Ethercentrum wants to build a radio centre where young people can attend radio workshops. Attention to immigrant newcomers is one of the spearheads of the project.

The P&V Foundation is strongly focusing on facilitating access to youth work for various target groups. Late 2004, the P&V Foundation started the "Better together? Young people for accessible youth work!" project. In March 2006, Steunpunt Jeugd launched a new diversity campaign in collaboration with the "Impulsfonds voor het migrantenbeleid" (Incentive fund for migrant policy).

11. Recognition of voluntary activities of young people

11.1 Initiatives for the recognition of voluntary activities of young people (at all levels: national, regional, local; credits or other forms of recognition in the educational field; institutions, enterprises, organisations, etc...that recognise voluntary activities (“best practice list”), contact persons, ...)

The five Provincial Support Centres, the Brussels Steunpunt (Support Centre) and the Vlaams Steunpunt Vrijwilligerswerk (Flemish Support Centre for Volunteer Work) are responsible for the co-ordination and support of voluntary work in Flanders. These Support Centres also strive for a broader social – and formal – recognition of volunteer work. Organisations working with volunteers usually provide a form of training, education or support for volunteers, leading to the award of a certificate or not. Although such certification is not legally recognised, these initiatives give an indication of the basic quality. The accreditation of experiential learning, i.e. of knowledge, skills and is about the civil effects of the accreditation of competences, which means conferring a certain status and rights. The Vlaams Steunpunt Vrijwilligerswerk (Flemish Support Centre for Volunteer Work) initiated a project called 'Accreditation of experiential learning for management volunteers' in co-operation with SoCius, the Steunpunt voor Sociaal-cultureel werk (Support Centre for Socio-cultural work). The 2006-2010 Flemish Youth Policy Plan sets out the Flemish government's aims to make voluntary involvement accredited by different actors at all levels (government, business, social partners, the civil society and young people themselves). Accreditation must be proportionate to the voluntary activities accomplished. The Flemish government examines in which way the accreditation projects are useful and possible. (A Flemish initiative is for example the Wacker project in which several organisations (VFJ, JES, non-profit Kids among others) collaborate. They study how their operation can be translated into competences and in which way they can be involved in the Centres for youth skills development of the city. Flanders is co-organiser of three European developments, viz. the development of the *European Portfolio for Youth Leaders and Youth Workers*, the development of the *Europass* project, based on the EU resolution on the recognition of the value of non-formal and informal learning and the *Youth Pass*.

11.2 Measures of societal recognition of voluntary activities (National Day of the Volunteer, events, awards, etc...)

The Vlaams Steunpunt Vrijwilligerswerk aims at an increased societal recognition of voluntary work in Flanders, for instance by means of promoting the quality of volunteer work and defending the interests of voluntary workers.

Each year, a week of the volunteer is organised. In 2008, this week is organised from 1 to 9 March, a symposium being held in the Flemish Parliament in Brussels on 7 March.

The Flemish government also presents the Volunteer of the Year Award in the cultural sector.

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

12.1 Co-operations and networks in favour of voluntary activities of young people at all levels (international, European, national, regional, local) with short description of the networks, their members and activities; description of how they enhance the development, facilitation, promotion and recognition of young people's voluntary activities.

The not-for-profit organisation JINT is the co-ordination body for international youth work and the National Agency for the whole European 'Youth' Programme in Flanders. It is an important contact point for the EVS (European Voluntary Service), for volunteers as well as for organisations. You can turn to the Agency for all information on EVS such as criteria, forms, social security,... and also for advice and monitoring in all stages of your project. JINT also sets up training programmes for volunteers and participating organisations.

'Het Punt' in Brussels and the not-for-profit Vlaams Steunpunt vrijwilligerswerk (Flemish Support Centre for Volunteer Work) are members of The European Volunteer Centre. EVC is an umbrella organisation of 27 national and regional volunteer centres throughout Europe. The key objectives of EVC are: give a clear voice to volunteer work in Europe, reinforce the infrastructure for volunteering in Europe, encourage volunteer work and make it more effective.

The main goal of the Vlaams Steunpunt Vrijwilligerswerk is to stimulate and support voluntary activities as well as to promote interests. The Vlaams Steunpunt watches over the interests

of volunteer work, e.g. by monitoring policy developments. Also cross-sectoral networking is a key pillar.

12.2 Exchange of information, experience and good practices (between which actors, activities, topics (e.g. removal of obstacles to young people's voluntary activities, promotion, etc...))

The Prince Philip Foundation is a major actor in the field of exchanges and the permanent dialogue between the different Communities in Belgium (the Flemish Community, the French Community and the German-speaking Community). The "Drie +" (Three+) programme supports exchanges, meetings and dialogue between citizen groups from the different Communities. It is aimed at non commercial associations and institutions, both public and private (with the exception of schools), e.g. socio-cultural associations, environmental organisations, youth organisations and volunteer work.

Contact information: Prins Filipfonds, p.a. Koning Boudewijnstichting, Brederodestraat 21, 1000 Brussel. Tel: +32 2 549 61 91. Fax +32 2 512 31 18. website: www.prins-filipfonds.org . e-mail: info@prins-filipfonds.org

The Vlaams Steunpunt Vrijwilligerswerk, the Provincial Support Centres and 'Het Punt' (Brussels) are responsible for the exchange of information and experiences within volunteer work, e.g. by means of training and a joint website www.vrijwilligerswerk.be.

12.3 Exchange of young volunteers: at all levels (transnational, national, regional, between communities) with information and contact addresses

In Flanders, young volunteers can apply to a broad range of organisations for international exchanges and short-term or long-term projects : AFS, ATD vierde wereld, Balkanactie, Bouworde, Damiaanactie, JNM (youth association for nature and environmental protection), Natuur 2000, Tierra, ToCH, VIA, WEP, Broederlijk Delen, Jeugddienst Don Bosco, Jint (the EVS programme). The projects focus on social, ecological and/or educational issues. Most projects are oriented towards youngsters from the age of 18. Please find an overview of the

organisations mentioned above on the following web site http://www.jint.be/xcms/lang__nl-BE/462/default.aspx

Contact information: Jint vzw, Grétrystraat 26, 1000 Brussel. Tel: +32 2 209 07 20. Fax +32 2 209 07 49. e-mail: jint@jint.be

Each year, the European Voluntary Service offers 3500 young people from 31 European countries and third world countries the opportunity to act as volunteers in many areas. It is a high quality model for transnational voluntary services that aims at developing the feeling of solidarity in young people, reinforcing their citizenship and mutual understanding.

Sources :

<http://www.jint.be>

12.4 Collective volunteering projects in your country

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

Description of projects (including future projects, where possible);

Bouworde vzw, Jeugdbond voor Natuurstudie en Milieubescherming (JNM), ATD Vierde Wereld België, Natuur 2000.

if known, please provide details of programme/project, dates, description, contact, capacity/number of volunteers.

The not-for-profit organisation 'Bouworde' organises camps in Flanders involving some ten volunteers each time. These mainly take place in the summer months (July, August and September). More information on the different projects can be found at www.bouworde.be .

JNM is an organisation for and by young people between the ages of 8 and 25 who take an interest in nature and the environment. During the summer holidays, they organise different types of camps for youngsters from 16 to 25, including

nature study, work, work study and environmental camps. More information at <http://www.jnm.be/kampen/>

"ATD Vierde wereld België" organises summer holiday camps and works on a shared future in Brussels and the Walloon Region. More information on dates and venue at http://www.atd-quartmonde.org/europe/be/be_nl/index.html

Natuur 2000 schedules a nature camp at Oelegem from 8 to 12 August 2005 for 14 to 25 year-olds. <http://www.natuur2000.be>

12.4.2 Are there any possibilities for involvement of international volunteers in these projects? Please describe.

Different organisations can be referred to as host organisation. They receive international volunteers.

12.5. International solidarity volunteer service

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

AFS, ATD vierde wereld, Balkanactie, Bouworde, Damiaanactie, JNM (youth association for nature and environmental protection), Natuur 2000, Tierra, VIA, WEP(World Education Program), Broederlijk Delen, Jeugddienst Don Bosco, European Voluntary Service.

If known, please provide details of programme/project, dates, description, contact, capacity/number of volunteers.

AFS Interculturele Programma's vzw. Hendrik Consciencestraat 52 B-2800
Mechelen Tel: (+32) 015 79 50 10 Fax: (+32) 015 79 50 11. E-mail:
info@afsvlaanderen.be Website: www.afsvlaanderen.be

Balkanactie vzw. Uitbreidingstraat 498. 2600 Antwerpen. Tel.: 03/234.11.20.
Fax: 03/233.26.92. Website: www.balkanactie.be

Bouworde vzw. (Rob Wauters) Tiensesteenweg 157. 3010 Leuven
Tel: 016 25 91 44. Fax: 016 25 91 60. E-mail : vzw.bouworde@pandora.be
Website: www.bouworde.be

[Damiaanactie](http://www.damiaanactie.be) vzw. Nationaal secretariaat. Leopold II laan 263. 1081 Brussel. Tel:
0032/(0)2 422.59.11. website: <http://www.damiaanactie.be>

Tierra c.v.b.a. Heidebergstraat 311. 3010 Leuven. Tel.: 016/25.56.16. Fax:
016/64.99.95. E-mail: info@tierra.be Website: <http://www.tierra.be>

Broederlijk Delen. Nationaal secretariaat Broederlijk Delen . Huidevettersstraat
165 . 1000 Brussel. Tel: 02/502.57.00. Fax : 02/502.81.01 . mailto:
info@broederlijkdelen.be Website: <http://www.broederlijkdelen.be>

*12.5.2 Please list some major NGOs and/or NGO platforms active in the field of
international solidarity service in non-EU countries* AFS, JINT, VIA, WEP,
Bouworde, Damiaanactie, Tierra, Broederlijk Delen, Jeugddienst Don Bosco.

*12.5.3 Please describe in how far the government/state administration is involved
in organising, supporting and implementing international solidarity service in non-
EU countries.* The Flemish Community set up the not-for-profit JINT as a co-
ordinating body for international youth work. In order to "promote the active
participation of the Flemish Community in international youth exchanges and
international youth policy" the Flemish government opted for a strategic alliance
with the youth work sector. In practice, the emphasis is on the European

programmes under the impulse of the European dynamics in the field of international youth mobility. But from the start, they adopted the fundamental principle to look towards the world.

13. Studies & Surveys

13.1 What recent surveys or research has been collected on the topic of voluntary activities?

In the following studies, voluntary work is one of the researched topics:

- Smits, W. (2004). Maatschappelijke participatie van jongeren. Brussel: Vrije Universiteit Brussel, TOR-groep.
- Smits, W. (2004). Participatie en onbehagen. Brussel: Vrije Universiteit Brussel, TOR-groep.
- Stevens, F., De Groof, S., Elchardus, M., Laurijssen, I. & Smits, W. (2006). Het spanningsveld tussen vrijwilligerswerk in het jeugdwerk en de commercialisering van de leefwereld van jongeren. Nieuwe analyses. Brussel: Vrije Universiteit Brussel, vakgroep sociologie, onderzoeksgroep TOR.
- Bouverne-De Bie, M. & Verschelden, G. (2003). Vrijwilligerswerk: een verscheidenheid van realiteiten.
- Verschelden, G., Vanthuyne, T., Larock, Y., Franckx, C. & Verhoeven, S. (2005). Eindrapport onderzoeksproject participatie in verenigingen. Brussel-Gent: Socius -Universiteit Gent, Vakgroep Sociale Agogiek.

'Volunteer work' is one of the themes that is also regularly questioned in the annual survey of the Planning and Statistics Administration of the Flemish Community.

Research (relatively little) on youth voluntary work in Flanders is linked to the concern over the decrease in the degree of activity or, in a broader sense, the involvement of volunteers. Generally it can be stated that the discussion about

young people and voluntary work in surveys is much more a discussion about the *volunteer* than about the significance and contribution of voluntary *work* in youth work in particular and welfare work in general. Research into the importance of voluntary work in youth work should be linked to the concrete context (the work) in which volunteers are deployed and to the question about the added value of this input.