



**Youth**Partnership

# ***QUESTIONNAIRE***

## ***“VOLUNTARY ACTIVITIES”***

### ***ESTONIA***



**Youth**Partnership  
Council of Europe  
European Commission



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# **1. Which types of voluntary activities exist in your country for young people, explain the different fields of activities and if possible give numbers of how many young people engage in them per year, in totals and by gender?**

There are no special arrangements for voluntary activities of young people. Young people can volunteer on similar grounds with grown-ups. Volunteering of young people is also regulated by legal acts that set limits on minors' working hours and working conditions as well as on their rights and responsibilities.

A nationwide representative survey-study of people aged 15-30 years was conducted in July 2009. A survey question asked whether an interviewee had participated in volunteering during last 12 months. Altogether 21% responded that they had participated in some voluntary activity during previous 12 months. There was no statistically significant difference between men and women.

Another question asked whether an interviewee had participated in the following activities during previous 12 months:

1. Communication and information dissemination
2. Training and mentoring
3. Counselling
4. Lobbying, representing someone's interests
5. Helping activities
6. Organising events
7. Project initiation and project management
8. Administrative activities
9. Other activities

Participation rates were the following:

1. Communication and information dissemination – 2.3%
2. Training and mentoring – 2.8%
3. Counselling – 1.5%
4. Lobbying, representing someone's interests – 1.9%
5. Helping activities – 8.4%
6. Organising events – 7.6%
7. Project initiation and project management – 1.5%
8. Administrative activities – 0.6%
9. Other activities – 3.4%

Percentages add to more than 21% because several respondents reported participation in more than one activity.

There was no statistically significant difference between boys and girls, but girls' participation rate was a bit higher.

## **2. Which kind of voluntary service exist in your country and how many young people engage in them per year, in totals and by gender.**

There is no local or nationwide voluntary service. Volunteering is based on *ad hoc* projects, albeit some organisations use volunteers more systematically and the activities take place on a more regular basis.

According to the survey, in 2008/2009 altogether 21% of youth aged 15-30 years partook in at least one act of volunteering; there was no significant difference between different sexes.

## **3. Financial and legal status of voluntary activities**

There is no legal definition of volunteer status in Estonia. In some fields of activity, volunteering is regulated by special legal acts but mostly not.

There are no tax exemptions, volunteers are taxed according to general rules.

Volunteers are not subjects of social or health protection emerging from volunteering they engage in and volunteering is not recognized by the pension system.

Under § 124 (2) of the Constitution, a person who refuses to serve in the armed forces for religious or moral reasons has a duty to perform alternative service pursuant to the procedure prescribed by law. Alternative service cannot be equated with volunteering. Alternative service can be performed in units established for offering social care, emergency aid and rescue services.

## **4. Name the main actors of voluntary activities of young people on national, regional and local level in your country**

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**5. What is the social protection of young volunteers in your country and are voluntary activities compatible with social benefits?**

There is no social protection emerging from volunteering and volunteering does not entitle to any social benefits.

**6 What Programmes and plans are there in your country on volunteering?**

Refer to section 8 and section 12.

**7. Does a strategy (plan) or specific measures for the development of voluntary activities of young people exist in your country?**

Wider consensus among social actors on volunteering as well as legal framework of volunteering is in the process of development; refer to next section (section 8).

Support to youth volunteering is arranged through organisations which are involved in organising volunteering (refer to section 4). Estonian Ministry of Education ([www.hm.ee](http://www.hm.ee)) and Estonian Ministry of the Interior (<http://www.siseministeerium.ee/?lang=en>) are primary national level actors which are responsible for developing volunteering.

**8. Please, describe which obstacles to volunteering of young people do still exist in your country and which measures are taken to remove them?**

The main obstacle is legally un(der)defined status of volunteering and volunteers. Another related feature is lacking common understandings among social actors, particularly in the area of recognition of skills acquired in volunteering.

Permanent work is being done to develop common understandings of volunteering; similar process goes on towards building a framework of social recognition and benefits associated with volunteering. In 2006 Volunteer Development Estonia drafted, with the support of the Ministry of Internal Affairs, the first voluntary activity development plan in Estonia for the years 2007 to 2010. The aim of the development plan is to define common understandings, visions and tasks for facilitating and developing voluntary activity in Estonia.

**9. How are voluntary activities of young people promoted in your country, particularly among young people with fewer opportunities? Please give an example of good practice if possible**

Information on volunteering opportunities is spread by various organisations using various information channels, including websites, formal meetings and informal gatherings, email lists, printed information materials, interpersonal communication and other channels.

Continuous Action has organised several information events devoted to informing young people with fewer opportunities about European Voluntary Service. The organisation has also organised projects for this target group.

**10. Explain how (by which means) voluntary activities of young people are recognised in your country. Name certificates and other measures used for that purpose.**

YouthPass has been issued to participants in Youth in Action European Voluntary Service projects. In 2007, 44 participants received youth pass, in 2008 24 participants and in 2009, 17 participants. VolunteerPass is being developed by Volunteering Development Estonia. Like YouthPass and EuroPass, it is used for recording experiences obtained through participation in volunteering. There are no other generally recognized certification systems. Annual thanksgiving event organised by Volunteering Development Estonia.

**11. Which co-operations, networks and exchange programmes do exist in your country for supporting voluntary activities of young people?**

Refer to section 4.

**12 Do collective volunteering projects exist in your country?**

Yes, in recent years there have been some large-scale collective volunteering events.

In May 2008, [www.minueesti.ee](http://www.minueesti.ee) organised a nationwide garbage collection event – country clean-up project (<http://www.teeme2008.ee/?setlang=eng>). In the event, more than 50 000 people (approximately 4% of population) participated and many of them were young people.

In May 2009, [www.minueesti.ee](http://www.minueesti.ee) organised brainstorming and think-tank event (<http://www.minueesti.ee/?lng=en&leht=394>) which focused on the topic of how to increase quality of living in Estonia. More than 11 000 people participated, many of them were young people. The event has resulted in several workshops that keep developing the ideas which were first formed during the event.

Another large-scale volunteering event is being planned to be accomplished in 2010.



Estonian Fund for Nature organises collective volunteering actions on more or less regular basis. The events include nature conservation and nature protection activities mainly.

### **13 Which recent survey or research has been carried out on the topic of voluntary activities?**

A face-to-face survey of 15-30 year olds, conducted in July 2009, included a number of questions on volunteering. 995 interviews were conducted, the sample was representative of the age group in Estonia. The study was conducted by Estonian Youth Institute ([www.eni.ee](http://www.eni.ee)), fieldwork and data collection was completed by polling company Factum Ariko (<http://www.faktum-ariko.ee/?lang=eng>). A telephone survey on volunteering was conducted in May 2009, altogether 401 volunteers and 200 non-volunteers were interviewed. The study was commissioned by Volunteering Development Estonia (<http://www.vabatahtlikud.ee/et/Vabatahtlik-tegevus/Uuringud>) in cooperation with think-tank Praxis ([www.praxis.ee](http://www.praxis.ee)); data collection was completed by polling company EMOR ([www.emor.ee](http://www.emor.ee)).