

# ***QUESTIONNAIRE***

## ***“VOLUNTARY ACTIVITIES”***

### ***ITALY***



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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?**

*GENERAL DEFINITIONS OF VOLUNTEERISM:* refers to all forms of voluntary activity, whether formal or informal, full-time or part-time, at home or abroad. It is undertaken of a person's own free-will, choice and motivation, and is without concern for financial gain. It benefits the individual volunteer, communities and society as a whole. It is also a vehicle for individuals and associations to address human, social or environmental needs and concerns. Formal voluntary activities add value, but do not replace, professional, paid employees.

*VOLUNTEERING:* can occur informally (for example neighbourly "helping-out"), or within the structures of a non-profit organisation. It is often (but not always) of a part-time nature. It may occur over one day or many years in a range of different fields. It is good practice to ensure that formal volunteers are covered by appropriate accident, health-care and third party liability insurance, that they receive appropriate training and management, as well as the reimbursement of all out-of- pocket expenses.

*FULL-TIME VOLUNTARY SERVICE:* refers to specific, full- time project-based voluntary activities that are carried out on a continuous basis for a limited period of time. Voluntary-service activities may occur at home and abroad. It is good practice to ensure voluntary service volunteers are afforded appropriate social protection, such as accident, health-care and third party liability insurance. Volunteers should also receive appropriate training and management, reimbursement of out-of- pocket expenses as well as appropriate accommodation and subsistence allowances as agreed between the volunteer and the non-profit organisation (and the State as appropriate).

*Source of definitions: AVSO / CEV Report on the "Legal Status of Volunteers in Italy", 2003.*

Some data on the young people's commitment in voluntary activities are reported on the results of the Annual Survey "Daily life – year 2007", carried out by the National Institute of Statistics (ISTAT) on a representative sample of families.

<b>AGE GROUPS</b>	<b>Unpaid activity for volunteer associations</b>
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**MALE**

14-17	7,9
18-19	11,6
20-24	9,1
25-34	8,7

**FEMALE**

14-17	10,5
18-19	12,1
20-24	12,6
25-34	10,2

**MALE + FEMALE**

14-17	9,1
18-19	11,9
20-24	10,9
25-34	9,4

Source: Istat - Survey "Daily life – year 2007"

([http://www.istat.it/dati/catalogo/20090312\\_00/](http://www.istat.it/dati/catalogo/20090312_00/)).

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

The National Civic service allows young Italian citizens aged 18-28 to devote one year to solidarity, in Italy or abroad.

<b>Year</b>	<b>Number of volunteers</b>
2001	181
2002	7.865
2003	22.743
2004	32.211
2005	45.175
2006	45.890

2007	43.416
Total	197.481

Source: SCN, 2007.

<b>Age</b>	<b>2007</b>	
		%
18 - 20	9.682	22,30
21 - 23	14.466	33,32
24 - 26	13.576	31,27
27 - 28	5.692	13.11
<b>TOTAL</b>	43.416	100
Male	13.224	30.46
Female	30.192	69.54

Source: SCN, 2007

<http://www.serviziocivile.it>

### 3 Financial and legal status of voluntary activities

There is not a specific legal status for volunteer. Under current legislation, a volunteer is defined as a person who freely commits himself/herself to carry out volunteerism. Volunteer activities are not paid to the volunteer by the organisations.

Volunteers of the National Civic Service receive a daily net salary of 14,46 Euro (a monthly net salary of 433,80 Euro). The length of the National Civic Service is one year and may not be prolonged or renewed. This income is not directly taxed. However, it increases the amount of taxable income.

#### *Organisations*

The law recognises many tax benefits for voluntary organisations, and people can appropriate a part (5 per thousand) of the tax on their personal income to a voluntary organisation.

### 4 Main actors of voluntary activities of young people on national, regional and local level

- The Ministry of Labour, Health and Social policies is the public administration in charge for the implementation of the laws on voluntary activities. In particular this

Ministry promotes, the development of voluntary activities through the realisation of research and studies, agreements with public and private organisations, funding and administrative managements of the projects financed to the voluntary organisations through the National Fund for the volunteering, the monitoring activities of the Voluntary Service Centres.

- The Voluntary Service Centres were regulated in 1991 with law 266 on voluntary work. Today they can be found in every Italian province with the exception of Bolzano. Overall there are 77 of them, 71 of which are members of the national Coordination (for more details see point 6).

## **5 What is the social protection of young volunteers and are voluntary activities compatible with social benefits (e.g. unemployment benefits)?**

Volunteers have social and health insurance although access to public health is a universal right in Italy, which does not depend upon the specific legal, labour or economic status of the beneficiaries. The period of National Civic Service is valid for the old-age pension.

According to the Italian law, "volunteer" is not an "employee". In this sense, a volunteer is a person who carries out a work without economic gain, despite the right of the volunteer to be reimbursed for any expenses s/he may incur while fulfilling their tasks. Moreover, a volunteering work must be of an altruistic and solidarity character and for these reasons it's compatible with social benefits.

In case the volunteer is employed he may ask to work flexitime and, if he/she is cooperating with the civil defence, his/her salary is reimbursed by the State to the public or private employer for the period during which he is cooperating with the civil protection.

## **6 What Programmes and plans are there in your country on volunteering (national, regional, local)?**

National Civic Service

The National Civic Service involves 2,802 non profit organizations and is a national governmental institution. The organizations operate at different levels (both local and

national) and from 2001 to 2007 conveyed a voluntary service to 154065 young people.

#### European Voluntary Service (EVS)

The European Voluntary Service (EVS) is one of the actions financed by the European Programme Youth in Action that provides young Europeans with the chance to express their personal commitment through unpaid and full-time voluntary activities in a foreign country within or outside the EU (for more information on this programme see point 11).

#### Voluntary Service Centres

These Centres are set up and managed by voluntary organizations, the natural beneficiaries of the services and activities they supply. A network of participation with 8,600 member associations.

The main fields of activity are the following ones:

- promotion of voluntary work and of the culture of solidarity, e.g. promotion initiatives on youth voluntary work and on the relation between school and voluntary work;
- help desk: to listen, provide information, guidance, counselling and accompanying on legal, tax, administrative, regulatory, management issues and for the relations with institutions and local organizations;
- training: training courses and initiatives for voluntary workers and operators. Counselling for the organization and management of training processes;
- support to planning and access of voluntary work to calls for tenders and funds;
- logistics, through the provision of spaces and equipment for the organizations' activities;
- help to improve communication in all the operating fields;
- economic support to the projects of the organizations.

### **7 Does a strategy or specific measures for the development of voluntary activities of young people exist in your country**

The Ministry of Youth intends to bring together young people who wish to collaborate in the reconstruction of the Abruzzi Region (after the earthquake of April 2009) with

voluntary associations, generally with the ones member of the National Youth Forum and working with Civil Protection. People can easily apply for it, by completing an electronic form on the website ([www.gioventu.it](http://www.gioventu.it)).

From June to September 2009, the Department of Youth promotes the initiatives “Youth Camp 2009” collaborating with the Fire Guard, the Navy and the Harbour Offices.

The 2009 Youth Camp program is available for 16-22 years old boys and girls living in Italy, who are studying in higher school or in the first years of university.

“Youth & Volunteer: a laboratory of ideas in evolution”, one of the initiatives carried out by the Ministry of Labour, Health and Social Policy, is a coordinated set of internet activities that has the target to promote the voluntarism in the young generations, as an experience of responsible and active citizenship.

<http://www.solidarietasociale.gov.it/SolidarietaSociale/tematiche/Volontariato/Progetti/Giovani+e+volontariato.htm>

## **8 Which obstacles to volunteering of young people do still exist and which measures are taken to remove them?**

Since the creation of the National Civic Service, Italy has witnessed a steady increase in engagement in voluntary action. High rates of unemployment, especially among young people, and the current restructuring of the economy in many areas, may be seen as contributing to the volunteer “boom” phenomenon currently underway in our country.

If this is the case, action is needed in order to stabilise this process and ensure continuation of progress to all those engaging in voluntary activities.

## **9 How are voluntary activities of young people promoted, particularly among young people with fewer opportunities?**

Voluntary activities are often promoted among young people through the school system. The Report 2007 of CSVnet, on the activities carried out by Voluntary Service Centres, shows that about 2,700 organisations organized meetings with 130,000 students in 2,000 schools (61% secondary high schools; 20% primary high schools; 19% primary schools) to present the potential and the importance of the voluntary activities. Many



Voluntary Service Centres (35) promote voluntary activities also in the Universities and the youth centres.

Moreover, there are 84 information points school-voluntary activities, disseminated in all the country and many youth projects organized by Voluntary Service Centres, in collaboration with different level of schools and youth centres of aggregation. These projects mainly aim at promoting awareness and offering guidance on voluntary activity to young people and, in some cases, giving them the opportunity to experience the voluntary activities.

The projects of European Voluntary Service, financed through the EU Programme Youth in Action, promote the participation of young people with fewer opportunities in inclusion projects.

This kind of projects may be of two types: the first one including young people with fewer opportunities as active participants and the second having a clear thematic focus on inclusion and aiming to improve the situation through awareness raising.

Lastly there also information and awareness campaigns on voluntary activities and National Civic Service, promoted by the Government and carried out at national level through TV, radio, on line and newspapers spot advertisements. The last information campaign on voluntary activities has been carried out in July 2007, meanwhile the last information campaign on National Civic Service in June 2008.

[http://www.governo.it/GovernoInforma/campagne\\_comunicazione/index.html](http://www.governo.it/GovernoInforma/campagne_comunicazione/index.html)

## **10 How voluntary activities of young people are recognised ?**

### **Certificates and other measures used for that purpose.**

At the end of the national civic service the young volunteer receive a certificate from the National Civic Service Office and the competences are recognised as credits mainly in the University courses, but in some cases also in the secondary high school.

The learning experience of young people participating to the European Voluntary Service (EVS) is formally recognised by Europass.

Anyway, competences acquired through voluntary activities are generally certificated by the voluntary organisation and are recognised as credits in the University system.

Moreover in some Universities faculties the participation of students to voluntary activities is part of their training.

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

National Agency of the Youth in Action Programme

Agenzia Nazionale dei Giovani (ANG) is the National Agency of Youth in Action, the EU Programme for young people aged 15-28 that promotes mobility within and beyond the EU borders, non-formal learning and intercultural dialogue, and encourages the inclusion of all young people, regardless of their educational, social and cultural background.

The ANG is responsible for managing the programme at national level by providing appropriate information and support to project promoters, by selecting and monitoring projects, as well as by managing the EU funds.

<http://www.agenziagiovani.it/presentazione.htm>

National Civic Service

Within the National Civic Service, it is possible to perform voluntary activities also in international organizations. The projects are carried out in collaboration with the European Union jointly with other international institution whose aim is cooperation and development among developing countries.

In 2007, 490 volunteers have been involved in voluntary activities in 66 different countries.

<http://www.serviziocivile.it>

National Coordination of the Voluntary Service Centres (CSVnet)

CSVnet is the National Coordination of the Voluntary Service Centres. It was officially opened on January, 11th 2003 with the aim of gathering, providing continuity to and strengthening the experience of the National Association of Service Centres, constituted in 1999. It provides services to its members in order to improve the quality of the system, spreading training initiatives, the use of the social budget instrument and the charter of services.

E-mail: [segreteria@csvnet.it](mailto:segreteria@csvnet.it)

<http://www.csvnet.it/>

## **12 Which collective volunteering projects exist?**

In 1992 the National Civil Protection was created (law n. 225/92), also to the other volunteer organizations has been given the role of "national operative structure", a part of the public system like other institutional members, for example Fire Guard, the Army, Police, Rangers,

At the moment in Italy, the growth of the voluntary in National Civil Protection is strong and constant and the voluntary organizations that wish to be part of the public system, use to register themselves in specific regional or national rolls.

There are about 1,300,000 available volunteers divided in 2,500 district associations in the different regions, coordinated with each other and ready to found, if and when necessary, a single structure for an easy and quick action.

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

In September 2008 the National Report on youth conditions was published by the Minister of Youth. This Report was elaborated by the University of Rome "La Sapienza" Faculty of Statistical Sciences.

This Report provides a detailed, overall look on the youth condition in Italy (national, regional and, if possible, provincial and municipal levels) and give also some information on participation to civil society and politics of young people.

<http://www.gioventu.it/>

Some data on young people participation to voluntary activities can be found in the chapter 24 "The social participation and the religious practice" of the multiscopes survey "Daily life – year 2007", carried out annually by the National Institute of Statistics (ISTAT) on a representative sample of families.

[http://www.istat.it/dati/catalogo/20090312\\_00/](http://www.istat.it/dati/catalogo/20090312_00/)