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Partnership between the European Commission  
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# INFORMATION SHEET

## VOLUNTEERING OF YOUNG PEOPLE

### SLOVAK REPUBLIC



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# 1. Volunteering of young people in Slovakia

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:

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

**On national level:** Y

**On regional level:** N

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One of the official national legislations concerning voluntary activities is focused at voluntary activities as form of activation of unemployed people according Act. 5/2004 about services in unemployment. This Act defines voluntary work as community service of legally defined personal or corporate entity. It does not focus specifically at young people.

From other legal documents volunteering of youth is mostly mentioned in „Act on support of youth no. 282/2008“. This Act gives legal framework for support of youth work, finances, accreditation of educational institutions and voluntary service in youth work.

Present government put Act on volunteering on the list of their program priorities. This Act on volunteering fall under sphere of action of Ministry of internal affairs of the Slovak Republic.

Special focus is in Slovakia dedicated to development of volunteering at universities preparing future social workers and workers, experts and volunteers of other helping professions. Volunteering in this context follows both idea of benefits for receiver of service as well as possibility of education of students in practice.

There is no existing legal policy concerning volunteering at regional level.

- Is volunteering usually paid? N

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Volunteering in Slovakia is unpaid activity. Organisations working with volunteers often reimburse their costs (travel costs, food, lodging etc.) of volunteers if they have enough resources. In case of sending volunteers abroad, organization use to pay travel costs, accommodation, food, pocket money and insurance (in case of European voluntary service within the program Youth in action it is obligatory).

- Is there any National voluntary service? Y

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There is no National voluntary service in Slovakia which would give any specific framework or guidelines for volunteering even most of the youth organizations and many other institutions in third sector work mostly with volunteers. There are though few institutions active on national level focused on development and promotion of volunteering. One of them is national voluntary center named C.A.R.D.O. It is not mentioned yet in any action plans, but they are active in the development of volunteering, in coordination of activities within European year of volunteering or in developing Act on volunteering. Other organization linked with volunteering at national level is Slovak youth council (umbrella organization of youth organizations working mostly with volunteers) or ZIPCEM which is umbrella organization of information centers for youth.

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

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Only legal act which gives guidelines in this area is again Act on support of youth 282/2008 which defines volunteer in area of youth work. Article 11 describes conditions who can and cannot be a youth volunteer, article 12 gives conditions for agreement about voluntary service and article 13 names responsibilities of the organization.

## 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?*

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### **National level**

At national level governmental institution in the field of volunteering is IUVENTA – Slovak youth institute ([www.iuventa.sk](http://www.iuventa.sk)). It belongs under the Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sport of SR and its main areas of activities is support of youth work development, youth policy, research in field of youth, educational, methodical and informational activities, administration of grant programs and support of talented youth.

Other non-governmental organizations at national level are Slovak youth council ([www.mladez.sk](http://www.mladez.sk)) which is umbrella organization of youth organizations and apart of other activities and are active in development of volunteering.

Third organization active at national level is C.A.R.D.O. which is non-governmental organization focusing on development of volunteering. They administrate web domain [www.dobrovolnictvo.sk](http://www.dobrovolnictvo.sk) which should link organizations and institutions looking for volunteers and active young people offering their time and energy as volunteers.

### **Regional level**

At regional level there are different big non-governmental youth organizations, regional leisure time centers and regional youth councils. They all use mostly young volunteers for realization of their activities and very often they also support volunteers by different trainings, but they usually do not focus on development of volunteering as their primary mission.

### **Local level**

At local level there are different non-governmental youth organizations, leisure time centers, youth parliaments, school councils and non-formal groups of young people. As at regional level they all use mostly young volunteers for realization of their activities and often they also support volunteers by different trainings, but they usually do not focus on development of volunteering as their primary mission.

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

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As above mentioned in Slovakia exists web domain [www.dobrovolnictvo.sk](http://www.dobrovolnictvo.sk) which links organisations looking for volunteers with active young people offering their time as volunteers. Currently there are 252 different organisations registered at the website and there are over 150 different calls for volunteers at different positions and activities in various organisations.

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

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One of the network is above mentioned website [www.dobrovolnictvo.sk](http://www.dobrovolnictvo.sk). Other co-operation was project 72 hours ([www.72hodin.sk](http://www.72hodin.sk)) which was coordinated by Slovak youth council in 2010 and aimed to link different activities involving volunteers all over Slovakia into three days and use it for promotion of volunteering into wider public. Now is similar principle used for linking voluntary activities within the European year of volunteering which is coordinated by IUVENTA – Slovak youth institute and C.A.R.D.O.

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

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Framework of financial support focusing primary on volunteering in Slovakia does not exist. Youth organizations have to look for financial support through different grants and calls of donors which support area of their interest. There is also financial support from Ministry of education, science, research and sport of the Slovak Republic called ADAM which includes calls for support of volunteering. In past also Ministry of labour, social affairs and family of the Slovak Republic had regular calls for supporting voluntary activities. State also gives possibility to employees and companies to donate 2 % from their tax from income to different organizations active in third sector. That is one of very important incomes nowadays, even this financial tool is now in transformation.

Another financial resource is program of the EU Youth in action, which supports European voluntary service. It focuses at receiving volunteers from other European countries, which also means they need to have enough activities for full-time volunteer and also language capacities for communication.

Foundations in Slovakia supports mostly voluntary activities as integral part of programs and activities in area, they define as priority. Mostly there are community foundations and foundations of banks or mobile operators. Other important resource for volunteering are programs of Children of Slovakia foundation. Development of volunteering infrastructure was also in previous years supported by Open society foundation in Slovakia.

### 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?

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#### By national policies:

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

#### By NGOs:

- Advertisement campaigns
- Education
- Youth information centres
- Other: capacity building
- None

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

National youth policy doesn't support volunteering as such. Even there is no mechanism, recommendation or strategy of support of volunteering in Slovakia we are already working on research, which should end up in recommendations and strategy of government in the development of volunteering. This research should be finished by May 2011.

At schools there is no subject which includes topic of volunteering. Youth information centers should concentrate on this topic, but it mostly depends on particular people employed in the centers if they have topic of volunteering as priority. C.A.R.D.O. and other volunteering centers promotes volunteering at all levels mostly during two regular events each year – day of volunteering and Award for volunteer in each region. This year specific focus is given to European year of volunteering as specific tool for promotion of volunteering and linking different organizations and institutions with one big campaign. Part of the capacity building in organizations are also regular trainings of their volunteers which they use later in activities they organize.

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

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- European Youth Pass
- Certificates
- Credits in the formal education system
- Awards
- Incentives
- They are valued in the CV
- Other: database
- They are not recognised

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

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European youth pass is issued as part of projects supported within Youth in Action program, but is not much recognized by other institutions (e.g. schools, universities, employers etc.).

Awards are used for promotion for wider public by award “Volunteer of the year” from each region. This tradition is still very young and doesn’t bring yet enough attention.

Based on Act 282/2008 on support of youth was created accreditation commission which accredits non-formal education program for young leaders, youth leaders and youth workers in different areas. This accreditation should be guarantee of quality of non-formal education programs in youth field and further should be used for wider RECOGNITION among schools, universities, employers and wider public. All participants of accredited education program will have certificate listing competences they developed during the training.

Part of the National project KomPrax, which is supported by ESF and started in January 2011 should be also database, where all participants which successfully finish any of the accredited education programs should be registered. This database should be then another tool for employers and universities to check what competences each participant gained during which education programs.

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

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Most common obstacles are low awareness about volunteering – youth organisations do not often promote information about their need for volunteer and wider campaign focusing on promotion of volunteering is also missing. There is also not enough financial support for volunteering as such. If voluntary centres are partly financed by state, they can use more of their time and energy in promotion and awareness rising. Another obstacle is economical situation of young people which usually among studies also work or have extra work and do not have enough time (or doesn’t see it as priority). Missing resources also means that many organisations are using mostly volunteers and they do not have enough professionals (paid staff) who can provide high quality voluntary management. Last but not least, status of the volunteer in Slovakia is not high and positive recognition of volunteering is missing by all sectors of society.

As a possible solution, or maybe first step for more actions on governmental level is prepared Act on volunteering. This still doesn’t mean more young people in voluntary activities, but that is most important and for now also only step of current government.

## 4. Mobility of young volunteers

*- Is there any national monitoring of how mobility of young volunteers takes place? Y/N*

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Monitoring on mobility is partly made by IUVENTA – Slovak youth institute, as mobility is one of the topics of the Report on Youth which was done first time as pilot project in 2010 and is planned to be done every four years.

Other monitoring of mobility is done as a part of the Youth in Action program (also administrated by IUVENTA) which is European program and mobility is one of it's objectives. Similar monitoring is also part of program ERASMUS.

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

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Report on Youth was extended document which is mapping situation of young people within 15 priority areas. One of them is also mobility. Last Report on youth was done in year 2010. On each of the priority area was composed working group from representatives of different institutions related to youth. This working group had to collect all available materials, statistics and researches, analyze current situation and give recommendations towards future.

For the Youth in Action there was research as mid-term evaluation among different beneficiaries to see effects of the different projects supported within the program.



## 5. Sources of information

- Alžbeta Mráčková, OZ C.A.R.D.O., [a.mrackova@cardo-eu.net](mailto:a.mrackova@cardo-eu.net)
- Tibor Škrabský, IUVENTA – Slovenský inštitút mládeže, [tibor.skrabsky@iuventa.sk](mailto:tibor.skrabsky@iuventa.sk)
- Gabriela Gliševičová, IUVENTA – Slovenský inštitút mládeže, [gabriela.glisevicova@iuventa.sk](mailto:gabriela.glisevicova@iuventa.sk)
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