

Youth Partnership

Partnership between the European Commission
and the Council of Europe in the field of youth



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VOLUNTEERING OF YOUNG PEOPLE IN EUROPE

FINDINGS OF A SUMMARY ANALYSIS OF THE INFORMATION TEMPLATES ON YOUTH VOLUNTEERING IN THE EKCYP

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March 2012

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	3
Statement of the issue.....	4
Snapshot on volunteering.....	5
Actual challenges.....	6
Chapter I. Legal Framework on Volunteering of Young People in Europe.....	9
The legal basis	9
Legal definitions	13
Fields of volunteering	14
Social protection of volunteers	15
Recommendations for the Legal Framework on Volunteering developed by the Consultant based on the analysis of national reports.....	21
Chapter 2. Institutional Framework regarding Recognition of Volunteering of Young People in Europe	22
The Stakeholders.....	22
Recognition Types, Mechanisms and Instruments.....	22
Partnership on volunteering	26
Promotion of volunteering	27
Recommendations for the Institutional Framework on Recognition of Volunteering developed by the Consultant based the analysis of country questionnaires.....	30
The Technical Recommendations for Future Reports of the EKCYP developed by the Consultant based the analysis of country questionnaires	31

INTRODUCTION

This Report is a Summary Report. It has been developed as a mapping study. It equally aims to provide analytical overview of the situation of young people and of national policies in regard of volunteering. The Report is based on the information given in the information templates (national reports), which have been prepared by the national correspondents of the European Knowledge Centre of Youth Policies (EKCYP) of the partnership between the European Union and the Council of Europe in the field of youth (EU-CoE youth partnership).

The Summary Report has been written by the consultant, contracted by the EU-CoE youth partnership for this purpose.

The mapping exercise consisted in aggregating qualitative information contained in answers to the questionnaire, provided by the EKCYP. And it aims at highlighting common trends and outstanding singularities.

In principle, the Summary Report was intended to cover all EU, EU accession and EFTA countries. However, the consultant was limited in terms of availability of information, as not all national reports (information templates) were ready for the period, in which this Summary Report was written.

The consultant was able to include 21 national reports from the year 2011 and used 3 other national reports from the year 2008, for those countries and in those questions, which were relevant and up-to-date for the purpose and the content of the Summary Report.

As a result, this Summary Report covers the following countries:

c EU Member States: Austria, Belgium (Flanders, Walloon), Bulgaria, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Estonia, France, Finland, Germany, Greece, Italy, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Romania, Slovak Republic, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, The Netherlands – 2011; and Latvia and the United Kingdom – 2008

c EFTA: Liechtenstein – 2011

o EU accession countries: Croatia – 2011

National reports went through a certain process of verification and/or approval by relevant national authorities.

The nature and the content of information templates have determined the structure of this Summary Report, which include:

- Introduction
- Chapter on Legal Frameworks on Volunteering of Young People in Europe, with its respective statement of the issue, conclusions and recommendations

- Chapter on Institutional Frameworks on Volunteering of Young People in Europe, with its respective statement of the issue, conclusions and recommendations
- Technical Recommendation for Future Reports of the EKCYP

The Chapter on Legal Framework on Volunteering covers legal definitions, fields of volunteering, social protection of volunteers and remuneration for voluntary activities, legal and policy aspects of national and transnational voluntary services for youth in Europe.

The Chapter on Institutional Framework on Recognition of Volunteering covers recognition mechanisms of volunteering, types of recognition and recognition instruments, as well as partnership schemes on volunteering and tendencies in promotion of volunteering.

As to the method of the research the consultant used document analysis and case studies.

Where the functional links have been established, or comparative overview was an important element of the analysis, the consultant has illustrated the conclusions with schemes and tables.

Limits of this study.

Scope: The content and the analytical scope of the Summary Report is limited with the content and the scope of information templates. This Summary Report is exclusively based on information templates and no additional research was conducted.

Content: The information is only partly available in the templates, often without details or explanations.

Analysis: Comparative analysis is difficult due to partial information, but also due to particular national contexts, which even if mentioned in many cases as determinant factors, are often not well described in national reports.

Therefore, interested readers are invited to consult information templates for further details and internet links, where available.

Statement of the issue _____

Volunteering is today on top of the political agenda. And this is not only thanks to the European Year of Volunteering 2011. Volunteering has merited its place among the policy areas of highest priority due to the contribution that volunteering as a social phenomenon makes to society development. Volunteering allows to gain competences valuable for the labour market and enhances societal cohesion, it promotes active citizenship and facilitates participation in the society. Volunteering safeguards democratic foundations of European societies, and is deeply rooted in their nature.

But national volunteering policies are not free from contradictions. Especially sensitive are the questions on social protection of volunteers and formal recognition of learning via volunteering. This Summary Report points to several contradictions, related to balance between regular employment and volunteering, social security rights and volunteering as not an employment, altruistic nature of volunteering and the right to decent living/earning, statutory and non-statutory forms of volunteering, formal recognition and social appreciation of volunteering, and several other issues.

If economically active youth shall concentrate on finding and keeping jobs, because volunteering cannot guarantee decent living, unemployed young people shall seek paid employment first, under the risk to lose their unemployment benefits, and economically in-active youth (students, on long-term sick leave, engaged in family duties, and others) shall go through all sorts of permission procedures in order to safeguard their social security benefits while volunteering, the question arises: *For whom volunteering policies are being created?*

We shall note, however, that the large majority of European governments cooperates with civil society (to a larger extent), and with private sector (to a lesser extent), in order to create and enforce smart and efficient volunteering policies. The research in the areas that touch upon volunteering, comes more and more often in the picture, as a tribute paid to evidence-based youth policy.

Snapshot on volunteering

Some very brief look at the statistics shows, that approximately two thirds of volunteers in Czech Republic are students of secondary schools, colleges, polytechnic schools and universities, and relatively young women on maternity leave.

In Spain one fourth of volunteers are in the age between 15 and 24 years old, and a bit more than one sixth of all volunteers are in the age between 25 and 34 years old. Students tend to volunteer more than other youth groups.

At the same time in Germany, there is a slight decline of voluntary involvement of young people in the age between 20 and 24 years old. Especially important drop off has been registered among students. This might indicate the effect of recent changes of “bachelor system”.

But in Slovakia, same tendencies are explained with economic decline, because students usually need to work, and do not have enough time to dedicate to volunteering.

We shall look at some more challenges in the coming paragraphs.

Actual challenges

As mentioned in very many national reports, organisations experience difficulties to recruit young volunteers. Even in countries, where voluntary involvement is high and stable, it is not easy to attract new activists into volunteering movement (DK).

The reasons for that vary from country to country. There are lots of similarities and lots of different features in the landscape of volunteering movements across Europe.

Life management

Young people might not see volunteering as a priority (SK), and might experience lack of time, which is not necessarily related to job or study (FI). Volunteering under the age of 18 is problematic for some young people, because they need a consent of other parents or legal guardians, and do not necessarily receive one (FR).

Avoidance

Young people might be afraid of negative image about themselves, as volunteering still has negative connotation, among peers (UK) or among older generations (RO).

Interest

Young people wish to directly contribute to society, by avoiding fixed membership and “ideological” affiliations. They wish to decide freely when and where to contribute (SE).

At the same time, volunteering organisations do not provide young people with opportunities, that they are looking for (UK). Young people do not feel comfortable in those organisations (BE). Because volunteering organisations are predominantly composed of adults. It means that the activities and ambience in volunteering organisations do not respond to expectations and needs of young volunteers (GR).

Young people often find it difficult to relate their experience and interest to activities, that they are offered in volunteering organisations. Young people prefer to work with their peers (GR).

Job

Young people might see volunteering as an obstacle to finding and keeping their job (BE).

In the period of economic crisis, young people prefer to be focused on the activities that should lead them to steady jobs. Training, internship, short time or even low paid jobs would be a preferred option, rather than voluntary involvement (ES).

Recognition

Lack of social recognition does not stimulate attraction of young people to volunteering either. Not all forms volunteering are equally recognised (BE).

Formal recognition is even a bigger issue. High quality training (formal degree) remains priority for many young people (BE) and the social value of job and formal training remains very high (CY). Therefore, many young people try to combine studies with job, and this takes a lot of them away from volunteering.

Experience and the skills acquired via volunteering are not acknowledged or validated by any formal system. Even Youthpass is not an official certification. The skills developed via volunteering are not recognised as official qualification (GR).

Access to rights

Nearly every national report mentions administrative procedures, restrictions of access to volunteering put on certain vulnerable groups of young people, absence of related insurances and social security benefits.

Specific examples cover unclear legal status of volunteers (SE), absence of mechanism of compliance with existing regulations (ES), and administrative challenges that arise from European law, which provides for no difference between profit-making and non-for-profit organisations in terms of taxation of service providers (FI).

Law and administration

The laws and policies are dispersed through different documents, codes and rules. It is not always clear who is responsible for what (administration issue), or where to look for correct legal answers (law codification issue). The absence of one main public body, which would regulate all aspects of volunteering is clearly a problem (GR).

Nearly every national report mentions excessive dependence of civil society organisations on public funding. This becomes the matter of sustainability and independence, as operation of volunteering organisations become depend on the rate of subsidies, and their agenda, their priorities tend to reflect the official policy priorities.

Outreach

Access to and dissemination of information remain problematic. Only large organizations can afford strategic communication of their activities (ES).

There is a significant number of young people whose reply is: “no one asked me” to join volunteering (FI, SK, UK).

Professionalisation of the sector

There is apparently a need for a nation-wide curriculum for training of volunteers (AT).

And persons, involved in organisation and coordination of voluntary activities, experience lack of professional training too (GR).

Lack of knowledge and management skills results in inefficient operation of volunteering organisations. This loss of energy and resources often leads to disputes among their members. Particularly young people are vulnerable in this sort of situation (ES).

Chapter I. Legal Framework on Volunteering of Young People in Europe

This Chapter deals with a set of legal aspects of volunteering of young people in Europe. It describes the current state of art, refers to existing laws and policies on volunteering and to related ones. It also explains the reasons behind development of legal policies on volunteering in various European countries. Policy clusters and typology of law-making has been developed for this purpose. This Chapter deals with legal definitions, fields of volunteering, social protection of volunteers and remuneration for voluntary activities, as well as with legal and policy aspects of national and transnational voluntary services for youth.

The legal basis

Legal protection has been recognised as the strongest and the most powerful mechanism of guarantees. Same applies to legal framework on volunteering. The law is used to encourage civil participation in volunteering, and to guarantee the social protection of volunteers. Although, there is no consensus on how law-making in the field of volunteering shall be developed. Different European countries offer different solutions. Debates continue within the countries and on the international level as to the need of law on volunteering, its form, its scope, and its content.

For the purpose of this study, we have distinguished 2 clusters regarding the legal framework on volunteering in Europe. One cluster is the Law, and the second cluster is the Policy, Programme or Strategy. In the Law Cluster we included Law on Volunteering as one sub-cluster and “Satellite” Laws (where volunteering is addressed, not as primary, but one of the issues). Second cluster includes the Policies, Programmes, Strategies, Action Plans and similar, which are exclusively dedicated to volunteering, as one sub-cluster. And Other policy documents, where volunteering is mentioned both explicitly or implicitly, but they are not exclusively related to volunteering.

Countries might have both the law, and the strategy, or a “satellite law” and other policies. We have seen different combinations in national reports. Countries with a law on volunteering are Belgium, Croatia, Czech Republic, France, Germany, Italy, Lithuania, Malta, Romania, and Slovenia. Countries, where volunteering is mentioned as part of other laws or codes are Austria, Greece, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Slovak Republic, Spain, and Sweden. Having or not having a law does not determine having or not having a strategy on volunteering or other programmes, where volunteering is mentioned both explicitly or implicitly.

Those countries, who have policy on volunteering, other than the law, or in addition to it, are Croatia, Greece, and Spain. Those countries, who have volunteering addressed via other policy instruments are Belgium, Bulgaria, Estonia, Finland, Latvia and the United Kingdom.

Table. Comparative overview of legal basis for volunteering of young people in Europe

Country	The LAW		Policy, Programme, Strategy	
	Law on Volunteering	«Satellite» Laws	Policy on Volunteering	Other documents
Austria		X		
Belgium	X	X		X
Bulgaria				X
Croatia	X		X	X
Cyprus				
Czech Republic	X	X		
Denmark				
Estonia				X
Finland				X
France	X	X	X	
Germany	X			
Greece		X	X	
Hungary				
Ireland		X	X	X
Italy	X			
Latvia		X		X
Liechtenstein		X		
Lithuania	X		X	X
Luxembourg	X	X	X	X
Malta	X			
Netherlands		X		
Poland				
Portugal				
Romania	X			
Slovak Republic		X		
Slovenia	X	X	X	X
Spain	X	X	X	
Sweden		X		
United Kingdom				X

The fact of having or not having a specific law or a specific policy is individual to every country, and is determined by its proper cultural, historical, social, and maybe even geographical reasons.

We have, however, noticed certain common tendencies in how the countries decide and develop their legal policies on volunteering. Such observation led us to the idea to propose certain classification of approaches, that we have called the types of law-making on volunteering. They are four types.

Out of principle No law

In the first type, the countries are following logics like this: Do we need law on volunteering in our country? Or volunteering as it is, is an expression of free will of our citizens and residents? Yes, it is an expression of the free will, and therefore, we remain faithful to this free will principle, and no law on volunteering is necessary in our country. This is an approach used in Nordic countries (Denmark, Finland, Sweden).

Out of need law-making

In the following type of countries one might find the following arguments: In a country like ours, we need better recognition of contribution that civil society makes into social cohesion between our citizens, and such contribution is made by volunteers on the first front. As we value the contribution, that these people out of their free will invest into our society, we need to protect them, and such protection must be written in law. These arguments are popular in the countries of Central and South-Eastern Europe (Croatia, Czech Republic, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Romania).

Rational law-making

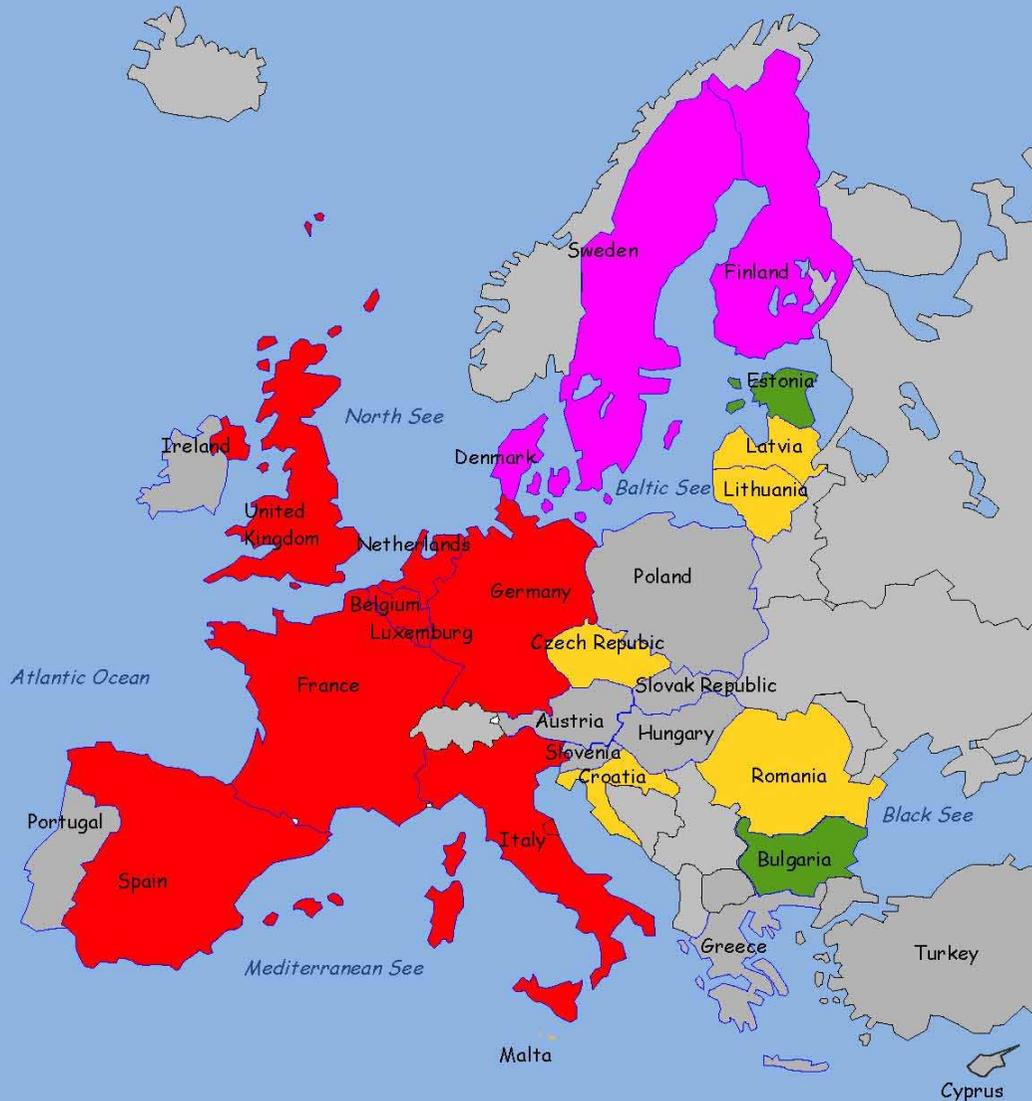
In this group of countries, the following arguments are strong: In our country we have a long standing tradition of volunteering. It is manifested by developed infrastructure, various long- and short-term programmes at national, local and international levels. The system of governmental, municipal and private funding is well established. We have made progress towards formal recognition of learning via volunteering. Law-making in the area of volunteering has been for us a natural process, we believe it is useful, rational and we will continue with it. This has been a reflection on policy development about volunteering in Western Europe (Belgium, Germany, France, Italy, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Spain, UK).

Thinking or not thinking of it

There is a small group of European countries, included in the Summary Report, who are still in the process of deciding, which way to go. They are either not yet there, or working on it (*Bulgaria, Estonia*).

You will find a visual presentation of this typology in the enclosed illustration.

National approaches to law-making on volunteering in Europe



- Out of principle No law:**
 Denmark, Finland, Sweden
Volunteering is an expression of free will of our citizens and residents. Free will rule. No need for regulation

- Out of need law-making:**
 Croatia, Czech Republic, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Romania
Need for better recognition of contribution that civil society makes into social cohesion between citizens, the volunteers are on the first front

- Rational law-making:**
 Belgium, Germany, France, Italy, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Spain, United Kingdom
Long-standing tradition on volunteering, infrastructure, schemes, natural, useful, and rational process

- Thinking or not thinking of it:**
 Bulgaria, Estonia
Long-standing tradition on volunteering, infrastructure, schemes, natural, useful, and rational process

- No information available**

Legal definitions

While reading through national reports, we have noticed the variety of words attached to the subject, “volunteering”, “volunteerism”, “volunteer”, “voluntary service”, “volunteer work”, “volunteering organisation”, “volunteering sector”, and many similar ones. However, definitions are not necessarily established. There are many related words used as synonyms without any further precision of their meanings.

Let's take some examples. In the Belgian Act on the rights of volunteers, volunteer work is understood as a non-compulsory, non-paid activity, undertaken to the benefit of third parties, it is set up by an organisation, but it is not carried out by the same person for the same organisation as part of employment contract, a contract of service or permanent appointment. In addition, the Italian law on volunteering emphasises on altruistic and solidarity character of volunteering, without economic gain.

These features: free will, solidarity, altruistic involvement for the benefit of society, represent the dominant understanding of the nature of volunteering. In the laws and policies of other European countries, where the definitions are given, we find very similar legal interpretations. At this stage, we only track common features of legal understanding of the nature of volunteering. But we will see already very soon, to what kind of “grey zones” popular understanding of volunteering brings us.

Countries, who function without legal definition of “volunteering” or “volunteering service”, do exist. This is the case of Austria, Greece, Estonia, Sweden, to name a few. The reasons why those countries do not have an established legal definition of volunteering varies.

As it was already explained in previous section, there are certain countries, who expressly avoid establishing the law on volunteering, and consequently, avoid to establish legal definitions of it. This is the case of Sweden. But, of course, as this social phenomenon exist, there is an obvious need to put a name on it. In Sweden, definitions of volunteering are put in policy and research texts. They describe volunteering as time and effort that are freely given, unforced and unremunerated, by individuals to voluntary and public organisations.

An existing distinction of meanings of “volunteering” can be illustrated by French words “bénévolat” et “volontariat”. Both translated into English as “volunteering”. But “bénévolat” is “informal voluntary work”, carried out in a free time, inside or outside of an organisation, and is not related to any legal status of volunteers. “Volontariat” is formally recognised type of volunteering (formal volunteering), it is an involvement via a non-profit organization during several months. “Volontariat” usually brings in a specific legal status for volunteers and there are certain social guarantees attributed to it.

In this sense “volontariat” or “civic service” (in France) resembles to “statutory voluntary service” in Germany. Both are “formal types of volunteering”, which means they function within an established

legal framework, they are facilitated and funded by the state, volunteers receive a package of certain social guarantees and benefits, such volunteering involvement is partially funded via pocket money or allowances, experience gained via such programmes is certified by state given documents, which are, in their own turn, formally recognised by other society actors, like employers, universities, and public authorities. Examples of this type of volunteering exist in Austria, Belgium, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, partly in Spain, and as it was already mentioned, in France and Germany.

In again another perspective, volunteering happens with/in an organisation, but without a fixed period of time, for a more or less structured project or for a spontaneous initiative. This “form” of volunteering is neither “benevolat”, nor “statutory service”. And, in fact, this “form” of volunteering activism is most common among young people across Europe. But as we will see, there is nearly no social guarantees attached to this status of volunteers.

In conclusion, such distinction of legal forms of volunteering creates an extra division of the statuses of volunteers, and not all forms of volunteering activism receive equal treatment by law. There is a contradiction in seeing volunteering as an expression of free will and an active, altruistic contribution into the society, and to protect and facilitate only specific forms of volunteering at the same time.

Fields of volunteering

The spheres of society life, where volunteering is allowed, encouraged and supported vary from country to country. In Czech law, volunteering, first of all, provides services in social sector, as assistance to unemployed, handicapped, elderly, ethnic minorities, immigrants, persons returning from prison, drug addicts, victims of domestic violence.

In Austria the emphasise will be on health care, emergency response and rescue service, like fire brigades. Both Czech and Austrian fields of volunteering are rather similar to Italian. In Luxembourg volunteering starts at local level from area committees and leisure activities. The emphasis is on active citizenship and social cohesion. In the last years there has been a discussion in Luxembourg, which made clear that emergency response and rescue service is of utmost value. In Belgium, humanitarian action and international solidarity are seen as a priority at national level. Attraction of volunteers to welfare and health sector are the priority in the region of Flanders.

In Latvia there is a pertinent tradition to organize joint cleaning of environment once a year. In Finland sport and recreation are important areas for volunteering involvement. In Cyprus work with young people is in focus of volunteers. Estonian latest priority is to provide unemployed young

people with opportunities to obtain work experience via involvement into volunteering. Same motivation exists in Slovakia.

All in all volunteers are active in nearly all spheres of society life, but priorities vary from country to country. There is a number of reasons for that. But at this stage, we intended to register this existing diversity of actions, where volunteers are called to give a helping hand.

Social protection of volunteers

We arrive to one of the most complicated issue of the whole legal framework on volunteering – the social protection of volunteers. This is the burning question for volunteers and volunteering organisations. The answer to it, is hidden behind the social value of volunteering, the synergy and the ultimate contribution that volunteering brings into our societies.

We wish to attract attention of the reader to the paradox, that persists in regard of the legal status of volunteers, or simply said, “*what is a volunteer*”?

If we believe, that volunteering is a free time, free will, unpaid activity to the benefit of the 3rd party, then we should not expect any social guarantees for the sake of volunteers. At the same time, national policies try to encourage volunteering at a grater scale, and with attraction of young people with disadvantaged backgrounds. The Paradox is the contradiction between the dominant concept on what volunteering is (actual legal status of volunteers) and the intention to encourage people to volunteer, without offering to them the necessary social guarantees.

Scheme. Paradox on the Legal Status of Volunteers

The legal status of volunteer determines the level of social protection guaranteed to volunteer

**Volunteering is
Out of free will
In free time
Outside of fixed employment
To the benefit of 3rd party
Activity**

**BUT
PARADOX**

**Social security rights are
earned with remunerated labour**

The solution to the above mentioned paradox has been found by certain countries in what they call “Statutory Volunteering”. These are the programmes of certain duration, administrated by the government or local authorities, where in exchange of unremunerated labour (volunteering), volunteers receive an extended package of social guarantees.

Via statutory programmes volunteers receive regular medical and civil liability insurance, family, unemployment, incapacity, pension records and other benefits. Volunteers receive pocket money or allowances. And the experience of participation in statutory volunteering programmes is attested by formally recognised instruments, which can be transferred into grades or qualifications.

The access to such programmes might not be easy for everyone, and limitations persist even in statutory volunteering. There might be the initial requirements to age, level of education and initial job experience, as it exists in Germany. Or all sorts of other legal barriers (restriction in duration, number of hours, types of activities, compensation) related to the primary importance of employment and various restrictions placed on actual beneficiaries of social assistance payments, as it exists in Belgium, and a number of other countries.

In regard of the European Union legislation, we need to refer to the Regulation 1408/71, which provides for social security coverage for those trans-border volunteers, who benefit from such protection at home. The mechanism on how to protect social rights of trans-border volunteers exists in the European Union law. However, the limits to such protection are rooted in national legislations.

Scheme. Statutory Volunteering

Obstacles:

Everyone is encouraged to seek paid employment first

Restrictions in duration, number of hours, types of activities, compensation for actual beneficiaries of social assistance payments

REG (EEC) 1408/71 only covers those volunteers who are insured under their national security legislation

STATUTORY VOLUNTEERING AS A SOLUTION

Characteristics:

Minimal age limits

Educational requirements

Insurances (regular medical, civil liability, accident)

Benefits (family, unemployment, record of service, pension, incapacity, living allowance)

National and International schemes

We have mentioned Belgium as the country, where formal restrictions in the access to volunteering persists for specific groups of young people. As a matter of good practice, however, we have decided to include a more detailed description of Belgian social security law on volunteering.

EXAMPLE – BELGIUM (FL)

*The Act on insurance regime for young people, involved in volunteering
September 2010. Source, National Report BE(FL)*

If volunteers receive unemployment benefits, or benefits caused by leave of absence, or temporary benefits for school-leavers, they shall report their volunteering activities in writing to unemployment agency of the National Employment Office (RVA). The burden of proof remains with the RVA, and the request shall only be rejected in certain specified cases.

Those cases are: volunteering work is not officially defined, or the nature, volume or frequency of the activity does not correspond to volunteering, or unemployed person becomes less available to labour market.

If volunteers receive living allowance, they have to take an extra step. They shall notify their welfare officer at the Public Centre for Social Welfare before starting their volunteering activities.

Young people with replacement income have the right to receive payment, that covers the expenses of voluntary work. There is no risk, that social benefits would be reduced, but the conditions of the law shall be met.

In case of a person receiving disability allowance, medical certificate shall establish "compatibility" between actual health condition of candidate-volunteer and nature of volunteering tasks. Same procedures exists in case of other illness or pregnancy. Volunteers are held responsible to obtain such medical certificate in advance.

We terminate this Chapter with the comparative overview of social protection of volunteers in Europe and comparative overview of reimbursement and remuneration for volunteering involvement in Europe. This allows to give some more details on the situation of volunteers in the country of our interest.

Table. Comparative Overview of Social Protection of Volunteers in Europe

Country	Social Protection (Insurances, Allowances, Benefits)						
	Medical Insurance	Accident Insurance	Liability Insurance	Family Allowance	Unemployment Benefits	Pension Benefits	Other Benefits
Austria	X ^(ST)			X (ST)	X (ST)	X (ST)	
Belgium			X	X	X		X ^{BE}
Bulgaria							
Croatia							
Cyprus							
Czech Republic	X ^{CZ}					X	
Denmark							
Estonia							
Finland							
France	X	X	X	X	X (Bénévolat)	X (ST)	
Germany	X (ST)	X	X	X	X (ST)	X (ST)	X ^{GE}
Greece							

ST Statutory Programmes only

BE Benefitt caused by leave of absence, temporary benefits for school-leavers, living allowance, replacement income, disability allowance

CZ In case of volunteering service abroad

GE Long-term nursing care

Hungary							
Ireland					X		X
Italy	X						
Latvia							
Liechtenstein							
Lithuania	X(ST)	X(ST)					
Luxembourg		X	X	X	X ^{LU}		
Malta							
Netherlands							
Poland							
Portugal							
Romania							
Slovak Republic							
Slovenia	X(ST)	X(ST)	X(ST)		X	X(ST)	X(ST)
Spain		X	X				
Sweden							
United Kingdom							

LU Special holidays: Congé jeunesse, Congé culturel, Congé des volontaires des services d'incendie, de secours et de sauvetage, Congé de la coopération au développement

Table. Comparative Overview of Reimbursement and Remuneration for Volunteering Involvement in Europe

Country	Forms of Reimbursement/Remuneration		
	Expenses Involved	Pocket Money/Allowance	Other
Austria			X vouchers
Belgium		X	
Bulgaria			
Croatia			
Cyprus			
Czech Republic			
Denmark		X	
Estonia			
Finland			
France	X	X ST	X vouchers
Germany	X	X ST	X ST accommodation, working cloth
Greece			
Hungary			
Ireland	X individual arrangements	X individual arrangements	X individual arrangements
Italy	X	X (salary)	
Latvia			
Liechtenstein		X	
Lithuania	X		X meals, phone calls, training, working cloth
Luxembourg	X	X	
Malta			
Netherlands	X individual arrangement		
Poland			
Portugal			
Romania			
Slovak Republic	X		
Slovenia	X	X	
Spain	X (occasionally)		
Sweden	X individual arrangements		
United Kingdom	X individual arrangements	X individual arrangements	X end of service award

Recommendations for the Legal Framework on Volunteering developed by the Consultant based on the analysis of national reports

1. Each country shall remain autonomous to decide on its own national legislation and policies on volunteering, which is the result of its unique cultural, historical, social, and geographical features, and actual needs. The diversity of local, national and international volunteering opportunities shall continue.
2. European countries may and shall learn from one another's best practices in development, support and recognition of volunteering (voluntary participation) of their citizens.
3. European states shall cooperate for promotion of trans-border volunteering in the EU, among the Council of Europe member states, and beyond, in support of this expression of good will of their citizens, the promotion of peace, justice and solidarity, the fundamental values of European societies.
4. European states shall conclude bilateral and multilateral conventions, and advance the European Union legislation, in the area of recognition and protection of social rights of volunteers.
5. For this purpose debates shall continue and consensus shall be reached, where possible, on the legal status of volunteer in national and/or international laws.
6. In support of genuine nature of volunteering, volunteers shall enjoy social protection. This includes, but is not limited to, medical insurance, family allowance, recognition as duration of labour for unemployment benefits and pension, access to professional re-integration programmes, and more.
7. Additional attention shall be paid to persisting division between "recognised" (statutory) and "unrecognised" (informal) volunteering. Such distinction of legal forms of volunteering creates an extra division of the statuses of volunteers, and not all forms of volunteering activism receive equal treatment by law. The effort shall be made to resolve the contradiction of seeing volunteering as an expression of free will and an active, altruistic contribution into the society, and at the same time to protect and facilitate only specific forms of volunteering.
8. Research shall continue to play vital role in the processes of decision-making on volunteering. Evidence-based policy in volunteering shall become a rule.
9. Special attention shall be paid to development of volunteering opportunities for those young people, who has special needs in access to volunteering. They are and not limited to, parents with young children and single parents, youth with learning and behavioural difficulties, young people with disabilities, with addictions, with criminal records, PLWHA (people living with HIV/AIDS).
10. Those special volunteering opportunities shall include development of supportive infrastructure in travelling, housing, daily assistance and orientation, psychological support, personal guidance, medical assistance, in national and cross-border volunteering schemes. This also includes capacity building of sending and hosting organisations.

Chapter 2. Institutional Framework regarding Recognition of Volunteering of Young People in Europe

This Chapter deals with formal recognition of volunteering, named “validation” for the purposes of this Summary Report, and with social recognition, named “appreciation”. The Chapter describes these two recognition types of volunteering, and provides examples of the recognition mechanisms and country-specific recognition instruments. How partnership on volunteering has been organised in the reporting countries, and what are the latest tendencies in promotion of volunteering in Europe, have been in the focus of this Chapter too.

The Stakeholders

Having read through national reports we could identify the stakeholders involved into recognition policies and process in the countries across Europe. Not surprisingly, the national lists of recognition stakeholders resembles each other.

In this list one finds the volunteers, volunteering organisations and civil society organisations in general, governments and local authorities, business (employment and recruiters), universities and educational system as a whole, and international organisations.

Recognition Types, Mechanisms and Instruments

The existing multiplicity of recognition instruments of learning via volunteering, could be summed up to two types: the social recognition, the mechanism that allows to demonstrate the social appreciation by the society of the contribution, that volunteers make into development of important social spheres and addressing of urgent society needs; and the formal recognition, the mechanism that allows to justify the learning experience of volunteers, while fulfilling their socially important missions.

We have collected the examples of recognition mechanisms, and presented it in the following table.

Table. Recognition of Volunteering. Types and Mechanisms.

TYPES OF RECOGNITION	
SOCIAL RECOGNITION/APPRECIATION Mechanisms	FORMAL RECOGNITION/VALIDATION Mechanisms
Awards Honours Medals	Degrees Credits Certificates (qualification)

Certificates (attendance)	
Distinctions	
Discounts	
CV records	

We see a rather extensive list of social appreciation mechanisms, which vary from awards and medals to discounts and CV records. This type of recognition mechanisms may be found in nearly every country. These are very colourful and popular instruments. Many of them have been created as the actions to promote volunteering, to inform the population of the nature of volunteering, and to explain the exceptional contributions that volunteers make into resolution of critical social issues.

To each recognition mechanism we have attributed recognition instruments. The recognition mechanisms are presented in the following table.

Table. Social Recognition of Volunteering in Europe. Recognition Instruments

Country	Recognition Instrument
Austria	Annual Award for Special Achievements in Volunteering
Belgium	Oscar for Social-Cultural Work My VDAB Annual Award for Volunteer Work
Finland	International Award for Young People Recreation Activity Study Book
France	Légion d'Honneur (Legion of Honour) Ordre du Mérite (Merit Order)
Luxembourg	TEAMK8 Card Youth Merit Award
Malta	Golden Medal OASI Youth of the Year Award John XXIII Kindness Award
Netherlands	International Award for Young People Children's Ribbon
Romania	Civil Society Gala
Estonia, Malta, Netherlands	CV Records

Another type of recognition mechanisms is the formal recognition, the way of validation of learning via volunteering, which may be expressed in degrees, credits and certificates.

Table. Formal Recognition of Learning via Volunteering. Country examples.

FORMAL RECOGNITION/VALIDATION	
Degree (qualification)	Belgium, France, UK
Credits	France, Italy
Governmental Certificates	Cyprus, Greece, Lithuania, Slovakia, France, Germany, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Malta

Formal recognition is not that widely spread in Europe, as social recognition. But we can state a firm intention to achieve better formal recognition and the actual progress towards such objective in the dominant majority of the countries, which made part of this Summary Report.

You will find in the following table specific examples on how learning via volunteering is being formally recognised across Europe.

Table. Formal Recognition of Learning via Volunteering in Europe. Recognition Instruments

Country	Recognition Instrument
Belgium (French Community)	«OJ», « CJ» decrees
France	Validation of acquired competences
Germany	Nachweise International Qualipass Granted as waiting time for university (for statutory volunteering only)
Italy	National civic service certificate Credits attributed by universities on the basis of certificates given by NGOs
Lithuania	Volunteering recognised as internship (at discretion of professor)
Luxembourg	Attestation de l'engagement (Attestation of engagement) Validation des acquis professionnels (Validation of acquired professional competences)
Malta	Mentioned in school certificate Degree plus programme (voluntary work unit) at the university curriculum
Netherlands	Ervaringscertificaat (Experience Certificate) Volunteering is part of school curriculum
Slovak Republic	NGOs accredited by government give certificates for accredited programmes Database accessible for universities and employers
Slovenia	Nefiks, system of recognition
United Kingdom	National qualification framework, volunteering from 0 to 3

In order to provide a better overview, we propose the table, that lists all countries, which make part of the Summary Report, and give indications on their recognition types. Some countries demonstrated both types of recognition, and some one or the other types.

Table. Comparative Overview of Recognition of Volunteering in Europe

Country	Types of Recognition	
	Formal Qualification	Social Appreciation
Austria		X
Belgium	X	X
Bulgaria		
Croatia		
Cyprus		X
Czech Republic		
Denmark		
Estonia		X
Finland		X
France	X	X
Germany	X	X
Greece		X
Hungary		
Ireland		X
Italy	X	
Latvia		
Liechtenstein		
Lithuania	X	X
Luxembourg	X	X
Malta	X	X
Netherlands	X	X
Poland		
Portugal		
Romania		
Slovak Republic	X	
Slovenia	X	
Spain		
Sweden		
United Kingdom	X	X

Partnership on volunteering

The framework on recognition of volunteering is not limited to formal and social recognition mechanisms. The framework goes beyond that. It is also about partnership, established among the main stakeholders of the recognition framework.

The EKCYP correspondents have been asked in the questionnaire about the mechanisms of partnership. The interest was to know what partnership mechanisms exist at local and national levels, in terms of, first, partnership between NGOs, second, partnership between NGOs and government and/or local authorities, and, third, the relations that are established with private sector.

We found out, that partnership between NGOs is generally characterised by coalitions, networks and platforms building, which unite to lobby for specific volunteering policies. They run joint campaigns, organise promotional actions, and develop common internet resources.

Partnership between NGOs and government and/or local authorities is characterised by consultative or co-decision structures, collective running of volunteering centres and realisation of information campaign together, implementation of community projects with attraction of volunteers, and research.

Public-private partnership is characterised by sponsorship, corporate volunteering, technical assistance and resource sharing.

Sometimes partnership is established with private individuals.

The following table gives details about existing partnerships regarding volunteering.

Table. Partnership on Volunteering

Country	Partnership Bodies		
	Between NGOs	NGO-Government	Public-Private
Austria			
Belgium	X	X	X
Bulgaria	X		
Croatia		X	
Cyprus		X	
Czech Republic			
Denmark			
Estonia			
Finland	X + individuals	X	
France	X	X	X volontariat

Germany	X	X	
Greece		X	
Hungary			
Ireland	X	X	X
Italy	X	X local authorities	
Latvia			
Liechtenstein			
Lithuania	X	X	X
Luxembourg	X	X	X
Malta		X	
Netherlands	X		X
Poland			
Portugal			
Romania			
Slovak Republic			
Slovenia	X	X	X
Spain	X	X	
Sweden	X + individuals	X	
United Kingdom			

Promotion of volunteering

Strategic promotion of volunteering is part of most action plans on recognition. Those actions include *information* about volunteering opportunities, *awareness-raising* about the role of volunteering in society, and *coordination* of efforts between various stakeholders of the volunteering sector for the promotion of volunteering.

The list of options is long. They impress with imagination and creativity. Anyone might find an inspiration of the choice.

There are the actions in local communities, annual national award ceremonies, which attract heavy media attention, and tasty volunteering portals and internet platforms for volunteers. A more traditional way of information, the posters, which are placed in busy public places, bus stops and metro stations, central streets and shopping malls, are accompanied with internet campaigning, and target presence in schools and universities with specific promo events.

Youth Information and Volunteering Information Centres, run by municipalities or coalitions of NGOs, not only spread information, but provide counselling services about volunteering for young people and their parents.

Volunteering is promoted via TV, radio, and newspaper advertisements. Volunteers share their success stories on-line, printed, and by word of mouth. Children learn about volunteering via interactive games at home in front of their computers or in a classroom.

Volunteering is more and more present as a theme within school curricula. Local communities, schools, volunteering organisations and individual volunteers take part in various public competitions, in order to manifest their best endeavours.

Among the new media, volunteers do not leave unattended social networks, like Facebook and Twitter. On-line matching databases offer abundant opportunities for volunteers and volunteering organisations to find each other. And it is always nice to talk to one's friends and relatives about volunteering, or to use street performance, street fundraising and street recruitment to attract attention to volunteering.

Last, but not least, joint campaigning with national youth councils, and various training opportunities for volunteers, for their organisations, for youth municipal officers and ministerial clerks, bring their fruits too for the promotion and recognition of volunteering in Europe.

All in all, there is a clear modern tendency to use new technologies for the benefits of volunteering. But personal conversation and advice from someone we know and trust remain important too.

Some inspiring examples can be found here.

Table. Promotion of Volunteering in Europe

Country	Promotional Activities
Belgium	Volunteering Fair Exposition "You+Me+Us, The Portraits of Volunteers on the Move" Voluntary Service Platform Day of the youth movement Volunteers Week "Coloured Volunteer Work" practice oriented training
Bulgaria	Facebook campaign
Cyprus	Best Volunteering Project Competition among schools Volunteer Week in schools Youth Information Centres Cyprus National Volunteering Portal Volunteering-Social Inclusion-Equal Opportunities: An interactive Multimedia

	Learning Tool (DVD), a game
Czech Republic	Business in the Community
Estonia	Regional Volunteering Centres
Greece	Bridge of Collaboration for Volunteering
Italy	Youth and Volunteer: a Laboratory of Ideas in Evolution, internet-based
Liechtenstein	Competition for the Best Volunteering Project
Lithuania	Promotion of Volunteering via General Teaching Plan On-line Volunteering Matching Database Facebook Twitter
Luxembourg	Luxembourgish Volunteering Agency, matching, competence building and information service Bénévolat des jeunes Fräi, well ech wëll! An du?
Malta	VolTours Facebook
Netherlands	Municipal Volunteering Centres I am Great! Campaign VETvrijwillig (awesome volunteering) iVolunteer recruitment project DOET annual awareness-raising campaign Volunteering for and by Young People and Families
Romania	Volunteer Portrait Booklet, stories of young volunteers
Slovakia	"72 Hours"
Sweden	National Volunteering Agency, Volunteering Matching Database
Belgium, Cyprus, Germany, Malta, Luxembourg	Volunteering Portal

Recommendations for the Institutional Framework on Recognition of Volunteering developed by the Consultant based the analysis of country questionnaires _____

1. To invite to, encourage and facilitate mutual learning between all stakeholders of the recognition framework on volunteering.
2. To stimulate participation of private sector, the business, employers and recruiters, in the process of recognition of volunteering, and to consult them on the added value of volunteering.
3. To use corporate volunteering as an example of a recognised form of volunteering. To learn the lesson for the broader recognition framework.
4. To stimulate public-private partnership on volunteering.
5. To continue debates on the genuine nature of volunteering in relation to formal validation of learning via volunteering. Without the risk of over-formalisation of informal learning, the recognition of volunteering as a valid source of learning needs to be appreciated.
6. To provide training in the use of new media for volunteers and their organisations.
7. To specifically support volunteering matching on-line databases, internet social network, interactive games, and volunteering internet portals.
8. To continue mutual convergence between formal, non-formal and informal learning for the benefit of volunteering.
9. To incorporate research for the evidence-based recognition policies on volunteering.

The Technical Recommendations for Future Reports of the EKCYP developed by the Consultant based the analysis of country questionnaires

1. In addition to version of national reports available for download in pdf format, there is a need for an operational electronic version of national templates, sort of electronic database, which would include all available national reports. In this manner, an interested user will be able to create selection of countries/questions of her/his choice. Operation with such data will be much easier and faster.
2. If the first recommendation is accepted, then national templates shall be filled in on-line, instead of being submitted as paper version. The choice of software shall be made.
3. The structure of questionnaire shall be optimised. We propose to avoid repetitive questions. The structure of questionnaire shall be flexible, shall allow changes, and opt for new questions as reality changes, new phenomena appears.
4. The Consultant proposes to keep combination of closed and open questions in questionnaire. Closed questions will provide information for comparative quantitative analysis, while open questions will allow to provide details, explanations, and examples.
5. The Consultant suggests to insert several longitudinal questions. Answers to such questions would allow cross-cultural comparison and will indicate the dynamics with time.
6. At this stage, the language of all national reports is English, and this has been seen as a difficulty too. For instance, the question of national voluntary service has been understood by some correspondents of the EKCYP as “programme” and by some other correspondents as “office”. As a result, the Consultant could not include this question in her analysis. And this is just one of the examples, where a multilingual version of questionnaire might be very useful.
7. National reports might be written in several languages, at discretion of reporting country, but at least in English and in an/the official language of reporting country. Reference to one more language is the source of verification of meanings. At the same time, accessibility of language is a matter of transparency and participative democracy.
8. The EKCYP shall invite its correspondents to provide details, descriptions, examples, clarifications of national policies and practices in their responses to questionnaire. Certain issues, names and events are obvious to those people, familiar with national context. At the same time, one shall not forget, that most of interested readers do not come from the same country and might not be familiar with such information. This is a function of national reports ito provide readers with comprehensive information.
9. The Partnership shall actively encourage countries to submit their answers to

questionnaire. Special attention (active lobbying) shall be given to “under-represented” countries in the EKCYP templates, first of all, in South-Eastern Europe and Eastern Europe and Caucasus.

10. The Consultant recommends to continue with summary reports, as they are a valuable source of comparative and analytical information. Summary Report promotes the idea of evidence-based youth policies, and contributes to visibility and effectiveness of the European Knowledge Centre for Youth Policies. Summary Report is a good basis for policy planning and programming of the Partnership between the European Commission and the Council of Europe in the field of Youth.