



EuroVolNet

The network for developing voluntary competence in sport organizations

Recommendations and conclusions

Annex no 2 to the Final report

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Project facts

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**Volunteering is a creator of human and social capital.
Volunteers help shape European society.
Volunteering is a journey of solidarity.**

EuroVolNet project, representing 18 Sport for All associations and other stakeholders from all over Europe

Overall

- **confirm** that volunteering has become prominent on the political agenda in the past few years and will continue to constitute a huge national and international challenge in the years to come. For individuals and for nations, volunteering challenge has a huge impact, both socially and financially. Sport and its widespread organizational structures provide a valuable setting where people contribute to European society.
- **reaffirm** the value of cooperation between Sport for All Associations, of cross border exchange and inspiration in order to increase capacity to develop volunteering as well as goal-oriented volunteering activities.
- **welcome** the establishment of a constructive dialogue with stakeholders at the European and national level and call on the European Commission to further strengthen its on-going dialogue and cooperation with the world of sport for all in relation to volunteering. In particular, partners call on the European Commission to include in the upcoming Sport Program sport and volunteering to support cross-border transfer of good practices, international knowledge sharing and development of common volunteering initiatives.
- **recommend** that after the Preparatory Actions are completed, to facilitate a structured approach to capturing lessons learned. The Commission should host and chair the workshop and invite all project coordinators.
- **recommend** that projects of up to three years should be supported in the future. Program objectives should be adjusted to reflect expected added value to the volunteering, strength the network and access to additional (e.g. pan-European) networks;
- **recommend** the overall dissemination of best practice collections, guidelines etc. including target beneficiaries and expected outcomes;
- **recommend** that an emphasis on EU added value relates to all aspects of the projects, including activities aimed at the general public at local level. These

should be based on identified good practice to ensure that maximum synergies between network partners are exploited and that the network and EU brands are given adequate weight. EU added value must be one of the award criteria for the selection of projects.

- **recommend** to develop more coordinated and proactive approach to volunteering policy in sport, to establish a permanent volunteering network that can ensure policy structure of all EU institutions and ensure that volunteering is made a priority within EU policy.
- **recommend** the development of common volunteering measurements, economic and social values. Common measurements of volunteering in sport are also important in order to enable evidence – based policy making that takes into account economic and social value of Human Capital that create better and healthier societies that can ensure stronger link to the EU2020 goals of smart, sustainable an inclusive growth.
- **recommend** that volunteering as co-finding should be permitted. Volunteering time must be included as contribution in-kind with a financial value



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define

Definition of volunteering

These are just few definitions that show differences and shows way for opportunities. A majority of countries in Europe either apply the same definition as used for volunteering in general, or vaguely refer to volunteers as 'people that donate their time to sport organisations, carrying out activities in a field they are passionate about'. (this is the case in Austria, Bulgaria, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Finland, Hungary, Lithuania, Malta and Poland).

The sport movement shall work towards a common definition of volunteering, and energetically lobby for recognition and valorization of volunteering in sport, emphasizing the dependence of sport organizations on volunteer inputs.

Volunteering – Education for life

Today, one of the most outstanding aspects of volunteering is its educational value and impact. The recognition and valorization of the time that citizens invest in volunteering is essential as a motivational factor, in particular among the younger generations as a bridge between voluntary work, education and the labour market.

Therefore, special attention must be paid to the recognition of skills and competences developed through non-formal and informal learning experiences. The role of volunteering needs to be fully recognized and supported in national and European lifelong learning strategies and activities.

Legal Framework

Inconsistent and inadequate legal frameworks for volunteers create obstacles associated to taxation, social insurance, unemployment benefits, health insurance and the labour market.

European member states need to remove these barriers for voluntary work and provide volunteers with the right to operate within a clear and adapted legal framework!

Social and Economic value of volunteering

The social and economic value of volunteering in sport is increasingly being recognised by EU member states, as both household spending on sporting goods and invested volunteering hours represent a multi-billion € economy. Volunteers are an impressive

bank of social capital, and we need to nourish their investments to increase the economic value of the volunteering.

Management in volunteering

Volunteers contribute tremendously to the development of society, and today this requires more than ever specific skills and knowledge. Volunteering is serious business. Voluntary organizations need to market themselves in an attractive fashion in order to enlist new volunteers. Thus, NGOs need efficient and targeted oriented volunteer management systems leveraging the recruitment, training and retention of young volunteers.

Funding of volunteering

There is an increased focus on assessing and redesigning ways of funding for the sport sector. Governments are adopting new forms of tax reliefs, whereas organizations increasingly discover alternative sources of income. However, today the main source of income for grassroots sport is the citizen himself and the concerned local authorities. European member states should promote equitable and sustainable funding mechanisms supporting the sound development of voluntary organizations. National sport organizations and public authorities should support grassroots sport associations by protecting their income, through enhanced guidance on funding streams and income generating activities.



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commit

to **Management of volunteering**

- and to develop a framework for the most relevant dimensions of a volunteer strategy, manage such a strategy based on
 - Initiation of an internal policy for volunteering
 - Transparent working structures for volunteering and internal communication
 - Recruitment strategy
 - Qualification and training of volunteers
 - Retaining culture
 - Recognition measures; public relation and marketing strategy
 - Financing and ways of funding

Management has to be defined as a long-term, systematic steering of development processes. This way it follows the principle of constant and step by step improvement of the strategy-plan, orientated on the available resources and the acceptance by the involved actors. Political willingness, careful planning (action plan), defined sequences for implementation and evidence based evaluation procedures are the basic elements for successful management in volunteering in sport.

conclude

- Management in volunteering is a real demanding issue and needs extra personal and financial resources.
- It's recommended to dedicate a special representative on board level and/or a staff member with this task.
- A certain budget should be allocated in advance to put the volunteering strategy into practice.
- The investment will be highly rewarding for a sustainable development of the organization.



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to **Volunteering – Education for life**

Volunteering is strongly linked both to non-formal and informal learning. It contributes to personal development, learning skills and competences thus enhancing employability. Non-formal education and lifelong learning are important elements of the EU2020 strategy towards smart, sustainable and inclusive growth. The sport sector, primarily based on volunteer engagement and contribution, is the most widespread civil society movement. Learning processes take place both on and off the pitch and sport halls. Millions of Europeans join non-formal training and education in sport organizations, be it as trainers or leaders. This is non-formal learning on a massive scale.

by recommending

1. Guidelines for the development of a European education and training policy in the voluntary sport sector based on

The specific nature and goals of voluntary organizations

- a fundamental difference between «service organizations» (selling already made services) and «voluntary organizations/associations» (associate members producing collectively activities)
- non-profit oriented but producing also «collective goods» such as democracy, tolerance and citizenship

Take care of the specificity of the human resources of voluntary organizations

- Volunteers have limited time and it is not possible to take more of their time to train them formally;
- Volunteers take no longer lifelong engagements (turn over)
- There is a huge tacit knowledge within organizations which has been traditionally transmitted through «companion-ship» (no «formalization» and little improvement)
- A good paid staff in voluntary organizations increases the number and quality of volunteers

Enhancing a human resource development policy in the voluntary sport sector

- Mapping the key roles and functions run by volunteers in voluntary sport organizations;

- Mapping and formalizing (through «e-manuals») the key related competences;
- Sharing the knowledge and competences in voluntary sport organizations (developing « learning communities /organizations » such as treasurer's communities of practice...);
- «Professionalizing» volunteers (developing their competences) through mentoring and learning communities and limited formal/non formal learning

2. The role of the European Union and of the Member States: Policy, strategy and legislation/law:

- EU and Member States are required to revise and implement laws and legislation in order to foster the recognition of volunteers' skills and competencies within the context of non-formal and informal education.
- EU is required to support Member States' practices.
- EU is required, in collaboration with the Member States, to put in place the European agenda of the Validation of Non-Formal and Informal Learning (VNFIL)

3. The role of sport organizations:

- Looking for a new path in the recognition of volunteers' skills and competences it can be maintained that sport organization must have a direct role in the definition of strategy concerning the formal and informal education.

4. Actions that sport organization can put in place:

- Lobbying;
- Sharing experience and identifying regulatory and policy frameworks that really work;
- Networking (New technologies may have a crucial role: internet and social network);
- Developing or enhancing their capacity (skills, knowledge and abilities) to effectively recruit, focus, and support volunteer resources;
- Working for the recognition/validation of non-formal and informal learning;