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**REPORT FROM THE COMMISSION TO THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT, THE  
COUNCIL, THE EUROPEAN ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMITTEE AND THE  
COMMITTEE OF THE REGIONS**

**on the implementation, results and overall assessment of the 2011 European Year of  
Volunteering**

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**1. BACKGROUND:**

**1.1. Introduction**

In accordance with the Decision establishing the European Year of Volunteering 2011<sup>1</sup>, this report offers an overview of the implementation, results and overall achievements of the European Year, building on the conclusions of an external evaluation of the European Year<sup>2</sup>.

In 2006, the European Commission consulted the European Economic and Social Committee on the future direction in the area of volunteering at the European level. One of the main recommendations of the European Economic and Social Committee's exploratory opinion on the role of voluntary activity in European society and its impact of December 2006 was *"to announce a Year of Volunteers, and to publish a White Paper on voluntary activity and active citizenship in Europe at the earliest opportunity"*.<sup>3</sup>

An alliance of NGOs supporting the idea of a European year of volunteering was set up and a civil society campaign aiming at the designation of 2011 as the European Year of Volunteering was launched. In 2008, the European Parliament adopted a declaration<sup>4</sup> supporting the call for a European Year of Volunteering 2011, and thus creating significant momentum and high expectations.

In 2009, the European Parliament and the Council endorsed the Commission's proposal to designate 2011 as the European Year of Voluntary Activities Promoting Active Citizenship (hereinafter EYV2011).

Ten years after the United Nations' International Year of Volunteering 2001, the EYV2011 came at the right moment to respond to expectations from civil society and to mobilise volunteering stakeholders in the Member States around the theme of volunteering as an expression of civic participation. It illustrated that Europeans are committed to the values of solidarity, justice and inclusion and it showed that the European institutions play their role in promoting volunteering.

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<sup>1</sup> Council Decision N° 37/2010/EC on the European Year of Voluntary Activities Promoting Active Citizenship, (2011) of 27 November 2009, OJ L 17, 22.1.2010, p. 43-49.

<sup>2</sup> Evaluation of the European Year of Volunteering 2011, Deloitte, June 2012.

<sup>3</sup> Opinion of the European Economic and Social Committee on Voluntary activity: its role in European society and its impact; SOC/243-EESC 1575/2006.

<sup>4</sup> Written Declaration on announcing 2011 as the European Year of Volunteering, of 9.4.2008.

## **1.2. The European Year 2011 and its objectives**

Fully respecting the principle of subsidiarity, the EYV2011 was designed to encourage the efforts undertaken by Member States, regional and local authorities to create better conditions and higher visibility for voluntary activities in the European Union, by pursuing four objectives:

- To work towards an enabling environment for volunteering in the EU in order to anchor volunteering as part of promoting civic participation;
- To empower organisers of voluntary activities to improve the quality of voluntary activities;
- To recognise voluntary activities;
- To raise awareness of the value and importance of volunteering.

## **2. WHAT DID THE EUROPEAN YEAR ACHIEVE?**

### **2.1. Context**

EYV 2011 took place against the backdrop of the global economic crisis. This situation provided the background against which citizens recognised the importance of community-based solidarity built on the commitment of individual volunteers, thus becoming more receptive to the ideas and values of volunteering and its role in fostering civic participation.

In this context, the EYV 2011 showed the need to further develop quality volunteering in an appropriate legal framework. Volunteering was recognised as an expression of solidarity amongst citizens contributing to the well-being of our society and to counterbalance social exclusion, poverty, intolerance, racism, xenophobia and injustice. In this respect, the EYV 2011 made a natural link to the preceding 2010 European Year for Combating Poverty and Social Exclusion.

### **2.2. A firm political commitment**

The EYV 2011 acted as a catalyst for policy changes both at European and national level. A number of important policy documents were adopted already during the year:

The Commission adopted a "Communication on EU Policies and Volunteering: Recognising and Promoting Cross-border Voluntary activities in the EU"<sup>5</sup>.

The Council, under Polish Presidency, adopted Conclusions on the role of voluntary activities in social policy<sup>6</sup> as well as on the role of voluntary activities in sport in promoting active citizenship<sup>7</sup>.

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<sup>5</sup> Communication on EU Policies and volunteering: Recognising and Promoting Cross-Border Voluntary Activities in the EU", COM(2011) 568 final of 20.09.2011.

<sup>6</sup> Council Conclusions on the role of voluntary activities in social policy of 3 October 2011;

<sup>7</sup> Council Conclusions on the role of voluntary activities in sport in promoting active citizenship of 28 and 29.11.2011;

In March 2012, the European Economic and Social Committee adopted its Opinion on the Commission Communication of September 2011<sup>8</sup>.

In June 2012 the European Parliament adopted a "Report on recognising and promoting cross-border voluntary activities in the European Union"<sup>9</sup>.

At European level, a set of further measures will facilitate volunteering in general, and cross-border volunteering in particular:

The European Year of Active Ageing and Intergenerational Solidarity 2012 (EY 2012) has taken up the topic of volunteering by promoting senior volunteering. One of its key actions, the European Seniorforce Day, invited local authorities and volunteering organisations to find new ways of engaging senior citizens in volunteering activities.

The European Year of Citizens 2013 will build upon the achievements of EYV 2011.

In the context of the Europe 2020 strategy and the flagship initiatives "Youth on the Move" and "An Agenda for New Skills and Jobs", the Commission made a proposal for a Council Recommendation on the validation of non-formal and informal learning<sup>10</sup> to boost skills and competences acquired outside school through activities like volunteering".

At a practical level, the European Skills Passport, i.e. a new electronic folder enabling citizens to present their skills and qualifications profiles, acquired either in formal and/or non-formal learning, will also consequently have a volunteering dimension.

EU funding programmes in different policy areas, such as the European Voluntary Service (EVS) of the Youth in Action programme<sup>11</sup>, the Europe for Citizens programme<sup>12</sup> and the Grundtvig programme<sup>13</sup> and the future Education, Training, Youth and Sport programme (Commission proposal "Erasmus for all")<sup>14</sup> will continue targeting volunteers.

A European Voluntary Humanitarian Aid Corps (EU Aid Volunteers) foreseen by Art 214 (5) TFEU will be set up in 2014 following three years of preparatory measures<sup>15</sup>.

In addition, initiatives are underway to help mainstream volunteering into EU policies, for example the renewed EU strategy 2011-14 for Corporate Social Responsibility<sup>16</sup>.

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<sup>8</sup> Opinion of the European Economic and Social Committee on the "Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions – Communication on EU Policies and Volunteering: Recognising and Promoting Cross-Border voluntary activities in the EU" of 28 March 2012, SOC 431-CESE 824/2012;

<sup>9</sup> Report on recognising and promoting cross-border voluntary activities in the EU" of 12 June 2012, European Parliament, A7-0166/2012/P7\_TA(2°12)0236; COM(2012)485 of 5.9.2012.

<sup>11</sup> Decision N° 1719/2006/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 15.11.2006, OJ L 327, 24.11.2006, p. 30-44;

<sup>12</sup> Decision N° 1904/2006/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 12.12.2006, OJ L 378, 27.12.2006, p. 32-40;

<sup>13</sup> Decision N° 1720/2006/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 15.11.2006, OJ L 327, 24.11.2006, p. 45ff.

<sup>14</sup> Erasmus for all: The EU Programme for Education, Training, Youth and Sport, COM (2011)787 final of 23.11.2011.

<sup>15</sup> COM(2012)514 of 19.09.2012.

At the same time, the EYV 2011 acknowledged the need for stronger engagement at national level. It is at Member States' level that remaining obstacles impeding volunteering can be removed. The EYV 2011 showed that volunteering is an essentially local phenomenon: most volunteers are engaged at local or regional level. However, one of the findings of the EYV 2011 is that Member States can contribute to the development of volunteering by opening national volunteering schemes for cross-border volunteering.

The National Coordinating Bodies of the EYV 2011 developed into a strong network and, as a result of their cooperation, adopted the "Warsaw Declaration for Sustainability of Action on Voluntary Activities and Active Citizenship" at the closing conference of the European Year in December 2011.

### **2.3. Creating an enabling environment for volunteering in Europe**

Creating an enabling environment was a particularly ambitious objective of the EYV 2011. While the importance of an enabling environment was recognised in all Member States, views differed as to the extent to which regulation is the solution to an improved environment. Whereas 12 countries had a legal framework specific to the voluntary sector in place at the beginning of the European Year (BE, CY, CZ, HU, IT, LV, LU, MT, PL, PT, RO, ES), in 12 other Member States the voluntary sector was governed through other existing general laws (AT, DK, EE, FI, FR, DE, GR, IE, LT, NL, SE, UK)<sup>17</sup>. A specific legal framework was created for the first time in Slovakia, Slovenia and Lithuania during 2011. In Bulgaria a law on volunteering was elaborated during 2011 and adopted in 2012. Poland adopted a new strategy on volunteering, Austria renewed its law on volunteering and Portugal prepared a new law to be adopted in 2012. The idea of a European Charter for Volunteering, built on a rights-based approach and initiated by the European Youth Forum, was discussed during 2011.

Regarding the admission of non-EU volunteers in the European Union, the Commission published in 2011 its first Report on the application of the Council Directive 2004/114/EC on the conditions of admission for third country nationals for the purpose of studies, pupil exchange, unremunerated training or voluntary service<sup>18</sup>.

The European Year was useful in encouraging Member States to implement the Manual on the Measurement of Volunteer Work that was officially endorsed by the International Labour Organisation during the European Year.

**The ILO's Manual on the Measurement of Volunteer Work** of March 2011 is intended to guide countries in generating systematic and internationally comparable data on volunteer work via regular supplements to labour force surveys. The objective is to improve the knowledge base about volunteering and to establish its economic value.

Poland and Hungary were the first European countries to implement the ILO Manual in 2011. Italy will adopt it in 2012, and Slovakia has used its methodology for its national research

<sup>16</sup> A renewed EU strategy 2011-14 for Corporate Social Responsibility, COM(2011) 681 final of 25.10.2011.

<sup>17</sup> Volunteering in the European Union, Study by the European Commission – DG EAC, GHK, 2010.

<sup>18</sup> Report from the Commission to the European Parliament and the Council on the application of the Council Directive 2004/114/EC on the conditions of admission for third country nationals for the purpose of studies, pupil exchange, unremunerated training or voluntary service, COM (2011) 587 final of 28.09.2011.

France, Latvia, the Czech Republic, Portugal, Spain and Montenegro, which is a candidate country for EU membership, have shown interest in following suite.

#### 2.4. Empowering volunteering organisations

The EYV 2011 has been a significant incentive to empower volunteering organisations and to strengthen partnerships amongst them. In particular, the EYV2011 Alliance played an important role in facilitating networking and cooperation between stakeholders of the European Year and succeeded in making heard the voice of civil society. Having a single umbrella group with which to coordinate civil society activities and policy inputs was an efficient way to cooperate with civil society and to reach out to hundreds of thousands of volunteers and potential volunteers.

In the medium and longer term, the work of the EYV2011 Alliance working groups which led to the elaboration of a civil society Policy Agenda on Volunteering in Europe (P.A.V.E) can be expected to be effective in improving the quality of volunteer management.

The **EYV 2011 Alliance** was set up in 2007 as an open, informal group of European networks active in volunteering to work together on the promotion and implementation of EYV 2011. The network grew from 24 networks in July 2010 to 39 networks in December 2011<sup>19</sup>, representing around 2,000 direct member and partner organisations throughout Europe and beyond.

The objectives of the EYV 2011 Alliance included the development of a *Policy Agenda on Volunteering in Europe (P.A.V.E.)* which was officially submitted to the European Commission at the EYV2011 closing conference in December 2011. The preparatory work took place largely in the framework of six working groups that met five times during 2011. P.A.V.E. provides policy recommendations by the volunteering stakeholder community for a more efficient and effective policy framework in Europe to support and promote volunteers.

#### 2.5. Recognising voluntary activity

The recognition of voluntary activities was perceived as an important objective of the EYV2011. This was reflected through a high number of award schemes and ceremonies developed throughout the EU to recognise and thank the volunteers. For example, the Netherlands organised a "Week of Applause" and Romania, Hungary, Ireland and Slovenia held national award ceremonies for the recognition of volunteers.

The first thematic conference of the European Year was dedicated to the theme of recognition and existing mechanisms for promoting the validation of the skills and competences that can be gained in the course of a volunteering activity. The European Qualifications Framework, Europass and the Youthpass are examples of useful instruments at European level in this context.

<sup>19</sup> AGE, AEVSO, AVSO, Caritas Europe, COFACE, CVA, CSR Europe, ENGAGE, Erasmus Student Network, Euclid Network, Eurodiaconia, EAPN, CEDAG, ENGSO, ENGSO Youth, ESAN, AEGEE, CEV, YFJ, ICYE, ISGF, Johanniter International, MHE, Red Cross, Social Platform, SOLIDAR, ALDA, CESES, EUCIS-LLL, EFIL, FEBA, EURAG, EJJO, ENNA, IPPF EN, ISCA, WAGGS, WOSM, Volonteuropre.

## **2.6. Awareness-raising on the value of volunteering**

Raising awareness about the value of volunteering was recognised as an important objective of EYV 2011 at European level and in the Member States. The European communication campaign and the national campaigns contributed to meeting this objective. In many Member States, the European campaign helped complement existing awareness raising activities by providing additional resources.

Beyond this, the EYV 2011 generated wide written and electronic press coverage.

## **3. EUROPEAN YEAR 2011: IMPLEMENTATION AND KEY ACTIVITIES**

In 2011, a total budget of €7.700 million supported activities at European level and in the 27 EU Member States.

A separate budget of €2.994 million for preparatory actions had been available in 2010 to develop an information and communication campaign for the EYV2011 and to set up the coordination structure bringing together the main stakeholders at European level.

### **3.1. Implementation of EYV 2011 in Member States**

In order to organise its participation in the European Year, each Member State designated a National Coordination Body (NCB), the range of which showed the diversity of volunteering traditions in the Member States.

NCBs were granted a total of €3.549 million to coordinate national EYV2011 activities in line with a national work programme developed by each NCB and approved by the European Commission. In each country, the amount received had to be matched by at least 20% of co-funding; some countries provided more than the requested minimum.

In the Member States, many activities took place at national, regional and local level, including:

- Awareness-raising activities (communication campaigns, visibility events, competitions and award ceremonies, websites, leaflets, promotional items, media work, social networking, etc.);
- Debates (conferences, seminars, meetings, etc.);
- Expertise-related activities (research, studies, publications, etc.).

The national communication campaigns had a good impact as they were tailored to national circumstances. Cooperation with the Representation Offices of the Commission in the Member States and with the Europe Direct Network helped reaching out to a broader public. The Year complemented existing national programmes and activities in the area of volunteering by providing funding and helped giving them a European dimension.

Many examples of good practice and innovative actions have been collected at national and at local level (see annex 1 for examples of good practice in the Member States).

### **3.2. European Flagship Projects**

A call for proposals for flagship initiatives was launched in October 2010, and a total of 33 projects were selected in March 2011 to promote networking and innovation in the field of volunteering. This corresponds to one project per country in fourteen Member States, while two projects obtained funding in France, Germany, Greece, Italy, Malta, Spain, Poland and the UK and three in Portugal.

The budget allocated to the co-financing of flagship projects was €1.964 million. The Commission's co-financing was limited to a maximum of 60% of a project's total eligible costs.

Priority was given to projects testing and developing new and innovative schemes and building long-term partnerships between civil society organisations and public sector bodies involved in volunteering. In addition, some themes were prioritised, i.e. employer-supported volunteering, mobility schemes in volunteering for people of all ages with a special focus on young people, social exclusion, and senior volunteering (see annex 2 for examples of successful flagship projects).

A number of innovative approaches to volunteering were introduced through the European flagship projects and spread through the partnerships that have been established through the call for proposals. However, the potential of the flagship projects was not always fully exploited in terms of results dissemination.

### **3.3. Awareness-raising at EU level**

Awareness of the Year amongst relevant stakeholders and the general public was promoted by means of a series of actions.

These actions consisted of four blocks:

#### ***The EYV2011 Tour:***

A one year road-show, called *the EYV Tour*, through the capitals of all Member States was organised. National Coordinating Bodies were requested to liaise with the local volunteer community and develop the programme of activities for the tour stop in their country. The idea behind was to offer a moment in the spotlight for local and national volunteering work, as well as a platform for networking and exchange of best practices among national stakeholders.

The *EYV Tour* was more successful in some countries than in others. Success factors appear to have been a high level of commitment on the part of both national and city authorities, a feeling of empowerment on the part of the voluntary sector, a central location and outdoor activities to attract visitors. Complementarity with showcasing other EU programmes, e.g. Youth in Action and Grundtvig and cooperation with the Commission Representations and the Europe Direct Networks underlined the European dimension.

#### ***The EYV2011 conferences:***



The Media Launch of the EYV 2011 took place in Brussels in December 2010, and four EU-level thematic conferences were organised during 2011.

On 8 January 2011, the European Year was officially launched in Budapest by the Vice-President of the European Commission, Viviane Reding, at a half-day conference. The Conference targeted mainly policy-makers on the theme of 'recognition of volunteering'. Staffan Nilsson, President of the European Economic and Social Committee attended the event.

On 23 and 24 May 2011, a two-day thematic conference co-organised with the European Economic and Social Committee was held in Brussels with the aim of tackling various issues in volunteering from the viewpoint of the individual volunteer. This conference was attended by the President of the European Parliament, Jerzy Buzek, Vice-President of the European Commission Viviane Reding and Staffan Nilsson, President of the European Economic and Social Committee.

On 3 and 4 November 2011, a 1½-day conference on the theme 'Empowering volunteering organisations' took place in Athens, with the participation of Vice-President Viviane Reding and Commissioner Maria Damanaki focusing on the 'quality of volunteering'.

The closing conference of EYV 2011 was held on 2 and 3 December 2011 in Warsaw. This policy-oriented conference, with the participation of Commissioner Kristalina Georgieva, set the scene for policy development and continued action at EU, national and regional levels, aiming at improving the situation for volunteering in the years to come.

These *thematic conferences* were very well received by the participants. According to surveys conducted after the four conferences, a large majority of participants felt that the European conferences had been worthwhile or very worthwhile, and their networking effect was felt to have been important.

#### ***The EYV2011 website:***

The official website of the EYV2011 communication activities ([www.europa.eu/volunteering](http://www.europa.eu/volunteering)) was designed to be interactive, participative and to build a sense of community. Content was provided - and uploaded - by the relays (see below), by volunteers sharing their personal stories and by NCBs. Some more generic information on volunteering, some media extracts, reports and photos on the EYV2011 Tour were also available on the site.

The website attracted a large number of visitors, however the evaluation pointed out that its design could have been done in a way to make the website more user friendly.

#### ***The EYV2011 relay:***

One young volunteer reporter per Member State was selected to produce video material and text on the implementation of EYV 2011 in another Member State. The videos were uploaded on the EYV 2011 website, and a short compilation film of extracts of the resulting videos was produced.

The EYV 2011 *relay reports* were highly visited by website users, but could, according to the evaluation, have been more closely integrated with the other activities of the European Year.

### **3.4. EYV 2011 Alliance**

In 2010, an action grant of €400,000 was allocated to the EYV2011 Alliance, a coordinating structure that brought together key European networks and organisations active in the area of volunteering. Website: [www.eyv2011.eu](http://www.eyv2011.eu).

In line with a work plan approved by the Commission, the EYV2011 Alliance undertook to complement the Commission's information and communication activities by carrying out activities specifically aimed at engaging volunteers and civil society organisations and by coordinating six working groups whose work culminated in the production of a "Policy Agenda on Volunteering in Europe" (P.A.V.E), a key contribution to the European Year by civil society.

## **4. CONCLUSIONS**

The European Year of Volunteering has had a positive impact on the world of volunteering, both at European and at national level. The objectives and activities of the Year were relevant, and the targeted, results-oriented approach was successful in reaching the objectives in all Member States, even though the impact varied according to specific national situations.

The European Year created and catalysed changes in the volunteering environment at European and national level and led to the adoption or modification of volunteering strategies and legislation in some Member States. It empowered organisers to improve quality, and to focus attention on areas such as corporate volunteering and volunteering as a non-formal learning experience. It increased the recognition of volunteering through a wide range of initiatives and raised awareness of volunteering and its value to society through the media and the European communication campaign. The national activities had a valuable multiplier effect for these EU-level activities.

The European Year contributed above all to the development of networks and new initiatives. It complemented existing activities and it highlighted the European dimension of volunteering.

The EYV 2011 left a legacy in the continuation of activities and structures which were put in place during 2011 and in the adoption of good practices that will bring changes in the years to come.

The EYV 2011 triggered the adoption of five EU policy documents dealing with volunteering in the European Union, i.e. a Commission Communication, two sets of Council Conclusions, an Opinion of the European Economic and Social Committee and a Report of the European Parliament<sup>20</sup>.

The European Year of Active Ageing 2012 has ensured some continuity with EYV 2011 through some specific actions. Sustainability will be assured through synergies with the European Year of Citizens 2013. By organising a series of European years on themes related to citizenship focussing on different aspects (European Year for Combating Poverty and Social Exclusion 2010, European Year of Volunteering 2011, European Year of Active

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<sup>20</sup> For references see footnotes 5-9.

Ageing and Intergenerational Solidarity 2012 and European Year of Citizens 2013) the Commission contributes to exploring the concept of civic engagement in its different dimensions.

## ANNEX

### ANNEX 1: THE EYV 2011 IN FIGURES

- 27 Member States involved;
- 4 EU high visibility events (Budapest, Brussels, Athens and Warsaw);
- A number of visibility events hosted by European institutions, such as the 2nd Volunteering Convention and stakeholder conference organised by the European Youth Forum and hosted by the European Economic and Social Committee and the European Parliament and the Forum "Regional and local authorities in action during the EYV 2011" organised by the Committee of the Regions;
- Four public hearings on volunteering organised by the European Economic and Social Committee;
- Many national, regional and local activities promoted by national coordinating bodies or civil society in all 27 Member States;
- A total budget of € 6.021 million for the activities implemented in the Member States;
- An average national co-funding rate of 41.04 % for national activities of the European Year through national budgets;
- A total budget of €3.274 million for the European Flagship Projects;
- An average co-funding rate of 40.99 % for the European Flagship Projects;
- Total budget of €10.694 million (EU budget) + €2.471 million (national budget) + € 1.342 million (co-funding flagship projects), i.e. a **total budget of €14.507 million**;
- More than 56,000 visitors of the EYV 2011 Tour;
- 950 workshops and debates on volunteering issues and 261 cultural performances organised during the EYV 2011 Tour;
- 1,660 organisations participating in the EYV 2011 Tour;
- Thousands of printed/online articles on the European Year and the EYV 2011 Tour;
- 366,172 unique visitors on the EYV 2011 website, and 1.556 million pages have been visited;
- More than 3,880 pictures uploaded to the EYV 2011 website;
- More than 420 videos uploaded to the EYV 2011 website;

- The EYV2011 video clips viewed more than 26,000 times;
- 27 Written reports + daily chronicles, pictures and videos from EYV 2011 relay reporters in all Member States;
- More than 1.2 million on-line visitors of the relay reports.
- 2 175 527 volunteer hours registered on the website of the EYV 2011 Alliance [www.eyv2011.eu](http://www.eyv2011.eu).

## **ANNEX 2: ACTIVITIES IN MEMBER STATES: EXAMPLES OF GOOD PRACTICE**

### **AUSTRIA**

On 17 and 18 June, volunteering organisations across Austria organised for the first time a National Day of Volunteering under the title "*Tag der freiwilligen Überraschungen*". The idea was to have a day of open doors showing voluntary activities taking place in Austria and inviting interested citizens to join the efforts and to commit themselves. A database was created enabling interested citizens to find a volunteering opportunity according to their specific interests or in their neighbourhood. More than 600 events took place across the country and more than 10,000 citizens participated in the activities.

### **BELGIUM**

On 15 November 2011, volunteers from the three communities of Belgium met representatives of the Belgian Royal Family. In his Christmas message 2011, the King thanked the volunteers for their engagement. An exhibition portraying 52 volunteers travelled through the French-speaking community of Belgium and 76,000 trees (one for each inhabitant) were planted by volunteers in the German-speaking community.

### **BULGARIA**

The ministry of Physical Education and Sports and the State Agency for Bulgarians Abroad organised a conference in Bansko with the participation of 250 children of the Bulgarian communities in Macedonia, Serbia, Albania, Romania, Moldova and Ukraine. At this occasion, a *Forest of Volunteering* was planted in Bansko.

### **CYPRUS**

The *EYV Tour* stop in Nicosia between 4 and 6 of April 2011 was opened by Ms Elsie Christofia, the First Lady of the Republic of Cyprus. Volunteer organisations presented their experience and activities in areas such as sports, youth, drug prevention, road safety, senior citizen's assistance. Municipalities showed examples of how to help the others and what a great experience volunteering can be. Visitors had the chance to get a first aid course on the spot or to learn to express basic things by sign language.

### **CZECH REPUBLIC**

In the Czech Republic, a new website about volunteering was launched in January 2011 and became the national website for all voluntary organizations. In November 2011, a database listing voluntary opportunities was added to this website enabling organizations to publish advertisements and volunteers to search for voluntary organizations. EYV 2011 also provided the occasion for a publication presenting twenty-two portraits of individual volunteers: young, elderly, men, women,

college or high-school graduates, people from big cities or from the country. The publication was produced in Czech and in English.

## **DENMARK**

The Danish EYV Tour took place from 1 to 3 August in a tent located in the Axel Torv square in Copenhagen under the motto "*The many faces of volunteering*" with the aim of highlighting the diversity of volunteering in Denmark. Volunteering organisations had the opportunity to present their projects and activities. More than 28 organisations participated. A photo exhibition, music performances, a foot soccer competition, a fashion show and first aid demonstrations took place to attract visitors, and a marketplace for organisations was built up inside the tent.

## **ESTONIA**

In Estonia, a two-month pilot program for employee volunteering in the corporate and public sector was developed to send volunteers from five companies and five ministries to 20 non-governmental organisations. The program was aimed at promoting the cooperation between three sectors: volunteers, NGOs and public sector. As a result, 28 volunteers committed an estimated 160-226 hours of volunteer work. In addition, NGOs learned how to engage professionals and employees became more aware of volunteering and its benefits. A follow-up program will be coordinated by NENO (Network of Estonian Non-profit Organisations) in a bit different form and funded by the Estonian Ministry of the Interior.

## **FINLAND**

EYV2011's [www.tuntitili.fi](http://www.tuntitili.fi) website includes a search engine suitable for finding volunteering opportunities. More than 120 organisations from different sectors took part in the creation of the engine's database which gives visitors the opportunity to leave their personal contact information and to mention how much time they are willing to volunteer in a given project. By December 2011, more than 99,000 hours were committed. The search engine was advertised in magazines, libraries and social media.

## **FRANCE**

In France, the project "*Action de sensibilisation des jeunes*" was developed to raise young people's awareness for the theme of volunteering and to mobilise them. This project was coordinated by a group of associations and representatives of French ministries. A group of young ambassadors who are themselves volunteers was trained to discuss with pupils and students about volunteering. The ministries sent a letter to school directors asking them to invite these ambassadors to their schools. A guide for teachers and school directors as well as a leaflet for different age groups were distributed in the schools. Approximately 10,000 young people were reached by the project.

## **GERMANY**

The international project „*Sieben Brücken, die verbinden*“ took place in five European countries (Denmark, Poland, Czech Republic, Austria and Germany) with very different definitions and traditions of volunteering. It was developed by the Social Academy of Potsdam AWO SANO in cooperation with the Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth. On the German side, the project involved volunteering stakeholders from Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania, Brandenburg, Saxony and Bavaria. The aim of the project was to allow participants to meet in a European context, to learn from each other and to discuss the role civic engagement plays in each participating country.

## **GREECE**

In Greece, it was decided to combine non-formal education with the formal educational system by producing an educational manual on volunteering targeting students in secondary schools. The idea behind was to foster a new culture of volunteering from an early stage of young people's development. The manual will be made available online and distributed in schools. It will contain general information on volunteering, its character, what volunteering is and what it is not, its benefits and disadvantages, motives for volunteering, the history of volunteering, volunteering stories, existing volunteering programs and concrete explanations on how to plan and organise a voluntary activity in the classroom. It will contain photos and a cartoon.

## **HUNGARY**

The big waste collecting initiative "*TeSzedd! Volunteer for a clean Hungary*", one of the most visible activities of the EYV 2011 in Hungary, was organised by the Ministry of Public Administration and Justice and the Ministry of Rural Development. More than 160,000 participants registered through the webpage. On 21 May 2011, several groups of local volunteers cleaned their environment with the assistance of a network of county coordinators. Individuals, civil organisations, companies, ministries, local governments, and institutions joined the campaign in a total of 1,500 locations all around Hungary. As a result, thousands of tons of waste were collected. A countrywide campaign on TV, radio, newspapers, and the social media was organised to announce the "TeSzedd!" waste collecting event.

## **IRELAND**

The Irish NCB along with more than 20 Volunteer Centres co-ordinated the *National Day of Volunteering* on 30 September 2011. The flagship event for this day was a national 'knit-a-thon' where thousands of volunteers across the country knitted scarves, hats and mittens for charity organisations. Schools across the country got involved by fundraising and hands-on volunteering projects. More than 10,000 volunteers took part in the project across the country. Staff from businesses all over Ireland gave time and energy in volunteering projects nationwide. Five Presidential candidates participated in an event in Dublin. The National Day of volunteering was extensively covered in print, broadcast and online media.

## **ITALY**

In the framework of the EYV 2011 and the celebrations for the 150<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Italy's Unity, the project *CSVnet* aimed at the national coordination of the service centres for volunteering by developing a participative process that led to the creation of a *Manifesto for the promotion of youth volunteering* and the organisation of a visibility event of young people. The project and the study "*When young people participate*" promoted by CSVnet and the National Youth Forum showed that the way young people relate to school, work and volunteering has undergone constant change and that therefore it is crucial to involve young people when designing and implementing volunteering actions for young people.

## **LATVIA**

One of the successful Latvian initiatives of EYV 2011 was the setting up of virtual "*meeting platforms*" promoting volunteering to foster cooperation among volunteers and "volunteer work suppliers". As a result of an open call for project proposals, four NGO's projects were supported with the aim to develop and promote communication platforms encouraging volunteering and motivating various groups of society, in particular young people to volunteer. The project provided the opportunity for national and local institutions to choose volunteers as well as for volunteers to find a volunteer placement. The virtual volunteering placement database will continue after 2011.

## **LITHUANIA**

A showcasing Lithuanian example promoting voluntary activities at regional level was the competition "*Capital of voluntary activities*". Five cities (Birzai, Alytus, Kedainiai, Siauliai and Palanga) were selected to be the Capital of voluntary activities for one month. During the project, hundreds of events took place in which thousands of people participated. Activities varied from city to city ranging from charity actions and concerts to sport events, environmental protection actions, art competitions, animals' rights protection to reading fairy tales for children in public parks and establishing local volunteer centres. The activities brought together representatives of local authorities, businesses and local people around a common theme.

## **LUXEMBOURG**

In Luxembourg, the "*Fête du Bénévolat*" celebrated in Schengen was a very successful cross-border event. Thanks to the participation of French and German partners it reflected the European character of the year. The aim was to thank the volunteers for their engagement for society. Highlights of the day were performances by fire-brigades and rescue workers, music performances and games for children.

## **MALTA**

The European Tour of the EYV2011 had its last stop in Malta from 28 November to 5 December. For this purpose, a tent was set up in the Old Bus Terminus in Valletta. The Malta Council for the Voluntary Sector made 15 stands available for local volunteering organisations to give them the opportunity to showcase their activities. Each day of the Tour was dedicated to a particular theme, namely environment, animal welfare, arts and culture, youth, sport, social and humanitarian assistance and health.

## **NETHERLANDS**

Dutch municipalities were invited to grant an award to excellent voluntary activities in four categories, i.e. the *Passion Award* for the individual or organisation that most put their heart and soul into their volunteer work, the *Innovation Award* for the most innovative individual or organisation, the *Engagement Award* for the individual or organisation that achieved the best results in getting people engaged and the *Competence Award* for the individual or organisation that did most in terms of talent development. Based on the selection at local and regional level, a national award ceremony was organised at the closing event of the EYV 2011 on 7 December in Amsterdam in the presence of Princess Margriet of the Netherlands.

## **POLAND**

The International Labour Organisation, the European Volunteer Measurement Project and the Polish Ministry of Labour and Social Policy hosted a workshop for labour statistics officials and civil society representatives on 28-29 September in Warsaw. The aim of the workshop was to connect statistics offices with civil society groups, to provide them with training on the methodology in the new ILO Manual on the Measurement of Volunteer Work, to discuss the possibility for the implementation of the ILO Manual in EU Member States and to share practice among countries starting or considering the implementation of the Manual. Poland's Central Statistical Office has already implemented the ILO Manual.

## **PORTUGAL**

On 23 and 24 May, the Portuguese National Coordinating Body for the EYV 2011 organised a Seminar under the theme "*Volunteering in the Mediterranean - A Cultural Identity*" with the participation of experts from France, Greece, Italy, Malta, Portugal and Spain, representing different



universities and being as well in charge of volunteering infrastructures and voluntary organisations. The objective of the seminar was to focus on the cultural identity of volunteers (values and concepts) and the organisation of volunteering in each country as well as the exchange of good practice. At the closing session a debate on "*Volunteering in times of crisis: impact and challenges*", was proposed by Professor Rogério Roque Amaro.

## **SLOVAKIA**

The Slovak road show "*Caravana*" extended the idea of the EYV 2011 Tour to five municipalities of Slovak regions: Košice, Prešov, Žilina, Nitra and Komárno giving citizens in towns outside of Bratislava the opportunity to find out about the European Year and its objectives as well as about opportunities for volunteering in their region. Many local and regional NGOs presented their activities by the mean of stands, pictures, photos and videos and discussed with citizens on voluntary opportunities. Dance and music performances were organised by local cultural and art groups, games and presents given to children, contests held about the EU and the EYV, and information spread about EU institutions, programmes, initiatives and contact points. Caravana contributed to the networking between NGOs, policy makers, local authorities and the population and to bridge gaps between the capital and the remote areas.

## **SLOVENIA**

In Slovenia, it was also decided not to restrict the EYV Tour to the capital, but to organise a Slovenian Volunteering Tour in 20 different towns of the country in order to widely promote volunteering and to encourage engagement in voluntary activities. Volunteering fairs were organised to give the volunteering organisations the opportunity to present their work. Round tables, panel discussions and debates covered different themes, in particular youth volunteering, corporate volunteering and raising the awareness of public administration on the importance of volunteering. All in all, around 400 volunteering organisations participated in the events. The Slovenian Tour was widely reported in national and regional media and received positive feedback from the general public.

## **SPAIN**

Within the context of the EYV 2011 Tour stop in Madrid, the intergenerational game "*Dale color al mundo*" was organised between Colleges and Secondary Schools and centres for elderly people in the autonomous community of Madrid. The idea behind was to develop a methodology bringing together young and elderly people to discover the social values of volunteering. In the first phase of the competition, games were organised in parallel for groups of young people and for groups of elderly. In the second phase, the conclusions of the young and the elderly were put together leading to common conclusions. The project was developed in cooperation with the Office of the European Parliament in Spain. It was largely reported by the Spanish media including national television.

## **ROMANIA**

The Romanian National Gala for the Recognition of Volunteers and Volunteering Projects took place on 12 December 2011 at the Howard Johnson Grand Plaza Hotel in Bucharest. The event was organised by the NCB, Volum Federation and the National Agency for Community Programmes in Education and Training. The awarding process was structured into 22 categories, based on a transparent system of nominations of volunteers and volunteer projects for activities implemented during 2011. The organizers received more than 200 proposals and half were preselected and invited to the ceremony. An independent jury was formed to select the winner. A „Portrait of a Volunteer” brochure was published describing the finalists and their rewarded activities. The event was well covered by the media.

## **SWEDEN**

Some 100,000 people visited the annual *Göteborg Book Fair* (22-25 September), where the Swedish NCB shared an exhibition stand with the European Commission and the European Parliament. Some 250 people stayed and listened to interviews with seven famous Swedish authors who shared their experience on what motivated them when volunteering. The Book Fair proved to be an opportunity to show a different perspective of these authors. It allowed the National Board for Youth Affairs to join forces with the European Commission and European Parliament to make a broad public pay attention to the European Year of Volunteering.

## **UNITED KINGDOM**

As part of the UK national work programme for EYV11, Volunteering England (VE) was commissioned to identify, develop and share good practice in *Employer-Supported Volunteering* (ESV). In this context, VE set up an online 'hub' providing information on ESV, for example case studies, recent research and a comprehensive list of both well-established and less well-known ESV consultants and brokers. VE asked three Volunteer Centres (local organisations providing volunteering infrastructure support) to try six new methods of increasing employer supported volunteering. VE managed to reach over 500,000 people across all sectors while using individual Volunteer Centres to pilot new schemes and ideas in more depth. 23 events were organised for a total of 1,700 delegates.

### **ANNEX 3: EUROPEAN FLAGSHIP PROJECTS: EXAMPLES OF GOOD PRACTICE**

The €1.964 million allocated to the 33 flagship projects to cover until 60% of the total eligible costs in 23 Member States dealt with several areas of the volunteering sector. The activities concerned six different topics, divided as follows:

- eleven projects which developed information, promotion and research (surveys, setting of quality standards, creative competitions to produce audio-visual material) on volunteering to share best practices, draw greater interest from the public and deepen knowledge on the issue.
- six projects targeting youngsters (in order to send them abroad to volunteer, to strengthen their awareness and motivation to engage socially and to participate in voluntary activities) or to persuade elder people to spend more time with younger generations.
- five projects on promoting 'dynamic communities through committed citizens', supporting the integration of migrants and disadvantaged people in local communities and shedding light on the social role of volunteering, both for the community and the environment;
- four projects on social services (prevention of 'dangerous behaviours' and support of volunteering for social integration purposes) and volunteering in the field of health care;
- four projects focused on research, exchange and dissemination of technology, with a focus on spreading its use among volunteers;
- three projects on employee volunteering.

#### **EXAMPLES OF INITIATIVES FROM FLAGSHIP PROJECTS**

##### *European night without accident – 15 October 2011*

Volunteers are deeply involved in social activities aimed at preventing dangerous behaviours: the 'European Night without Accident' was a flagship project coordinated by the Responsible Young Drivers Foundation, Belgium throughout the 27 EU Member States during the night of 15 to 16 October 2011. 1,000 volunteers aged 18-29 engaged to raise awareness among young fellow drivers to drive safely, staying away from drugs and alcohol.

Applying a relaxed, informal and peer-based approach, the thousand volunteers were present in 200 nightclubs all across the EU. They installed so-called 'awareness booths' at the entrance of the club, asking the 'Saturday Night Fever' youngsters to take up a challenge: to blow into the breathalyzer before hitting the road and commit to remain sober the whole evening as sign of their commitment. The designated drivers, just before leaving the nightclub, were encouraged to undergo another alcohol test and/or drug test to make sure they would drive

safely back home, setting a virtuous example for their friends and peers.

### ***'Digital technology at the service of volunteering and social inclusion'***

Coordinated by the 'Banco Informatico, Tecnologico e Biomedico' and ran in partnership with four associations and a provincial institution in Italy, this flagship project contributed to broaden digital access for a considerable amount of social projects. The partners joined their efforts to collect 'outdated' technological devices, mainly out of date computers and medical tools which would have been thrown away, and to use them for upgrading digital knowledge in voluntary organisations and among disadvantaged people.

This initiative has guaranteed better digital instruments to a considerable amount of associations and the improvement of 'digital skills' through specific trainings to people who mistrusted or rarely dealt with computers, and it favoured the overall dissemination of digital technology in the 'non-profit sector'.

### ***Movement of volunteer for parks***

Coordinated by the Cell of Alternative Youth Activities and involving four partner organisations from Greece and Cyprus including a Ministry, this project motivated people of any age potentially interested to engage socially and to support volunteering for greener areas.

The initiatives, i.e. conferences, workshops and research were meant to raise awareness on the benefits of volunteer actions in urban parks and on the quality of environment. The project provided some new scientific background knowledge in the field of volunteering for urban and suburban green space and parks, adding up to its contribution to the fight against climate change, especially in terms of communication and awareness raising.

### ***'Serve the city'***

'Serve the city' is a Portuguese project directed at homeless people and socially marginalized groups: five associations worked throughout the year to 'serve' disadvantaged groups in Lisbon offering their time. The volunteers organized several community dinners, wherein thanks to the informal, innovative and welcoming setting, they offered the unique opportunity to these people to develop long-term relationships, including emotional, psychological, spiritual and practical support. Differently from regular meals offered by churches and other associations, where people may feel ashamed or uninvolved at the human level, 'Serve the city' brought community dinners to the marginalized and homeless people gathering every evening in public places waiting for the food given by different organizations. Therefore, the potential

improvements on the side of the volunteering organizations concerning communication and organisational skills were combined with an added value for the lives of the target groups.

### **Broadcasting and its role in promoting volunteering**

Three associations (from the UK and the Netherlands) led by the British CSV (Community Service Volunteers) partnered with the BBC, the internationally renowned broadcaster, to attract new partners and create a stronger volunteering network to share ideas and experiences on how to reach the public through the broadcast media.

The most original contribution of the project comes from the attempt to promote volunteering through broadcasting at a European scale. In a two-days conference organized in September 2011, delegates from many EU countries discussed how to put into action the best strategies to step up efforts to increase visibility and overall active participation of potential volunteers. At the core of the debate were strategies to enable countries where there is little or no tradition of either social action broadcasting and/or volunteering to face the strongest barriers to make people aware of volunteering and finally motivate them to be engaged socially.

To favour this process, the findings of the conference have been shown in the 20<sup>th</sup> Annual Volonteurope Conference, which took place in Edinburgh, 20-23 October 2011.

### **Volunteer! ...through road safety**

The aim of the project “Volunteer! ...through road safety”, run by "Open Youth", Bulgaria together with two Belgian associations, a Bulgarian municipality and the Bulgarian Ministry of Health, is to test an approach to develop a European model of making an informed choice on whether to organize a one-time volunteer action or a full-scale volunteer campaign, given different circumstances and desired effect, built on peer-to-peer communication and promoting civic participation. The result of the project is a unique methodology that is easily transferable on European level, based on real findings.

The project addresses not only the question “What is it to be a volunteer?”, but also gives concrete answers to the more important ones: “Why be a volunteer?” and “How to be a volunteer?”

Among other things, the project produced three Cartoon short movies (of respectively 29, 51 and 50 seconds' duration, with themes: What? Why? How?) to pass on the volunteer message in a funny and unusual way. They can be seen on the website of the project:

<http://roadsafetyvolunteers.open-youth.org/index.php?lang=en>

### **Values and activities of volunteering and e-volunteering**

The project run by the Polish "Good Network Foundation" together with three Polish associations and a municipality institution consists of two complimentary activities:

a) the ‘Key values of volunteering’ campaign which promotes various forms of volunteering and raises awareness of the value of volunteering in order to overcome the narrow and negative image of volunteering in Poland

b) a European competition ‘Discover e-volunteering’ organised at European scale and focused

on promoting one specific form of volunteering the e-volunteering (volunteering via Internet). The project aims at raising awareness of the value of the volunteering, promoting the variety of voluntary activities and encouraging civil society to benefit from new types of volunteering (especially e-volunteering) in order to empower them, fight social exclusion and improve the quality of volunteering itself.

The project includes also a research on various forms and values of volunteering and a collection of real stories from volunteers as an interactive and innovative way of filming and promoting volunteer stories: users of the project's website ([www.tojestwolontariat.pl](http://www.tojestwolontariat.pl)) can upload their short movies.