

NATIONAL REPORT – SLOVENIA

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1 GENERAL INFORMATION ABOUT VOLUNTEERING IN SLOVENIA

The first section presents a general overview of volunteering in Slovenia. It provides information on the history of volunteering in the country; definitions of volunteering; the number and profiles of volunteers; the number and types of organisations engaging volunteers; and the main voluntary activities taking place in Slovenia.

1.1 History and contextual background

The history of volunteering in Slovenia goes back to the 18th-19th century, when voluntary organisations emerged in the domain of culture and education¹. The Church, in particular the Catholic Church, has played an important role in the development of charities and humanitarian aid. Before the Second World War (WWII), other types of voluntary organisations were also established by craftsmen who organised themselves by sector - production, finance and insurance². Estimates suggest that prior to WWII there were roughly 7,000 civil society organisations (including voluntary organisations) in existence³.

However, the creation of the Socialistic Federative Republic of Yugoslavia (1943-1991) marked an important change in the development of grassroots organisations and of a voluntary sector. Many voluntary organisations were either forbidden by the State or were placed under State control. During this period, volunteering survived in various areas of activity such as humanitarian aid⁴ (for example, the fire service or the Red Cross) and in local tourism, culture and sports⁵. The voluntary work at this time included traditional activities organised by the central administration and primarily performed by young people volunteering for sports organisations, fire-brigades, and organisations involved in the protection against natural disasters⁶.

In the 1970s a process of decentralisation began with the adoption of the new Associations Act in 1974, which marked the development of modern non-governmental organisations (NGOs) in Slovenia. As a result, the number of NGOs and volunteers has significantly increased from the mid-1970s onwards in what can be described as a bottom-up approach⁷. However, despite some rejuvenation of the sector during this time, the insufficient support from the socialist state and the general public meant that voluntary organisations remained under-developed. After the 1980s, new social movements emerged (promoting peace, environmental, human rights, spiritual and other movements), which in turn helped the development of the NGO sector⁸.

Following the collapse of the socialist bloc and the process of economic transition, the importance of volunteering and the third sector began to increase significantly. This was facilitated by interventions by various national advocacy non-governmental organisations, as well as by international NGOs - for example, the Soros Foundation, which enabled the

¹ Rebolj (2008). *Volunteering in Slovenia* in "Volunteering in Museums and Cultural Heritage: A European Overview Research". Report by the European project Volunteers for Cultural Heritage (VoCH). Edited by Kirsten Gibbs and Margherita San.

² Hvalič et al.

³ Interview, Ministry of Public Administration, 30 June 2009.

⁴ Hvalič S., Ramovš J., Ramovš K. National Report: Third Sector in Slovenia.

⁵ Rebolj (2008). *Volunteering in Slovenia* in "Volunteering in Museums and Cultural Heritage: A European Overview Research". Report by the European project Volunteers for Cultural Heritage (VoCH). Edited by Kirsten Gibbs and Margherita San.

⁶ Irma Meznaric (2008) Speech for EU Parliament, Volunteering Interest Group, 13 January 2008.

⁷ Irma Meznaric (2008) Speech for EU Parliament, Volunteering Interest Group, 13 January 2008.

⁸ Divjak, T., Klenovšek, T. (2006) Civil Society and Good Governance in Societies in Transition: Slovenia. In: Civil Society and Good Governance in Societies in transition, Benedek, W. (ed.). Vienna: Neuer Wissenschaftlicher, Belgrade: Belgrade Center for Human Rights.

establishment of NGOs in the fields of human rights, the protection of minorities, women's rights, and ecology at national level⁹. The process of accession to the European Union has also helped to encourage Slovenia to fully align with the European standards of dialogue and partnership with the civil society¹⁰.

1.2 Definitions

There is no generally recognised definition of volunteering in Slovenia. However, the definition proposed in the new draft law on voluntary work describes voluntary work as “*an activity of an individual doing non-profit activities, out of his own free and for the benefit of others or society and without expecting any material benefits*”¹¹.

1.3 Number and profile of volunteers

Total number of volunteers

According to the Ministry of Education and Sport, no institution is involved in collecting systematic data on volunteers and voluntary organisations¹².

Current estimates suggest that there are between 280 000 and 350 000 volunteers in Slovenia¹³. A recent survey undertaken by Slovenska Filantropija on voluntary organisations in the private and public sector in 2008 indicates a smaller number of volunteers in Slovenia.¹⁴ The study found a total of 182,128 of volunteers in 3226 associations and 897volunteers in a sample of 39 public institutions.

Stakeholders highlighted that it is difficult to calculate a more precise number because of the possibility of duplication in the counting of volunteers (one volunteer could be counted twice if they work for two voluntary organisations at the same time).

Trend

Sources differ in their interpretations of the trend in the number of volunteers over the last decade. According to the Ministry of Education and Sport, a growing number of people are undertaking voluntary activities¹⁵. However, some NGOs offer a different analysis – the majority (66%) suggest that the number of volunteers have remained constant, whilst almost a third have reported an increase¹⁶.

Gender

According to 2006 research cited by the Ministry of Public Administration, the majority of volunteers are male (58%). The slightly higher percentage of male volunteers could be explained by the fact that there is a relatively high percentage of NGOs active in the sport

⁹ Rüb, F. W. (2000) Von der zivilen zur unziaivilen Gesellschaft: das Beispiel des ehemaligen Jugoslawien. In: Zivilgesellschaft und Transformation, Merkel W. (ed.). Opladen: Leske + Budrich. p. 173-201.

Irma Mezmaric (2008) Speech for EU Parliament, Volunteering Interest Group, 13 January 2008.

¹⁰ Szabó, Máté (2004) Civic Engagement in East-Central Europe. In: Future of Civil Society. Making Central European Nonprofit Organizations Work, Zimmer, A., Priller, E. (eds.). Wiesbaden: VS Verlag.

¹¹ Proposition of the Law on voluntary work in Slovenia (Act 6, 2004) made by the Legal Information Centre for NGOs in Slovenia (PIC) on the initiative of CNVOS (Centre for Information Service, Co-operation and Development of NGOs). Source, ZPD 2008, Available at: http://www.sodeluj.net/pic-ceetrust/images/stories/projekti/prostovoljstvo/besedilo_clenov-zpd_predlog.pdf

¹² National report on the implementation of common objectives for the voluntary activities of young people.

¹³ Interview, Ministry of Public Administration 30 June 2009. Information based on research carried out by University of Ljubljana (2006). More details at <http://www.seviqc-brezice.si/sl/NVO/CRP-NVO-v-Sloveniji/>

¹⁴ Information provided by Primoz Jamsek, Slovenska Filantropija, October 2008.

¹⁵ Ministry of Education and Sport. National Report on the implementation of common objectives for the voluntary activities of young people.

¹⁶ Interview, Ministry of Public Administration 30 June 2009.

sector - according to some sources, 36% of all NGOs are involved in the sports sector¹⁷ - and so may be more appealing or more accessible to men than to women.

In contrast, a survey of young Slovenian volunteers aged between 14 and 28 years, indicates that 75% of participants are female, in comparison to 25% male¹⁸. The difference in the relative percentages might be determined by the specificity of the sample used by the survey.

According to the Ministry of Education and Sport, data on gender can vary from one volunteering domain to another¹⁹. For example, whilst it is estimated that more men than women volunteer in sport sector, an equal percentage of male and female volunteers (or even higher percentage of women) are likely to be engaged in voluntary activities in the culture or social care sector.

Age Groups

There are important differences between voluntary organisations in terms of numbers and age of volunteers engaged. Individuals who 'lead' volunteers are more likely to be older than the volunteers²⁰. According to the information provided by the Ministry of Education and Sport (which draws on research done by the Pedagogical Institute in 2005), the volunteers of most organisations are either aged between 19 and 30 years or are secondary school students, aged between 15 and 18 years²¹. Adults over the age of 30, in particular those aged over 64, are significantly less likely to do voluntary work.

Most organisations engage between one and ten secondary school student volunteers. Furthermore, in most organisations there are between one and five volunteers aged between 25 and 30.

The recent survey on volunteering carried out by Slovenska Filantropija found 9,012 elderly volunteers active in the social care sector in 2008. Slovenska Filantropija observes that the number of older volunteers is increasing, particularly in community services and self-help groups.

Geographical spread of volunteering

According to data collected by Gril (2006), most voluntary organisations are active in Central Slovenia (35 %), followed by Podravska (20 %) and the Savinjska region (17 %)²². The smallest proportion of organisations (on a relative basis) can be found in the Zasavska region in East Slovenia. Only a tenth of voluntary organisations cover the entire territory of Slovenia.

In general, a higher concentration of volunteers can be found in cities/towns with a large community of students and pupils²³.

Education levels

¹⁷ Interview, Ministry of Public Administration 30 June 2009.

¹⁸ Gril, 2006.

¹⁹ Interview, Ministry of Education and Sport on 6th October 2009.

²⁰ Interview, Ministry of Education and Sport, 7 October 2009.

²¹ Ministry of Education and Sport and Office for Youth (2007). National report on the implementation of common objectives for the voluntary activities of young people. www.ursm.gov.si/.../National_report_on_voluntary_work_-_final.doc

²² Gril A., Tančič A., Vidmar M., Brečko B.N. (2006) Spodbujanje prostovoljnega dela z mladimi: podprojekt 'prostovoljno delo mladih na področju sociale in kulture'. Projekt ciljnega raziskovalnega programa 2004: zaključno poročilo. Ljubljana: Pedagoški Inštitut. (Encouraging voluntary work of young people: Project: »Voluntary work of young people in the social and cultural field«. Project of research programme 2004: research report. Ljubljana. Pedagogical Institute).

²³ Interview, Ministry of Public Administration 30 June 2009.

According to the data provided by the Ministry of Education and Sport and the Office for Youth, most volunteers have completed secondary school or higher education. Volunteers are less likely to be educated at primary or postgraduate level²⁴. The data also indicates that societies have a larger number of highly educated volunteers with a postgraduate degree than do public institutions.

Volunteer involvement by sectors

According to the Ministry of Education and Sport, voluntary work is mostly carried out in the areas of: social services/care; sport; recreation; education; health; culture; environment; and tourism. There is also a special voluntary organisation that carries out relief operations during crisis situations.

Profile of volunteers by employment status

Data from the Ministry of Education and Sport indicates that the majority of volunteers are university or secondary school students or employed persons. Few volunteers are unemployed or retired. Volunteers who are secondary school students are more likely to do voluntary work for public institutions rather than for NGOs.

Time dedicated to volunteering

Information from Slovenska Filantropija (2009) implies that volunteering activities in the third sector and in the public domain amounted to 14 million hours in 2008 (see Table 1 below).

Table 1: Time spent on volunteering

Number of associations / institutions studied	Number of volunteers	Number of hours done by volunteers
NGOs		
3226	182,28	14,651,380
Public entities		
39	897	43,208

Other studies show significant lower figures. Altogether, volunteers work for approximately 1,238,756 hours per year, which represents almost 1%²⁵ of all employees' work in Slovenia. This is in line with Trček's (2009) estimate of 1.3 million of hours dedicated in 2004.

On average, the work performed by volunteers in an organisation amounts to 149 hours per month. This represents roughly 84 % of work carried out by one regular employee.

University of Ljubljana has calculated that volunteers in Slovenia perform work equivalent to the contribution of 7,125 full-time employees²⁶.

1.4 Number and types of organisations engaging volunteers

Definition of voluntary organisations in Slovenia

As laid down in the legislation, there are three main types of NGOs in Slovenia: associations, foundations and institutes. The majority of them are registered as private associations.

According to the Law of Associations, **associations** are membership-based organisations consisting of "physical subjects/persons" who pursue common interests²⁷. Associations

²⁴ National report on the implementation of common objectives for the voluntary activities of young people.

²⁵ 0.91%

²⁶ University of Ljubljana (2006).

cannot be established for the purpose of generating profit, although they may engage in economic activities that are related to and support their primary non-profit objectives. The state does not exercise supervisory power over associations beyond the point of initial registration.

In addition, the same act specifies that associations may acquire the status of organisations *“in the public interest”, if they are active in the following fields: culture, education, health care, social welfare, family policy, protection of human rights, environment and animal protection, sports, defence and protection from natural and other disasters, economy, agriculture, forestry, veterinary, external affairs, democracy development or other. The law provides for some additional conditions that must be fulfilled in order to acquire the status of an “association in the public interest”*²⁸.

Foundations are grant-making, asset-based organisations established by foreign or domestic legal entities or individuals for charitable purposes or for the public benefit²⁹. Activities for the public benefit are those carried out in the fields of science, culture, sport, education, health care, child and disabled care, social welfare, environmental protection, conservation of natural and cultural heritage or religion. A foundation may engage in every activity that is necessary for the advancement of its objectives as well as in activities aimed at its promotion, which can also include economic activities.

Institutes are non-membership organisations that can be founded by individuals or legal entities. They fall in two categories: private institutes and public institutes³⁰. Institutes can conduct activities in the areas of education, science, culture, sports, health, social welfare, children’s welfare, social care, social security etc. They may be established by domestic or foreign legal entities. Private institutes may engage in economic activities only to advance the non-profit objectives for which they were originally established. They also may provide services for the public benefit if they meet the conditions set up by the relevant authorities³¹.

Two other types of third sector organisations stipulated in the existing legislation include:

- Housing and other co-operatives, which are founded by “natural subjects/persons” (individuals) to promote the economical benefits of their members; they are based on the voluntary association and equal co-operation and management of their members; special rules defining the activities of the housing co-operatives stipulate that members should use any profits for the purpose for which the co-operative was founded (OJ RS No. 64/93)
- Religious organisations that are founded by “natural subjects/persons” (individuals) in accordance with the Constitution and the Legal status of Religious Communities in the Socialist Republic of Slovenia Act (OJ SRS, No. 1976, 42/1986, 5/1990, RS No. 17/1991-I, 10/1991, 22/1991, 13/1993, 66/1993, 29/1995).

²⁷ Association Law, OJ RS No. 60/1995, 49/1998, 89/1999, 80/2004.

²⁸ The activity in the public benefit has to be defined the association's statute; the association has to be registered and active at least two years before applying for the status; the association has to use its resources in the last two years predominantly for the activity in the public interest and regularly carry out programmes, projects and other activities for the realization of its goals and objectives in the public interest; the association has to have a strategic plan for future activities; the association should be able to identify and show important achievements of its activities.

²⁹ The Foundations Law (OJ RS no. 60/1995, 53/2005, 70/2005) was also passed in 1995, since then several changes were passed.

³⁰ Institutes Law, OJ RS no. 12/1991, 45/1994, 8/1996.

³¹ Information in this section was adopted from Divjak, Klenovšek (2006) Civil Society and Good Governance.

In addition to associations, foundations and institutes, there are other special forms of NGOs, such as humanitarian organisations, organisations supporting people with disabilities, student organisations etc. Organisations, which are not NGOs, but are still considered part of the civil society, are trade unions, religious organisations, cooperatives, and professional chambers³².

Number of voluntary organisations and distribution per sector

It is worth mentioning from the outset that the structure and type of non-governmental organisations varies greatly, depending on their activity scope.

In 2000, the ICNPO classification (International Classification of Non-profit Organisations) included about 13 000 third sector organisations out of a total of 143,000 registered legal entities in Slovenia (Hvalič, 2002)³³.

According to more recent data from 2006, there are 19,069 societies, 149 foundations, 449 private institutions, 645 church organisations, 22 non-profit cooperatives registered in Slovenia³⁴. However, it is estimated that approximately a third of these NGOs are actually inactive and more than half of them do not operate in the public interest (but only for the benefit of their members) (Hvalič, 2002).

NGOs operate in the following sectors:

- Sports and recreation 27.6%;
- Culture and art, 17.7%;
- Fire protection 8.7%;
- Development of tourism 7.9%;
- Association of interest groups 7.2%;
- Education 4.52%;
- Social welfare 3.6%;
- Protection of animals and plants 2.63%;
- Business, professional and other groups 2.63%;
- Health care 2.14%;
- Environmental protection 1.54%;
- Employment and training 0.84%;
- Religious activities 0.83%;
- International cooperation 0.81%;
- Housing 0.42%;
- Research 0.03%; and

³² Divjak, Klenovšek (2006) Civil Society and Good Governance.

³³ Hvalič S., Ramovš J., Ramovš (2002). National Report: Third Sector in Slovenia. Anton Trstenjak Institute of gerontology and intergenerational relations. Available at: <http://www.inst-antonatrstenjaka.si/slike/105-1.pdf>

³⁴ Report of the 5th Slovenian congress on voluntary work, input by Andreja Černak Meglič, Slovenska filntropija, Ljubljana. Access at <http://www.prostovoljstvo.org> (accessed 26th of December 2006).

- Law and advocacy 0.03 %³⁵

As shown above, on balance, Slovenian NGOs are most active in the fields of sports and recreation as well as culture and art.

Despite the fact that a majority of NGOs operate in the sports and recreation sector, in fact a great number of volunteers do unpaid work for religious institutions, including the Romano-Catholic Church as it is specified by the Report of the 5th Slovenian congress on voluntary work³⁶.

Volunteers also work for public institutions such as social work centres, schools, hospitals, and residence halls for pupils³⁷.

Trend

In Slovenia, there is no systematic data available on the number of voluntary organisations. However, according to the information from the Ministry of Public Administration in Slovenia, the number of voluntary organisations is growing.

Types of organisations engaging volunteers

Regarding the number of employees working for NGOs, the data collected by the University of Ljubljana indicates that only 0.53% of the economically active population is employed in the NGO sector (a decrease from 0.7% in 1996). Social welfare organisations have the highest employment rate (26.7% of all employees in the sector), although only 3.7% of NGOs are active in this field.

The majority of NGOs are active at local level: the municipality level accounts for 36.5% of NGOs and only 14% of NGOs are active at the national level.

1.5 Main voluntary activities

Slovene volunteers perform a plethora of activities devoted to local communities, peacemaking, environmental protection, personal and social assistance, humanitarian aid, sports and culture, and religious volunteering³⁸. Common activities include taking part in programme implementation, administrative work, fundraising, providing information to the general public, etc³⁹.

In public institutes - such as nursing homes for the elderly, care centres for children and teenagers with special needs, hospitals and prisons - volunteers can organise occasional cultural events and evening entertainment. In elementary and secondary schools, they are usually involved in preventative activities. Young volunteers are often involved in organisation of leisure activities for children and other young people (excursions, summer camps, workshops).

³⁵ Kolarič, Z., et. al. (2006) Velikost, obseg in vloga zasebnega neprofitnega sektorja v Sloveniji, Raziskovalni projekt v okviru CRP – Celovita analiza pravnega in ekonomskega okvirja za delo nevladnih organizacij. Ljubljana: Univerza v Ljubljani, Fakulteta za družbene vede, Center za proučevanje družbene blaginje.

³⁶ Report of the 5th Slovenian congress on voluntary work, input by Andreja Černak Meglič, Slovenska filantropija, Ljubljana. <http://www.prostovoljstvo.org>

³⁷ National Report on the implementation of common objectives for the voluntary activities of young people. Ministry of Education and Sport.

³⁸ European Commission and Council of Europe (2006). The European Knowledge Centre for Youth Policy. Key priorities for youth policies answers on Voluntary Activities. Voluntary Activities Partnership. Available at: www.youth-knowledge.net | www.youth-partnership.net

³⁹ National Report for the Implementation of Common Objectives for the Voluntary Activities of Young People.

2 INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK

2.1 Main public bodies and other organisations involved in volunteering

Main public body responsible for volunteering

There is no one public body responsible for volunteering in Slovenia. Different Ministries and Government Offices are involved in this. This includes Ministry of Interior, Ministry of Defence, Ministry of Public Administration (since recently), Ministry of Education, Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family, and the Governmental Office for Youth.⁴⁰

Overall, the roles of different ministries can be categorised in the following manner⁴¹:

- Ministry of Public Administration is in charge of regulatory reform.
- Ministry of Interior and Ministry of Defence are involved in governance and leadership;
- A range of ministries contribute by funding volunteering and voluntary programmes; and
- A range of different ministries and governmental offices are involved in the implementation of policies and programmes in this field.

The Ministry of Public Administration is now leading the process of drafting the new law on voluntary work in Slovenia. The Office for Youth encourages and supports volunteering by co-financing voluntary work programmes. Each year the Office launches a public call for voluntary activities carried out by young people as one of the main areas of youth policies. Eligible programmes must aim to:

- Carry out and encourage voluntary activities among young people;
- Provide education and training as part of voluntary activities; and
- Enhance the exchange of volunteers.

Other public bodies involved in volunteering

Slovene municipalities are involved in funding voluntary activities.

Organisations that promote volunteering, facilitate cooperation and exchange of information

The current draft law on volunteering, which is likely to be passed in 2010, would lay down the foundations for the creation of a National Association of Volunteers.⁴² For the time being however, such structure is not in place.

The main organisation that promotes volunteering is the Slovene Philanthropy (*Slovenska Filantropija*), which is an NGO itself. It aims to promote and develop voluntary work and, in general, solidarity among people. In addition to promoting voluntary work, its core activities include helping individuals to get in touch with organisations in need of volunteers, training volunteers and supporting civic organisations. Furthermore, it organises the following events:⁴³

- Forum of volunteering (every second year);

⁴⁰ Information provided by the Ministry of Public Administration, June 2009.

⁴¹ Information provided by the Ministry of Public Administration.

⁴² Interview, Ministry of Education and Sport, 6 October 2009.

⁴³ Information available at O PROSTOVOLJSTVU, <http://www.prostovoljstvo.org>.

- Slovenian Congress of Volunteering (every second year, lasting two days);
- Seminars for organisers of voluntary work; and
- Festival of volunteering for young people (every year, lasting one week).

Slovene Philanthropy also leads a Slovenian network of more than 500 voluntary organisations. The Slovenian network of voluntary organisations was formed to promote volunteering, identify the value of voluntary activities and create an environment prolific for its development.⁴⁴

The portal www.volunteerism.org (www.prostovoljstvo.org) helps voluntary organisations to connect with each other across the country. Inclusion in the network and information system is open to all interested voluntary organisations. At the invitation of the Ministry of Public Administration, the Centre for the Promotion of Voluntary Work serves as an »administrator«, providing voluntary organisations and volunteers with various forms of support, such as:

- Information and counselling;
- Educational opportunities and exchange of experiences;
- Participate in joint promotion of volunteering; and
- Cooperation in strengthening civil dialogue and systemic regulation of volunteering.

Other organisations that promote volunteering directly or indirectly include the following organisations (the list is not exhaustive):

- CNVOS - Centre for Information Service, Co-operation and Development of NGOs. It was established in early 2001 as an independent, non-profit and non-governmental organisation. The aim of 27 organisations who founded CNVOS is to empower NGOs in Slovenia, promote their role in the civil society, and ensure the realisation of their objectives.
- The Association of Slovenian Societies, whose members are numerous societies who work with volunteers, organises an important promotional event every year under the framework of the Global Youth Service Day. In 2006, the Association, together with the National Council of the Republic of Slovenia, organised an award ceremony for volunteers. The winners of the award received acknowledgement from the Vice-President of the National Council of the Republic of Slovenia.
- The National Youth council of Slovenia (MSS) is a national representative body operating at the European level. It has been a member of the European Youth Forum since its establishment in 1996. Every year, the Youth Council organises a well-received event 'Volunteer of the Year'. The volunteers of the year receive the award from the Ministry of Work, Family and Social Affairs.
- MOVIT NA MLADINA - perform the tasks of National Agencies under the European Community programme Youth in Action.
- Association for Promotion of Prevention and Voluntary Work - develops and supports civic initiatives.
- Voluntaryat – SCI Slovenia is an organisation that offers various opportunities for international voluntary work.

⁴⁴ Information provided by Slovenska Filantropija, October 2009.

- MISSS - Youth Information and Counselling Centre of Slovenia.
- Legal Information Centre for NGOs – PIC is an NGO established in 1997 by the Peace Institute, Amnesty International Slovenia, the Association for Development of Preventive and Voluntary Work, the Regional Centre for Environment in the Central and Eastern Europe – REC Slovenia and ALCEDO. It aims to improve the situation of NGOs in Slovenia and offers legal counselling and trainings for NGOs.
- SEECRAN - South East European Child Rights Action Network took the lead in the campaign for the establishment of a Slovenian NGO platform.
- HUMANITAS - conducts sponsorship programs (for socially children at disadvantage in Slovenia and in some African countries).
- EKVILIB's main activities are: fighting against social exclusion, developing cooperation and helping people in need, education for development, and advocating socially responsible management of human resources.
- Slovenian Caritas is involved in humanitarian aid and missionary work.

Affiliation with European umbrella organisations/networks

The cooperation between Slovenian NGOs and foreign NGOs and networks is still in its infancy. One of the reasons is the lack of NGO networks (and representative body of NGOs) in Slovenia.⁴⁵ However, the National Youth Council of Slovenia (MSS) is a member of the European Youth Forum and Slovenska Filantropija is a full member of the European Volunteer Centre.⁴⁶

2.2 Policies

Volunteering is not a priority on the political agenda as such but it is included in the governmental coalition programme.⁴⁷ Volunteering is considered an important and relevant matter by the current government.⁴⁸ For example, under the current government, an advisor was designated to give advice to the prime minister on issues around the third sector and volunteering in general. The advisor is also situated at the interface between the central administration and the third sector, as he can answer enquiries from NGOs on various matters.⁴⁹

Furthermore, it is envisaged that the draft law will be passed under the current government. The latest proposal was presented in late 2008 but the progress slowed down in the context of the government's economic priorities during the economic downturn.⁵⁰

National strategy/framework for volunteering

There is no national strategy for volunteering in Slovenia. However, a few strategic public documents refer to volunteering:

- A draft resolution of the national programme on social security supports the adoption of the law on volunteering by 2010 (*Izbrani prispevki IV., V. in VI. Slovenskega kongresa prostovoljstva, LJUBLJANA 2009*).
- The National Social Protection Programme by 2005 emphasises that the state supports the development of voluntary work. By setting up a uniform system of

⁴⁵ Divjak, Klenovšek (2006) Civil Society and Good Governance.

⁴⁶ http://www.cev.be/9-members_slovenska_filantropija_42-EN.html

⁴⁷ Interview, Ministry of Public Administration 30 June 2009.

⁴⁸ Interview, Ministry of Education and Sport, 6 October 2009.

⁴⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁰ Ibid.

social protection and by stimulating the development of voluntary work, charity, self-help and donorship, the state will provide better direct financial support and encourage the development of non-governmental organisations as well as the private sector. The state will also implement additional tax mechanisms to stimulate the development and financing of social programmes.⁵¹

- According to the National Sports Programme in the Republic of Slovenia, the Faculty of Sports at the University of Ljubljana as the highest pedagogical and scientific sports institution must ensure the quality and professionalism of its voluntary workforce. The task of the state is to particularly support the training and further training of voluntary workers. Voluntary work is also stated as one of the means of financing the sports and national programme.
- According to the Resolution on the National Programme in the Area of Narcotic Drugs 2004 – 2009, voluntary work done by NGOs should become a common preventive measure in this area in the local community and civil society at large.
- In accordance with the Resolution on the National Programme for Equal Opportunities for Women and Men 2005–2013 volunteers who are active in violence crisis centres should benefit from appropriate training to better contribute to the objective of reducing violence.
- The National Programme of Protection against Natural and other Disasters plans to improve the status of voluntary firemen (Slovenia has approx. 1,440 volunteer firemen societies and 44 000 active firemen).

National targets and reporting arrangements for volunteering

There are no national targets for volunteering in Slovenia.

There are no formal, centralised arrangements to monitor and report on volunteers and voluntary organisations in Slovenia either. However there is a common understanding that NGOs operate upon the principles of self-organisation and partnership with the government.⁵² But the government is not involved directly in the monitoring of volunteering in Slovenia.⁵³

Reporting arrangements also depend on financing: if voluntary activities are financed through an external body then certain degree of reporting is necessary. For example, when including organisations under the Programme Activities for Enhancing Volunteering in Slovenia, an additional questionnaire is used to gather information on the scope of voluntary work in Slovenia and the problems encountered by such organisations.

International policies

It is acknowledged that international policies and programmes have had an impact on volunteering in Slovenia. However, no further information was obtained on this.

2.3 Programmes

Key national programmes that stimulate volunteering at national level

While there is no national policy/programme specifically devoted to volunteering, the National Program of Social Security 2006-2010 includes a strategy on the development of voluntary work. It mainly concerns volunteers in the social field and the relevance of their work to the Ministry of Labour. The programme supports the following issues:

⁵¹ Primerjalno pravna analiza ureditve prostovoljskega dela (Comparative legal analysis of the scheme of voluntary work), prepared by Pravno-informacijski center nevladnih organizacij – PIC.

⁵² Interview, Ministry of Education and Sport, 6 October 2009.

⁵³ Ibid.

1. Drafting the law on voluntary work in consultation with NGOs. Volunteers' work is acknowledged as valuable activity.
2. Research work on volunteering, particularly in the humanitarian field is encouraged.
3. The cost of educating and training volunteers are taken into account as part of the costs related to activities and coordination of volunteers.

The Ministry of Work, Family and Social Affairs includes in its tenders a minimal share of costs incurred by the Slovenian Office for youth as eligible costs. The Office for Youth includes the voluntary activities of young people among its priority programmes that it co-finances.⁵⁴

4. A national award for the volunteer of the year is launched.
5. More financial incentives as well social projects on prevention that include volunteers are mentioned.
6. The programme also encourages donations in the social field (through tax mechanisms as well as acknowledging philanthropy as a standard for Business Excellence).⁵⁵

It is the only national programme that addresses volunteering in a systematic manner but other examples can be found too. For instance, the Ministry of Education and Sport runs programmes that involve promotion of voluntary work among young people and the National Youth Council of Slovenia has established an Award for the Volunteer of the Year.

It also must be mentioned that many of the activities dedicated to the stimulation of volunteering are 'outsourced' by the government to the Slovene Philanthropy, which is responsible for the promotion of volunteering at the national and local level. Slovene Philanthropy also coordinates a network of voluntary organisations by linking over 500 non-profit organisations and is thereby the largest network of its kind in Slovenia (see Section 2.1 for further information).

Programmes promoting/supporting volunteering at regional and local level

The Elderly as Possessors and Transmitters of Intangible Cultural Heritage is a new Slovenian project in the field of volunteering, cultural heritage and conservation (<http://kulturni-mediator.si/>). The project runs from June 2008 until December 2009, and is led by the Third Age University of Slovenia together with Slovenian Museum Society, Slovenian Ethnological Society and a number of other associate partners.

The project is meant to set up a model of permanent preservation of intangible cultural heritage, possessed and transmitted over to other generations by older people who are students of the Slovenian Third Age University. The project is based on volunteering as well as active transmission of knowledge and culture of older people to younger generations. In the framework of these museums, new voluntary roles have been built for 'cultural mediators', and today more than 40 cultural mediators work in museums on a voluntary basis.

Programmes promoting/supporting volunteering at transnational level

Established in 1997, MOVIT (Service for the Promotion of Youth Mobility) is an NGO working for the enhancement of young people's mobility in the field of education and culture. It also promotes the "Youth in Action" programme.

⁵⁴ Ministry of Education and Sport. National report on the implementation of common objectives for the voluntary activities of young people.

⁵⁵ National program of social security 2006-2010. <http://www.uradni-list.si/1/content?id=72891> _

The National Education Institute also supports different voluntary activities amongst young people in Slovenia, particularly networking at the international level.

3 REGULATORY FRAMEWORK

3.1 General legal framework

Specific legal framework which exists with respect to volunteering

There is no specific law on voluntary work in Slovenia but a draft law have existed since 2004. As mentioned earlier, it is expected that this law will be passed in 2010.

At the moment, the various aspects of volunteerism are regulated by different laws. In general, there are about 25 legal regulations that pertain to volunteers and volunteering.⁵⁶ These include: Law on Social Security,⁵⁷ Law on Organizations for People with Disabilities,⁵⁸ Law on Humanitarian Organizations,⁵⁹ The Law on Red Cross in Slovenia,⁶⁰ Law on Protection against Natural Disasters,⁶¹ Law on Fire Brigades, Act on the Supply of Blood,⁶² Law on Labour Relations, The Law on the Protection of Cultural Heritage,⁶³ Act for Foreigners,⁶⁴ The Law on Health Care and Health Insurance,⁶⁵ etc (see Annex 1).

The main legal acts that address volunteering are:

- The Employment Relationship Act that covers undeclared work and voluntary work; and
- Law on Youth and Policy on Youth that addresses volunteering in schools (especially at secondary level, where volunteering is part of the mandatory curriculum).

There are also specific regulations pertaining to volunteers in the fields of sports, culture, and social protection.

Finally, in terms of the legal framework for NGOs, Slovenian legislation does not recognise the term 'non-governmental organisation'.⁶⁶ Instead, there are three main legal entities laid down in the Slovenian law: associations, foundations and private institutes and each of them is governed by a separate legal act.

Self-regulation in relation to volunteering

In 2006, the cooperation between various voluntary organisations resulted in the development of a Volunteering Ethics Code, which contains basic guidelines and minimum standards that volunteers and their organisations are encouraged to comply with. The Code gives basic instructions for voluntary work, applicable to all types of voluntary organisations and volunteers. By signing the Code, an organisation also obtains the right to use the logo

⁵⁶ PIC (2008). Comparative Legal Analysis Of Organization Of Voluntary Work. PIC: Legal Information Centre for NGOs.

⁵⁷ Official Gazette of RS, no. 3/2007-UPB2

⁵⁸ Official Gazette of RS, no. 108/2002, 61/2006-United-1

⁵⁹ Official Gazette of RS, no. 98/2003, 61/2006-United-1

⁶⁰ Official Gazette RS, no. 7 / 1993

⁶¹ Official Gazette of RS, no. 51/2006-UPB1

⁶² Official Gazette of RS, no. 104/2006

⁶³ Official Gazette of RS, no. 16/2008

⁶⁴ Official Gazette of RS, no. 71/2008-UPB5

⁶⁵ Official Gazette of RS 72/2006-UPB3, 91/2007, 71/2008, 76/2008)

⁶⁶ Divjak, T., Klenovšek, T. (2006) Civil Society and Good Governance in Societies in Transition: Slovenia. In: Civil Society and Good Governance in Societies in transition, Benedek, W. (ed.). Vienna: Neuer Wissenschaftlicher, Belgrade: Belgrade Center for Human Rights

of *Volunteering* as a symbol of the quality of their work, which is awarded by the Centre for the Development and Promotion of Voluntary Work of the Slovene Philanthropy.

The Code of Ethics was developed with the assistance of a large number of different organisations and experts in the voluntary sector. The initiative benefitted from the support of the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs, and Family. As of 27 October 2009, 360 organisations out of more than 600 which are included in the volunteering network had signed the Code of Ethics.⁶⁷

Amongst others, the Code specifies that volunteers have the right:

- to be informed about their work and voluntary organisation;
- to be familiarised with the work;
- to get the support and acknowledgement of their work;
- to be provided with opportunities of learning and advancement at work;
- to be given the opportunity to say their opinion and participate in the decision-making;
- to be given the opportunity to participate in the organisation of voluntary work;
- to have expenses reimbursed; and
- to benefit from insurance.⁶⁸

3.2 Legal framework for individual volunteers

There is no special legal status for volunteers in Slovenia (due to the lack of specific regulation of volunteering).

Provisions for specific categories

According to the Ministry of Public Administration, in Slovenia, all people are entitled to carry out voluntary work regardless of their employment status.⁶⁹ No permission is required for an individual person to start volunteering.

However, if a volunteer who receives unemployment benefits was granted an award for voluntary work, the amount of state financial support is automatically reduced. For instance, if the benefit amounts to EUR 1000 and the award is EUR 100, then a volunteer receives EUR 900 worth of state support.

According to the Enforcement of Penal Sentences Act, if a person is sentenced to jail (for minor transgressions), he/she can choose to serve their sentence through doing voluntary work.

Support schemes and incentives

There are no financial support schemes relating to subsidies, taxation, procurement and insurance for individual volunteers. At the same time, there are no financial disincentives either.

Non-financial incentives however do exist. These include:

⁶⁷ Ministry of Education and Sport (2007). National report on the implementation of common objectives for the voluntary activities of young people. Ministry of Education and Sports and the Office for Youth.

www.ursm.gov.si/.../National_report_on_voluntary_work_-_final.doc

Information updated by Slovenska Filantropija, October 2009.

⁶⁸ http://www.prostovoljstvo.org/main.php?mod_id=6

⁶⁹ Interview, Ministry of Public Administration 30 June 2009.

- Youth Pass.
- New curricula reform – voluntary work is now part of the compulsory curricula in general secondary schools and optional in primary schools.⁷⁰
- Resolution on the National Program for Culture 2008-2011 (Official Journal of RS, no. 35/2008) encourages volunteers to work in museums.

Taxation rules on reimbursement of expenses for individual volunteers

The costs associated with volunteering that can be reimbursed include travel to and from the place of volunteering, travel while volunteering, meals (when work lasts more than four hours), postage, phone calls, stationery etc., and cost of protective clothing/special equipment. However, due to the lack of a law on volunteering law, the reimbursement of expenses related to volunteers' activity is left at the discretion of the host organisation.

Under the Slovenian tax law reimbursements for food, accommodation or any other expenses related to the voluntary activity (e.g. travel cost) as well as the volunteer allowance, is not subject to taxation as long as the volunteer does not receive any type of financial remuneration or award from the voluntary organisation.⁷¹ If the volunteer receives such financial award or remuneration, then both received income and reimbursements are subject to taxation. According to the Ministry of Public Administration, reimbursed expenses have to be declared but they are not taxed (e.g. travel costs, per diem, accommodation etc.).⁷² As mentioned, they are only taxed when the volunteer receives any other type of financial assistance (income, fees etc).⁷³

According to the Law on Income Tax, tax exemption applies to 'revenues intended to cover documented costs of transport, subsistence and accommodation, when the payment is made to a volunteer individual or person respondent to an invitation or call to participate in various activities - amateur, voluntary, humanitarian or charitable activities, educational training, health, humanitarian, cultural, sports, research, trade union activities, activities carried out by chambers, religious communities and political parties, provided that the said activities are non-profit and voluntary, or carried out on the basis of an invitation or call to participate in activities of associations and unions" (Article 107). The activities need to be in line with the objectives or purposes for which the societies are established, and should not seek financial profits.

Taxation rules on rewards or remuneration for individual volunteers

According to the Ministry of Public Administration, rewards or fees for individual volunteers are to be declared and considered as taxable income.

3.3 Legal framework for organisations engaging volunteers

Voluntary organisations do not have the obligation to notify public authorities about individual volunteers as long as they do not receive any financial awards or reimbursement of costs. In the case when such an award is granted and volunteers' expenses are reimbursed, NGOs have to submit a special tax form to the tax agency.

In general, NGOs can carry out both profitable and non-profit activities. According to the Ministry of Public Administration, NGOs are taxed only on what constitutes "profit". They are

⁷⁰ National Report for the Implementation of Common Objectives for the Voluntary Activities of Young People. Ministry of Education and Sport.

⁷¹ PROSTOVOLJNO DELO – DURS Pojasnilo DURS, št. 4210-1168/2006, 8. 12. 2006. Document provided by Tax Administration of Slovenia.

⁷² Interview with representative of the Ministry of Public Administration, 30 June 2009.

⁷³ PROSTOVOLJNO DELO – DURS Pojasnilo DURS, št. 4210-1168/2006, 8. 12. 2006. Document provided by Tax Administration of Slovenia.

not taxed on revenues generated through non-profit activities, particularly when the revenues are limited and confined to income sources such as membership fees or donations. However, it is acknowledged that sometimes it is difficult to clearly delineate profits from non-profits. For instance, any revenues generated from contracts won through competing or bidding against other competitors are in principle taxable. Government financial support can be considered as profit in some specific cases.

There is no tax on income generated through fundraising.

According to the 107th Article (paragraph 2) of the Income Tax Act (Official Gazette of RS, no. 117/2006, 90/2007, 10/2008, 78/2008), the following revenues are exempted from tax: revenues intended to cover documented costs of transport, accommodation and subsistence when payments are made to a person who is involved in voluntary humanitarian, charitable, educational, health, culture, sports and research activities as well as trade union activities, the activities carried out by associations, religious communities and political parties. The exemption applies only to activities that are non-profit or are carried out in support of the objectives for which a society was originally established.

According to the Income Tax Act, a reduced tax of 0.3% applies to grants per current tax year.

The article 43 of the Law on Value Added Tax (Official Gazette of RS, no. 117/2006) specifies that some goods and services are exempted from VAT when the organisations who provide the goods/services are managed and run mostly by volunteers, who do not benefit directly or indirectly from the outcome of the organisational activities. However, the law is not clear concerning the required proportion of volunteers (relative to the number of paid employees). In any other cases, voluntary organisations are eligible for paying VAT.

There are no subsidies linked to establishing volunteering organisations in Slovenia.

3.4 Legal framework for profit-making organisations

Ever since 2006 when the Associations Law was amended, private legal subjects (institutions and individuals) have been able to set up their own NGOs. Furthermore, the Employment Relationship Act specifies the conditions under which a voluntary activity (e.g. carried out in private companies or public institutions) is not considered undeclared work.

There are no specific support schemes in place for private companies to promote volunteering, and corporate volunteering remains small-scale in Slovenia. It is estimated that no more than two or three large companies (usually multinational) encourage and support their employees to do voluntary unpaid work. Some also believe that these activities are sometimes carried out for marketing or public relations purposes.

With regards to companies that allow volunteering during working hours, it is the organisation that is responsible for covering the costs related to employees' and volunteers' unpaid activities (including accidents or injuries occurred whilst volunteering).

3.5 Insurance and protection of volunteers

As there is no specific legislation on volunteering, it is acknowledged that any social or health protection of volunteers is left at the discretion of the host organisation. However, this is not a major issue as all people legally resident in Slovenia including students, unemployed, employed and retired persons benefit from the obligatory health insurance which covers the basic rights.⁷⁴ Students and employees also benefit from specific insurance policies. The proposed law on volunteering would bring changes to the current insurance arrangements.

⁷⁴ The European Knowledge Centre for Youth Policy (2006). Key priorities for youth policies answers on Voluntary Activities.

The draft law as it stands now stipulates that all volunteers would be insured directly through the National Association of Volunteers, a new organisational structure that the draft law would lay down.⁷⁵

According to specific laws, e.g. Law on Fire Brigades, Law on Protection against Natural and other Disasters as well as Healthcare and Health Insurance Act volunteers are entitled to insurance. However, as the above-mentioned strand of legislation suggests, the obligation of insurance only pertains to certain specific volunteers. Otherwise, volunteers have to insure themselves. This issue is still open to debate in the context of the current draft law on voluntary work that states that every volunteer carrying out 'organised' voluntary work (e.g. in an organisation), for a certain amount of hours per years will be insured by the host organisation.

With regard to other insurance benefits, volunteers do not benefit from pension and disability insurance (as it is the case of the employed), unemployment insurance, parent care insurance, work accident insurance and professional disease insurance.⁷⁶

4 ECONOMIC DIMENSION OF VOLUNTEERING

4.1 Funding arrangements for volunteering

National budget allocated to volunteering

According to the Ministry of Public Administration, the budget allocated at the national and local level for NGOs amounts to EUR 150 million.⁷⁷

No tensions were identified between the rules on state aid and the allocation of grants, subsidies and other donations to volunteering.

Sources of funding for voluntary organisations

It is worth mentioning from the outset that the sources of funding for NGOs are dispersed and little systematic information is available on this matter.

The largest proportion of funds comes from governmental and municipal sources or from NGOs' own assets. The projects are mostly financed by the Ministry of Labour, Family and Social Affairs, the Ministry of Education and Sport and the Office of the Republic of Slovenia for Youth. Voluntary organisations receive the smallest amount of funding from the European Union, sponsors and various foundations.⁷⁸

When looking at the income in numbers, in 2004, NGOs received 36.3% of their income from public funds, 30% from the sale of their goods and services and 20.9% from private donations. A comparison between 2004 and 1996 indicates that the income from public funds has significantly increased, but the income from the sale of goods and services and private donations have decreased. In-kind donations accounted for 2.7% of income.⁷⁹

Another source of financing voluntary organisations is stipulated by the Income Tax Act which states that 0.5% of income may be taxed and directed to financing activities of general public benefit (Art.142). This is a new source of funding for voluntary organisations carrying out non-profit activities in the public interest i.e., organisations for human rights

⁷⁵ Interview with Zoran Verovnik, Ministry of Education and Sport, 6 October 2009.

⁷⁶ The European Knowledge Centre for Youth (partnership between the European Commission and the Council of Europe in the field of youth policy, youth research and youth work (2006) Key priorities for youth policies answers on Voluntary Activities Policy.

⁷⁷ Interview, Ministry of Public Administration 30 June 2009

⁷⁸ Gril A., Tančič A., Vidmar M., Brečko B.N. (2006) Spodbujanje prostovoljnega dela z mladimi.

⁷⁹ Kolarič, Z. et. al. (2006) *Velikost, obseg in vloga zasebnega neprofitnega sektorja*.

protection, protection against natural and other disasters, organisations for people with disabilities, charitable, ecological, cultural, sports, religious and other purpose organisations.

More detailed information on funding sources can be found below:

- *Foreign donors and international sources:* Many Slovenian NGOs rely on funding from foreign donors, such as governments (e.g. Netherlands, USA) and international NGOs (Bister, 2005). Until recently, the Soros Foundation used to provide substantial funding in this area too. Smaller Slovenian NGOs with one to five employees seem to suffer the most from the lack sustainable funding (as well as lack of human resources and expert knowledge on fundraising).
- *European Union Sources:* Many Slovenian NGOs made use of funds from the PHARE programme or, for instance, from the European Union's youth programmes. It is however assumed that not many Slovenian NGOs have submitted a proposal to EuropeAid or taken the lead on any PVD or ED applications.
- *National sources:* NGOs used to receive some funding from various ministries as well as local state authorities for smaller project funding. However, due to cuts in public expenditure, NGOs feel now the impact of financial hardship. Alternative private sources of funding are limited although "self-financing" (through membership/participation fees) and private donations and contributions constitute commonly used methods. Private fundraising is used especially by the church institutions (missionaries, Caritas) as well as international NGOs (e.g. Red Cross) or international organisations (e.g. UNICEF). These types of NGOs are most capable of raising most significant private funds. For example, the Carol Singers' campaign raised 29m SIT (approx. EUR 130,000) for projects in Madagascar, Bolivia, Brazil and other countries. Recently, the child sponsorship programmes were also able to attract private donations. Private companies, especially local enterprises tend to provide funds for small scale NGO projects, e.g. in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Private foundations are not developed in Slovenia. This missing interest in a substantial investment in such activities goes hand in hand with a non-stimulating legal environment in terms of tax reduction for sponsoring and donations by the private sector.

Other specific sources of financing voluntary work include the following:

- National Social Security Programme that takes into account the activity of the non-government sector and volunteers activity as an integral part of social security system;
- Concessions granted by the Ministry of Labour, Family and Social Affairs for social assistance programmes of non-government and private sectors;
- Public tenders for the co-financing of youth programmes and programmes of youth organisations issued by the Office of the Republic of Slovenia for Youth;
- Tax relief for humanitarian and charity contributions;
- Contributions by local communities and municipal budgets;
- MLADINA – Youth in Action, Programme;
- Foundation for Financing Invalid and Humanitarian Organizations (FIHO) with National Lottery funds;
- Membership fees of the organisations; and

- Donations from businesses or profit-making sector, sponsorship.

Social Services of General Interest (SSGI)

There are 4,500 registered organisations that work in the public interest and 2,100 of them are financed by the state.

Public services are in general provided by public institutes and hence, public procurement (e.g., NGOs providing social services) is still underdeveloped in Slovenia.⁸⁰ Public services can also be provided by private institutes if they receive a special concession from the relevant government authorities (so called 'Institute of public right') endowing them with the same rights, obligations and responsibilities as public institutes.

By virtue of a special article, any other form of NGOs (associations, foundations), which receive a concession, can acquire a status equivalent to that of a public institute, as long as they meet certain conditions for providing public services.⁸¹

Participation of non-profit organisations in tendering for the provision of public contracts - also known as 'outsourcing' in Slovenia – has increased in the last ten years, and this trend is likely to continue.

In 2004 it was found that the majority (80.6%) of non-governmental organisations had no paid staff and the workforce of the non-governmental sector mostly consists of volunteers.⁸²

Non-profit organisations fill out an important gap in the provision of services. This is particularly important in the social care domain, where 78 different individual programmes are being implemented (e.g. social rehabilitation of people with addictions, programmes for people with mental problems and disabilities, maternity homes).

It is considered important to apply special procurement rules to SSGI.

4.2 Economic value of volunteering

Income generated through volunteering

The only data available shows that if volunteers were paid the so-called 'student hourly' rate (SIT 800 / EUR 3.33 per hour)⁸³, then the economic value of voluntary work would amount to EUR 4 million per year.⁸⁴ On the basis of the active population in Slovenia (850,000) and average salary in Slovenia, the voluntary contribution would amount to EUR 10 million per year.

Economic value of volunteering

Some estimates suggest that the economic value of the voluntary sector can represent up to 1% of the economic value of the paid work workforce.⁸⁵

It has also been estimated that all volunteers in Slovenia perform work equivalent to the contribution of 7,125 full-time employees⁸⁶.

⁸⁰ Interview, Ministry of Education and Sport, 6 October 2009.

⁸¹ Articles 23 – 28 of Institutes Law (OJ RS no. 12/1991, 45/1994, 8/1996).

⁸² Research on Non-governmental Organizations. POVZETEK OSNOVNIH UGOTOVITEV RAZISKAVE

⁸³ Value of one hour volunteer work with the work performed by students through the Student Service.

⁸⁴ Interview, Ministry of Public Administration 30 June 2009

⁸⁵ Report of the 5th Slovenian Congress on voluntary work. Input by Andreja Černak Meglič, Slovenska filantropija. Ljubljana, 2006. <http://www.prostovoljstvo.org>

⁸⁶ University of Ljubljana (2006).

Value of volunteering work as a share of GDP

There is no definitive answer to this question. The Ministry of Public Administration estimates that the value of volunteering work could represent 0.08% of the GDP. Other sources estimate the value of volunteering work at 5%⁸⁷ of GDP.

On a different note, the income of NGOs in the year 2004 accounted for 1.19% of the GDP.⁸⁸

Issues of service substitution and job substitution

According to information from different Ministries, at the moment there is no risk that voluntary activities would be in part replacing services to be provided by the state.⁸⁹

With regards to the issue of volunteering in part replacing employment, one position regarding this matter is that there is a certain risk that nowadays many young people volunteer for private sector companies with the aim of gaining some professional experience - which employers might use as job substitution. On the other hand, it is acknowledged that this risk is low and volunteering in the private sector brings many benefits to young people (e.g., improve their employability skills).⁹⁰

5 CULTURAL, SOCIAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL DIMENSIONS

5.1 Key benefits for volunteers, the community and direct beneficiaries

The key cultural and social benefits of volunteering invoked include intergenerational cooperation; a sense of security, acceptance, and meaningfulness; consolidation and expansion of social networks; social inclusion and mental and physical health; better cooperation between the state and the civil society.⁹¹

Volunteering brings many benefits to **communities**, including:⁹²

- volunteering can improve the quality of life in a community;
- volunteering strengthens the rights of minorities and social groups who are at a disadvantage; and
- volunteering can promote active citizenship.

The research done on young volunteers (Gril, 2006) suggests that **volunteers** may pursue volunteering to gain new personal and professional experiences, find meaningful work as well as to gain a sense of achievement by helping the community and contributing to a better society.

With regards to the impact on beneficiaries, many volunteers have stronger “green” values, have better and more up-to-date information about beneficiaries as well as have more similar experiences to the beneficiaries they serve. In addition, volunteers are often willing to spend more time with beneficiaries, or simply have more time, than paid staff. It is worth

⁸⁷ Trček (2009)

⁸⁸ Benedek, W. (ed.): *Civil Society and Good Governance in Societies in transition*, Vienna: Neuer Wissenschaftlicher; Belgrade: Belgrade Center for Human Rights

⁸⁹ Interview, Ministry of Education and Sport.

⁹⁰ Ibid.

⁹¹ Osterman A., and J. Sužnik (2008). *Drustvo Optimisti Ptuj (Society Optimists Ptuj)* article in the edition of the VI. Slovenian congress of volunteering

⁹² http://www.prostovoljstvo.org/main.php?mod_id=6

mentioning that good quality care of children, elderly, patients and the disadvantaged in general requires more time and attention⁹³.

According to the Ministry of Public Administration, volunteering contributes to the policy goals on:

- social cohesion;
- social inclusion;
- education and training;
- new job creation (indirectly);
- regional development (partly important contribution);
- business environment (low contribution);
- knowledge and innovation (mostly because volunteers are often pioneers in many fields of activity);
- inter-generational dialogue;
- life-long learning;
- sustainable development (partly important contribution);
- environmental protection;
- human rights;
- human capital;
- intercultural dialogue (partly important contribution);
- active ageing;
- adaptability of workers (low contribution); and
- humanitarian aid.

There is a common understanding that paid employment and voluntary work are both necessary to meet the current needs of the Slovenian society.⁹⁴

5.2 Factors that motivate individuals to volunteer

Volunteers perform voluntary work for different reasons, including:

- Spiritual and personal growth-related reasons;
- Acquisition of knowledge, skills and experiences;
- Desire to do useful work (sense of achievement) and help others⁹⁵;
- Socialising and extending one's social network (sense of belonging);
- Reputation (good public image)⁹⁶;

⁹³ National report on the implementation of common objectives for the voluntary activities of young people. Ministry of Education and Sports and the Office for Youth.

www.ursm.gov.si/.../National_report_on_voluntary_work_-_final.doc

⁹⁴ http://www.prostovoljstvo.org/main.php?mod_id=6

⁹⁵ Gril (2006)

- Expectation of improved self-image and personal satisfaction; and
- Confidence in one's own abilities, understanding of personal feelings and actions, and giving sense to life.

6 VOLUNTEERING IN THE CONTEXT OF EDUCATION AND TRAINING

6.1 Recognition of volunteers' skills and competences within the national educational and training system

From the outset it is worth mentioning that the draft Law on volunteering that is currently discussed states in its 19th article that a host voluntary organisation is obliged to issue a certificate for volunteers upon the completion of the volunteering period.⁹⁷

Recent educational reform has also given voluntary work an important place in the educational system. Voluntary work is now **part of the compulsory curricula in general secondary level schools** and certain types of high schools (with international baccalaureate).⁹⁸ Pupils need to do voluntary work for a certain number of hours per year and they receive a certificate for it. These certificates however do not facilitate their entrance to further education courses.

These changes to the curricula have been done under the auspices of the National Education Institute. In the first years of the reform, the National Education Institute financed counsellors that designed and implemented voluntary activities in schools as well as trained mentors to work with schools and pupils. In the past, the institute also carried out the project 'Open School', under which schools could obtain financial assistance from the Ministry of Education and Sports. Furthermore, the non-governmental organisation "Slovene Philanthropy" continues to provide schools with professional assistance for training volunteers in the national network.⁹⁹

According to the Ministry of Public Administration, the role of volunteering is recognised in the policies on youth and intergenerational dialogue.

Formal recognition of skills gained through voluntary work by young people is currently promoted by the University of Ljubljana. The University plans to introduce a system of accreditation from next academic year. According to this plan, each student will receive two credits for 60h of volunteering per year. This initiative does not apply to other universities or higher education establishment.

Furthermore, NEFIKS, a partnership project of the national youth organisation Youth Guild and the Office of the Republic of Slovenia for Youth aim to establish a uniform system of validating knowledge and experience acquired in a non-formal manner by Slovenian young people working in Slovenia and abroad. For this reason, a record book of non-formal learning was introduced to collect the acquired knowledge and experience. It is designed

⁹⁶ Jamsek P. (2005) Me and you – volunteers. Mladje.
www.mva.si/fileadmin/user_upload/doc/2_OGLEDALO/2_Publikacije/Mladje/Mladje__11.pdf]

⁹⁷ Proposition of the law of voluntary work in Slovenia; 6th Act -Made by Legal Information Centre for NGOs in Slovenia [Pravno-informacijski center nevladnih organizacij.

⁹⁸ National Report for the Implementation of Common Objectives for the Voluntary Activities of Young People. Ministry of Education and Sport.

⁹⁹ National report on the implementation of common objectives for the voluntary activities of young people. Ministry of Education and Sports and the Office for Youth.

www.urism.gov.si/.../National_report_on_voluntary_work_-_final.doc

for various users (secondary school and university students, unemployed and any other persons of 14 years of age and above) and it serves for recording knowledge from six different fields:

- knowledge acquired through engagement as active citizens and serious work on projects
- knowledge acquired through work (through student employment brokerage services)
- knowledge acquired through organised forms of education (courses and seminars)
- knowledge acquired in camps
- *knowledge acquired through voluntary work*
- other ways of acquiring knowledge.¹⁰⁰

6.2 Education and training opportunities for volunteers

The support and training for volunteers includes:

- ongoing training (partly)
- induction training
- pre-volunteering training
- peer volunteer support (exchange of experience among volunteers)
- mentoring/'budding' schemes (e.g. guidance, feedback).

In the majority of voluntary organisations volunteers learn through mutual exchange of experience, leadership mentoring, feedback and initial training. Almost all organisations have indicated that they use various forms of training and support. A quarter of the volunteers receive training only once, in a form of initial training. In a recent survey, more than half of voluntary organisations reported that they provide volunteers with training several times a year (usually in the form of monthly meetings). A few included in the sample organise training for volunteers, if necessary, once a year.¹⁰¹

In addition, the Slovene Philanthropy runs a two day training for persons who are interested in taking up volunteering.

7 EU POLICIES AND VOLUNTEERING

There is a common feeling among key stakeholders that to date, EU policies have not had a significant impact on volunteering in Slovenia, although many feel that the impact is going to be felt more strongly in the future.

However, it is believed that EU and international youth policies have already had an impact on youth volunteering in Slovenia. This is due to the fact that the Youth Programme and its successor Youth in Action brought about a new concept and framework for volunteering in Slovenia. The European Voluntary Service also has a strategic role in the development of volunteering in Slovenia.

¹⁰⁰ National report on the implementation of common objectives for the voluntary activities of young people. Ministry of Education and Sports and the Office for Youth.

www.ursm.gov.si/.../National_report_on_voluntary_work_-_final.doc

¹⁰¹ Gril A., Tančič A., Vidmar M., Brečko B.N. (2006) Spodbujanje prostovoljnega dela z mladimi: podprojek 'prostovoljno delo mladih na področju sociale in kulture'. Projekt ciljnega raziskovalnega programa 2004: zaključno poročilo. Ljubljana: Pedagoški Inštitut.

The EU policies on education and training (particularly in the field of validation of non-formal and informal learning) have helped to raise public awareness about the importance of skills and competences acquire through volunteering. There is a common understanding that such skills should be validated and included in the National Qualifications Framework. There is also an understanding that volunteers should have certain skills to qualify them for voluntary activities. The draft law stipulates that the National Association of Volunteers would issue certificates that accredit volunteers' skills and competences.¹⁰²

Some of the recommendations put forward by some interviewees in terms of EU level action include:

- Better recognition of volunteers' work;
- Promotion of schemes for voluntary work in companies across the EU; and
- Promotion of a unitary set of quality and ethical standards for volunteering across the EU

8 CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR VOLUNTEERING

Stakeholders have identified a number of challenges and opportunities, which could have a significant impact on volunteering in Slovenia.

8.1 Challenges for volunteering

From a legal point of view, the main challenge for volunteering in Slovenia is the lack of a specific legislation that regulates and standardises voluntary activities in Slovenia. The new law on voluntary activities, which is expected to be passed by the end of 2010, could help to address some of the issues facing volunteers.

In terms of funding, almost two-thirds of the Slovenian NGOs perceive the lack of sufficient financial resources as well as low levels of state subsidies as an obstacle to volunteering¹⁰³. NGOs also have to go through the process of tendering or of attracting sponsors in order to have access to suitable financing – this can be a time-consuming and costly process. Moreover, there is a lack of information on financial opportunities.

Many NGOs also mention the problem of finding volunteers (due to the lack of motivation of young people to undertake voluntary work, the remoteness of voluntary organisations or the shortage of paid staff and funding). There are also negative prejudices about voluntary work and a conspicuous lack of interest among young people to take up volunteering¹⁰⁴. The lack of recognition of volunteers and their economic value is another important challenge, which needs to be addressed.

Other challenges stem from the fact that there is no clear definition of non-governmental organisation and consequently, different public authorities take different positions towards various NGOs¹⁰⁵. Furthermore, there is a need to establish a code of ethics and other rules, which can be followed by the NGO sector.

The main challenges faced by volunteers and voluntary organisations in Slovenia relate to:

- the legal and regulatory framework;

¹⁰² Interview, Ministry of Education and Sport.

¹⁰³ Benedek, W. (2006) and Gril (2006).

¹⁰⁴ National report on the implementation of common objectives for the voluntary activities of young people. Ministry of Education and Sports and the Office for Youth.

www.ursm.gov.si/.../National_report_on_voluntary_work_-_final.doc

¹⁰⁵ Benedek (2006)

- the need for information and data;
- the current infrastructure;
- the need for sustainable funding;
- the need for greater recognition of the role of volunteers; and
- the insurance and protection for volunteers.

The most significant challenge for the time being is still the lack of information and statistics on volunteering in Slovenia; such data could serve as a starting point for change. Other sources suggest though, that the lack of a clear and unitary legal and regulatory framework for volunteering is one of the greatest challenges as enforcing a law on volunteering would ensure the following benefits: the qualification and training of volunteers; greater recognition of volunteers and volunteering; and health and social insurance (volunteering could count for work experience). Passing the law on volunteering would also mean allocating a national budget to the field.

Turning to look at how the challenges are being addressed, the current draft law that is likely to be passed under the current government would address many of the challenges mentioned: lack of information and statistics (a National Association/Agency of Volunteers would issue certificates and monitor any trends in this area); lack of sustainable funding (budget allocated specifically to volunteering); qualification and training (through the National Association of volunteers) as well as insurance of volunteers.

8.2 Opportunities for volunteering

One of the biggest opportunities for volunteering in Slovenia is the law on voluntary work, which is expected to be passed in 2010 (however, not confirmed yet). The law could make a significant difference to the challenges outline above, creating a more efficient and successful voluntary sector in Slovenia – in particular, concerning the lack of systematic data and statistics on volunteering; the lack of sustainable funding; the lack of recognition/awareness; and greater promotion of volunteering.

There has been a long tradition of volunteering in Slovenia. This, together with the raising number of NGOs operating in the country should help to foster the development of volunteering as a worthwhile pursuit.

Stakeholders suggest that the provision of accurate information and statistics on volunteering is one of the most favourable opportunities.

Some of the recommendations for national level action in this field include:

- Coordination of volunteering-related activities between different ministries (as well as other public bodies);
- Encouragement of the development of voluntary work through tax benefits and other financial and non-financial mechanisms; and
- Development of modern types of volunteering such as corporative, virtual and family volunteering which could also include generation from 30 – 55 age

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ANNEX 1: OVERVIEW OF SOME SECTOR-SPECIFIC LAWS ADDRESSING VOLUNTEERING IN SLOVENIA

Act of Disabled Persons Organizations refers to an important area of voluntary work, specifying the conditions of training of volunteers helping disabled persons. Training of volunteers is a preliminary condition for obtaining the status of an organization for disabled people.

The provisions of the Humanitarian Organizations Act refers to both humanitarian organizations and self-help organizations covered in the Social Assistance Act. They refer to volunteering as one of the preconditions for the organizations in obtaining the status of humanitarian organizations: "an organization shall be considered to satisfy this precondition if its activity is performed entirely or predominantly by volunteers that carry out such work out of free will and without remuneration. Reimbursement of direct costs incurred by a volunteer shall not be considered remuneration. An organization shall be considered to engage volunteers for its activity if majority of its workers are volunteers."

Red Cross Slovenia Act part of international Red Cross mentions volunteering as one of its seven basic principles.

Blood Donation Act refers to a special category of volunteers – blood donors. According to the 169th paragraph of Work Relations Act, the blood donor has the right to be absent from work on the day of the blood donation. That counts as a paid day.

The Act on the Prevention of the Black Market Economy distinguishes between, on the one hand, humanitarian, charity and voluntary work and, on the other hand, the black market work. Only work in educational institutions, hospitals or elderly homes counts as voluntary work.

Law on the Protection of Cultural Heritage specifically refers to volunteers in the public service. Volunteers working in civil service protection must have the appropriate education or qualification. After completion of voluntary service, the public host organisation issue a certificate accrediting the acquired work experience or qualifications, unless the law provides otherwise. Volunteers may also work as apprentices, trainees or simply as volunteers. The task of volunteers is to raise public awareness about the cultural heritage. A contract is signed between the volunteer and the public service. The criteria for monetary awards of volunteers are regulated as such.

The provisions on the Association of the Social Chamber that was established under the Social Assistance Act refers to voluntary work and makes reference to the role of the Social Chamber in supporting voluntary work in the domain of social assistance. The Code of Ethics for social assistance emphasises that volunteers should accept tasks in line with their qualification and experience and in accordance with the Code of Ethics. Volunteers should benefit from training and supervision.

Foreigners Act deals with foreigners interested in carrying out voluntary work in Slovenia. A foreigner needs a permit for temporary residence to participate in the trans-national programmes of volunteering (stipulated in Article 30).

Pension and Disability Insurance Act stipulates that 1) persons who have completed their education and take part in voluntary work ; 2) secondary school students and 3) undergraduate and postgraduate students that perform work through authorized student employment service are entitled to mandatory insurance. Participants in youth camps are insured against invalidity, physical impairment or death caused by injury at work.

Source: Ministry of Education and Sports and the Office for Youth and Primerjalno pravna analiza ureditve prostovoljskega dela (Comparative legal analysis of the scheme of voluntary work), prepared by Pravno-informacijski center nevladnih organizacij – PIC.