



Volunteering Legal Frameworks in Europe

Some aspects to consider

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Volunteering Equality
Rights Action
VERA



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Volunteering has a value for:

- *Individuals, communities, the economy and society at large* as one of the most visible expressions of solidarity.
- *The promotion and facilitation of social inclusion*, building social capital and producing a transformative effect on society.
- *The development of a thriving civil society* that can offer creative and innovative solutions to common challenges.
- *Economic growth* and as such deserves specific and targeted measurement in terms of both economic and social capital.

BUT

There are some major societal trend in Europe that can impact on this



<https://www.eesc.europa.eu/sites/default/files/files/qe-04-17-886-en-n.pdf>

Demographic Changes

- ***Ageing Population***
= More skilled Volunteers available for longer or lack of young volunteers?
- ***More Diverse and Shifting population***
= Volunteer Grandparents/Grandkids, etc.



Economic Crisis

- *Less Taxes and Reduced local Authority budgets and higher demands for services*
- *Increased poverty and need*
- *Reduced funding to Civil Society Organisations*



Digitalisation

- *Social Media enabling citizens to self organise for “ad Hoc” Volunteering*
- *Social Media making everyone an advocate*
The representative nature of volunteer-based civil society organisations as advocates should be protected
- *“Gig” economy workers*
More cross sector co-operation in the frame of employee volunteering
- *Online Volunteering*
Are legal frameworks ready?



EVEN Workbook:
Team Building
Events



EVEN Workbook:
Volunteering activities
during working time



EVEN Workbook:
Private Volunteering
Initiatives

Populism

- *Are people becoming more individualistic? More likely to commit to short-term activities with a clear personal gain than long term volunteering commitments?*



Volunteer organisations need to be assisted by public administration to better demonstrate their value and impact.

Shrinking Civic Space

A good functioning civil society is a sign of a healthy democracy and contributes greatly to quality of life and peace and stability.



Volunteering EcoSystem

- Volunteering can happen in an episodic way for an event
- Volunteering can happen in an episodic way for a disaster relief
- Volunteering can also represent a more continuous commitment.

VOLUNTEERING ECOSYSTEM

www.europeanvolunteercentre.org / t: @VolunteeringCEV / fb: @CEV.volunteer ©European Volunteer Centre



Recognition



Real Value



Regulatory Framework

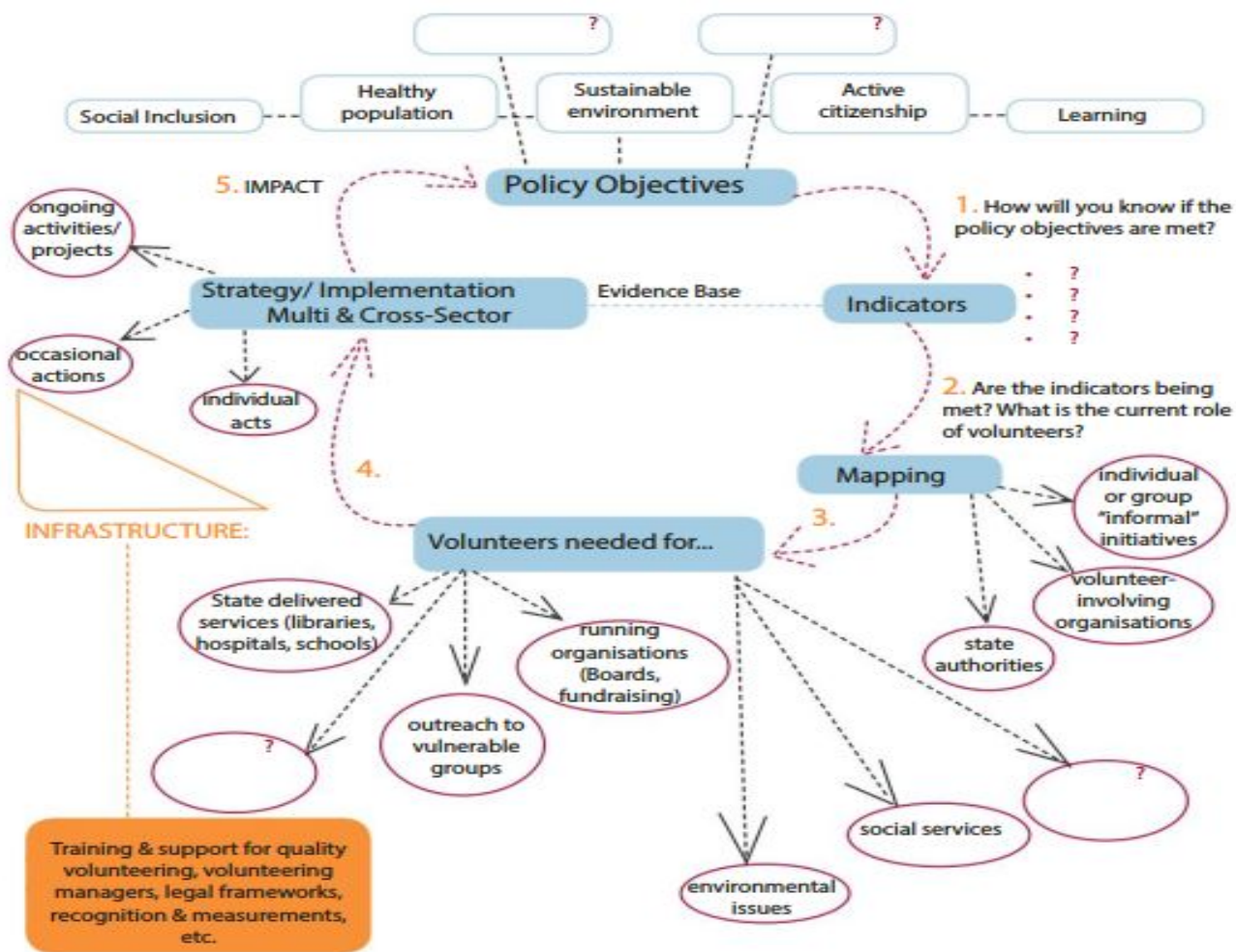


Resources



Tool Kits

- Volunteering In Events
- Online Volunteering
- Voluntourism
- Inclusive Volunteering
- Employee Volunteering
- Local Volunteering Strategies (DEVVS)



Conducive Legal Framework

- **Freedom to Volunteer**

Everyone should have the freedom to volunteer. This includes groups potentially at risk, such as unemployed people, asylum seekers, refugees, migrants, older people, people with disabilities etc. No one should be forced to do “voluntary work”, neither for public nor for private institutions

Conducive Legal Framework

- **Equal treatment of all Volunteers**

The EU and its Member States should adopt a common approach to volunteering involving a stronger role for the EU when it comes to determining the legal environment for volunteering. This would ensure more harmonised approach and guarantee a more equal treatment and easy access to volunteering activities.

Conducive Legal Framework

- **Social Protection for Volunteers**

Volunteers should have adequate social protection doing volunteer work (health, accident and liability insurance). Member States should support volunteers and voluntary organisations financially to cover these expenses through a sustainable framework.

Germany, Poland & Belgian examples.

Conducive Legal Framework

- **Volunteering and Social Security**

Volunteering during unemployment should not be the reason for losing social benefits such as unemployed benefits and social security benefits.

Conducive Legal Framework

- **Taxation**

All reimbursement of volunteer's expenses incurred in relation to volunteering should be exempted from income taxes.

Companies should not be able to send tax assignments to organisations and foundations exclusively benefitting the employees of the company and their relatives.

Conducive Legal Framework

- **Visa Issues**

EU and Member States should facilitate the entry of third country nationals into EU territory for the purpose of volunteering within the EU, amongst other things that third country volunteers and their volunteer-involving organisations can easily access and operate within EU territory in cases of public emergencies, disasters, major events and other situations of need.

- **Criminal Record Checks**

Compulsory criminal record checks for volunteers only in cases in which this is absolutely necessary to ensure the high quality of volunteers and volunteer-involving organisation work, or to protect vulnerable people. Compulsory criminal record checks certificates should be produced in a reasonable time and be free of charge for the volunteer and the volunteer-involving organisations.

Conducive Legal Framework

- **Validation of Learning**

Civil Society Organisations can often be suitable places for structured learning and work experience . CSO leaders should be trained and supported with resources to play that role in supporting trainees and others on work experience placement where a clear learning path and learning objectives are in place.

Volunteering NOT equal to Traineeships.

Conducive Legal Framework

- **Service Learning & Civic Education**

Volunteering provides a unique setting for civic education.

Civic education and Service Learning should be introduced more widely into the formal education systems to increase awareness of volunteering and civil society not only for children and young people but also their wider networks of families and friends.

Conducive Legal Framework

- **Resilience planning for Volunteering Emergency Situations**

The compassion, altruism, generosity and solidarity that underpins volunteering takes place in context, and that context should be an enabling one.

Volunteering is an important part of community resilience and should be an integral part of the community planning for crisis prevention and response.

Volunteering in crisis situations needs special attention, planning and organisation proportional to the potential risks and **take into account all the knowledge, experiences and potential** of civic activism and volunteers and staff of organised civil society.

Conducive Legal Framework

- **Employee Volunteering Emergency Situations**

Facilitate the volunteering of staff members of private as well as public employers. These provisions should include compensation measures for employers of persons who are also volunteers and who in cases of emergency have to leave the work places to volunteer for the benefit of the public.

Conducive Legal Framework

- **Voluntourism**

Organisations engaging in the 'sale' of volunteering opportunities should be regulated - whether they are targeting volunteers abroad and attracting them to the country to volunteer or targeting tourists already in the country.

Conducive Legal Framework

- **Volunteering Charter**

- Broad definitions of volunteer, volunteer-involving organisations and volunteering.
- Rights of a volunteer (core rights, support from volunteer-involving organisations and right for personal development).
- Responsibilities of volunteer.
- Rights and responsibilities of volunteer-involving organisations and of public authorities.

Blueprint for European Volunteering 2030 (BEV 2030)

#BEV2030

Blueprint for European Volunteering 2030 #BEV2030

This Blueprint is organised around 5 thematic concepts:

1. **Independent and inclusive engagement;**
2. **New volunteers and methods;**
3. **Empowerment;**
4. **Appreciation of contribution;**
5. **Resources for more Value.**



It serves as guidance to CEV and other stakeholders concerned with volunteering, especially policymakers, regarding the steps that need to be taken for volunteering to reach its true potential. **It acknowledges that there are different cultural and legal contexts for volunteering in Europe and takes into account that the outcomes of the suggestions included will vary according to this variety of circumstances and different volunteer profiles, for example regarding age, but stresses that common values and aspects of quality indicators should be common throughout.**

The Blueprint was **approved by the CEV GA** held in Berlin and online on 14th September 2021.

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