

UPSILLING & PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT:

Volunteering is an important space for acquisition of skills and competences, learning and personal development, that is complementarity to employment and formal education and training opportunities, not an alternative. Volunteering should not be misused by state authorities as a compulsory tool to get people back to work, volunteering should be based on a person's own free will and should not be required by the state authorities as a conditionality for any support or consideration. People claiming benefits or any other kind of state support such as integration processes for newcomers should not be excluded or prevented from volunteering.

KEYS:

1 Full implementation of the Guidelines on Validation of non-formal and informal learning
Including through volunteering, in all Member States.

2 Europass
Should integrate increased possibilities to enable volunteers to showcase their experience and learning outcomes.

3 Establish the "European Platform for Volunteering for Older People"

As called for by the German Presidency of the EU & following a robust consultation and planning process as to its design this will: bring economic and social benefits as part of active ageing opportunities; increase the productivity of a growing demographic of skilled and experienced older people; delay reliance on state support for social care and medical attention due to decreased health and well being as a result of inactivity.



Vote Volunteer Vision EP Election Campaign Launch event
European Parliament, Brussels, 21 March 2023

*Join us
for further dialogue
to unlock
the potential
of volunteering!*



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VOLUNTEERING:
*The keys to
unlocking the
potential*



In 2021 CEV published the [Blueprint for European Volunteering \(2030\) \(BEV2030\)](#) organised around 5 thematic concepts: Independent and inclusive engagement; New volunteers and methods; Empowerment; Appreciation of contribution; Resources & Coordination.

Acknowledging that there are different cultural and legal contexts for volunteering in Europe and taking 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, BEV 2030 provides key guidance to stakeholders including policymakers, regarding the steps that need to be taken for volunteering to reach its true potential.

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

Volunteering contributes to the European Social model, to resilience, peace, cohesion and prosperity. It provides a framework for a constructive narrative for the Future of Europe as an alternative to extremist and populist views, ideologies and actions, and can contribute to their prevention.

Volunteering can actively prevent Hate Speech, promotes inclusion and tolerance, contributes to an intergenerational approach and enables citizens to be directly active in developing the Europe they strive for.

The development of a comprehensive **European Civic Engagement and Volunteering Strategy** would make a significant contribution to reaching the enabling environment for volunteering and solidarity in Europe that will **strengthen** volunteering outreach, **inspire** volunteering impact and **celebrate** volunteering & volunteers, leading to growth in the value of volunteering in Europe.

DEMOCRACY & CIVIC ENGAGEMENT:

Defending European fundamental rights & values, as well as promoting resilience and sustainable development as an expression of democracy and solidarity, is a central role for volunteers. BEV 2030 highlights that volunteers are not just a source of people-power for essential and meaningful tasks in society, but that they play an important role in social cohesion, interpersonal relationships, as well as social transformation and innovation. It shows how, when organised in a suitable strategic policy framework, volunteers can be empowered and mobilised to pave the way to making the fundamental rights enshrined in the European Treaties a reality by connecting people and communities, building increased trust and inclusion, something highly necessary in an increasingly divided and polarised Europe.

KEYS:

1 **European Solidarity Corps, with at least three times as much budget & impact**

The potential impact of the ESC should be strengthened, maintaining its unique identity as the only EU programme focussed on embedding solidarity in a thriving European democracy and increasing the quality of the opportunities provided, as well as the diversity of participants and causes it can support, leading to an even greater impact.

2 **Embed Civic Education, including a Service Learning component, in Education systems**

This will enable a stronger focus on European Values, Solidarity and the role of the EU in promoting peace, increasing awareness of volunteering and civil society, not only for children and young people, but also their wider networks of families and friends. The “free will” nature of volunteering should be protected as distinct from compulsory parts of formal education systems.

3 **European Volunteering Impact Week**

To coincide with International Volunteer Day on 5th December this annual week should be open to volunteers of all ages active in different fields and contexts. It will contribute to better reflecting the importance of volunteers for peace, quality of life, wellbeing and solidarity in Europe. This positive messaging & appreciative discourse will advance the volunteering policy developments in Europe and ensure better public recognition of volunteers for solidarity and collaborative communities. This can be further enforced by declaring 2025 the European Year of Volunteers, as well ensuring a strong European input to the UN International Year of Volunteers for Sustainable Development 2026.

RESILIENCE & WELL BEING:

Especially in times of crisis, volunteering is a key resource for community resilience and is a driver of value creation that is crucial for sustainable development, as well as for disaster preparedness and risk reduction. Collaboration involving volunteers at the local level between the public and private sectors (profit and not for profit), for communities of all sizes and situations enables different stakeholders to face threats together and contribute to common, sustainable solutions to existing and future challenges. However, the continued lack of coordination at the EU level and across Member States regarding volunteering programmes, policies and data gathering makes it impossible to have a realistic assessment and measure of the true transformative effect and value of volunteering in Europe, and consequently for efficient and sustainable, evidence-based policies to be developed. A situation that makes volunteering budgets at all administrative levels and fields easily, and increasingly vulnerable, to cuts.

KEYS:

1 **Collect reliable and comparable data on the impact of volunteering**

This should include economic, social, and environmental benefits for resilience and sustainable development in Europe through an EU-wide research initiative. The data and evidence about new trends and innovation in volunteering and of inequalities and lack of inclusivity, be that based on age, ethnicity, gender etc. should be used as the basis to support mitigating activities and policies as part of a concrete action plan in collaboration with civil society partners to address disparities in volunteering caused by restrictive legal frameworks, by prejudice or stereotypes or other sources of inequality.

2 **Use the “Beyond GDP” approach to measure the value of volunteering**

The European Quality of Life Surveys, harmonised Time Use Surveys and SILC (Statistics on Income and Living Conditions) are good practice approaches ensuring that the contribution to personal well-being, health, safety, social connections and civic engagement, as well as economic value is captured.

3 **Integrate Volunteering in all EU Strategic Frameworks**

A variety of EU funding possibilities across all work areas in programmes such as CERV, Civil Protection Mechanism, LIFE, Horizon Europe, Humanitarian aid etc should be offered to ensure that volunteering organisations and initiatives are in a more secure position to contribute effectively to recovery processes and future resilience, as well as peace building.