

## Eurodesk Information note

### The European Year of Volunteering 2011

#### 1. Introduction

The EU has designated the year 2011 as the **European Year of Voluntary Activities (EYV)** promoting active citizenship. In Europe, only 23% of people over 15 years old are involved in voluntary activities with a big difference between the Member States. While in countries like UK and Netherlands we can find up to 40% of volunteers; in Italy, Belgium, Greece and Lithuania only 10% of citizens is involved in volunteering. In proclaiming the 2011 as the year of Voluntary Activities, the EU means to make European citizens more conscious about volunteering activities and wants to recognize their importance in contributing to the development of social skills and solidarity.

#### 2. Objectives and Activities

The European Year for Volunteering has the following objectives:

- i. Enable volunteering environment in the EU;
- ii. Improve the quality of voluntary activities by empowering voluntary activities organizers;
- iii. Recognise voluntary activities at EU level and in the Member States;
- iv. Raise awareness of the value and importance of volunteering.

During the EYV the European Commission will be working closely with two strategic partners:

- **National Coordinating bodies (NCBs):** The NCBs will be responsible for the planning, coordination and organization of events and activities in its territory during the European Year and will coordinate with Community level activities.
- **EYV 2011 Alliance:** is the informal network of major NGO European networks with a particular interest in volunteering who have committed to working together on the promotion, lobbying, organization and implementation of the EYV 2011.

The European Commission has allocated EUR 8 million for the year. Planned activities are:

#### A. DIRECT COMMUNITY INITIATIVES

Events and forums for exchanging experience and good practices; cooperation activities with the private sector and media for disseminating information on voluntary activities and the European Year; production of material and tools for media; publication of the results schemes and initiatives contributing to the objectives of the European Year; the establishment of an information website on the Europa site.

Specifically, an EYP Tour is planned to travel across Europe (a pavilion staying 2 weeks in Brussels and the capitals of 5 biggest EU states, in each other countries: stands for 1 week in the capitals) in order to highlight good practice in the volunteering field and offer an opportunity for volunteering organisations to showcase their activities and achievements. It is the responsibility of the NCBs and the Alliance to organize the exhibition area. In particular, Eurodesks that are not part of the National Agencies should establish contact and make sure they are represented.

In addition, the Representations of the European Commission in the countries will have 'European spaces' with different events throughout the year. Organisations interested in cooperating should contact the Commission's representation in the country concerned.

Note: the European Year only covers EU Member States. If there are activities outside the EU, those countries are invited to contact the Task Force in Brussels directly to have those activities included in the list on the website.

**B. CO-FINANCING COMMUNITY INITIATIVES:**

To raise awareness of the objectives of the European Year, high-visibility events on a European scale are going to be organised possibly in cooperation with the EU Presidencies 2011.

**C. CO-FINANCING NATIONAL INITIATIVES:**

At national, regional and local levels, events, conferences and seminars are planned in order to allow mutual learning and exchange of good practices to promote the European Year; cooperation with the media and educational and promotional campaigns including the organisation of awards and competitions are included in the programme.

A call for proposals is expected to be published in September 2010 with a total budget of EUR 2 million (1-2 projects per country).

**D. INITIATIVES NOT RECEIVING ANY COMMUNITY FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE:**

For public and private organizations that will assure that the initiatives in question will be carried out during 2011 and that want to make a significant contribution to achieving the objectives of the European Year, the Community will grant non-financial support, including written authorisation to use the logo, and other (communication) materials associated with the European Year.

**3. How to get involved**

If you are interested in carrying out an activity in the framework of the European Year, you should inform the National Coordinating Body (NCB) in your country. The European Commission has a strong interest in achieving the highest possible multiplying effects and reaching out beyond the European capitals. In this respect, contacts have been established to the Committee of Regions in order to bring local and regional authorities on board. Local and regional Eurodesk multipliers could make a worthwhile contribution by further spreading the word and initiating activities in cooperation with local and regional authorities (e.g. organizing a Volunteering Weekend in a city or organizing a 'European volunteering space' in the local town hall). Eurodesk multipliers should inform the NCBs about their plans.

**4. Contacts**

List of National Coordinating Body for your Country:  
[http://ec.europa.eu/citizenship/pdf/doc1022\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/citizenship/pdf/doc1022_en.pdf)

**EYV Task Force team members:**  
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**5. Further information**

EYV (interim) web page: [http://ec.europa.eu/citizenship/focus/focus840\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/citizenship/focus/focus840_en.htm)  
<http://www.eyv2011.eu/PublicImageVoting.asp>  
[http://www.cev.be/112-towards\\_a\\_european\\_year\\_of\\_volunteering\\_2011-en.html](http://www.cev.be/112-towards_a_european_year_of_volunteering_2011-en.html)  
You can also watch an interview of John Mcdonald here:  
<http://il.youtube.com/watch?v=1R3V6xxvcCA&feature=related>

July 2010