



National Observatory for Volunteering
Div. III Volunteering – Directorate General
Volunteering, Associations and Social Bodies – Ministry
of Labour and Social Affairs

EUROPEAN YEAR OF VOLUNTARY ACTIVITIES PROMOTING ACTIVE CITIZENSHIP

ITALY PLAN 2011

Summary

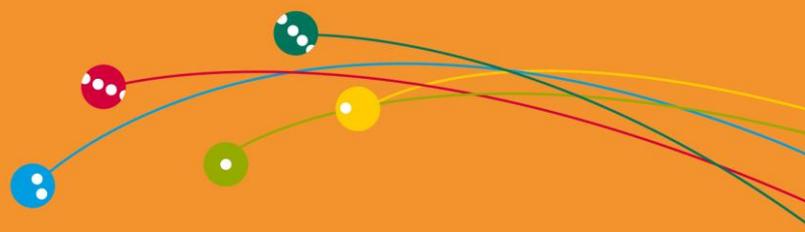
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<http://www.lavoro.gov.it/AnnoEuropeoVolontariato/mm/programma/>

In the document for the Italy Plan 2011 approved by the National Observatory for Volunteering during the meeting of 14 July 2010, the framework of motivations and objectives for the European year of voluntary activities promoting active citizenship are indicated, in conformity with the proposals of the Manifesto of Italian volunteering for Europe, already adopted by the National Assembly of Volunteering in Rome on 4-5 December 2009.

The National Coordinating Body (NCB) is the institutional body, indicated by the Government of each Member State to the European Commission, coordinating all the initiatives for the European Year in the country and interfacing with European institutions. The Italian National Coordinating Body for the European Year 2011 is the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs – Directorate General volunteering, associations and social bodies.





National Framework: challenges and opportunities

Legislation of the past few years in Italy identified and regulated main typologies of third sector organisations:

- voluntary organisations (Law 266 of 1991);
- social cooperatives (Law 381 of 1991);
- associations of social promotion (Law 383 of 2000);
- non-governmental organisations (Law 49 of 1987);
- other third sector organisations (gathering those organisations not included in the above categories).

Volunteering (in Italy governed by the framework law on volunteering No. 266, of 1991) is then one of the organisational forms present in the third sector.

The term "volunteering" designates precisely aid and solidarity interventions, carried out by a group or an organisation, not by single individuals. For solidarity we mean the act of implementing a communitarian behaviour in which bonds are so tight that the various stakeholders in relation one with the other share the founding values and behaviours.

Volunteering, then, can be defined, besides its legal meaning, as a form of community action aiming at the implementation of altruistic and solidarity services, promoting rights and developing active and participative citizenship.

Voluntary organisations are created out of their members' free will, participation does not entitle to any type of financial remuneration, and their main aim is advocacy and implementation of social relevant services and activities for people not belonging to the organisation itself or for the community as a whole.

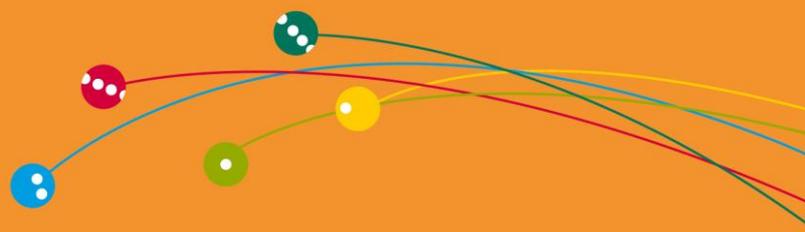
In that respect, one may refer to two criteria:

- the existence of a bond not related to a contractual agreement, but based on ethics;
- the existence of a rule preventing the distribution of any earnings of the organizations to its members.

The first criterion excludes third sector organisations based on professional bases (such as cooperatives); the second one excludes mutual organisations and self-help groups.

This conception of volunteering is based on the initial definition in the Framework Law on Volunteering stating: "The Italian Republic recognises the social value and function of voluntary activities as expression of participation, solidarity and pluralism...." (art. 1 par. 1 of Law 266/91).

The Italian volunteering considered itself since the beginning conscious action and movement, democratic participation networks, starting from different local cultures and communities of our country. Similarly, since the beginning, it acted internationally for mutual understanding among



different cultures and nationalities, for human development in the world within a context for peace and cooperation among peoples.

Facts and figures about the Italian third sector

The report published in 2008 by CNEL and ISTAT on social economy, for the period between 2001 and 2003, underlines the increase in voluntary organisations, especially in the field of health and social care.

By the end of 2003, there were 21.021 voluntary organisations, with an increase of 14.9% compared to 2001. In the same period, volunteers increased by 18.8%, passing from approximately 700,000 to more than 800,000, while employees are always around 12,000.

As far as finances are concerned, the total revenue of voluntary organisations, between 2001 and 2003, increased from 1,198 million euro in 2001 to 1,630 million Euros in 2003, and the average amount of revenues increased from 66 to 78 thousand Euros.

Expenditures showed very similar figures, 1,145 million Euros in 2001 and 1,518 million in 2003, with an average of 63 and 72 thousand Euros, respectively. In terms of activities, the health and social care mission of volunteer organisations is confirmed, although in the period considered there has been a growing trend of commitment in other fields of activities.

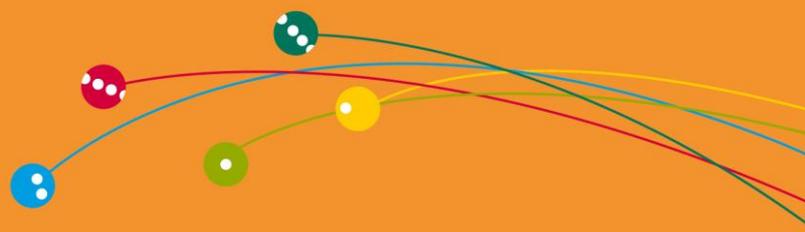
The main field of activities were, in actual facts, health (28%) and social care (27.8%), but with a decrease in their relative weight. Conversely, according to the report, organizations active mainly in the fields of recreation and culture, environmental and civil protection increased in numbers

National challenges and National strategy for volunteering

In Italy like in Europe, volunteering is a founding element for civil society development and for consolidation of democratic life and one of the fundamental dimensions of active citizenship. Agreeing with the Motivations of the Report to the European Parliament on the role of volunteering in contributing to economic and social cohesion (A6-0070/2008), Italy feels represented in the definition of volunteering as:

- is carried out without remuneration; in other words unpaid;
- is carried out of one's own free will;
- is carried out for the benefit of a third party outside one's own environment of family and friends;
- is open to all.

As stated in the Charter of Values of Volunteering: "Gratuity is the distinctive element of voluntary action and renders it original with respect to the other components of the third sector and other forms of civic engagement."



Because of this nature, volunteering can aid all to discover a new culture: solidarity, non-discrimination, sustainable development, non-violence, mutual respect and responsible citizenship based on the promotion of rights and best practices of shared and participatory democracy.

The presence of volunteering within all local communities far and near stimulates the community and its different actors, institutional and not, to devote more attention to the needs of the community itself and creates the conditions so that different subjects in the community find sustainable solutions, valorising mutual competences, knowledge and skills.

In its nature, volunteering is a prophetic answer to community needs, stimulating the different actors, public or otherwise, to grant solutions stable in time. For this nature volunteering must be able to connect with all those wanting to initiate and contribute to mechanisms of change, siding always with the weakest.

Moreover, partnership building and the creation of local and regional synergies between volunteering and institutions are of particular relevance, whereby the partnership represents a key instrument for the development of inclusion and equal opportunities policies. This is furthermore a fertile territory for the practice of participative democracy and for the involvement of all citizens to the life of the local community.

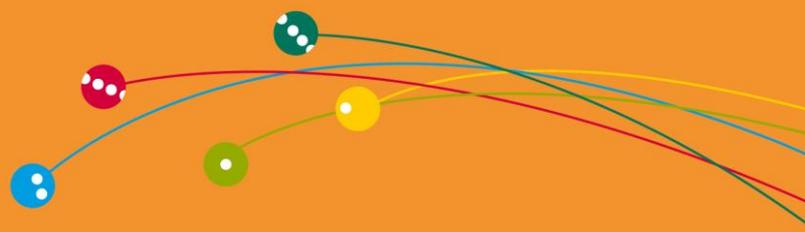
With its action based on solidarity, volunteering makes an essential contribution to the creation and growth of social capital, to the valorisation of interpersonal relationships and to the affirmation of the centrality of the individual, overcoming the limits imposed by a vision of development based only on economical dimensions. Measuring the volunteers' contribution only on financial terms is therefore reductive.

In fact, although the financial contribution is considerable – 5% of GDP according to official estimates – **it does not take into account its qualitative role, nor does it portray the capacity of innovation and social experimenting produced by voluntary action, not to mention its ability to take action at the first sign of social emergencies, thus reducing their impact.**

As underlined by Harkin in the same report, preparatory to the Decision for 2011, as well as in specific research in the field, volunteering plays a significant role in the creation of social capital. This is of special relevance in financially deprived areas, where reduced possibilities of access to services and opportunities generate also an impoverishment of social relations.

It is necessary also to underline the importance of volunteering in the promotion of social and economic cohesion, one of the most important objectives of the **Lisbon Charter**

Volunteering promotes employment (**more so in the European definition, nationally such a statement refers to the role that the values of volunteering have also in the employment field**), social inclusion, intergenerational relations and support to the excluded sectors of the

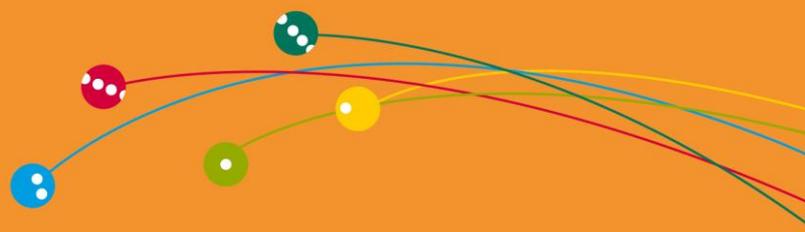


population and is committed to the realization of inclusion and mutual understanding, in times of large migrations.

Italy, within the European context, with its tradition of giving value to the different forms of volunteering and to its public recognition, on the basis of the founding values of volunteering –generous self-giving, the practise of active and participative citizenship, the ability to share the objectives of a fair and cohesive society – can contribute to create an environment favourable to volunteering all over Europe with its actions and through the exchange and valorisation of best practices, thus enabling:

- the recognition of the role and contribution of volunteering to the promotion of economic and social cohesion and lifelong learning;
- the active and participative involvement of the volunteering world as a fully acknowledged partner and interlocutor by the public authorities at all levels, in the policy definition and monitoring process.
- the access to adequate and sustainable funding for voluntary organizations, without an excess of bureaucratic formalities, and the recognition of volunteering as co-funding contribution in projects and programmes;
- the valorisation of volunteering role in the creation of an active and solidarity European citizenship considering its capacity of motivating and mobilising people towards a free personal commitment, creating bonds of proximity;
- the recognition of the role of volunteering as agent of participative democracy and of its impact on the development of active welfare and social inclusion policies, as social innovation catalyst as a result of the organized efforts of active citizens;
- easy access, adequate support and guidance for all citizens to volunteering opportunities, as fundamental for personal growth, social integration and in order to create community bonding
- the construction of relationships among societies and cultures, together with its international dimension, to prevent the political use of cultural differences to initiate conflict, faced as we are with the development of racism and fundamentalism;
- the inclusion of volunteering as a specific category in the official EUROSTAT and Member states statistical accounts;

Also in the “White Paper on the future of the social model. **The good life in the active society**” (approved by the Cabinet of Ministers on 6 May 2009 and presented the same year by the Minister of Labour and Social Affairs, the Senator Maurizio Sacconi MP), the role and function that the Third sector, and therefore volunteering, *associations* and social bodies of whom is responsible this Directorate general, plays in the realisation, and integration of active welfare policies. Such importance derives from having experimented models of participation constituting the focal strength to implement the welfare mix of opportunities, jointly planned interventions specifically to increase and promote the potential of the individual and of the community.



In this perspective, the Third sector, volunteering and civil society organisations and the different relevant public bodies, aim at accompanying individuals and families along the whole path of life, and in particular at supporting frailties, answering the needs arising in the daily life and in the various stage of life (in relation with age, the presence of family responsibilities or the need to conciliate these with the employment), supporting and promoting individual capacities and family networks. More generally, the system described in the White Book aims at building “friendly” local communities, favouring, from the offer side, interventions and organisational models promoting and encouraging freedom, and, from the demand side, active citizenship (third sector) and initiatives of mutual and self-help, placing at the core target groups and individuals, as well as quality and evaluation of services provided.

Administrative structure in place

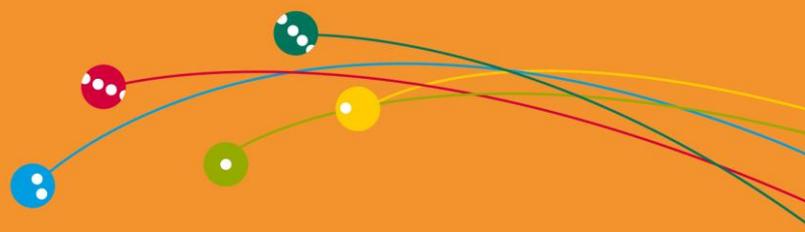
The National Coordinating Body (NCB) of the European Year of voluntary activities promoting active citizenship (2011) is the Directorate General for volunteering, associations and social bodies of the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs

For the preparation and management of the Year 2011 the NCB is supported by the Working Group of the National Observatory for Volunteering "European and International Volunteering in comparison". The technical Secretariat of the NCB is backed by the Europe and Mediterranean Area of CSVnet as defined in the Deliberation of the National Observatory for Volunteering on 21 December 2009.

Since 1997, the National Observatory for Volunteering (a body foreseen by the Framework Law on Volunteering 266/1991), through the working group "European and International Volunteering in comparison" has been dealing with the analysis and study of various types and characterizations of volunteering, civil society and third sector organisations at continental and international level with the overall objective to become acquainted with the different and heterogeneous aspects of volunteering, namely identifying:

- location and features of Italian volunteering in comparison with volunteering in other countries, paying attention to both shared and country-specific elements;
- the role that volunteering itself has in various contexts in identifying needs and requirements, in active welfare and in social inclusion policies.

Subsequently, the National Observatory for Volunteering and the same working group followed the activities related to 2001 - International Year of Volunteers (IYV), proclaimed by the United Nations and coordinated by UNV - United Nations Volunteers, in two significant moments:



Lecce, 3 February 2001

Presentation of the Second Biennial Report on Volunteering

The report was, on the occasion of the IYV, a concrete contribution to the understanding of quality and quantity dimensions of volunteering in Italy, to the analysis of its critical elements and to the configuration of its development in the coming years, also in comparison to the European and international context.

In the year 2000 report research data were also reported concerning both the national and local dimension of volunteering and it underlined some important issues, such as: the functioning of the Volunteer Support Centres; the volunteering situation at regional level; the articulation of volunteering in different sectors and types, etc.

Space had been given to the size of volunteering both from the international and EU point of view; as well as some innovative experiences of volunteering in non European countries.

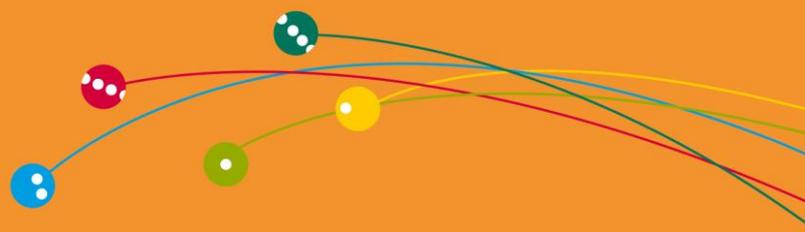
Turin, 23-24-25 February 2001

The three days were devoted to the role of Volunteering in the third millennium seen as an encounter between generations. National, European and international authorities and researchers participated. During the first day, several citizens' events took place, where the protagonists, either directly or indirectly, were the different generations of volunteers; as well as meetings between the world of volunteering and schools and institutions.

The second day was opened by the President of the Republic, the Minister responsible, the UN representative in Italy, with a work session on voluntary action, with particular attention to younger generations, and some insights on issues related to volunteering through working groups coordinated by representatives of the National Observatory for Volunteering and other organizations.

During the third day, the Prime Minister closed the event after the session "Volunteering as a resource for social reforms and social commitment" coordinated by the competent Minister and the Minister of Justice, and with the subsequent findings of the respective working groups.

The Working Group "European and International Volunteering in comparison" after 2001 has implemented relevant studies and research. Since 2007, with the support of the Europe Area of the National Coordination of Volunteer Support Centres - CSVnet, it has been following all the steps towards the Year 2011, starting from the position paper of the European Alliance – which brings together 24 European networks interested in volunteering issues and the promotion of volunteering. On 5 December 2007 – International Volunteer Day – this Alliance met at CEV - European Volunteer Centre to draw up a common strategy towards the declaration of 2011 as the European Year of Volunteering. The result of this meeting was a position paper. The already mentioned Group at the Observatory took note of this document and began to develop some substance and content assumptions, and proposals, in collaboration with the European Alliance 2011. Regarding this issue, a stable channel of information and collaboration has been activated through CEV - European Volunteer Centre, through its Italian Vice President, who is part of the same Working Group at the Observatory.



In that respect, the Working Group followed studies, networking initiatives and the preparation of events aimed at improving the understanding, impact and exchange of good practices on volunteering in Europe, not excluding the part regarding international volunteering.

For all relevant activities for the preparation, shared management and good impact of the Year 2011, the Working Group - together with support provided by the technical-organizational Secretariat, namely the Europe Area of the National Coordination of Volunteer Support Centres - CSVnet - works closely with the Ministry as NCB, proposes activities and documents, gets volunteering and civil society engaged in conformity with decisions taken, and reports – through the group coordinator – to the Observatory during institutional moments.

Consultation of stakeholders and involvement of relevant actors in civil society

The European Year of voluntary activities promoting active citizenship is a great opportunity for the Italian social fabric and for the country as a whole: the main objective is to build **participatory and shared actions and processes, among volunteering itself and all those organisations of the third sector that involve volunteers and promote volunteering and active citizenship, institutions and all the other stakeholders.**

The NCB initiated the preparatory works with the working group appointed by the National Observatory for Volunteering, representing the main stakeholders in the field of volunteering. A first meeting of the Italian Alliance 2011 aimed at volunteering and third sector as well as civil society organisations on a national scale was scheduled.

At regional and local level the Volunteer Support Centres will be asked to organise opportunities and meetings with all volunteers and organisations operating in their territories.

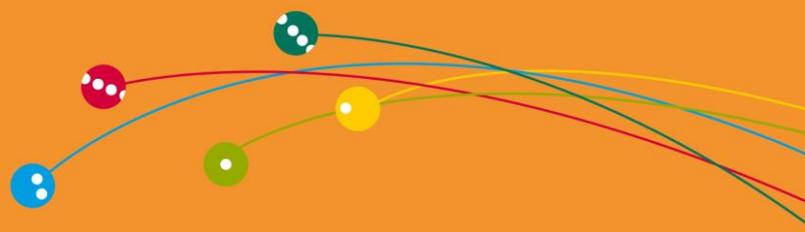
To facilitate a wider dissemination, the invitation will be extended to national volunteering networks and coordination, which will be asked to inform and involve representatives of their territorial organisations.

The National Observatory of Social Promotion Organisations – based in this Directorate General – indicated the representatives that will be part of the Italian Alliance 2011.

The consultation process, its outcomes and follow up

The consultation process has always been – “shared and participatory” and the objectives all stakeholders are aiming at are:

- the valorisation of volunteering and its impact, for the construction of stable and sustainable mechanisms that support it, as a basic element of active, shared and solidarity citizenship;
- the dissemination of initiatives and knowledge at local level and the valorisation of results and the useful and accessible impact to local organizations and their networks;
- the implementation of partnership and networking activities, through joint and co-designed initiatives and through the open sharing of good examples and good practices;



- the strengthening of voluntary organisations to improve the quality of the activities within the organisational structures, in order to facilitate volunteer activities and helping these organisations to implement new forms of volunteering and to open up to new approaches in order to promote shared networking, mobility, cooperation and synergy within the civil society and between civil society and other sectors of the community;
- the recognition that through volunteer activities competences and skills are acquired in a process of lifelong learning;
- the awareness-raising among citizens and institutions, to increase general awareness on the main values of volunteering culture, as an expression of civic participation;

The NCB and the National Observatory for Volunteering will also work towards a broader involvement of other stakeholders, through co-designing and supporting initiatives related to Areas of the Plan for 2011 and inserted into the national 2011 Calendar. Foundations, businesses promoting and implementing corporate social responsibility, universities and research institutes and media are identified as bodies of particular importance in this partnership process.

The Areas of the Italy National Plan 2011 are:

- Promotion and participation
- Exchanges of best practices
- Youth
- Subsidiarity and dialogue with institutions
- Research and data, valorisation of social impact
- Valorisation of volunteering activities as contribution to the build-up of good relations for the construction of social bonds in the community
- Volunteering infrastructures

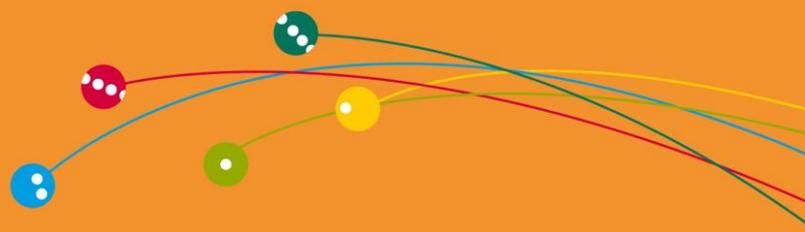
Promotion and Participation

- Communication tools
- Awareness Initiatives
- Communication campaigns with media
- Institutional Awards
- Ambassadors
- Street Events
- Public and Third Sector organisations initiatives
- Presence at major public and private events
- Lisbon Treaty: European active citizenship, rights and duties of European citizens

Volunteers! Make the difference!

- Orientation and training to the values of volunteering
- The culture of giving, sharing and participating
- Community needs and social community bonds





- Training and training needs, skills assessment and recognition
- Equal opportunities for participation
- European Volunteer Passport
- Exchange of good practices: by issues, areas for intervention, target groups typology
- Exchange of good practices: pathways to quality, social innovation, effectiveness
- Social Responsibility: individual, community, corporate
- Volunteering and social cohesion: future perspectives for policies for combating poverty and social exclusion
- Ensuring compatibility between professional life and volunteering

Youth

- School and volunteering
- Workshops of shared and participatory citizenship
- National Civic Service
- Give youth space! Associational projects for youth volunteering
- Aspiring Volunteers! Educating children to active citizenship (3-14 years old)
- Valorization in university courses of active citizenship competencies acquired through volunteering
- Information and awareness through youth media
- European Voluntary Service and opportunities for international mobility
- Legality and social community responsibility: the future of Europe

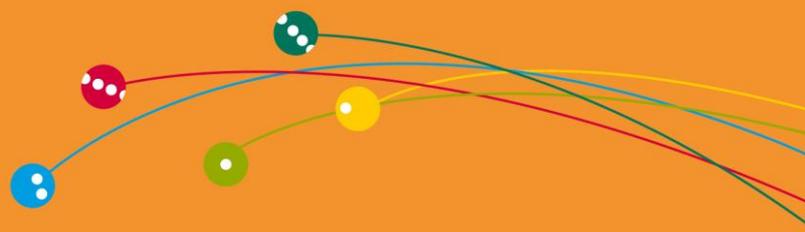
Subsidiarity and dialogue with institutions

- Partnership: consultation and verification mechanisms
- Volunteering in the policy making process and in social cohesion
- Manifesto of volunteering: requests to the Italian Government
- Joint session Italian Parliament – volunteers
- Joint sessions Regional Councils– volunteers
- The role of volunteering in participatory democracy
- Registers: regional, European, thematic

Research, data and social impact

- "Volunteering in Europe. Organizations, promotion, participation": dissemination of the results and comparative essays.
- Statistical survey of volunteers and voluntary organisations
- Measuring impact of volunteering on social and human capital
- Basic skills and transversal citizenship skills
- Economic and Social Reporting





- IV biennial report on Volunteering
- Good examples of projects granted funding by the National Observatory for Volunteering – years 2006 - 2009
- Report of the 1st year of participatory citizenship workshops
- Report of the 2nd year of participatory citizenship workshops
- European and International Volunteering: motivations and needs
- White Paper of the European Commission on volunteer activities in the EU (2006, EESC Opinion on “Voluntary activities: their role and impact in European society”)

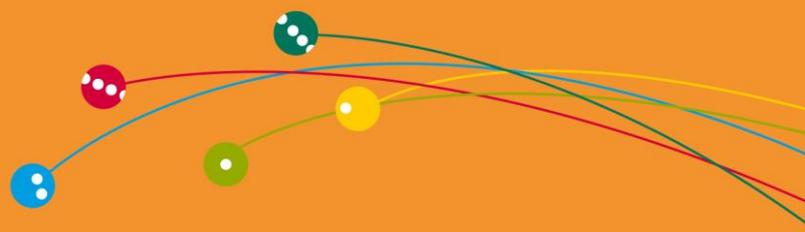
Infrastructure for volunteering

- Legal framework and legislation to support volunteering
- Volunteer Support Centres: functions, funding, governance
- Organs and functions of representations, coordination bodies and volunteering networks
- Funding and funds for basic activities of voluntary organizations
- Valorisation of volunteering
- Mechanisms and tax breaks, administrative and management support for voluntary organizations
- Volunteer Status

Expected outcome and impact

The following expected outcomes are strictly linked to the impact outcomes:

- ◆ Contributing to networking among organisations;
- ◆ Developing training and cooperation of those volunteering;
- ◆ Stimulating innovation in what concerns activities for volunteering and youth;
- ◆ Improving information delivery to volunteers, included access to people with disabilities;
- ◆ Favouring the acknowledgement of competences acquired by volunteers;
- ◆ Favouring the exchange of good practices and examples;
- ◆ Facilitating a social and cultural awareness process about the role of volunteering in the creation and implementation of social bonds in the community;
- ◆ Increasing the level of knowledge of the issue, to strengthen cooperation among different services and the community itself;
- ◆ Reducing the margins of risk behaviours among youth providing them with the key to understand the outside world, but also their emotions and relationships through the value features of volunteering;
- ◆ Promoting active citizenship, and European civic consciousness;
- ◆ Valorising voluntary activities aiming at increasing relations and social GDP;
- ◆ Informing, disseminating and implementing those subjects constituting the infrastructure for volunteering.



After 2011

Monitoring and evaluating of 2011 will be the main source of the White Paper on Voluntary activities Italy, which could be a valid contribution to the creation of the European Green Paper on Volunteering.

Outcome and process will be shared and discussed and analysed during the VI National Conference of Volunteering planned for February 2012.

Long-term expected outcomes and impact (outcomes must be measurable if possible)

Long-term expected outcomes and impact will concern:

- the follow-up, then, the monitoring and evaluation of expected outcomes and impact indicated in the relevant points of this Plan;
- laying the foundation of organisational processes giving the possibility to volunteers and their organisations to participate to the development of the society and of the EU;
- developing their feeling of belonging to the EU;
- encouraging their participation to democratic life in Europe;
- strengthening their mobility in Europe;
- developing among young people in particular intercultural learning;
- promoting fundamental values in the EU;
- offering opportunities for informal and non formal learning with a European dimension and creating new possibilities in the field of active citizenship;
- developing and promoting the quality of national support infrastructure for volunteers and their organisations;
- developing transnational projects of thematic cooperation involving volunteers and their organisations;
- contributing to cooperation among the various forms of youth volunteering at national and international level, with the view of increasing their mobility strengthening their feeling of citizenship;
- developing national and European policies apt to remove bureaucratic and administrative obstacles burdening voluntary organisations (Opinion CESE 2006);
- removing obstacles and promoting cooperation and exchange of ideas and good practices as well as the creation of the network necessary to a better understanding and knowledge of volunteering;
- coordinating with the other CE countries to organise conferences on behalf of the presidencies of the European Union and institute a European Volunteer and Civil Society Week;
- developing political cooperation and EU cooperation with other international organisms (Council of Europe, United Nations Organisations, etc.) .

The above- mentioned expected outcomes will be measured through ad-hoc quality and quantity indicators that are being defined, since they will feature variables that will need to take into account also the mid and long-term expected outcomes and impact presented by the other NCB.