

CEV Policy Statements on Volunteering Issues in Europe

Policy statements support [CEV's 5Rs policy agenda](#) and give more details about CEV's perspective on:

[Youth Guarantee / p. 2](#)

[European Voluntary Service & European Solidarity Corps / p. 3](#)

[Volunteering in Big Sports Events / p. 4](#)

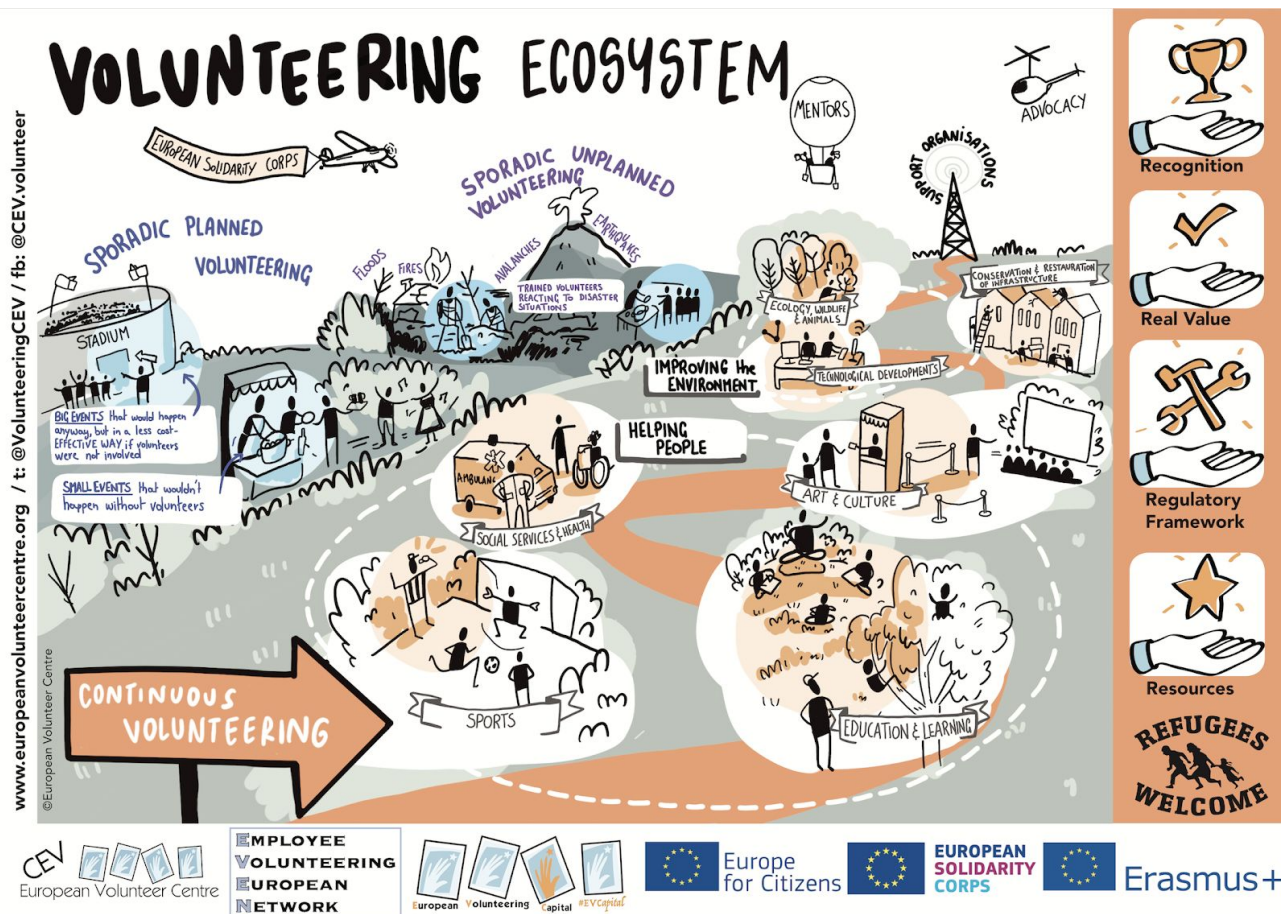
["Voluntourism" / p. 5](#)

[Volunteering at Music Festivals and Concerts / p. 6](#)

[Inclusive Volunteering / p. 8](#)

[Volunteering and impact on Welfare payments in Europe / p. 10](#)

[Volunteering and Social Prescribing/ p.12](#)





CEV Policy Statement on the Youth Guarantee (Approved CEV General Assembly 13 October 2016)

CEV notes that:

1. EU countries endorsed the principle of the Youth Guarantee in April 2013 ([Council Recommendation](#)).
2. The Youth Guarantee is a new approach to tackling youth unemployment which should ensure that **all young people under 25** – whether registered with employment services or not – get a good-quality, concrete offer within 4 months of them leaving formal education or becoming unemployed. The good-quality offer should be for a **job, apprenticeship, traineeship**, or continued **education** and be adapted to each individual need and situation.
3. Many EU Member States are failing to meet this commitment.

CEV believes that:

1. It is correct that volunteering is not included as a fifth option for the Youth Guarantee alongside a **job, apprenticeship, traineeship**, or continued **education**.
2. Volunteering is an engagement freely given to meet identified needs and this should remain the main focus of the volunteer activity even though the development of skills and competences are a valuable outcome of youth volunteering for the volunteers themselves.
3. In addition to the volunteering opportunities already offered, volunteer organisations provide an ideal place for young people on the Youth Guarantee Scheme to undertake a traineeship,
4. The EU should encourage Member States to further support volunteering and young people by working with their volunteering infrastructure organisations to build capacity in the volunteering sector to offer suitable traineeship placements for young people on the youth guarantee scheme.
5. The EU should fund pilot initiatives to provide evidence about how such placements could be organised and their impact on the participating young people.



CEV Policy Statement on “European Voluntary Service & European Solidarity Corps”

(Approved CEV General Assembly 13 October 2016)

CEV notes that:

1. EVS celebrates its 20th anniversary in 2016.
2. Many projects and organisations have benefited from, and been better able to fulfill their objectives, due to the time, energy and expertise of EVS volunteers.
3. Many young people have been able to experience the privilege of being an EVS volunteer and put into practice their active citizenship in this way.
4. EVS has become increasingly flexible in a bid to encourage and facilitate the participation from more young people from hard-to-reach groups.
5. The creation of a European Solidarity Corps was announced in 2016 that will include EVS as part of it.

CEV believes that:

1. Whilst extra funding and opportunities for EVS are welcome, this should be in conjunction with increased European investment in other types of volunteering, including that which can be accessed by and is attractive to people of all ages.
2. Situations where organisations exist largely due to EVS projects should be avoided and ideally EVS volunteers should be placed in projects where they can undertake their responsibilities alongside local volunteers and in this way get a better understanding of the local volunteering reality and contribute to the local volunteering objectives.
3. The financial conditions and relative standard of living for EVS volunteers should be reviewed, taking into account the standard of living experienced by people working on the minimum wage and the actual cost of living in the host country and region.
4. The possibility to undertake all or part of an EVS placement online should be explored by the European Commission and a pilot scheme for this conducted.
5. More synergies between National and Regional level full time volunteering schemes and EVS should be made.
6. The Expert Group on the Mobility of Young Volunteers should continue to meet and further develop the potential of existing and future full time cross-border youth volunteers in Europe.
7. The European Solidarity Corps should be developed in close collaboration with volunteer infrastructure organisations to ensure that the potential of the volunteer opportunities offered in this scheme are fully realised and complement existing provision whilst meeting properly identified needs other than those of the volunteers themselves.
8. It is crucial to recognise volunteering as a source of non-formal and informal learning but that a balance must be kept in order not to move the focus of volunteering from the benefit to others to the benefit of the individual in the form of qualifications or recognition of skills.

CEV Policy Statement on “Volunteering in Big Sports Events”

(Approved CEV General Assembly 13 October 2016)

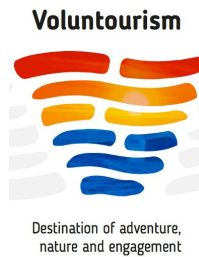


CEV notes that:

1. Volunteers are a critical resource for the hosts of big sports events eg Olympics and Football World Cup.
2. On repeated occasions in the preparation, implementation and follow up to these events questions are raised about this use of volunteers as part of the delivery mechanism of these ventures.
3. Recent reports from the Olympics in Rio de Janeiro stated that many volunteers quit '[due to long hours and no food](#)'.
4. There is a disparity between volunteer International Olympic Committee members receiving a stipend of \$900 a day and regular volunteers receiving not even meals in some cases.
5. The 2012 London Olympics managed to get 70,000 volunteers selected from a field of 240,000 applicants.
6. Tokyo will need about about [80,000 volunteers](#) to keep their Olympic Games running smoothly.
7. Volunteering in a big sports events is often a person's first introduction to volunteering and can lead to them seeking longer-term opportunities for volunteer engagement. This opportunity can be lost if the experience is not a positive one.

CEV believes that:

1. All volunteering in sport whether grassroots or in big sports events should be based on the values and principles that will contribute to culture of nonviolence, anti discrimination, tolerance and social inclusion.
2. Volunteers should be treated fairly and with due concern to the applicable volunteering legal framework and quality standards. The motivation for their engagement should be to bring added value to the event rather than as a cost-cutting measure.
3. Volunteering quality standards should be maintained in big sports events and hosting countries and sport governing bodies should work with the appropriate volunteering infrastructure organisations to ensure that this happens.
4. Organisers should put in place mechanisms so that people with less financial capacity to pay their own travel, accommodation and/ or food whilst volunteering also have the possibility to volunteer.
5. The European Commission should ensure that any barriers to the free mobility of EU volunteers wishing to volunteer in a big Sports Event in another EU country are investigated and, where appropriate, eradicated.
6. Organisers should ensure that volunteering recruitment drives for big sports events are conducted with reference to, and due consideration of, the wider volunteering context in the host community.
7. Unsuccessful volunteer applicants should be signposted and referred to other sources of volunteering opportunities.
8. Ex-volunteers from big sports events should be encouraged, and given all the means possible, to identify further volunteering opportunities where suitable and desired in order that their volunteering engagement can be continued.



CEV Policy Statement on “Voluntourism”

(Approved CEV General Assembly 13 October 2016)

CEV notes that:

1. Voluntourism is a form of tourism in which travellers participate in voluntary work. -Participants pay a fee to travel to and engage in a ‘volunteering project’ often (but not always) in the so-called developing world and often in a country other than their own.
2. Some providers of voluntourism are not-for-profit and others are profit-making businesses.
3. Volunteers in these programmes can do good and the fees that they pay contribute to delivering projects that otherwise might not happen.
4. Some voluntourism programs are mis-sold and participants can pay fees for experiences which are little more than a holiday and provide no real volunteering opportunities or involve actions designed to meet real local needs.
5. “Voluntourism has become a global business, fueled by a growing desire among travelers to take meaningful trips and try to do some good. Scores of companies offer travelers the opportunity to do everything from count and monitor wildlife to teach in schools” (Conde Nast Traveler 2013).
6. Some programmes focus more on the presumed needs of the community, positioning the volunteer as a benevolent giver, rather than on a real understanding of need and community partnership.
7. A [project between organisations in Croatia and Montenegro](#) is funded by the EU (interreg) in order to promote good practice of voluntourism and enhance local pilot projects.

CEV believes that:

1. Information for potential voluntourists about what to look for in quality voluntourism experiences, particularly in relation to seeking not-for-profit based opportunities should be provided.
2. We should endeavour to ensure that renewed interest in volunteering, and in particular cross-border volunteering, from the European policymakers maintains a focus on non-fee paying volunteering opportunities that are truly grounded in responding to local challenges and an expressed need for additional human resources in the form of volunteers coming from another country, avoiding all job substitution situations.
3. Any concerns about voluntourism experiences on offer in Europe should be brought to the attention of the CEV secretariat, or to CEV members in their country. These examples will be used to create a report to be used as an evidence base for volunteering policies.
4. Funds should be sought in order to monitor the situation and gather data regarding the voluntourism phenomena in Europe.



Volunteering at Music Festivals and Concerts (Approved CEV General Assembly 5 October 2017)

CEV notes that:

1. Very often, in order to ensure that they are financially viable, many music festivals across Europe rely massively on the assistance of volunteers, with some almost entirely volunteer driven.
2. Individual concerts, both for-profit and also concerts held in order to raise money for charities, or with a traditional cultural focus, also rely heavily on the support of volunteers.
3. Considering the high prices of Festival tickets in a vast number of these events, to volunteer, in exchange for free pass, benefits and other types of discounts, is increasingly becoming an appealing prospect for many young people.
4. Both for-Profit and not-for-profit music festivals often develop partnerships with not-for-profit organizations, which act as brokers in the recruitment of volunteers for key roles. The activities undertaken by the volunteers (generally 8 hours shifts) range from stewarding, door staff/security, campsite info personnel, supervising and dismantling the festival's infrastructure, cleaning and rubbish collection.
5. Volunteering in major events can be an important experience for young people that allow them to gain key experience and exposure in the music/ entertainment industry, strengthening and improving their organizational and social skills, and an opportunity for personal development, while undertaking key responsibilities for the success of the event.

CEV believes that:

1. It is crucial to underline and emphasize that volunteering should happen in the framework of non-profit activities for the public good/interest.
2. It is crucial that event organisers remember that the involvement of volunteers should be organized in such a way that it will serve the public good. If the organization of a concert or festival is recognized as being of benefit for the wider community the volunteer program should be organized in collaboration with a non profit organization (CSO, governmental or other public institution).
3. A not for profit organisation engaging volunteers should ensure that the ethics of volunteering are protected, the quality of the volunteering experience is ensured, adherence to relevant legal frameworks, and the added community value protecting the essential values on which volunteering is based is taken into account.
4. The volunteering opportunities fostered in this area should avoid, at all costs, situations of job substitution, namely by respecting the general principle of adequate balance between professionals

and volunteers and bring added value to the event rather than being limited to a cost cutting exercise.

5. It is crucial that event organisers remember that, following the guidelines defined in the Policy Agenda for Volunteering in Europe (PAVE) glossary, volunteers are “people from diverse groups [...] undertaking a wide range of tasks [...] without seeking any financial gain being neither the objective nor the way to recognize the contribution or the achievement”¹
6. It is crucial that volunteers shall receive adequate preparation for their responsibilities and enjoy an environment where their contribution is valued and appreciated, while receiving a respectful treatment.
7. Organisers should implement a set of measures that could allow people with less financial capacity to effectively enjoy this experience, by providing transportations, food and accommodation (since in many cases the volunteer is expected to cover these costs themselves).
8. Recruiters of volunteers for music festivals and concerts should ensure complete transparency about the profit or not-for-profit nature of events. They should also require organisers to engage volunteers or so-called volunteers on the basis of a clearly written agreement stating their rights and responsibilities that respect the relevant legislation and the ethos and principles of volunteering.

¹ PAVE Glossary, 2011, p. 44.



Inclusive Volunteering

(Approved CEV General Assembly 26 October 2018)

CEV notes that:

1. Volunteering supports social inclusion and solidarity; underpins active citizenship and social engagement; and promotes shared responsibilities and European values.
2. Volunteering contributes to the European Social model and to security, peace and prosperity.
3. Volunteering provides a framework for an alternative narrative to extremist and populist views and actions and can contribute to their prevention.
4. Volunteering actively prevents Hate Speech, promotes inclusion and tolerance and enables citizens to be directly active in developing the Europe they strive for.
5. Volunteering has the power to break stereotypes and promote understanding and tolerance of differences.
6. Volunteering is in an ideal position to provide a basis and a framework for inclusive societies given that everyone has something to contribute as a volunteer to encourage and facilitate inclusion and diversity.
7. Despite people's natural tendencies to show solidarity and offer a 'helping hand' to those in need, volunteering cannot flourish without a conducive and supportive policy framework creating an enabling environment in which organisations and initiatives can exist in a sustainable way. In addition to a policy framework, volunteering also requires investment and infrastructure to support it and help it thrive.
8. Volunteer organisations are currently experiencing a severe lack of capacity to train and support the numbers of willing volunteers available, and to attract and engage others so that they are able to drive the change to nurture a diverse and inclusive community where people can volunteer freely and easily, regardless of background or ability, and achieve full participation and integration through their volunteer engagement.

CEV believes that

1. Governments alone cannot bring about a society where the respect for Human Rights, Equality and Dignity for all are respected.
2. Volunteering should be central in building a cohesive and inclusive society based on solidarity and active citizenship.
3. Through volunteering people can arrive at a point of understanding others. Understanding in turn helps to achieve respect for others, and build a society where the freedom to be different can be developed.

4. Volunteer-involving organisations and public institutions should make every effort to ensure that the volunteering opportunities that they offer are open to all people whatever their background and / or situation as regards individuals who need additional support because of social obstacles such as: disability, educational difficulties, economic limitations, cultural differences, health problems, geographical barriers, as well as socio-economic background.
5. Volunteer-involving organisations and public institutions should develop an environment where volunteers from different social, cultural and religious backgrounds and contexts can implement actions together.
6. Volunteer-involving organisations and public institutions should ensure that whilst respecting the values base, principles of quality volunteering, and the rights of vulnerable groups, that volunteering opportunities are accessible to **all** citizens who wish to contribute their time and skills in this way.
7. Volunteer-involving organisations and public institutions should ensure that they develop a suitable range of roles and functions for volunteers that can take into account differing skills and competencies and personal situations of existing and potential volunteers, whilst at the same time ensuring that the societal needs and those of the direct beneficiaries of the actions are paramount.
8. Volunteer-involving organisations and public institutions should ensure that when volunteers are engaged it is in a way that is compatible with a good work-life balance and that the emerging situation of the 'gig' economy, with zero hours contracts and precarious work conditions, is taken into account when designing roles and rosters for volunteers.
9. Volunteer-involving organisations and public institutions should assist volunteers in obtaining and maintaining genuine and meaningful volunteering placements through the provision of relevant and appropriate support. This should take into account that while all volunteers need support in order to realise their full potential, some volunteers may require additional support in order to realise their volunteering engagement in a way that ensures the intended impact.
10. Volunteer-involving organisations and public institutions, and the infrastructure organisations that support them, should be properly resourced and financed in order to ensure that volunteering is open and accessible to all, respecting ethical principles and quality guidelines for high impact, needs-led, value-added, voluntary-based actions.



Volunteering and impact on welfare payments in Europe

(Approved CEV General Assembly 26 October 2018)

CEV notes that:

1. In some European Countries unemployed people, or others, who are legally entitled to receive social welfare benefits, can be subjected to limitations regarding their volunteering activities. In some cases, people in receipt of unemployment or other allowances such as sick or disability pay are permitted to volunteer but only within certain sectors.
2. Claimants are often required to inform the relevant employment or social security office of their volunteer commitments, and/or intention to volunteer. This request can be refused under certain circumstances and can also lead to the suspension of payments.
3. Volunteers can lose their entitlement to state welfare payments they may have been claiming if they receive accommodation, board and pocket-money from the organisation or project for which they are volunteering. This is particularly the case of full-time volunteers in non-governmental national or transnational voluntary service programmes.
4. In addition to contributing to societal need and the common good, volunteering also enables people to gain hard and soft skills or competencies that they can use to improve their well-being, personal development and employability.

CEV believes that:

1. Volunteering has a value and importance as one of the most visible expressions of solidarity promoting and facilitating social inclusion, building social capital and producing a transformative effect on society. As such, everyone should have the freedom to volunteer. This includes groups potentially at risk, such as unemployed people.
2. Volunteering when unemployed or claiming sick or disability benefits is a person's individual decision to contribute to the society and the public good. It should not be the reason for losing social benefits.
3. Volunteering should be seen as having a positive value in enhancing employability and well-being. There is no reason to forbid volunteering for benefits-claimants based on a perception that it has a negative impact per se on availability to work, or it is a symptom of an abuse of the social security system.
4. **Public Authorities should:**
 - Recognise the positive impact of volunteering on volunteers and society overall when designing social security entitlement policies.
 - Examine existing policies, regulations and training for welfare agency staff concerning volunteering and benefits entitlement and amend in order to remove all barriers that people face in accessing volunteering.

- Remove any requirement to request permission to volunteer in relation to assessment for benefit entitlement or to provide specific details about the causes for which a person is volunteering.
- Consider that volunteering in relevant activities can contribute to increasing an individual's employability or health and well-being could be an eligible activity to be undertaken, at a person's own free will (in line with the principles of volunteering), in full or part replacement of other training and self development opportunities offered or required by State services as a condition for receipt of benefits.



Volunteering and Social Prescribing

(Approved CEV General Assembly 21 November 2019)

[Read the CEV study here](#)

CEV notes that:

1. Social Prescribing, “community referral”, “linking” or “signposting”, is a means for tackling poor health without, or alongside, the prescription of pharmaceutical drugs.
2. Social prescribing schemes cover a wide-range of activities and programmes ranging from physical activities eg dance classes, through culture programmes and volunteering.
3. Volunteering has become an efficient and an increasingly popular way of addressing health and well-being concerns as part of social prescribing schemes.
4. Research proves that volunteering has a positive impact on mental health.
5. To participate in volunteering activities in the framework of social prescribing is beneficial for patients with mental health issues, and/or suffer from loneliness and isolation.
6. Volunteering as part of social prescribing schemes has a positive impact on society, as patients require less on-going support, they contribute to an important cause and often continue to support it even after the prescribed period ends.

CEV believes that:

1. Volunteering as a social prescribing practice should be more widely-implemented within Europe.
2. The use of volunteering through the social prescribing referral programme and its impact should be carefully monitored.
3. Referral or signposting scheme for patients towards volunteering placements should be improved, to avoid leaving the patients alone in the process.
4. Link-workers should assist patients who are signposted towards volunteer placements in obtaining and maintaining genuine and meaningful volunteering placements through the provision of relevant and appropriate support.

5. The doctors, link-workers, other health professionals and patients should receive more information about the positive impact of volunteering which would allow a wider adoption of social prescribing in this field.
6. Organisations engaging volunteers in social prescribing schemes should be trained, resourced, financed and supported.
7. It should be ensured that organisations that offer volunteering placements in as part of social prescribing schemes respect ethical principles and adhere to quality guidelines for high impact, needs-led, value-added, voluntary-based actions.