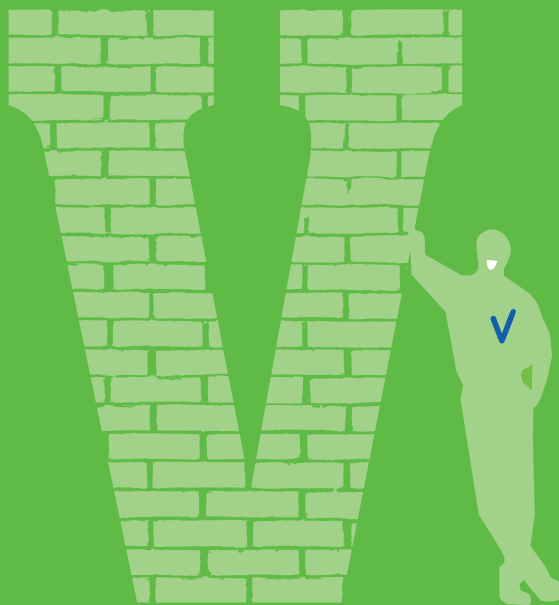CEV General Assembly Conference

"An enabling volunteering infrastructure in Europe: Situation – Trends – Outlook"

Malmö, Sweden | 15th-16th October 2009

Final Report – Conference Conclusions

EUROPEAN VOLUNTEER CENTRE

Education and Culture DG

'Europe for Citizens' Programme

CEV General Assembly Conference

"An enabling volunteering infrastructure in Europe: Situation – Trends – Outlook"

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EUROPEAN VOLUNTEER CENTRE

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Abbreviations

CEV	European Volunteer Centre
CSR	Corporate Social Responsibility
CSV	Centro Servizio al Volontariato
DE	Germany
DG	Directorate-General
DK	Denmark
EU	European Union
EYV 2011	European Year of Volunteering 2011
GA	General Assembly
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
HU	Hungary
IAVE	International Association for Voluntary Efforts
IE	Ireland
IT	Italy
KAVC	Korea Association of Volunteer Centres
KAVM	Korea Association of Volunteer Management
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NL	The Netherlands
ÖKA	Önkéntes Központ Alapítvány
RO	Romania
SE	Sweden
SEE	Southern and Eastern Europe
SEEYN	South East European Youth Network
SK	Slovakia
SI	Slovenia
SPES	Centro di Servizio per il Volontariato del Lazio

Executive summary

What, Who and Where?
What do we mean when we talk about an enabling volunteering infrastructure in Europe? What are its elements and roles? What is the current state of play regarding the volunteering infrastructure in different countries? And how do we want it to look? What should be the legacy of the European Year of Volunteering 2011 in terms of the volunteering infrastructures in different countries and in Europe? Can we agree upon common indicators for a successful volunteering infrastructure?

Over 120 participants gathered in Malmö, Sweden, from 15th to 16th October 2009, for the CEV General Assembly conference 'An enabling volunteering infrastructure in Europe: Situation – trends – outlook' in order to find answers to those questions. Participants included representatives of CEV member organisations and other civil society actors, European Union (EU) institutions, the Swedish EU Presidency, national and local governments, as well as businesses. The conference was organised by CEV in cooperation with its member organisation, the Forum för Frivilligt Socialt Arbete, and was supported by the European Commission..

Why?
Research and the work of CEV members across Europe suggest that a strong and enabling volunteering infrastructure is needed in order to fulfil various key roles, such as raising public awareness about volunteering; developing volunteering opportunities and brokering between (potential) volunteers and volunteer placements; developing good practice; and working on policy responses and the strategic development of volunteering in our societies. The hypothesis according to which there are some elements across Europe that, put together, should form such a common volunteering infrastructure, in order to strengthen volunteering and increase its impact in the various areas in which it operates, gave the impulse for organising a General Assembly on this topic. The CEV General Assembly in Malmö attempted to identify the most important elements and roles of such an infrastructure and aimed at reaching a common understanding of the concept and developing an agenda towards an enabling volunteering infrastructure all over Europe.

How?
The General Assembly was opened by two keynote speeches from Johan von Essen, Professor at the Ersta Sköndal University College, and Cees van den Bos, from the Erasmus University of Rotterdam, respectively the volunteering infrastructure in Sweden and a panorama of volunteering infrastructure in eight countries. It was followed by an opening panel debate involving representatives of the European Commission, the European

Parliament, the Permanent Representation of Sweden to the EU, CEV members, and other stakeholders, who discussed the common elements of a volunteering infrastructure in Europe and its perceived roles. In ten different workshops, good practices were presented in terms of developing an enabling volunteering infrastructure, and three panel debates addressed the questions of the role of the public sector in developing a volunteering infrastructure, the need for laws on volunteering and the necessity of an infrastructure for volunteering. In a final session, the participants discussed the common grounds for a "Malmö agenda" for an enabling volunteering infrastructure in Europe. The conference also included an ongoing exhibition where representatives of 19 countries presented an overview of the volunteering infrastructure in different European countries.

Conference Conclusions – The Malmö Agenda

The General Assembly entailed lively discussions on what should be considered as part of an enabling infrastructure and what should not be included in it. Various points of views were also confronted on the roles of such infrastructure. Both questions proved to raise different elements of answers depending on the national or regional contexts. However some common conclusions could be drawn from the discussions, including the fact that successful and quality volunteering is linked with an effective volunteering infrastructure.

Based on the conference conclusions, the European Volunteer Centre drew a set of recommendations as a first step on a way towards an enabling volunteering infrastructure in Europe. The Malmö Agenda is addressed to volunteer centres and volunteer-involving organisations, decision makers and political authorities at European, national, regional and local levels, media, research and business representatives, and calls on profound discussion on the volunteering infrastructure and defining the appropriate systems, mechanisms and instruments to ensure that volunteering will flourish in Europe.

The volunteering infrastructure should combine a set of Europe-wide common standards with adaptable flexible features

Minimum common standards are needed to establish a Europe-wide volunteering infrastructureing information about volunteering, raising awareness about the contribution of which uniformly promotes and supports volunteering. However, volunteering is a concept that differs from country to country and therefore the perceived necessary elements and functions of an enabling volunteering infrastructure also vary.

→ A set of common standards should be agreed upon for a Europe-wide model of volunteering infrastructure to promote and support volunteering. The volunteering infrastructure must take into account the roles and responsibilities of the different stakeholders and maintain a sensible balance between spontaneous volunteering and organised volunteering. Apart from the common elements, "volunteering infrastructure" should remain a flexible concept which can be adapted to the different regional, national and local contexts. If interpreted in a too restrictive way, this could indeed limit the space for manoeuvre of volunteer actors in some countries and be counterproductive.

The volunteering infrastructure should be based on the needs of volunteers and the community

The volunteering infrastructure is not an end in itself but it should serve a purpose to create an enabling political, social and economic environment in Europe for the full potential of volunteering to be realised. Through the volunteering infrastructure everybody should be able to actively contribute to the development of communities and have equal access to voluntary activities.

→ The volunteering infrastructure should be based on needs and take into account the specific characteristics and requirements of volunteering providers and beneficiaries. It should be designed in a way that volunteering is accessible in the most appropriate way to all, irrespective of race, gender, legal status, disabilities. Moreover, the volunteering infrastructure should primarily aim at increasing the impact of volunteering on the well-being of the community.

The volunteering infrastructure should be designed to serve different purposes

The volunteering infrastructure should assume different functions such as enabling volunteering to take place and facilitating voluntary activities, disseminating information about volunteering, raising awareness about the contribution of volunteers and allowing volunteers to be celebrated and rewarded.

→ Volunteering infrastructure should be designed in a way to serve multiple functions and interests: those of society, volunteer organisations and volunteers themselves.

An enabling volunteering infrastructure necessitates involvement of all stakeholders

In order for an enabling volunteering infrastructure to be established, the support and contribution of all stakeholders including volunteer organisations, the public and private sector and all other relevant stakeholders where volunteering has a role to play is essential.

→ All stakeholders should get involved in strengthening the volunteering infrastructure by contributing to developing volunteering; ensuring recognition among citizens and the political sphere, and ensuring a lasting and optimal impact on society. However, the voluntary sector must remain autonomous in order to be efficient and to enjoy unrestricted room for manoeuvre.

The European Year of Volunteering (EYV) 2011 should be seized as an opportunity to develop an enabling volunteering infrastructure in Europe

EYV 2011 will constitute a unique opportunity to widely raise awareness about the crucial role of volunteers all over Europe and to inform the public as well as policy-makers about the concrete impact of volunteering on society.

→ All stakeholders should seize the opportunity of EYV 2011 and mobilise efforts for contributing to building an enabling infrastructure where volunteering is acknowledged for its benefits and promoted through enabling policies and environment.

Programme of the conference

Thursday 15 October 2009

08.30 Registration

09:00 **Opening ceremony of the conference**

- ■ **Göran Petterson**, *Secretary General, Forum för frivilligt socialt arbete*
- ■ **Dr Marijke Steenbergen**, *CEV President*

09:15 **Opening panel – An enabling volunteering infrastructure in Europe – Situation, Trends, Outlook**

Keynote speeches:

- ■ **Johan von Essen**, *The Institute for Civil Society Studies, Ersta Sköndal University College,* The Volunteering Infrastructure in Sweden
- ■ **Cees van den Bos**, *Erasmus University Rotterdam and Volunteer Centre Arnhem* A panorama of Volunteering Infrastructure in 8 countries

- ■ **Pierre Mairesse**, *DG Education and Culture, European Commission*
- ■ **Marian Harkin**, *Member of the European Parliament, Ireland*
- ■ **Henrik Selin**, *Permanent Representation of Sweden to the EU*
- ■ **Cristina Rigman**, *Pro Vobis National Volunteer Centre, Romania*
- ■ **Ksenija Fonovic**, *SPES Italy*
- ■ **Kuba Wygnánski**, *Forum of the Third Sector / Council of the Public Benefit and Volunteering, Poland*
- ■ **Celia Moore**, *IBM Corporate Citizenship Executive, CSR Europe Vice-chair*

  Chair: Markus Held, Director CEV

11:00 Coffee Break

11:30 **Official inauguration of the country corners: A panorama of the elements of a volunteering infrastructure in 28 countries...**

- ■ **Lester M. Salamon**, *Johns Hopkins University, USA*

13:30 Lunch

14:30 **A spotlight on good practice part 1: parallel workshops focusing on roles performed by the volunteering infrastructure**

Workshop I **Government's role in successfully constructing and supporting a sustainable volunteer infrastructure in the Netherlands.** ■ Sandra Kamerbeek, *MOVISIE (NL)*	Workshop IV **Bridging the gap: building support for volunteer-involving organisations** ■ Fiona Sexton, *Yvonne Mc Kenna, Volunteer Centres Ireland (IE)*
Workshop II **Volunteering in Southern and Eastern Europe (SEE) - from underground to mainstream** ■ Domagoj Kovacic, *SEEYN South East European Youth Network (Bosnia and Herzegovina)*	Workshop V **„Wag the City" – Innovative ways of involving youth in volunteering** ■ Susanne Brannebo, *Spiritus Mundi (SE)*
Workshop III **What competences and policy are needed in order to support and promote senior volunteering?** ■ Zsofia Tornoczi, *on behalf of ÖKA (HU), SPES (IT), Slovenska Filantropija (SI), C.A.R.D.O. (SK), and Pro Vobis (RO)*	

16:00 – Coffee Break

16.30 – **Three parallel debates**

Debate I	Debate II	Debate III
Do we need laws on volunteering?	**What role exists for the public sector to develop the volunteering infrastructure**	**Achieving favourable conditions for volunteer development – is infrastructure necessary?**
■ Nilda Bullain *European Center for Not-for-Profit Law, Hungary* ■ Carina Ohlsson *Swedish Forum for Womens' Shelter / Forum för frivilligt socialt arbete* ■ Alzbeta Mracková *C.A.R.D.O. National Volunteer Centre, Slovakia* ■ Lluc Martí *IAVE Youth Office, Catalunya, Spain* Chair: Andras F. Tóth *ÖKA National Volunteer Centre, Hungary*	■ Kirsten Koht *Local Authority of Baerum, Norway* ■ Ludvig Sandberg *Forum för frivilligt socialt arbete, Sweden* ■ Mette Hjaere *National Volunteer Development Agency, Denmark* ■ Elza Chambel *National Council for the Promotion of Volunteering, Portugal* Chair: Mike Nussbaum *Volunteering England*	■ Simon Richards *Volunteering England, UK* ■ Karl Monsen-Elvik *Volunteer Development Scotland, UK* ■ Gordana Forcic *Association of Civil Society Development SMART, Croatia* ■ Jugoslav Jevdjic *Youth Communication Centre OKC, Bosnia and Herzegovina* Chair: Cristina Rigman *Pro Vobis National Volunteer Center (Romania)*

17:45 – Closing plenary

20:00 – Reception and Dinner

Friday 16 October 2009

09:00 **A spotlight on good practice – part 2: parallel workshops focusing on roles performed by the volunteering infrastructure**

Workshop VI
Building Volunteering Infrastructure from scratch in a Post-Communist Country: Opportunities and Challenges

- Cristina Rigman, *Pro Vobis National Volunteer Center (RO)*
- András F. Tóth, *ÖKA National Volunteer Centre (HU)*

Workshop VII
Online volunteer recruitment services in Denmark and Sweden

- Amelie Silfverstolpe, *Volontärbyrån (SE)*
- Casper Bo Dano, *frivilligjob (DK)*

Workshop VIII
Business community engagement: The German network of local brokers and the European project INCLUDE

- Peter Kromminga, *UPJ (DE)*

Workshop IX
History, Role and Development of Volunteer Centres as Infrastructures in Korea

- Dr. Kang-Hyun Lee, *IAVE President and Korea Council of Volunteering (Korea)*

Workshop X
Volunteer infrastructure in Italy: Framework Law on Volunteering and the system of Volunteer Support Centres (CSV)

- Ettore Degli Esposti, *Coordinamento Regionale dei Centri di servizio per il Volontariato della Lombardia (IT)*

10:30 Coffee Break

11:00 **Common trends and common ground? Towards a CEV "Malmö Agenda" for an Enabling Volunteering Infrastructure in Europe**

- Group 1: Belgium, Bosnia, Denmark, Ireland, Portugal, Hungary
- Group 2: Croatia, Sweden, France, Turkey, Estonia, Netherlands
- Group 3: Germany, Italy, Norway, Serbia, Sweden, Romania
- Group 4: Poland, Finland, Montenegro, Luxembourg, UK, Slovakia, Spain

13:00 Lunch

13:30 Closing plenary

14:30 Visits to local projects

Introduction

The General Assembly conference 'An enabling volunteering infrastructure in Europe: Situation – trends – outlook' was organised by the European Volunteer Centre (CEV) in cooperation with its member, the Forum för Frivilligt Socialt Arbete. The event, which took place in Malmö, Sweden, from 15th to 16th October 2009, was supported by the European Commission. Among the over 120 participants, representatives of CEV member organisations and other civil society actors, EU institutions, the Swedish EU Presidency, national and local governments as well as businesses were present.

Millions of citizens all over Europe are involved in voluntary activities in various sectors such as social inclusion, lifelong learning, active ageing, civil protection, environmental action, etc. Through volunteering, people of all abilities and backgrounds can contribute to a positive change and further develop their skills and knowledge while meeting people from very different backgrounds and origins. Volunteering benefits both society in general and the volunteers themselves as it constitutes a means of social inclusion and integration, it provides formal and informal opportunities and it plays a crucial role in dealing with various societal issues.

For the full potential of volunteering to be realised, some structures and methods are necessary. These structures and methods form the volunteering infrastructure, which is there to create an enabling political, social and economic environment in Europe for voluntary activities to flourish and bring a lasting and efficient impact. The volunteering infrastructure is thus a building block in a democratic society, through which everybody can actively contribute to the development of communities and have equal access to voluntary activities.

By addressing this topic, the CEV General Assembly sought to identify the elements that should form this volunteering infrastructure and the roles that it should fulfil. It also tried to answer the question whether it is possible to reach a common understanding of this concept all over Europe and agree on standards for establishing a common enabling volunteering infrastructure in Europe.

This report summarises the conference discussions of the various panels, workshops and debates and presents the main conclusions to be drawn from them.

The first chapter **'Background: the concept of "volunteering infrastructure" and the state of play in Europe'** introduces the concept of 'volunteering infrastructure' by presenting some attempts for a definition of "volunteering infrastructure" and presents the general state of play in Europe in terms of volunteering infrastructure in Europe.

The second chapter **'What role for the volunteering infrastructure'** addresses the roles and functions to be performed by a European volunteering infrastructure.

The third chapter **'Volunteering Infrastructure in Europe: different elements and spotlight on good practices'** presents the various elements of the volunteering infra-

structure that were identified during the conference and illustrates them through the different good practice workshops that were presented.

The fourth chapter **'What role for different stakeholders to develop the volunteering infrastructure?'** addresses the respective roles of various actors in the development of a volunteering infrastructure, including volunteer centres and networks, the public sector and other stakeholders, such as businesses.

Finally, the fifth chapter **'Conclusions – common trends and common grounds'** presents the main conclusions of the discussions.

The report also comprises three appendices - an address book of the organisations involved, the participants' list, and a bibliography.

CEV would like to thank the Forum för Frivilligt Socialt Arbete for having hosted the conference, all speakers and workshop presenters who agreed to share their expertise and knowledge through the workshops, debates and panel discussions, the participants who showed their interest in the conference by their presence and their active contribution in the discussions, as well as the volunteer proofreader Anne Maria Corbett for her contribution to this publication.

Aurélie Storme
CEV – the European Volunteer Centre
Brussels, July 2010

I. Background: the concept of "volunteering infrastructure" and the state of play in Europe

All over Europe, more than 100 million citizens engage in voluntary activities. A Eurobarometer survey in 2006 revealed that 3 out of 10 Europeans claim to be active in a voluntary capacity and that close to 80% of respondents feel that voluntary activities are an important part of democratic life in Europe[1]. Although the concept of volunteering embraces different elements and traditions in different countries and regions, it is observed and commonly agreed that wherever people engage together in activities to help each other, support those in need, preserve our environment, campaign for human rights, or to initiate actions to help ensure that everyone enjoys a decent life – both society as a whole and the individual volunteers benefit and social cohesion is significantly strengthened.

In order to recognise the contribution of these volunteers and to encourage more citizens to become active, measures to be taken differ from country to country. However, the CEV General Assembly in Malmö has corroborated the hypothesis according to which there are some elements across Europe that, put together, should form a common volunteering infrastructure which would strengthen volunteering and increase its impact in the various areas in which it operates.

This chapter first presents what we generally understand by the concept of 'volunteering infrastructure'. The second section then presents the general state of play in Europe in terms of whether the grounds of a European volunteering infrastructure already exist and whether there is a trend towards such a common infrastructure.

1. The concept of volunteering infrastructure – general definitions

As generally and broadly conceived, the concept of 'volunteering infrastructure' can be understood as referring to 'the systems, mechanisms and instruments needed to ensure an environment where volunteering can flourish'[2].

While such common definition of the concept can be agreed upon, opinions and views appear to differ greatly from country to country when it comes to identifying more precisely what systems, mechanisms and instruments exist, and whether the various elements of a volunteering infrastructure are in place. In general, participants of the GA indeed generally agreed that some common elements can be identified, but that "volunteering infrastructure" should remain a flexible concept which can be adapted to the political, economic and social context of each country.

Cees van den Bos, researcher at the Erasmus University of Rotterdam and director of the Volunteer Centre Arnhem (Netherlands), has presented a more precise and more

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[1] Special Eurobarometer 273 Wave 66.3, 2007. 'European Social Reality', February 2007
[2] UN Volunteers, 2005. 'Developing a Volunteer Infrastructure – A Guidance Note', Bonn: Bonner Universitäts-Buchdruckerei

restrictive definition in his keynote speech of the opening panel: he defined the concept of 'volunteering infrastructure' as the 'organisations providing infrastructure to promote, stimulate and develop volunteering in general at three levels: volunteer support – to offer individuals appropriate opportunities; management support – to help organisations make volunteering attractive; community support – to gain public recognition, to provide supporting preconditions, and to create an inviting climate'.

Göran Petterson, Secretary General of the Forum för frivilligt socialt arbete (Sweden), presented another, more practical, perspective by giving his view on a volunteering infrastructure for Sweden: in his opinion, this should include a structure and methods for knowledge and learning in order to build capacity and competence within the sector; an accessible structure formed by volunteer centres for recruitment of volunteers; a mirrored public structure with voluntary sector bodies at local, regional and national level; increased funding and support for voluntary sector research; a new structure for both investment capital and risk capital for the sector, which could include private investments and new forms of partnerships. However, according to Mr Petterson the volunteering infrastructure in Sweden should not contain any law on volunteering. The Swedish voluntary sector has few legal bases and volunteer centres in general would like to protect this unique model as it preserves the autonomy of the voluntary sector. Nonetheless, Göran Petterson recognises that, if this argument pertains to the Swedish case, a legal basis on volunteering can be necessary in other national contexts. Also, according to this point of view, the volunteering infrastructure is not only made up of organisations which promote volunteering, but also comprises a full set of methods and other elements such as funding.

The third chapter of this report gives a broader overview of the different elements that are perceived as part of an enabling volunteering infrastructure in different countries.

2. An enabling volunteering infrastructure in Europe – situation, trends, outlook

What features already exist in terms of volunteering infrastructure? What is missing? What should an enabling volunteering infrastructure look like?

Having studied the development of volunteering infrastructure in 8 countries[3], **Cees van den Bos** found that a volunteering infrastructure started to develop in several countries in the 1970's, when governments and the voluntary sector started to promote volunteering in general. Volunteering infrastructure appeared with different elements but with comparable functions such as recruitment and brokerage. According to Cees van den Bos, the two main reasons for such development were the change in the individual motivation to volunteer, which resulted in a lack of volunteers, and the increasing political interest in the concept of civil society, which attributes new values to volunteering. The values attributed to volunteering varied depending on the political discourse on civic engagement. Cees van den Bos identified four different discourses:

■ *the welfare discourse*, which is about service provision, unpaid work, acting for others;

■ *the democracy discourse*, which refers to active citizenship, civic involvement, influencing policies, and bridging the distance between government and citizens;

■ *the economic discourse*, which focuses on work relations and regards the social inclusion of citizens who are excluded from the labour market, due to unemployment, addiction, or handicap; it considers volunteering as a means for reintegration, naturalisation, alternative punishment, or service learning.

■ *the community discourse*, which regards the enhancement of close neighbourhood relations, trust, safe communities, mutual support, and social networks.

In accordance with this perspective, the discussions of the opening panel showed that what currently makes up the volunteering infrastructure in different European countries greatly varies depending on the respective national political, economic and social contexts and heritages. For example, **Ksenija Fonovic** from SPES stressed the crucial role in Italy of the numerous volunteer support centres at regional level, which work at empowering volunteer-involving organisations through capacity building, promoting exchange of best practice and cooperation, providing support and various services such as training programmes. Their strength is, among other factors, due to the strong support of the banking Foundations and the enabling law on volunteering.

The situation is quite different in Romania. As in other post-communist countries, according to **Cristina Rigman** (Pro Vobis), citizens from these countries have been used to a strong State, responsible for providing most social services. The voluntary sector is thus still very new and in the process of being developed, which means that the volunteering infrastructure is still very restricted.

In general, the panel participants agreed that the following elements of a volunteering infrastructure are mostly lacking in Europe:

■ **The support of the political authorities at different levels in terms of policy and recognition**: official strategies and policies on volunteering at local, national and EU levels, formally recognising the role of volunteering in different sectors and planning measures to facilitate voluntary activities – such as expenses reimbursements, tax exemptions, etc. – are necessary in order to promote volunteering and facilitate its action in various areas of society. Such strategies would be a way to officially recognise the contribution of volunteering and spread this recognition, promote it among citizens, and encourage research on the impact of volunteering. This aspect is further developed in the fourth chapter, in the sub-section on the role of the public sector to develop the volunteering infrastructure.

■ **Funding**: in order to operate efficiently, volunteers and volunteer-involving organisations need financial support from public authorities and other stakeholders.

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[3] USA, Denmark, UK, Finland, Germany, Italy, Netherlands, Norway. (Cees M. Van den Bos, 2008. 'Paper presented at the annual Meeting of the Association for Research on Nonprofit Organisations and Voluntary Action', Philadelphia, PA.)

Volunteering requires no salary but still involves some costs in terms of infrastructure, expenses reimbursements in the framework of voluntary activities, viability of volunteer centres and volunteer-involving organisations, etc. Therefore, financial resources are essential in this sector.

■ **Research on volunteering**: in order to become a viable activity, volunteering needs its value and impact to be recognised. In this aim, research is crucial to put forward concrete study results and tangible figures which demonstrate its impact. Such studies are still lacking.

'Whether at the local, regional, national or even European level, a key role of the volunteering infrastructure is to provide a "voice" for Volunteering.'

Karl Monsen-Elvik,
Volunteer Development Scotland

II. What role for the volunteering infrastructure?

As with the issue of definition, conference participants agreed that 'volunteering infrastructure' should be a flexible concept with regards to its functions, depending on the national or regional context.

1. A theoretical framework based on the situation in 8 countries

In his presentation, Cees van den Bos suggested a framework, based on the idea that the volunteering infrastructure is basically made of the volunteer centres that exist in a country. Through his research, he found out that volunteering infrastructure finds its legitimacy in serving various stakeholders who have different expectations with regard to volunteering:

■ *volunteers*, who expect challenging experiences;
■ *organisations*, which seek the best volunteers;
■ *governments*, which want to involve as many citizens as possible for different goals;
■ *third parties* like schools, therapists, businesses or judges, who use volunteering as a means to realise specific goals for their students, clients, employees or convicts.

In order to fulfil this task, volunteer centres have evolved into development agencies, carrying out six core functions:

■ **brokerage** – to connect prospective volunteers with appropriate opportunities;
■ **marketing** – promotion, publicity events and campaigns;
■ **good practice development**, to develop and deliver trainings and accreditation for volunteers, potential volunteers and volunteer managers;
■ **developing opportunities** to strike the potential for volunteering within communities and to include the competences and talents of as much citizens as possible;
■ **policy response and campaigning**, to maintain awareness of policies that have an impact on volunteering, to seek recognition, to campaign for a volunteer-friendly climate;
■ **strategic function**, to develop social policies that facilitate volunteering and answer volunteering needs.

These functions are provided on three levels of support: volunteer support; management support; and community support. Differences concerning the implementation of

these functions by volunteer centres from the eight countries studied depend on differences in the non-profit regimes (liberal, corporatist, social democratic and statist) in these countries[4], which have different discourses on civic engagement and the values of volunteering.

2. A wider perspective – additional functions

Considering volunteering infrastructure as a broader concept, including elements other than just the volunteer centres, additional functions were identified by the delegates during the various discussions held in the good practice workshops and panel debates:

■ **Provide opportunities for networking and exchange of ideas and best practices** – the volunteering infrastructure should connect different volunteer actors among them and also allow them to engage with other stakeholders in various events such as conferences, workshops, Market Places, in order to allow them to exchange ideas and experiences and build partnerships.

■ **Evaluate the impact of volunteering** – the volunteering infrastructure should serve to evaluate the impact of volunteering and the concrete results that it achieves in society, in order to have tangible data and evidence on why to rely when advocating the promotion of volunteering.

■ **Inform about volunteering** – inform volunteer actors, the wider public, the political sphere and other stakeholders about the number of volunteers, volunteering opportunities, the impact of volunteering, its economic value. This information function is meant to raise awareness about volunteering, encourage people to volunteer, and guide the policy-making process.

■ **Provide a voice for volunteering** – provide the opportunity to volunteers and the voluntary sector in general to express their needs and advocate for an enabling environment to be put in place.

■ **Provide a clear definition of volunteering** – the volunteering infrastructure should aim at reaching a common understanding of volunteering and in this way facilitate the process of communicating and advocating support to volunteers and volunteer activities; this would also contribute to ensure a wide recognition of the value of volunteering.

■ **Volunteer management and capacity-building** – the volunteering infrastructure should organise voluntary activities in a way that ensures that they are effective, quality-based and that they have a real impact.

■ **Ensure inclusiveness and equality of access to volunteering** – the volunteering infrastructure should include rules that ensure that every individual can contribute to the society through volunteering, irrespective of his/her age, gender, race, legal status or any other criterion.

III. Volunteering Infrastructure in Europe: different elements and spotlight on good practices

1. The different elements of volunteering infrastructure

As mentioned in the first chapter, there is no fixed understanding of the concept of 'volunteering infrastructure' and the elements included therein. From the various discussions, different elements have been pointed out as being part of this infrastructure. According to the national contexts and specificities, each of these elements is considered more or less important and more or less necessary. Below follows a list of the different elements that were identified; these are then illustrated in the next sub-chapter in the good practice examples that were presented in the workshops.

Volunteer centres and networks at local, regional and national level
■ These constitute a framework to promote, stimulate and develop volunteering. They offer volunteer placements and help organisations to find volunteers; they provide trainings; they promote volunteering and work at gaining recognition and support for volunteers; and they constitute a forum for exchange of best practices.

The volunteers themselves
■ Every individual has the right to participate in the life of the community through voluntary effort, as provided in Article 29 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. However, it has been observed that people traditionally excluded and marginalised from society remain largely unrepresented in the volunteering demographics. In view of the benefits brought by volunteering to volunteers themselves and the communities in which they live, access to volunteering for all should be promoted. This constitutes the objective of the Volunteering Ireland Outreach programme, which seeks to implement a radical new model for delivering services that builds social capital in a disadvantaged and ethnically diverse community as a way of strengthening civil society by supporting inclusive involvement and community self-help. The programme encourages social entrepreneurship by empowering individuals to make real and long lasting changes for the benefit of their community.

The perception of volunteering and the recognition of its value
■ To ensure that more and more citizens engage in volunteering, the value of their contribution has to be recognised. Awareness and acknowledgment of their work needs to be widespread among citizens, political actors and other stakeholders. The meaning of volunteering must also be clarified and redefined: indeed the image of volunteering is still often seen as a duty or as a patronising attitude from the rich towards the poor and an activity reserved to certain groups of people. Therefore there is a need to update the

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[4] Lester Salamon and Helmut Anheier, 1998. 'Social Origins of Civil Society: Explaining the Nonprofit Sector Cross-Nationally', Voluntas, 9

perception that people have of volunteering. It is important to show that volunteering has evolved over time and is now more an expression of active citizenship, accessible to all, than an obligation.

The legal framework
■ In certain countries, a law on volunteering is considered very important as it clarifies and formalises the rights of volunteers and constitutes an official recognition of the value of voluntary activities. The law can also be a means to secure that the voluntary sector is eligible for funding. However, in some countries, it is considered that a law on volunteering would restrict the autonomy of the voluntary sector and its scope of action. Therefore it is important that volunteer centres are involved in the process of drafting the law, in order to ensure that the law is not restrictive and covers all areas of importance. In addition, laws on volunteering should be adapted to the various national contexts.

Research
■ To allow widespread recognition of the value of volunteering, concrete evidence of its value has to be provided through studies on the impact of volunteering and dissemination of this data. Research is in this sense an important part of an enabling infrastructure as it allows for the positive effects of volunteering both for volunteers and for society as a whole to be demonstrated clearly.

Communication tools
■ A wide range of communication tools exist and can be used in order to ensure wide recognition of volunteers and to disseminate information about the value of volunteering and volunteering opportunities. These tools can be considered as part of an enabling volunteering infrastructure. They comprise not only traditional communication media or events but also innovative tools such as the Internet and the new social media.

Funding
■ Adequate funding is a necessary part of an enabling infrastructure, in order to ensure the viability of volunteer centres and to allow the development of projects to promote and develop volunteering opportunities. It is also indispensable to cover the costs that voluntary activities may imply.

Enabling government policies and strategies at different levels
■ To enable volunteering everywhere in Europe, it needs to be acknowledged and supported by the different political actors at European, national and local levels. Their support, in terms of funding but also in the drafting of suitable political strategies, will allow volunteering to develop and be better recognised.

Cross-sector cooperation between stakeholders, in particular with businesses
■ The support from other stakeholders, and in particular businesses, is also crucial in order to promote volunteering in new contexts and environments and to publicise the positive impact of volunteering on people and their working environment.

Standards
■ Standards in terms of quality requirements, reimbursements, insurance policies, security should be part of an enabling volunteering infrastructure to ensure the security of volunteers, the efficiency of their work, and the respect of their rights.

2. Good practices

> **Workshop I: Government's role in successfully constructing and supporting a sustainable volunteer infrastructure in the Netherlands**
>
> Presenter: Sandra Kamerbeek, MOVISIE (Netherlands)

Background
Sandra Kamerbeek addressed three major long-term national projects, which together have been ongoing for nearly 10 years and of which the overall aim was to develop and support the volunteering infrastructure in the Netherlands. The first project (2002 – 2005) aimed at raising awareness of the value of volunteer centres, building and supporting volunteer centres. The second project (2006 – 2007) worked for the improvement of the quality of volunteer centres. The third project (2009-...), still ongoing, aims to promote the creation of a regulatory framework for local governments to encourage them to support volunteer work and sustain infrastructure.

Projects' description
The first project which contributed to the development of the volunteering infrastructure was triggered by the awareness-raising impact of the International Year of Volunteers 2001. The two following initiatives were taken at national level:
■ **The creation of a Commission for (local) volunteering policy development**, which constituted a theoretical framework for local governments to encourage them to develop a volunteering policy. The ensuing policy defined six functions for volunteer centres, provided guidelines for financial support for volunteer-involving organisations and addresses the issue of insurances.
■ **The Temporary Financial Impulse to build volunteer centres**, which was the starting point for the creation of many volunteer centres in the Netherlands, through the provision of financial support for a local volunteering infrastructure. It also aimed at implementing local volunteering policies.

The second project was the **Policy Paper on Voluntary Efforts 2005-2008**. It focused on the consolidation and the improvement of quality. In the course of this project, a pool of 25 consultants was created to support 130 local governments or local volunteer centres in implementing volunteering policies and promote the sharing of knowledge and experiences.

Finally the third project is related to the **Social Support Act**, which constitutes a legal framework to encourage local governments to support volunteering. The

57 COM(2001) 366.
58 COM(2002) 347
59 COM (2006) 136.
60 European Parliament resolution of 13 March 2007 on corporate social responsibility: a new partnership (2006/2133(INI)).
61 See: http://www.csreurope.org/pages/en/alliance.html

main goal is to help citizens to participate in society; local governments are given the task of shaping policies which are supportive of citizen participation through volunteering. The Social Support Act is structured around the following service areas: social cohesion and quality of life; preventing action; information, advice and client support; support for informal carers and volunteers; participation by people with disabilities; services for people with disabilities; social relief and prevention of domestic violence; public mental health care; addiction policy. In complement to this, the Policy paper Volunteering & Informal Care 2008-2011 defines five core functions for local governments:

■ *Translate* the legal developments
■ *Connect* local governments, volunteers, and volunteer organisations
■ *Strengthen* local infrastructure
■ *Share* knowledge
■ *Consolidate* knowledge and experiences

The project of MOVISIE, **Supporting local governments implement the Social Support Act** (2009-2012) is implemented through a policy scan to identify best practices and shortages.

Projects' outcomes / findings
The first two projects have proven to be successful in achieving their objectives, thanks to the long-term character of the projects, and a thorough evaluation, while the third project is still ongoing.

Another important element of success was linked to strong government involvement and support for the different initiatives. The cooperative behaviour of the Dutch government explains the strength of volunteer organisations.

Elements of volunteering infrastructure
Volunteering infrastructure in the Netherlands is thus understood as
■ the different volunteer centres,
■ the legal framework that is in the process of being established to support volunteering,
■ and the support of political bodies at national and local levels.

Different levels can be distinguished among volunteer centres although they are not organised into a hierarchy but in a relation of cooperation. At national level, welfare support organisations such as MOVISIE make the link between local volunteer centres and the national government. Local volunteer centres also interact with and are partly financed by local governments, and they are organised at provincial level through provincial support structures.

Local volunteer centres in the Netherlands are efficient and sustainable because of their entrepreneurship, innovative and dynamic behaviour, and the strategic cooperation among them. In general, they tend to focus on specific projects i.e. social services, social inclusion or business community involvement, and their main function is brokerage.

The different developments in building infrastructure translate a trend in defining more and more the function of local governments in terms of supporting volunteering infrastructure. Such involvement of the political sphere at all levels is not observed in all countries and, according to Sandra Kamerbeek, the lack of support from the government often represents a hindrance to more volunteering.

Workshop II: Volunteering in Southern and Eastern Europe (SEE) - from underground to mainstream

Presenter: Domagoj Kovacic, SEEYN South East European Youth Network (Bosnia and Herzegovina)

Background
Domagoj Kovacic presented the different dimensions and shortages in terms of volunteering infrastructure in Southern and Eastern Europe (SEE)[5] - where values and structures are still in the process of being re-established after the series of conflicts of the 1990's - and various initiatives taken by SEEYN to develop and enhance the volunteering infrastructure in the region. In general, volunteering is positively perceived in SEE, but the number of volunteers is quite low and volunteering infrastructure is restricted in terms of laws and support from the governments. This context implies limited capacities for volunteering centres in their task to promote and develop volunteering.

Projects' description
The South East European Youth Network (SEEYN) has started to focus its strategy on volunteering since 2003 as it considers that young volunteers are contributing to the development of positive social values, and that volunteering promotes employability. Moreover volunteering is an expression of active citizenship and social responsibility, and it can have significant impact with regard to the provision of social services, in the sense that it makes them more accessible and increases their quality.

The SEEYN strategy has three main objectives which all tend towards the development of a volunteering infrastructure in SEE:

■ Acknowledgement of the value of volunteering by governments
■ Promotion of volunteering among youth
■ Increase the capacities of organisations that promote volunteering

In order to achieve these goals, it has carried out various activities:
■ First research on volunteering in SEE: "Voluntarism and public institutions" (2004), in order to build the general public perception of volunteering;
■ Research and advocacy campaign for legislation and support of volunteering – Albert Einstein (2005);
■ Research on pro-social values behaviours and employability amongst young people in SEE and the impact of volunteer work camps "We can! We volunteer!" in SEE (2006/7);
■ Financial support to different types of voluntary activities – work camps, long term exchanges, volunteering in high school;
■ Regional promotional activities such as the International Volunteer Day;
■ Publications and training kits;
■ National, regional and European training programmes.

These projects have been carried out with a regional perspective. Indeed SEEYN has given priority to a regional networking approach in order to develop a common volunteering infrastructure in SEE, instead of having different national strategies.

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4 Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia, Kosovo, Montenegro, Albania, Bulgaria, Macedonia

Projects' outcomes / findings

As a result of these various projects, the following changes could be observed: increased number of young volunteers; increased quality of volunteering programmes; increased recognition of volunteering in public legislation of some countries.

Several advantages can be drawn from the regional networking approach:

- It fosters consensus and strengthens individual claims by gathering them together in the advocacy process – the strategy to focus on (youth) volunteering has been made by consensus;
- It has been easier to raise funds at regional level;
- Less experienced organisations got support from the stronger organisations;
- It allowed for exchanges of volunteers, but also programmes, experiences, experts, methods and tools and the transfer of good local volunteer practices from one country's communities to another country's communities;
- The promotion of the positive developments resulted in the involvement of more and more organisations in volunteering programmes;

However, the regional approach comprises some pitfalls such as the decreasing communication at regional level over time and the decrease in commitment at regional level when volunteering projects start to be put in place at local level.

Elements of volunteering infrastructure

SEE is thus at the beginning of the process of building its volunteering infrastructure as it has long been devastated by conflicts and dominated by a communist ideology where volunteering was mostly an obliga-

tion of the system rather than a voluntary engagement of citizens.

Therefore, the first important element of this infrastructure is the perception and recognition of the value of volunteering among citizens and by governments. Building this recognition implies highlighting the benefits of volunteering in terms of increasing tolerance and social cohesion, increasing well-being, and allowing the acquisition of skills.

Volunteer centres constitute another element of the volunteering infrastructure; their main functions should be to inform citizens about volunteering opportunities, and to provide trainings and opportunities for exchanges and networking.

Laws on volunteering should be another element of the infrastructure to be developed, although they should not over-regulate the sector and be restrictive for the engagement in voluntary activities; they should rather serve to provide more and better opportunities for volunteering.

Finally, research on volunteering and the flow of information is another important element that was mentioned in the workshop, and which SEEYN has included in its activities.

> **Workshop III: What competences and policy are needed in order to support and promote senior volunteering?**
>
> Presenter: Zsofia Tornoczi, ÖKA (HU), on behalf of ÖKA (HU), SPES (Italy), Slovenska Filantropija (SI), C.A.R.D.O. (SK), and Pro Vobis (RO)

Background

According to different surveys[6], in 2050, the population of 60 years and over will increase up to 35.1% in Europe. To face this trend, the EU has encouraged member states to promote activities stimulating the 'active ageing'[7] of the European population. These activities not only ensure that people can work longer, but also that elderly people engage beyond retirement in participation, solidarity and active citizenship - e.g. through volunteering.

In this view, the two year project 'Think Future, Volunteer Together'[8] was organised in the framework of the ENEA preparatory action[9] of the European Commission Directorate-General (DG) Employment, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities on active ageing and mobility of elderly people. In this preparatory action, volunteering was recognised as a tool to mobilise the full potential of older people for active ageing and their contribution to society.

Project description

The project 'Think Future, Volunteer Together' aimed at promoting the involvement of people over 55 years in volunteering. In addition, it attempted to evaluate if and how international exchanges and possible implementation of follow-up micro-projects of senior volunteers can enhance and promote their active engagement especially in the Central and East European countries, where adult and older people are scarcely present in the volunteering

landscape. The ultimate objective of the project was that senior volunteers engaged in the project become promoters of volunteering among elderly people in their communities.

In addition to CEV, which acted as policy advisor, the project brought together five CEV member organisations: SPES (Italy), Pro Vobis (Romania), C.A.R.D.O (Slovakia), ÖKA (Hungary), and Slovenska Filantropija (Slovenia).

The main project activities were the setting-up of a local network and the promotion of the project within country-based organisations working in the field of volunteering or with elderly people; the recruitment of volunteers; a two-week international exchange composed of a number of volunteer activities for participants; and the possible implementation of micro projects by the volunteers upon completion of the exchange.

Project's outcomes / findings

In the framework of this project, it was widely agreed that volunteer centres play an important role in promoting senior volunteering and coordinating international exchanges for seniors by:

- supporting the enthusiasm of elderly volunteers during and after the exchanges, encouraging and empowering them to implement their own volunteer projects in their communities;
- ensuring good and smooth contacts

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[6] United Nations, 2002. World Population Ageing 1950 – 2050, http://www.un.org/esa/population/publications/world-ageing19502050/

[7] 'Core active ageing practices include life long learning, working longer, retiring later and more gradually, being active after retirement and engaging in capacity enhancing and health sustaining activities' in Communication from the Commission from the Commission to the Council and the European Parliament, 2002. 'Europe's response to World Ageing, Promoting economic and social progress in an ageing world - a contribution of the European Commission to the 2nd World Assembly on Ageing' [COM (2002) 143 final]

[8] http://www.cev.be/101-think_future_volunteer_together_(senior_volunteering)-EN.html

[9] http://ec.europa.eu/social/

between hosting and sending organisations;

■ ensuring and promoting effective, specialised senior volunteers' management.

Another important conclusion of the project was that, compared to projects at national or local levels, international projects with European partners allow more exchanges of best practices, tools and ideas about the role of volunteer centres in the promotion of senior volunteering. Moreover acting at European level gives an opportunity to promote senior volunteering at a larger scale and raise awareness among a larger population.

With regards to the target group of senior citizens, a great enthusiasm could be observed among older people to engage in voluntary activities. The project allowed the elderly involved in the exchanges to voice their ideas, get involved, and become aware that their knowledge and experience is needed and precious. In addition, they became invaluable multipliers of voluntary engagement among the senior population.

Finally the possibility of partnerships with various stakeholders working on the issue of active ageing, such as local volunteer centres, universities of third age or lifelong learning, employment services, national and local associations of elderly, and organisations providing support to seniors, was crucial in raising motivation among seniors and facilitating the organisation of the exchanges.

Elements of volunteering infrastructure
Different important elements of infrastructure were highlighted through the presentation of this project:

■ Volunteer centres at local and national levels provide elderly people with volunteering opportunities; they support and coordinate senior volunteering projects and ensure their smooth organisation.

■ The possibility to build such project at European level, thanks to EU support, can be considered as another element of infrastructure which enables the promotion of senior volunteering to a broader extent and the exchange of best practices. Moreover, through such international project, partners can be confronted to the obstacles of their volunteering infrastructures and observe how these obstacles can be overcome in other countries thanks to a different infrastructure.

■ Volunteers, i.e. senior volunteers, are also identified as an important part of the infrastructure through this project, as they are the actors who, through their enthusiasm and will to use their experience and knowledge for the benefit of others, make such projects successful and efficient.

■ Finally the opportunity of partnerships with different stakeholders constitutes another building block of an enabling volunteering infrastructure, as it allows to reach out a wider public and to get support from more parties.

Presenter: Fiona Sexton, Yvonne Mc Kenna, Volunteer Centres Ireland (Ireland)

Background
While in 2008 there were around 7500 volunteer applicants for 14,000 opportunities in Ireland, in 2009 the recession resulted in a 120% increase. The new pool of volunteers is made of highly skilled volunteers with sufficient spare time on their hands. In view of this increase in the volunteer pool, both in terms of size and diversity, the focus of this year-long project, 'Bridging the volunteering Gap', is to increase the use of volunteers with professional skills.

The project has the general objective of enabling the profiling of volunteers according to their skill set, so that the volunteer centres of Ireland can search for a volunteer according to an organisation's specific requirements. This project offers a marketing communications programme to help organisations to engage with volunteers more creatively, and develop their strategies, with a specific focus on capacity building, using corporate or professional type volunteer skills.

Project description
The project materials consist in:

■ New developments of the salesforce.com database that enables the volunteer centres to filter and search for volunteers by skill sets nationwide. The centres will be able to search for volunteers according to an organisation's requirement.

■ Development and design of a web-based toolkit including in depth case studies, volunteer profiles and templates, frequently asked questions and quick step guides.

■ Design and development of training modules.

■ Development and communication via podcast / on-line microsite for increased accessibility.

■ A national marketing campaign to promote the newly produced material to volunteer-involving organisations.

Project's outcomes / findings
In view of the project findings so far, there is an obvious gap in terms of resources and infrastructure: volunteer centres need help and resources to educate and support organisations wanting to develop their volunteering strategies. They also need to be better equipped, through financial support and capacity-building, to attract, manage and retain volunteers.

The creation of the online toolkit will provide the volunteer centres of Ireland with a sustainable and lasting tool, helping volunteer-involving organisations to help themselves and giving them more resources to educate organisations on the services they can deliver.

Elements of volunteering infrastructure
This project can be seen as an example of best practice in terms of building a volunteering infrastructure in the sense that it seeks to establish innovative tools to help volunteer centres recruit volunteers and to find the right match between volunteer applicants and volunteering opportunities, in accordance with their specific skills and knowledge. These new tools, together with the volunteer centres and the volunteers

themselves form the volunteering infrastructure in Ireland.

This project also raises the question whether such a web-based toolkit could be established and managed at European level and whether this could be an efficient tool in promoting and facilitating volunteering across Europe.

Workshop V: 'Wag the City' – Innovative ways of involving youth in volunteering

Presenter: Susanne Brannebo, Spiritus Mundi (Sweden)

Background
Spiritus Mundi, founded in 2004, is a Sweden-based non-profit and non-governmental organisation active in culture diplomacy. It develops projects, either as an independent organisation or commissioned by other organisations, which focus on creating new meeting grounds, where dialogue of different cultures is developed through creative endeavours. Through concentrated efforts they celebrate and promote respect towards diversity.

Project description
The three-year initiative 'Wag the City', in which young people from different city districts meet across geographical, social and cultural borders, consists of musical workshops with different youth organisations and lectures/discussions with experts within the field of international culture dialogue. It has been developed in Malmö (Young Culture Ambassadors) and in Stockholm (Wag the City Botkyrka). The project aims at creating new and unique meeting grounds for people with different social, geographical and cultural backgrounds, on a local, regional, national and international level; increasing the awareness and knowledge of different identities and cultures; acting as an advisor in issues regarding cultural diplomacy; offering volunteer opportunities.

Project's outcomes / findings
The Spiritus Mundi concept has proven to be very attractive for a lot of people who are willing to volunteer, because they find the activities interesting and inspiring. The flexibility from which the volunteers benefit in terms of choosing their own method to achieving Spiritus Mundi's objectives is an additional important motivation to engage in volunteering in this framework. Culture proved as a strong unifying factor in the project – it does not imply language or other barriers to collaboration.

Elements of volunteering infrastructure
For an organisation to perform well, three structural elements were indentified as crucial:
- active website;
- well established network of contacts;
- and a transparent organisation with a clear vision and opportunities for the future.

For Spiritus Mundi, these elements proved important for the projects to be successful. Each volunteer-involving organisation needs to communicate its activities effectively. At the same time, it should invest into establishing a stable network of contacts and collaborators and last but not least, if it wants to attract volunteers, it needs to be transparent, offer attractive

projects and opportunities for the volunteers to develop. The role and contribution of volunteers in this project is undisputable. They act mostly as group facilitators. Organisations involving and working with volunteers have to act professionally. However, a strict line should be drawn between voluntary and paid work.

Workshop VI: Building a Volunteering Infrastructure from scratch in a Post-Communist Country: Opportunities and Challenges

Presenter: Cristina Rigman, Pro Vobis National Volunteer Centre (Romania) and András F. Tóth, ÖKA National Volunteer Centre (Hungary)

Background
Through this workshop, Cristina Rigman and András F. Tóth attempted to demonstrate how a volunteering infrastructure can be successfully established from scratch. The issue was addressed through two presentations from ÖKA (Hungary) and Pro Vobis (Romania) on the development of a volunteering infrastructure in an environment that faced various limitations and resource constraints particular to a post-communist environment. The role of the local community, volunteer centres and decision-makers was addressed in regards to the establishment of a successful volunteering infrastructure.

Projects' description
András F. Tóth presented a project that aimed at establishing a network of volunteer centres in Hungary. The main activities at the first stage were the identification of organisations from outside the capital who were willing to start assuming the functions of volunteer centres, and the training and organisation of network meetings to develop the services of these organisations and to encourage cooperation among them. Cooperation agreements were set up among the members of the network, and common programmes were put in place. A five-year strategic plan for the Network of Volunteer Centres was set up in early 2009. The project also aimed at creating an internal quality assurance scheme for the volunteer centres and lobbying the national government for support for the development of new volunteer centres.

Cristina Rigman presented a similar project which sought to develop local volunteer centres and a volunteer centres' network as the basic elements of the volunteering infrastructure in Romania. The programme mainly consisted of consultancy and training on establishing, developing and managing a local volunteer centre; facilitating meetings in the communities; providing networking opportunities and organising events for local volunteer centres; developing volunteer management toolkits and trainings; and establishing a network to represent and act as the voice of local volunteer centres.

Projects' outcomes / findings
In Hungary, starting with four volunteer centres, ÖKA managed to build up a network of nine volunteer centres, which is now the main reference point for volunteering at national and local level. As a result of this achievement the government decided to

further support the development of volunteer centres throughout the whole country and apply for support from the EU Structural Fund. This should lead to the creation of new volunteer centres during the period 2010 – 2011 all over Hungary.

The Pro Vobis project in Romania was implemented between 2001 and 2008. Initially, in 2001, four volunteer centres existed in Romania: Pro Vobis, Activ, AIDONG and ASSOC. They formed part of the National Network of Volunteer Centres. From 2001 to 2008, 19 new volunteer centres joined the Network. Several developments related to volunteering took place within this period including the development of a law on volunteering and of a national web portal on volunteering. In 2003 a 'How to set up a local volunteer centre' guide was created by Pro Vobis, which became, as of 2004, the main resource point for volunteer centres at national level. These developments were possible thanks to the financial resources from different actors including private institutions, the European Commission and the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Elements of volunteering infrastructure
The ÖKA case is an example of how to build a network with rather limited resources, and how to create strong commitment among its members. It also highlights the importance of getting support from the decision-makers at national level for the development of a volunteering infrastructure. The local volunteer centres, their strong commitment and good cooperation among them throughout the network, and the support from the government constituted the main building blocks of the volunteering infrastructure. Frequent communication and network meetings are essential as well as good coordination from the initiating organisation.

The Pro Vobis programme showed that the commitment of the local community is essential for the sustainability of the local volunteer centres. In this sense, volunteers themselves are the principal actors of the volunteering infrastructure, together with the volunteer centres. The network at the national level strengthens its members and provides them with support when they have difficulties. In addition, financial resources are essential to put in place these organisations and allow them to be sustainable and to offer adequate services in terms of volunteer placements, information and trainings.

Workshop VII: Online volunteer recruitment services in Denmark and Sweden

Presenter: Amelie Silfverstolpe, Volontärbyrån (Sweden) and Casper Bo Dano, frivilligjob (Denmark)

Background
The problems of attracting and recruiting volunteers are a common challenge to volunteer-involving organisations. Amelie Silfverstolpe from Volontärbyrån, Sweden, and Casper Bo Dano from Frivilligjob, Denmark, introduced two different, but also similar online database projects for volunteer assignments. The presentations addressed the advantages and disadvantages of online volunteer bank practices and the commitments that these projects entail for the volunteers, the organisations offering volunteer services, as well as the organisation that offers the database service.

Projects' description
The objective of these two projects was to create a free online arena with national coverage to allow volunteer-involving organisations and volunteer candidates to meet. These online databases are thus meant to facilitate the search for volunteer assignments for people who want to volunteer and to offer a recruitment portal for volunteer-involving organisations to display their volunteer opportunities.

The website of Volontärbyrån in Sweden was launched in 2002 as an "easy to use" infrastructure for matching volunteers with non-profit organisations. It also provides real-time and online training for volunteer managers and is financed through partnerships with national and local governments, as well as companies. Organisations searching for volunteers can create an account on the website through which they register their assignments, which are controlled by Volontärbyrån. Volunteers also have to register and can then find volunteer opportunities through a search engine or mail updates. Their online application is automatically sent to the non-profit organisation, which can then get in contact with the candidates. The tool is thus useful for both organisations and volunteers, but also to control the different offers and demands and publish statistics about volunteer opportunities and the pool of volunteers.

FrivilligJob.dk has a similar role in Denmark as it is a national organisation dedicated to help people to find a volunteer placement. This online service makes it easy to find local volunteer opportunities or recruit qualified volunteers in Denmark. It was launched in 2005 and is financed by the Ministry of the Interior and Social Affairs. It is used by more than 600 organisations and it is visible on all the major professional job databases in Denmark. The database attracts foremost young volunteers who wish to use their skills for the benefit of others and gain experience.

Projects' outcomes / findings
With its database, Volontärbyrån attracts mainly "first-time volunteers" (between 23-31 years old) who previously encountered difficulties to find their way into volunteer-involving organisations. This means that many organisations that previously struggled with this specific volunteer age group have been able to reach and attract younger volunteers thanks to this new tool. Since 2002, close to 20 000 volunteers have made contact with nearly 1000 organisations via the website.

Frivilligjob.dk also mainly attracts a younger generation of volunteers with its online tool (up to 35 years old). During March 2009 the website had 15,000 unique visitors, close to 120,000 page views and over 150 organisations had about 700 assignments published. An important conclusion of this project is the importance of publicity and partnerships in order to make the tool visible and widely known.

Elements of volunteering infrastructure
Many organisations are struggling to find enough volunteers, which means that offering recruitment support means meeting a challenge that most volunteer-involving organisations have in common thus creating an infrastructure that supports and enables volunteering in a broader sense. An online database with volunteer opportunities enables the recruitment from groups that previously have been difficult to reach. This helps volunteer-involving organisations to develop further, because of the input and work of a variety of volunteers.

An enabling volunteering infrastructure in this case is thus understood as the organisations which provide volunteering

opportunities, the volunteers who offer their services, and the online database which has the function of brokerage between the two actors. In addition, funding is an important element that allows the development of such a tool, and the partners from different sectors are important to make publicity for this tool among the population.

Workshop VIII: Business community engagement: The German network of local brokers and the European project INCLUDE

Presenter: Peter Kromminga, UPJ (Germany)

Background

The UPJ is a German national network of engaged businesses and local non-profit intermediary organisations which promotes networking between volunteering-involving organisations and businesses, as well as volunteering among businesses. Its activities aim at creating new connections between business, civil society organisations and public authorities thus contributing to solve societal challenges and to shape sustainable communities. Moreover UPJ provides organisations from the business, community and public sectors with information and consultancy to improve their Corporate Citizenship and Corporate Social Responsibility activities. It runs the INCLUDE project in cooperation with other social partners and the German ministry.

Project description

UPJ has a national network of local business community brokers which can be different types of organisations such as volunteer centres, charities, foundations or city councils. They are all characterised as autonomous organisations experienced in brokerage and working with companies. These local 'drivers' have various tasks such as advising community organisations on how to co-operate with companies; brokering partnerships when companies seek community projects to engage in; pro-actively approaching companies to initiate collaborative business-community action: running easy-to-step-in programmes like 'Local Business Action Days' or 'Market-places'; and organise recognition through public relations and Award Schemes. UPJ coordinates these local brokers through annual meetings and permanent contacts. It provides them with a helpdesk, a platform for exchanges of best practices, and guidance through different tools including 'how to' guides.

The European INCLUDE project is funded by the European Commission. It involves UPJ but also Business in the Community and ENGAGE, and other partners. It focuses on the investment of business in skills development and employability, social inclusion and innovation in addressing societal challenges, by transferring a wide range of features like skills and resources from the businesses and their workforce to the local community through participation of businesses in cross-sector partnerships. It also focuses on how these investments and the business participation are best nurtured by different actors like brokers and local authorities. The objectives of this project are to expand the scope of the inventory of CSR practices already existing towards collaborative business initiatives as well as cross-sectoral local initiatives, involving the complete range of means that business can invest to contribute to the development of skills and employability, social inclusion and innovation in addressing societal challenges; to disclose and pinpoint models and tools on how local actors can include businesses into cross-sectoral partnerships; and to inform and foster the exchange of experts and multipliers. Its main activities are thus research and the dissemination of information.

Projects' outcomes / findings

There are already many instruments to provide business with a low threshold opportunity to get to know how community engagement works and there are already different models on how brokers can function as facilitators of cross-sector partnerships. But there is still a need to further transfer those instruments and role models and to further develop those models in a more strategic way to meaningfully contribute to social cohesion.

Elements of volunteering infrastructure

From this workshop, it can be deducted that business and partnerships between businesses - as well as other stakeholders - and community organisations also form part of an enabling volunteering infrastructure. In addition, the local business community brokers are crucial in promoting these partnerships in the sense that they are intermediaries that are speaking both the community and the business 'languages'; they constitute reliable local or regional contact points for businesses willing to engage; they know how to find the right fit for business community projects and partnerships; they have at least a basic knowledge on how to assess business community projects; they run easy-to-access programmes fostering and enabling business community engagement; and they are agents of change through the initiation of cross-sector partnerships as an innovative approach to tackle community challenges.

Workshop IX: History, Role and Development of Volunteer Centres as Infrastructures in Korea

Presenter: Dr. Kang-Hyun Lee, IAVE President and Korea Council of Volunteering (Korea)

Background

In Korea, volunteer centres form the core of the volunteering infrastructure. This workshop presented the history, role and development of Korean volunteer centres, the different stages of their development in this country, their main activities and in what way they constitute the main volunteering infrastructure in Korea today.

Description

A volunteer centre in Korea is a non-profit corporation or organisation built in accordance with a statute and ordinance to carry out activities of development, promotion, connection, and coordination of voluntary services. Three main levels can be distinguished: local, regional and national levels.

Local volunteer centres constitute a permanent cooperative framework for volunteer-involving organisations and groups in cities, counties, and autonomous districts. They recruit and train volunteers and promote voluntary services; they develop and manage volunteer programs and pilot op-

erations; and they gather and disseminate information related to volunteering.

Regional volunteer centres constitute a permanent cooperative framework for organisations and groups in metropolitan cities and provinces. They train managers and leaders in voluntary services; they develop and manage volunteer programs at regional level; they do research on volunteering; they operate as information centres and platforms of exchange of information and cooperation; and they provide assistance to projects carried out by volunteer centres in cities, counties, and autonomous districts

At national level, different volunteer centres' networks exist:
■ The Korea Council of Volunteering is the highest umbrella organisation. It was founded in 1994, but legally recognised only in 2005, through the 'Volunteering Act'. Its main activities include: the promotion of cooperation among member organisations and the support of their programs; national campaigning and international networking to promote volunteering; policy development and research; advocacy; dissemination of information; and other activities commissioned by national and local governments to promote volunteering.
■ The Korea Association of Volunteer Centres (KAVC) is a corporation which was launched in 2000. Its revenue is composed of membership fees, grants from the government, and grants from insurance companies dealing with accidents which occur while volunteering
■ Volunteer21 is another corporation funded in 1996. It provides training for managers of volunteer centres; it initiated a three-year survey on giving and volunteering in Korea; it carries out research and aims at compiling a Volunteer Centre Management Manual, and standardising train-

ing courses for volunteer managers.
■ The Korea Association of Volunteer Management (KAVM) is an NGO whose membership is composed of individuals such as volunteer managers, government officials, and academics. It was established in 2004 with the view that volunteer management is a very important element in promoting volunteering. It aims at improving the quality and professionalism of volunteer managers and leaders; exchanging information; and developing advocacy activities for policy developments through holding volunteer management forums, providing consulting services, and carrying out research.

Elements of volunteering infrastructure
Applying the model developed by Cees van den Bos to Korea, Dr. Kang-Hyun Lee concluded that the political discourse on civic engagement in Korea, which influences the values attributed to volunteering, bears elements of the welfare model, the democracy model and the community model. Korean volunteer centres provide support at the three levels mentioned by Cees van den Bos: volunteer support, management support and community support. Their core functions include brokerage, marketing, good practice development, development of opportunities, and strategic development. They receive funding mainly from the national, regional and local governments.

A significant flaw of Korean volunteer centres is that most of them are dependent on local, regional or national governments. Another problem is the lack of emblematic leaders and the inadequate training of the staff; a big part of it is made of government officers who are not familiar with NGOs and volunteer management. Moreover the fact that most of the staff is composed of government officials implies that there is a high level of turnover and a

lack of consistency. Finally, the equipment of volunteer centres is often inadequate, mainly in terms of software.

Therefore, Korean volunteer centres face many challenges today:
■ duplication of services by various volunteer centres
■ unclear division of roles between provincial and local volunteer centres
■ excessive government control
■ lack of professional skills
■ challenges related to the definition of volunteering

To face these challenges, a national five-year plan for promoting volunteering has been put in place, based on the Basic Act on Volunteer Service (2005) and the Enforcement Decree (2006). It aims at covering five areas: volunteering value and opportunity, infrastructure, management, research and international volunteering. The goals of this plan are to encourage at least 30% of the population to participate in voluntary activities, and a share of 2% of the GDP.

Workshop X: Volunteer infrastructure in Italy: Framework Law on Volunteering and the system of Volunteer Support Centres (CSV)

Presenter: Ettore Degli Esposti, Coordinamento Regionale dei Centri di servizio per il Volontariato della Lombardia (Italy)

Background
The Framework Law on Volunteering in Italy and the subsequent creation of the volunteer support centres (CSVs) have been developing a very efficient and successful working environment for volunteer organisations and volunteers in Italy. This workshop presented how the law can contribute to the development of volunteering and which areas are, however, not for the law to determine.

Description
The Italian Framework Law on Volunteering 266/91 recognises the social value and function of volunteering as an expression of participation, solidarity and pluralism, promotes the protection of its autonomy and encourages its contribution for the achievement of social, civil and cultural aims. The law provides six criteria to define a volunteer centre, criteria relating to

its composition, juridical status, structure/functioning, the costless dimension, solidarity, and obligations.

The law established a special fund for volunteering, to which private entities with banking origins contribute – e.g. banking Foundations; these are compelled by the law to transfer a fifteenth part of their net yearly income to the regional fund. The money is used to create volunteer support centres (CSVs) and the fund is managed by a Management Committee, of which the composition is shared by the region (1 member), volunteer centres (4 members), the saving banks and foundations (7 members), the Association of Italian Saving Banks (1 member), and the local authorities of the Region (1 member).

The main functions of the volunteer support centres are to support local volunteer centres and provide them with informa-

tion and training to enhance their qualifications. In total, there are today 77 CSVs in Italy (69 provincial, 8 regional), of which 95% of membership is made of 9.000 volunteer-involving organisations.

Findings

Over the years, it has been observed that the success and well-functioning of this volunteering infrastructure is due to the fact that the legal framework has been elaborated in close collaboration with the voluntary sector. In consequence, it is clear and simple and avoids too many legal complexities. It also ensures certain autonomy of volunteer centres from the government.

Moreover, the law provides for a secure and stable source of funding which avoids uncertainty with regards to financial resources. The law also provides clear mechanisms of governance and control and the national network ensures coordination and exchanges between the different organisations. Finally volunteer centres are run by dedicated staff.

Elements of volunteering infrastructure

In this case, the specific law on volunteering is a crucial part of the volunteering infrastructure. It is important in creating an enabling environment for voluntary activities as it provides a clear framework on the functioning of volunteer centres and ensures regular resources for them. It is not restrictive as it has been elaborated in collaboration with volunteer support centres.

These form the other building block of the volunteering infrastructure: volunteer support centres coordinate the activities of volunteer-involving organisations and allow them to be in contact and exchange information and best practices; it also ensures the qualification of the staff of these organisations by organising regular training.

Funding and the support of the public sector are also important elements of the volunteering infrastructure; thanks to the regional funds which have been set up through the law, there is a permanent flow of financial resources towards volunteer centres and the support of the public sector has allowed these funds to be created and enables the voluntary sector to be strong and autonomous.

Members of the conference having a discussion

IV. What role for different stakeholders to develop the volunteering infrastructure?

Volunteering is freely given, but not cost-free – it needs and deserves targeted support from all stakeholders – volunteer centres, governments at all levels, and other stakeholders such as business. In order to build an enabling volunteering infrastructure in Europe, which would allow volunteering to realise its full potential, a mutual process of cooperation between these different stakeholders is necessary. This process should be bottom-up in the sense that it has to be based on the experiences, needs and demands of the main stakeholders, i.e. volunteers and volunteer centres. For this process to evolve bottom-up, a decentralisation approach should be adopted to allow the main stakeholders to have the possibility to raise their concerns at a higher level and gain autonomy at the same time as support from decision-makers. This requires a real commitment of political authorities to accept delegating power to volunteer representatives and at the same time taking the necessary decisions at their level of power, and strong support from all stakeholders in the promotion of volunteering.

'An adequate volunteer infrastructure is a precondition for the development of volunteering in a country. In order to achieve this, different stakeholders should be involved in volunteer infrastructure development.'

Gordana Forcic, Association of Civil Society Development – SMART (Croatia)

1. The role of volunteer centres and networks

While they all work to support and develop volunteering and represent volunteers' rights, volunteer centres and networks have different roles to fulfil depending on the level at which they operate.

Local volunteer centres are the closest entities to the volunteers themselves. They are the direct link between volunteers and organisations who seek volunteers. As part of the volunteering infrastructure their main role therefore is to connect both sides and find the right matches. By providing these volunteer placements, local volunteer centres also play a part in the work of the government, as noted by Cees van den Bos, as they contribute to the government's objective of promoting active citizenship for different goals. In addition to this mainly brokering role, volunteer centres also work to promote volunteering among citizens, organisations and public authorities.

At a higher level, **regional and national networks** are umbrella organisations which have two main roles – a representative role and an operational role. As representatives of local volunteer centres, they promote their work to political authorities and work at gathering political support and recognition of volunteer centres. They aim at placing or keeping volunteering on the political agenda at national, regional and local levels and lobby for social policies to be developed that facilitate volunteering. The operational role of regional and national networks consists of providing information and trainings to volunteer centres in order to support their development, expand their scope of action and enhance the quality of their services. In this way, they contribute to good practice development.

Finally **European networks**, such as CEV, play the same kind of role as regional and national networks but at a higher level. They form part of the volunteering infrastructure by representing national, regional and local volunteer centres at European institutions level and channelling their interests and concerns. They aim at placing volunteering on the European political agenda, and also act as platforms for exchange of best practices and information.

2. The role of the public sector

Public actors, i.e. local, regional and national authorities, as well as the EU institutions, all play a crucial role in the establishment of an enabling volunteering infrastructure in Europe. Their contribution to such an infrastructure is in their interest, as volunteering benefits the public sector at all levels by contributing to building a more cohesive society in which citizens are active and bring positive change to society, irrespective of their abilities and backgrounds. In particular, from a European perspective, volunteers contribute to the strategic objective of the EU of becoming '…the most competitive and dynamic, knowledge-based economy in the world…' as adopted by Member States at the European Council in Lisbon in March 2000: according to a Johns Hopkins University study[10], the voluntary sector contributes an estimated 5% to the GDP of our national economies and it provides informal and non-formal learning opportunities; through volunteering, people gain knowledge, exercise skills and extend their social networks, which can often lead to new or better employment opportunities, as well as personal and social development.

The role of public authorities mainly consists in designing policies and strategies which take volunteering into account and facilitate the development of voluntary engagement among citizens. Public authorities should also provide financial resources to the voluntary sector to ensure its sustainability; however this role should not entail a permanent restrictive control by the public sector or a loss of autonomy of the voluntary sector. The support of the development of an enabling law on volunteering can also be part of this role, depending on the various countries, as long as such law is conceived in collaboration with the voluntary sector and is not restrictive. In addition, public authorities should also promote volunteering within their own structures, among their employees. These are the main functions of **regional and national authorities** in order to support an enabling infrastructure.

Local authorities are particularly crucial in enabling volunteering as they are the public entities closest to volunteers. They are best placed to observe the concrete contribution of volunteering to society and the enabling of local policies will depend on them.

At European level, support of volunteer projects brings an additional dimension by not only allowing the sustainability of the voluntary sector in one region or country through enabling policies and co-financing, but also by providing opportunities to exchange best practices, ideas, information among volunteers and volunteer-involving organisations from different countries and in that way enriching them.

In addition, it is also the role of the EU to raise awareness about volunteering, promote it among member states and celebrate the contribution of volunteers through the organisation of high-visibility campaigns or events such as the European Year of Volunteering 2011. This kind of event organised at such a high level has a crucial impact on the establishment of an enabling volunteering infrastructure as it reaches many countries, populations and authorities at the same time and it highlights the crucial role of volunteering all over Europe.

> 'In Portugal, the significant amount of financial support from the public sector is explained by the government's reliance on non-profit organisations for the provision of social services.'
>
> *Elza Chambel, National Council for the Promotion of Volunteering (Portugal)*

3. The role of other stakeholders

Other stakeholders, i.e. NGOs, associations, business representatives or private organisations, who work in fields where volunteering takes place, also play a crucial role in supporting volunteering. Indeed volunteering is indispensable in a wide range of areas: social inclusion; life-long learning; policies affecting young people; inter-generational dialogue; active ageing; integration of migrants; intercultural dialogue; civil protection; humanitarian aid and development; sustainable development and environmental protection; human rights; social services; raising employability; corporate social responsibility, etc.

Therefore, all stakeholders working in these respective fields have an interest in supporting and collaborating with volunteers. Such support contributes to allowing volunteering to flourish and to a better recognition within society; this has been illustrated in various projects presented in the good practice workshops such as the Think Future Volunteer Together project, or the projects of UPJ, the German network of engaged businesses and local non-profit intermediary organisations, which promotes networking between volunteering-involving organisations and businesses.

These various stakeholders can support volunteering in different ways including through financial support, but also by including volunteer programmes in their work and promoting volunteering in their specific area.

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[10] Johns Hopkins University, 2007. 'Measuring Civil Society and Volunteering', p. 4–6.

V. Conclusions – Common trends and common ground – The Malmö Agenda

Examples prove that successful and quality volunteering is linked with an effective volunteering infrastructure. All over Europe, volunteers need support and information to carry out their voluntary activities in a secure, efficient and rewarding way. Organisations need an enabling volunteering infrastructure in order to carry out effective management and be able to attract volunteers from all horizons. The volunteering infrastructure is also necessary for governments and policy makers to understand volunteering and be aware of opportunities how to best encourage volunteering.

Based on the conclusions from the General Assembly, the European Volunteer Centre is putting forward the following **recommendations as a first step on a way towards an enabling volunteering infrastructure in Europe**. The Malmö Agenda is addressed to volunteer organisations, decision makers and political authorities at European, national, regional and local levels, media, research and business representatives and calls on profound discussion on the volunteering infrastructure and defining the appropriate systems, mechanisms and instruments to ensure that volunteering will flourish in Europe.

The volunteering infrastructure should combine a set of Europe-wide common standards with adaptable flexible features

Minimum common standards are needed to establish a Europe-wide volunteering infrastructure which uniformly promotes and supports volunteering. However, volunteering is a concept that differs from country to country and therefore the perceived necessary elements and functions of an enabling volunteering infrastructure also vary.

A set of common standards should be agreed upon for a Europe-wide model of volunteering infrastructure to promote and support volunteering. The volunteering infrastructure must take into account the roles and responsibilities of the different stakeholders and maintain a sensible balance between spontaneous volunteering and organised volunteering. Apart from the common elements, "volunteering infrastructure" should remain a flexible concept which can be adapted to the different regional, national and local contexts. If interpreted in a too restrictive way, this could indeed limit the space for manoeuvre of volunteer actors in some countries and be counterproductive.

The volunteering infrastructure should be based on the needs of volunteers and the community

The volunteering infrastructure is not an end in itself but it should serve a purpose to create an enabling political, social and economic environment in Europe for the full potential of volunteering to be realised. Through the volunteering infrastructure everybody should be able to actively contribute to the development of communities and have equal access to voluntary activities.

The volunteering infrastructure should be based on needs and take into account the specific characteristics and requirements of volunteering providers and beneficiaries. It should be designed in a way that volunteering is accessible in the most appropriate way to all, irrespective of race, gender, legal status, disabilities. Moreover, the volunteering infrastructure should primarily aim at increasing the impact of volunteering on the well-being of the community.

An enabling volunteering infrastructure necessitates involvement of all stakeholders

The volunteering infrastructure should assume different functions such as enabling volunteering to take place and facilitating voluntary activities, disseminating information about volunteering, raising awareness about the contribution of volunteers and allowing volunteers to be celebrated and rewarded.

Volunteering infrastructure should be designed in a way to serve multiple functions and interests: those of society, volunteer organisations and volunteers themselves.

The volunteering infrastructure should be based on the needs of volunteers and the community

In order for an enabling volunteering infrastructure to be established, the support and contribution of all stakeholders including volunteer organisations, the public and private sector and all other relevant stakeholders where volunteering has a role to play is essential.

All stakeholders should get involved in strengthening the volunteering infrastructure by contributing to developing volunteering; ensuring recognition among citizens and the political sphere, and ensuring a lasting and optimal impact on society. However, the voluntary sector must remain autonomous in order to be efficient and to enjoy unrestricted room for manoeuvre.

The European Year of Volunteering (EYV) 2011 should be seized as an opportunity to develop an enabling volunteering infrastructure in Europe

EYV 2011 will constitute a unique opportunity to widely raise awareness about the crucial role of volunteers all over Europe and to inform the public as well as policy-makers about the concrete impact of volunteering on society.

All stakeholders should seize the opportunity of EYV 2011 and mobilise efforts for contributing to building an enabling infrastructure where volunteering is acknowledged for its benefits and promoted through enabling policies and environment.

APPENDIX 1
Address book:

CEV – European Volunteer Centre
- ✉ Rue de la Science 10,
  1000 Brussels - Belgium
- ☎ +32 2 511 75 01
- 📠 +32 2 514 59 89
- @ cev@cev.be
  www.cev.be

Speakers:

Göran Pettersson
- ✉ Secretary General
  Forum för frivilligt socialt arbete
  Hantverkargatan 3F
  112 21 Stockholm
  Sweden
- @ http://www.socialforum.se/se/Startsida/

Dr Marijke Steenbergen
- ✉ CEV President, CEO MOVISIE
  Catharijnesingel 47
  3511 GC Utrecht
  Netherlands
- @ http://www.movisie.nl/

Dr Kang-Hyun Lee
- ✉ President of the International Association
  of Volunteer Effort
  c/o Korea Council of Volunteering (KCV)
  32-59 Yongmun-dong
  Cheongwon Bldg. 3rd FL,
  Yongsan-gu, Seoul, 140-832
  Korea
- @ http://www.iave.org/

Johan von Essen
- ✉ The Institute for Civil Society Studies,
  Ersta Sköndal University College
  Stigbergsgatan 30
  Box 11189
  100 61 Stockholm
  Sweden
- @ http://www.esh.se/

Cees van den Bos
- ✉ Erasmus University Rotterdam and
  Volunteer Centre Arnhem
  P.O. Box 1738
  3000 DR Rotterdam
  The Netherlands
- @ http://www.eur.nl/en/english/

Forum för frivilligt socialt arbete
- ✉ Hantverkargatan 3F,
  112 21 Stockholm – Sweden
- ☎ +46 8-651 07 21
- 📠 +46 8-652 51 14
- @ goran.pettersson@socialforum.se
  www.socialforum.se

Pierre Mairesse
- ✉ European Commission, DG Education
  and Culture
  B-1049 Brussels
  Belgium
- @ http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/education_
  culture/index_en.htm

Marian Harkin
- ✉ European Parliament
  60, rue Wiertz / Wiertzstraat
  B-1047 Bruxelles/Brussel
  Belgium
- @ http://www.marianharkin.com/

András F. Tóth
- ✉ Director ÖKA -Önkéntes Központ
  Alapítvány (Hungarian National
  Volunteer Centre)
  Múzeum Krt. 23-25. IV./17.
  1053 Budapest
  Hungary
- @ http://www.onkentes.hu/alap.php

Henrik Selin
- ✉ Sweden Permanent Representation to
  the EU
  Square de Meeûs 30, postal SE-1000
  Bruxelles
  Belgium
- @ http://www.regeringen.se/sb/d/2250

Cristina Rigman
- ✉ Provobis – National Volunteer Centre
  Romania
  No. 6 Rene Descartes Street
  400486 Cluj Napoca Romania
- @ http://www.provobis.ro/index_en.php

Ksenija Fonovic
- ✉ SPES - Centro di Servizio per il
  Volontariato del Lazio
  Via dei Mille 6
  00185 Roma
  Italy
- @ http://www.volontariato.lazio.it/spes/

Kuba Wygnánski
- ✉ Forum of the Third Sector
  ul. Dantyszka 10/02
  02-054 Warsaw
  Poland

Celia Moore
- ✉ IBM Corporate Citizenship Executive
  IBM UK, 76 Upper Ground
  London SE1 9PZ
  UK
- @ http://www.ibm.com/ibm/ibmgives/

Dr Lester M Salamon
- ✉ Johns Hopkins University
  Center for Civil Society Studies, Institute
  for Policy Studies,
  The Johns Hopkins University Baltimore,
  MD 21218,
  United States of America
- @ http://www.jhu.edu/

Sandra Kamerbeek
- ✉ MOVISIE
  Catharijnesingel 47
  3511 GC Utrecht
  Netherlands
- @ http://www.movisie.nl/

Domagoj Kovacic
- ✉ SEEYN - South East European Youth
  Network
  Ul. Cemerlina 18
  71000 Sarajevo
  Bosnia-Herzegovina
- @ http://www.seeyn.org/about_seeyn.html

Zsofia Tornoczi
- ✉ ÖKA National Volunteer Centre
  Múzeum Krt. 23-25. IV./17.
  1053 Budapest
  Hungary
- @ http://www.onkentes.hu/alap.php

Fiona Sexton
- ✉ Volunteer Centres Ireland
  DMG Business Centre,
  9/13 Blackhall Place, D 7
  Ireland
- @ http://www.volunteer.ie/

Yvonne McKenna
- ✉ Volunteer Centres Ireland
  DMG Business Centre,
  9/13 Blackhall Place, D 7
  Ireland
- @ http://www.volunteer.ie/

Alzbeta Mracková
- ✉ C.A.R.D.O.
  Ursulinska 3
  P.O.Box 300
  814 99 Bratislava
  Slovakia
- @ http://www.cardo-eu.net/

Lluc Marti
- ✉ IAVE Youth Office
  Pelai Street 44, 2nd floor
  08001Barcelona, Catalonia
  Spain
- @ http://www.iave.org/

Kirsten Koht
- ✉ Municipality of Baerum, Norway
  Bærum kommune
  1304 Sandvika
  Norway
- @ https://www.baerum.kommune.no/

Ludvig Sandberg
- ✉ Forum för frivilligt socialt arbete
  Hantverkargatan 3F
  112 21 Stockholm
  Sweden
- @ http://www.socialforum.se/se/Startsida/

Mette Hjaere Jensen
- ✉ Center for frivilligt socialt arbejde
  Albanigade 54 E, 1. sal 5000 Odense C
  Denmark
- @ http://www.frivillighed.dk/Webnodes/da/
  Web/Public/Forside

Elza Chambel
- ✉ National Council for the Promotion of
  Volunteering
  Avenida Marquês de Tomar,
  21 - 7º andar.
  1050 - 153 Lisbon
  Portugal
- @ http://www.voluntariado.pt/

Dr Mike Nussbaum
- ✉ Volunteering England
  Regents Wharf
  8 All Saints Street
  London N1 9RL
  United Kingdom
- @ http://www.volunteering.org.uk/

Simon Richards
- ✉ Volunteering England
  Regents Wharf
  8 All Saints Street
  London N1 9RL
  United Kingdom
- @ http://www.volunteering.org.uk/

Karl Monsen-Elvik
- ✉ Volunteer Development Scotland
  Jubilee House
  Forthside Way
  Stirling FK8 1QZ
  Scotland
  United Kingdom
- @ http://www.vds.org.uk/

Gordana Forcic
- ✉ SMART - Association of Civil Society
  Development
  Blaza Polica 2/4
  51000
  Rijeka
  Croatia
- @ http://www.smart.hr/

Jugoslav Jevdjic
- ✉ Youth Communication Centre OKC
  Kralja Petra I Karadjordjevica 113-115
  78000 Banja Luka
  Bosnia-Herzegovina
- @ www.okcbl.org

Amelie Silfverstolpe
- ✉ Forum för frivilligt socialt arbete
  Hantverkargatan 3F
  112 21 Stockholm
  Sweden
- @ http://www.socialforum.se/se/Startsida/

Casper Bo Dano
- ✉ Frivilligjob
  Østeraagade 2, 1. tv
  9000 Aalborg C
  Denmark
- @ http://frivilligjob.dk/

Peter Kromminga
- ✉ UPJ e.V.
  Brunnenstr. 181
  D-10119 Berlin
  Germany
- @ http://www.upj.de/index.php

Ettore Degli Esposti
- ✉ Coordinamento Regionale dei Centri di
  servizio per il Volontariato della
  Lombardia
  Piazza Castello, 3
  20121 Milano
  Italy
- @ http://www.csvlombardia.it/

Members of the conference having a discussion

APPENDIX 2
Participants list

	Surname	Name	Organisation	Country
1.	Abild	Tor	Association of NGOs in Norway	Norway
2.	Ainsalu	Aveli	Ministry of the Ĩnterior	Estonia
3.	Andersson	Karin	Forum för frivilligt socialt arbete	Sweden
4.	Almagro Castro	Higinio	Andalusian Agency for Volunteering	Spain
5.	Alsander	Maria	Forum för frivilligt socialt arbete	Sweden
6.	Ballesteros Alarcón	Vicente	Plataforma Andaluza de Voluntariado	Spain
7.	Benedetta	Polini	AVM - Associazione Volontariato Marche	Italy
8.	Bergsten	Terése	Save the Children Sweden	Sweden
9.	Berman	Els	NOV - Vereniging Nederlandse Organisaties Vrijwilligerswerk	Netherlands
10.	Bernardet	Danielle	France Bénévolat	France
11.	Bjerke	Anne	Frivillighet Norge	Norway
12.	Boaria	Marco	ALDA - Association of Local Democracy Agencies	France
13.	Bo Dano	Casper	Frivilligjob	Denmark
14.	Bradley	Elaine	Volunteering Ireland	Ireland
15.	Bruin	Astrid	MOVISIE	Netherlands
16.	Caselli	Rossana	Centro Nazionale per il Volontariato	Italy
17.	Chambel	Elza	National Council for the Promotion of Volunteering	Portugal
18.	Chis-Racolta	Nicoleta	Pro Vobis National Volunteer Centre	Romania
19.	Cobb	Mei	United Way Worldwide	USA
20.	Cronzell	Lina	SOIR - Swedish Organisation for Individual Relief	Sweden
21.	Damerow	Julia	University Münster	Germany
22.	De Zutter	Raf	Het Punt	Belgium
23.	Degli Esposti	Ettore	Coordinamento Regionale dei Centri di servizio per il Volontariato della Lombardia	Italy
24.	Erksel	Ulrika	Forum för frivilligt socialt arbete	Sweden
25.	Ernholdt	Pernilia	Swedish Red Cross	Sweden
26.	F. Tóth	András	ÖKA National Volunteer Centre	Hungary
27.	Falås	Marianne	Volunteer Centre Malmö	Sweden
28.	Fallan	Francis	Volunteer Centre North Lanarkshire	UK
29.	Felicitas Pabst	Hanna	European Adjucational Exchange - YFU	Belgium
30.	Fonovic	Ksenija	SPES - Centro di Servizio per il Volontariato del Lazio	Italy

	Surname	Name	Organisation	Country
31.	Forcic	Gordana	SMART - Association of Civil Society Development	Croatia
	Frattani	Gianluca	AVM - Associazione Volontariato Marche	Italy
32.	Fritzson	Alexandra	IM - Individuell Människohjälp	Sweden
33. 34.	Frostrom	Linda	WAGGGS - World Association of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts	Sweden
	Fuentes González	Magela	IM - Individuell Människohjälp	Sweden
35.	Gaal-Lajtos	Kinga	Junior Achievement Hungary	Hungary
36.	García Carretero	Manuel	Plataforma Andaluza de Voluntariado	Spain
37.	Garcia Freixedes	Eduardo	FOCAGG	Spain
38. 39.	Guarriga Cuadras	Xavier	Departament de Governació i Administracions Públiques, Generalitat Catalunya	Spain
	Gergely	Orsolya	Junior Achievement Hungary	Hungary
40.	Graneli	Ulla	Brottsofferjourernas Riksförbund	Sweden
41.	Guclu	Basak	OSGD	Turkey
42.	Habakukk	Krista	NGO Pärnumaa Kodukant	Estonia
43.	Hambach	Eva	Vlaamse Steunpunt Vrijwilligerswerk	Belgium
44.	Harkin	Marian	European Parliament	Ireland
45.	Held	Markus	CEV	Europe
46. 47.	Herbert	Mikaela	SOIR - Swedish Organisation for Individual Relief	Sweden
	Hjaere Jensen	Mette	Center for frivilligt socialt arbejde	Denmark
48. 49.	Jennings	Allen	UNV, Arab States, Latin America and the Caribbean Section (ARLAC)	Germany
50.	Jevdjic	Jugoslav	Youth Communication Centre OKC	Bosnia and Herzegovina
	Juratovics	Zoltan	Junior Achievement Hungary	Hungary
51. 52.	Jurić	Ante	SEEYN	Bosnia and Herzegovina
	Kamerbeek	Sandra	MOVISIE	Netherlands
53.	Klasson	Marita	Forum för frivilligt socialt arbete	Sweden
54.	Koht	Kirsten	Local Authority of Baerum	Norway
55.	Kötter	Ute	University of Applied Sciences Munich	Germany
56. 57.	Kovacic	Domagoj	SEEYN - South East European Youth Network	Bosnia and Herzegovina
	Kromminga	Peter	UPJ e.V.	Germany
58.	Kruger	Roland	Generali Deutschland Holding AG	Germany
59. 60.	Lacagnina	Lino	Coordinamento Regionale dei Centri di servizio per il Volontariato della Lombardia	Italy
	Lee	Kang-Hyun	Korea Council of Volunteering	South Korea
61.	Leigh	Robert		UK

	Surname	Name	Organisation	Country
63.	Leonart	Eva	Federació Catalana de Voluntariat Social	Spain
64.	Leroy	Veerle	Het Punt	Belgium
65.	Lucke	Gisela	ARBES - Arbeitsgemeinschaft des Bürgerschaftlichen Engagements e. V.	Germany
66.	Lucke	Hans-Jochen	ARBES - Arbeitsgemeinschaft des Bürgerschaftlichen Engagements e. V.	Germany
67.	Lunas Masnou	Rosa	ACFUC	Spain
68.	Macchioni	Stefania	CSV.net	Italy
69.	Mairesse	Pierre	European Commission, DG education and culture	France
70.	Manni	Alberto	SPES	Italy
71.	Mänd	Tuulike	Volunteer Development Estonia	Estonia
72.	Marcolini	Enrico	AVM - Associazione Volontariato Marche	Italy
73.	Margau	Jurgita	The Volunteer Centre	Lithuania
74.	Marosszeki	Emese	Elefta Help Service Association	Hungary
75.	Marti	Lluc	IAVE Youth Office	Spain
76.	McKenna	Yvonne	Volunteer Centres Ireland	Ireland
77.	McNeil	George	Volunteer Centre North Lanarkshire	UK
78.	McNeil	Mary	Volunteer Centre North Lanarkshire	UK
79.	Meinert	Marie	Save the Children Sweden	Sweden
80.	Milosevic	Igor	SEEYN - ZID Montenegro	Montenegro
81.	Monsen-Elvik	Karl	Volunteer Development Scotland	UK
82.	Moore	Celia	IBM Corporate Citizenship Executive	UK
83.	Mracková	Alzbeta	C.A.R.D.O.	Slovakia
84.	Nidal	Almudafar	Malmo – Muncipality	Sweden
85.	Nikodemova	Katarina	CEV	Europe
86.	Nilson	Maria	Ministry of Integration and Gender Equality	Sweden
87.	Nussbaum	Mike	Volunteering England	UK
88.	Ohlsson	Carina	Forum för frivilligt socialt arbete	Sweden
89.	Okereke	Nwadi	Volunteering England	UK
90.	Olsson	Karin	Forum för frivilligt socialt arbete	Sweden
91.	Pettersson	Goran	Forum för frivilligt socialt arbete	Sweden
92.	Pilipovic	Marija	SEEYN - South East European Youth Network	Serbia
93.	Piotrowska	Aleksandra	Ministry of Labour and Social Policy	Poland
94.	Poyatos	Juan	FUNDAR	Spain
95.	Prosser	Anita	BTCV - British Trust for Conservation Volunteers	UK
96.	Razzano	Renzo	SPES - Centro di Servizio per il Volontariato del Lazio	Italy
97.	Reger-Beau	Nicole	Agence du Bénévolat	Luxembourg
98.	Reid	Eliane	Volunteer Development Scotland	UK

	Surname	Name	Organisation	Country
99.	Richards	Simon	Volunteering England	UK
100.	Rigman	Cristina	Pro Vobis National Volunteer Centre	Romania
101.	Salamon	Lester M	Johns Hopkins University	USA
102.	Salgado Silva	Candida	CEV	Europe
103.	Salsbäck	Maja	Save the Children Sweden	Sweden
104.	Sandberg	Ludvig	Forum för frivilligt socialt arbete	Sweden
105.	Santolaya Soriano	Francisco José	Andalusian Agency for Volunteering	Spain
106.	Schwärzel	Mirko	Bundesnetzwerk Bürgerschaftliches Engagment - BBE	Germany
107.	Scotte	Ivar	Association Nonprofit commitment	Sweden
108.	Selin	Henrik	Sweden Permanent Representation to the EU	Sweden
109.	Sexton	Fionna	Volunteer Centres Ireland	Ireland
110.	Silfverstolpe	Amelie	Forum för frivilligt socialt arbete	Sweden
111.	Sozanská	Olga	Hestia National Volunteer Centre	Czech Republic
112.	Steenbergen	Marijke	MOVISIE	Netherlands
113.	Storme	Aurélie	CEV	Europe
114.	Svensson	Sara	Save the Children Sweden	Sweden
115.	Svensson Kåreda	Daniel	Save the Children Sweden	Sweden
116.	Szabo	Susana	France Bénévolat	France
117.	Szanto	Botond	Junior Achievement Hungary	Hungary
118.	Tornoczi	Zsofia	ÖKA National Volunteer Centre	Hungary
119.	Trnavac	Dusica	SEEYN - South East European Youth Network	Serbia
120.	Uibokand	Evelin	Volunteer Development Estonia	Estonia
121.	Usco	Paolo	Centro Servizi Volontariato F.V.G.	Italy
122.	Van den Bos	Cees	Erasmus University Rotterdam and Volunteer Centre Arnhem	Netherlands
123.	Van Elst	Ton	MOVISIE	Netherlands
124.	Vikström	Jatta	Citizen Forum	Finland
125.	Von Essen	Johan	The Institute for Civil Society Studies, Ersta Sköndal University College	Sweden
126.	Westerström	Amanda	Uppsala Crime and victim support	Sweden
127.	Widlundh	Henriette	Centrum för Ideellt Arbete	Sweden
128.	Wijnandt	Hilde	Vlaams Steunpunt Vrijwilligerswerk	Belgium
129.	Williams	Sarah	Volunteering Ireland	Ireland
130.	Wygnánski	Kuba	Forum of the Third Sector	Poland
131.	Zoledowska	Marta	Ministry of Labour and Social Policy	Poland

APPENDIX 3
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Notes

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