
REPORT

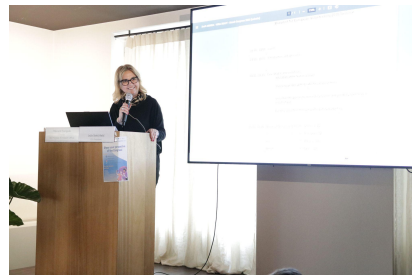
#REACT - “Rights & Equality - Active Citizens Together” - Blueprint for European Volunteering 2030 Seminar

*Mid Norway European Office
(Avenue des Arts 7/8)*

On 20 March 2023, in Brussels, CEV hosted the #REACT - “Rights & Equality - Active Citizens Together” - Blueprint for European Volunteering 2030 Seminar that saw the participation of **81 citizens** from all over Europe, of which 28 males, 52 females, 1 non-binary.



CEV President Lejla Šehić Relić and Håvard Tangvik, Director of the Mid Norway European Office welcomed the participants and gave introductory speeches.



The first part of the Seminar included presentations of case studies from 7 speakers while the second part utilised breakout discussions to go more deeply into each topic, with the speakers acting as expert resource people.

Veronica Agliozzo, Project Officer of Plataforma del Voluntariado de España (PVE) gave a presentation on the use of the Blueprint 2030 (BEV2030) at the national level, linking the BEV 2030 with the PVE strategic plan and with the local Spanish context and legal framework, including proposals for advocacy actions linked to the strategic objectives and lines of action of the PVE Strategic Plan.



She was followed by **Manuel Corchado Gonzalez¹, CEV Volunteer from Spain & Loredana Dicsi², Membership Internal Communication and Youth Coordinator of European Disability Forum** who spoke about involving people with disabilities as volunteers. Manuel, as a person with Asperger syndrome, shared his experience with the different challenges he faced during his 1 month as an ESC volunteer with CEV in September 2022. Following this in-person placement, he continued volunteering online from Spain, during which he saw further personal development and, with appropriate support, has been able to contribute to CEV with a lasting impact. Loredana, who is a person with vision impairment, shared her experience starting as a young volunteer in Romania, then moving to Brussels and working for EDF. She shared advice and information about how organisations can consider people's potential abilities and contribution as volunteers rather than focussing on disability. She referred to the guides published by EDF in 2022: [Guide on Volunteers with disabilities within the new European Solidarity Corps \(ESC\)](#) and in 2019 a [Guide for accessible meetings for all](#).



Rossella Menegato and Marzia Garofletti, Volunteers from CSV Vicenza - l'ideAzione discussed the "[Schegge](#)" project, which is included in the organisation's annual programme. The project focuses on volunteer responses to domestic violence and gender violence as a result of war, both in terms of supporting victims as well as contributing to prevention. Domestic violence and gender violence are serious issues that require a multi-faceted approach to combat and prevent them, as such it was highlighted that solutions should also be multi-faceted, empowering both organisations and individuals to tackle the issue.



Marta Osório, Head of Volunteering Division from Municipality of Cascais and Danijela Ustic, Management Committee member from Volunteer Centre Istria focused on funding volunteering through participatory budgeting. Participatory budgeting gives citizens the effective power to present proposals and decide, through voting, the projects to be implemented by the Municipality of Cascais. The Municipality commits to respecting and implementing the decision of the participants.



The first breakout room was led by Veronica Agliozzo and focused on **BEV 2030 at the National Level**. BEV 2030 serves as guidance to CEV, CEV members and other European volunteering organisations concerned with volunteering, especially policymakers, regarding

¹ Annex 2

² Annex 3

the steps that need to be taken for volunteering to reach its true potential. It acknowledges that there are different cultural and legal contexts for volunteering in Europe and takes into account that the outcomes of the suggestions included will vary according to this variety of circumstances and different volunteer profiles, for example regarding age, but stresses that common values and aspects of quality indicators should be common throughout. Participants shared their experiences and best

practices about community resilience, legal & policy framework in their countries, democratic engagement and inclusion. They all underlined that the Blueprint can be easily adapted and applied in different countries and different local levels in order to improve the facilitating environment and impact of volunteering and that some of them are already implementing it in this way as in Spain.



The second breakout room was led by Connor Audsley, CEV Project Officer and Manuel Corchado Gonzalez focusing on **Involving people with disabilities as volunteers**. In this group participants talked about the [Guide on Volunteers with disabilities within the new European Solidarity Corps \(ESC\)](#) and the [Guide for accessible meetings for all](#) that Loredana Dicsi introduced before. The first guide has been created as part of VIVID-T,

which is a project funded by the European Union (EU) that looks at technical assistance in humanitarian response, with a specific lens on volunteering and inclusion of persons with disabilities in these responses. The second guide focuses on successful conferences with active participation and robust debate, with audiences from diverse backgrounds and perspectives, the achievability of which will depend on how conference organisers accommodate the needs of all possible participants, including persons with disabilities. They also talked about different levels of engagement with volunteers with disabilities, the challenges of reaching out to an organisation, cross-border volunteering, levels of accessibility in terms of volunteering organisations and opportunities especially regarding the importance of accessible and inclusive communication with volunteers with disabilities, starting from the very first point of contact.



Third breakout room was led by Rossella Menegato and Marzia Garofletti focusing on **Volunteer responses to domestic violence and gender violence as a result of war**. They presented case studies from the "[Schegge. Non chiamiamoli uomini](#)" project, where the volunteers raise awareness especially through using theatre to shed light on 35 stories of violence. These stories depict and represent the scenario of violence (gender violence, abuse of power,



psychological violence, relationship violence and drug addiction, abuse of social networks, assisted violence) through real experiences, narrowing down the gap between the spectator and the victim. The play is based on the book written by Rossella Memengato under the same title. Participants in the workshop shared their stories on domestic violence and gender violence as a serious issue that requires a multi-faceted approach to combat and prevent. Educating volunteer organisations and volunteers about domestic violence and gender violence is an important step in preventing it. It is important to provide support and assistance to victims of domestic violence and gender violence. This can be done through volunteer support in areas such as counselling and shelters.

Finally, the **fourth breakout room** was led by Marta Osório and Danijela Ustic focusing on **Funding Volunteer through Participatory Budgeting** in Portugal and Croatia, a process that ensures priorities that have to be implemented to be decided by the participating citizens and ensures full implementation of the participants' deliberations, contributing to more equality of representation and decision making. Participants talked about examples in their municipalities where Participatory Budgeting funded volunteer projects or volunteering promoting organisations. In Cascais in 2022 through Participatory Budgeting ReFood was funded - a new operations centre for the volunteer association that rescues food and transforms it into meals that are delivered. Participants also gave examples where Participatory Budgeting was applied in culture, animal welfare, health and wellbeing, environment, transport and accessibility and civil protection.



Given the high number of questions in the breakout rooms and the level of engagement with the important points discussed, it can be said that the audience was particularly interested in the topics addressed by the REACT seminar.

Presentations from the seminar are available [here](#), while more pictures are accessible [here](#).

Annex 1

AGENDA

13:00 - 14:00	Lunch
14:00 - 14:15	Introduction and welcome CEV President - Lejla Šehić Relić Director of Mid Norway European Office - Håvard Tangvik
14:15 - 15:15	Case Studies Presentations <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. BEV 2030 at the National Level: Veronica Agliozzo - Project Officer of Plataforma del Voluntariado de España 2. Involving people with disabilities as volunteers: Manuel Corchado Gonzalez, Volunteer, CEV & Loredana Dicsi - Membership Internal Communication and Youth Coordinator, European Disability Forum 3. Volunteer Responses to domestic violence and gender violence as a result of war, Rossella Menegato - Volunteer (CSV Vicenza - L'ideAzione) - Marzia Garofletti (CSV Vicenza - l'ideAzione) 4. Funding Volunteer through participatory budgeting, Marta Osório, Head of Volunteering Division, Municipality of Cascais & Danijela Ustic - Management Committee member, Volunteer Centre Istria
15:15 - 16:30	Breakout Discussion 1 Room - Dracena (10)
	Breakout Discussion 2 Room - Aloe Vera (12)
	Breakout Discussion 3 Room - Hibiscus (16)
	Breakout Discussion 4 Room - Oxalis (17)

Annex 2

Speech of Manuel Corchado Gonzalez

My name is Manu and I am going to talk about my experience in the volunteering field. I am 32 years old and I come from Jerez de la frontera, Spain.

1. Lack of opportunities for people with Disabilities.

1.1 Organisations have difficulties accepting people with disabilities because they have extra costs and they don't have the enough funds to support it.

1.2 The organisations don't have the capacity to work with extra effort because people with disabilities require too much attention and Europe won't give any class of funds to support the costs.

1.3 People with disabilities want to participate in volunteering activities but they're not accepted by the organisations so they get frustrated. That happened to me because they don't have enough resources to cover it.

2. Travelling to Brussels alone

2.1 After trying to apply many times to different opportunities I got frustrated so I found a direct contact and I found CEV's whatsapp number thanks to the Andalusian volunteer platform of cadiz and then I asked them to help me find volunteering experience in any place in Europe.

2.2 Because they didn't find organisations that could support me Gabriela Civico gave me the opportunity to volunteer at CEV for 28 days with the financial support of Alzira, an organisation located in a town in Valencia.

2.3 When I was accepted by the CEV organisation in Brussels I was excited but I had a little fear travelling alone in a plane and I finally could go with gabriela's son ismael that supported me to arrive in Brussels and host me in the place i was going to stay that 28 days

2.4 During my time in Brussels I lived with two women from the United Kingdom. For me it was hard to adapt myself to the place because I needed to follow rules, clean ,buy my own food and manage my money. Brussels is expensive.

3. Volunteering experiences in Brussels and gratefulness

3.1 I like my volunteering experience because I could eat a lot of things and travelling through other places from Belgium like Antwerp, Bruges, Ostende and other places from Brussels with many people from the CEV team.

- The activities I did at CEV were:
- Attending to events I had in brussels
- Give documents to Gabriela in other places.
- Administrative and logistics tasks.

3.2 My biggest learning was travelling through the metro to know other places from Brussels and learn how it works. Sometimes with the support of people and sometimes alone so I became more independent and self-confident.. Also I go to the swimming pool with one of the CEV members Kristijan.

3.3 After my big experience in Brussels I went to a little congress in Vienna to talk about my experience in November of 2020 as part of an Erasmus Plus project closing event.

4. Invite organisations and municipalities to host volunteers with disabilities

4.1 To finish the speech I would like to say to organizations of other places in Europe must take this example in order to promote inclusion diversity in the volunteering field and help people with disabilities to learn and grow up.

I'm very thankful to Joseph to help me to made this speech, to **Gabriella** to give the opportunity of participate as a volunteer in Brussels and to my friends **Giulia, Sara, Yuliia, Kristijan, Pavel, Connor, Miriah, Filipa, Luca, Santiago, Ismael, Alejandra, Maria, Queralt** and to my partners who was sharing me in the first time I was in Brussels **Alana** and **Melani** the one who learn me how to cook a tiramisu.

Annex 3

Speech of Loredana Dicsi

Barriers to volunteering for Persons with Disabilities

What is volunteering? Volunteering is dedicating its own time for a certain activity.

In the context of disability volunteering was seen as helping persons with disabilities. The volunteer is a person without disability, a healthy charitable...

But nowadays volunteering is available for everyone. This should be the case at least.

In 1997 in my country of origin Romania volunteering started to become known. I knew an organisation not far from where I was following English courses and I went there to request information on how I could join the team of volunteers and how I could help. I had a discussion with a kind lady working there, she completed a form and told me she would contact me. The day of today I was never contacted. And when taking the initiative, I didn't get further. I never became their volunteer. Luckily a couple of years later during my studies I could do volunteering in a special kindergarten for children with severe disabilities.

The mentality that persons with disabilities are those who need help is still embedded in our mindsets. That a person with a disability can help is difficult to believe. Yet this is the truth we are also human beings built in the same way like our non-disabled peers. We have this nature that pushes us to be kind and offer our help. We also want to be volunteers.

So this is the most important barrier I think to see the volunteer and not the disability.

Trust in the abilities of persons with disabilities is another one. It is important to speak with the volunteer with disabilities and decide together what the tasks would be and do not assume that the person would take the easiest tasks.

Access to information. And an accessible recruitment process. Create accessible information and documents, make sure your website follows the Accessibility standards set down by the EU in its Web Accessibility Directive and the World Wide Web Consortium. Including in your communication you are welcoming volunteers with disabilities. Make sure you provide a contact for accessibility issues should the person need to address someone.

Reasonable accommodation; sometimes organisations/institutions would like to take persons with disabilities as volunteers, but when it comes to providing equipment or adjustments it frightens the institutions as they do not have the knowledge, resources or are simply afraid. Also some insurance companies may not want to cover the volunteers with disabilities. Discuss with the volunteer to find out what she or he would need to ensure the reasonable accommodation. If you do not have what they request, try to find out how you could get it?

Also in some countries if you are not working and want to volunteer you may lose your unemployment benefit or you need to do some administrative steps that frighten persons with disabilities. Discuss about this with the person and ensure you want to support them in doing those procedures with the person.

Self confidence of persons with disabilities in their capacities being afraid of the way they will be judged is also a barrier.

But these barriers can be overcome. I never stopped volunteering and am not planning to do that. I volunteered a lot in the disability field, but I also volunteer in events of my city, for my cohousing.

Be open as organisations, do not be afraid to speak with the volunteer and you will see the the barriers will be lifted one by one. Here make the person with disability feel you are listening to hear and see its or his capacities that you see the person in him or her and not the disability, and that the disability reaches your diversity and is not a hinder.

For many of us, I say us, because I have a disability, I am almost blind. Volunteering is a step to the labour market. It helps us try what work is like, building our confidence that we are not only recipients of help and services, but we are givers. Givers of time, help and we can provide work of quality.

Resources:

- [Guide: Volunteers with disabilities within the new European Solidarity Corps \(ESC\)](#)
- [Accessible Website Toolkit - Digital Accessibility Training session #7](#)
- [Accessible Video Toolkit - Digital Accessibility Training session #5](#)
- [Accessible Online Meeting Toolkit - Digital Accessibility Training session #4](#)
- [Accessible Social Media Toolkit - Digital Accessibility Training session #3](#)
- [10 Web Accessibility Rules](#)
- [EDF guide for accessible meetings](#)
- [EDF Guide for Accessible Meetings for All](#)