



## Introduction

The following article is based on the 2011 Study on Volunteering in the European Union, Estonia Country Report, as well as the 2013 study Participation in Voluntary Activities in Estonia by Praxis Centre for Policy Studies. The main development organisation in the field of volunteering, NGO Estonian Village Movement Kodukant, also shares knowledge obtained during its everyday work with volunteer involving NGOs and volunteers.

## 1. VOLUNTEERING INFRASTRUCTURE CONCEPT DEFINITION

The definition of volunteering commonly used in Estonia is:

Volunteering is the commitment of time, energy or skills, out of one's free will and without getting paid. Volunteers help others or undertake activities mainly for the public benefit and the benefit of society. Helping one's family members is not considered to be voluntary activity.

## 2. VOLUNTEERING LANDSCAPE (general situation in the country)<sup>1</sup>

#### 2.1 Total number of volunteers

Data from a 2013 survey Participation in Voluntary Activities in Estonia indicated that 31% of the population aged 15-74 had been engaged in voluntary activities over the preceding 12 month period. This translates to over 300,000 individuals.

#### Average volunteer is:

Female (58% of all the volunteers) in his/her prime of working age (46% of the volunteers are 25-29 years old), has secondary or vocational education (50% of the volunteers) and works either as a specialist, an office worker or a manager. He/she copes financially, as the net income of the family is at least 800 euros a month (close to the average salary). He/she is Estonian (77%) and comes from Tallinn (25%) or South-Estonia (25%).

#### 2.2 Volunteer involvement by sectors

Volunteers in Estonia are active in a wide-range of different sectors and work with a variety of different target groups to address different issues. Data from 2013 has shown that the most popular sector of volunteers engaged in voluntary activities is for environmental protection (37%). Other popular sectors are local community development (including village community development) (33%), child and youth work (23%), education and sciences (21%), sports (19%), humanitarian aid (16%), social work (16%), culture and arts (15%) and security and rescue (13%).

#### 2.3 Trends

Compared to the study conducted in 2009, where the volunteering rate of population was 47%, the drop to 31% seems significant. Nonetheless, there are several reasons behind this change and it is incorrect to

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> Conclusions in this section are based on the survey carried out by Praxis Centre for Policy Studies in 2013 (https://www.siseministeerium.ee/sites/default/files/dokumendid/Uuringud/Kodanikuyhiskond/2014\_vabatahtikus\_tegevuses\_osalemine.pdf)



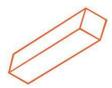
state that the rate of volunteering has actually decreased this much. On the one hand, people nowadays have a better sense of what volunteering is, they are more aware of its necessity and principles. On the other hand, researchers have learned from the experience, the study methodology has been specified and volunteering defined more narrowly. Another reason for a decline can most likely be due to changes in general social and economic situation, as the economic crisis could have influenced people's choices regarding their use of time. As the motivation to volunteer has not decreased it can be said that the decrease in the rate of volunteering is not a result of the developments in the field of volunteering.

Although the self-assessment of the respondents of the survey shows that they tend to not be aware of ways they can contribute their time in the public interest and without pay, both the experience of NGO Estonian Village Movement Kodukant and the research results show that general awareness about volunteering has increased. In 2013, compared to five years ago, there were significantly fewer people who attributed not volunteering to lack of information.

The capacity and quality to involve volunteers has increased among major NGOs. Their main challenge is to recruit new volunteers, especially those who are willing to volunteer on long-term basis and offer their professional skills.

In addition to general civil society and volunteer development, the state is also contributing more and more to involvement of volunteers in specific fields, like assistant police officers and volunteer rescuers.

One field in need of more volunteers is social sphere. Unfortunately social workers in Estonia tend to have prejudice to engage volunteers and the great challenges also are limited resources for volunteer management and training of volunteers. To improve the situation it is essential to pay more attention to volunteer mediation and resources. On the positive side there are initiatives of



different associations to establish regional voluntary mediation platforms, the voluntary mediation moving more and more into the Internet.

Expansion of informal civic initiatives is also noticeable.

All in all, the mindset is changing in Estonia and voluntary activities are getting more common.

# 3. LEGAL FRAMEWORK FOR VOLUNTEERING AND ITS IMPLEMENTATION (laws, institutions)

There is no specific legal framework in place in Estonia for volunteering but a range of laws affect volunteering. These include for instance:

- > Non-profit Associations Act
- Foundations Act
- ➤ Income Tax Act
- ➤ Value Added Tax Act
- > Law of Obligations Act
- Youth Work Act

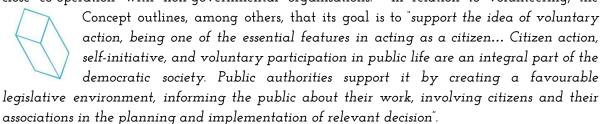


- > Rescue Act
- Victim Support Act
- > Child Welfare Act
- > Assistant Police Officer Act

#### 3.1 Policies

There are two key national documents in Estonia that relate to civic initiatives and volunteering in Estonia:

1. The Estonian Civil Society Development Concept (CSDC) forms the basis of the national strategy for the civil society development and its purpose is to 'prove' that there is mutual understanding between the government and non-profit organisations about co-operation between the two parties. The concept stresses the role of voluntary activity in the development of civil society. It promotes the idea that active participation in voluntary associations is an important form of social engagement that contributes positively to democracy and individual's personal development. The concept specifies the roles and principles by which public authorities and civic initiatives should develop and implement public policies. The Civil Society Development Concept was approved by the Parliament in December 2002. It was formed in close co-operation with non-governmental organisations. In relation to volunteering, the



2. The Civil Society Development Plan 2015-2020. The Estonian Government has adopted the development plan, which aims at the promotion of civil society in 2015-2020. The plan focuses on two priorities: socially active residents and acting capabilities of citizens' associations, i.e. ensuring that citizens' associations have sufficient possibilities for achievement of their goals. The development plan establishes the goal of participation of citizens' associations in the formation of policy as a natural and valued cooperation. It is also important to increase the influence of citizens' associations in the process of dealing with social problems and improvement of well-being of people through social innovation, social entrepreneurship and provision of public services. The condition for achievement of both goals is the presence of capable citizens' associations that have sufficient possibilities for development and influential activities. Activities of the development plan are financed from the state budget, external financial resources and, if possible, from private and third sector financial resources. The development plan of the field shall be executed on the basis of the implementation plan prepared for the years 2015-2018, and it shall be updated every year for the following four years.

#### 3.2 Main public body responsible for volunteering

The Ministry of Interior is responsible for analysing, planning and coordinating active community development and co-operation between the state and NGOs.

The Joint Committee of the Government and NGOs was formed in 2003 and reformed in 2007 to include higher state representatives. The Committee is in charge of the implementation of the Civil



Society Development Concept, the Minister of the Interior is in charge of the committee. The committee consists of about 20 members, including bigger umbrella organisations.

However, many other ministries are involved in volunteer development policy agenda too, including:

- Ministry of Justice (volunteering in probation services, the regulations screening volunteers working with children);
- Ministry of Environment (volunteering in the environmental field);
- Ministry of Culture (volunteering in the sport);
- Ministry of Foreign Affairs (volunteering abroad);
- Ministry of the Interior (volunteering in rescue work, churches and congregations);
- Ministry of Education and Research (volunteering among young people, especially school pupils and students);
- > Ministry of Social Affairs (volunteering in social sphere).

Many voluntary organizations also collaborate with local governments. For example Pärnu City Government has been involved in the international co-operation project of activating elderly people through volunteering<sup>2</sup>.

## 4. STRUCTURE OF THE NON-PROFIT SECTOR INVOLVED IN VOLUNTEERING

Estonia has a very large number of registered, non-profit organisations. On the 1st of January 2014 there were 29 530 non-profit organisations, including 801 foundations and 579 religious organisations. The number, however, includes also about 12,000 housing associations, which cannot be classified as organisations engaging volunteers as such, as housing associations are a compulsory feature of the Estonian housing market.

Most of the associations are managed through volunteers, according to the data of 2014<sup>3</sup>() only 30.3% NGO had paid workers and 32% of the NGOs didn't engage volunteers at all.

#### 4.1 National Volunteer Organisations

#### > The Estonian Volunteer Network

The Estonian Volunteer Network was established in March 2014 coordinating associations promoting efficient volunteering in order to say the word that concerns forming policies connected with the voluntary activities, to support the interests of the voluntary organisations, involving volunteers and be a consistent partner to public offices coordinating the sphere and the Ministry of the Interior. The possibilities and duties of the development of the sphere are shared jointly. Today there are 28 associations in the Network. The leader of the Network is NGO Estonian Village Movement Kodukant, being a strategic partner to the Ministry of the Interior in developing volunteering in Estonia. The NGO Estonian Village Movement Kodukant is a member of the European Volunteer Center.

The tasks of the voluntary activities of the NGO Estonian Village Movement Kodukant are:

- > Promotion of volunteering;
- Provision of training and consultancy;

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> Let us be active - Central Baltic 2014-2020 project, <u>https://www.facebook.com/letusbeactive</u>

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> Kodanikualgatuse institutsionaliseerumine Eestis 2014,

http://www.kysk.ee/failid/Upload/files/KUAK%2014%20raport.pdf



Dissemination of information about volunteering, evolving the greatest portal of volunteering called Volunteer Gate<sup>4</sup> and every other week an e-newsletter is published.

#### Network of Estonian Non-profit Organisations (NENO)<sup>5</sup>

Network of Estonian Non-profit Organisations NENO, is the largest Estonian organization uniting public benefit non-profit organizations. It was established in 1991 and at the moment it unites 107 active and operational public benefit non-profit organizations. NENO's mission is to give voice to and advocate on behalf of Estonian public benefit organizations and its work is dedicated to the development and promotion of civic action and civil society in Estonia".

#### ➤ International Youth Association Est (YES)<sup>6</sup>

International Youth Association Est (YES) is a non-profit, non-political, non-governmental organisation. It was established in 1991 with the purpose to promote youth and cultural exchanges for learning and better mutual understanding. EstYES was a pioneer organisation in the field of international youth voluntary service in Estonia.

## > Foundation Arhimedes Youth Agency

Foundation Arhimedes Youth Agency supports and funds in Estonia the European Voluntary Service projects which are part of the Erasmus+ Programme - European Union programme in fields of education, training, youth and sport for the period 2014-2020. The European Voluntary Service (EVS) gives young people (17-30) the opportunity to express their personal commitment through full-time voluntary work in a foreign country within or outside the EU. The EVS aims to develop solidarity, mutual understanding and tolerance among young people, while contributing to strengthening social cohesion and promoting active citizenship. In January 2016 in Estonia there are 114 accredited organisations that can host foreign volunteers in Estonia and/or send Estonian youngsters to do voluntary work abroad.

#### ➤ The Estonian National Youth Council®

The Estonian National Youth Council also appeals to the activity of the young volunteers. Estonian National Youth Council (ENL) is an umbrella organization established in 2002 and unites 43 youth organisations, 15 county youth councils and 70 local youth councils throughout Estonia. ENL promotes cooperation between youth associations and active participation of young people in society. ENL is working for recognition and participation of young people.

#### ➤ The Estonian Nature Fund<sup>9</sup>

The Estonian Nature Fund has involved the greatest number of volunteers in the environmental sphere. ELF was established in 1991 by biologists and conservationists and in close co-operation with WWF (World Wide Fund for Nature). ELF is a non-governmental and independent nature protection organisation.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup> Volunteer Gate, <u>http://vabatahtlikud.ee/</u>

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup> Network of Estonia Non-Profit Organisations, <u>http://www.ngo.ee/en</u>

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>6</sup> International Youth Association Est, <a href="http://www.estves.ee/en/estves-2/">http://www.estves.ee/en/estves-2/</a>

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>7</sup> For more Information about EVS in Estonia:

http://ec.europa.eu/youth/programme/mobility/european-voluntary-service\_en.htm,

http://euroopa.noored.ee/rahastus/euroopa-vabatahtlik-teenistus/

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>8</sup> Estonian National Youth Council, <u>http://www.enl.ee/en</u>

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>9</sup> Estonian Nature Fund, http://elfond.ee/en



## ➤ Let's Do It!Teeme ära! & Let's Do It! World<sup>10</sup>

Let's Do It!Teeme ära! It's the day of collective action that has been taking place in different forms all over Estonia since the year 2008. In 2008 people got together to clean Estonia from illegal garbage, in 2009 people gathered together to generate good ideas and from 2010-2014 there have been several different actions (Estonian: talgud) all over Estonia. Every community, organization or active citizen decided by themselves what needed to be done and asked other people to join according to that. The main purpose of the day is the contribution to the civil society in Estonia by promoting active attitude, strengthening local communities and supporting the development of local leaders.

Let's Do It! World is a civic led mass movement which began in Estonia during 2008 when 50,000 people gathered to clean up the entire country in just five hours. We are now an international movement with ll2 countries working together, engaging over l4 million participants.

## ➤ Helpific<sup>11</sup>

Helpific is a web-based platform that connects volunteers with people with special needs. Those who cannot volunteer can contribute with donations to ensure that the community members with special needs could live their lives with joy and enjoyment and get necessary services that enable them to be engaged in social life and do anything they desire. The mission of Helpific is to empower each and everyone to live a full life with dignity and to create stronger communities and smarter society. Volunteers have the opportunity to help people in their communities in a simple, fast and convenient way and experience that helping others can be really simple and fun, without taking any long-term obligations.

#### 4.2 Local Volunteer Centres

It is also worth mentioning the 8 local volunteer centers:

- Pärnu Volunteers Center operates at Pärnu County Movement<sup>12</sup>.
- > Viljandi County Volunteers Center operates at Viljandi County Development Center.
- > Järva County Volunteers Centre operates at Paide Freetown House 13.
- ➤ Lääne County Volunteers Center operates at Lääne County Village Movement<sup>14</sup>.
- ➤ Saare County Volunteers Center operating at Saare County Village Movement<sup>15</sup>.
- > Serve The City operates mainly in Tallinn and Harju County<sup>16</sup>.
- > Tapa Volunteers Support Center in West Viru County 17.
- > Free Will in Tartu, being more focused on consultancy and training.

#### 4.3 Other Organisations

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>10</sup> Let's Do It!Teeme ära! & Let's Do It! World, <a href="http://www.teemeara.ee/en">http://www.teemeara.ee/en</a> and <a href="http://www.letsdoitworld.org/about">http://www.letsdoitworld.org/about</a>

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>11</sup> Helpific, <u>https://helpific.com/en/</u>

<sup>12</sup> Pärnu Volunteers Center, https://www.facebook.com/ParnumaaVabatahtlikeKeskus

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>13</sup> Järva County Volunteers Centre, <a href="http://wabalinn.weissenstein.ee/wabalinna-maja/">http://wabalinn.weissenstein.ee/wabalinna-maja/</a>

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>14</sup> Lääne County Volunteers Center, https://www.facebook.com/laanemaa.vabatahtlikud

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>15</sup> Saare County Volunteers Center, http://www.saarekodukant.edu.ee/koduleht/index.php/vabatahtlikud

<sup>16</sup> Serve The City, http://www.saarekodukant.edu.ee/koduleht/index.php/vabatahtlikud

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>17</sup> Tapa Volunteers Support Center, <u>http://www.vabatahtlik.com/uhingust/tugiisiku-blogi</u>



#### > The Good Deed Foundation 18

Professional volunteers and enterprises cooperating to involve volunteers have been promoting the Good Deed Foundation, having an operative data base of professional volunteers. In addition they have started several social initiatives under the volunteers' leadership, like:

- Social Impact Bond<sup>19</sup>: New innovative investment model which aims to raise the effectiveness of solutions used to tackle social problems.
- > SPIN Sports<sup>20</sup> based on prevention program for the youth, which consists of soccer practices and workshops to develop social skills.

## ➤ The NPO Sports Year<sup>21</sup>

During the last year the NPO Sports Year has activated, planning sport volunteers' movement and wishing to launch an Internet platform intermediating sports volunteers.

## > The Estonian Volunteer Rescue Association 22

Estonian Volunteer Rescue Association is a non-profit organisation established in order to unite different voluntary rescue organisations and represent, execute and protect their interests. Today the Association has 96 member organisations, which represent 103 voluntary fire squads and 29 sea rescue teams. Through legal entities it unites more than 2000 people.

NGO ESTSAR (Estonian Search and Rescue) was established in 2015 by the experts in the field to help police forces and rescue service in rescue and search. In addition, ESTSAR is providing preventive actions, first aid, organizing and participating in public awareness and rescue capacities raising activities. ESTSAR is a member of Estonian Volunteer Rescue Association.

## ➤ Missing<sup>23</sup>

Missing is a non-profit organisation that was established in order to unite different volunteers amongst people, enterprizes and rescue organisations. OPEROG assists the police with the missing people in the first 72 hours of search and rescue missions<sup>24</sup>.

KatrinAlert is a child abduction alert system, which informs Estonian citizens (social media, other public channels, etc.) on active searches and endangered missing children in Estonia<sup>25</sup>. Missing unites more than 2000 volunteers.

#### ➤ The Association of Estonian Assistant Police Officers<sup>26</sup>

The Assistant Police Officer united by "the Association of Estonian Assistant Police Officers", which was established in 2011 as an independent non-profit organisation with the aim of uniting assistants police officer in the Estonian Republic under a joint organisation and thereby guarantee unitary development, quality, mutual sharing of experience and information exchange.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>18</sup> The Good Deed Foundation, http://www.heategu.ee/en

<sup>19</sup> Social Impact Bond, www.sib.ee

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>20</sup> Spin Sport, www.spinprogramm.ee

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>21</sup> NPO Sports YEar, http://www.spordiaasta.ee/#&slider1=2

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>22</sup> Estonian Volunteer Rescue Association, http://www.paasteliit.ee/about-us/, Homepage: www.estsar.ee Email: info@estsar.ee

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>23</sup> Missing, http://www.kadunud.ee/, https://www.facebook.com/KadunudSA/

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>24</sup> OPEROG, https://www.facebook.com/groups/OPEROG/

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>25</sup> KatrinAlert, http://www.katrinalert.org/, https://www.facebook.com/KatrinAlert/

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>26</sup> The Association of Estonian Assistant Police Officers, http://www.abipolitseikogu.ee/



## > Eesti Toidupank (Estonian Food Bank)<sup>27</sup>

The Eesti Toidupank (Estonian Food Bank) is a network of 14 different non-profit, charitable organizations that collect surplus food from food dealers and distribute it to those who have difficulty purchasing enough food in order to avoid hunger and to fight food waste. The Food Bank has a clear mission: to create solidarity between human beings and responsibility for the weakest. More than 90% of the work is done by volunteers.

In 2015 distributed food banks approx. 800 000 kg of "saved" food and 700 000 kg of European food aid (FEAD).

Food banks are around since March 2010, but this relatively young network is according a central survey (2014) the best spontaneously known charitable organisation in Estonia.

#### > The Estonian Society for the Protection of Animals

The Estonian Society for the Protection of Animals stands for the principles that animals should be treated considerately and kindly. They provide direct help for the animals but they are also engaged to the prevention work to educate people to ensure best future for the animals. Society involves volunteers to those activities.

#### ➤ 4.16 NGO Mondo<sup>28</sup>

NGO Mondo is devoted on development cooperation, global education and humanitarian aid. They mission is to support people living in vulnerable situation and communities to take care of themselves and to raise public awareness in Estonia about world's problems and their possible solutions.

## 5.OTHER STAKEHOLDERS (state, private, etc.)

#### 5.1 The Unemployment Insurance Fund<sup>29</sup>

The Unemployment Insurance Fund is a quasi-governmental organisation and a legal person in public law. It performs its activities independently from the government, but on the basis of a mission and of operational rules defined by law.

The Unemployment Insurance Fund offers a voluntary activity measure to an unemployed person with the aim of helping the unemployed to prepare for working life, develop social skills, provides new experience, professional skills and knowledge and helps create or maintain working habits. Maximum for three months the unemployed person can participate as a volunteer in some organisation's activity for the public benefit or the benefit for society. The organisation has to make a contract with the Unemployed Insurance Fund. The participant continues to receive an unemployment benefit, and is in addition rewarded a scholarship and travel compensation, paid by the Unemployment Insurance Fund.

5.2 Police<sup>30</sup>

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>27</sup> Estonian Food Bank, www.toidupank.ee, www.facebook.com/toidupank

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>28</sup> NGO Mondo, http://mondo.org.ee/en/

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>29</sup> The Unemployment Insurance Fund, <a href="https://www.tootukassa.ee/eng/content/about-tootukassa">https://www.tootukassa.ee/eng/content/about-tootukassa</a>

<sup>30</sup> Police, <u>www.abipolitseinik.ee</u>



The Estonian Police have engaged special volunteers (assistant police officers) in their work from 1994. Assistant police officers are volunteers participating in police activities, (public order, traffic control, crime prevention, border guard and migration control etc) according to the law and other cases granted by the law. The activity of the assistant police officers is regulated by the Assistant Police Officer Act<sup>31</sup>.

#### 5.3 Rescue Board

The National Rescue Board engages volunteers in their work. Voluntary rescuers participate in rescue and prevention work. On agreement with the employer a volunteer may carry out rescue or prevention work also during his working hours. The state has guaranteed the volunteers with insurance if they have undergone the training and received a rescuer's certificate.

## 6. FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

National Foundation of Civil Society was established in 2008 and it is financed from the state budget. The Foundation focuses on capacity building of NGOs and development of a supportive environment for civic action. As a rule, it is possible to use projects to pay the expenses needed to develop the volunteer activities. For a wider development of the sphere the Ministry of the Interior made for the first time a longer-term agreement with the NGO Estonian Village Movement Kodukant for 4 years, which embraced two-year funding agreement. Thereby on the positive side longer-term funding can be seen. Funding by the private sector is also developing. Good examples here are the platforms like Swedbank's donation environment "I love to help" and crowdfunding platform Hooandja where creative ideas can find support.

## 7. REGULAR AND SYSTEMATIC RESEARCH

National studies on voluntary activities have been carried out since 2009, the second study was in 2013 and the subsequent one is planned before 2020. The Ministry of the Interior orders the studies. The restudies have enabled to get a more systematic picture of the sphere and observe the changes.

## 8. ETHICS AND QUALITY STANDARDS FOR VOLUNTEERING

A Code of Good Practice on Volunteering has been worked out, describing the principles of good relations between organisations and volunteers. In 2015 the Volunteer Friend quality standard was initiated, recognising professionalism and high level of volunteer involvement in Estonian NGOs. The quality mark can be awarded to organisations which have participated in a Volunteer Friend development programme, have considered all important aspects of volunteer involvement and organised voluntary work in accordance with Good Practice on Volunteering. Ten NGOs received the quality mark in 2015, awarded by NGO Estonian Village Movement Kodukant in cooperation with the Ministry of the Interior.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>31</sup> Assistant Police Officer Act, https://www.riigiteataja.ee/en/eli/526062014002/consolide

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>32</sup> "I love to Help", <u>https://www.armastanaidata.ee/en/</u>

<sup>33</sup> Crowdfunding Platform Hooandja, http://www.hooandja.ee/en



## 9. AWARENESS OF VOLUNTEERING OPPORTUNITIES

A number of successful volunteering campaigns have been run in the last couple of years and they have helped to build a momentum and raise awareness about volunteering. Volunteering is getting more ordinary in Estonia, especially among the young, who value the experiences they get through volunteering and describe such experiences in their CVs. NGO Estonian Village Movement Kodukant promotes volunteering through Volunteer Gate, the main national website in this field. Volunteer Gate is a medium for a volunteer to find suitable volunteering opportunities. It also contains wider information about volunteering, as well as volunteer management instructions and materials. Every other week an electronic newsletter is published and distributed. During the last year the circle of Volunteer Gate FB page users has grown quickly.

In addition to Volunteer Gate one can find volunteering opportunities on the websites of NGOs pointed out in point 4 of this article.

The image of the voluntary sector in general is good, for example, media reports on voluntary organisations tend to be positive and show the impact of the voluntary sector in a positive light.

## 10. ADDITIONAL COUNTRY SPECIFICITIES

In Estonia the International Volunteer Day has been celebrated as a national recognition event since 2005. The President of the Estonian Republic delivers awards to volunteers<sup>34</sup>, volunteer involving NGOs and enterprises supporting employee volunteering. By 2016, 319 commendations have been awarded to volunteers<sup>35</sup>.

## 11. RECOMMENDATIONS

- > Some stakeholders feel that generally the regulatory framework for NGOs is good, although some shortcomings still remain. In the field of volunteering, for instance, the issues of reimbursement of per diem and covering insurance costs need better regulation.
- > There is a need for more transparent and efficient funding systems for voluntary organisations. Public sector recognises the value of volunteering, but at the same time the availability of resources does not increase in correlation with expectations to NGOs and volunteers.
- > State funding for the third sector has increased but tends to be project-based, rather than provides core funding. This creates uncertainty for some organisations about the future of their activities
- There is a room for greater degree of co-operation between non-profit associations and foundations and the private sector.
- There is a need to build the capacity of voluntary organisations to deal with today's challenges in relation to funding, legal issues, volunteer management, etc. There is also a need to ensure more training for volunteer management.

 $<sup>^{34}</sup>$  The speech given by the President of the Estonian Republic at the recognition event in 2015 can be read here  $\frac{\text{http://ngo.ee/ngo/247/article/10692}}{\text{http://ngo.ee/ngo/247/article/10692}}$ 

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>35</sup> NGO Estonian Village Movement Kodukant promotes unified visual identity to symbolise volunteering, which can be found here http://vabatahtlikud.ee/organisatsioonile/vabatahtiku-tegevuse-visuaal/