



A statement on the eve of the International Volunteer Day 2024

Twenty years – this is how long volunteering has been a part of my life. I remember my first coordinator's smile, and all the beautiful personal experiences I've collected since then.

Recently, returning from the CEV Autumn Volunteering Congress, we were caught by an unexpected event. Due to a long flight delay, I spent a night with another Hungarian conference participant at the Brussels airport. We both went as volunteers – she as the president of a Foundation, I as a volunteer ambassador. The delay was unpleasant, and we were exhausted and tired by the time we got home. We spent more time in Brussels than planned, with many challenging moments. However, we continuously paid attention to each other, supporting each other as best we could. Looking back after months and years, all the difficulties will fade, and what will remain is the adventure and the shared experience.

During volunteering, as in other areas of life, we can encounter various difficulties. If we go through these together, the shared experience and the enlightenment of finding solutions connect us. Because we are together.

Of course, volunteering is also full of joys: serving a good cause, experiencing the ability to act, knowing glances, great conversations. No matter how I look at it, volunteering is a series of encounters.

In our era, where isolation and loneliness affect every generation, volunteering becomes a true bridge. A bridge between people. Because genuine connection is a fundamental human need.

In volunteering, we give and receive – not money or objects, but something much more: human warmth, meaning, the wonder of understanding each other.

International Volunteer Day is 19 days before Christmas. It's an opportunity to recall that the most valuable thing we can give is ourselves. Openly, attentively, empathetically, to the best of our abilities.

Let this period be rich in genuine encounters. Because our relationships are the true celebration.

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