



## **A statement on the eve of the International Volunteer Day 2024**

As a volunteer, leader of a civil society organisation, and an ambassador, my main motivation is to contribute to the development and strengthening of the European community. We can all recall times in our own surroundings when we felt that community life had irreversibly broken down, and that it would no longer be possible to bring teams together again. Yet, life has proven that we need each other's company and community life.

It's natural that as our life situations change, we think about volunteering in different ways. For me, however, this has mostly remained constant.

I've always felt that if I can help others, I'm giving something back to society. Volunteering, for me, is not just an activity but a way of life, in which I learn, grow, and in the process, inspire others. This is my motivation.

I have been volunteering with various civil society organisations since I was 16 years old. During this time, I have gained a lot of experience and been able to help many people.

When I was elected student mayor in Tatabánya, I came up with the idea that "Without a team, there is no result!". I still use this whenever we are preparing for an event or a project.

In Tatabánya, where I live, and in other towns in Hungary, there are many opportunities to promote social cohesion. I believe that volunteering strengthens the bonds that help overcome social inequalities and support different segments of society.

Sustainability, achieved through supporting and organising green projects at the municipal and community level, should be the starting point. Thus, one of the important goals of volunteer activities is to contribute to this. The European volunteer movement plays an increasingly significant role in helping to achieve environmental goals and secure a sustainable future.

*Kerekés Máté István*