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European Commission
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Europe for Citizens
Programme

**Fostering the Dialogue between Citizens, Civil Society
Organisations, National and European Institutions.**

An Introduction to the European Year of Voluntary Activities
promoting Active Citizenship



European Year of Volunteering

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**Fostering the Dialogue between Citizens, Civil Society
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An Introduction to the European Year of Voluntary
Activities promoting Active Citizenship.

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This volume, entitled *Fostering the Dialogue between Citizens, Civil Society Organisations, National and European Institutions. An Introduction to the European Year of Voluntary Activities promoting Active Citizenship*, depicts an exhaustive portrait of the European Year of Volunteering, by illustrating its legal basis, history, financial aspects, main initiatives and activities and by examining volunteering through an analysis concerning its impact on society and economic growth and its role in the promotion of active citizenship, of social inclusion and of European Union values: respect for human rights, refusal of any kind of discrimination, intercultural dialogue, enhancement of each individual's freedom.

Through the collection of articles coming from different kinds of national and International Institutions, the book, promoted jointly by the European Commission and by the Italian Ministry for Cultural Heritage and Activities via ECP – *Europe for Citizens Point Italy*, explores the various aspects of the subject by emphasizing the initiatives promoted by the European Institutions and the Ministry for Cultural Heritage itself and illustrating how culture, through solidarity in the context of social experience, enriches and fosters the integration process in the European Union.

The publication is part of the editorial activity of the ECP Italy, established in order to spread on national territory the 'Europe for Citizens' Programme and the European Active Citizenship, through intercultural dialogue and exchange.

Volunteering, which is meant to be an «act based on free choice, motivation and will and characterized by the lack of concern for financial gain», is, in this context, an example of civic participation through which the citizen, being aware of his community's necessities, acts actively in

order to address them and thus develops a sense of commitment towards his community.

Finally, volunteering is part of European Agenda's priorities and European politics' objectives, as it represents an instrument to reach citizens and their needs, to create an inclusive society, to overcome discriminations, to combat poverty and to contribute to each Member State economic growth, which is the subject of a specific chapter dedicated to the economic dimension of the third sector.

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The present volume, promoted jointly by the ECP – *Europe for Citizens Point* Italy, the National Contact Point for the ‘Europe for Citizens’ Programme, established in the Ministry for Cultural Heritage and Activities, and by the European Commission, DG – Communication, aims to outline a comprehensive framework of the ‘European Year of Voluntary Activities promoting Active Citizenship’, by pointing out its main features, objectives and activities.

The publication provides the reader with a synthesis concerning the historical process and the legal basis related to the establishment of the European Year of Volunteering together with an overview of the European and Italian situation in voluntary sector, by highlighting its contribution to the economic and financial growth, as well as to social and political development. The picture is completed by an analysis of the initiatives promoted by the European Union in the voluntary field and by a summary of the European Years preceding 2011.

The final section of the book includes a selection of Italian entities involved in volunteering, from the social-sanitary and humanitarian sector to the cultural, educational, environmental, medical one, etc.

Specifically, the volume aims to be a concrete proof of the possibility to involve the European Institutions and Organisations, the National Public Bodies and Local Authorities, the Civil Society Organisations and the Citizens in the debate on a common crucial issue: the role of volunteering in the Italian and European cultural, social and economic scene.

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European Year of Volunteering

Introduction to the European Year of Voluntary Activities promoting Active Citizenship

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The Council Decision of 27 November 2009¹ defines the ‘European Year of Voluntary Activities promoting Active Citizenship (2011)’ and thus dedicates the year 2011 to Volunteering, by adopting the Proposal of the European Commission of 3 June 2009² and the Opinion of the European Parliament of 26 November 2009.

The legal context of the Council Decision is provided by the Lisbon Treaty that establishes the European Citizenship, which constitutes an important element in the process of European integration. In this regard, volunteering represents a key dimension of the active involvement of citizens in the construction of a more democratic Europe, based on solidarity and on a non-discriminating, inclusive society.

Notwithstanding the different forms and meanings the term 'volunteering' takes on in each Member State, the common *substratum* that characterises all kinds of voluntary activities, which are based on each individual's free choice, motivation and will, is represented by the lack of concern for financial gain. Volunteering actions can be carried out spontaneously by a single person or they can be performed, for example, in the context of a voluntary association, of a no-profit-making organisation, etc. Although volunteering does not substitute nor replace professional, paid employment's activities, it widely contributes to the development of a democratic society and benefits both the volunteers and the community.

On 5th December (International Volunteers Day) 2007, an alliance (not formally established) of major European NGO networks active in volunteering field met in CEV offices to start to work on a strategy aimed to declare 2011 as the European Year of Volunteering. As a result, a position paper was launched on 13th February, 2008 in the European Parliament at

I.1 2011: European Year of Voluntary Activities promoting Active Citizenship. Legal Basis, Program and Activities

1.
2010/37/EC. See the *Official Journal of the European Union* L 17/43, 22/01/2010, available at:
<http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:L:2010:017:0043:0049:EN:PDF>.

2.
Brussels, 03/06/2009, 2009/0072 (CNS), available at:
http://ec.europa.eu/citizenship/pdf/doc828_en.pdf.

3.

Marian Harkin, Gisela Kallenbach, Emmanouil Angelakas, Mieczysław Janowski and Joel Hasse Ferreira.

4.

More than half of the 785 members of the European Parliament had to sign it during the next three months.

5.

The European Parliament has taken into account also that European Volunteer Centre, the European Youth Forum, the Association of Voluntary Service Organisations, the World Scouts Movement, the Red Cross/European Union Office, Volonteurope, AGE, Solidar, Caritas Europa, ENGAGE, Johanniter International, the European Non-Governmental Sports Organisation and others - all representing thousands of organisations involving millions of volunteers - have all called upon the European Institutions to announce 2011 as the European Year of Volunteering.

6.

Brussels, 3/06/2009, COM(2009) 254 final.

a meeting of the Interest Group on Volunteering; the event was attended by representatives of the current Slovenian Presidency and the upcoming French Presidency of the European Council.

On 9 April 2008, five members of the European Parliament³ launched a Written Declaration of the European Parliament on announcing 2011 as the European Year on Volunteering.⁴ As the Declaration was signed by 454 members of the European Parliament before the deadline, established on 15 July 2008, the European Parliament - given that 100 million people in Europe are involved in volunteering activities, that, according to Eurobarometer, 3 out of 10 Europeans claim to be active in this field and, finally, that volunteering sector plays an essential role in economic growth and social inclusion - adopted the Written Declaration on announcing 2011 as the European Year on Volunteering.⁵ Besides, after the adoption of the Declaration, a press conference was convoked on 16 July.

On 3 June 2009, the European Commission launched the Proposal for a Council Decision on the European Year of Volunteering.⁶

The Proposal aims to raise awareness of the relevance of volunteering and to remove the existing obstacles that volunteers and volunteering organizations still meet today, especially in terms of recognition, and to reach four main goals (i.e. to create a more volunteer-friendly environment; to empower volunteer organisations, by promoting the cooperation between organisations that are active in this field as well as with other sectors throughout Europe; to recognize and to reward volunteering activities; to highlight the value of volunteering, with special attention to its contribution to social cohesion and inclusion, to the creation of 'Social Capital', to the development of active citizenship, to the increase of the Gross Domestic Product, etc.). These goals will be obtained, during 2011, by means of events, publications, studies and discussions, aimed to benefit volunteers and organizations active in volunteering field all over Europe - that will be enabled to know and to share examples of best practices -, public authorities, business' entities and common citizens, thus sensitizing public opinion on volunteering.

On 6 August 2009 began the official competition for a logo and a slogan ('Let's logo' competition) for the European Year of Volunteering, thus

giving, for the first time, the citizens the opportunity to shape the visual identity of a European Year. The official logo (which has image n. 463 as basis) and slogan ('Volunteer! Make the difference!') have been selected by the European Commission on 31 March 2010. Later, they have been graphically and linguistically adapted; the final version has been launched on 11 August 2010.

The Council Decision on the European Year of Voluntary Activities promoting Active Citizenship (2011) is dated 27 November 2009.

The Decision recognizes the role played by voluntary activities in the promotion of active citizenship, social cohesion, civic participation, democracy and European integration and consequently the importance to support them as well as to ensure the exchange of good practices at local, regional, national and Community level.

The general objective of the European Year is "to encourage and support - notably through the exchange of experience and good practices - the efforts of the Community, the Member States, local and regional authorities to create the conditions for civil society conducive to volunteering in the European Union (EU) and to increase the visibility of voluntary activities in the EU".

The specific objectives of the European Year shall be those already mentioned by the European Commission's Proposal, concerning the creation of an appropriate and adequate environment for volunteering, that enables people to perform voluntary activities - whose quality has to be improved through the empowerment of organizations involved in volunteering, by encouraging networking, synergies and cooperation between them and other sectors of the European society.

Besides, policy-makers, public institutions, civil society organizations, the formal and non-formal education entities and employers should recognize voluntary activities and the skills, the competences, and the expertise acquired through them.

The overall aim is to raise general awareness of the value of volunteering as an expression of active citizenship that contributes to overcoming issues common to all Member States.

The objectives of the European Year will be achieved by means of a

series of initiatives that will take place at local, regional, national and European level and that will include: events, for example conferences or seminars aimed to promote volunteering, to stimulate citizens to engage in voluntary activities as well as to celebrate volunteers and voluntary organizations; studies and research on volunteering and the dissemination of their results; exchange of experience and good practices at different levels; information and promotion campaigns to spread key messages.

The budget available for the implementation of the European Year consists of 8 million Euro and will cover the period from 1 January 2011 to 31 December 2011; it includes, *inter alia*, the grants for the National Coordinating Bodies, the grants for 'flagship' projects, the contract for communication campaign and the contract for evaluation. Other Community funding for specific projects related to volunteering can be given through existing Community Programmes, such as 'Europe for Citizens Programme' (one of the Annual Priority Themes of which is focused on the European Year of Volunteering).

The European Commission shall implement the European Year at Community level and the National Coordinating Bodies shall implement it at national level. In fact, the cooperation with and between Member States is secured by the creation, by 28 February 2010, of National Coordinating Bodies in each Member State, that draw up the national programme for the European Year, that cooperate with a wide range of relevant stakeholders (for example civil society organizations or National Agencies/Contact Points of relevant Community Programmes) and that participate to formal meetings organized by the Commission with the scope of exchanging information at European level and implementing the European Year at national level. The Commission convenes meetings of representatives of European organizations active in volunteering, too. The Commission may cooperate with relevant international organizations, such as the United Nations (that celebrates in 2011 the tenth anniversary of the 'United Nations Year of Volunteering') and the Council of Europe.

Before the end of 2012, the European Commission shall submit a report to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions on the results and

implementation of the European Year of Voluntary Activities promoting Active Citizenship.

On 5 July 2010, the EYV 2011 Alliance Secretariat has been established, hosted at the CEV - European Volunteer Center office. It is in charge for the practical implementation of the work program of EVY 2011 Alliance and serves as a Contact Point for internal and external questions on the European Year.

The media launch of the European Year of Volunteering has taken place in Brussels, on 2 December 2010. In this occasion, the official website for the European Year of Volunteering, www.europa.eu/volunteering has been introduced, together with the major activities that take place at EU level, i.e. the five high-visibility conferences, the 'EYV2011 relay' (27 'Relay Reporters' follow the work of 54 volunteering organizations and produce audio, video and written reports to be broadcasted by the media) and the 'EVY Tour'.

During 2011, five high impact conferences will take place in European cities with the aim of bringing together entities active in the world of volunteering (to create networks, to share experiences and knowledge, to debate on relevant topics and common issues and to improve the quality of voluntary activities) as well as business and political parties, in order to define the respective competences and responsibilities in the field of volunteering and to cooperate in the building of an adequate infrastructure to promote volunteers and voluntary activities - that can include, for example, the creation of a legal framework able to formally recognize volunteering, although not affecting its autonomy.

The first conference has coincided with the media launch of the European Year, which has taken place in Brussels on 2 December 2010; the second has been dedicated to the recognition of volunteering and has been held in Budapest, on January 2011; the third one, organized in Brussels in May, will deal with the achievements of volunteers, who are the 'true heroes' of the year; the fourth one, realized in Athens, will concern the quality of volunteering and the fifth one, centred on the need for a proper legal framework of volunteering, will take place in Warsaw.

The European Year of Volunteering foresees a Tour that lasts for one

year and move from one Member State to another - each stage of the tour takes place in a European capital and lasts approximately ten days.

The tour contributes to promote volunteering, to spread awareness on it among general public and to stimulate citizens to involve in volunteering activities; meanwhile, it represents a great occasion for volunteers to meet each other, to exchange experiences and good practices, to discuss common issues, to make their activities and needs known to policy-makers.

Each stage of the Tour will be covered by the relay team, composed by 27 European volunteers (one from each member state) with background on journalism, who will share stories and experiences with volunteers living in other Member States and will realize video and audio clips as well as articles to be disseminated through the media and via web.

The tour has started in Brussels, Belgium in a large pavilion built for this occasion in Place d'Espagne/Spaanjeplein and that has hosted a 10 days-long program focused on volunteering.

The tour takes place in the subsequent capitals and dates:

Budapest - from 8 January

Vienna - from 24 January

Lisbon - from 3 February

Luxembourg - from 16 February

Madrid - from 28 February

Athens - from 17 March

Nicosia - from 29 March

Paris - from 14 April

Tallinn - from 30 April

Bucharest - from 9 May

Ljubljana - from 20 May

London - from 1 June

Vilnius - from 20 June

Rome - from 1 July

Copenhagen - from 28 July

Stockholm - from 8 August

Dublin - from 22 August

Warsaw - from 1 September

Helsinki - from 15 September
Riga - from 26 September
Berlin - from 7 October
Amsterdam - from 21 October
Prague - from 2 November
Bratislava - from 14 November
Sofia - from 21 November
Valletta - from 28 November

The process that resulted in the above-mentioned Decision establishing the European Year of Volunteering has gone through different phases.

The Treaty of the European Union, signed at Maastricht on 7 February 1992,⁷ officially expressed the importance of creating links between the voluntary sector (considered as an important source of information on a wide range of social issues) and the European Institutions, as the Declaration 23, annexed to the Treaty, stated that: 'The conference stresses the importance, in pursuing the objectives of Article 117 of the Treaty establishing the European Community, of cooperation between the latter and charitable associations and foundations as institutions responsible for social welfare establishments and services'.

Subsequently, in 1995, a platform of European social NGOs was created and a 'Comité de sages' was appointed to analyse the future of 1989 'Social Charter' and to prepare a report that eventually focused on fundamental rights.⁸ Afterwards, the First European Social Policy Forum was held in March 1996. It was attended by more than 1,000 participants belonging to non-profit organisations and its aim was to ensure a continuous structured dialogue between the voluntary sector and policy makers at European level, so that, from one side, political community actions could take into account the real needs of European society, from the other side, citizens could be aware of the results achieved through European policies.

The European Voluntary Service (EVS) has been an Action of the 'Youth' Programme since 1996 and a quality model for transnational voluntary service that gives young people the opportunity to be involved in voluntary service in a wide range of areas, thereby encouraging their

I.2 The Legal Precedents: From the Treaty of Maastricht to the Creation of the 'Europe for Citizens' and 'Youth in Action' Programmes

7.
Maastricht, 07/02/1992,
Official Journal C 191,
29/07/1992.
Available at: <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/en/treaties/dat/11992M/html/11992M.html>.

8.
The report focused on 'eight rights' - namely equality before the law, elimination of every form of discrimination, equality between men and women, freedom of movement in Europe, right to choose one's own occupation or profession and educational system, right to association and to defend one's own rights, right of collective bargaining and action.

9.

Treaty of Amsterdam amending the Treaty on European Union, the Treaties establishing the European Communities and related Acts, *Official Journal*, C 340, 10/11/1997.

10.

Communication from the Commission on Promoting the role of voluntary organizations and foundations in Europe, Brussels, 06/06/1997, COM(97) 241 final.

Available at:

http://aei.pitt.edu/6976/01/003396_1.pdf.

11.

By illustrating these five features, the European Commission's Communication does not, consciously, consider some categories of organizations that could, potentially, be included among voluntary ones, such as political parties, religious congregations, trade unions, employers' organizations and so on.

solidarity, active citizenship and mutual understanding.

The Intergovernmental Conference held in 1997 adopted the Declaration 38 on voluntary service activities, which has been attached to the Treaty of Amsterdam and which states that: "The Conference recognizes the important contribution made by voluntary service activities to developing social solidarity. The Community will encourage the European dimension of voluntary organizations with particular emphasis on the exchange of information and experiences as well as on the participation of the young and the elderly in voluntary work".⁹

The European Commission has later analyzed the role of voluntary organizations and foundations in the Communication of 6 June 1997,¹⁰ that recognizes their value in the social economy of the European Union and their significance in different social fields, since they provide a wide range of services, safeguard human rights and contribute to the development of active citizenship and democracy.

The document underlines the difficulties existing in defining accurately voluntary organizations but, at the same time, indicates a series of features that, to various degrees, distinguishes these entities. Voluntary organizations are characterized by groupings (whether formal or not-formal), sometimes ratified through a legal act establishing the legal status; by the absence of profit-making, i.e. they do not aim to obtain a financial gain for their members; by independence from government and public authorities regarding the drawing up of their own rules and procedures (obviously in respect of the local jurisdiction); by the involvement in the public arena and by contribution, at least in part, to the public and social good.¹¹

Similarly, the European Commission's Communication - though remembering the arduousness to categorize voluntary organizations - tries to detect some functions covered by these entities, totally or partially. Voluntary organizations can provide social services related to health care, training, information, support, advice, assistance, etc.; can be intended to campaign, lobby or argue on behalf of some causes of some social groups with the scope of changing public opinion and perception on it (advocacy); can be focused on mutual aid or self-help, thus giving people sharing common interest or problems the opportunity of helping and support-

ting each other; can play the role of 'intermediate-bodies' that constitute the interface between a specific sector - and the related organizations active in it - and the public authorities, by providing information, supporting and coordinating the activities performed in a specific field (by doing this, they create a mechanism through which a community can make its needs and aspirations known to public authorities).

In addition to the above-mentioned social aspects and to the political features of voluntary organizations, mainly connected to the promotion of values such as the active involvement of citizens, civic participation and the enhancement of solidarity and democracy, the Communication of 6 June 1997 stressed their economic importance. First of all, as other kind of enterprises, they are economically active (since, in many cases, they sell products, provide services for which they are paid, create surplus that is not used to create a profit for their members, but is then reinvested). Besides, nonprofit entities' operating expenditures represent an impressive percentage of gross domestic product and, meanwhile, civil society organizations' recent wide expansion (also connected to the development of new social concerns and to the tendency of governments to engage voluntary organizations in the delivery of services that were formerly managed by them) creates new job opportunities. Noprofit organizations are related to the sector of employment also because they provide valuable training to volunteers - that later find employment on conventional job markets as a result of the expertise they have gained and of the social abilities they have developed - and, finally, owing to their implication in the training and retaining of unemployed people (for example, they could help persons with disabilities to find a place in job market).

The European Economic and Social Committee's opinion on volunteering, 'Hospice work - an example of voluntary activities in Europe',¹² was adopted in 2002. It considers volunteering as a higher form of citizens involvement and 'based on a humanistic view of society and on the awareness that we all belong to the same *solidum*, in which joint responsibility requires voluntary participation and action and commitment by citizens are an essential part of high-minded action'.

The Council Resolution of 27 June 2002,¹³ regarding the framework of

12.
OJ C 125/07.

13.
OJ C 168, 13/07/2002.

14.
COM (2001) 681 final.

15.
Communication from the Commission to the Council - Follow-up to the White Paper on a New Impetus for European Youth. Proposed common objectives for the participation and information of young people, in response to the Council Resolution of 27 June 2002 regarding the framework of European cooperation in the youth field, Brussels, 11/04/2003, COM (2003) 184 final.

16.
2.1 - *Greater participation by young people in the life of the community in which they live*, p. 6 of COM (2003) 184 final.

17.
Brussels 30/05/05, COM (2005) 206 final.

18.
OJ 327, 24/11, 2006, p. 30.

European cooperation in the youth field, recognized volunteering as a fundamental element in the context of the activities related to young people, to their mobility and to their participation in civic life. The aim of the White Paper on a New Impetus for European Youth,¹⁴ approved by the Commission on 21 November 2001, as well as of the above mentioned Council Resolution, was to improve young people's information and participation, so that young persons could be involved in public actions, in the decisions regarding themselves and the life of the communities in which they live. In this respect, the overall objective was to encourage young people to be active citizens and to participate in the democratic life as well as in the mechanism of representative democracy. The framework to promote a greater participation of young people is provided, to a great extent, by voluntary sector and, specifically, by voluntary organizations and NGOs, that are participatory structures and that have a major role to play. In this regard, the Communication from the Commission to the Council of 11 April 2003,¹⁵ mentions that: 'It is important that young people ... have an opportunity to play a greater part in the life of their community. The following lines of action are proposed: promote the involvement of young people in participatory structures (NGOs, associations, voluntary organizations, etc.) and support youth NGOs, while respecting their independence and autonomy'.¹⁶ The acknowledgement of volunteering as a key factor in youth field was later stressed by the Resolution of the Council of 16 November 2007 and the Recommendation of 20 November 2008.

The Youth Pact adopted by the European Council on 22 and 23 March 2005 as part of the renewed Lisbon strategy also called on young people to become involved in voluntary activity.¹⁷

The European Commission promoted the EVS - European Voluntary Service under 'Youth in Action' Programme 2007-2013, established with the Decision (of the 24/11/2006) No 1719/2006/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council.¹⁸ EVS is a particular type of voluntary service that gives young people the opportunity to express their personal commitment through full time voluntary activities that are performed without concern for financial rewards and that take place in a foreign country within or outside European Union.

By Decision 1904/2006/EC of 12 December 2006 the European Parliament and the Council adopted the 'Europe for Citizens' Programme for the period 2007-2013, which put into place the legal framework to support a wide range of activities and organisations promoting 'active European citizenship' and therefore the involvement of citizens and civil society organisations in the process of European integration.

One of the 'Horizontal Features' of the Programme is 'Volunteering - expression of active European citizenship'. The Programme Guide, in fact, states that: 'Volunteering is an essential element in active citizenship: by giving one's time for the benefit of others, volunteers service their community and play an active role in society. They develop the sense of belonging to a community thereby also gaining ownership. Volunteering is therefore a particularly powerful means to develop citizens' commitment to their society and to its political life. Civil society organisations, associations of a European general interest, town twinning associations and other participating organisations often rely on voluntary work to carry out and to develop their activities. Therefore, particular attention is paid within this Programme to the promotion of volunteering.'

Indeed, voluntary activities are often essential for the implementation of the projects selected in the Programme and they add value to their results.

Besides, the 'European Year of Volunteering' represents one of the Annual Priority Themes planned for the Programme for 2011, and has been also one of the Annual Priorities Themes for 2010, too ('raise awareness about, and mobilise stakeholders towards, the planned European Year of Volunteering 2011').

On 6 April 2006, the European Commission decided to consult the European Economic and Social Committee on 'Voluntary activity: its role in European society and impact'.

The consequent Opinion of the Committee, dated 13 December 2006,¹⁹ urged the European Commission 'to announce a Year of Volunteers and to publish a White Paper on voluntary activity and active citizenship in Europe at the earliest opportunity'.

The ascertainment that the majority of volunteering activities take place at local level led to the consequence that the European dimension was not always properly stressed. In this regard, the White Paper should have promoted the European identity and strengthen the European citizenship.

The European Economic and Social Committee identifies the true value of volunteering in "the desire to make a contribution on one's own initiative to the common good and to help shape society" and in the promotion of "values such as altruism and solidarity", thus creating "a counterweight to increasingly widespread isolation and egoism in modern societies".

In this view, volunteering represents one of the best examples of civic participation and active citizenship (that are indeed the fundamentals of democracy); gives people a strong sense of belonging to the community together with a feeling of being useful and responsible for the wellbeing of others; creates new social ties thus contributing to social cohesion and progress in Europe; makes a significant contribution to 'social capital' by creating social links and networks; contributes to economic growth - all these items being very difficult to measure. Besides, it offers an opportunity to achieve informal and non-formal learning, to accumulate experiences and knowledge, to develop one's own abilities and skills.

I.3 The European Economic and Social Committee Opinion on 'Voluntary activity: its role in European society and impact'

19.
Brussels, 13/12/2006, OJ C
325.

The Opinion underlines the utility to increase the links between civil society organisations and schools; it highlights the potential benefits resulting from the involvement of young people and children in the resolution of social problems by undertaking their first volunteering experiences, in order to develop social awareness from an early age.

Notwithstanding the fundamental role played by the European Voluntary Service Programme in inclusion of young people in volunteering, the Opinion stresses the importance to extend the financial funds also to other forms of volunteering that are addressed also to other kinds of people ("an adequate infrastructure has to be put in place throughout Europe to support voluntary action, making pan-European volunteer programmes available to all population groups rather than being restricted ... to ... voluntary service by young people").

As already observed in other EU documents, the main difficulty to categorize (and also to make reliable statistics on) voluntary activities derives from the different forms it can take, the different kind of individuals it can involve (volunteers can, in fact, differ one from another with regard to their age, education, background, etc.), the various degree of relevance it has in the various States. Furthermore, there are many voluntary activities that are unknown, since they are informal and are performed outside the framework of specific organisations.

The range of forms volunteering can take covers many fields - as the Opinion states, volunteering can include charity activities, such as assistance to elderly or disabled people (the social and the health being traditional fields of volunteering), activities performed in the aftermath of environmental disasters, activities related to civil life and civic commitment, activities connected to religious associations, activities in the field of sport, culture, health, education, politics, trade, consumer protection, development cooperation, etc.

Volunteering in its purest form is unpaid (expenses occurred are usually reimbursed), but some kind of volunteering actions could also comprise 'voluntary' workers who receive a salary, that is far below the market rate, as remuneration.

Member States should set up a legal framework to guarantee the right

to carry out voluntary activities independently of an individual's legal or social status; to ensure equal opportunities for all individuals engaging in voluntary activities, including people with disabilities; to support and to recognize voluntary activities.

The growing interest and demand for volunteering activities do not correspond to the financial funds dedicated to it and it is not matched by the infrastructure, that does not allow a proper recognition of voluntary activities.

Due to the lack of a legal definition or basis for voluntary activity in many Member States, volunteer organisations and voluntary activities are often denied public recognition; sometimes the potential of volunteering is not recognised (for example, the capacity of voluntary activity to integrate young people, unemployed or migrants in the job market or in the social context is often underestimated); moreover, volunteers are often in a unfavourable position in terms of taxation, social security or insurance.

The Opinion recommends that the relations between volunteering, government and business entities should be clearly defined, as volunteering does not replace paid work nor substitutes basic social services nor replace the tasks of government. So, it asserted that the government must create the proper infrastructure for volunteering - but "not to institutionalize it, as it would then lose its *raison d'être* and its special value as the outcome of free choice" - by training and supporting volunteers, reimbursing their expenses and costs in money and, side by side, raising awareness in public opinion, planning a national program on volunteering and in coordinating it, designing a strategy to promote volunteering. etc.

The document suggests to adopt a European-level charter establishing the role of voluntary organizations, including their rights and duties, in order to create "e uniform guidelines for organizations which could be granted special legal status in conjunction with special economic and other rights".

Finally, the Opinion stresses the need for the exchange of experience and best practices between Member States, for the creation of networks between voluntary organizations and for the dissemination of information on volunteering.

On 19 November 2007, the Council of the European Union and the Representatives of the Governments of the Member States, meeting within the Council, have adopted a Resolution on ‘Voluntary Activities of Young People’.²⁰

The Resolution's scope is to encourage the recognition and the increase of voluntary activities of young people through information provided by making full use of instruments such as the Resolution itself, the European Voluntary Service, the European Quality Charter on Mobility, the Europass and the planned European Qualifications Framework and to consider "the opportunity to organise a European Year to promote volunteering in order to improve the image of volunteering in society in general and among young people".

In this way, the document aims to develop voluntary activities at local, regional, national, European level through enhancing awareness of the existing opportunities and bettering their quality and, meanwhile, facilitating access to volunteering for young persons at all levels, in order to promote in a concrete way voluntary activities among the young, who can, therefore, develop a sense of responsibility.

I.4 The Council Resolution on ‘Voluntary Activities of Young People’

20.
Available at:
<http://www.cev.be/data/File/CoEU14427.07.VoluntYoung.pdf>.

In March 2008, the European Parliament adopted a Report on the 'Role of voluntary activities in contributing to economic and social cohesion' which encouraged Member States and regional and local authorities to recognize the value of voluntary activities in the promotion of social and economic cohesion.

On 6-7 February 2008, the Committee of the Regions formulated an Opinion on 'The contribution of volunteering to economic and social cohesion'.²¹ The Opinion faces once again the issues related to the lack of reliable statistics and of a proper legal framework for volunteering, as well as a clear definition of rights and responsibilities. So, it recommends that regional and local authorities work for the development of an infrastructure aimed to support volunteering, although respecting the autonomy of the voluntary sector. As to the question concerning the recognition of voluntary activities, it suggests that the already existing decentralized certificates of competences acquired through volunteering should be linked to Europass CV scheme, so that they could be used for the official recognition of experience deriving from voluntary activities with regard to employability.

The document emphasizes the need for a broader approach on volunteering that goes beyond citizenship as well as youth affair sphere and for promoting the exchange of experience and mobility of volunteers through a European Voluntary Programme for all ages, not restricted to young people. Since all sections of society can play an active role in volunteering, EU actions should not be over concentrated on the involvement of the young in voluntary activities, but, given the aging of the population, should encourage older people to engage in voluntary activities,

I.5 The Committee of Regions Opinion on the 'The contribution of volunteering to economic and social cohesion'

21.
http://www.cev.be/data/File/CoR_Opinion_contribution_volunteering_economic_social_cohesion.08.pdf; see also OJ C 105/11 (<http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:C:2008:105:0011:0015:EN:PDF>).

The Committee of the Regions recognizes the role that volunteering plays in the global development of the regions, by promoting intercultural dialogue, mutual trust, reducing poverty, addressing climate change and environmental issues, integrating disabled people and immigrants, providing job opportunities, contributing to the personal development, self-esteem and self-confidence, creating 'social capital', etc. Since all these aspects have a positive influence on economic, cultural and social growth, volunteering widely contributes to the Lisbon Agenda and to EU politics.

Another aspect pointed out by the Opinion is the contribution provided by volunteering to the implementation of projects funded by EU Programmes, such as 'Europe for Citizens' or 'Leader' Programme, and the need for the recognition of voluntary activities as equivalent to co-financing, once these activities are costed.

Similarly to the already analyzed Opinion of the European Economic and Social Committee, the Report adopted on March 2008 ascertains that the majority of volunteering activities take place at local or regional level; this situation, although does not always allow to underline in an adequate way the European dimension, has the positive implication of enabling local actors to participate in the civil life of their community. At national level this empowerment can transform the relationship between the citizen and the state "from that of a client / patron situation to one where citizens through collective action have a meaningful role to play in making a positive contribution to the life of the community". In certain situations this change is not perceived as positive by the authorities, as these forms of participatory procedures can be seen as a challenge for the *status quo* and can, in some cases, "prove inconvenient".

The Report points out how volunteering could be an instrument to manage the process of globalization, insofar as the dialogue and the synergies between voluntary organizations, local communities and European Institutions are guaranteed.

In fact, citizens often feel that the decision concerning their future and their daily life are taken at distance from them and so that they have no control over them nor the possibility to make their needs known nor the capacity of influencing global events. In this perspective, voluntary orga-

nizations' view related, for example, to social issues, can be taken into account by local and, possibly, EU Institutions.

The process of globalization has proceeded side by side with the development of communication systems, that, nowadays, permit to engage people in 'e-volunteering' or 'virtual volunteering'. The text of the Report, in fact, defines these terms as "volunteer tasks completed in whole or in part via the Internet", that can be performed by those who are not able or do not wish to make volunteering actions *in situ*, because of lack of sufficient time, personal choice, a disability or home based obligations.

Although the existing difficulties to provide a clear definition of 'social capital' - that comprises, *inter alia*, mutual trust, sharing, co-operation, networking, participation, development of common norms and of a sense of belonging - the importance of volunteering for the creation of it is stressed and, subsequently, the relevance of voluntary actions for the economic and social growth is highlighted by the report.

As a means of social inclusion (addressed also to those who have been excluded by the formal learning system as well as long-term unemployed persons), as an instrument to promote employment (since, as already mentioned, it allows the volunteer to acquire new competences, skills and valuable non formal learning) and as a tool to bring Europe closer to its citizens (that are enabled to become a fundamental part of the process of European integration), volunteering targets the objectives of the Lisbon Agenda.

Furthermore, it improves the economic level of the areas in which it takes places, since, according to the UN Handbook on Non-Profit Institutions²² of 25 September 2005, the Non-Profit Institutions contribute about as much to Gross Domestic Product in a wide range of countries as do the construction and finance industries and twice as much as the utilities industry - so they account for 5-7% of the Gross Domestic Product in the countries surveyed.²³ This means that the role played by volunteering in economic sector is greater than usually supposed.

Finally, the Report deals with the value of volunteering for the increase of social inclusion, that is ensured by the fact that it concretizes and puts into practice some of the basic values of the European Union such as soli-

22.

Johns Hopkins University Report Measuring Civil Society and Volunteering, September, 2007. See: www.jhu.edu/ccss.

23.

In 2008, these findings emerged from data generated by official statistical agencies in eight countries, (Australia, Belgium, Canada, the Czech Republic, France, Japan, New Zealand and the United States).

clarity and dialogue. Volunteering contribution to social inclusion comprises also the connectedness between different generations that can work together for the common good with an approach of mutual understanding and enrichment (for example, the young can achieve a sense of responsibility while older people can use their knowledge and experience for the benefit of the community); the creation of links between specific groups belonging to divided communities: volunteers coming from different cultural or religious backgrounds can work together in the attempt of overcoming barriers and for peacebuilding (for example, in Northern Ireland or in Cyprus volunteers supported reconciliation processes); the prevention and the surmounting of discrimination and prejudices, allowing migrants to be integrated with local communities and thus promoting intercultural dialogue.

II

European Year of Volunteering: Financial Aspects

Rita Sassu ECP – Europe for Citizens Point Italy

The financial budget¹ for the European Year of Volunteering 2011 has been established by the European Commission through a work programme² attached to the Council Decision 37/2010/EC of 27 November 2009 on the European Year of Voluntary Activities Promoting Active Citizenship (2011).³ The work programme constitutes also the financial decision for the grants and contracts provided by the European Union in the context of the European Year of Volunteering 2011 (EYD), as it has been drawn up in a sufficiently detailed manner to meet the requirements set by Article 90⁴ of Commission Regulation (EC, Euratom) 2342/2002,⁵ which established the detailed rules for the implementation of the EU Financial Regulation (i.e. Council Regulation [EC, Euratom] 1605/2002).

A total budget of 8 million euro on the budget line 16.05.03.02 has been made available, by means of the above-mentioned work programme, in order to support the grants and contracts related to the actions of the European Year of Volunteering 2011. Additional funds can be earmarked to the European Year of Volunteering, up to the 5% above the fixed amount, without necessity of changing the financing decision. The financing decision also foresees the possibility to introduce changes in the budget of each specific action,⁶ provided that these changes do not significantly alter the nature and purposes of the action.

The effectiveness of the financing decision is subject to the endorsement of the budgetary authority.

The Council Decision 37/2010/EC states that the overall objective of the European Year of Volunteering is to constitute a powerful tool to support the EU, the Member States, local and regional authorities in creating the most favourable conditions to the flourishing of volunteering in the European Union. Equal importance was given to the aim of ensuring an as wide as possible visi-

II.1 Total Budget, Grants and Contracts

1.
See: http://ec.europa.eu/citizenship/pdf/doc1088_en.pdf

2.
Under Article 110 of Council Regulation (EC, Euratom) 1605/2002 (see: <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:L:2002:248:0001:0048:EN:PDF>), European Union grants are subject to an annual work programme.

3.
See also: <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:L:2010:017:0043:0049:EN:PDF>

4.
Under Article 90 of Commission Regulation (EC, Euratom) 2342/2002, "The financing decision shall determine the essential elements of an action involving expenditure from the budget".

5.
For further information see: <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:L:2002:357:0001:0071:EN:PDF>

bility to voluntary activities in the EU. To this purpose, a wide range of activities has been included in the work programme of the EYV, to be implemented at European, national, regional or local level: information and promotion campaigns, dissemination of good practices, studies and researches, conferences and similar events, initiatives carried out in the different Member States that the EU will support by means of grants (assigned through a call for projects). While the European institutions will play a coordinating role, they will share the responsibility of designing and implementing the activities of the EYV with National Coordinating Bodies, designated by each Member State. Thus, every National Coordinating Body will be responsible for the implementation of the activities of the EYV at a national level, constantly in touch with all the relevant stakeholders and in compliance with the EU guidelines for the EYV activities. The European Commission has the responsibility to assure an effective coordination, with periodical meetings and a constant exchange of information, between all the National Coordinating Bodies.

6.

Four actions will be implemented in the framework of the EYV:

Co-ordination of national activities (*National Coordinating Bodies*), 'Flagship' projects, Communication campaign, Evaluation.

Each Member State had to appoint its own National Coordinating Body within 12 March 2010. The amount fixed by the European Commission for this first action is 3.7 million euro, distributed among the different countries in consideration of the population size and cost of living of the countries as well as of a minimum threshold (about 55,000 euro per country) below which an effective action was assumed impossible for the NCBs. More specifically, 60% of the 3.7 million euro was divided according to population size and cost of living, while the remaining 40% was shared equally among the Member States. The co-financing by the Commission is limited to 80% of the expenses faced by the NCBs and takes the form of an operating grant that has been signed in January 2011. The National Coordinating Bodies have to design a national strategy and a national work programme in order to implement the national activities in the frame of the European Year of Volunteering, according to the objectives established by Article 2⁷ of Council Decision 2010/37/EC of 27 November 2009, adapting them to the specific national context and needs. The European Commission will provide support to the NCBs both by means of guidelines according to which the NCBs will draw up their national work programme and by helping the NCBs to fill in the grant application forms. The table shows the indicative amount of the grants for the various National Coordinating Bodies.

II.2 Grants for National Coordinating Bodies

7.

Article 2 of the Council Decision 2010/37/EC states that: "The overall purpose of the European Year shall be to encourage and support - notably through the exchange of experience and good practices - the efforts of the Community, the Member States, local and regional authorities to create the conditions for civil society conducive to volunteering in the European Union (EU) and to increase the visibility of voluntary activities in the EU. The objectives of the European Year shall be to:

1. *work towards an enabling environment for volunteering in the EU* in order to anchor volunteering as part of promoting civic participation and people-to-people activities in an EU context and address existing obstacles to voluntary activities, where appropriate and necessary;
2. *empower organisers of voluntary activities to improve the quality of voluntary activities* in order to facilitate voluntary activities and help organisers to implement new types of voluntary activities and to encourage networking, mobility, cooperation and synergies within civil society and between civil society and other sectors in an EU context;
3. *recognise voluntary activities* in order to encourage appropriate incentives for individuals, companies and volunteer-development organisations and gain recognition for volunteering at EU level and in the Member States by policymakers, civil society organisations, public institutions, the formal and non-formal education sector and employers for skills and competences developed through volunteering;
4. *raise awareness of the value and importance of volunteering* in order to raise general awareness of the importance of volunteering as an expression of civic participation which contributes to issues which are of common concern of all Member States, such as a harmonious societal development and social cohesion".

Country	Indicative amount '000 EURO	Country	Indicative amount '000 EURO
Belgium	100	Luxembourg	55
Bulgaria	90	Hungary	100
Czech Republic	100	Malta	55
Denmark	80	The Netherlands	130
Germany	420	Austria	90
Estonia	60	Poland	225
Greece	105	Portugal	100
Spain	260	Romania	150
France	340	Slovenia	65
Ireland	75	Slovak Republic	80
Italy	320	Finland	80
Cyprus	60	Sweden	95
Latvia	65	United Kingdom	330
Lithuania	70		

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II.3

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A call for proposals was launched during the second semester 2010 in order to select one or two flagship projects per Member State. These projects have to be characterized by the launch or support provided to innovative approaches to volunteering, by the creation of networks and above all by their long term effects related to the following particularly relevant purposes. The first of these objectives is the improvement of the quality of volunteering, since a better quality of voluntary activities is expected to enhance the operative capacities of the organizations which avail themselves of volunteering. Besides, the European Union aims to promote projects that highlight the still existing obstacles to voluntary activities, in order to clearly identify and remove them. The projects are also required to focus on the impact of volunteering in terms of social cohesion and intergenerational solidarity, more specifically, the proposals have to foster employer-supported, young people and senior volunteering, while the role of volunteering in tackling social exclusion constitutes a strong link between the European Year of Volunteering and the recently concluded European Year for Combating Poverty and Social Exclusion 2010, thus underlining the coherence between the various initiatives carried out by the European Union.

The eligibility criteria for the flagship projects require the applicants to be public sector organisations or non-governmental civil organisations. The projects must include at least four partners, each of them being a public sector organisation or a non-governmental civil organisation, provided that at least one of the partners belongs to each of those two categories. One of the partners acts as the project leader. The project leader must be a civil society non-governmental organisation with a legal status,

II.4 Grants for 'European Flagship' Projects

8.

Article 93(1) of the Council Regulation (EC, Euratom) 1605/2002 states that:

"Candidates or tenderers shall be excluded from participation in a procurement procedure if:

(a) they are bankrupt or being wound up, are having their affairs administered by the courts, have entered into an arrangement with creditors, have suspended business activities, are the subject of proceedings concerning those matters, or are in any analogous situation arising from a similar procedure provided for in national legislation or regulations;

(b) they have been convicted of an offence concerning their professional conduct by a judgment which has the force of res judicata;

(c) they have been guilty of grave professional misconduct proven by any means which the contracting authority can justify;

(d) they have not fulfilled obligations relating to the payment of social security contributions or the payment of taxes in accordance with the legal provisions of the country in which they are established or with those of the country of the contracting authority or those of the country where the contract is to be performed;

(e) they have been the subject of a judgment which has the force of res judicata for fraud, corruption, involvement in a criminal organisation or any other illegal activity detrimental to the Communities' financial interests;

(f) following another procurement procedure or grant award procedure financed by the Community budget, they have been declared to be in serious breach of contract for failure to comply with their contractual obligations".

9.

Article 94 of the Council Regulation (EC, Euratom) 1605/2002 states that:

"Contracts may not be awarded to candidates or tenderers who, during the procurement procedure:

(a) are subject to a conflict of interest;

(b) are guilty of misrepresentation in supplying the information required by the contracting authority as a condition of participation in the contract procedure or fail to supply this information".

whose level of activity can be local, regional, national or even European, of course in the field of volunteering. Organisations which are in any of the situations described in Articles 93(1)⁸ and 94⁹ of the Financial Regulation applicable to the general budget of the European Communities (Council Regulation [EC, Euratom] 1605/2002) are not eligible for the grants for flagship projects. Besides, the applicants must state their awareness of the Article 96(2)(a).¹⁰ All this information is collected through a declaration on honour, signed and dated, according to Article 134¹¹ of the detailed rules for the implementation of the Financial Regulation applicable to the general budget of the European Communities (i.e. Commission Regulation [EC, Euratom] 2342/2002 of 23 December 2002).

The declaration on honour attests the status of the applicants as legal entities as well as their technical and financial capacity to carry out the project. The technical capacity requires that the applicants provide a list of the projects that they have already developed in the field of voluntary activities and the curriculum vitae of the most important persons that will take an active role in the project, specifying their professional experience in the relevant field. To provide evidence of financial capacity, the applicants must submit, together with their applications, the following documents: the bank identification form (possibly accompanied by a copy of a recent bank account statement), the profit and loss accounts, the balance sheet for the last financial year (the latter two documents are not necessary for the applicants that are public bodies), the budget for the year 2010. The Commission, on the basis of the financial capacity, can reject the application, ask for further information, or offer a grant without pre-financing and pay according to the costs actually incurred.

The projects are evaluated on grounds of both qualitative and quantitative criteria. The eight qualitative criteria will constitute 80% of the evaluation (each one with the same weighting, i.e. a maximum of ten points). The first one is the relevance of the project according to the general objectives of the European Year of Volunteering, while the relevance in relation to the specific objectives and priority themes of the call for proposals constitutes the second criterion. This criterion has a particular importance, since if the project does not obtain a minimum score of seven points (out

of ten) according to this criterion, it is not possible for the Commission to select it for the grant. Other criteria are: quality of the project, i.e. the relevance of its content and the clarity of its methodology; long term effects of the projects, its capability to effectively pursue the objectives of the European Year; also the quality of the partnership will be evaluated, more specifically, how the tasks are distributed among the different partners, and their actual role in the project, their experience and how well their profile and motivations suit their specific tasks in the frame of the project, as well as how precise has been the division of the roles among the partners. Besides, the Commission considers the active involvement of people in the project; its visibility, and how its results can be spread and exploited by the largest number of European citizens; finally, if the budget is adequate to the activities planned in the work programme.

Two quantitative criteria, each one with a maximum score of ten points, will form the remaining 20% of the evaluation. The first is the number of partners; the second criterion is the expected number of participants and of indirectly involved people. The Commission finances two projects, at maximum, for each of the 27 Member States, so that the maximum number of financed projects will be 54. In each Member State, the two projects (or the single project, depending on the case) with the highest score (according to the above-mentioned criteria) are awarded the grant.

The budget available for flagship projects amounts to 2 million euro, to be allocated by means of co-financing that covers up to 60% of the eligible costs incurred to implement the project. The various Member States receive grant according to their population: largest countries (i.e. France, Germany, Italy, Poland, Romania, Spain and the United Kingdom) receive grant between 108,000 and 120,000 euro; medium-size States such as Belgium, Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Cyprus, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Latvia, Lithuania, the Netherlands, Portugal, Slovakia, Slovenia and Sweden receive from 48,000 to 60,000 euro, while small countries like Luxembourg and Malta are awarded a co-financing between 24,000 and 30,000 euro.

Selected projects¹² are expected to create and develop innovative approaches in the field of voluntary activities, in order to contribute to

10.

Article 96 of the Council Regulation (EC, Euratom) 1605/2002 states that:

"Administrative or financial penalties may be imposed by the contracting authority on candidates or tenderers who are in one of the cases of exclusion provided for in Articles 93 and 94, after they have been given the opportunity to present their observations.

These penalties may consist:

(a) in the exclusion of the candidate or tenderer concerned from contracts and grants financed by the budget, for a maximum period of five years;

(b) in the payment of financial penalties by the contractor in the case referred to in Article 93(1)(f) and by the candidate or tenderer in the cases referred to in Article 94 where they are really serious and without exceeding the value of the contract in question.

The penalties imposed shall be in proportion to the importance of the contract and the seriousness of the misconduct".

11.

Article 134 of the Commission Regulation (EC, Euratom) 2342/2002 states that:

"1. The contracting authority shall accept, as satisfactory evidence that the candidate or tenderer is not in one of the situations described in point (a), (b) or (e) of Article 93(1) of the Financial Regulation, production of a recent extract from the judicial record or, failing that, a recent equivalent document issued by a judicial or administrative authority in the country of origin or provenance showing that those requirements are satisfied.

2. The contracting authority shall accept, as satisfactory evidence that the candidate or tenderer is not in the situation described in point (d) of Article 93(1) of the Financial Regulation, a recent certificate issued by the competent authority of the State concerned. Where no such certificate is issued in the country concerned, it may be replaced by a sworn or, failing that, a solemn statement made by the interested party before a judicial or administrative authority, a notary or a qualified professional body in his country of origin or provenance.

3. Depending on the national legislation of the country in which the tenderer or candidate is established, the documents referred to in paragraphs 1 and 2 shall relate to legal persons and/or natural persons including, where considered necessary by the contracting authority, company directors or any person with powers of representation, decision-making or control in relation to the candidate or tenderer".

achieve the general and specific objectives, as well as the priorities, of the European Year of Volunteering 2011. The activities include the exchange of experience and good practices, studies and research and the dissemination of their results, conferences regarding volunteering, creation of networks, audiovisual and multimedia communication tools, development of new means to organize volunteers. Particular relevance is assigned to the long lasting effects of the projects.

Applications fulfilling all the above-mentioned were will be evaluated by an evaluation committee. The Commission closely cooperated with the National Coordinating Bodies (NCBs). In fact, a copy (in CD/DVD) of all the applications was sent to the relevant NCB. The opinion of the NCBs had a consultative character, not binding on the Commission. The Commission also considered, in its final decision regarding the grant award, the geographical balance of the projects and cared about the full coverage of the priority themes of this call for proposals.

12.

The results of the selection have been published at the following link:

<http://europa.eu/volunteering/it/node/1970>.

A communication campaign organised both at European and national level intends to raise public awareness regarding the objectives and priority themes of the European Year of Volunteering. The campaign involves all the relevant stakeholders and, as much as possible, the general public. To reach this purpose, a second specific contract was drawn up under the Multiple Framework Contract EAC/20/2008¹³ for the provision of integrated communication services. The company P.A.U. Education, already selected for the preparatory action in 2010, provides the service. The contract amounts to 2.05 million euro, divided into two main fields: 1.1 million euro for the organisation of events and 950,000 euro for the communication campaign.

Four events with European relevance are financed with the above-mentioned 1.1 million euro: the opening conference of the Year that took place in Budapest in January 2011; two conferences regarding the thematic priorities of the EYV 2011 and the closing conference in Warsaw in December 2011.

As far as the communication campaign is concerned, the amount of 950,000 euro finances four main activities. The first is the EYV Tour, a travelling roadshow that for the entire 2011 moves across European Union in order to enhance cooperation and mutual knowledge between local, regional and national volunteers, as well to increase the visibility of the European Year. A continuous relationship with the media is carried on through media partnerships, advertising, etc.; a web portal is implemented and constantly updated; while the fourth activity consists in the production of information and promotional material.

II.5 Contract for Communication Campaign

13.

For further information see:
http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/education_culture/calls/2008/index_en.html
<http://ted.europa.eu/udl?uri=TED:NOTICE:254251-2008:TEXT:EN:HTML>
<http://ted.europa.eu/udl?uri=TED:NOTICE:86850-2009:TEXT:EN:HTML>

II.6 Contract for Evaluation

The Council Decision 37/2010/EC of 27 November 2009 established that the Commission shall submit a report to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions to explain the implementation and results of the European Year 2011. In order to fulfil this task, the Commission launched a mixed evaluation, that will be carried out both during and at the end of the Year. The evaluation will be financed with 250,000 euro.

III

European Year of Volunteering: European Institutions and Organisations' Point of View

2011 has been designated the "European Year of Voluntary Activities promoting active citizenship"- a title which underlines the strong relationship between volunteering and citizenship.

Volunteering is indeed one of the key dimensions of active citizenship and democracy, because it puts European values such as solidarity and non discrimination into action and as such contributes to the harmonious development of European societies. Volunteering is an important element for social progress and thus to increased social and economic cohesion. It is about showing solidarity, bridging gaps and creating community. It is an active expression of civic participation that strengthens our core European values.

The European Year will provide the opportunity to demonstrate in a European context that voluntary activities increase civic participation and can help foster a sense of belonging and commitment of citizens to their society at all levels - local, regional, national and European.

Citizens' participation in the life of the EU is an extremely important topic. We can only exist and prosper as a Union if citizens feel a part of it, get involved and support it. So realizing the full potential of volunteering becomes an important means by which the EU can help citizens become actors on the European scene. Volunteering conveys the positive message that each one of us has a role to play, that each one of us can contribute to one's own personal development but also to improve the society in which we live. Each one of us can help build a better society for ourselves and for the future generations. Volunteers are already putting this solid conviction into action. Together, we can do a lot for the common good.

Volunteers are people who really stand up for something and for someone. They are people who 'walk the talk', who are not content simply to sit

III.1 The Relationship between Volunteering and Citizenship

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around passively, but who decide to take action. They are people who very concretely demonstrate tolerance, fairness and open-mindedness. But they are also people who themselves are not usually in the limelight, but whose achievements can be felt by all.

Volunteers make our societies better, so we have a duty and responsibility to do whatever we can to promote, recognize, facilitate and support their work. These are the objectives of the European Year 2011. Let us all make it a success.

Volunteering can be part of every citizen's life. It can be a rich learning experience for the individuals concerned, and in the case of young people it can help them prepare for their professional lives. Volunteering also helps developing one's social skills and competences; it contributes to solidarity, non-discrimination, social inclusion and the harmonious development of European societies. It is a key indicator of civic engagement and a vehicle for building a sense of citizenship. In this light, the European Commission very much welcomes the fact that 2011 is the European Year devoted to volunteering.

When we talk about 'voluntary activities' in the context of the European Year, we refer to all types of voluntary activity, whether formal, non-formal or informal, and which are undertaken of a person's own free will, choice and motivation, without concern for financial gain. This rather broad 'definition' has been chosen on purpose to capture the wide spectrum of traditions and cultural attitudes towards volunteering that exist across the EU Member States today.

It is estimated that 94 million people, or 23% of Europeans aged 15 and older engage in some form of voluntary activity. Data suggests that there are big differences across the Member States, but these are to a certain extent exaggerated due to measurement problems: each Member State has a different understanding of volunteering and how to measure it, depending on cultural attitudes, traditions and the historical context. For example, participation in formal volunteering structures appears to be very low in some former Eastern Bloc countries, where the legacy of forced or state-sponsored 'voluntary' activities under communism has tainted the attractiveness of organised, structured volunteering for the populations concerned.

III.2 The European Year of Volunteering 2011: the View from the European Commission

***John Macdonald
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Head of Task Force
for the European Year
of Volunteering***

The average age of volunteers is between 30 and 50 years. They tend to be in employment, and are well-educated (higher education and beyond). Men outnumber female volunteers in 11 Member States, and are roughly equal in number in a further 9 countries. The majority of male volunteers may be explained by the dominance of volunteering in sport, which as a sector attracts the most volunteers. This is followed by volunteering in the social sector, aid to the disadvantaged, and volunteering in the health sector.

The volunteering sector in the EU faces a number of significant challenges. For EU policy-makers, one obvious problem is that there is a lack of internationally comparable data on, and monitoring of, voluntary activities in the EU Member States.

Further, national volunteering strategies are very rare - typically because of the question of which government department should be responsible for 'volunteering': Youth Ministry? Labour Ministry? Family affairs? Home affairs?

The challenge is aggravated by the fact that in many countries, there is no legal framework to cover things such as the social insurance of volunteers, their training, entitlement to holidays, accommodation or pocket money.

At the same time, there is an increase in the professionalisation of the volunteering sector, which is causing a growing mismatch between the needs of volunteering organisations and the aspirations of volunteers. Younger volunteers, for example, are less willing to commit to longer term volunteering periods, while this is increasingly requested by certain volunteering organisations. Coupled with this is the problem that skills or competences that are gained through volunteering activities are hardly recognised.

Another problem that volunteering organisations face is sustainable funding: due to the large increase in volunteering organisations over the past years, there is now more competition for the available funds.

To respond to these challenges, the European Year of Volunteering has been envisaged as an awareness-raising exercise with four main objectives.

The first is to foster an enabling environment for volunteering in the EU. This means that we want to see the European Year of Volunteering providing input for further policy development; that it initiates a dialogue within Member States on volunteering issues; and that it initiates a dialogue between EU Member States and Europe's developing world partners on volunteering issues. We want to encourage the exchange of good practices between Member States on how to remove existing obstacles to volunteering, for example how volunteers could be entitled to reimbursement of expenses or how they could be protected while they are performing voluntary activities.

The second objective is to empower volunteering organisations and improve the quality of volunteering. We would hope to see new Europe-wide networking initiatives that encourage cooperation, exchange and synergies between volunteering organisations and other sectors, especially the corporate sector.

The third objective is to reward and recognise volunteering activities. This means that we are keen to see progress by Member States' education authorities, policy makers, civil society organisations, and employers on improving the formal recognition of skills and competences gained through volunteering. This could involve consistently referring to skills gained in one or more of the eight categories of the 2006 framework of 'Key Competences for Lifelong Learning', for example¹. Member States' authorities could help advancing this work by implementing national qualifications frameworks that are compatible with the new European Qualifications Framework (EQF) and that take account of non-formal and informal learning results, such as skills and competences gained through volunteering activities.

In a related field, we will explore how to further develop 'Europass Mobility', which is already part of the well-established *Europass* set of documents², to include volunteering activities. This would need to be combined with decisions identifying which certificate-issuing authorities would be entitled to issue a Europass Mobility document for a volunteering experience. Lessons learned from the European Youth Pass may be useful here. The Youth Pass documents an individual's achievements after

1.

<http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:L:2006:394:0010:0018:en:PDF>.

The Key Competences are a combination of knowledge, skills and attitudes that are considered necessary for personal fulfilment and development, social inclusion, active citizenship and employment in our rapidly-developing, competitive, knowledge-based society.

2.

The Europass currently consists of a set of five possible documents: 'Europass CV' and 'Europass Language Passport' (both filled in by the individual), and the 'Europass Diploma Supplement' (for university degrees), the 'Europass Certificate Supplement' (for vocational training certificates) and 'Europass Mobility' (for traineeships and stages), all of which are issued by the certifying authority or company concerned.

coordinating or organising projects under the Commission's *Youth in Action* programme (which includes the European Voluntary Service).

The fourth objective of the European Year of Volunteering is to raise awareness of the value and importance of volunteering. We want to ensure that there is increased awareness both within Europe and in partner countries of the value of volunteering and its contribution to the economy, society and individual's lives.

Many interested parties and stakeholders are active and want to get involved in the European Year - they want to make tangible contributions to it. We can identify three main levels.

At the Community level, there will be conferences and events, and the launch of information and promotion campaigns to stimulate debate, raise awareness and disseminate key messages, thanks to an active participation of the EU institutions (European Parliament, Committee of the Regions, Economic and Social Committee, etc) and many of the Commission's own departments and services.

At the national, regional and local level, the Member States are organising concrete initiatives for the Year. These will be coordinated by specially-appointed 'National Coordination Bodies' (NCBs), which were identified by the Member States themselves, and which have the responsibility of preparing and implementing events for the Year in their territories³.

The third level includes the activities of civil society organisations. The Commission has a strategic partnership with 'The Alliance' of volunteering platforms, who in total represent over 1,500 volunteering networks and organisations across Europe. Many of the Year's activities are being prepared and coordinated in tight collaboration with the Alliance.

Everyone is invited to volunteer - to volunteer to make the European Year of Volunteering a success.

3.

Anyone interested in getting involved in the European Year should contact the NCB for their country.

The addresses are here:
http://ec.europa.eu/citizenship/annexes-citizenship/doc1069_en.htm

‘Europe for Citizens’ Programme has been established by Decision 1904/2006/EC of 12 December 2006 of the European Parliament and the Council and covers a period from 2007 to 2013.

The Programme supports projects and organisations that promote active European citizenship and therefore the involvement of citizens and civil society organisations in the process of European integration. In this respect, volunteering plays a crucial role in the development of active citizenship, as through volunteering citizens actively participate in the life of their social community, by responding to its needs and acting in order to overcome its problems.

‘Europe for Citizens’ Programme’s general objectives include the development of the European identity and of a sense of ownership of European Union: by means of volunteering actions, citizens develop a sense of belonging to a community and their commitment to society’s wellbeing and political life is therefore increased.

Volunteering widely contributes to reach the scope of the Programme’s priority themes (i.e. the future of the European Union and its basic values; active European citizenship: civic participation and democracy in Europe; intercultural dialogue; people’s wellbeing in Europe: employment, social cohesion and sustainable development; impact of EU policies in societies) as it is deeply linked with European values such as solidarity, respect for human rights, human dignity and equality and meanwhile encourages civic participation by fostering citizens’ involvement in relevant social and political issues. Hence, volunteering represents an important element for the building up of an inclusive, non-discriminating, cohesive society, thus improving citizens’ general wellbeing in Europe. Since experiences and

III.3 ‘Europe for Citizens’ Programme and the European Year of Volunteering

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social abilities achieved through voluntary activities can be eventually used in conventional job markets, by means of volunteering European citizens may increase their employability – moreover, it should be reminded that nonprofit entities’ operating expenditures constitute an important percentage of gross domestic product in the European Union. Besides, volunteering creates relationships between generations and ameliorates intercultural dialogue.

Because of the above-mentioned intense relationship between volunteering and ‘Europe for Citizens’ Programme and since many successful projects in the context of the Programme itself could not have been realized without the support of volunteers, the ‘European Year of Voluntary activities promoting active citizenship (2011)’ has been selected among Annual Priority Themes established for 2011. Therefore, stakeholders are invited to reflect on social cohesion and innovation by taking part to the European Year and European citizens are encouraged to participate in civic life through volunteering.

In this way, ‘Europe for Citizens’ Programme will be an important instrument to raise awareness on volunteering and volunteering will be a crucial means to achieve the Programme’s objectives and priorities.

Italy numbers three million volunteers, and more than thirty thousand non-profit organizations, for a total of seven hundred thousand individuals.

On 3 June 2009 the European Commission announced that 2011 will be the European Year of Volunteering, recognising its major contribution to the development of a culture of solidarity which promotes integration and mutual understanding.

This specific aspect was underlined by the President of the Republic, Napolitano, on 5 December 2010: «Volunteering is the lifeblood of our coexistence and the typical and distinguishing feature of the quality of our democracy. As also highlighted in Italy's 2011 plan – the guideline document for the European Year of Volunteering that will be celebrated next year – volunteering expresses itself through the promotion of the loyal relationship between generations, the support of marginalized segments of the population and the commitment to create a path to integration and mutual understanding in an age of large migration flows. There is a need for this great school of solidarity that generously produces actions, daily practices and projects which make a significant contribution to the establishment of a widespread share capital. Especially in times like these, characterised by major economic difficulties, supporting the world of volunteering is of fundamental importance, at the same time guaranteeing the resources necessary to achieve its irreplaceable mission recognised by millions of citizens».

The figures indicating the widespread participation in this solidarity competition are extremely high: more than 100 million Europeans are engaged in volunteer activities and according to a survey conducted by

III.4 Volunteers for a New European Citizenship

*Silvia Costa
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Committee on Culture
and Education*

Eurobarometer in 2006, 3 out of every 10 Europeans declare to be volunteers and nearly 80% of them feel that such activities constitute an important part of democratic life in Europe.

But this can be improved by stimulating and rationalizing volunteer activities, and especially by recognising and highlighting the merits of those who devote themselves to them.

In Europe an estimated 94 million people are committed to some or other volunteer activity, which account for 23% of citizens aged 15 years and over.

This fact, however, is the result of the lack of a common set of definition and parameter for measurement, as shown by the data indicating that, for example, the percentage of volunteers in Great Britain is over 40% whilst in Italy that percentage is theoretically lower than 10%. It must be noted, in fact, that volunteering in the field of sport, which is not accounted for in Italy, in Europe represents the most significant sector in numerical terms.

There is an important connection between the issues concerning the fight against poverty and social exclusion (in 2010) and that of volunteering and active citizenship of 2011.

Such link was highlighted by CEV, that during a very interesting initiative last December which I attended, presented the Brussels Declaration on the role of volunteering in the fight against old and new forms of poverty and social exclusion, in the context of the objectives for an inclusive EU. The Brussels Declaration raises a number of issues that were treated over the course of the CEV hearing at the Culture Commission of the European Parliament and which can be summarized into a fundamental question: the EU must seize the opportunity of the European Year of Volunteering to establish a cultural and legal space to create the conditions under which every citizen is granted the right to choose to be a volunteer under their own free will, although without being penalised, and where their contribution and that of volunteer organizations is recognised in cultural and social, but also in financial and fiscal terms.

I proposed and obtained authorization from the Commission to draft a White Book on volunteering, already requested by CES, in order to be

able to compare the various national legislations, the recognition of the status of volunteer and of the latter's prerogatives, as well as the role played by organizations and their access to national and European tenders, tax deductions, consulting by service centers, the presence in the decision-making processes at the various institutional levels and the enhancement of their financial and social contribution to cohesion and development.

This year we need to seize the opportunity in Europe to promote a confrontation between the various institutional and social actors on the various situations and legislations, as well as a comparison of the best practices used by the various European associations, also in order to show the contribution made by volunteering to a greater effectiveness of the human rights which form the basis of the European Convention and which, today, have become part of the new European Constitution.

Various forms of marginalization and exclusion have arisen in Europe due also to the lack of adequate education, to unequal access to resources and of solitude also as a result of the weaker family and social ties. We only need to think that, in Europe, one out of every three marriages ends up in a separation or divorce and this requires a whole series of mediation, consulting and support networks, including financial support.

Material poverty lies next to immaterial poverty. And the weakening of social ties is the true impoverishment and privation of the right to citizenship.

Here lies the root and profound meaning of the role of volunteering, as human activity provided with the ethics of giving, of sharing and of social responsibility. A sort of counterculture set against the dominant one. Albeit with an additional task, which is today necessary: that of creating the conditions for conferring greater autonomy and stronger social ties to marginalised and excluded individuals and social groups, and allow them to regain their social role as protagonists, playing a greater role in terms of advocacy and consultation.

Among the objectives set by the European Year are the streamlining of the administrative and bureaucratic procedures necessary to volunteer,

conferring greater autonomy and responsibility to volunteer organizations, improving the quality of the services and raising the awareness of public opinion on the importance of the sector.

In particular, as regards the status of volunteer, a number of priorities have been established:

- compulsory insurance,
- work permits, also for the employees of private organizations,
- recognition of training credits in the sphere of formal and informal education, as reiterated in the report approved within the Culture Commission of PE on the communication of the European Commission on professional training.

I would like to bring to mind the flagship initiative and: 'Youth on the Move', which also provides for the recognition of volunteers by awarding training credits for formal and informal skills acquired during service and:

- training credits in the sphere of the school, University and professional training curriculums
- the possibility for retired people to offer voluntary service without providing for accumulation of pension and the reimbursement of expenses and insurance incurred while volunteering
- the Italian experience of early part-time retirement with the possibility of completing one's career with an NGO
- promoting forms of professional volunteering (credit angels)

As regards associations:

- for participation in national and European tenders, providing for the recognition of volunteers' activities as co-funding (volunteers do not generate income but rather wealth and social work)
- providing for forms of agreements between local authorities and NGOs for the performance of mediation and family consulting activities, for minors, for family households

Lastly, in order to include poor people or the individuals concerned in the voluntary organisations we need to draw from the Italian experience in social solidarity cooperatives, which can be defined as such if their organizational structures are composed to a large extent of the beneficiaries of their actions and by imposing on the Public Administration the obligation to assign a share of the services to the Public Administration to them.

- family volunteering: experiences of inclusive family associations in the field of health (oncological children, etc), social solidarity (mutual aid), family mediation, intra-generational solidarity, and time banks
- support to immigrants' or integrated NGOs

Here follows a summary of the salient points:

- Social services of general interest in Europe rely largely on the contribution of volunteers. The actions of volunteer organizations in Member States show that volunteers make a significant contribution to the services offered in the social and health assistance sectors
 - Volunteering is an instrument for active aging
 - Volunteer activities are part of non-formal and informal learning for people of all ages and at any stage of their life. Volunteering contributes to personal development and to the abilities and skills in the field of learning, thus increasing the value of people in the labor market
 - The sports sector sees the largest number of volunteer activities carried out by NGOs in Europe, accounting for the majority of volunteers and participants
 - Development policies are practically impossible to implement without the contribution of volunteers
 - Business volunteering plans (on the part of employees) are considered to an increasing extent by companies as a means of establishing a link with the society, of investing time and resources in their communities and of giving a true meaning to their corporate social responsibility policies

Lastly, volunteering is an important economic factor: a research study conducted by the Institute for Volunteering Research, 'Volunteering

works', shows in fact that for each euro spent by organizations for supporting volunteers, they obtain an average return of 3 to 8 euros. Furthermore, the comparative project on the non-profit sector has shown that the volunteering sector accounts for approximately 2-7% of GDP of national economies (Repubblica 7 January 2011 Art. R. Orsi).

It is no coincidence that Italy's volunteering is composed of people aged over 45, of female graduates also very well prepared as shown by a study conducted by <<Fondazione Roma>> concerning the third sector according to which, unfortunately, Italy ranks poorly in a list of 130 countries examined, trailing behind Nicaragua and Zimbabwe.

It is for this reason that this year's meeting should be considered a decisive event both in ethical, economic and social terms and that is the challenge set with determination by the European initiative. The first results can already be seen; following the official announcement of the European Year of Volunteering, the works are already underway in Italy for the finalisation of the 'Manifesto of Italian volunteering for Europe'.

The support of the institutions is fundamental, as volunteering is an activity that is conducted gratuitously, although it is not cost free. It requires and deserves the targeted support of all the parties concerned - the volunteering organizations, the government at all levels, the enterprises - as well as an environment favorable to social policies, including a volunteering infrastructure; and all of this requires funds.

Personally we guarantee our full support to those policies that aim to develop the support and implementation actions under the strategic perspective of a Europe that is increasingly open to the recognition of best practices, in which the exercise of solidarity is supportive of those who are in need, emphasizing the true values shared by Christian ethics which form the common basis of European culture. Volunteers! Let's make the difference.

Today, the voluntary sector is strongly established in all European countries; countless organisations and associations are involved in daily charitable and humanitarian work. These activities reflect the spirit of the European Union as celebrated in the Treaties. The EU's goals are achieved through solidarity projects which enhance the general awareness of civic responsibility.

At European level, this means more tolerance, greater integration, an understanding of different cultures and nationalities, a new strategy for dealing with collective problems in a peaceful context, and cooperation between nations. Italy, with its tens of thousands of voluntary organisations, is at the forefront of this process.

Viviane Reding, European Commissioner for Justice, Fundamental Rights and Citizenship, has said, «Every day, every hour, every minute, someone gives a helping hand. We see it in our youth clubs and our hospitals, in our schools and on our playing fields. From town halls to sports halls, from maternity units to retirement homes, people help each other – people volunteer – volunteers are all around us (...) 2011 is the European Year of Volunteering. We all have the capacity to volunteer and with our small actions, do great things for many around us. It is time to make a difference!».⁴

We want the European Year of Voluntary Work to encourage engagement on the part of the European Union, Member States and local and regional authorities to create a better environment for the voluntary sector,

III.5 Considerations on the European Year of Volunteering

Emilio Dalmonte
European Commission
Representation in Italy
Deputy Head

4.
Speech by Viviane Reding,
Vice-President of the European
Commission, responsible for
Justice, Fundamental Rights
and Citizenship – Budapest,
8th January, 2011.

to promote every single initiative, ensuring that ideas, big or small, can flourish, that enthusiasm and commitment are not strangled by red tape, that precious time is not wasted in administrative bottlenecks. Our aim is also to empower those who want to contribute to build a better society, encouraging an exchange of best practice both within and among Member States and stimulating a dialogue between stakeholders, from NGOs to the corporate sector, underscoring the significance of voluntary work and galvanising a new generation of volunteers.

Italy has identified clear aims for this year's campaign: empowering volunteer organisations and improving the quality of volunteering, rewarding and recognising voluntary activities, and raising awareness of the value and importance of volunteers. To attain these aims, all sectors of society must get involved, and there should be a general acknowledgement that voluntary work illustrates the significance of active citizenship.

Many initiatives, e.g. conferences and events, will be organised to stimulate debate at national, regional and local level; everybody is called to contribute in order not only to make voluntary work more attractive and accessible, but also to recognise and honour all those millions of citizens who actually embody the kind of change they want to see in their country and in the world.

Yes, we have started. The European Year of Volunteering began four months ago. It was strongly coveted by all those European associations representing 100 million people who, day by day, spend their time and their energies to help people around them, selflessly.

It is the first time that the European Union directly addresses to this field and of course some challenges have to be faced. Legal basis, the budget available, the different national legislations, the distinct local experiences. But still the will to emphasize what some people call "the spine of our societies" has been stronger than all the obstacles. Because voluntary work joins people together, it may act as a point of reference to create a more shared sense of Europe; it can generate ongoing exchanges that may improve our communities, as well as foster the organisation of civil society and promote development for our territories. We would like this year to be that: not only celebrations, not only resounding conferences, not only good words but real, innovative projects. Projects that could then act as a model for those countries where the voluntary activity is still in its embryonic stage; of course, these countries have no responsibility in that, because until the fall of Berlin Wall, communism had banned any kind of organisation of civil society. The government used to organise and supervise each aspect the life of the society, including the compulsory days of volunteering, which still generate a sense a repulsion in too many people. We need to go beyond this, we need to figure out proper legislations, to put forward new proposals and set out new goals. We strongly wish that every State contributed with a more substantial investment in this field, we would like to have plenty of initiatives and ideas that could attract more and more people, especially young people, to the world of volunteering. And on 31st December 2011 we would like, all things considered, to be able to give valuable answers. We want

III.6 European Year of Volunteering: we have started

***Marco Scurria
European Parliament
Committee on Culture
and Education***

to be able to verify the implementation on part of the associations, to find out projects that could act as a model, to identify those legislative tools that may help to overcome legal difficulties related to cross-border experiences.

In other words, 2011 should represent only a small taste of what is going to be a concrete and constant European commitment in this field.

Social cohesion, that still represent one of the main objectives of the European Union, will be achieved only if the whole world of solidarity in our continent is in condition of giving its own contribution. Even beyond the European boundaries, volunteering is the best presentation to start dealing with people and countries that aim to become part of the European Union or that belong to different cultures and continents.

You can find all of this in the challenge we will be facing this year.

The EYV 2011 Alliance is an informal, open and growing group of currently 35 European networks active in volunteering. The EYV 2011 Alliance came together in December 2007 with the purpose of starting a common campaign towards establishing the European Year of Volunteering in 2011. 3 years later at the start of EYV 2011 this accomplishment stands as a shining example of what can be achieved when Civil Society works together.

EYV 2011 Alliance members are grateful to the recognition that the EU institutions have given to this pivotal role of civil society in establishing and now in implementing the Year.

Due to the financial support offered by the European Commission in the form of a project grant in the Citizenship Programme and additional co-funding offered by Robert Bosch Stiftung, Fundacion Telefonica and Alliance Steering Group members, the EYV 2011 Alliance has been able to establish a project work programme aided in its implementation by the support of two full time staff in its secretariat hosted by CEV - European Volunteer Centre office in Brussels. As a critical contact point and driving force for the facilitation of the joint effort to lobby for the Year it was agreed by EYV 2011 Alliance members that CEV should be the grant holder for the EYV 2011 Alliance Project and also therefore host the Secretariat.

The EYV 2011 Alliance has 4 aims:

1. Coordinating civil society
- To be the main voice for volunteer organisations active within the

III.7 Introduction to EYV 2011 Alliance

***Gabriella Civico
EYV 2011 Alliance
Project Manager***

Alliance network and to serve, through its permanent secretariat and contact point, as interlocutor for European institutions and the communication agency in charge of EYV 2011 to allow monitoring, involvement in planning and participation in the Year's activities.

- To ensure ongoing exchange of information between main European networks active in volunteering.

- To serve as a platform at European level for the exchange of good practices and partnership building between civil society, business, research and public authorities.

2. Developing a policy agenda for volunteering in Europe

- To develop and formulate policy recommendations that organisations from all over Europe and volunteers have been able to feed into "Agenda 2020" and channel these policy recommendations to European and national decision makers.

3. Mobilising and capacity building

- To empower Alliance networks and their members to build capacity, to relate to and to capitalise on the potential of the Year.

- To stimulate partnerships and projects between organisations all over Europe.

- To mobilize volunteer organisations all over Europe through the structures of the Alliance networks to prepare for the Year and its activities and promote contact making and sharing of experiences to reach out to volunteers at the local level.

- To improve capacity at the grass root level across Europe, to improve the quality of volunteering and increase volunteering opportunities creating a lasting legacy.

Since 2007 EYV 2011 Alliance members have been working together to lobby for the EYV 2011, working with other stakeholders and policy makers across the EU. The experience of civil society organisations showed that there was a need at all levels - EU, national, regional and local - to increase volunteering and the awareness of the added value it brings to

European society, to celebrate volunteers, involve more volunteers and to improve the policy framework on volunteering. There is no Europe without volunteers: they contribute greatly to both social Europe and its growth. EYV 2011 Alliance members thought that EYV 2011 would increase recognition of this and increase the capacity of volunteering organisations to deliver their missions.

The EYV 2011 Alliance Project Work Plan addresses several critical issues especially those which are to be discussed within the policy dialogue to take place during the Year harnessing the widespread expertise gathered together through the 100 members of the EYV 2011 Alliance Working Groups, many of whom are volunteers themselves.

Six working group have been established on six different themes (Quality of Volunteering, Legal Framework of Volunteering, Volunteering Infrastructure, Recognising Volunteering, Value of Volunteering & Employee Volunteering). The groups met for the first time on the 7th and 8th of January 2011 in Budapest, Hungary. The working group members have been nominated by EYV 2011 Alliance member organisations and will meet in total at least 5 times during 2011 including the Kick Off Conference held in Budapest and three further Working Group meetings held in Brussels in March, May & September 2011. The closing conference in Poland (December 2011) will see the approval of the "EYV 2011 Alliance European Policy Agenda on Volunteering" to be presented to policy makers at the EC EYV 2011 closing conference also in Poland in December 2011.

Working towards the European Policy Agenda on Volunteering the EYV 2011 Alliance will address:

Quality:

- Work towards a common understanding of "quality volunteering"
- Clarify the roles and responsibilities of the organizers of volunteering in ensuring quality volunteering experiences.
- Identify and disseminate good practice in the field of quality assurance and quality assessment tools used by volunteer organisations.

Legal Framework:

- Map research on the legal status of volunteers in Europe
- Collect concerns in terms of legal barriers and bottlenecks caused by legal provisions at any level that result in limiting volunteering in Europe.
- Advocate for recommendations for improvement of the legal status of volunteers and a clear legal status for volunteers everywhere in Europe

Volunteering Infrastructure:

- Extract good practice indicators of an enabling volunteering infrastructure at different levels feeding into a European framework recommendation allowing space for national diversity of volunteering to be respected.
- Identify key legal features for volunteer organisations to provide an enabling infrastructure.

Recognition:

- Map the existing tools for recognition of volunteers - extract good practice examples.
- Map tools of how to recognize the contribution of volunteer organisations
- Formulate recommendations for better recognition of volunteering in different areas and by different tools.
- Devise a strategy for implementation of the recommendations

Value:

- Identification of tools and ways to identify, measure and express the value of volunteering.
- Valuing volunteering as an important creator of human and social capital, cohesion and well-being, encompassing the provision of services and an effective intervention where other policies may fail.
- Valuing the contribution of volunteering in positively shaping the European society.

- Valuing volunteering as an expression of solidarity, a value which is not only in great need in the current economic and social climate, but also one upon which the EU has been built.
- Recognising the contributions of volunteers as match-funding in all European and national project funding.

Employee volunteering:

- Increase understanding of the concept of Employee Volunteering as a key element of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR).
- Achieve recognition of Employee Volunteering as a means / key component of putting CSR concept into practice.
- Contribute to making Employee Volunteering accessible for all, in all sectors (private, public and non-profit).

EYV 2011 will contribute to helping the wider public understand why volunteering is a critical issue and help volunteering organisations to show that:

- Volunteers are an example for active civic participation.
- Volunteers put in practice European values of solidarity and diversity.
- Volunteering contributes to economic and social cohesion
- Volunteers are in particular the main agents when it comes to social inclusion especially for the integration of migrants into our societies.
- Volunteering is a means for active ageing.
- Volunteering plays an important role with regards to maintaining and restoring family links.
- Volunteering contributes to tolerance, peace building, conflict resolution and reconciliation of divided societies.
- Voluntary activities are part of informal and non-formal learning for people at all ages and at all stages of their lives.
- Volunteering contributes to personal development and to learning skills and competences enhancing employability providing life-long learning opportunities.
- The sport sector is the largest voluntary, non-governmental organi-

sation activity throughout Europe and sports as we know it in Europe could not exist without the tireless efforts of volunteers.

- Volunteers are the backbone of Europe's civil protection force.
- Development policies are practically impossible to implement without the contributions of volunteers.
- Corporate (employee) volunteering schemes are increasingly seen by European companies as a means to connect to society, invest time and resources in their communities and to fill their CSR policies with concrete meaning.
- Volunteering is an important economic factor.

Volunteering is freely given, but not cost free and the EYV 2011 Alliance members believe that volunteering and volunteering organisations need and deserve targeted support from all stakeholders - volunteer organisations, government at all levels and businesses. The EYV 2011 Alliance Working groups will spend EYV 2011 working towards this vision of an enabling volunteering environment including a volunteering infrastructure. The EYV 2011 Alliance members are committed to engage with the EYV 2011 together with key EU stakeholders especially the European Commission and play a part in showcasing what *good policy-maker - civil society partnerships* can achieve and work together on a successful European Policy Agenda on Volunteering to be delivered before the end of EYV 2011.

IV

European Year of Volunteering: Italian National Institutions and Local Authorities' Point of View

In July, an agreement was signed by the Municipality of Rome's Social Policy Department, the Educational Policy Department and the Regional Schooling Office. The document stressed the importance of volunteering as an instrument of lifelong learning, allowing the students of Rome to address issues and matters of public importance and social utility through daily practice. The goal pursued by the protocol aims to turn volunteering into a reality for the schools of Rome, awarding young students credits (resulting from the period spent in social activities) which are accountable for their final degree. This project, which is part of a personal "curriculum", is aimed to raise a durable and common awareness on the effects of responsible attitude for the promotion of change. In particular, according to this agreement, the Capital sponsors and supports, through special funds, the implementation of projects together with schooling institutions in collaboration with a number of volunteering organizations accredited by the Region. Among these, there are a number of centers and institutions involved in the asylum of refugees and language mediation; there are projects run by Catholic associations, providing help to indigents and disabled persons, as well as initiatives with the Civil Protection and the Officers of the Fire Brigade. Hence, the Civil Protection Volunteers Programme was improved through an increase of human resources and the related Civil Protection School trainings. In the framework of the European Year of Volunteering, other activities are organized around the House of Volunteers, which provides assistance to the elderly. The organization is composed of approximately 1000 volunteers committed to providing assistance to the elderly, helping them in their day-to-day activities and in tackling emergencies caused by the Summer heat or, more simply, offering

IV.1 European Year of Volunteering in the context of 'Roma Capitale'

Gianni Alemanno
Municipality of Rome
Mayor



ROMA
CAPITALE

them company. Anyone can contact a free number and call a volunteer equipped with a mobile phone and ready to provide assistance. Another project provides for the transport and assistance to elderly people to do medical check-ups at clinics and hospitals for diagnostic therapies etc. Each day, moreover, 2000 elderly people are ready to guarantee school pupils the best safety conditions during entrance and exit from school thanks to the project named "A friend for the city".

The linchpin of all these initiatives is the respect for the human person and this principle can be applied by ensuring a long lasting effect on the ethics and behaviour of young people. The realisation that rights can be supported only if strictly connected to corresponding duties, is a teaching that deeply impresses young people. In a moment of crisis such as the current one is it even more evident that the first ones who pay the price for the lack of respect for the law are always the weak and disadvantaged, people. Volunteering, which requires a greater degree of maturity and capacity of reflection, helps young people to understand the complexity of the real world. In life, what counts are not the reports, but rather, the strategies. Students learn not to close their eyes on deprivation or on minor or major crime, among which exclusion and poverty. This helps them to create the appropriate defence also against the violence exercised by their same peers, in a day-to-day reality which frequently, and not only in the rural areas, reveals its cruel identity, especially with the youngest.



In recent years the volunteering sector in Europe has grown significantly and presently accounts for a wide range of collective and individual services. Volunteering activities connected with culture and, more specifically, with Cultural Heritage have developed more recently than to those connected with the social welfare system, which in fact represent the more traditional volunteering activities. Nevertheless, active volunteering in the favor of museums, archeological sites and libraries is deeply rooted in the Italian national territory and growing significantly thanks to the large presence of monuments and artworks in the country. The value of these assets can therefore be enhanced and preserved also with the support of non-profit organizations or thanks to the willingness of private citizens to offer their services and skills for the benefit of cultural assets.

It is therefore important to stress the need to establish a statute of equal dignity as the other volunteering sectors, such as the more traditional one mentioned above, that is, that connected with the social welfare system. Any form of spontaneous, gratuitous and uninterested activity which is not directly associable to the 'poor', to the 'ill' or in any case to the 'disadvantaged people', must be recognised and treated, from the perspective of its value and contribution to the social community, as a social welfare activity, in order to respect the pluralism of volunteering, understood first and foremost as the freedom to choose the sector of social service in which to operate, including the cultural sector. Such need is all the more urgent given that, over the last few decades, major developments were registered in volunteering activities associated to sectors ranging from civil protection, the environment, education, sports, etc.

The Cultural Heritage sector has, since the pre-unification period,

IV.2 Cultural Heritage and Volunteering

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always envisaged the participation and collaboration of unpaid - and hence voluntary - citizens for professional posts. 'Professional officers' and non-professional public administrators (a complex case which is rife with political implications and alone requires ample discussion) are some of the official forms of voluntary participation in the Public Administration. Professional officers can be characterised by three elements, namely the non-obligation to take on the role, the non professional status, and the lack of remuneration (which make the difference between minister and general director).

As regards voluntary participation in the administration of Cultural Assets, the law provides for the participation of private citizens not as professional employees, but rather as voluntary collaborators in a position similar to that of employees.

One of the voluntary figures involved in the administration of Cultural Assets is that of the professional supervisor, who is responsible for assisting the protection and preservation of monuments and ancient artifacts; this post is not subject to remuneration, with the exception of any expenses incurred and documented for the performance of the respective duties. Again, a similar and voluntary function is performed by the members of the Provincial Commissions for the protection and preservation of monuments and ancient artifacts.

Professional supervisors or members of the Provincial Commissions are not required to possess any special qualifications or general knowledge, but only specific skills pertaining to the tasks assigned to them; the decision lies with the Public Administration for Cultural Heritage, which appoints, confirms or removes the individual based on his or her performance. It can be easily deduced from the above that, within the same Public Administration for Cultural Heritage there is a presence of volunteers, albeit only to a much lesser extent than that of remunerated and paid staff.

A third category of voluntary employees in the field of Cultural Heritage comprises professional registrars, who are responsible for keeping the State archives and selected from among retired employees of the State archive administration, from the members of the 'Società di storia

patria', cultural associations, cultural institutes and, finally, from the scholars of history subjects.

Another form of voluntary service within the administration for Cultural Heritage is represented by those who render voluntary and gratuitous service at the state-owned public libraries and bibliographic superintendences; anyone who wishes to participate in competitions for managerial, conceptual and executive careers is eligible. In this particular case, unique to the field of volunteering, volunteers provide gratuitous services albeit with a purpose, that is with the intent to obtain a certificate of 'praiseworthy service' which is subject to assessment during the various competitions.

Among the various voluntary figures operating in the field of Cultural Heritage is that of the professional curator, although now almost in disuse.

As the examples provided above suggest, the question of volunteering in the administration for Cultural Heritage is only part of a wider context concerning the relationship of collaboration between voluntary service and State. One of the major difficulties faced by the legislation concerning the highly desired placement of volunteers in the field of Cultural Heritage will certainly consist in identifying those employment sectors which can truly benefit from such placements, without undermining or questioning the institutional role of the Ministry or of the Superintendences, but rather strengthening and improving the collaboration between volunteer associations and the Public Administration for Cultural Heritage.

One of the major achievements in the involvement of volunteers in Cultural Assets is the employment of volunteers also in activities for the promotion of museums and other projects including those related to the dissemination of culture, even though volunteers cannot in any case replace permanent staff or office clerks nor compete with the subordinate personnel, but only act in the capacity of collaborators.

Worthy of note in this respect is the number of specifically dedicated voluntary associations that exist in Italy today, for example, those involved in making the most important museums accessible to the disabled through the employment of specialised staff capable of guiding them and introducing them to the realm of Italy's cultural heritage, while setting an

example of voluntary activities which combine the traditional health assistance/social welfare and the cultural sectors. Similarly, among the various museum institutions availing themselves of voluntary staff, worthy of mention is the project promoted by the recently inaugurated MAXXI museum (of which the Ministry for Cultural Heritage and Activities is a founding partner and promoter), which is addressed to retired adults who dispose of leisure time and have an interest in contemporary art: volunteers will follow a training course in order to qualify as a major resource for the museum through the acquisition of knowledge and skills that they will then use to serve the visitors of the MAXXI, for example to provide receptive and guidance services, explaining information materials on the museum and the related activities, etc.

A major issue concerns the exact definition of the field of ‘Volunteering for Cultural Heritage’, and making a distinction between the latter and the more vast and less clearly defined ‘cultural volunteering’.

Today, in fact, the number of non-profit organizations that operate in the field of culture with the purpose of managing a cultural social service which is not limited to their own members but, rather, benefits the entire community, has increased significantly. In this specific context, cultural volunteering becomes part of the basic dimension of active citizenship: a group of citizens that decides to join an association, for non-profit reasons, actively engaging for the benefit of the community and to serve a common purpose is a practical example of civic participation and, therefore, of active citizenship.

Lastly, it is important to make one final comment with respect to Cultural Heritage. As already mentioned above, it represents a specific sector in the wider context of the field of culture. In fact, there are various components that make up the cultural organizations operating in the field of volunteering: indeed, this includes also non-profit organizations operating in the music sector (such as, for example, music bands), in the theatre sector, in the information sector, etc. The field of Cultural Heritage is, from this perspective, a very well-defined sphere, whose definition was first attempted in 1985 in the volume “Volunteers for the environment” by the Giovanni Agnelli Foundation. The publication set the limits of volun-

teering for Cultural Heritage to any actions associated to the rediscovery, value enhancement and reassessment of the ‘cultural heritage’.

The Italian situation, understood strictly in relation to Cultural Heritage, albeit poised for growth, is not so highly developed as that related to culture understood in the broader sense. The experience gained by Italy’s voluntary service for Cultural Heritage has yet to be firmly established and, especially, it has yet to acquire national recognition.

It is therefore important to stress the need in Italy to promote full integration between the public and the private sectors in the sphere of actions concerning historical and artistic assets, and to enhance as much as possible any contributions that may be made by voluntary efforts and actions. The ultimate goal of such actions should be that of giving a practical demonstration of how Cultural Assets make up a strategic sector for development and cohesion, thus establishing synergies with the EU2020 Community Strategy.

1.

In Italy, the volunteering activity carried out within volunteering organizations is regulated by the framework law on Volunteering, n. 266/1991.

2.

Presented on September 30th 2008 in Rome, base of CNEL:

3.

Data concerning volunteering organizations registered in regional databases of volunteering up to December 31st 2008 are currently being processed. This survey had been commissioned to ISFOL by the National Observatory of Volunteering and the results will be published in the IV Biennial Volunteering Survey.

4.

Ruling n. 75/1992 by the Constitutional Court that, together with the framework law on Volunteering n. 266/1991 and other acts on this topic, define what volunteering is.

5.

E. E. Gastaldi, P. Springhetti., *Al di là delle mura: le ragioni della solidarietà*, FIVOL, Rome, 1998.

The consideration on Italian volunteering¹ as part of third sector organizations, the latter being viewed as *challenge* to proximity, places itself within the boundaries of a very complex social and cultural framework in continuous evolution, from which we can't abstract for a full and adequate comprehension of volunteering phenomenon, from a quantitative and qualitative viewpoint.

In the CNEL/ISTAT report on social economy,² it is highlighted the true importance that third sector organizations carrying out nonprofit activities have in the civil society.

These actors, despite their own structural, organizational and legislative specificities, contribute to the simultaneous increase of both the social economy and civil society.

Volunteering organizations³ play, among them, a prevailing role in the establishment of social bonds and of civil society itself, because volunteering is "a way of being of the person in the domain of social relations or, by using another definition, a paradigm of the social action that can be related to either individuals or group associations". It represents a "basic model of the positive and responsible action of the person, that naturally and gratuitously offers his services in aid of either other people or common interests that should be protected by the community".⁴

The etymological definition - essential for the same semantic definition - of the word volunteering expresses clearly what it actually is; it comes from Latin word *voluntas-volontà*, and it is thus bound to the willingness of being and acting and, as Gastaldi remarks, "it is a way to exercise the individual own personality that, together with a strong willful charge, lead the choice to be involved in first person, freely and gratuitously, to fight social disorders"⁵; the same word had a semantic-structural evolution with

IV.3 Italian Volunteering as Challenge of Proximity: the National Observatory of Volunteering as Tool for Social Inclusion

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National Observatory
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Head of Technical
Secretary Office
Fellow ISFOL***

6.

Act n. 328, November 8th 2000 published on G.U. n. 265, November 13th 2000, Framework law for the establishment of intervention and social services integrated system. The implementation of the rules of the Constitutional law n. 3/2001, to reform the fifth title of the Constitution, created just few months after the passage of act 328/2000, a totally new setting for the implementation of the local welfare reform, by requiring the definition a a new organization of the jurisdiction for the planning and the management of social policies, having given to Regions the jurisdiction on social planning and reserving to national Government the determination of essential level of welfare and health care services. A short time later the reform of the fifth title of Constitution, when a large number of people was afraid that there would have been a slowdown endangering the creation of intervention and social services integrated system, as described by the act 328/2000, there was instead a renewed propulsion in the regulatory and programming action in many Italian regions, that interpreted positively the new jurisdiction, by planning the adoption of act 328/2000 in very different ways for what concerns time, approach, strategic choices, and working tools.

the act 8th November 2000 n. 328 *Outline law for the achievement of an integrated system for interventions and social services*⁶, which represents the first organic social policies reform, with the acknowledgement of personal rights, the specification of the body in charge of assistance, the integration of services, the adoption of the planning method, the valorization of the third sector organizations (art. 5 above mentioned act 328/2000) and the anticipation of new integration and welfare interventions⁷.

In the scientific analysis and sometimes in the common use language, the aforementioned organizations are identified with expressions such as 'third sector unit' or 'nonprofit institutions'. These terms refers to very different kind of organizations: volunteering associations, social cooperatives, NGO's, bank foundations and not, quite different associations (sport, culture, environment). A new important value adding element of the report concerned the census and the collection in one volume of the most important issues brought out by the official statistic production about the nonprofit field. The starting point is the data analysis of the first ISTAT census concerning nonprofit institutions and referring to 1999, which highlighted at the time the weight of these organizations in our country - about 220 thousands units (associations, foundations, social cooperatives and religious associations), with more than 500 thousands employees and more of 3 million volunteers carrying out a lot of different activities - and then focused on specific sectors of nonprofit organizations.

In the report the social cooperatives (at the end of 2005, more than 7 thousands) seem less dynamic in comparison with volunteering organizations from a quantitative viewpoint, but they are equally active in terms of differentiation of the offer and ability to face, by adopting the mutualistic model and by using mainly paid employees, the needs of the socially excluded users or, more in general, potentially risking social exclusion. In addition to the mutualistic model there is the 'philanthropic' one, with the foundations (about 5 thousands units identified at the end of 2005) that, in Italy too, mainly thank to the privatization process of some institutions in the public sector, are growing both as sponsors and suppliers of services for citizens. The report ends with the analysis updated to the most recent data of two kinds of bodies, NGO's and association of national social promo-

tion, that, though representing few units (239 NGO's and 141 association of national social promotion at the end of 2007), distinguish themselves for their weight in terms of economy and community involvement.

As far as volunteering organizations are concerned - 21 thousands units at the end of 2003 -, they are defined by an important dynamic evolution both in quantitative terms and in terms of variety of activities carried out; an example of such an evolution is represented by the offered services profiles: together with the classical ones relevant for healthcare and welfare, there are more innovative services for promotion and greater awareness towards social and environmental issues, among which we find the topic of migrations.

From the chart below we can understand how in the period 1995-2003 the number of organizations registered in regional databases of volunteering (as in act n. 266/1991) grew from 8.343 to 21.021, thus recording a percentage increase equal to 152.

Chart n. 1 - Volunteering organizations registered in regional databases on 31st December per Region - Years 1995-2003.

REGIONI	1995		1997		1999		2001		2003	
	Numero	%	Numero	%	Numero	%	Numero	%	Numero	%
Piemonte	693	8,3	991	8,5	1.188	7,9	1.384	7,6	1.626	7,7
Valle d'Aosta	35	0,4	48	0,4	53	0,4	73	0,4	90	0,4
Lombardia	1.687	20,2	1.827	15,8	2.591	17,2	3.154	17,2	3.499	16,7
Trentino-Alto Adige	404	4,8	830	7,1	1.343	8,9	1.560	8,5	1.727	8,2
Bolzano-Bozen	327	3,9	728	6,2	1.042	6,9	1.228	6,7	1.356	6,4
Trento	77	0,9	102	0,9	301	2,0	332	1,8	371	1,8
Veneto	872	10,5	1.075	9,2	1.270	8,4	1.907	10,5	2.018	9,6
Friuli-Venezia Giulia	238	2,8	418	3,6	548	3,6	631	3,4	701	3,3
Liguria	314	3,8	489	4,2	600	4,0	631	3,4	762	3,6
Emilia-Romagna	1.018	12,2	1.343	11,5	1.664	11,0	1.907	10,5	2.180	10,4
Toscana	1.340	16,1	1.683	14,4	1.792	11,9	1.894	10,4	2.144	10,2
Umbria	173	2,1	289	2,5	353	2,3	363	2,1	480	2,2
Marche	178	2,1	343	2,9	450	3,0	637	3,5	730	3,8
Lazio	194	2,3	292	2,5	423	2,8	516	2,8	661	3,1
Abruzzo	90	1,1	160	1,4	201	1,3	264	1,4	283	1,3
Molise	24	0,3	89	0,8	89	0,6	130	0,7	188	0,8
Campania	173	2,1	407	3,5	584	3,7	763	4,2	964	4,6
Puglia	162	1,9	285	2,4	331	2,2	422	2,3	530	2,5
Basilicata	56	0,7	133	1,1	155	1,0	205	1,1	253	1,2
Calabria	108	2,3	177	1,5	282	1,9	363	2,0	440	2,1
Sicilia	55	0,7	246	2,1	368	2,4	491	2,7	642	3,1
Sardegna	451	5,4	807	5,2	798	5,3	978	5,3	1.088	5,1
ITALIA	8.343	100,0	11.710	100,0	15.071	100,0	18.293	100,0	21.021	100,0
Nord-ovest	2.729	32,7	3.353	28,6	4.432	29,4	5.242	28,7	5.877	28,0
Nord-est	2.439	29,3	3.686	31,3	4.826	32,0	6.066	32,8	6.626	31,5
Centro	1.885	22,6	2.607	22,3	3.018	20,0	3.440	18,8	4.064	19,3
Mezzogiorno	1.199	14,4	2.084	17,8	2.796	18,6	3.666	19,7	4.354	20,7

7.

S. Polidori, *I piani di zona nel sistema integrato di interventi e servizi sociali (art.5, L. 328/2000): ruolo e coinvolgimento delle Associazioni di promozione sociale e di volontariato nella progettazione*, National Observatory of Associationism - Branch II Social associationism - Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, 2006.

Source: Istat, Gathering of volunteering organizations, 2001 and 2003.

In 2003, 28,5% of volunteering organizations is in North-West, 31,5% in North-East, 19,3% in Central Italy and 20,7% in South and Islands. Compared with data in 1995 the number of volunteering organizations grows with attention to the national dimension (+152,0%), more in the South and in North-East respectively +263,1% e +161,9%), less in North-West and in Central Italy (respectively +119,0% and +115,6%).⁸

This growth in the southern part of Italy seems to be 'physiological', because the structuring and establishment of the same organizations, and thus the following registration in the pertinent regional database of volunteering, was slower and more gradual.

Both in 1995 and in 2003, the regions with the greatest number of organizations are Lombardy, Tuscany, Emilia Romagna and Veneto; at the bottom of the list there are the smallest regions, Molise and Valle d'Aosta.

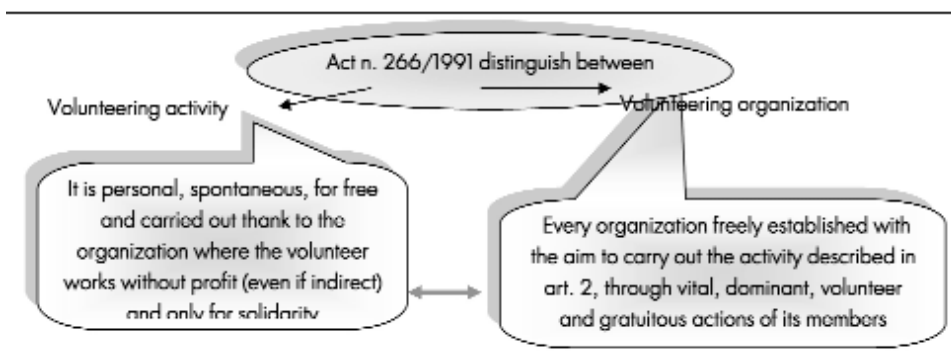
The regions that between 1995 and 2003 had a growth bigger than 300% (about twice the National data) are Sicily, Molise, Campania, the autonomous provinces of Trento and Bolzano, Basilicata and Marche. On the contrary, the only region with a growth rate lower than 75% (almost half the National data) is Tuscany that, however, hosts the highest number of organizations. This remarkable growth since 1995 can be explained both by the establishment of new units (8.530) and the registration in databases of pre-existing organizations (4.148).

Given the current growing numbers of both volunteering organizations registered in regional/provincial databases and others third sector organizations, there is a question to raise: why Italian volunteering is today a strategic tool and challenge to proximity? Which are the specificities of the value of volunteering that link it to the proximity in terms of vocation for every man and help to face poverty?

8.

During the two year period 2004-2005, Istat conducted the fifth survey on volunteering organizations registered in regional and provincial databases up to December 31st 2003. Cfr. Istat, *Statistica in breve*, October 14th 2005 and the contribution by N. Zamaro, *Atti della V Conferenza Nazionale del Volontariato*, National Observatory of Volunteering, Ministry for Social Solidarity, November 2007.

Illustration n. 1 - Act 266/1991 -Volunteering activity and organization



Source: Technical Office of National Observatory of Volunteering. Cfr. *I Fabbisogni formativi delle organizzazioni di volontariato che operano nell'ambito delle migrazioni*, National Observatory of Volunteering and Isfol - Year 2008.

Proximity Volunteering: Profile and Identity

We can surely assume that volunteers play today a vital role: they are involved in projects aiming to the growth of the human quality in the local community and in the society. The attention to social needs identifies the dimension of solidarity in the volunteers actions thus representing, as remarked in the decision of Constitutional Court (n. 75/1992), the fundamental element of every citizenship and in this sense volunteering is the most favourable environment. Its full and formal acknowledgement by the government is based on this as explained in art.1 of the act n. 266/1991.

In the last decade the marginalization dynamics and refusal of people in difficulty (especially social services users) have affected the conditions of social disadvantage. From this viewpoint, it is vital to redirect the identity of volunteering for what concerns the meaning of its first fundamental feature, gratuitousness,⁹ which can be basically analyzed in two conceptual and pragmatic dimensions:

- gratuitousness, as absence of salary and gratuitousness as aptitude. Indeed the "non payment of services does not assure, itself, gratuitou-

9.

Codified in the framework law on volunteering, n. 266/1991.

European Year of Volunteering

10.

S. Zamagni S., *Tra volontariato ed economia civile*, *Rivista della Cooperazione*, n°4, p. 44. 2001.

11.

The social encyclical letter *Caritas in veritate* by Benedict XVI is focused on the gift. It has been written to remind the engagement of Paul VI and his "Popolorum Progressio"; this encyclical letter is an hymn to the economy of gratuitousness and donation, an economy that shouldn't have only profit and material wellness at its core: "..... Charity in truth places man before the astonishing experience of gift - the Pope says - Gratuitousness is present in our lives in many different forms ... The human being is made for gift, which expresses and makes present his transcendent dimension"(n.34). It is a key point. The ratio of the gift and gratuitousness is the key of that "fraternity" that the Pope sees as true solution to the dramatic problems of the human family and to the globalization era: failures, hunger, cultural and spiritual decline endanger the human dignity of people, victims of sole utilitarian economy dynamics or ideology of unlimited technological power..... In this scene, globalization will not ever be an opportunity of life, but a spiral and an interweave of more and more dramatic slaveries."

12.

A. Caillé A., *Il terzo paradigma. Antropologia filosofica del dono*, Torino, Bollati Boringhieri, 1998 cit. p. 237.

13.

Interview with Alain Caillé, *Rivista del Volontariato*, Fivol, 1999.

ness, that is essentially a virtue, that is a spirit aptitude".¹⁰ This definition explains clearly the typical specificity of a volunteering organization and thus of volunteers that work in it: it is the centrality reserved to its relational network, to interactional dimensions and to 'sociability of social networks';

- the idea of gift,¹¹ in sociological terms, can be defined as "(..) any donation of goods or services carried out without guarantee of reciprocity, to create, to preserve or to regenerate the social network. In the gift relation the connection is more important than the goods"¹² and represents a fundamental condition of volunteering identity because it "is based on the gift and it cannot exist but when you give, without the certainty of reciprocity; (...) if we focus on ourselves and on our self-interest we can access neither to gift nor to volunteering. The gift and the volunteering are thus the same thing: a jump out of ourselves to work together and to establish social networks".¹³ The notion of donation remarks the freedom to have the use of ourselves and of our own resources for a good that, being ordinary, is a 'common good' we all can work for. It is thus fundamental, and it is a typical specific feature of volunteering, that the services offered by volunteers and by their organizations are gratuitously bestowed.

Surely it is clear that today gratuitousness, the gift, the solidarity, are powerful social and economic resources. They are factors of development that, if not properly enhanced, risk to stop economic revival, as it happens in the current financial crisis: profit and nonprofit organizations must necessarily cooperate together, to guarantee a true social development and a working welfare.

Also profit organizations can learn from volunteering organizations based on gratuitousness and donation. Gratuitousness and donation, openness to the other people and not only as goods or factor of production, are attitudes useful also inside free economy. Indeed the gift represents the element of a system of reciprocal actions, that is to say that the gift spontaneously given would oblige the consignee to return with another 'coun-

ter gift'; there is a trade; it is not confined to a relation between individuals but spreads out to a wider relation involving the whole society. The trade should necessarily be seen as a 'gift chain' and not as a pure economic and commercial instrument.

Indeed the gift has not a one-sided form, as mere donation, but begins a movement of reciprocal actions, a continuous trade which can be analyzed empirically and semantically too.¹⁴

Thinking critically to the notion of gift means to find a balance between an analogue logic and a bipolar one. Compared with the first viewpoint the notion of gift is quite identical to merchandise, while in the second viewpoint they are radically different. Actually the notion of gift needs a 'third way', a new explanatory model.

In relation to an analogue logic consideration the gift would belong to the same fundamental universe of merchandise. Thus gift and merchandise would be characterized by an economic analogy. The logical and chronological starting point of this mental approach would be the identification of barter with the gift and this latter with merchandise. The gift would represent a potential merchandise and the gift trade would be a merchandise trade, a calculated trade. Marcel Mauss criticizes Smith approach, by refusing the use of a representation of primitive societies as based on a subsistence economy or a natural economy. The acknowledgement of validity of the analogue model would mean for the gift to be seen starting from a purely mercantile reality. Contrary to an analogue logic, bipolar logic considers gift and merchandise as two concepts very different between them, as two unfitting social forms. The great anthropological division deals with human experience in two extremes: on the one hand the primitive communities and the modern society on the other hand. In order to find the archetype of such a dichotomy we need to analyze the ancient Greece, with the distinction between *ethnos* (tribe) e *polis* (city-State) but it is with Tönnies (1887) that the representation of the extremis was more and more clear through the two idealtypical notions of *Gemeinschaft* and *Gesellschaft*.¹⁵

In contrast with this economic approach, "to be interested in giving means to be interested in the issue of goods circulation in relation with the

14.

In Indo-European languages (Benveniste, 1971) the meaning of "give" (it. "dare") is expressed by the root *dō*. Later, a study on the Hittite verb "*dā*", which means "take" and not "give", caused confusion about this tricky and interesting linguistic matter. Taking into consideration the term "dono" (en. "gift"), it is possible to notice that, though having the root "*dō*", it has noun forms with variable meaning according to the subject. These are: *dōs*, *dōsis*, *dōron*, *dōreá*, *dōtínē*, five words different among them, but all translatable as "gift, donation". The first one, *dōs*, is the easiest way to express the donation, the idea of donation, that is in its most abstract form: "donation is good, take away is bad" as Hesiod said. *Dōsis* is, instead, the act of donation that is likely materializing in gift, it is a potential gift, a gift promised in advance as reward for a brave act. In this case it is possible to see an indirect link to both the meanings of the root *dōs*: in fact to materialize the promised gift (and thus giving it), the condition of having something in return (and thus taking something) must be fulfilled. By considering together *Dōron* e *dōreá*, the first one suggests the material gift and thus the gift itself, the second one means the action of bringing and giving a gift, gratuitously and with nothing in return. Finally *Dōtínē* is the gift requiring a counter-donation; the *dōtínē* aims to have a gift in return, something rewarding the previous gift. This notion is thus linked to the idea of reciprocity, relation, trade, and to the circulation of gifts that should be returned. The word *dōtínē*, more than the others, clearly show in its meaning the notion of mutual trade through pacts, alliances, friendship, hospitality.

15.

F. Tönnies, *Gemeinschaft und Gesellschaft*, Reisslad, Leipzig (trad. it. *Comunità e società*, Comunità, Milan 1963).

social bond"¹⁶. In this case the social bond does not represent the aim of every potential trade, but the means, the instrument so that the trade and thus the acquisition of the item could be achieved. On the contrary, in the donation, there is an inverse relationship: what circulates is in the service of the bond, it is the gift that represents a tool for social intermediation. A bipolar analysis would have made this distinction through the representation of two realities very different between them: in the first one, objective relations prevail (modern society) and in the second one personal relations prevail (primitive society); in other words, as Tönnies would say, on the one hand there is a community inspired by a 'natural willingness' and on the other hand there is a society ruled by a 'rational willingness'.

Certainly each one of these considerations is peculiar of the two forms of trade with essential specificities, but the classical thought will not be helpful to the final understanding of the notion of gift and its relation with the idea of merchandise. There is a third way of thought too. To solve the impasse generated by the analogue and bipolar viewpoints and in order to understand comparatively the nature of gift and merchandise, we need a third way.

Analyzing, in a same approach, both the identity and differences of the phenomena in perspective would be ideal. The effort to highlight in a coherent way the similarities and the differences between the gift and the merchandise requires a wide knowledge of the human condition, that is to say the necessity to refer to the human experience in a general form.

The primitive community portrayed by Mauss can be considered the first social model from which the other social systems take shape. It is structured on the basis of the system of donation. The gift is a "complex phenomenon, especially in its most ancient form, that is embodied by the total lending".¹⁷ The archaic gift, as a total social action, means a relational totality, in short a community made up by the circulation of gifts and counter-gifts between all the members.

This consideration on the notion of gift is analyzed in some classifications of The White Book by Minister Sacconi, *The good life in the active society: The White Book on the future of the social model* (May 2009): it recognizes the central role and the important functions of many third sec-

16.

J.T. Godbout, *La circulation par le don*, in *Revue du Mauss*, 1992, nn. 15-16, I e II trim., p. 216.

17.

M. Mauss, *Saggio sul dono*, p. 211, cit. alla nt. 1

tor organizations, such as volunteering, social advancement associations, social cooperatives, social companies, etc., in the fulfilment and in the integration of welfare active policies.

This centrality results from the attempts to test abstract models of participation (introduced by the above mentioned act 328/2000, as well by the plans financed by the National Fund of National Observatory of Volunteering, as for act 266/1991), that are strong elements to achieve the welfare mix of opportunities and communities, to carry out common and co-organized ad hoc interventions to increase and foster the potentiality of the individual and community.

From this viewpoint, third sector organizations and several public bodies aim to aid the individuals and the families on the whole way of life, especially to face weaknesses, answering to the needs in daily life and in other situation of life (with relation to age, to the presence of familiar responsibilities or to the needs to conciliate the latter with the working ones), by supporting and promoting individual skills and familiar networks.

More in general, the system described in the above-mentioned White Book aims to build 'friendly' local communities, encouraging intervention and organizational models to promote freedom in the offer side and active citizenship (third sector) and aid and reciprocal aid initiative in the demand side, thus acknowledging the importance of users and people, as well the quality and the evaluation of offered services; those are just the principles in the act 328/2000.

Only through common and participative forms of coordination with the third sector organizations, active policies of welfare can guarantee and preserve the right to wellbeing, to develop and keep alive the own physical skills, to have a satisfactory social life with its own social bonds, to acknowledge and develop personal skills, to be active members of society and to face positively the common responsibilities and daily opportunities.

The right to wellbeing is the basis - indeed it is deeply rooted and correlated - to the right to services and social services, that must be offered according to the standards and procedures defined by reference rules.

The White Book mentions the principle of 'horizontal subsidiarity' bet-

ween public bodies and civil society; it is necessary that the local authority in charge of social functions (already described in the above-mentioned act. 328/2000) is aware of the population's needs and is able to properly plan and implement the services and interventions, as well as to evaluate their quality and results. In no way the 'horizontal subsidiarity' can be intended as mere substitution of public bodies to the deficiencies of civil society, but as instrument of promotion, coordination and support that enable to social groups (families, associations, volunteering, other third sector organizations, companies, etc.) to express at best (and with the full guarantee of freedom of enterprise and transparency in reporting) their different and specific potentiality.

The vital role of guarantying feedback is up to the institutions (existence, quality, accessibility and usability of services), that are responsible for monitoring, verification and evaluation - with procedures that in my opinion should be made with legislative bills and/or circular letter ad hoc, etc., also considering the new institutional structure, that is the federalism, in primis the 'fiscal one' - with the aim to guarantee equal dignity, including rights and duties to men, women, children, teenagers, young people, elderly people, handicapped, homeless, etc., that live in our community; it is not important if they are Italians and/or migrants and/or other.

In the event that the social intervention comes from the community, it is an alternative to the welfare services provided by the public institution, thus satisfying directly the needs. From a solidaristic viewpoint preserving the vital functions of welfare, the right application of the principle of horizontal subsidiarity must develop and strengthen the role of public institutions in two ways:

- a) constant support to the resources of civil society and to solidaristic bonds;
- b) surveillance on the global system of supply, guarantees of neutrality and completeness of intervention network and services on the territory.

Subsidiarity must be carried out through consultation with all institutional levels (including regions and local authorities, in order to make the targets of social wellness official and to verify their achievement, by

enhancing the role of volunteering and third sector in services co-planning and execution.

Hence solidarity appears to be a typical element of democratic needs with a strong planning and political role; it is an element of social change that acknowledges the reciprocity and the interpersonal relations among people as basis of community.

A deep analysis of the social importance of volunteering must be carried out within the historical horizons of postmodern society and must be measured on the deep transformations at the present-age. In the Italian case, it must be highlighted that volunteering has acquired a definitory role of local welfare systems.

Unclear and fluid scenarios of post-modern society have an high structural and cultural differentiation and a proliferation of living worlds and informal civic practices. The modern world expresses a multiplicity of viewpoints and moral trends that are not consistent with a one-way vision. In this many-sided and various society, where the single person lost the sense of direction and the great ideologies collapsed, post-materialistic needs to arise. This changes cause deep perturbations in the balance of society and the individual witnesses the "predominance of objective spirit on the subjective one"¹⁸ in a mounting process of fragmentation of his own identity.

Within these 'non places', (according to Augé¹⁹ they are symbols of our age), there is a growing demand for 'sense', a search for significant places where to define, through deep and important relations, a new meaning of sense to the public space of '*vita activa*'.²⁰

From this viewpoint in the opinion of the modern individual the solidarity is a significant place for the redefinition of his personal and social identity, acknowledging an objective interdependence of human destinies. It is important to consider that "volunteering is a culture focused on the person, aiming to the strengthening of the person and watching the problems in the globality of life where the individual acts".²¹ In this perspective, a policy based on the true promotion of volunteering could make a difference between a passive and non-responsible solidarity and an active and responsible solidarity, thus affirming a supportive solidarity of all the

18.

G. Simmel, *La metropoli e la vita dello spirito*, (a cura di) P. Jedlowski, Rome, Armando, cit. p. 84, 1996.

19.

M. Augé., *Nonluoghi. Introduzione a un'antropologia della surmodernità*, Elèuthera, Milan, 2005.

20.

H. Arendt., *Vita activa. La condizione umana*, Bergamo, Bompiani, 1998.

21.

F. Bellino F., cit. p. 319.

system in welfare Society²² and community in comparison with the outdated dependency culture.

Volunteering will be integrated with other third sector social actors. It will have a role of change and innovation preserving its identity of gratuitousness, donation and sharing.

Who are Today's Volunteers? How do they refer to the Users of their Intervention?

Volunteers understand the need to create true places of reception, valorization and social inclusion for people with increasing sensitivity. From its approach to reality, volunteering is itself a paradigm of cultural, social and institutional change. It deals with a shared sensitivity to the achievement of "*common good*" and then hand over to society through its action. Due to his proximity and sharing of most extreme contexts of poverty, the volunteer develops a sensitivity to the contradictions and to injustices of our society. Furthermore, these hit very often weaker and socially excluded people, with few opportunities to assert their own rights. This special condition of volunteers pushes them to have a function of social consciousness towards the society they belong to, to give voice to the castaways, maybe arousing their will to be protagonist and to enable institutions to pursue a genuine social justice, also during coordination and synergy. Sensitive and significant contributions are essential, in crucial and constructive cooperation for the humanization of services provided on the territory by public and private institutions. Because of the bond between volunteers' experiences and the most widespread contradiction of civil society, they are invaluable receivers and represent the social consciousness in all the contexts of social consultation described by the Italian Constitution, that is to say by the democratic order. The pertinence and the regular usability of social services represent a basic transition for each significant intervention of solidarity. That is why volunteers can contribute to the improvement of services on the territory on the base of their special perception of poverty, on the base of genuine aid relations; above all they will be able to bring their own featured relational resources in the community.

22.

G. Bianchi, *La solidarietà che si reinventa*, Franco Angeli, 1997.

The most effective and pragmatic method to bear on the quality of services can be promoted through intervention of cooperation between their organizations and the other services on the territory, in a trend of integration aimed to build networks of solidarity. This process of integration encourages the precious engagement of volunteers in contributing to the social planning of services on the territory.

Proximity Volunteering: Profile and Identity

Proximity services evolve from below and are based on the 'reticularity', typical of relations in communities and among people, keeping intact the richness and the specificities. In this way volunteering has a cultural dimension of community and is able to complete services (also the institutional ones and those run by other third sector organizations) with senses, meanings and relations.

Proximity volunteering has a communitarian approach, it focuses on the relation during the intervention, it is transversal and it starts from below.

That is why it contributes to create sharing and sense of belonging, rouses interests and activates coordinated actions centered on the cooperation and on the mutual recognition.

Thus volunteering proximity is a challenge to the present social context because:

- it has more flexible methods of approach, reception and accompaniment, not centered on the problem but on the person and on the community;
- it stimulates instruments for individual protection by supporting the subjectivity and the personalization of interventions;
- it activates formal and informal resources of local community, by promoting the network between public and private sector.

The key role of volunteering is today to share and to acknowledge the poverty issues to answer pragmatically especially to the most disadvantaged people.

Volunteering: Tool for Social Inclusion

Volunteering eases the perception of the poverty of other people as a social condition to share and to support, as it is a featuring element of the community and give people the feeling of being active citizens.

The action to benefit another person who does not belong to the same community is bond to the acknowledgement of the value of every other individual and the chance to participate positively on the destiny of other people. Moreover self-aid and mutuality organizations too, despite being conceived for a direct reciprocity, are able to open out (and often they do) to the aid of people not belonging to their own circle.

Every voluntary action involves the contact between the person offering aid and the people who avail themselves of it from a poverty-need condition. This aid relation has typical elements, such as listening, reception, valorization of other people and empathy; it evolves in a often deficient social dimensions within trends and behaviors of the dominant culture. Moreover, the assistance is bond to the sharing in proximity and in everyday poverty thus developing lifestyles and behavior styles that reform and strengthen a shattered and fractionate social network.

For its specific and unique approach in poverty situations, volunteering is often welcomed by disadvantaged people in comparison with institutional and professional operators; for this reason the collaboration between profit and nonprofit actors must be promoted and stimulated, to guarantee an high profile of services and their humanization.

Volunteering aims to promote the centrality of disadvantaged people, in order to develop an interdependence based on solidarity dynamics where everybody can express his own gifts and specificities. From this point of view we highlight the appearance of new and prophetic services that are able to update and repackage the ordinary shape of social intervention.

It is important to go over the dependency culture: in this way the causes of poverty are studied and removed, especially through the centrality of people and their active approach. Indeed, today it is necessary that every social intervention guarantees a reception and a valorization context to the assisted people, especially those having a social exclusion background. Volunteering is thus an instrument of real social inclusion.

In my opinion there are two targets to promote and stimulate, in order to encourage the development of volunteering:

- in this framework it is vital to promote strongly the education of volunteers and people in charge in volunteering organizations; the development of their expertise is decisive to have the right and effective tool to work efficiently with the recipients of interventions;
- moreover I think that public institutions should support more Volunteering Organizations, often being obliged to work in emergency situations, thus risking to have no actions continuity or orderliness: that is why frequently they haven't places, time and resources to direct their efforts towards a genuine promotion of users. Unlike many other organizations, volunteering ones cannot lean on the resources of a sponsor or on reciprocity bonds. In this way volunteers can dialog with all social actors in a territory, by relying on a free and constructive social consciousness. This autonomy permits volunteering to offer and set its own services with cleverness and creativity in every critical and weak point of the supportive network operating in a territory. Public institutions can find useful coalitions and important contributions to the growth of civil society, through their own scale of values.

Every support and facilitation from institutions and from volunteering practices in institutional and educational places (school, university, research, radio and public TV, etc.) is a measure of real subsidiarity in the strengthening of civil society. The services provided by volunteering organizations represent, for the whole society, a vital contribution to the removal of social contradictions and to their cultural, institutional and contextual causes. Public institutions should thus emphasize this resource by encouraging, favoring and consolidating the participation to volunteering to the consultation for the working-out of social policies in the different areas of territory.

The services, the performances, the time and the resources offered by part of volunteers in different situations of need and often developed in order to obtain and share value-added solidarity and cultural development services, represent an invaluable resources for the quality of life in the country.

National Observatory of Volunteering: Tool of Promotion of Volunteering and Inclusive Policies

In this situation, from 1991 there is a National Observatory of Volunteering introduced by act 266/1991; it is presided over by the Minister of Labour and Social Affairs or his delegate. This Observatory is made up of ten representatives of volunteering organizations and federations working in at least six regions of Italy, two specialists and three representatives of the most important trade unions.

Its tasks are:

- to conduct a census, in collaboration with the regions, of volunteering organizations and to communicate the activities they carry out;
- to promote inquiries and studies about volunteering in Italy and abroad;
- to provide every element for the promotion and the development of volunteering;
- to sign experimental projects elaborated by volunteering organizations recorded in regional and provincial registers, sometimes in collaboration with local authorities, to face social emergencies and to promote the application of very advanced intervention methodologies;
- to promote volunteering as lifestyle for teenagers, also thanks to the project "Youth and Volunteering", in cooperation with the Service Centre for Volunteering and with Voluntary Associations;
- to offer aid and advices for computerization and databases projects in the areas reported in act 266/91;
- to publish the Biennial Volunteering Survey;
- to support projects of education and retraining concerning volunteer services, also in collaboration with the regions;
- to promote and organize three-yearly the National Volunteer Convention, that all institutional organizations, groups and concerned operators attend.

One of the Observatory's working tools to promote concretely voluntary work and its specificities is the *Annual Guideline*: it represents incontrovertibly a vital medium to support Voluntary Organizations in Italy and to promote thus social inclusion and community links.

Thanks to financial resources provided by the *Guideline*, volunteering can strengthen considerably its own role as Social Actor establishing a new supportive and sharing community together with other local authorities.

Indeed, in my opinion, one of the most assertive and important role of Volunteering lies in its increased planning ability, that is the ability to plan long term interventions/paths/activities with a coherent and rational sense. Social planning helped to modify the aspect of volunteering, thus bringing a new vision with care to the future, by avoiding to improvise and on the contrary by building coherent development plans little by little on its own territory. Voluntary work can be conceived as a context in evolution, but also a context in evolution, where open and experimental processes are developed, by avoiding deterministic definitions. It has to manage continuous changes in political, social and economic setting and this requires an analysis of situation and the research for a new identity and for a new way to be and to act: in one word a new culture leading to the definition of 'volunteering function' in the social context of reference.

The voluntary associations are a changing reality because they are connected to the transformation of the external and internal environment. It is thus necessary to promote an organizational culture that could increase the value of the role of everyone in the setting-up and transformation of the organization and, at the same time, that could push people to engage in change. This requires on the one hand a differentiation of roles and tasks and on the other hand the interdependence of various operators, aiming to achieve common goals.

Directive 266/91 aims to act in this scene, by supporting strongly the ability of volunteering to organize and intervene in social changes. Directive 266/91 also favors Internet networks.

The dynamism of contemporary society causes the continuous appearance of more elaborate needs, which requires new solutions and global initiatives. In this setting, the single voluntary association is often powerless, or at least insufficient, because it has not enough human, professional, financial and organizational resources. In these circumstances it is essential to fight the cultural boundaries breeding absolutistic approach, to

promote a new and synergic methodology of networking. The main problem is that several associations are often very different among them in terms of organizational structure, typology, dimensions, sector, targets, logics, cultures and values.

The partnership should not be a mere group of self-referential subjectivities, but a new organizational medium able to face the complexity of needs and to remove in depth the causes generating them.

However networking is not an easy solution, because it requires a great effort of critical adaptation, aimed to the valorization of specificities and richness deriving from the definition of common targets, from the shared planning of actions and from the active management of interventions.

Building a partnership is not an easy thing to do. It requires the ability:

- to admit the potential advantages of team working;
- to define the possible development of the plan, by identifying both the tools and the most coherent methodologies compared with single organizations;
- to identify and map the expertise and the resources hold by every partner;
- to negotiate a common approach;
- to integrate the knowledge and the management process for single activities.

Networks boost innovation. The reasons why they should be created are related to:

- the necessity to put the project in a wider and long range perspective of development;
- the achievement of a more effective multiplier effect;
- the establishment of synergies, enabling to develop innovative projects and products;
- the creation of a group of contacts enabling to widen the choice of the available solutions;
- to draw attention, by valorizing their own identity.

The success of a network depend on team working and an efficient communication system among partners. To build a reliable network it is necessary to minimize tensions and to have good personal relations, based

on confidence and mutual understanding.

Planning Volunteering

Two main features of voluntary organizations are giving answers to pressing and ignored needs and the 'prophetic' ability to understand and confront with the claims of the territorial community. On the one hand this situation increases the value of a role that could be defined as pioneeristic and on the other hand these organizations are too often obliged to work in emergency and in dynamic contexts focused more on the necessity to offer rapid answer to pressing needs, rather than on the analysis and removal of cause-and-effect links. In my opinion planning projects can be vital to fight an approach of needs emergency and answers and to adopt methodological approaches and tools based on the planning of interventions and on the valorization of many resources (financial, professional and organizational) in connection with selected targets.

In other words, planning projects would permit volunteering to pursue its primary goal, that is to constantly verify that new initiatives aimed to the removal of the causes of needs and marginalization, by avoiding that carried out activities are bond to dependency culture and charity. This would cause the perpetuation of the need and the existence of the current one and these elements tie down the users in a situation of inferiority and dependence. We are dealing with a kind of volunteering able to give practical answer to the urgent needs and meanwhile to stimulate the political institutions to contribute to the eliminations of the causes determining that need, by refusing to accept its role of shortsighted social shock absorber unable to suggest different strategies.

This approach requires neither a change of volunteering targets nor a reduction of the involvement and moral pressure often typical of associations activities. Indeed, it is based on the specificities of each single organizations, by fully respecting their identity but requiring frequently sweeping changes in the adopted practices and procedures of intervention.

The year 2011 represents an important appointment for the whole world of Volunteering, because it will be the European Year of Volunteering promoting active Citizenship. It is a great opportunity for the Italian and European social fabric, in order to plan shared and participant actions and paths between volunteering itself, third sector organizations, civil society organizations including volunteers and promoting voluntary work and active citizenship, institutions and every other stakeholder.

The National Coordinating Authority (ONC) of the European Year of Volunteering promoting Active Citizenship (2011) is led by Ms Marina Gerini, chief executive of General Directorate office for volunteering, community groups and social organizations. In order to plan and manage the activities for the 2011 event, this office works alongside the work team of National Observatory for Volunteering "European and International volunteering: a comparison".

The General Directorate office for volunteering, conscientious objection and youth policies was created in Social Affairs Department, within the structure of the Presidency of the Council of Ministers, in the mid-Eighties (thus before the framework law on volunteering n.266/1991 came into force).

Currently the above-mentioned General Directorate office is within the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, with the name General Directorate office for volunteering community groups and social organizations. The National Observatory for Volunteering, described by art. 12 of the above-mentioned act 266/1991, works since 1991 within the same General Directorate office and it is chaired by the Minister of Labour and Social Affairs.

IV.4 - Italian European Year of Volunteering promoting Active Citizenship: A Shared and Participative Process promoted by the National Observatory for Volunteering and the National Coordinating Authority Italy

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The aforementioned Observatory is made up of 15 active members: there are ten representatives of volunteering organizations working (as active, functioning and effective) in at least six regions, two specialists and three delegates of most representative trade unions. Standing or temporary delegates will also be present (that is qualified professionals chosen among representatives of associations, organizations, research and study centres linked to the world of Italian volunteering and delegates of regions and local authorities).

The National Observatory for Volunteering has the following tasks:

- to conduct, in cooperation with the regions, a census of volunteering organizations and to disseminate the knowledge of the activities they carry out;
- to promote researches and surveys on volunteering in Italy and abroad;
- to offer every useful element for the promotion and development of volunteering;
- to endorse experimental plans conceived, in cooperation with local authorities too, by volunteering organizations registered in regional or provincial databases, in order to face social crisis and to favour the execution of advanced intervention methodologies;
- to promote volunteering among young people as lifestyle, thanks to the programs "Youth & Volunteering: a laboratory of ideas in evolution" and "Citizenship laboratories: shared and participative", in cooperation with Services Centres for Volunteering, volunteering organizations and local authorities;
- to give support and consultancy for projects of computerization and databases in appropriate sectors described by the act n. 266/91;
- to publish the Biennial Report on Volunteering;
- to endorse educational and retraining plans concerning services activities, also in collaboration with the regions;
- to promote and organize, every three years, the National Volunteering Conference, attended by all interested institutions, groups and organizations;

- to promote and take care of the relations with the structures of volunteering, that is with banking institutions, the National Council of extraordinary funds Management Committees for Volunteering established within each region, services centres for volunteering in national territory, the South Foundation, etc.

The jurisdictions of the Ministry of Labour concern also the international scope for activities promoted and coordinated by various institutions of European Union. Beside national jurisdictions, some competences belong to regions and autonomous provinces²³.

Since 1997 the National Observatory for Volunteering, together with the work team "European and International volunteering: a comparison", deals with the analysis and the study of various typologies and characterizations of volunteering, civil society and European and international third sector organizations. It aims to understand the various and heterogeneous features of volunteering, that is:

- to identify the position and the characteristics of the pattern of Italian volunteering compared with that of other countries, by emphasizing both the shared elements and the typical features;
- to outline the role that volunteering itself has, in various contexts, in the specification of needs and requirements, in active welfare policies and in social inclusion policies.

Afterwards, the National Observatory for Volunteering and the same work team followed the activities linked to 2001 - International Year of Volunteers (IYV) proclaimed by the United Nations and coordinated by UNV - United Nations Volunteers. After the year 2001, the work team carried out the related study and research activities. There were two important events in this sense:

Lecce, 3rd February 2001

Presentation of II Biennial Report on Volunteering

The report represented, on the occasion of IYV, a concrete contribution to the understanding of qualitative and quantitative dimensions of volun-

23.

We need to clarify that for some specific sectors there is the jurisdiction of other institutions: for instance volunteering in Protezione Civile refers to the Department of Protezione Civile - Presidency of the Council of Ministers; the civil service refers to the National Office for Civil Service within the same Presidency of the Council of Ministers, while the Ministry of Foreign Affairs has jurisdiction for NGO's dealing with cooperative development programs.

European Year of Volunteering

teering in Italy, to the analysis of its criticalities and to the configuration of its development perspectives for the next years, also in comparison with the European and international context. In the report 2000, the data of researches concerning national and local dimension of volunteering were reported and some important issues were approached such as: the functioning of Services Centre for Volunteering; the situation of volunteering on a regional level; the links of volunteering in various sectors and typologies, etc. Attention was given to the dimension of volunteering both from an international viewpoint and from the European Union perspectives, as well as to some groundbreaking volunteering experiences in extra-European countries.

Turin, 23-25 February 2001

These three days were dedicated to the role of Volunteering in the third millennium as chance for various generations to meet each other. Authorities and national, European and international scholars attended the event. During the first day there were several civic events where the protagonists, in a direct or in indirect way, were the various generations of volunteering, with meetings involving the volunteering sector, the schools and the institutions. The second day was inaugurated by the President of the Republic, relevant Minister, the UN representative in Italy, with a work session concerning the voluntary activities paying special attention to the youth, as well as to some elaborations of issues linked to volunteering through work team coordinated by representatives of the National Observatory for Volunteering and organizations. In the third and final day, with the work session "Volunteering as resource for social reforms and social engagement", coordinated by the appropriate minister and the Justice minister, as well as with the following outcome of work team, the President of the Council of Ministers put an end to the event. The work team "European and International volunteering: a comparison" carried out, after the year 2001, study and research activities. Since 2007, sponsored by the European Area of National Coordinating of Services Centres for Volunteering - CSVnet, it followed all the approaching steps to the Year 2011 starting from the original position of European Alliance that get toge-

ther 24 European networks of NGO concerned with the issues linked to the sector of volunteering, including promotion activities. The 5th December 2007 - International Volunteers Day - the above-mentioned Alliance gathered in the CEV (the European Volunteer Centre) - to develop a shared strategy so that the year 2011 would be declared European Year of Volunteering. The result of this meeting was clarified in a statement document, where the aforementioned Observatory group started to elaborate hypothesis, as well as propositions, in collaboration with the European Alliance 2011. For this reason a stable cooperative and informative relation was established through the CEV - European Volunteer Centre thanks to its Italian vice-president, who is member of the same Observatory team group. For this reason, the team group followed the studies, the network initiatives and the planning of the events aimed to improve the understanding, the impact and the exchange of best practices with respect to volunteering in Europe, by not leaving out the international volunteering. For all activities necessary to the preparation, participation and positive impact of the Year 2011, the team work - together with the support from the technical logistic Secretariat, that is from the European Area of National Coordinating of Services Centres for Volunteering - CSVnet - cooperates with the Ministry as ONC, proposes activities and documents, activates volunteering and civil society in accordance with the decisions and reports, by means of the group coordinator, during the institutional events to the Observatory.

Likewise to what has been achieved to the European level with the establishment of an Alliance of civil society, it is desirable to promote also in Italy a similar coordinating and participative form. The various coordinating forms and volunteering networks will be invited to participate to the Alliance 2011 Italy, with procedures yet to define; third sector organizations, whose activities includes volunteers and identify themselves in the premises and objectives of the Year 2011 and accept the Plan 2011 for Italy, will attend this event too.

The ONC planned the preliminary work with the team work of the National Observatory for Volunteering that represents the most important stakeholder in the volunteering sector. The first meeting of the Alliance

2011 Italy has been scheduled and it is addressed to volunteering and third sector organizations, as well as civil society institutions with national relevance. On a regional and local level, the Services Centres for Volunteering will be invited to plan opportunities and meetings with all volunteers and organizations operating in their own territories. To promote the widest circulation, the invitation will be addressed to the networks and to the national volunteers coordinating group, that will be invited to inform and involve the representatives of their own territorial organizations. The ONC will activate at the same time an interinstitutional work plan with other administrations: national, regional, provincial, municipal, etc., aiming to urge a shared activity, as well as a cooperation activity, through specific understanding. The objective of the interinstitutional work is the valorisation of the Year through cooperatively planned and financed initiatives in order to be sure that the various administrations understand the objectives of the Year 2011 in their own intervention sectors, so that this attention could encourage groundbreaking and stable activities.

The consultation process has been - and will keep on being - "shared and participative" and all other involved actors aim to:

- the valorisation of volunteering and of its impact, for the establishment of stable and lasting mechanisms supporting it as key element of active, shared and supportive citizenship;
- the circulation of initiatives and information on a local level and the valorisation of results and useful and accessible impact for territorial organizations and their networks;
- the practice of partnership and networking, through shared and cooperatively planned initiatives, through the imitation of good examples and best practices;
- the strengthening of volunteering organizations and associations involving volunteers, to improve the quality of activities within the organizational structures, to ease voluntary activities and to help the organizations themselves to apply for new kinds of volunteering and to understand the new approach mechanism, in order to promote the shared networks, the mobility, the cooperation and the synergies in the civil society and between the civil society and the other social sectors;

the acknowledgement that, through voluntary activities, people can gain knowledge and skills in a process of permanent learning; the awareness of citizens and institutions to enhance the general consciousness about the absolute value of the culture of volunteering as expression of civic participation.

The ONC and the Observatory will work together also to promote a wide involvement of other stakeholders, through the cooperative planning and the support on initiatives linked to the issues of Plan 2011 and included in the national Calendar 2011.

Foundations, enterprises promoting and carrying out the corporate social responsibilities, universities, research institutions and media are very important entities in this partnership process. The Plan 2011 Italy will be introduced to all stakeholders in a workshop and to the media in a press conference, to involve the people to plan an activities' schedule. The fields of the Plan represent a grid of issues, themes and contents conceived as vital, in order to plan activities, events and remarks, with the general objectives to increase and strengthen the values and the culture of volunteering, by looking into the future and by promoting active and participative citizenship. They define together a platform that, through systemic actions adopted on a local level, provides for an ideal and operative place where volunteers organizations and all stakeholders can identify themselves, plan actions, events and initiatives and to request the patronage and the logo of the European Year for these and to be included in the national calendar of initiatives for 2011.

The activities of the Plan are based on the following cornerstones:

- the volunteers;
- the youth and their involvement in the conscience and consciousness of volunteering values;
- volunteering and third sector organizations;
- civil society;
- people and their rights, their belonging community, the common goods.

The objectives of the Plan are based on concepts transversal to actions, reflecting the fundamental reasons of voluntary activity:

- the notion of empowerment, that is a process of social action and, thanks to it, people, organizations and communities gain knowledge about their own life, in order to change their own social and political milieu to improve the equity and life quality;
- the notion of mainstreaming, that is a process of social action and, thanks to it, the differences and the groundbreaking practices gain centrality within public policies.

The group of actions of the Plan aims to make visible, recognizable and widespread a shared, inclusive and positive culture of volunteering, factor of social innovation and bond of the community.

The fields of the Plan 2011 are:

- Promotion and participation
- Exchange of best practices
- Youth
- Subsidiarity and dialogue with the institution
- Researches and data, valorisation of the social impact
- Valorisation of voluntary activities as contribution to the establishment of relations in order to build social bonds
- Infrastructures for volunteering

I would like to highlight some essential elements for a preparation and management of quality in the whole process of the year:

- The involvement and the participation of territories and volunteers on a local level represents the core of the initiatives of the Year.
- The cooperative planning with the institutions must be carried out and supported, as an example of subsidiarity and in respect of the diversity of roles.
- The networking is a goal to achieve, to improve the impact and to lay the foundations for lasting collaborations.
- The valorisation of initiatives within each field and priorities of the Plan for a better identification and evaluation of the results.

- The monitoring and the evaluation of the initiatives and results achieved for the identification of future priorities and addresses.
- The formulation of requests and recommendation to the Italian government to schedule situations of confrontation and dialogue with the institution, starting from the Parliament.
- An action of pressing towards the European Commission so that it undertakes the essential actions for the editing of a White Book on voluntary activities, their role in the European society and their impact, as wished in the judgement of CESE in 2006, by using the Open Coordinating Method.

The fundamental process to identify the best practices will be characterized by the main requirements that structure and define that the best practices and good examples are "useful" for:

- the adequacy, the completeness of the implementation of the planning framework and/or a single activity;
- the innovation, that is the ability of the program/model/activity to find new, creative and considerable solutions (both in terms of processes and products) for the improvement of initial conditions or for the satisfaction/solution of the early need/problem;
- the reproducibility, that is the chance offered by the program/model/activity to be reproduced in the presence of similar issues to those originating it and the portability, therefore the application of the program/model in places and situations different from the original ones when it was achieved;
- the sustainability, that is the tendency of the program/model/activity to be founded, in a perspective vision, on the existing resources or on the ability to generate itself new resources. The sustainability is strongly linked to the mainstreaming and to the ability of involvement, that is to put in motion the technical, cultural and human resources of all participating actors, that are the involved volunteering organizations and the users these programs and activities are aimed to;
- the mainstreaming, in addition to the elements here described, there are some requirements hardly "operationalizable"/detectable such as the effectiveness, the impact or, in other terms, the value added originating

from the putting into effect of the programs/model/activity in terms of ability to produce changes. Also in this case the link to the mainstreaming is evident, because change starts from the horizontal and vertical involvement of the actors operating in the same field.

The best practices will concern in particular:

- Volunteering and volunteering organizations programs that are potential candidates for national and regional funds.
- Citizenship laboratories: shared and participative
- In-depth thematic research examinations that will be included in the IV Biennial Report on Volunteering.
- The activities and the programs scheduled by Services Centres for Volunteering, by Management Councils for extraordinary funds for Volunteering, by the Foundations (included the South Foundation).

The valorisation of the best practices will be characterised by communication information and education activities through the following modalities and/or tools:

- Availability on the official website;
- Integral part of the publication "IV Biennial Report on Volunteering";
- Presentation in workshop activities.

The tools to spread around the initiatives will be:

- Website

The website www.destinazioneeuropa.eu will be modified to highlight the whole 2011 process. In addition to the news, there will be all the documents and resources useful to the execution of awareness and education initiatives. A banner will be available and people will be able to add it on associative websites. Networking mechanisms, news management modalities and information produced within the usual associative and institutional website will be encouraged.

- Calendar of initiatives

On the website there will be a calendar of all the initiatives reported to

the ONC and linked to the goals of 2011 and national Plan: not only the most important events, but also the networks initiatives and local events.

- Catalogue of good examples

All the experimental projects of volunteering organizations granted with the Fund for volunteering in the last years will be available on the website.

- Logo and slogan

The documents and the procedures for the 2011 logo and slogan exploitation will be available on the website. The sharing of edited material will be possible, by making them available for other initiatives aimed to the promotion of volunteering.

- Other tools

There will be the chance to encourage the achievement, and then the sharing and expansion, of other communication channels, such as photography exhibitions, video advertisements, etc. It can be assumed that there will be groundbreaking tools such as social networks and those aiming to give direct information/awareness, especially for what concerns the involvement of youth.

- EYV 2011 Tour

The European Commission will organize a Tour to be held in public squares that, in a year, will involve all the EU Countries. The Tour will be in Rome for a week in summer 2011.

- Prizes and Awards

The engagement and the participation of volunteers to the society are acknowledged through prizes and awards. This represents a way to call the media attention and, thanks to them, the citizenship attention, to the capability of volunteering aimed to promote social innovation, create community networks and encourage active and supportive citizenship.

Moreover, the ONC will sponsor the prizes and the awards supported by associative networks or by other institutions.

The 2011 process started in 2010 with some events organized by the ONC:

- Alliance Italy meetings;
- framework agreements with volunteering and third sector organi-

zations; meeting and frameworks agreements with national, European and international public institutions; presentation of Plan 2011 to the relevant stakeholders;

- other important events on a European level linked to the Plan goals and sponsored by the Ministry.

The expected outcomes are:

- to contribute to the organizations networking;
- to develop the education and the cooperation of people carrying out volunteering activities;
- to challenge innovation for what concerns volunteering and youth;
- to improve volunteers training, including the accessibility for people with disabilities;
- to encourage the acknowledgement of the expertise gained by volunteers;
- to promote the exchange of best practices and good examples;
- to ease a process of social and cultural awareness concerning the role of volunteering for the achievement and development of community bonds;
- to increase the expertise level of the phenomenon, so as to strengthen the collaborations between the various services and the same community;
- to reduce the risky behaviour between young people giving them new interpretations of the outside world, also by considering the values of volunteering;
- to promote active citizenship and civic European awareness;
- to emphasize volunteering activities in terms of relations and social GDP;
- to inform, spread and enforce people and entities working within the volunteering structures.

It is vital to show and share with central authorities caring for volunteering (i.e. health, justice, civil protection, cultural heritage, environment advocacy, etc.) the active citizenship, youth policies and justice policies,

in order to encourage a shared and cooperative activity through specific agreements. The objective of the interinstitutional work is the valorisation of the activities of European Year of Volunteering, that promote active citizenship, through shared initiatives, so that the various actors can promote the circulation of 2011 objectives in their intervention sectors, in order that this attention will materialize in groundbreaking and stable activities.

In this shared and participative process, the people involved aim to the following objectives:

- the valorisation of volunteering and its impact, for the conception of stable and lasting mechanisms supporting it, as fundamental element of active, shared and supportive citizenship;
- the circulation of initiatives and information on a local level and the valorisation of the results in terms of benefits and accessibility to territorial organizations and their networks;
- the practice of partnership and networking, through shared initiatives, good examples and best practices;
- the strengthening of volunteering organizations and associations involving volunteers, to improve the quality of activities within the structures of organizations, to ease voluntary activities and to help the same organizations to apply new kinds of volunteering and to accept new approaches, in order to promote the shared network, the mobility, the cooperation, and the synergies within the civil society and between civil society and other sectors of community;
- the acknowledgement that volunteering activities make available skills and abilities in a lasting learning process;
- the citizens and institutions awareness to increase the general importance of fundamental values of volunteering culture as an expression of civic participation.

The ONC and the Observatory will work also to promote a wide participation of other stakeholders, through cooperative planning and the support of initiatives linked to the sectors of Plan 2011 and reported in the national Calendar 2011. Foundations, companies promoting the corporate social responsibility, universities and media are very important entities in

this process of partnership. The Plan 2011 will be introduced to all stakeholders in a workshop and to media in a press conference, to encourage all involved people to plan appropriate activities.

The ONC asks the institutions to strengthen and spread voluntary activities carried out within their own territorial contexts, and to actively participate to all scheduled initiatives during the European Year. The goal is to conceive a shared strategy and a network of institutional partnership to include all citizens and territorial associations.

The main objective of the European Citizenship is to enhance the sense of European identity amongst Italian citizens, through information campaigns that make their rights as European citizens known, and the opportunities that arise from their legal status of being European citizens.

The concept of European citizenship was introduced by the Maastricht Treaty of 1992 and represents one of the most important innovations to the Union's function, affecting over 500 million European citizens.

Before clarifying the particular rights associated with citizenship, it is useful to have a brief historic overview on the formation of European fundamental rights that encompass, among others, those specifically related to citizenship.

There are four major milestones that led to the legal recognition of the Charter of Fundamental Rights and European Citizenship:

- The Treaty of Maastricht is the first to introduce the concept of European citizenship.
- The Treaty of Amsterdam institutes the principle of the suspension of rights for any Member State that violates such fundamental principles and establishes the principle of non-discrimination. Not only regarding issues of citizenship but also those pertaining to sex, race, religion, age and sexual orientation, to strengthen the principle of sexual equality.
- The proclamation of the Chapter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union, produced in Nice in 2000, consists of six chapters (on Dignity, Freedom, Equality, Solidarity, Citizenship and Justice) and contains the civil, social, political, and economic rights of all EU citizens.

IV. 5 The Charter of Fundamental Rights of Voluntary Action in synergy to Create the European Union

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- The Lisbon Treaty recognizes legal significance of the Charter.

Every citizen of the Union is entitled to these rights. Therefore, one can rely on rights that relate to their the right to life, to human dignity, to integrity of the person, and to freedom of expression. In addition, the Treaty defines social freedoms pertaining to the freedom of strikes, information and consultation; to the need to reconcile work and family life; to the protection of health, safety and welfare.

As stated above, every citizen of each Member State is also a citizen of the Union. Thus, European citizenship naturally comes with the citizenship of one's national State and does not require separate denotation. However, it is complementary to national citizenship and does not replace it.

Union citizenship is comprised of a set of rights and duties in addition to those outlined by the Member State.

In particular, those concerning the European citizenship are:

1. The right to freedom of movement and right of residence in the territory of any Member State;
2. The right to vote and stand in the European Parliament elections and in municipal elections of one's State of residence, under the same conditions as nationals of that State;
3. The right, outside the EU, to protection by the diplomatic and consular authorities of any other EU country, should his/her country not be represented there on the same grounds than their own nationals.
4. The right to address the institutions or other bodies of the Union in one of the languages of the Member States;
5. The right to petition the European Parliament;
6. The right to file a complaint to the mediator appointed by Parliament to report cases of maladministration on the part of institutions and municipal bodies, excluding judicial bodies.

As one can see from this brief description, the purpose and the main concern of the European legislator has been to ensure a set of standards that can guarantee respect for the individual, economic and social solidarity, integration, social cohesion, security, cultural protection, education and sense of belonging. All these elements aim to promote peace and a

high quality of life for EU citizens.

The achievement of this objectives of growth and prosperity in the European Union is dependant not only on standards, programs, and funds, but also on interventions which arise spontaneously from the citizens, as through the work of volunteering association.

Direct experience with each individual territory, through volunteer work, can also help to strengthen the bond between EU-citizens of different Member States while simultaneously developing a common sense of belonging, necessary to establish an "European citizenship."

"United in diversity" exemplifies a core principle of the European identity. Non-discrimination, the basis for all volunteer efforts can help to overcome a lack of trust that comes from the prejudices and fears caused by every phenomenon that challenges the culture or national tradition. This cohesive action is even more effective in the case of voluntary action between organizations of different States, and through a multicultural dimension that can strengthen the feeling of unity and sharing of the common European good.

The values that inspire the volunteers' activity to overcome and improve the social conditions are the same underlying the values of the Charter of Fundamental Rights.

The efforts of voluntary organizations can positively influence the action achieved by the National and European Institutions, in order to effectively integrate different cultures and develop a strong sense of belonging to the European Union.

Celebrating the European year of volunteering, we aspire to show how these aims are achieved.

The non-profit sector in Italy saw, until the unification of the country in the late 19th century, the predominant presence of the church. After World War II the Italian welfare system was enlarged; however, the church remained a significant supplier of health and education services, while the non-profit organisations declined until the early 90s. In this period, a large fiscal crisis and the subsequent reduction in public expenditure gave origin to a renaissance of the Italian third sector. Beyond the traditional charitable role, the new non-profit organisations aimed at social inclusion, avoiding every form of marginalisation. The State contracted services in the fields of social welfare and health to private non-profit organisations, thus contributing to establish their current importance in ensuring health and social care as well as the effective achievement of policy goals.

According to the last survey, carried out in 2006, Italy counted 1.125 million volunteers, about 2.2% of the adult population. Men (54.4%) outnumbered women (45.6%), and volunteers mainly came from northern regions and held an upper school degree. Between 1995 and 2003, the number of Voluntary organisations (Organizzazioni di Volontariato – OdV), whose legal basis is the Framework law 266/91, regularly increased and, by 2007, soared to 35,200, mainly located in the North. One of the causes of this flowering may be recognised in the law 328/2000 on the recognition of voluntary organisations as official partners of local authorities for programming and implementing social assistance programmes.

The Italian volunteering legislative environment is based on three laws. The first one, 266/91, the so-called ‘framework law for volunteering’, defines the activity of volunteering and voluntary organisations and establishes: the regional registries; the rules concerning the financing of

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A Survey on Italian Participation in Volunteering

Rita Sassu

**ECP – Europe
for Citizens Point Italy**

voluntary organisations; the National Observatory for Volunteering and its functions; the Special Fund financed by Bank Foundations and distributed to each Volunteering Service Centre; the obligation for voluntary organisations to insure their volunteers against accidents and diseases related to their voluntary activities as well as against any liability to a third party. Law 460/97, also known as the ‘Onlus law’, states that voluntary organisations, through the registration in the regional registries, can acquire status of non-profit organisations with social utility (Onlus), thus benefiting from tax incentives. Finally, law 328/2000, the ‘framework law for assistance reform’, reaffirms the positive contribution of voluntary organisations to meet social policy objectives. The above-mentioned laws aim at creating a close cooperation between public authorities and voluntary organizations in the supply of public services: local authorities fund voluntary organizations that not only provide a variety of public services but also contribute, thanks to their direct knowledge of social issues, to orient and improve public policies; the national government has the main task of legislating the third sector and allocating the National Fund for Volunteering.

The main public body responsible for the implementation of the legal framework of volunteering is the Ministry of Labour, Health and Social policies, especially by means of the National Volunteering Observatory (created in 1991). An important role is also played by the Youth Policies Department, within the Youth Ministry, by the regions and the autonomous provinces. Particularly relevant are the 77 Volunteering Service Centres (VSCs), almost one for each Italian province, managed by the same voluntary organizations that benefit from their services.

Public procurement (between 1.9 and 2.5 million euro per year) in Italy is managed by the Directorate General for Volunteering, Associations and Social training, within the Ministry of Labour, Health and Social policies through the National Fund for Social policies. These funds are subsequently distributed to regional and provincial authorities which launch the calls for tenders, and then allocate these funds to the winning projects. Over the past decade, the share of volunteering organisations participating in these calls for tenders has dramatically increased due to the decentrali-

sation in the areas of health and social assistance. According to law 266/91 (art.15), Volunteer Service Centres are financed through Special Funds, one for each region, provided by banking foundations.

The only available data show that in 2003, compared to 1995, the share of funds coming from the private sector has increased.

The tendering competition between organisations was expected to encourage a variety of small innovative projects, but actually, since the funding lasts for one year only, the majority of these projects are too small to have a significant and sustainable impact on communities. Instead, it has been suggested that less projects should be selected and the funding should last more than a year. This would ensure the sustainability of the projects and their lasting impacts on communities.

Additionally, the organisations sustain the expenses that are, at a later stage, refunded by the government. However, it is frequent for organisations to wait from one to three years to receive the money from the government. Consequently, the organisations become indebted and sometimes cannot afford to pay the salaries to their core staff. This could lead to a high number of volunteering organisations to cease to exist.

Volunteering in Italy, particularly in relation to young people, is often viewed as a civic education experience, an opportunity for young people to become responsible citizens. There are two key programmes which aim to promote the involvement of youth in voluntary activities: the National civic service, addressed to young people between 18 and 28 years old, which is remunerated (in Italy) (433.80 euro net per month); and the National Agency of the Youth in Action Programme, i.e. the National agency of the EU programme for young people aged 15-28 that promotes mobility, social inclusion, non-formal learning and intercultural dialogue. As part of an incentive to encourage young people to engage in voluntary activities, a 'credit' system has been implemented in some schools and universities.

In relation to elderly people, who in 2003 represented 29% of active volunteers, volunteering is an opportunity to socialise and continue to contribute to society.

The main challenges for volunteering in Italy are: fragmentation, given

the presence of many small organisations with few staff and volunteers; institutionalisation, with the related risk of a slow loss of independence and internal flexibility; and demographics. In fact, Italy, as most countries in Europe, is witnessing the ageing of its population; as a result, the turnover for voluntary organisations is no longer ensured. Additionally, several voluntary organisations are reluctant to have volunteers of different age ranges.

On the other hand, the most important opportunities for volunteering can be recognised in an increasing coordination between voluntary organisations, in attracting and retaining young volunteers, and in collaborating with local authorities without becoming dependent on them.

More specifically, it is crucial that organisations of all sizes make a conscious effort to improve communication, promote best practices exchange and highlight the needs to be inserted in the social agenda. As far as young people are concerned, there should be more promotion of volunteering, especially in schools. Voluntary organisations should also be more transparent, for example by ensuring that budgets and expenditures are circulated to the stakeholders. Regarding the issue of collaboration without dependence, voluntary organisations should decline, as much as possible, the conditions imposed by local authorities on their collaboration.

By means of the present National report, included in the Study on Volunteering in the European Union,²⁴ an extensive survey of the volunteering situation in Italy has been carried out, highlighting its historical, institutional, legislative, financial and demographic aspects, and also trying to identify the main features, and flaws, of this social phenomenon. However, the scarcity of updated data, pointed out by the study itself, constitutes a serious issue which somewhat undermines the accuracy of the portrait of the Italian situation resulting from the report.

Notwithstanding the serious difficulties in assessing its quantitative dimension, the nonprofit sector is an essential and deeply rooted element of the Italian society since the Middle Ages, its ancestors being recognisable in the *Opere Pie* ruled by the Roman Catholic Church, which provided a wide range of health and welfare services, especially for marginali-

24.

For further information see:
http://ec.europa.eu/citizenship/news/news1015_en.htm
and <http://ec.europa.eu/citizenship/eyv2011/doc/National%20report%20IT.pdf>

sed people. Moreover, since the early 1990s Italy has witnessed an intense growth in the number of nonprofit organisations, and nowadays volunteering is becoming more and more visible as an effective instrument for active citizenship. This is partly a consequence of the already mentioned financial crisis of the welfare state, but also reflects the decay of traditional mass models of social and political participation as well as a generalized claim for an increased tolerance and a deeper awareness of individual needs in the context of civil associations.

Besides the importance of the nonprofit sector for the achievement of widespread well-being and social inclusion, its economic relevance, i.e. its role in producing and distributing goods and services, as well as in implementing the principle of subsidiarity recently introduced into the Italian Constitution, has been officially recognised with the admission, since 2001, of representatives of the third sector to the *Consiglio Nazionale dell'Economia e del Lavoro* (CNEL).²⁵

25.

For further information see:
Primo Rapporto CNEL/ISTAT
sull'economia sociale, Roma
2008
(http://www.lavoro.gov.it/NR/rdonlyres/7A9EE93F-3CB3-40EC-A7E6-BD505D52F8CC/0/RapportoCNEL_ISTAT_noprofit.pdf).

V

European Programmes and Initiatives targeting Volunteering

‘Europe for Citizens’ Programme’s objectives and priority themes

By Decision 1904/2006/EC of 12 December 2006 the European Parliament and the Council adopted the "Europe for Citizens" Programme, that covers period from 2007 to 2013 and that has an overall budget of 215 million euro.

The Programme promotes - through financial supports - projects and organisations that foster active European citizenship and therefore the involvement of citizens and civil society organisations in the process of European integration.

"Europe for Citizens" Programme pursues a series of general objectives, that include the development of a sense of ownership of the European Union among its citizens - who should increase their participation to civic life and meanwhile be aware of their rights - and a sense of European identity, based on shared values, common history and culture; the promotion of the citizenship of the European Union, by giving citizens the opportunity to meet, to interact and to participate in the construction of a closer Europe, which is democratic and world-oriented, united in and enriched through its cultural diversity; the furtherance of intercultural dialogue, through the enhancement of mutual understanding between European citizens and by respecting and valorising cultural and linguistic diversity.

The specific objectives of the Programme aim to bring together people coming from different participating European nations in order to share opinions and exchange experiences, by learning from history and building for the future; to promote debate and reflection on European common culture and history, thus developing active citizenship and democracy; to

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‘Europe for Citizens’ 2007-2013 Programme

Rita Sassu

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for Citizens Point Italy*

bring Europe closer to its citizens by promoting Europe's values and achievements, while preserving the memory of its past and history; to contribute to intercultural dialogue through the encouragement of the interaction between citizens and civil society organisations as well as between citizens coming from Member States of the European Union as constituted on 30 April 2004 and those coming from Member States which have acceded afterward.

Besides, the Programme gives priority to five relevant topics that should be taken into account by applicants, with the purpose of creating synergies between projects dealing with the same issues and ensuring visibility and effective impact to actions supported by the Programme. The first permanent priority of the Programme concerns the reflection on the future of the European Union and on its basic values - such as freedom, human dignity, democracy, equality - that have been reconfirmed and emphasized by the Lisbon Treaty (in this context, the legally binding Charter of Fundamental Rights constitute a major step forward). The second priority deals with the active European citizenship and therefore citizens' involvement and participation in EU policies, with the result of ensuring democracy and establishing a cooperation between citizens, civil society organisations and European Institutions - citizens' initiative will represent a powerful means in this regard. Volunteering is an important instrument to develop civic participation, too, as through volunteering citizens get involved in society's life, needs and problems and thereby develop a sense of commitment and belonging to society. The third one is intercultural dialogue, which constitutes a key element in the process of creating a united, socially cohesive Europe. Mutual understanding and knowledge of different, yet united, cultures, will help European citizens to develop tolerance, solidarity and to raise awareness on cultural and linguistic richness of Europe; meanwhile it will contribute to overcome social divisions connected to xenophobia and racism. The fourth thematic priority is represented by European citizens' wellbeing and issues related to employment, social cohesion and sustainable development. In this respect, it has to be pointed out that the EU2020 Strategy aims to create a smart (grounded on education, on research and innovation and on digital

society), sustainable (respectful of the environment and able to use new green technologies, reducing carbon emissions), inclusive (able to raise European employment rate and to modernize the welfare system) and meanwhile competitive and greener economy, whose growth has to be based on knowledge. So, projects financed by the Programme should explain how European Union puts the rights and wellbeing of citizens in first place, thus improving the level of their everyday life. Ultimately, the impact of EU policies on societies is concerned. Citizens should be enabled to share their opinion and to recognize the value and achievements of European political actions, as this is a fundamental means to foster civic participation.

Each year, a set of annual priorities is identified by the Annual Work Plan, in order to stimulate applicant to consider to European Agenda. The annual priorities established for 2011 are:

- to involve civil society in the debate and reflection on the European Union and the effects of entry into force of the Treaty of Lisbon; commemoration of the Europe day on 9 May;

- to give citizens the power to exercise their new right of initiative, thereby giving them a greater role in the democratic life of the European Union; to promote participation through volunteering, in connection with the '2011: European Year of Volunteering';

- to ensure Equal opportunities in political life;

- to mobilize stakeholders active in overcoming cultural barriers in the reflection on social cohesion and social innovation, involving them in '2011: European Year of Volunteering';

- to analyze the impact and consequences of the current economic situation and the social dimension of the EU2020 strategy; to involve citizens and civil society organizations, including volunteers, in the development of solutions applicable to local and European level and in the exchange of experiences on them;

- to raise awareness and to stimulate reflection and exchange of views with policy-makers about the importance and implications of EU policies on citizens' daily lives, with particular reference to the governance, climate change, sustainable energy and economic aspects of the strategy

EU2020; to build on the results of the '2010: The European Year for Combating Poverty and Social Exclusion'.

Management of the 'Europe for Citizens' Programme

The Programme is managed by the European Commission, DG COMM - Directorate General Communication, which runs the budget and establishes the priorities, the objectives and the criteria through consultation with the Programme Committee and organizes and monitors the general implementation, follow-up and evaluation of the Programme itself.

The European Commission relies on an Executive Agency, which is the EACEA - Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency, (established by decision 2005/56/EC of the European Commission of 14 January 2005), responsible for the practical implementation of most of the Actions of the "Europe for Citizens" Programme and the management of the complete life cycle of the projects.

The EACEA is in charge of the ECP - Europe for Citizens Points, that are national structures whose main task is to spread the knowledge of the "Europe for Citizens" Programme on national territory by disseminating practical information to general public and targeted groups (through conferences, info-day, seminars, workshops, publication, web sites, etc.) and to guide and support those interested to participate to the Programme.

Structure of 'Europe for Citizens' Programme

The "Europe for Citizens" Programme is structured in four Actions, in turn composed of different Measures and Sub-Measures.

Action 1 - *Active Citizens for Europe* aims to bring together people coming from different European areas in order to share and exchange experiences and opinions, to understand each others' culture, to learn from history and build for the future. Action 1 includes two different Measures.

Action 1, Measure 1 - *Town twinning* promotes direct exchange between citizens participating to projects that involve at least two twinned towns (or interested to town twinning), thus encouraging networking and

cooperation between different European Nations; it comprises Measure 1.1 - *Town Twinning Citizens' meeting* (projects financed under this Measure should involve at least 2 participating countries;¹ maximum grant: 25.000 euro) and Measure 1.2 - *Networks of Twinned towns* (at least 4 participating nations; maximum grant: 150.000 euro)

Action 1, Measure 2 - *Citizens' projects and Support Measures* promotes the realization of projects characterized by transnational and cross-sectorial approach through Measure 2.1 - *Citizens projects* (to collect their opinion and maximum grant: 250.000 Euro), aimed to gather citizens from different participating nations (at least 5) in order to act on relevant European issues, at local and European level. It also supports the dissemination of the concept of active European citizenship and of the "Europe for Citizens" Programme itself by Measure 2.2 - *Support Measures* (at least 2 participating countries; maximum grant: 100.000 euro).

Action 2 - *Active Civil society in Europe* supports European public policy research organisations (think-tank) and civil society organisation at European level through operating grants (i.e. Action 1, Measure 1 - *Structural support for European public policy research organisations* and Measure 2 - *Structural support for civil society organisations at European level*). It also furthers projects promoted by Civil Society Organisations (that involve at least 2 participating countries; maximum grant: 150.000 Euro) and related to the Programme's above mentioned objectives and priorities.

Action 3 - *Together for Europe* is managed directly by the European Commission, that will organize high visibility events, studies and will produce information and dissemination tools concentrated on European Union and active European citizenship.

Action 4 - *Active European Remembrance* maximum grant: 55.000 Euro aims at commemorating the victims of Nazism and Stalinism and at preserving the remembrance of deportations, with the scope of preserving the past and promoting action, debate and reflection related to European values such as democracy, shared values, human rights and freedom.

1.
Participating countries are:
27 Member States of the EU;
Croazia; Fyrom; Albania.

Information about the ‘Youth in Action’ Programme

‘Youth in Action’ 2007-2013 is the European Programme which promotes non-formal education, intercultural learning and youth mobility for groups or individuals, through the youth exchanges, the European voluntary service and the local initiatives of young people between 13 and 30 years old.

In Italy the Programme is managed by the Agenzia Nazionale per i Giovani (National Agency for Youth). The National Authority is the Dipartimento della Gioventù of the Presidenza del Consiglio dei Ministri (Department of Youth of the Presidency of the Council of Ministers).

Young people and youth workers naturally constitute the main target population of the Programme, which reaches these individuals through promoters: youth organizations and groups, local authorities and all the stakeholders working with and for young people.

Objectives:

The general objectives are stated in the legal basis of the Youth in Action programme:

- to promote young people's active citizenship in general and their European citizenship in particular
- to develop solidarity and promote tolerance among young people, in particular in order to foster social cohesion in the European Union
- to foster mutual understanding between young people in different countries
- to contribute to developing the quality of support systems for

V.2 Non-formal Learning Opportunities and Mobility within the ‘Youth in Action’ Programme

Paolo Di Caro
***Italian National Agency
for Youth
Director***

youth activities and the capabilities of civil society organisations in the youth field

- to promote European cooperation in the youth field

The Programme foresees five operational Actions:

- | | |
|------------|---|
| Action 1 | Youth for Europe |
| | 1.1 Youth Exchanges |
| | 1.2 Youth Initiatives |
| | 1.3 Youth Democracy Projects |
| Action 2 | European Voluntary Service |
| Action 3.1 | Cooperation with the Neighbouring Countries of
the European Union |
| Action 4.3 | Training and networking of those active in youth
work and youth organization |
| Action 5.1 | Meetings of young people and those responsible
for youth policy |

The Programme offers opportunities for youth mobility in Europe and in countries outside Europe, through:

- Youth Exchanges which bring together groups of young people (from 13 to 25 years old) from two or more countries, providing them with an opportunity to meet peers with different social and cultural backgrounds, to discuss and confront various themes, to learn about each other's countries and cultures, to participate in joint activities of common interest. Youth Exchanges allow young people to experience Europe and so to feel more European citizens. Non-formal learning principles and practice are reflected throughout the project.

- European Voluntary Service enables young people (from 18 to 30 years old) to carry out voluntary service for up to 12 months in a country other than their country of residence. It fosters solidarity among young people, it promotes active citizenship and mutual understanding and it is a true 'learning service'. Beyond benefiting local communities, volunteers learn new skills and languages, and discover other cultures. Non-formal learning principles and practice are reflected throughout the project. A project can focus on a variety of themes and areas, such as culture, youth, sports, social care, cultural heritage, arts, civil protection, environment,

development cooperation.

Projects at local level are also promoted by the Programme, through:

- Youth Initiatives which give young people (from 18 to 30 years old) the chance to try out ideas through initiatives, the opportunity to be directly and actively involved in planning and carrying out their projects. Participation in a Youth Initiative is an important non-formal learning experience. It also provides young people with an opportunity to consider themselves as European citizens and to feel that they are contributing to the construction of Europe. They enable a large number of young people to become inventive and creative in their daily life and to speak out on their local needs and interests but also on the main world issues.

The Programme offers the opportunity to become active citizens, through:

- Youth Democracy Projects which enable young people (from 13 to 30 years old) to learn about democratic processes and become active citizens in their local communities or at European level. They learn to critically analyse political or social issues, and to make their voices heard. The projects allow them to try out ways of influencing the reality they live in and to make the world a better place. A Youth Democracy Project is developed by a European partnership, allowing the pooling of ideas, experiences and methodologies from projects or activities at local, regional, national or European level, in order to improve young people's participation. Non-formal learning principles and practice are reflected throughout the project.

The other Actions of the Programme support 1. the training of those active in youth work and youth organisations, the exchange of experiences, expertise and good practices between those active in youth work and youth organisations, as well as activities which may lead to the establishment of long-lasting, high quality projects, partnerships and networks. 2. Cooperation and structured dialogue between young people, those active in youth work and youth organizations and those responsible for youth policy. The structured dialogue can take form of seminars, conferences and other events implemented at local, regional, national or international level, in order to establish a platform for debates between all the interested

parties and enable them to formulate postulates and translate them into concrete actions.

For more information, you can contact:

Agenzia Nazionale per i Giovani

Via Sabotino, 4 - 00195 ROMA

www.agenziagiovani.it

The Promotion of Individual Mobility through the European Voluntary Service

Starting from 2007 more than 24.000 Italian young people took part in mobility projects promoted by the 'Youth in Action' Programme, granted by the Italian National Agency for Youth and by other National Agencies in Europe, and implemented in Italy and in other Programme countries. About 16.000 of them went abroad to take part in mobility projects, about 8.000 of them took part in hosting projects in Italy where they met 12.000 peers from different countries (European Union countries, Neighbouring Countries of the European Union, Mediterranean, South East Europe, Eastern Europe and Caucasus areas). They challenged with different social and cultural backgrounds in projects whose main aim is to allow young people to perform an educational experience and to participate to a learning process in non-formal contexts. The experience is assured both when the project is implemented in the country of residence of the promoters and when the project is implemented in one of the countries of the partners' project.

16.000 Italian young people participated in short term group mobility projects implemented abroad (where youth Exchange projects counted for more than 11.000 young people).

In addition, 1.400 young people took part to the European Voluntary Service activities outside Italy: this Action of the Programme supports medium and long term individual mobility.

Although most of the group mobility activities are addressed to young people between 13 and 30 years old, 26% of young participants represent

the age range between 15 and 17 years old and 50% the age range between 18 and 25 years old.

Interestingly, the projects supporting group mobility (especially youth exchanges) show a gender balance (50% of males and 50% of females), while the Italian volunteers participating in projects abroad are mainly females (61,5%), males represent the 38,5%.

The percentage of females raises up to 70% when we consider the volunteers hosted in Italy and coming from other countries. Furthermore, about 1.000 volunteers have been hosted in projects implemented in Italy.

Another interesting element is the number of the Italian young volunteers in sending projects (1.400), which is higher than the number of the volunteers hosted in Italy: this is a brand new tendency in Italy because until 2006, during the implementation phase of the Youth Programme, the number of the volunteers hosted in Italy was higher than the one sent abroad: a sign of barriers and difficulties (intercultural, linguistic, learning) encountered by young Italians before deciding to participate in long term mobility activities.

It is evident that the young people working as "European volunteers" in local projects for a period between 2 and 12 months have a unique chance to live an intercultural learning experience in non-formal context, to participate actively, to develop solidarity, to promote mutual understanding and to acquire new skills, competences and knowledge contributing to social, personal and/or professional development.

Countries where young Italians have volunteered most are Spain, Germany, United Kingdom, Portugal. These countries hosted the 50% of the total number of participants in sending projects. Italy is the most visited country by German, Spanish, French, Turkish and Polish volunteers.

Volunteering as Expression of Active Citizenship

Volunteering is a key component of active citizenship and a core part of several community programmes that mainly promote the mobility of volunteers, such as the 'Youth in Action' Programme - notably through the European Voluntary Service.

In accordance with the European recommendations, the Italian National Agency for Youth will promote the importance of voluntary activities and the active citizenship through the 'Youth in Action' Programme and other specific initiatives, also in cooperation and with the contribution of the Minister of Youth: Meetings addressed to the exchange of experiences and good practices, Conferences and events to promote dialogue, to sensitize public awareness on the value of volunteering, to stimulate and to give value to the actions carried out by the volunteers and the organizations, Information and Promotional Campaigns in order to diffuse the aims and the key messages of this European Year.

For more information, you can visit the website www.agenziagioveni.it.

Some Comments about the European Strategy and Youth Policies

The Europe 2020 Strategy, launched by the European Commission, sets ambitious objectives for smart, inclusive and sustainable growth.

Youth on the Move, one of the EU's flagship initiative, focuses on learning mobility and young people in order to respond to the challenges and to reach the following objectives: "to unleash all young people's potential and to achieve the Europe 2020 objectives is essential to guarantee quality education and training, successful labour market integration and more mobility of young people."

By elaborating data and statistics, the European Commission gave a picture of the situation of young people in Europe and launched this new initiative, in order to implement new strategies at European and national level:

- Youth unemployment is unacceptably high at almost 21%.
- By 2020, it is estimated that 35% of all jobs will require high-level qualifications, combined with a capacity to adapt and innovate, compared to 29% today.
- Fewer than one person in three in the EU (31.1%) has a higher education degree.
- Currently, 14.4% of 18-24 years old in the EU have less than upper

secondary education and are not in further education and training: many young people leave school early, increasing their risk of becoming unemployed or inactive, living in poverty and causing high economic and social costs.

- Europe also has to do better on literacy: 24.1% of 15 year olds are low performers in reading literacy and this share has increased in recent years.

What is the future of young people? The EU's support for learning mobility through programmes and initiatives will be reviewed, expanded and linked up with national and regional resources. The international dimension will be reinforced and by 2020 all young people in Europe, according to Youth on the Move, should have the possibility to spend a part of their educational pathway abroad.

In this direction, formal, non-formal and informal learning activities will help young people to expand their career and living conditions.

Youth on the Move should also aim to give young people with fewer opportunities and/or at risk of social exclusion learning, job, voluntary opportunities in other countries.

The Initiative also proposed a European Skills Passport, based on existing elements of Europass, to increase transparency and transfer of competences acquired through both formal and non-formal learning across the European Union.

Our main task now is to communicate and inform all the stakeholders, people working with and for young people, administrators, policy-makers in order to set conditions at national and local level "to unleash all young people's potential and to achieve the Europe 2020 objectives."

The primary mission of Eurodesk Italy is to provide young people with information on European opportunities targeted at them. Without information, there is no participation: this is what youth from the European Union declared in 2000 (5-8 October, European Youth Conference, Paris) and the European Commission wrote down in the 2001 White Paper *A New Impetus for European Youth*.

Informing young people on what the EU can offer, means reflecting on how globalization has become such an inevitable phenomenon, and the wealth of opportunities made available for those who want to get involved. However, it has to be kept in mind that in order to take full advantage of the opportunities in Europe, it is necessary to keep developing national/local competencies, while widening the links on a higher level: only those who perform well their tasks, can make the most of a globalized context.

Eurodesk Italy: a network that means it!

The term "network" has been used since many years as an effective and flexible metaphor to describe a collective subject, focusing on relations between different individualities, rather than on characteristics of single components. You join the dots drawing a line to find out the picture.

Once you decide which subjects and relations are to be taken into consideration, everything or so can be described as "network": the whole society or a community, a cell or a living being, three computers in a room or the global communication network, an enterprise, a group of enterprises, or the market.

This way of defining reality (by joining dots) offers interesting per-

V.3 Eurodesk Italy's Mission

Ramon Magi
Eurodesk Italy
President

spectives. First of all, it gives you the opportunity to underline similarities between objects, very different at first sight. It is strange to find out that relations between groups of friends from the same village have the same shape as a network of air transport; or that the nervous system of a fish exchanges information using the same systems of the business community in Wall Street. More, that the development strategy of a sale network of sport articles is similar to the way many societies in Africa solve the overcrowding problem.

There is more than that. Drawing on a paper the links between single elements enables, in the study of human organizations, to take into account relationships between people as they are, and not (as in flow charts) as they should be. Otherwise, how can we understand the strategic importance of the employer's secretary, to whom everybody turn to when there is a problem? Or the key role of a porter, who knows everything on everyone?

Thanks to the Internet, the word "network" is used even on the TV evening news, and many disciplines have dealt with the study of networks: social sciences, informatics, economics, learning sciences, marketing. The fields of application are infinite. In theory, what can be described, can also be reproduced. Once we understand the functioning of a network, we can plan the development of a new one. In theory.

In fact, there is a recurrent question: how can we develop a network?

Which conditions lead people, groups, organizations to link, share resources, cooperate?

In the same way, interest towards the Internet has focused for a long time on technological aspects.

A matter of computers. After twenty years of ongoing development of the world wide web, hardware and software are only to make effectively function the tools we use to communicate and share. As web's gurus say: "if you call it technology, it means it still doesn't work properly". Today's attention is focused on people sitting in front of the computer.

Networking is, above all, a natural human behavior: to do something together, freely.

A matter of people.

Networks are based on exchanges.

Exchanges are not necessarily equivalent, and are often made between dimensions which are not comparable. In a collaborative learning context, you share your own knowledge to acquire a new one. In a peer to peer network, you give access to strangers to your own "digital knowledge", taking resources from other unknown people. Such philosophy of reciprocity, is called "gift economy". Studies of cultural anthropology on human communities outlined the high symbolic value of such exchanges, which produce identity and sense of belonging, and reinforces team spirit. Modern kinds of "gift economies" can be considered: the "open source" philosophy, the hacker's ethics or the word-of-mouth via e-mail.

If a network is cooperative, then it develops for a specific purpose - or mission - pursued by each member in its activity context (a specific territory, an activity field). Exchanges and gifts, in theory, are all aimed at reaching this goal.

A well functioning network is full of interesting people. Beyond a certain number, they stop to be interesting. They are simply too many. The number depends on the media we use, the nature of resources we exchange, the goal we want to reach, and many other factors. The number of voices that can participate in a conversation increases, if this happens on line. Everybody can participate in a discussion on the last Britney Spears' haircut, but not everybody can do so in a scientific research group.

Anyway, an undesired effect of having a "very accessible" network, is that it can generate new costs, due to excessive participation. If you have tried to get something to drink in a very crowded party, you know what it means.

In order to solve the raising of contacts, networks tend naturally to grow according to a fractal modality: members create sub-networks interconnecting the newcomers, which can then become members and create new sub-networks, and so on.

A research on tribal communities carried out by the well-known anthropologist, Robin Dunbar, shows they tend to grow to a maximum of 150 individuals. Beyond that number, a group leaves to create a new community. This recurring number - "the Dunbar's number"- corresponds, according to some researchers, to the quantity of simultaneous personal rela-

tionships each individual can manage. A sort of social capacity of our brain.

Eurodesk Italy: networking for Europe

In the field of information and guidance services, the term "network" is recurrent. On European level, networks have always represented a key part in the European Union strategy.

Networks can be very effective in shortening distances in such a vast territory as the European one, and in order to develop cooperation between governments, countries and communities, and safeguarding the autonomy and diversity of single realities.

In the field of information and guidance services, European Union suggests the creation and interconnection of networks in order to reach three main objects:

- Integration between the European dimension and the local communities. Use of European, national and regional networks to spread information, taking into consideration the specific geographical and cultural features.
- Coordination between institutional and private services, in order to exploit also informal channels in the dissemination of information;
- Coordination between guidance services and other services to people (social services, training agencies, etc.), in order to favour sharing of information, knowledge, experience and tools, and implement integrated territorial systems meeting the different needs of citizens/users.

Networking between information and guidance services is a particular form of cooperation aimed at meeting a new typology of citizenship rights: give equal opportunities of accession to training, employment, mobility and personal development through services and desk points located on the whole territory. Local points to access a more and more global system of opportunities.

For information and guidance services, networking is extremely important, to say, essential.

Networking is important for the very nature of this typology of servi-

ces. It is important because a response to demand for accessing opportunities on a large scale, implies a "vertical" job for the gathering of information, that can be carried out only working as close as possible to the primary sources. It is necessary to be present in the territory where the specific information on a course, a scholarship, a call of proposals, are launched. In the same way, but through an opposite flow, information must circulate in a widespread communication system towards final users.

Networking is essential in a country like Italy, characterized by the lack of a balanced and coordinated development of information and guidance services, and by such a high amount of experiences carried out on initiative of public and private bodies: youth centers, employment centers, guidance desks, etc.

In a logic of equal opportunities of access to information and quality services, this maze of different structures can lead to confusion in the final users, causing an excessive increase of work and a waste of human and material resources.

Anyway, diversity becomes a source of wealth when the network puts together different subjects, safeguarding their uniqueness and working on forms of connection (media, rules, codes, trust) and concurrence of intentions.

Eurodesk Italy: a national network

Eurodesk is the official network of the 'Youth in Action' European Programme for the information on programmes and initiatives promoted by UE institutions for young people.

Supported by the European Commission - DG EAC (Education and Culture) and the Italian Ministry of Youth, Eurodesk aims at favouring access of youth to opportunities offered by European programmes in different fields: international mobility, culture, formal e non formal education, job, voluntary activities, etc.

Eurodesk is active since 1990 with the goal of "shortening distances" between young people and institutions, and between the centre and the "peripheral territories" of the European Union. In order to fill this physi-

cal and language gap, Eurodesk operates on two levels: an up-to-date, reliable and easy to understand information (code/language level); a network of interconnected local relays (channel/medium level).

Eurodesk has grown with time. It was born in Scotland, as an experimental project, and it developed first in Great Britain and then in several member States; in 2000, it became the official information and guidance network on Youth Programme and youth policies promoted by the EU.

Today, Eurodesk is present in 30 European countries, with national coordination offices supporting around 1.000 regional and local relays.

Eurodesk is a fractal network.

On a European level, it is coordinated by a resource centre located in Brussels (Eurodesk Brussels Link). The European coordination office keeps contact with the European Commission Directorate General Education and Culture, and manages the network of 30 national coordination offices.

On a national level, each national coordination office cooperates with the Youth National Agency and coordinates a network of local relays providing information and guidance on local level.

In Italy, Eurodesk network is active since 1997. The national coordination office is run by the association for social promotion Eurodesk Italy, in cooperation with the Italian National Agency for Youth, the regional structures and the local bodies responsible for youth policies.

In the first two years, the information activity on European opportunities for young people has been carried out by the national coordination office through a toll free number, and the provision of information and documents through e-mails, ordinary mail, fax. Afterwards, an Internet site has been activated, through which it is possible to access a database on European Union programmes, receive a newsletter, get news on the network activities, download useful materials.

The national network of local relays started developing in 1999. The network has grown further during the years, connecting services and desks of different nature (youth information centres, employment centres, European information services, etc.), activated by public and private bodies.

All bodies co-finance the project with an annual fee and commit themselves, through an agreement, to activating a free service located in visible and adequate premises, and equipped with hardware and software tools for the management of the database and the computer services. Besides, they have to choose an operator responsible for the activities of the Eurodesk local relay, who has to meet some basic requirements (English knowledge, computer competencies, etc.)

Bodies wishing to become a member of Eurodesk network can submit a call for expression of interest, in the frame of an open call published annually in the Eurodesk Internet site. At the moment, priority is given to applications coming from territorial provinces where there is no Eurodesk Local Relay yet.

In the last years, Eurodesk Italian Network has made an effort to "duplicate", on a local level, the functioning scheme of the European and national network: the network of *Antenne Territoriali Eurodesk* (ATE). Through a technological platform provided by Eurodesk Italy, some bodies already members of the network as local relays, work as hubs, coordinating a network of *antennas*, such as schools, employment centres, youth information centres.

Currently, Eurodesk Italian Network has 107 local relays, in 19 regions, and 8 sub-networks linking about 100 territorial antennas, for a total of more than 200 European Point of Information for youth.

2011 European Year of Volunteering: Eurodesk Italy contribution

Eurodesk Italy will promote the application of the "Guidelines for the valorisation of the of European Voluntary Service (EVS) projects", beginning in this way their testing phase.

The Guidelines were elaborated by structures involved in EVS as Hosting, Sending and Coordination organisations since many years. The Guidelines for the valorisation of the of European EVS projects aims at being suggestions for the organisations involved in EVS projects, in order to bring forward projects which valorise both the experiences done by the volunteers and the values of the voluntary service in itself.

The Guidelines are divided into three different parts.

After a brief introduction to the main idea and needs beneath them, in the first part. In the second part, some hints and suggestions on different phases of EVS projects are considered: before departure, during the project and after it. In the third part, a broad description on concepts concerning volunteering in general and EVS is given.

To sum up, the Guidelines may be a valuable tool to get inspired for the potential EVS and EVS support activity before, during and after the EVS project. Organisations often develop just some aspects of volunteering. Therefore, these suggestions would like to be a guide to have some hints to follow when in need to give other support.

In March 2011 there will be the first evaluation, in order to verify if any problem emerged and to change, if necessary, our way.

At the end of this testing phase, a questionnaire will be given to the involved partners in order to gather impressions and suggestions on the use of the Guidelines and changes to make.

In November 2011, there will be an evaluation meeting and in December 2011 the final version of the Guidelines will be handed out. In this way, we will leave our contribution for a better valorisation of the European Voluntary Service as a legacy of the European Year of Volunteering 2011.

Never forgetting its primary aim, Eurodesk Italy's mission becomes more and more that of developing and managing neutral and easy-to-use platforms, as tools to promote an active participation and a free expression of innovative and creative forces.

Although we cannot always foresee what the final outcome of a project might be, we know for sure that the current, manifold and accessible possibilities of knowledge interconnections - *knowledge, skill, attitude* - represent innovative and powerful elements, far less exploitable 10 years ago. To make the most of them is our own responsibility!

VI

Economic Dimension of Nonprofit Sector

Rita Sassu ECP – Europe for Citizens Point Italy

The importance of volunteering in the European social and economic context has been highlighted in several documents, the most recent being the *Study on Volunteering in the European Union. Final Report*¹ drawn up by the European Commission, Educational, Audiovisual & Culture Executive Agency (EACEA), Directorate General Education and Culture (DG EAC). Further examples are the Opinion of April 2008² issued by the Committee of the Regions, which pointed out the role of volunteering in accomplishing the objectives set by the Lisbon Agenda, since volunteers, while they produce social capital and improve the ‘quality of life’ especially at local level, at the same time benefit from higher employability in the private sector, due to the skills acquired through voluntary activities. Besides, the role of volunteering in fostering social cohesion and inclusion in the EU, with particular attention to migrants, people with disabilities and older people, was acknowledged by the European Parliament with its Resolution of March 2008.³ As far as elderly volunteers and mobility of elderly people is concerned, a significant initiative was ‘Think Future, Volunteer Together’, developed under the ENEA pilot project.⁴ Volunteering also plays a key role in the supply of a wide range of social services in fields such as culture, education, health, etc., as the Green Paper on Services of General Interest⁵ stressed clearly. Nowadays the European voluntary sector still receives the bulk of its funding from the State by means of contracts signed with the public administration for the provision of the above-mentioned public services, but given the increasing importance of volunteering and the decline of the financial capacity of the public sector, the trend is starting to change; therefore, a greater emphasis is being put on the ability of voluntary organisations to earn income and become more efficient.

VI.1 Economic Dimension of Nonprofit Sector and Volunteering

1. For further information see: http://ec.europa.eu/citizenship/news/news1015_en.htm.
2. Opinion of the Committee of the Regions on ‘The contribution of volunteering to Economic and Social Cohesion’ (<http://eurlex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:C:2008:105:0011:0015:EN:PDF>).
3. EP Resolution 10 March 2008, A6-0070/2008 on the role of volunteering in contributing to economic and social cohesion (<http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?pubRef=-//EP//TEXT+REPORT+A6-2008-0070+0+DOC+XML+V0//EN>).
4. ENEA was launched in 2003 and supported by DG EMPL.
5. Green Paper on Services of General Interest (http://eurlex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/site/en/com/2003/com2003_0270en01.pdf).

European Year of Volunteering

Despite the relevance of the voluntary sector, its economic value is still difficult to assess due to the scarcity of statistical data. Thus, the Johns Hopkins University Centre for Comparative Civil Society Studies (JHU/CCSS),⁶ one of the most important and active entities in the statistical measurement of the economic value of voluntary, not-for-profit, philanthropic or ‘civil society’ organisations in the United States and throughout the world, launched in 1990 the Johns Hopkins Comparative Nonprofit Sector Project,⁷ whose preliminary results were exposed in the book *Global Civil Society: Dimensions of the Nonprofit Sector*, volume one (Baltimore 1999).⁸ This report identified the so-called nonprofit sector (other definitions include: the ‘voluntary’, the ‘civil society’, the ‘third’, or the ‘independent’ sector) as composed by institutions that are:

- organizations, i.e., they have a recognizable structure;
- private, i.e., they do not belong to the public administration;
- not profit distributing;
- self-governing;
- voluntary, both because membership in them is not legally required and because they often rely upon voluntary work or financial contribution.

Furthermore, in 2003 the United Nations Statistics Division, in cooperation with Johns Hopkins University, issued the *Handbook on Nonprofit Institutions in the System of National Accounts* calling on countries to produce regular ‘satellite accounts’ on nonprofit institutions and volunteering as part of their regular national accounting, as well as to measure the volunteer effort these organisations mobilise and to include it in estimates of economic activity. Since then, 32 countries have committed to produ-

VI.2 Availability of Data

6.

See: <http://www.ccss.jhu.edu/index.php?section=content&view=20>.

7.

The project started with 13 countries and today it extends to 47 countries: Argentina, Australia, Austria, Belgium, Brazil, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Czech Republic, Denmark, Egypt, Finland, France, Germany, Ghana, Hungary, India, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Japan, Kenya, Korea (Republic of), Lebanon, Mexico, Morocco, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Pakistan, Peru, The Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Russia, Slovakia, South Africa, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Tanzania, Thailand, Uganda, United Kingdom, United States, Venezuela.

8.

L.M. Salamon, H.K. Anheier, R. List, S. Toepler, S. Wojciech Sokolowski and Associates, *Global Civil Society: Dimensions of the Nonprofit Sector*, Baltimore 1999, pp. 3-4 (<http://www.ccss.jhu.edu/index.php?section=content&view=47>).

cing such accounts and ten have done so already. Voluntary organisations themselves are beginning to monitor the economic value of their volunteers' contribution. A related issue, especially with regard to the European Union, is the role of volunteering in the social well-being of Member States, stemming from the Stiglitz report⁹ and developments concerning ways to measure social well-being alongside raw economic growth (GDP).

Since many countries lack data on volunteering to include in satellite accounts, an initiative was also launched with the International Labour Organisation (ILO) in 2007 to develop a procedure for measuring volunteer work through national labour force surveys.

Some European countries have already attempted to measure the economic value of nonprofit sector, developing rather sophisticated approaches, whereas in a dozen of Member States such attempts have simply never been made (Czech Republic, Estonia, Greece, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Slovakia, and Romania). Belgium has been one of the pioneer EU countries in collecting nonprofit statistics in national accounts, following the UN recommendations. The Institut des Comptes Nationaux started publishing them in 2005. Nevertheless, such calculations have been often questioned and there is usually no consensus on the estimation of the economic value of volunteering. Researchers in France, for instance, estimate that it is between 10 and 15 billion euro, depending on the method used to value voluntary work – as well as on the reference wage used: minimum wage (SMIC), equivalent wage for similar position, etc. Over the past 10 years in the UK, focus has turned to measuring the economic value of volunteering and evaluating performance partly to justify the voluntary sector's existence within a market economy but also to try to understand its financial contribution and the cost of replacing it should it not exist. Such research, however, presents many challenges mainly due to the informal nature of many voluntary organisations. According to the UK Civil Society Almanac 2010, published by the National Council for Voluntary Organisations (NCVO), general charities' expenditure stood at £32.8 billion in 2007-2008. Of this expenditure, £23 billion (70% of the total expenditure) was directly expended upon carrying out charitable acti-

9.

J.E. Stiglitz, A. Sen, J.-P. Fitoussi, *Report by the Commission on the Measurement of Economic Performance and Social Progress* (http://www.stiglitz-sen-fitoussi.fr/documents/rapport_anglais.pdf).

vities, £5 billion was spent on grant making, while the cost of generating funds amounted to £4.1 billion and £0.7 billion were spent for the governance of the voluntary sector.¹⁰ The attitude towards measuring the economic value of volunteering has also changed in the past ten years. In France, for example, there used to be a strong reluctance to put an economic value on volunteering, while today there is a growing consensus that it can have a positive leverage effect for the voluntary sector. Associations are encouraged to provide their ‘complete’ budget that includes their various revenues and contributions including volunteering.

At EU level, Eurostat collects data from national statistical institutes and when the national offices cannot provide these data, Eurostat encourages them to improve their compliance with ILO and UNV recommendations. Thus the main source of data are national studies and surveys, although they resent a wide heterogeneity, in the fields of time, different definitions, methodologies, survey samples and target groups, as well as various types of volunteering (e.g. formal/informal), and therefore are not comparable. Furthermore, key obstacles that make data very difficult to obtain are the high turnover typical of the nonprofit sector, lack of formal approach, and poor recording of information. Most countries rely on population surveys or surveys commissioned by volunteering agencies and other bodies, which are not often representative of the population; finally, in many countries the main data source for the number of voluntary organisations is a national registry of nonprofit associations/organisations, normally managed by a public body and updated on a regular basis. The strength of this data source is that in many cases associations are obliged to register their associations with the public organisation in charge of the database. But there are also some weaknesses:

- in most cases these databases include both associations relying fully or partially on the volunteer workforce and associations run by employed workforce alone, without specifying to which of the two categories each organisation belongs;
- organisations are not obliged to inform if they cease their activities, hence the databases tend to include significant numbers of non-active nonprofit associations;

10.

Data are available on the NCVO website:
<http://www.ncvo-vol.org.uk/access-tables-behind-almanac>.

- in some countries, registration is not compulsory.

While some harmonised data sources are available on volunteering, e.g. the European Values Study (EVS), the European Time Use Survey (ETUS), the European Social Survey (ESS), the Eurobarometer survey on European Social Reality and the above-mentioned Johns Hopkins University Comparative Nonprofit Sector Project, national stakeholders point out a number of weaknesses, such as:

- Time Use surveys, when carried out by national statistics offices are often outdated (being based on information from 1997-1999) and when provided by Eurostat they include only a limited number of Member States;
- the already mentioned heterogeneity of criteria and results which prevents a comparison across EU, since most European countries have not yet adopted the measure of volunteering proposed by the UN Methodology.

Despite these limits, international and European studies are a valuable resource to establish a comparison with regard to the size and to the economic relevance of this social phenomenon across different countries.

The European Commission, in its *Study on Volunteering in the European Union*, has collected the estimations on the economic value of volunteering based on a harmonised methodology (replacement cost method) for all countries (tab. 1). The replacement cost method calculates the value of the volunteering by the amount the organisation benefiting from the volunteer work would have to pay to replace it with paid work.¹¹

Given the lack of data in a number of countries (e.g. Cyprus, Estonia and Latvia), the findings presented here are mostly aimed at indicating the broad scale of the value of volunteering.

The economic value of volunteering varies greatly, from a tiny percentage of gross domestic product (GDP) in Slovakia, Poland and Greece (less than 0.1%) to a significant share in Austria (4.75%), the Netherlands (3.50%) and Sweden (3.14%). Volunteering also represents more than 2% of GDP in the UK, Finland and Denmark. Countries such as France (1.65%), Germany (1.95%) and Ireland (1.79%) are among six countries where volunteering represents between 1 and 2% of GDP. Finally, in Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Italy, Hungary, Lithuania, Malta, Portugal, Romania and Slovenia, the value of volunteering is below 1% of GDP. In countries such as Italy, estimates are considered to underrate the phenomenon as the observed number of volunteers takes into account only those volunteers active in 'registered' voluntary organisations. On the contrary, the estimation of the number of volunteers in Austria (3 million) tends to be high, as both informal and formal volunteering is taken into account. For most Member States the only available estimates concern formal volunteering.

VI.3 Value of Nonprofit Sector and Volunteering Work as a Share of GDP and of Employment

11.
The UN *Handbook on Nonprofit Institutions in the System of National Accounts* recommends choosing as 'reference' wage the average wage applicable in the social services sector. However such data was lacking for a significant number of Member States. Therefore the average wage was chosen as reference wage. Volunteer inputs were converted into full-time equivalent jobs; the number of full-time equivalent (FTE) volunteers was then multiplied by the average wage in the particular country.

Table 1: Value of volunteering work as share of GDP

	Year	Volunteering in terms of FTE*	Value of volunteering work as a share of GDP**
Austria	2006	331,663	4.75%
Netherlands	2008	480,637	3.50%
Sweden	2008	280,062	3.14%
Finland	2005	128,395	2.72%
Denmark	2003	110,041	2.61%
United Kingdom	2007	1,004,228	2.26%
Germany	2008	1,211,474	1.95%
Ireland	2006	78,367	1.79%
France	2005	935,000	1.65%
Luxembourg	2001	9,537	1.59%
Spain	2005	591,017	1.33%
Belgium	2001	84,903	1.08%
Portugal	2002	67,342	0.66%
Malta	2004	1,891	0.50%
Lithuania	2002	15,673	0.43%
Slovenia	2004	7,125	0.42%
Bulgaria	2002	38,710	0.37%
Czech Republic	2007	41,304	0.28%
Hungary	2007	24,600	0.25%
Romania	1997	49,417	0.15%
Italy	2006	80,600	0.11%
Greece	2008	7,323	0.06%
Poland	1998	20,473	0.06%
Slovakia	2007	1,156	0.02%
Cyprus	n/a	n/a	
Estonia	n/a	n/a	
Latvia	n/a	n/a	

Notes

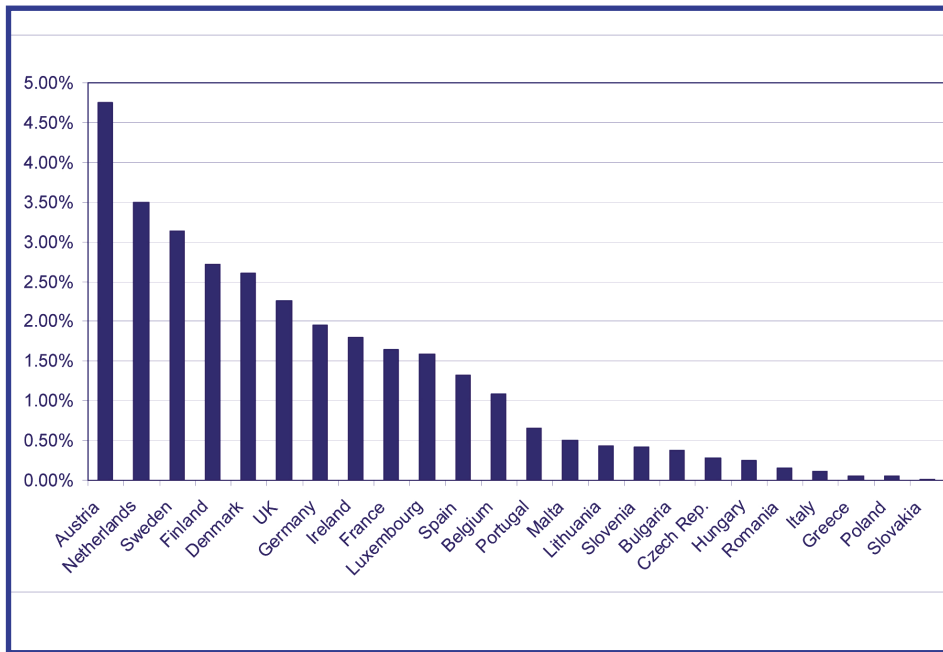
* Full-time equivalent. The calculation is based on 44 working weeks.

** Source: Eurostat. Where annual gross salary data for the specific year is not available, the data for annual gross salary in social sector (i.e. codes M-N-O of the Statistical Classification of Economic Activities in the European Community, NACE) has been used; otherwise, the figure for that year has been forecasted based on time series data.

Source: European Commission, Educational, Audiovisual & Culture Executive Agency (EAC-EA), Directorate General Education and Culture (DG EAC), *Study on Volunteering in the European Union. Final Report*, p. 135.

Figure 1 conveys an immediate perception of the data about value of volunteering as a share of GDP in various EU countries.

Figure 1: Value of volunteering work as a share of GDP



Source: European Commission, Educational, Audiovisual & Culture Executive Agency (EAC-EA), Directorate General Education and Culture (DG EAC), *Study on Volunteering in the European Union. Final Report*, p. 135.

It may be useful to compare the data collected by the European Commission with the results which arose, in 1995, from the Johns Hopkins Comparative Nonprofit Sector Project promoted by the Johns Hopkins University Centre for Comparative Civil Society Studies (JHU/CCSS).

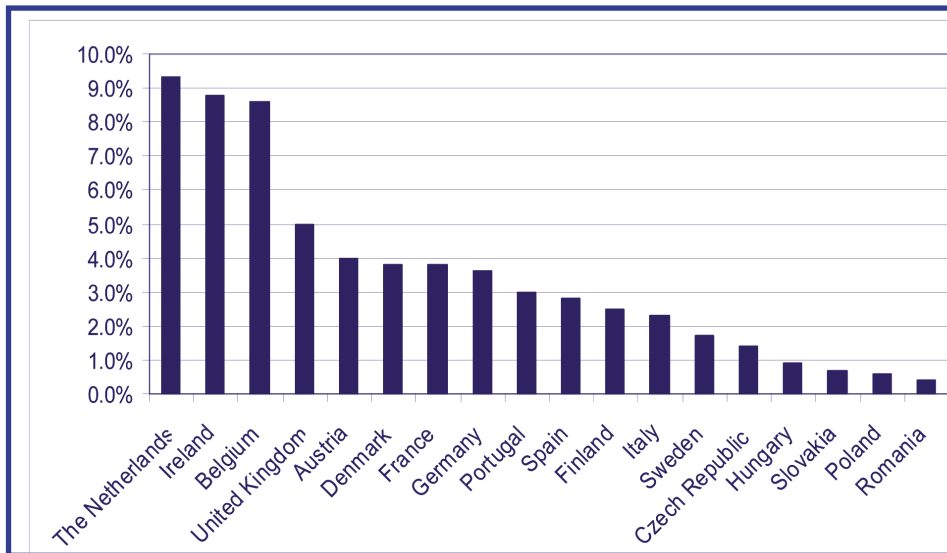
Table 2: The civil society sector

Country	Year	Employment, % of economically active population	Volunteers, % of economically active population	Expenditures, % of GDP
Austria	1995	4.0%	1.1%	3.0%
Belgium	1995	8.6%	2.4%	8.4%
Czech Republic	1995	1.4%	0.8%	1.7%
Denmark	2003-04	3.8%	3.0%	6.6%
Finland	1995	2.5%	2.9%	3.9%
France	1995	3.8%	4.2%	3.8%
Germany	1995	3.6%	3.0%	4.0%
Hungary	1995	0.9%	0.2%	2.8%
Ireland	1995	8.8%	2.3%	8.4%
Italy	1999	2.3%	1.7%	3.1%
Netherlands	1995	9.3%	5.8%	15.5%
Poland	1997	0.6%	0.2%	1.3%
Portugal	2002	3.0%	1.2%	4.2%
Romania	1995	0.4%	0.5%	0.3%
Slovakia	1996	0.7%	0.3%	1.4%
Spain	1995	2.8%	1.5%	4.0%
Sweden	1992	1.7%	5.4%	4.1%
United Kingdom	1995	5.0%	5.6%	6.8%

Source: Johns Hopkins Comparative Nonprofit Sector Project, *Workforce, expenditures, and revenue data* (<http://www.ccss.jhu.edu/index.php?section=content&view=16&sub=91&tri=93>).

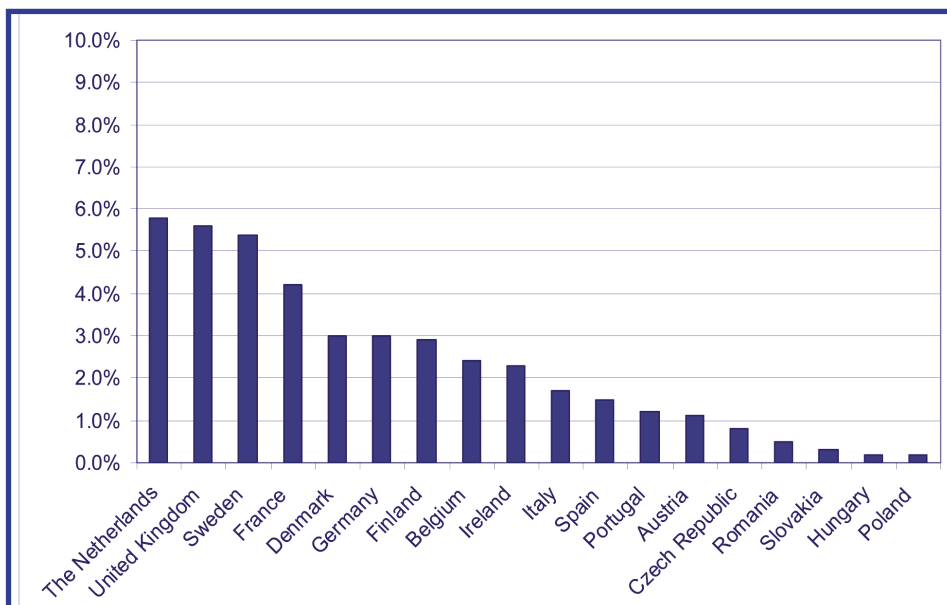
The information summarized in table 2 can be more easily grasped through the following figures.

Figure 2: Employment in civil society sector, % of economically active population



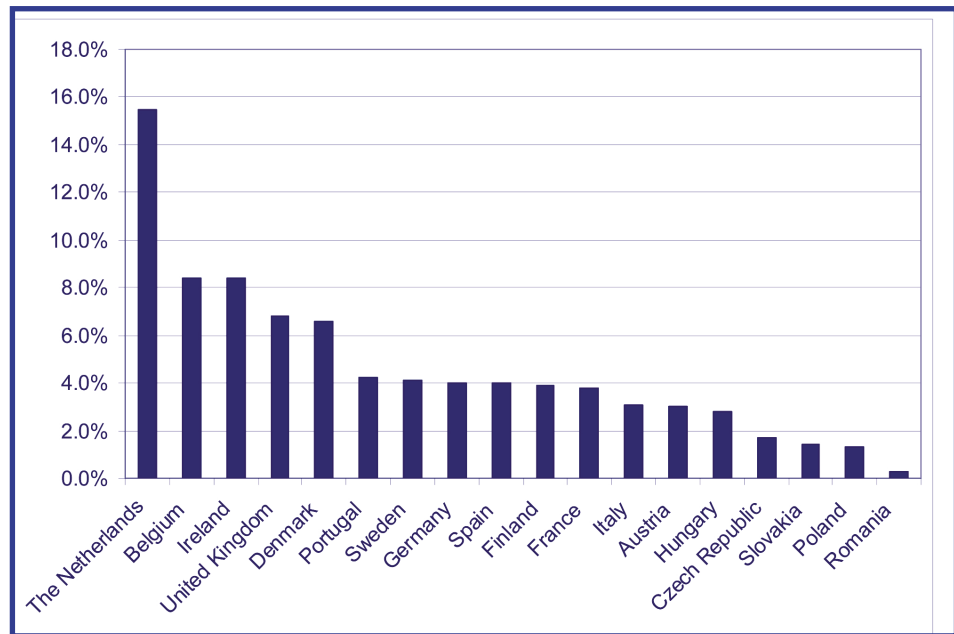
Source: based upon Johns Hopkins Comparative Nonprofit Sector Project, *Workforce, expenditures, and revenue data* (<http://www.ccss.jhu.edu/index.php?section=content&view=16&sub=91&tri=93>).

Figure 3: Volunteers, % of economically active population



Source: based upon Johns Hopkins Comparative Nonprofit Sector Project, *Workforce, expenditures, and revenue data* (<http://www.ccss.jhu.edu/index.php?section=content&view=16&sub=91&tri=93>).

Figure 4: Expenditures of the civil society sector, % of GDP



Source: based upon Johns Hopkins Comparative Nonprofit Sector Project, *Workforce, expenditures, and revenue data* (<http://www.ccss.jhu.edu/index.php?section=content&view=16&sub=91&tri=93>).

Although fig. 1 and fig. 4 show two different measures (i.e. the value of volunteering work and the expenditures) of the contribution of the non-profit sector to GDP, a comparison between them highlights, in mid-1990s (fig. 4) and about ten years later (more specifically, fig. 1 refers to data from 2002-2008), a certain persistence in terms of countries with high and low share of nonprofit sector in GDP (Austria being a remarkable exception). Netherlands, United Kingdom, Denmark¹² and Ireland for instance, display in 1995 expenditures for nonprofit sector above 6% of GDP (actually, almost 16% for Netherlands) and also a share of volunteering work higher than 1.5% of GDP between 2006 and 2008. A similar correspondence between fig. 1 and fig. 4 can be identified for countries with a medium sized nonprofit sector, such as Germany and France, where the expenditures represented 4% of GDP in 1995, and about ten years later the volunteering work share of GDP varied between 1.5% and 2%. Central and Eastern European countries (Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, Romania and Slovakia) show both a small share of volunteering work

12.

For Denmark, in both figures data are referred to the years 2003-2004.

(under 0.5% of GDP) and expenditures of the civil society sector which in mid-1990s did not exceed 3% of GDP. Mediterranean countries appear to be more heterogeneous, since Spain seems both in 1995 (expenditures) and in 2005 (value of volunteering work) more alike France and Germany, while in Portugal, Italy and Greece the nonprofit sector appears less relevant at least in terms of GDP share.

More country-specific data are provided in the following sections, mainly based on the preliminary results of the Johns Hopkins Comparative Nonprofit Sector Project, as exposed in *Global Civil Society: Dimensions of the Nonprofit Sector*, volume one. Though perhaps outdated, these results have the merit of allowing a comparison which, as already pointed out, is rarely possible when relying on national sources.

Belgium

In 1995, 468,764 paid workers were employed by associations without profit purpose (AWPPs) in Belgium, the equivalent of 358,852 full-time jobs, or approximately 10.5 percent of nonagricultural full-time equivalent (FTE) paid employment, 12.7 percent of FTE paid employment in the private sector, and 14.7 percent of FTE paid employment in the service sector. Volunteering constituted the equivalent of 100,687 additional FTE. The sector's added value as a percentage of the GDP was estimated to be the equivalent of nearly 6 percent in 1995, and exceeded 7 percent of the GDP including the imputed value of volunteer input.¹³

Table 3: The nonprofit sector in Belgium, 1995

Labor force in AWPPs	
<i>Paid employment</i>	
Head count	468,764
FTE	358,852
As % of nonagricultural paid employment	10.5%
<i>Volunteering</i>	
FTE	100,687
Wage bill of the AWPPs	
As % of GDP	5.6%
As % of GDP (including volunteers)	7.1%

Source: L.M. Salamon, H.K. Anheier, R. List, S. Toepler, S. Wojciech Sokolowski and Associates, *Global Civil Society: Dimensions of the Nonprofit Sector*, Baltimore 1999, p. 45.

13.

L.M. Salamon, H.K. Anheier, R. List, S. Toepler, S. Wojciech Sokolowski and Associates, *Global Civil Society: Dimensions of the Nonprofit Sector*, Baltimore 1999, pp. 44-46.

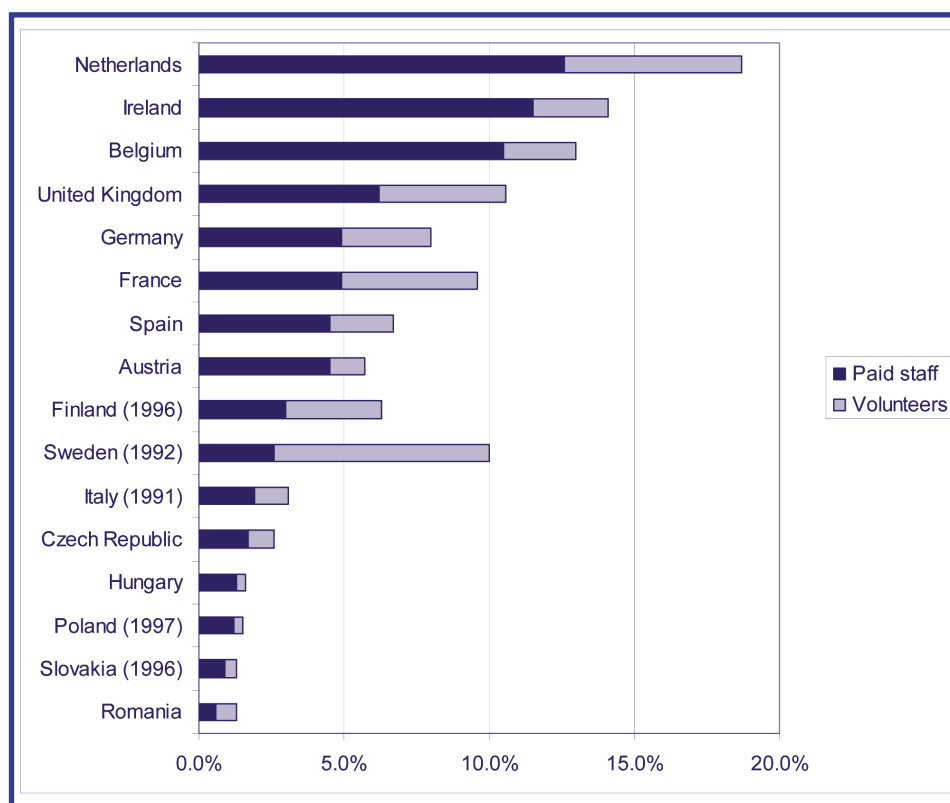
As tab. 4 and fig. 5 show, in 1995, the Belgian nonprofit sector was the third largest among the 13 European countries studied in the Johns Hopkins project, with regard to the share of total employment. It can be pointed out that the bulk of Belgian nonprofit employment was made of paid workers, which were four times more numerous than volunteers. A strong prevalence of paid employees over volunteers characterized also Ireland and, though their total share of nonprofit employment was far lower, Spain and Austria; on the other hand, Netherlands, United Kingdom, France and Sweden showed a large share of volunteers in nonprofit employment.

Table 4: Nonprofit share of total employment, with and without volunteers, by country, ca 1995

Country	Paid staff	Volunteers	Sum
Romania	0.6%	0.7%	1.3%
Slovakia (1996)	0.9%	0.4%	1.3%
Poland (1997)	1.2%	0.3%	1.5%
Hungary	1.3%	0.3%	1.6%
Czech Republic	1.7%	0.9%	2.6%
Italy (1991)	1.9%	1.2%	3.1%
Sweden (1992)	2.6%	7.4%	10.0%
Finland (1996)	3.0%	3.3%	6.3%
Austria	4.5%	1.2%	5.7%
Spain	4.5%	2.2%	6.7%
France	4.9%	4.7%	9.6%
Germany	4.9%	3.1%	8.0%
United Kingdom	6.2%	4.4%	10.6%
Belgium	10.5%	2.5%	13.0%
Ireland	11.5%	2.6%	14.1%
Netherlands	12.6%	6.1%	18.7%

Source: based upon *Global Civil Society: At-A-Glance. Major Findings of the Johns Hopkins Comparative Nonprofit Sector Project*, 1999, p. 5 (http://www.ccss.jhu.edu/pdfs/CNP/CNP_At_a_glance.pdf).

Figure 5: Nonprofit share of total employment, with and without volunteers, by country, ca 1995



Source: based upon *Global Civil Society: At-A-Glance. Major Findings of the Johns Hopkins Comparative Nonprofit Sector Project*, 1999, p. 5 (http://www.ccss.jhu.edu/pdfs/CNP/CNP_At_a_glance.pdf).

Belgium, in compliance with the UN *Nonprofit Handbook*, also published a satellite account on nonprofit institutions and volunteering, whose key findings are summarized in tab. 5. It can be observed that the more recent data broadly confirm those of 1995, and also show a stable increase in the value added of nonprofit organisations as a share of GDP, as in the percentage of workers employed in nonprofit sector.

Table 5: Nonprofit organisations, Belgium, 2000, 2005-2008

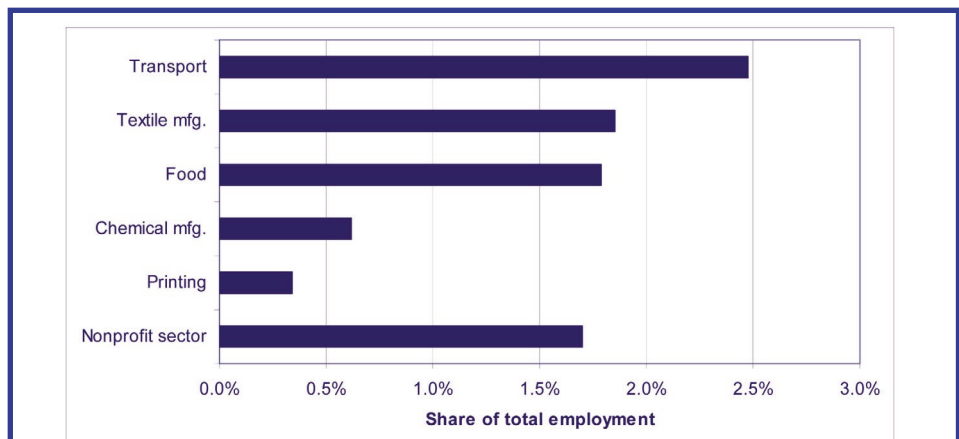
	2000	2005	2006	2007	2008
Value added, gross, % of GDP	4.1	4.7	4.8	4.9	5.1
Wage bill of nonprofit organisation, % of the total wage bill	7.4	8.5	8.7	8.9	9.0
Paid employment, thousands of people	312,5	383,3	401,5	416,5	431,7
Paid employment, % of the total employment	9.2	10.8	11.1	11.3	11.5

Source: Institut des comptes nationaux, *Comptes nationaux Le compte satellite des institutions sans but lucratif 2000-2008*, p. 7 (<http://www.nbb.be/doc/dq/f/dq3/NFDS.pdf>).

Czech Republic

Even excluding its religion component, the nonprofit sector in the Czech Republic had operating expenditures of 803.6 million dollar in 1995, or 1.6 percent of the country's gross domestic product, a substantial amount especially considering that the sector had been developing more or less freely only for six years. The nonprofit sector workforce included the equivalent of 74,200 full-time equivalent paid workers, i.e. 1.7 percent of all nonagricultural workers in the country, 3.4 percent of service employment, and the equivalent of 5.9 percent of the government employment at all levels.¹⁴

Figure 6: Nonprofit employment in the Czech Republic in context, 1995



Source: L.M. Salamon, H.K. Anheier, R. List, S. Toepler, S. Wojciech Sokolowski and Associates, *Global Civil Society: Dimensions of the Nonprofit Sector*, Baltimore 1999, p. 288.

14. L.M. Salamon, H.K. Anheier, R. List, S. Toepler, S. Wojciech Sokolowski and Associates, *Global Civil Society: Dimensions of the Nonprofit Sector*, Baltimore 1999, p. 286.

Including religion, in 1995 the nonprofit sector amounted to the 2.1% of GDP, of which 0.4% was made up by volunteers; as far as the total non-agricultural employment was concerned, the nonprofit sector sized a share equivalent to 2.9%, of which 1.1% of volunteers.¹⁵

The relative size of the nonprofit sector in Czech Republic fell below the global average (fig. 5), which is not surprising given the hostility toward such organizations during the Communist era; at the same time it was considerably above the Central European average.¹⁶ Besides, as fig. 6 shows, in 1995 nonprofit employees outnumbered those of chemical and printing sectors and were almost as many as those who worked in food and textile sectors, thus confirming the significance of the civil society sector in Czech Republic.

Table 6: Workers and wages in Nonprofit Institutions Serving Households (NPISH), 2004-2008 (CZK mil., persons)

Indicator	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008
Registered number of employees: actual persons, 31 December	38,359	42,711	44,598	48,538	X
Average registered number of employees, full-time equivalent	32,067	34,285	36,075	38,686	38,130
Number of voluntary workers, actual persons	494,272	838,947	890,571	1,282,997	1,236,530
Wages - excl. other personnel expenses	5,488	6,189	7,073	8,285	8,382
Other personnel expenses	1,353	1,129	1,544	1,871	1,218
Number of persons working under contracts other than contracts of employment	105,640	116,063	138,593	132,128	95,718

Source: Czech Statistical Office, *Economic Results of Nonprofit Institutions (2004 - 2008)*, (<http://www.czso.cz/csu/2010edicniplan.nsf/engp/9504-10>).

The Czech Statistical Office has also published some more recent data (tables 6 and 7) regarding the economic role of nonprofit institutions (NPI). Despite the difficulty of establishing a comparison with the 1995 findings, a continuous growth of nonprofit sector both in terms of its share of total employment and of GDP may be observed.

15.

L.M. Salamon, H.K. Anheier, R. List, S. Toepler, S. Wojciech Sokolowski and Associates, *Global Civil Society: Dimensions of the Nonprofit Sector*, Baltimore 1999, p. 288.

16.

L.M. Salamon, H.K. Anheier, R. List, S. Toepler, S. Wojciech Sokolowski and Associates, *Global Civil Society: Dimensions of the Nonprofit Sector*, Baltimore 1999, p. 289.

Table 7: NPI Satellite account 2002-2004, Share in Total Economy

Variable	2002	2003	2004
Output	0.89%	0.89%	0.95%
Value added, gross	0.86%	1.05%	1.17%
Employees	1.47%	1.64%	1.70%
Employment, FTE (economically active population)	1.25%	1.39%	1.42%

Source: Czech Statistical Office (CZSO), *Czech NPI Satellite account. Progress Report August 2006*, p. 2 (http://www.ccss.jhu.edu/pdfs/CNP/CNP_SA_report_0609.pdf).

Finland

Despite the presence of a highly developed welfare state, Finland has a sizable volunteering sector that, as fig. 1 confirms, accounts for a significant share of national GDP.

Even excluding its religion component, the nonprofit sector in Finland had operating expenditures of 4.7 billion dollar in 1996, or 3.9 percent (5.8 percent including volunteering) of the country's gross domestic product; plus a sizable workforce of 62,848 full-time equivalent paid workers. This represented 3 percent of all nonagricultural workers in the country, 9.5 percent of service employment, and the equivalent of nearly one-eighth of public employment. There was also a considerable amount of volunteer effort, which translated into another 75,000 full-time equivalent employees, so the total number of full-time equivalent employees of nonprofit organizations in Finland was 138,000, or 6.3 percent of total employment in the country. Although the size of the Finnish nonprofit sector was considerable relative to the Finnish economy, it was still small relative to its counterparts in other Western European countries. As figure 5 shows, nonprofit employment as a share of total employment was also considerably lower in Finland than it was elsewhere in Western Europe, though higher than in Central Europe.¹⁷

France

Between 1990 and 1995, nonprofit employment in France experienced

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L.M. Salamon, H.K. Anheier, R. List, S. Toepler, S. Wojciech Sokolowski and Associates, *Global Civil Society: Dimensions of the Nonprofit Sector*, Baltimore 1999, pp. 64-69.

a rapid growth of 20 percent. This growth rate is comparable to that experienced by other Western European countries for which data are available, namely Germany, United Kingdom, and Netherlands, which averaged a 24 percent increase over the same period. This finding is noteworthy because, within the same period, total employment in France declined by one percent. Between 1990 and 1995, volunteering work grew faster than paid employment, with a 7 percent average annual growth, especially in the social services field.¹⁸

As shown in table 8, the economic activity of the French third sector in 1995 was significant and sizable: 975,000 full-time equivalent employees were employed within the French nonprofit sector including religious congregations. Even excluding religious congregations, the sector employed 960,000 fulltime equivalent paid workers, 4.9 percent of total employment. The total volunteer hours worked amounted to the equivalent of 1 million full-time volunteers, slightly more than its 975,000 paid workers. Thus, including the FTE volunteer work, the total labor force of the nonprofit sector represented 9.6 percent of total employment (see also tab. 4). Nonprofit sector operating expenditures in France constituted 3.7 percent of the gross domestic product (see also tab. 2).¹⁹

In comparative perspective, the French third sector is a 'middle weight': figures 1, 4 and 5, in fact, show that the French third sector is at the average level in terms of employment as well as GDP share.²⁰

Table 8: The overall economic contribution of the French third sector in 1995

Economic indicator	With religion	Without religion
Volunteer headcount (thousand)	12,567	11,069
FTE Volunteers (thousand)	1,115	1,021
FTE paid employment (thousand)	975	960
Percent of economy-wide paid employment	5%	4.90%
Total FTE paid and unpaid employment	2,090	1,981
Percent of economy-wide employment including volunteering (all formal sectors)	10.10%	9.60%
Operating expenditures (OE)	58 billion USD	57 billion USD
OE as percent of GDP	3.80%	3.70%
OE including volunteers	104 billion USD	99 billion USD
As percent of volunteer-adjusted GDP	6.60%	6.30%

Source: L.M. Salamon, H.K. Anheier, R. List, S. Toepler, S. Wojciech Sokolowski and Associates, *Global Civil Society: Dimensions of the Nonprofit Sector*, Baltimore 1999, p. 83.

18.

L.M. Salamon, H.K. Anheier, R. List, S. Toepler, S. Wojciech Sokolowski and Associates, *Global Civil Society: Dimensions of the Nonprofit Sector*, Baltimore 1999, pp. 89-92.

19.

L.M. Salamon, H.K. Anheier, R. List, S. Toepler, S. Wojciech Sokolowski and Associates, *Global Civil Society: Dimensions of the Nonprofit Sector*, Baltimore 1999, pp. 83-84.

20.

L.M. Salamon, H.K. Anheier, R. List, S. Toepler, S. Wojciech Sokolowski and Associates, *Global Civil Society: Dimensions of the Nonprofit Sector*, Baltimore 1999, p. 90.

21.
Ph. Kaminski, *Les associations en France et leur contribution au PIB. Le Compte Satellite des Institutions Sans But Lucratif en France*, Février 2006, pp. 6-7, 9, 15 (http://www.ccss.jhu.edu/pdfs/CNP/CNP_FrenchSatelliteAccount.pdf).

22.
L. M. Salamon, M.A. Haddock, S.W. Sokolowski, H.S. Tice, *Measuring Civil Society and Volunteering: Initial Findings from Implementation of the UN Handbook on Nonprofit Institutions*, Johns Hopkins Center for Civil Society Studies, Working Paper No. 23, 2007, p. 4 (<http://www.ccss.jhu.edu/pdfs/ILO/MCS.pdf>).

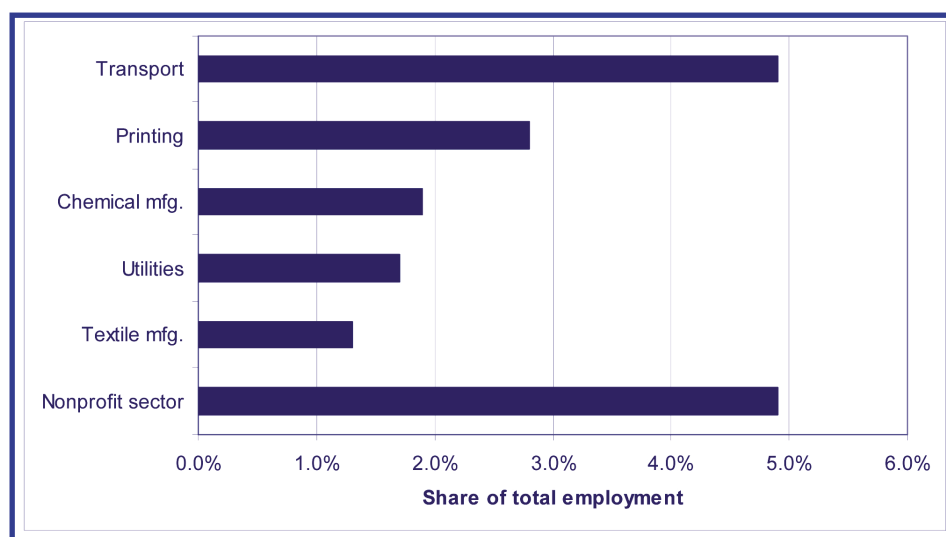
23.
L.M. Salamon, H.K. Anheier, R. List, S. Toepler, S. Wojciech Sokolowski and Associates, *Global Civil Society: Dimensions of the Nonprofit Sector*, Baltimore 1999, pp. 100-101.

To draw up a more updated portrait of the French nonprofit sector, in 2002 there were 128,191 organisations without profit purpose in France, with 1,435,330 paid employees. The wage bill amounted to 25,819 million euro while 2.9% was the size of nonprofit organisations contribution to GDP;²¹ however, including volunteers, NPI contribution to GDP increased to 4.2%.²²

Germany

The nonprofit sector turns out to be a substantial economic force in Germany. Even excluding its religion component, it had operating expenditures of 94.4 billion dollar in 1995, or 3.9 percent of the country's gross domestic product. Besides, it employed an important workforce of 1.44 million full-time equivalent paid workers, i.e. 4.9 percent of all nonagricultural workers in the country, 11.6 percent of service employment, and the equivalent of 30.4 percent of public employment.²³

Figure 7: Nonprofit employment in Germany in context, 1995



Source: L.M. Salamon, H.K. Anheier, R. List, S. Toepler, S. Wojciech Sokolowski and Associates, *Global Civil Society: Dimensions of the Nonprofit Sector*, Baltimore 1999, p. 102.

More people worked in the nonprofit sector in Germany than in many entire industries in the country. In 1995, as shown in figure 7, nonprofit employment in Germany outdistanced employment in the country's utilities and in its textile, printing, and chemical manufacturing industries. In fact, employment in the nonprofit sector in Germany was on a par with employment in the transport sector. Moreover, the nonprofit sector also attracted a considerable amount of volunteer effort: one million full-time equivalent employees (without religion). The total number of full-time equivalent employees of nonprofit organizations in Germany became thus close to 2.5 million, or 8 percent of total employment in the country. The German nonprofit sector was also fairly large relative to its counterparts in Western Europe, although smaller than in Belgium, Ireland, and Netherlands, as figure 5 displays.²⁴

The German nonprofit sector also increased its importance between 1990 and 1995, due to the continued growth of the West German nonprofit sector, but also, to a significant degree, to the formation of nonprofit organizations in the former East Germany after the end of socialist rule.²⁵

Hungary

Between 1990 and 1995, employment in the Hungarian nonprofit sector grew by 37 percent,²⁶ and in 1995 the nonprofit sector in Hungary had operating expenditures of USD 1.2 billion, or 2.8 percent of the country's gross domestic product, while its workforce included 45,000 full-time equivalent paid workers. This represented 1.3 percent of all nonagricultural workers in the country, 2.2 percent of service employment, and the equivalent of 4.6 percent of the public sector workforce. The volunteer labor translated into at least another 10,000 full-time equivalent employees, so the total number of full-time equivalent employees of nonprofit organizations in Hungary was close to 55,000, or 1.6 percent of nonagricultural employment in the country. The Hungarian nonprofit sector was quite important relative to its counterparts in the other Central and Eastern European countries (see fig. 5). A similar situation has already been highlighted in relation to Czech Republic.²⁷

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L.M. Salamon, H.K. Anheier, R. List, S. Toepler, S. Wojciech Sokolowski and Associates, *Global Civil Society: Dimensions of the Nonprofit Sector*, Baltimore 1999, pp. 101-104.

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L.M. Salamon, H.K. Anheier, R. List, S. Toepler, S. Wojciech Sokolowski and Associates, *Global Civil Society: Dimensions of the Nonprofit Sector*, Baltimore 1999, pp. 113-114.

26.

L.M. Salamon, H.K. Anheier, R. List, S. Toepler, S. Wojciech Sokolowski and Associates, *Global Civil Society: Dimensions of the Nonprofit Sector*, Baltimore 1999, p. 320.

27.

L.M. Salamon, H.K. Anheier, R. List, S. Toepler, S. Wojciech Sokolowski and Associates, *Global Civil Society: Dimensions of the Nonprofit Sector*, Baltimore 1999, pp. 306-308.

Ireland

In 1995, nonprofit operating expenditures in Ireland amounted to 5.24 billion dollar, i.e. 8.6 percent of GDP; including volunteering, the share increased to 9.5 percent of GDP. Besides, the nonprofit sector was more economically significant than either agriculture and fishing, or public administration and defense. There were 125,584 paid employees (full-time equivalent) in the Irish nonprofit sector and 33,690 (FTE) people who worked as volunteers.²⁸ The importance of the nonprofit sector in Ireland is clearly visible in figure 4, which shows that the expenditures of the civil society sector as a share of GDP were higher than in every other European country, with the exception of Belgium and the Netherlands. Besides, as pointed out in figure 5, the Irish nonprofit sector, whose paid employment represented the 12.2 percent of the total employment was, in 1995, the second largest after the Dutch one. However, the share of volunteers in Ireland (2.6% of the total employment) was significantly lower than in the Netherlands (6.1%).

Italy

In 1991, the Italian nonprofit sector was important from a national viewpoint; with 418,128 standard units of labour, it did in fact generate the same amount of employment as the banking and insurance sectors taken together (434,000 standard employment units), i.e. 1.8 percent of the total employment. The workforce mobilized by the sector was nevertheless much larger including the large number (302,950 FTE) of volunteers. Adding these volunteers to the number of paid workers, the nonprofit sector increased considerably, reaching 3.1 percent of total national employment. In 1991, the operating expenditures of the nonprofit sector amounted to 1.9 percent of GDP, while the sum of the value added by employees and by volunteers was 1.8 percent of GDP.²⁹ In 1999 the nonprofit sector expenditures amounted to 3.1 percent of GDP (see tab. 2).

In 2000, the National Statistics Institute carried out the first census of Italian nonprofit organisations, which showed the existence, at the end of

28.
L.M. Salamon, H.K. Anheier, R. List, S. Toepler, S. Wojciech Sokolowski and Associates, *Global Civil Society: Dimensions of the Nonprofit Sector*, Baltimore 1999, pp. 128-130.

29.
G.P. Barbeta, *The nonprofit sector in Italy*, Manchester 1997, pp. 110-112.

1999, of 221,412 active third sector organisations staffed by 630,000 paid workers (of whom around 51,000 were part-timers) and 3.2 million volunteers, and with total earnings amounting to 38 billion euros. The organisations surveyed worked mainly in the sectors of culture, sport and recreation (63.1 percent) and social services (18.7 percent). But the sector with the largest percentage of paid workers was social welfare (27.6 percent), followed by health (22.8 percent) and education (private schools) and research (18.9 percent). The vast majority (87.1 percent) of the organisations were financed by private resources, while only 12.9 percent received their funding from public institutions, they were mainly social cooperatives, almost all of which worked in the social welfare sector.³⁰

Netherlands

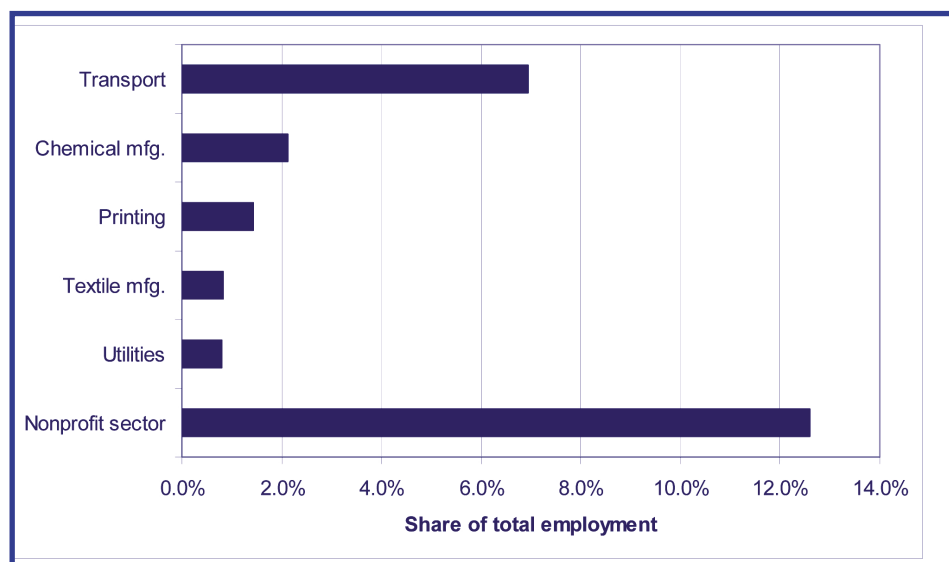
The Dutch nonprofit sector greatly exceeds most of its European counterparts in terms of size. This reflects subsidiarity, a typical aspect of Dutch society. In fact, given the Dutch deep respect for different religious and ideological beliefs, the provision of crucial services has been historically left to nonprofit organizations affiliated with the various political or religious groups. Excluding its religion component, the nonprofit sector in the Netherlands had operating expenditures of 60.4 billion dollar in 1995, or 15.3 percent of the GDP. The workforce in 1995 included the equivalent of 652,800 full-time equivalent paid workers, i.e. 12.6 percent of all nonagricultural workers, 27.9 percent of service employment, and 89.9 percent of the government employment at all levels. In 1995 more people worked in the nonprofit sector in the Netherlands than in many other sectors in the country (see fig. 8), such as utilities, textiles, printing, chemical, and transport industries. Employment in the Dutch nonprofit sector even slightly exceeded the total employment in all of these industries. The nonprofit sector in the Netherlands also attracts a considerable amount of volunteer effort. According to the more conservative estimate, this translated into another 390,000 full-time equivalent employees in 1995, thus the total number of full-time equivalent employees of nonprofit organizations in the Netherlands increased to one million, or 18.7 percent of total

30.

A. Evers, J.-L. Laville (Eds.),
The third sector in Europe,
Cheltenham 2004, pp. 58-60.

employment in the country; moreover, nonprofit employment as a share of total employment was also considerably higher in the Netherlands than it was elsewhere in Europe; finally, there were far more volunteers in the Netherlands than in Ireland, the second country in terms of paid employees working in the nonprofit sector (see fig. 5).³¹

Figure 8: Nonprofit employment in the Netherlands in context, 1995



Source: based upon L.M. Salamon, H.K. Anheier, R. List, S. Toepler, S. Wojciech Sokolowski and Associates, *Global Civil Society: Dimensions of the Nonprofit Sector*, Baltimore 1999, p. 148.

31.

L.M. Salamon, H.K. Anheier, R. List, S. Toepler, S. Wojciech Sokolowski and Associates, *Global Civil Society: Dimensions of the Nonprofit Sector*, Baltimore 1999, pp. 145-151.

32.

L.M. Salamon, H.K. Anheier, R. List, S. Toepler, S. Wojciech Sokolowski and Associates, *Global Civil Society: Dimensions of the Nonprofit Sector*, Baltimore 1999, pp. 326-330.

Poland

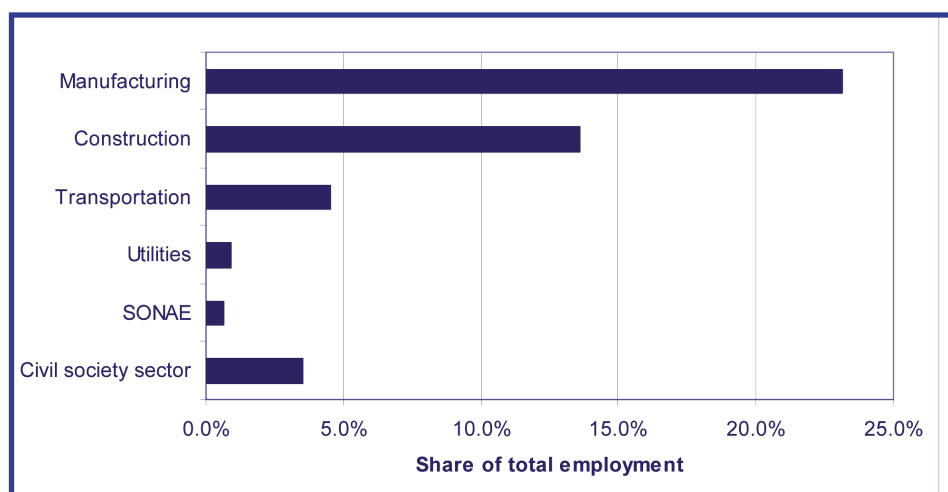
The data regarding Poland published in *Global Civil Society: Dimensions of the Nonprofit Sector* (1999) were only preliminary. They highlighted that in 1997 Polish nonprofit sector was a minor but growing economic force; in fact, excluding religion, the Polish nonprofit sector employed nearly 91,000 full-time equivalent paid workers, a small but significant workforce, representing 1 percent of nonagricultural paid employment in the country, 2.8 percent of service employment, and the equivalent of 1.9 percent of the public administration workforce. Volunteering work amounted to 20,473 full-time equivalent employees, so

the total number of full-time equivalent employees of nonprofit organizations in 1997 was 111,460, or 1.2 percent of total employment in the country.³²

Portugal

The Portuguese civil society sector is a noteworthy contributor to national income and expenditure. In 2002, the expenditures of the Portuguese civil society organizations (including religious worship organisations) exceeded 5.4 billion euro, 4.2 percent of the nation's gross domestic product. There were 227,292 FTE workers (including those in religious worship activities), 70 percent (159,950) in paid positions and the remainder (67,342) as volunteers. They represented about 4.2 percent of Portugal's economically active population, and about 5 percent of its nonagricultural employment. The value of volunteer effort alone, estimated at 675 million euro, contributed more than 0.5 percent to the nation's GDP. As shown in figure 9, Portugal's civil society sector employed as many workers as its transportation industry, nearly six times more than its utilities industry, and almost ten times as many people as Portugal's largest private company, SONAE (having regard only to its domestic employment).³³

Figure 9: Civil society employment in Portugal in context, 2002



Source: based upon R. Campos Franco, S. Wojciech Sokolowski, E.M.H. Hairel, L.M. Salamon, *The Portuguese nonprofit sector in comparative perspective*, 2005, p. 12.

33. R. Campos Franco, S. Wojciech Sokolowski, E.M.H. Hairel, L.M. Salamon, *The Portuguese nonprofit sector in comparative perspective*, 2005, pp. 11-12.

Romania

The nonprofit sector is a small but developing economic force in Romania. More specifically, in 1995 the nonprofit sector in Romania had operating expenditures of 90.3 million dollar, or 0.3 percent of GDP. The related workforce included 37,353 FTE paid workers, or 0.6 percent of all nonagricultural employment in the country, 1.2 percent of service employment, and 0.9 percent of public employment at all levels. Significantly, compared to the 37,000 paid workers in Romania's nonprofit organizations, Romania's largest private company, Dacia S.A. (a manufacturer of machinery, equipment, and furniture) employed in 1995 only 29,000 workers. The nonprofit sector also attracted a considerable amount of volunteer effort which in 1995 translated into another 46,000 FTE employees; the total number of FTE employees of nonprofit organizations in Romania thus became close to 84,000 or 1.3 percent of nonagricultural employment in the country. The Romanian nonprofit sector in 1995 was fairly small in relation to its Eastern and Central European counterparts; however, it was not much below the Slovakian share, and the gap between Romania and Slovakia in terms of nonprofit employment was filled if volunteering work was included (see fig. 5).³⁴

Slovakia

The nonprofit sector in Slovakia accounted in 1996 for relatively small shares of national expenditures and employment. Excluding its religion component, the nonprofit sector in Slovakia had operating expenditures of 247.1 million dollar, or 1.3 percent of the country's gross domestic product, a modest, but still significant amount. The workforce employed in nonprofit sector included, in 1996, 16,200 FTE paid workers, i.e. 0.9 percent of all nonagricultural workers in the country, 1.4 percent of service employment, and the equivalent of 2 percent of the public administration workforce. As shown in figure 10, in 1996 nonprofit employment in Slovakia outdistanced employment in industries such as printing, hotels and restaurants; moreover, it was not far behind the employment level in

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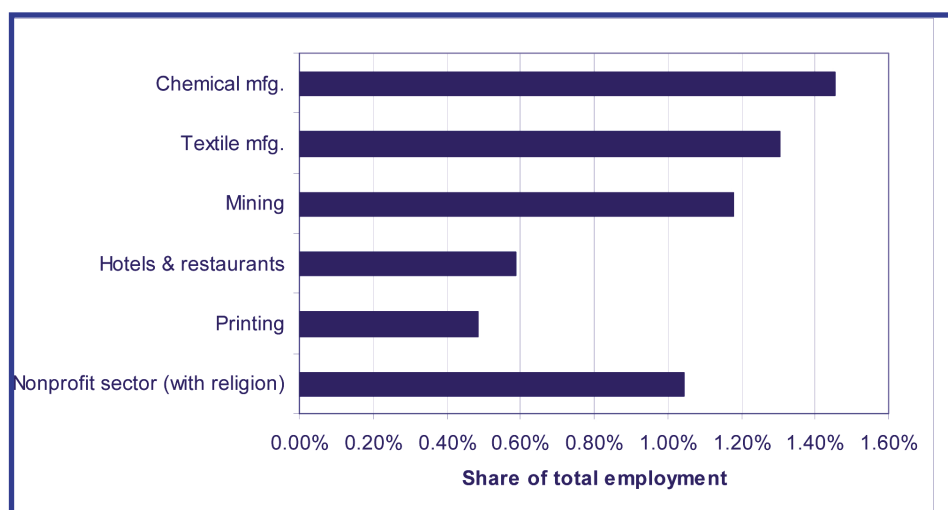
L.M. Salamon, H.K. Anheier, R. List, S. Toepler, S. Wojciech Sokolowski and Associates, *Global Civil Society: Dimensions of the Nonprofit Sector*, Baltimore 1999, pp. 338-341.

35.

L.M. Salamon, H.K. Anheier, R. List, S. Toepler, S. Wojciech Sokolowski and Associates, *Global Civil Society: Dimensions of the Nonprofit Sector*, Baltimore 1999, pp. 356-358.

mining, textiles, and chemical manufacturing industries. As far as volunteer effort is concerned, for 1996, this included at least another 7,000 FTE employees, which boosted the total number of full-time equivalent employees of nonprofit organizations in Slovakia to 23,000 or 1.3 percent of nonagricultural employment in the country, while nonprofit sector share of GDP increased to 1.4 percent. As figures 2, 4 and 5 point out, while it was beginning to take a significant place in the Slovak economy, in 1996 the Slovak nonprofit sector was small in comparison to its counterparts elsewhere in Europe, and even lagged a little behind the level observed in other Central European countries.³⁵

Figure 10: Nonprofit employment in Slovakia in context, 1996



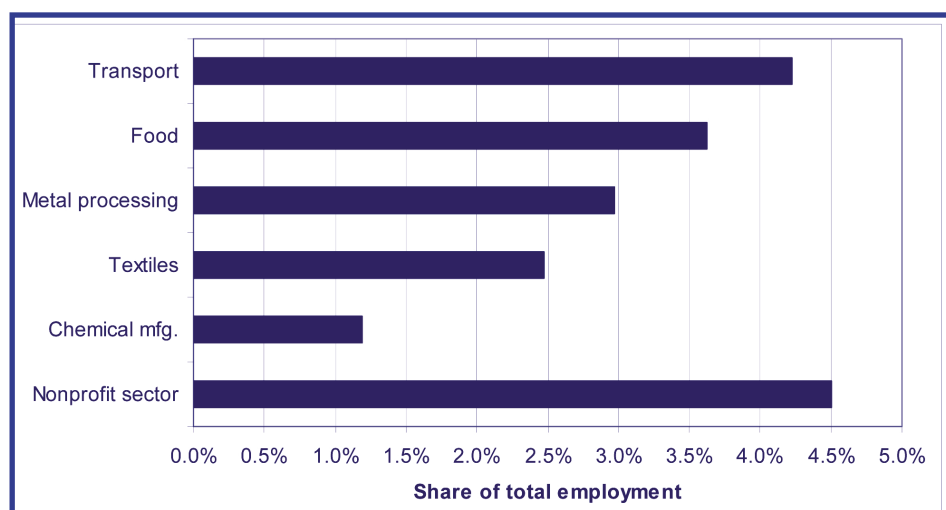
Source: based upon L.M. Salamon, H.K. Anheier, R. List, S. Toepler, S. Wojciech Sokolowski and Associates, *Global Civil Society: Dimensions of the Nonprofit Sector*, Baltimore 1999, p. 357.

Spain

The nonprofit sector appears to be an important and growing economic force in Spain. Even excluding its religion component, in 1995 the Spanish nonprofit sector had operating expenditures of 22.6 billion dollar, or the equivalent of 4.0 percent of Spain's GDP. Behind these expenditures lied an important workforce that included in the same year 475,179

FTE paid workers, i.e. 4.5 percent of all nonagricultural workers in Spain, 6.8 percent of service employment, and 22.9 percent of public employment at all levels. Indeed, as shown in fig. 11, more people worked in the Spanish nonprofit sector in 1995 than in many entire industries in the country, including transport and communication; food, beverages, and tobacco; metal processing; textiles; and chemical manufacturing industries. The nonprofit sector in Spain also attracted, in 1995, lots of volunteers which represented another 253,599 full-time equivalent employees; the total number of full-time equivalent employees of nonprofit organizations thus increased to 728,778, or 6.7 percent of total nonagricultural employment.³⁶

Figure 11: Nonprofit employment in Spain in context, 1995



Source: based upon L.M. Salamon, H.K. Anheier, R. List, S. Toepler, S. Wojciech Sokolowski and Associates, *Global Civil Society: Dimensions of the Nonprofit Sector*, Baltimore 1999, p. 166.

United Kingdom

In 1995 the UK broad nonprofit sector (BNS)³⁷ employed 1.473 million full-time equivalent paid workers who accounted for 6.2 percent of employment in the economy as a whole. In fact, in terms of paid staff, the BNS exceeded the largest single institutional employer, the National

36. L.M. Salamon, H.K. Anheier, R. List, S. Toepler, S. Wojciech Sokolowski and Associates, *Global Civil Society: Dimensions of the Nonprofit Sector*, Baltimore 1999, pp. 164-166.

37. The broad nonprofit sector (BNS) includes all entities that are formal organizations having an institutionalized character; constitutionally independent of the state and self-governing; non-profit-distributing; and involving some degree of volunteerism.

Health Service (NHS). Nonetheless, 16.311 million volunteers remained the primary labor input for the sector as a whole, the equivalent of 1.664 million full-time voluntary employees, slightly more than its 1.473 million paid employees. Besides, the BNS expended 74.9 billion dollar in 1995, some 6.8 percent of GDP. The third sector had also grown significantly during the 1990s, especially between 1990 and 1993, precisely when the UK economy was experiencing a severe recession.³⁸

As figure 5 shows, in 1995 the third sector in UK was relatively large in relation to the remaining European countries, though less important in terms of employment than in Netherlands, Ireland and Belgium.³⁹

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L.M. Salamon, H.K. Anheier, R. List, S. Toepler, S. Wojciech Sokolowski and Associates, *Global Civil Society: Dimensions of the Nonprofit Sector*, Baltimore 1999, pp. 180-185.

39.

L.M. Salamon, H.K. Anheier, R. List, S. Toepler, S. Wojciech Sokolowski and Associates, *Global Civil Society: Dimensions of the Nonprofit Sector*, Baltimore 1999, pp. 192-193.

Europe 2020 Strategy is European Union's economic development plan for the next decade that succeeds the Lisbon Strategy, which covered the period running from 2000 to 2010.

EU2020 Strategy's objective is to make EU a smart, sustainable and inclusive economy in order to achieve results in terms of increased levels of employment, social cohesion and productivity and to overcome and recover from the economic and financial crisis that affected Europe during last years, by coming out stronger from it.

The legal basis of the Strategy is represented by the European Commission Proposal of 3rd March 2010,⁴⁰ finally adopted by the European Council on 17 June 2010,⁴¹ that outlines five measurable targets for 2020 - namely employment; research and innovation; climate change and energy; education; combating poverty.

The legal document identifies the three above-mentioned priorities and explains 'smart growth' as the development of an economy based on knowledge and innovation, 'sustainable growth' as the enhancement of a more resource efficient, greener and more competitive economy, 'inclusive growth' as the promotion of a high-employment economy delivering social and territorial cohesion.⁴²

Smart growth will be pursued by improving EU's levels of education (encouraging people to learn and to study), of research and innovation (creating products and services that create new skills and new jobs and, meanwhile, address society's needs), of digital technologies.

Sustainable growth will be achieved by creating a competitive low-carbon economy, by protecting the environment (reducing emissions and preventing biodiversity loss), by developing new green energies, by introdu-

VI.4 EU2020 Strategy and Volunteering

40.
Brussels, 3/3/2010, COM (2010) 2020 final, available at:
<http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=COM:2010:2020:FIN:EN:PDF>.

41.
Brussels, 17/06/2010, EUCO 13/10, available at:
http://www.consilium.europa.eu/ueDocs/cms_Data/docs/pressData/en/ec/115346.pdf.

42.
COM (2010) 2020 final, p. 6.

cing efficient smart electricity grids, by harnessing EU-scale networks and improving the business environment, by helping consumers to make well-informed choices.

Inclusive growth will be obtained through the raising of employment rate and creating more and better jobs (particularly for young people, women and older workers), the investment in training and the acquirement of new skills, the modernization of labour markets and welfare systems; special attention should be paid to ensure that the benefits ensuing the economic growth reach all EU areas.

In this regard, five headline targets have been agreed. These are:

- In the employment field: to raise to 75% the employment rate for people aged 20-64;
- In the research and innovation field: to improve the conditions for research and development with the aim to increase the investment levels in this sector up to 3% of European Union's GDP by combining public and private investments;
- In the climate change and energy field: to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 20% compared to 1990 levels (or even 30% if the conditions are adequate); to raise the share of renewable energy consumption to 20% and to move towards a 20% increase in energy efficiency;
- In the education field: to improve education levels through the reduction of school drop rates to less than 10% and to increase the share of 30-34 years old persons having completed tertiary or equivalent education to at least 40%;
- In the 'combating poverty and social exclusion' field: to promote social inclusion through poverty reduction, mainly lifting at least 20 million people out of the risk of poverty and social exclusion.

This five EU level targets are being translated in national targets through each Member State's National Reform Program (which is expected in April each year; draft National Reform Programs have been submitted in November 2010).

Seven flagship initiatives have been identified in order to ensure the achievement of the Strategy's objectives. These are:

- Digital Agenda for Europe, whose purpose is to maximize the

benefits ensuing the digital revolution, for example by unblocking the free flow of online services across national borders and creating a digital single market, speeding up internet connections, enhancing European people's e-skills, promoting on-line economy by securing web transactions, funding Information and Communication Technology research, also in order to tackle social challenges, etc. For more info see:

http://ec.europa.eu/information_society/digital-agenda/index_en.htm.

- Innovation Union, that aims to improve conditions and access to finance for research and innovation in UE, in order to transform innovative ideas into new jobs, products and services, also by promoting innovative partnerships between the private and public sector. For more info see:

http://ec.europa.eu/research/innovation-union/index_en.cfm?pg=home.

- Youth on the Move, an initiative to support Europe's young people and their learning and employment mobility, particularly improving the quality and attractiveness of education and training in Europe and increasing young people's chance to find a job, also exploiting the full potential of EU funding Programmes. For more info see:

http://europa.eu/youthonthemove/index_en.htm.

- Resource efficient Europe, that targets economic growth based on a resource-efficient, low carbon approach through supporting policy European agendas related to the fight to climate change, the preservation of biodiversity, the promotion of energies that do not harm the planet and the containment of the environmental impact of resource use, but also industry, agriculture, transport, regional development. For more info see:

http://ec.europa.eu/resource-efficient-europe/index_en.htm.

- A industrial policy for the globalization era is based on the Communication adopted on the 28th October 2010 on the initiative of Vice-President Antonio Tajani and outlines a plan to foster economic growth and jobs through the maintenance and strengthening of a competitive and diversified industrial base, which makes less use of carbon. For more info see:

http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/policies/industrial-competitiveness/industrial-policy/index_en.htm.

- An agenda for new skills and jobs is aimed to develop and to

upgrade skills, to better working quality and conditions, to create new jobs, to improve social welfare systems, to help disadvantaged people to get jobs, to enable workers to move easily between EU countries. For more info see:

<http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=958&langId=en>.

- European platform against poverty sets out the strategy to reach the EU2020's goal to reduce poverty and social exclusion by at least 20 million by 2020, since currently 80 million people in EU are at risk of poverty (including 20 million children and 8% of the working population). The platform is intended as an instrument to improve access to work, making EU fund more available to promote social inclusion and combat discrimination. For more info see:

<http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=961&langId=en>.

Volunteering supports all aspects of EU2020 Strategy, as it represents a key element of economic and social growth. Volunteering, as explained in the previous paragraph of the present chapter (*Economic dimension of nonprofit sector and volunteering*), has a relevant and positive impact on the financial sector and economic growth.

Besides, volunteering is a unique instrument to promote social cohesion and hence the creation of an inclusive society; it is a powerful creator of social capital; it allows people to develop new skills that can eventually be used in job markets; it reduces economic, social, environmental inequalities; it encourages integration and intercultural dialogue between citizens coming from different countries, thus reinforcing the sense of belonging to unique community and promoting active citizenship; it fosters intergenerational mutual help; it can be performed by young people as well as be senior citizens, who can place their experiences and knowledge at society's disposal; in many cases, it turns out to be a route to employment; it is one of the fundamental means to combat poverty and social exclusion; it supports non formal learning, etc.

Volunteering improves citizens' quality of life, wellbeing and affects positively social behavior firstly by increasing the respect for other people, cultures and for the environment.

Volunteering helps to overcome social exclusion and poverty, also

because it often equips unemployed persons with new skills, thus targeting the core of EU2020 strategy.

The relevant economic value of third and especially voluntary sector has already been underlined in the previous paragraph, but its social value is even wider. A volunteer acts out of a free choice, motivation and will and without concern for financial gain in order to address society needs and to give a concrete answer to society problems. Therefore, volunteers' activities - that represent an effective and powerful source of economic growth, of social capital, of social inclusion and cohesion, of inequalities and discrimination reduction - pursue all the objectives and initiatives of EU2020 Strategy.

VII

European Years: an Overview

Rita Sassu ECP – Europe for Citizens Point Italy

The European Year of Tourism 1990¹ was established with the Council Decision 89/46/EEC of 21 December 1988. The objectives of the Year consisted in exploiting the integrating role of tourism in order to prepare a large European area without frontiers and acknowledging the economic and social importance of tourism as a means to enhance regional growth and employment. To this end, the Community, the Member States and private organizations undertook coordinated actions aimed at: promoting, especially among young people, greater knowledge of the cultural heritage and life-styles of the other Member States; spreading a new concept of tourism, far from over-exploitation of the environment and alternative to mass tourism, with a better distribution over both time and destination; enhancing intra-Community tourism. The overall budget for the European Year of Tourism amounted to 5 ECU million, distributed among the following actions:

- actions co-financed by the Community budget: 2.5 ECU million, of which 1.5 ECU million to finance pilot projects, implemented by public and/or private entities, aimed at promoting off-season tourism and cultural, rural and social tourism; while the remaining 1 ECU million was dedicated to actions that promoted travel by young persons in order to improve knowledge of the different European cultures and intercultural dialogue;
- actions entirely financed from the Community budget: 2.5 ECU million, of which 300,000 ECU for competitions and prizes and 2.2 million ECU for information and publicity campaigns both in the mass media of the Member States and in those of third countries;
- administrative expenses and year logo.

VII.1

European Years from 1990 to 2006

1.
See also: <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=CELEX:31989D0046:EN:HTML>
and
<http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=COM:1991:0095:FIN:EN:PDF>.

2.

For further information see:
<http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=CELEX:31991D0388:EN:HTML>

<http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=COM:1990:0450:FIN:EN:PDF>

<http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=COM:1993:0627:FIN:EN:PDF>

3.

Especially regarding cleanliness of air, safety, well-being, noise and vibration, according to the Advisory Committee on Safety, Hygiene and Health Protection at Work.

The Year included also actions without financial implications for the Community budget, i.e. voluntary actions by public and private operators in the tourism sector (for example, coordinated price reductions to encourage off-season tourism, advertisement, especially through the mass media, regarding the European Year and use of its logo, etc.).

The European Year of Safety, Hygiene and Health at Work 1992² was established with the Council Decision of 25 July 1991 91/388/EEC. Its opening conference took place on 12 March 1992 in Lisbon, Portugal, the country then holding the presidency of the Council of the European Communities. Three main reasons moved the Community in engaging in the European Year. The first was the conclusion of the third programme of action on safety and health and the related need to assess its importance, its results and the fundamental role of commitment both from employers and workers about these matters. The second aim of the Community was the capital importance of enhancing public awareness regarding safety, hygiene and health at work as well as their social and economic aspects, in the context of the internal market. Finally, the Community wanted to highlight the risks³ concerning safety, hygiene and health that occurred at the workplace, which actions could be taken to reduce them and the impact of European legislation on this issue; this third aim was particularly meant to be addressed to young people, workers and employers. The European Year was characterized by a decentralized approach, in fact each Member State that participated in the Year formed a National Liaison Committee composed by workers, employers and Ministries responsible for coordination and selection of projects to be financed with Community funding and for the implementation of actions at national level. Besides the Community Member States (i.e. Belgium, Germany, Denmark, Greece, United Kingdom, Ireland, Spain, France, Luxembourg, Italy, Netherlands and Portugal), also the European Free Trade Association (EFTA) (i.e. Austria, Finland, Iceland, Norway, Sweden, Switzerland) countries participated in the Year. The Year had a total budget of 12 ECU million, of which 7.7 million from the European Communities budget for 1992 while the remaining 4.3 million were allocated from the budget for 1993.

The European Year of the Elderly and of Solidarity between Generations 1993⁴ was established with the Council Decision of 24 June 1992 92/440/EEC. The objectives of the European Year were: enhancing the social aspect of European Community; strengthening society's sensibility towards older people situation, the issues of an ageing population and the measures required to deal with this theme; promoting solidarity between generations; avoiding the exclusion of the elderly from the process of European integration. The amount of Community financing was 6.9 ECU million. Each Member State appointed a National Coordinating Committee to set up, organize and coordinate the participation of the country to the European Year.

The European Year of Lifelong Learning 1996⁵ was established by the Decision 2493/95/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 23 October 1995. The themes of the European Year were: the importance of a qualified and open to all education, as well as the ability to learn by oneself in order to be ready for lifelong learning; the promotion of vocational training as a means for obtaining better job opportunities; the promotion of education and training during the working life, as the best response to the requirements of the job market and of society in general; focus on the lifelong learning of disadvantaged people, such as women; cooperation between educational institutions and actors from the private sector, like small and medium enterprises; the involvement of social partners in the creation of new opportunities for lifelong learning in a perspective of a highly employment-intensive economic growth; the raising of awareness of parents about the importance of education and, later, lifelong learning for their children's future; the improvement of the European integration in the field of education and training in a frame of mutual understanding and mobility in Europe, the spreading of information concerning European Union activities among European citizens, with particular attention to the theme of recognition of diplomas and qualifications across the European Union and the promotion of linguistic abilities. The activities devised for the Year included preparation and dissemination of studies, surveys and communication products; each State participating in the Year had to designate an appropriate body responsible for the selection, implementation

4.
For further information see:
<http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=CELEX:31992D0440:EN:HTML>.

5.
For further information see:
http://europa.eu/legislation_summaries/education_training_youth/lifelong_learning/c11024_en.htm.

and coordination of actions at a national level. The budget set for the Year by the European Union amounted to 8 ECU million.

The European Year against Racism 1997⁶ was established with the Resolution of the Council and the representatives of the governments of the Member States, meeting within the Council of 23 July 1996 96/C 237/01. The Year pursued the following objectives: to focus the attention of public opinion upon the threat posed by racism, xenophobia and anti-Semitism to democracy, respect for human rights and social cohesion of the Community; to foster reflection about necessary measures for combating racism; to promote the development and dissemination of good practices in the fight against intolerance and xenophobia, in order to enhance the effectiveness of the actions of people engaged in combating racism; to highlight the benefits of integration policies, particularly as far as employment, education, training and accommodation was concerned; to promote the participation in society of discriminated against people (because of their ethnic origin or religion). The measures adopted in the frame of the European Year included: conferences (especially at the beginning and at the end of the Year), seminars, reports, information campaigns, exchange of information between competent institutions regarding the above-mentioned activities, a common logo and slogan to support the recognition of the Year in as many public events as possible.

The European Year of Languages 2001⁷ was established with the Decision 1934/2000/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 17 July 2000. The first objective of the Year consisted in spreading awareness regarding the richness of languages inside European Union, as one of the most important signs of the variety of European cultural heritage; in fact all languages were intended to deserve the same evaluation since understanding and appreciating others' languages is the fundamental step for mutual respect and intercultural dialogue. The second aim of the Year consisted in encouraging multilingualism, while the third consisted in underlining the importance of being fluent in several languages under a cultural and social point of view as well as a source of better employment opportunities (i.e. allowing people to look for job outside their homeland, in other EU Member States), at the same time enhancing European eco-

6.
For further information see:
<http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=CELEX:41996X0815:EN:HTML>.

7.
For further information see:
http://europa.eu/legislation_summaries/education_training_youth/lifelong_learning/c11044_en.htm.

nomy competitiveness. The fourth and the fifth objectives of the Year consisted, respectively, in emphasizing the lifelong learning of foreign languages and in spreading information about the teaching and learning of languages. Forty-five European countries participated in the Year, each one appointing a national coordinating body responsible, under the supervision of the European Commission, for the activities related to the Year and in constant touch with the other national bodies. The European Year budget set by the Decision amounted to 8 million euro.

The European Year of People with Disabilities 2003⁸ was launched with the Council Decision 2001/903/EC of 3 December 2001 which begins stressing the objectives of the Year: raising awareness regarding the rights of people with disabilities, in order to ensure an equal treatment and avoid discrimination, especially multiple discrimination, against them; finding new means to encourage equal opportunities for European citizens with disabilities and spreading knowledge about good practices and effective strategies applied at local, national and European level; strengthening cooperation among all the parties involved in the issues related with disabilities, such as European Union, national institutions and governments, NGOs, private sector, people with disabilities and their families; paying attention to the image of people with disabilities and, more generally, to the communication aspects of this theme; highlighting differences between various disabilities; ensuring the adequacy of education provided to children and young people with disabilities, with the aim of permitting them a full participation in society. Participating countries were: all the EU Member States plus the four EFTA countries (Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway and Switzerland), the candidate countries of central and eastern Europe (CCEE), Cyprus, Malta and Turkey; each participating country had to establish a national coordinating body to organise the activities related to the Year. The budget fixed at European level for the European Year of People with Disabilities 2003 consisted of 12 million euro.

The European Year of Education through Sport 2004⁹ was established by the Decision 291/2003/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 6 February 2003. Sport was in fact recognised as a major economic and social phenomenon at the European level, endowed with a fun-

8.

See also:

http://europa.eu/legislation_summaries/employment_and_social_policy/disability_and_old_age/c11413_en.htm.

9.

For further information see: http://europa.eu/legislation_summaries/education_training_youth/sport/l35008_en.htm.

damental social and educational role. The objectives of the Year were: spreading the awareness of the educational role of sport among institutions and sports organisations, in order to promote cooperation in the field of education through sport; exploiting the values conveyed through sport to improve young people physical and social abilities; underlining the contribution of sport to non-formal education of young people; encouraging good practices concerning sport in education system, especially regarding social inclusion of disadvantaged groups; considering the problems of the education of young sportsmen and sportswomen. The budget provided at European level for the Year consisted of 12.1 million euro; besides, there were other funds coming from the Commission, the Member States and other parties. Each Member State designated a national body responsible for the implementation of the actions related with the Year. Among the countries which participated in the Year there were the 25 Member States, as well as Bulgaria, Romania, Turkey, the countries of the European Free Trade Association (EFTA) and the European Economic Area (EEA). The Year opening conference was held in Dublin (Ireland) during January 2004.

The European Year of Citizenship through Education 2005,¹⁰ launched with a conference held in Sofia (Bulgaria) on 14-15 December 2004, was proclaimed by the Council of Europe in order to focus on the crucial role of education in building a democratic society. In fact, the Year was aimed at highlighting the all-embracing character of citizenship, avoiding an exclusively legal and political view on this concept. Education was intended to promote mutual understanding and dialogue between different cultures, solidarity, equality and, above all, social cohesion as well as a sense of belonging to the values and principles of the European Union. The general objective of the Year was to establish a link between policy and practice in the field of Education for Democratic Citizenship and Human Rights (EDC/HRE), supporting effective and sustainable programmes for EDC/HRE and providing a broad framework for Member States' actions which could enhance their impact. The Year had also four specific objectives. The first was to promote awareness of the importance of education in the development of democracy and participation to social and political

10.

For further information see:
http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/education/edc/eyce_2005/eyce_evaluation_en.asp.

life, in a context of respect for diversity and human rights, intercultural dialogue and social cohesion. The second objective consisted in encouraging the Member States' commitment to an educational policy based on EDC/HRE, while the third objective concerned the importance of providing the Member States with a set of adequate instruments to fully realize the role of education in developing democracy, respect for human rights, social inclusion (with special regard to young people). The last objective consisted in sharing best practices and promote partnerships at European level as well as with other global actors.

The European Year of Workers' Mobility 2006¹¹ found its legal basis in the Decision 2241/2004/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 15 December 2004, which established a single Community standard for the transparency of workers' qualifications and competences (Europass). The theme of workers' mobility, chosen in connection with the Lisbon strategy, was developed through three main objectives of the European Year: making European workers aware of their liberty to establish themselves (and work) wherever they decide inside European Union, as well of the available instruments to fully enjoy the right to mobility and to be informed about the existing job opportunities, namely, the EURES network; sustaining and enhancing good practices in mobility; promoting studies and researches concerning mobility flows in Europe, the obstacles to these flows and the reasons which move people to spend a period outside their homeland, in another Member State. The Year was launched with a conference which took place in Brussels on 20-21 February 2006, entitled "Workers' mobility: a right, an option, an opportunity?" and focused on the relationship between globalization and the European labor market. The overall budget of the Year amounted to 10 million euro.

11.

For further information see:
http://europa.eu/legislation_summaries/internal_market/living_and_working_in_the_internal_market/c11333_en.htm.

On 17 May 2006, the European Parliament and the Council adopted the Decision 771/2006/EC to designate 2007 as the European Year of Equal Opportunities for All - Towards a Just Society (EYEO).¹²

The final aims of the European Year were to encourage people's awareness of their rights to enjoy equal treatment and a life free of discrimination - irrespective of sex, racial or ethnic origin, religion or belief, disability, age and sexual orientation and to launch a major debate on the benefits of diversity for European societies. In order to reach these general objectives, the EYEO opening conference, which took place in Berlin on 30-31 January 2007, stressed three main goals of the Year: to spread information among people about their rights to equal treatment; to move closer to achieving the objective of real equal opportunities for all; and to underline the benefits of diversity for societies in the European Union. Besides, the EYEO Decision established four key themes, also known as the "4 Rs" - Rights, Representation, Recognition and Respect. The first one, Rights, was aimed at making people more aware of their rights to equal treatment and of the existing European legislation on this subject - special attention was dedicated to those groups at risk of discrimination. The second theme, Representation, intended to stimulate debate about the need, as well as the possible means, to improve the participation in society of groups that suffer from discrimination, a typical case being the balanced participation of men and women. Recognition emphasised the benefits of a pluralistic society and the positive contribution that every person could make to it, once removed stereotypes and prejudice. Finally, Respect focused on building a more cohesive society, fighting violence and discrimination, with particular regard to young people.

VII.2

2007: European Year of Equal Opportunities for All

12.

For further information see: <http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=555&langId=en&CFID=2544001&CFTOKEN=ba5ec6e2c7303bbd-4EC84996-C802-0082-9483F4FD816CDC90&jsessionid=030919d4243964760450> and especially *On-going Evaluation of the 2007 European Year of Equal Opportunities for All* available at the following link: <http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?langId=en&catId=423&newsId=483&furtherNews=yes>.

Among the EYEO significant and original features there was, according to an explicit request from the Decision that instituted the Year, equal focus on the six grounds of discrimination (i.e. sex, racial or ethnic origin, religion or belief, disability, age and sexual orientation) and concern about multiple discrimination, which refers to the fact that people are discriminated against on more than one ground at a time. In such a context the participating countries generally published calls for proposals dealing with more than one kind of discrimination at the same time, thus fostering cooperation between national, regional and local authorities active in the field of discrimination as well as the NGOs representing discriminated against groups.

The EYEO focused on the relation between gender and the other five forms of discrimination listed in Article 13 EC, while some countries supported actions specifically addressed at the issue of multiple discrimination against women.

Perhaps the key factor of the EYEO success was the wide participation and profound commitment of the Member States, the European institutions and civil society. In some cases, the EYEO provided the Member States their first important occasion for an open, in-depth debate on the themes regarding discrimination. The European Union encouraged the Member States to identify the problems and the challenges specifically related to their national context, in order to draw up public strategies and priorities aimed at tackling the various ground of discrimination observed in each country.

Thirty countries participated in the EYEO, 27 Member States plus Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway. The EU budget for the EYEO amounted to about 15 million euro, more than half of which (7.65 million euro) were allocated for activities at national level, while the remaining part was used for Community-wide measures. Adding the resources coming from each Participant Country, the total EYEO budget consisted of around 18.5 million euro.

EYEO actions were decentralized: 30 National Implementing Bodies (NIBs, generally ministries) planned national strategies to implement the EYEO, in close cooperation with civil society. The country case-study

reports from Denmark, Ireland, Lithuania, Romania, Spain and Slovakia found that the decentralized approach had improved the participation in the EYEO of citizens and organizations representing discriminated against people, especially the smaller (but deeply rooted in civil society) ones.¹³

The success of the decentralized strategy results clearly considering the 434 Actions successfully implemented, which produced more than 1,600 concrete outputs, consisting of more than 1,000 meetings and events, about 440 national-level information and promotion campaigns and over 120 studies and surveys. So, the general public has been widely reached by the events organised during the EYEO and considerably more European citizens have been able to become aware of their rights to non-discrimination. As mentioned above, an important role was played by non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and social partners, while an intense dialogue was established with local authorities and policy-makers.

13.

Communication from the Commission to the Council, the European Parliament, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions - Implementation, results and overall assessment of the 2007 European Year of Equal Opportunities for All {SEC(2009)781}; COM/2009/0269 final, available at the following website: <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=CELEX:52009DC0269:EN:HTML>.

The European Year of Intercultural Dialogue (EYID) 2008 was declared by the European Parliament and the Council on 18 December 2006, with Decision 1983/2006/EC and officially inaugurated on 7-8 January 2008 during a two-day conference in Ljubljana, Slovenia.

The choice of this theme, strongly connected to the previous 2007 European Year of Equal Opportunities for All, was due to the increasing cultural diversity (under several aspects: language, religion, ethnic background, etc.) inside the European Union, consequence of globalisation and deregulation of employment laws as well as of the enlargement of the Union. In such a complicated and evolving situation, intercultural dialogue played a central role in fostering European identity and citizenship; besides, it was believed to help people to enjoy the benefits of learning from different cultural traditions.

According to Decision 1983/2006/EC, the European Year of Intercultural Dialogue was intended to pursue both overall and specific objectives. The former could be identified in:

- recognising intercultural dialogue as a means to improve the ability of European citizens to deal with a rich and complex cultural environment, provided the historical, and recently increasing, coexistence of different identities and beliefs within the Union as well as each Member State;
- underlining the utility of intercultural dialogue not only at a European level but also in the context of globalisation;
- involving European citizens, especially young people, in active European citizenship, which implied an open attitude to the contribution coming from cultural diversity and its influence on the historical

VII.3

2008: European Year of Intercultural Dialogue

development of the Member States, in the frame of common European values.

The specific objectives of the Year consisted in:

- actually bringing the intercultural dialogue in EU citizens' everyday life, again with particular focus on younger generations;
- identifying and spreading, assuring them a wide visibility at a European level, best practices in promoting intercultural dialogue, with particular regard to young people and children;
- exploring the full potentialities of education and the media in promoting cultural dialogue, as well as the principles of equality and mutual understanding between different cultures;
- ensuring the coherence of all Community programmes and actions with the aim of intercultural dialogue, and promoting their continuity;
- discovering and encouraging new ways of implementing intercultural dialogue, with the largest participation of different social actors.

As far as intercultural dialogue is concerned, in the context of the EYID 2008, eight major topics were selected: culture and the media, education/science, migration, minorities, multilingualism, religion, the workplace, youth. In fact, art has often benefited from the creative impulse coming from different culture, while the media have developed a strong influence on citizens' vision of the world and on their perception of different people, thus confirming or deconstructing stereotypes. Under the educational point of view, intercultural dialogue aimed to provide individuals with the knowledge and skills to live in increasingly diverse societies; particularly relevant appeared the issues of democracy, citizenship, civil rights, but also knowledge about other cultures and foreign languages, as essential bases of dialogue between different cultures. Minorities and migration have enriched Europe's cultural, linguistic, ethnic and religious heritage and intercultural dialogue helps citizens to establish deeper understanding and relationships with immigrants and people belonging to such minorities. Regarding religions, intercultural dialogue displayed its importance in a very sensible field, for, in multicultural societies, the diversity of faiths, beliefs and convictions can lead to misconceptions and fears: dialogue constitutes the main instrument to overcome these fears, by encou-

raging mutual knowledge and openness. Cultural variety in the workplace was recognised to be a real asset for competitiveness in a globalised economy and also to improve corporate image and reputation. The final topic regarded the special importance that intercultural dialogue has for young people growth, at a time they are still developing their own vision of the world and acquiring skills and competences for their future. Interaction with different cultures stimulates young people curiosity, their creativity and understanding of society, helping them both in their professional life and as active and responsible citizens.

To sum up, the key message of the EYID was that intercultural dialogue contributes to: mutual understanding and a better living together, exploring the benefits of cultural diversity, enhancing an active European citizenship and a sense of European belonging.

The EYID was particularly targeted to young people, disadvantaged social groups, but also civil society organisations. All the EU Member States took part in the EYID. At the EU level the European Commission's Directorate-General for Education and Culture was responsible for the implementation of the Year while in each EU Member State was established a National Coordinating Body, usually a representative of the Ministry of Culture and/or Education.

The EU budget for the EYID amounted to about 10 million euro, of which 3 million euro for actions at European level, 3 million euro for projects at national level (one in each Member State), 3.3 million euro for information campaign and 0.7 million euro for studies and evaluation.

Information about the European Year of Intercultural Dialogue 2008 is available at the website: <http://www.interculturaldialogue2008.eu/>.

The European Year of Creativity and Innovation (EYCI) 2009 was declared by the European Parliament and the Council with Decision 1350/2008/EC of 16 December 2008. The conference that officially launched the EYCI was organised by the Czech Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports and the European Commission; in the framework of the Czech Presidency of the EU, it was hosted in the Czech Senate on 7-8 January 2009.

The European Council repeatedly highlighted the vital importance of innovation in order to improve Europe's competitiveness in the context of globalisation; besides it focused on the deep relationship between innovation as a source of competitive advantage and creativity as a personal attribute, dependent on cultural environment and, above all, education. In fact, in March 2007 the European Council launched the concept of "knowledge triangle": education, research and innovation. The European Union supports various initiatives aimed at promoting creativity and capacity for innovation, through the exchange of experience and good practices; among these, it may be worth to remember the Community Action Programmes for Lifelong Learning and Youth policies, as well as the 'Education and Training 2010' work programme.

The European Year of Creativity and Innovation focused on the vital importance of creativity and innovation both for economic prosperity and for social, as well as individual, wellbeing. The EYCI aimed to spread good practices, to encourage education and research, to promote political debate.

The theme choice was related to the financial and economic crisis that emerged late in 2008, since creativity and innovation were considered

VII.4

2009: European Year of Creativity and Innovation

essential means to discover effective solutions to difficult situations. Although particularly useful in critical moments, creativity and innovative capacity were chosen as themes of the European Year 2009 mainly for their crucial long-term benefits for the economy, society, enterprises as well as individuals, i.e. as fundamental pillars for sustainable economic and societal development.

The Year was focused on creativity in the cultural context as well as in the utilitarian sense, in this latter meaning the EYCI underlined the importance of innovation to improve Europe's competitiveness in the global economy. Specific goals of the Year reflected this double approach. In fact, the EYCI aimed at promoting artistic and scientific culture at all levels of education, in order to create and maintain an active, innovative mindset among students; another important objective was the preservation of a creative, open-minded attitude throughout adult life, for example through the appreciation of cultural diversity or familiarisation with information and communication technologies. Under the economic profile, EYCI established a link between creativity and entrepreneurship, sustainable development, regional and local growth, specific industrial sectors such as design, innovation in public and private services.

The above-mentioned Decision 1350/2008/EC highlighted the general objective of the Year: fostering, along with the Member States policies, creativity, through lifelong learning, in order to improve innovation, aimed at promoting, as a consequence, the development and well-being of all people. The Year was also intended to pursue a list of specific objectives, which focused on creativity supporting factors such as:

- a cultural and social environment favourable to innovation;
- respect and acceptance of cultural diversity as a unique tool to improve intercultural dialogue;
- aesthetic, intellectual and emotional development of all children;
- the importance of creativity for both the individual (under a personal and economic profile) and economic growth, with special attention to young people;
- mathematical, and more broadly, scientific education, as well as technological knowledge;

- ability to face change, problem solving;
- forms of individual self-expression by means of both formal and non-formal education;
- awareness of the fundamental role of creativity in the labour market, especially in a globalised world, to improve job opportunities;
- creative activities which foster innovation, such as design and management skills, but also protection of intellectual property;
- innovative capacity in private and public organisations, encouraging the active participation of both employees and clients.

The EYCI was particularly addressed to young people, educators, firms, policy makers and civil society organisations, as well as the general public.

The European Commission coordinated the Year, under the lead of the Directorate-General for Education and Culture, in association with the Directorate-General for Enterprise and Industry. In each participant State, a national coordinator, usually a representative of the Ministry of Education, was responsible for the implementation of the Year at a national level. All EU Member States, plus Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway and Turkey, participated in the Year.

No specific budget line was planned for the EYCI. Events hosted in the Member States were funded by national authorities, possibly in partnership with private entities (market companies, civic organisations, etc.). EU support came from existing funds, such as the 7th Framework programme. Extensive information regarding the European Year of Creativity and Innovation 2009 is collected in the website: <http://www.create2009.europa.eu/>.

The European Year for Combating Poverty and Social Exclusion (2010) was declared by the European Parliament and the Council with Decision 1098/2008/EC of 22 October 2008. The Opening Conference took place in Madrid on 21 January 2010, at the Auditorium of the Ministry of Health and Social Policy.

Poverty can include a variety of aspects, from lack of money to spend on food and clothes to suffering poor housing conditions and even homelessness. It also implies limited lifestyle choices that may lead to social exclusion. To provide a quantitative benchmark, the common threshold applied to at-risk-of-poverty indicators in the EU is that of 60 % of median equivalised disposable income after social transfers.¹⁴

Poverty appears to pass on from one generation to another, and it especially affects groups of people such as families with children - especially large families and single-parent families - elderly people, disabled people and immigrants. Generally, women are more at risk than men. Poverty goes along with social exclusion and causes a number of difficult situations, for example: insufficient health care; reduced access to education, leisure activities and modern technology; financial exclusion and over-indebtedness. For this reasons, European Union framework for tackling these and other related issues cares particularly about eliminating child poverty and poverty within the families as well as gender and age discrimination; encouraging social inclusion, education, employment; combating financial exclusion, over-indebtedness and working out the housing issue.

The decision to make 2010 the European Year for Combating Poverty and Social Exclusion found its root in the founding principle of solidarity

VII.5

2010: European Year for Combating Poverty and Social Exclusion

14. Eurostat, *Combating poverty and social exclusion. A statistical portrait of the European Union 2010*, p. 39
http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/cache/ITY_OFFPUB/KS-EP-09-001/EN/KS-EP-09-001-EN.PDF.

of the European Union. The main objective of the Year was to raise public attention about poverty, in its above-mentioned multiple aspects, and the related social exclusion, giving a voice to those who daily experience these conditions. At the same time, the Year aimed at renewing the EU Member States commitment to find proper solutions to this social issue. Among the reasons that moved European Union to deal with poverty and exclusion, there was their impact not only on the well-being of individuals and their ability to take part in society, but also on economic development and on social cohesion. Fighting poverty was in fact expected to positively influence economic growth and employment. Although the decision of the theme for European Year 2010 had been taken before the crisis, undoubtedly the economic downturn underlined the importance of poverty issue in the European political agenda, since unemployment rose sharply in many countries and the subsequent fall of public expenditure and social transfers furtherly worsened the situation.

The Decision 1098/2008/EC established four objectives for the European Year:

- recognition, which concerned the fundamental rights of poor people to a dignified life and to participate actively in society. The European Year was aimed at raising public awareness upon the situation of people experiencing poverty, enhancing poor people opportunities to benefit from social, economic and cultural rights, combating stereotypes and social exclusion;
- shared responsibility and participation emphasized the role of both public and private actors in providing effective support for social inclusion policies, highlighting the role of both private citizens and society in the fight against poverty, particularly through volunteering;
- cohesion underlined the increased social cohesion that originates from the defeat of poverty, as well as the general benefits coming from an equal society with no poverty and no social marginalisation; this objective is aimed at creating a society characterized by high quality of life, educated people, fulfilling jobs, social well-being, sustainable development, solidarity and equal opportunities for all;
- commitment and practical action renewed the efforts of the EU and

the Member States to combat poverty and social exclusion, by involving all interested social actors.

The European Year 2010 was intended to be characterized by decentralisation and coordination, with several awareness campaigns, meetings, discussions and conferences, competitions achievements regarding the theme for the Year, etc.

In the effort against poverty, the Union involved the Member States as well as the actors in the public and private sectors, such as organisations in civil society and those defending the interests of persons living in poverty, as well as the social partners, local and regional authorities.

At national level, a programme was developed for adapting the policy guidelines framed at European level to each country. Responsible for designing and implementing the programme was a NIB, National Implementing Body (usually, an administrative authority). All the 27 EU Member States participated in the Year, plus Iceland and Norway.

The 2010 European Year was given a budget of at least 26 million euro, of which 17 million euro provided by European Union. This may be supplemented by funding from private sources.

A website was set up to spread information about the event: www.2010againstpoverity.eu.

VIII

The International Year of Volunteers promoted by the United Nations

Rita Sassu ECP – Europe for Citizens Point Italy

In the middle 1990s a group of important international non-governmental organizations (NGOs) launched the idea of an International Year of Volunteers (IYV).¹ The initiative was brought to the attention of the United Nations system for the first time during 1996 at a Policy Forum in Japan organised by the United Nations Volunteers programme (UNV) and the United Nations University (UNU). On 22 July 1997 the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), with the support of the UNV and of the Government of Japan, presented to the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) a proposal for a resolution establishing an International Year of Volunteers (IYV). The same year, on 20 November, the 52nd session of the UN General Assembly adopted Resolution A/RES/52/17² which declared 2001 the International Year of Volunteers. Resolution 52/17 gained the support of 123 member states. The UNV was designated as the centre of coordination of the IYV and the necessary financial resources were mainly provided by Belgium, Italy and Japan.

The IYV 2001, whose official opening ceremony took place at UN Headquarters in New York on 28 November 2000, aimed at highlighting the achievements of volunteers worldwide, at widening participation in voluntary activities and at providing a favourable context for the development and effectiveness of volunteering. In fact, while volunteering constituted a unique instrument to tackle serious social, economic, cultural and humanitarian problems, the number of people involved in voluntary service was reputed insufficient. More specifically, IYV 2001 focused on four primary objectives: recognition, facilitation, networking of volunteer service and promotion.

Recognition was meant to ensure a consultative role for voluntary sec-

VIII.1

2001: International Year of Volunteers of the United Nations

1. For further information see: <http://www.worldvolunteerweb.org/tools/about-us/iyv-2001.html> and <http://www.unv.org/en/news-resources/archive/unv-news/unv-news-december-2001/doc/iyv-2001-a-chronology.html>.
2. See: http://www.worldvolunteerweb.org/fileadmin/docdb/pdf/2001/A_RES_52-17_eng.pdf.

tor in the field of governmental and local decisions. This scope was pursued by implementing country studies which identified the contribution of volunteering to national welfare and to the country progress. Awards for the dissemination of the best practices were also instituted.

The facilitation measures were designed with keen attention to the specific cultural framework of each State, in order to avoid unintended discouraging effects. To provide a few examples: legal status, insurance cover and social welfare protection for the volunteers; special permission accorded to employees in order to provide them the necessary time to spend in voluntary activities; various kinds of tax deductibility; volunteer service as a valid alternative to military service, etc.

The third objective, networking, was established in order to promote relationships between communities, at local, provincial, national and even international level, and the exchange of best practices by means of television, radio, the press and other media. One of the most significant communication tools was the IYV web site (www.iyv2001.org), launched in 1998, on 5 December, International Volunteer Day.

The effort for promotion was aimed at enlarging the number of volunteers by attracting new candidates and spreading a favourable public opinion regarding voluntary service.

Among the outstanding preparations for IYV 2001 there was the plan for the Year designed by the Canadian IYV Leaders Forum in Montebello, held in Quebec on 20-21 April 1999, while the same year, in June, the first National IYV Committee was established in the Netherlands, and before the end of 2001 there were 123 National IYV Committees, one for each participant country. These committees were composed of government representatives, the media, the private sector, academia and civil society. On 19-21 August 1999, the first IYV Regional Workshop, in Paramaribo, Suriname, gathered delegates from numerous states of the Caribbean region; between 2000 and 2001 seven additional regional workshops took place in different parts of the world, organized by the UNV programme and with financial support provided from the Government of Japan. Also 10 IYV City Committees, the first of which was established in October 1999, were constituted by the New York Association for Volunteer

Administration and UNV.

During December 2000, by means of a second UN resolution, 'International Year of Volunteers', the UN General Assembly requested the UN Secretary-General to submit a report on actions that governments and the UN system could implement in order to enhance volunteering. Furthermore, the resolution requested the UN Secretary-General to submit a report on the results of IYV and its follow-up, to be presented at the 57th Session of the General Assembly in 2002. In fact, a study³ regarding the achievements and results of the IYV 2001 was released in 2002 by the Institute for Volunteering Research in the UK and the Development Resource Centre in South Africa and formed part of UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan's report on the outcomes of IYV 2001.

The Council of Europe adopted several important initiatives aimed at fostering voluntary activities and at supporting the IYV 2001: on 24 January, the Council adopted recommendations on IYV in order to use legislation to disseminate volunteering among European citizens, removing legal obstacles to the engagement in voluntary action. Among the other activities promoted by the European institutions between 2000 and 2001, it can be worth remembering the European Senior Volunteers Conference hosted at the European Parliament in Brussels on 28 September 2000, the support ensured by the European Commission to the volunteering among young people and, on 21 May 2001, the European Youth Convention on Volunteering hosted by the European Economic and Social Committee.

On 5 December 2001, the 56th session of the General Assembly in New York included two sessions on the different tools that governments and the UN system could avail themselves of in order to support volunteering. The closing of the Year was celebrated globally on 5 December - the annual International Volunteer Day.

3.

The report can be found at the following link:
<http://www.worldvolunteer-web.org/resources/research-reports/global/doc/iyv-global-evaluation.html>.

The UN General Assembly, having regard to the need to consolidate the achievements of the International Year of Volunteers 2001, decided to mark the tenth anniversary of this initiative by means of the IYV+10,⁴ established by Resolution A/Res/63/153.⁵ Among the primary goals of the IYV+10 there is the celebration of the diversification of volunteerism, in order to enhance the pluralism which constitutes one of the outstanding features of the voluntary sector.

The Consultative Meeting on the International Year of Volunteers +10 was held in Bonn, Germany, on 22-23 October 2009, at the United Nations Volunteers (UNV) Headquarters. The Meeting aimed to discuss ways to celebrate the anniversary as well as the drawing up of a Global Plan of Action.⁶ This Plan of Action is composed of seven sections: global coordination; common vision; communication, promotion & recognition; networking and partnerships; social inclusion and IYV+10; engaging national leadership/ national committees; facilitation. The first section, global coordination, includes the establishment of a governing body for IYV+10 with the task of guiding partners and stakeholders towards the most effective ways to avail themselves of the opportunities offered by the IYV+10; the governing body has also the responsibility to ensure coordination with other important initiatives such as the European Year of Volunteering. During the Meeting emerged, beyond all different needs and views of the various participants, a common vision summarized in a document titled Vision Statement.⁷ According to this common vision, volunteering constitutes a basic human character and deserves a legal recognition, a sort of 'right of volunteering', having also regard to the Universal Declaration on Volunteering, adopted by the Board of Directors of the International

VIII.2

2011: International Year of Volunteers +10

4.

See also: <http://www.worldvolunteerweb.org/iyv-10/background/doc/the-history-the-original-1.html> and <http://www.worldvolunteerweb.org/iyv-10/resources/doc/resolutions-leading-to-iyv-10.html>.

5.

The text of the Resolution can be consulted at the following link: http://www.worldvolunteerweb.org/fileadmin/doc/db/pdf/2009/UNV_resources/GA_RES_IYV_10.pdf.

6.

Available at the following link: <http://www.worldvolunteerweb.org/fileadmin/docdb/pdf/2010/FINAL%20IYV10%20-%20Global%20Plan%20of%20Action%20-%20Jan%202010.pdf>.

7.

See also: <http://www.worldvolunteerweb.org/iyv-10/background/doc/iyv-10-vision-statement.html>.

8.

See also:

<http://www.iave.org/content/universal-declaration-volunteering>.

9.

For further information regarding the Millennium Development Goals, i.e. eradicate extreme poverty & hunger, achieve universal primary education, promote gender equality and empower women, reduce child mortality, improve maternal health, combat Hiv/Aids, malaria and other diseases, ensure environmental sustainability, develop a global partnership for development, see:

<http://www.un.org/millenniumgoals/>.

10.

See also: <http://www.worldvolunteerweb.org/iyv-10/background/doc/global-call-for-action-1.html>.

Association for Volunteer Effort (IAVE)⁸ in January 2001. In fact, besides its social utility, particularly in reference to Millennium Development Goals,⁹ volunteerism is important for the individual development of volunteers themselves. The third part of the Plan is dedicated to communication, promotion & recognition. In this field, the first objective is to attract as many new volunteers and donors as possible, through the emphasis on interviews, videos and articles in which the successes of voluntary activities are highlighted. A Communications Working Committee develops a communications strategy whose outstanding message includes the recognition of the key role of volunteerism for both the social and individual well being and aims to spread the desire for volunteering among as many people as possible. The Committee has also develop a new logo for IYV+10, a 'toolkit' or communication materials, involving spokespeople and celebrities to spread the message of IYV+10; a large number of stories of volunteerism are collected and global events are organized; the Committee takes care of the publication of reports regarding the outcome if the IYV+10, develops inter-active online calendar with events related to IYV+10 as well as the website World Volunteer Web (<http://www.worldvolunteerweb.org/>); also web 2.0 tools such as social networks, blogs etc. are used for the communication campaign. The section about networking and partnerships focuses on the multilateral nature of volunteering, since the participation of many different stakeholders constitutes a powerful means to collect human and financial resources. Through cross-sector partnerships, on the other hand, the comparative advantages of each different stakeholders' category (e.g. governmental and intergovernmental bodies, civil society organisations, academic and research institutions, etc.) can be exploited at the highest degree. Among the proposed actions there have been a: a Global Call for Action¹⁰ (as an annex to the Global Plan of Action) launched on 5 December 2009 in order to promote the participation in the IYV+10 from cross-sector partners; letters to Heads of UN entities, for the same purpose; choice of a specific theme for every month in 2011; wide knowledge of the Global Plan of Action, and so on. The fifth part of the Plan points out the role of IYV+10 in promoting social inclusion, especially considering global problems such as financial crisis,

food crisis, etc. The proposals for actions in this section have been: form a working committee with the responsibility of carrying out a research on social inclusion; involve governments, UNV and NGOs networks like the NGO Committee for Social Development in the activities of IYV+10; disseminate and exchange good practices in the field of social inclusion and volunteering; develop a working committee dedicated to enhance and recognize professional abilities of volunteer management. As far as National Committees is concerned, their task consists in coordinating the activities related to the IYV+10 at a national level and the actions that implemented in the framework of the Plan which are: create a best practices database of National Committees; map all the existing National Committees; draw up a scheme that each country may follow when establishing its own National Committee, specifying, among other items, the purpose of the IYV+10 National Committees, the existing legislation regarding this matter and the outcome of the National Committees; develop a practical Guidance Note about how the National Committees ought to function; ensure coordination at global and regional level, collaborate with initiatives such as the European Year of Volunteering. The seventh section focuses on the necessity to facilitate the participation of as many people as possible, from every background, in volunteering. The actions are: form a Working Committee on Facilitation; improve empirical methods to evaluate the impact of volunteerism, for example develop, collect and review studies on best practices, train volunteers themselves to assess the impact of their activities, exchange best practices, especially simple ones, establish a clear way to point out the impact of volunteering; establish a research committee; enhance the capacity to organize volunteers; highlight means of investing in new volunteers groups composed by young, elder or marginalized people; encourage a favourable policy and legislation framework; etc. An exhaustive synthesis of the outcome of the Consultative Meeting is available in its Final Report.¹¹

11.

See: http://www.worldvolunteerweb.org/fileadmin/docdb/pdf/2010/FINAL_Report%20IYV10%20Consultative%20Meeting%20October%202009%20Bonn.pdf.

IX

Italian Entities active in the field of Volunteering: Best Practices

AFSAI, Association for Intercultural Training, Exchanges and Activities was born almost 50 years ago when a group of people, many of whom youngsters, decided to found an organization that had as a goal the youth and cultural exchange between peoples and nations. During all these years, the main goal has been attained with growing success, always highlighting the distinctive characteristic of AFSAI: a non-profit association composed by youngsters, that proposes programmes for and with youngsters.

In 1971, AFSAI obtained juridical personality, through the Decree of the President of the Republic n. 922 of 27 May.

The structure of AFSAI is based on the volunteering of its own members: the overwhelming majority of these are youngsters that have already participated in one of the programmes proposed by the Association and develop their volunteering activities gathered in Local Committees and/or Commissions, established during the works of the General Assembly. The Local Committees are assisted by a National Coordination Office that tightly collaborates with the Board of Managers of the Association. The supreme decision-making organ of AFSAI is the annual General Assembly that, besides deliberating on programmes, orientations and management scales, also takes the decision or elects the members of the Board of Managers. Instead, a small nucleus of professionals works at the National Coordination Office, dealing with administrative management, following the deliberations of the General Assembly and of the Board of Managers, organizing and coordinating associative programmes, connecting the work of the volunteers in the various Local Committees, keeping international relations and taking care of national contacts with the various partners of AFSAI.

IX.1 AFSAI, Association for Intercultural Training, Exchanges and Activities

Objectives

To spread the activities of intercultural learning for youngsters through:

- the promotion of mutual understanding between cultures by means of exchanges and transnational youth activities;
- the promotion of youth social protagonism by means of projects of international youth volunteering;
- the support of youth active citizenship by means of local promotion of associative vision and mission.

Activities

- International cultural youth exchanges;
- international youth volunteering projects;
- training of trainers of international youth exchanges and of tutors of projects of international volunteering;
- network of aggregation and support to participants of the transnational youth activities;
- network of local organizations of social solidarity.

Programmes

The European Voluntary Service (EVS) is promoted by the European Commission and allows a European or non European youngster (18–30 years) to become a volunteer in a foreign country within or outside the EU for a specified period, normally between 2–12 months. Each EVS project has at least three partners, a volunteer, a sending organisation and a host organisation. The project has to take place in a country other than where the volunteer lives, it is non-profit-making and unpaid. The EVS seeks to develop solidarity, mutual understanding and tolerance among young people all over the world, thus contributing to reinforcing social cohesion in the European Union and to promote young people's active citizenship.

EVS is a true 'learning service'. Beyond benefiting the local communities, by participating in voluntary activities, young volunteers can deve-

lop new skills and, therefore, improve their personal, educational and professional development.

Example of EVS Project coordinated by AFSAI: A Future Together (EU-Africa EVS Project)

‘A Future Together’ was a project implemented by AFSAI and co-funded by the European Commission in the frame of the Youth in Action Programme, Action 2 European Voluntary Service. The project aimed at promoting Intercultural Dialogue and Social inclusion of people coming from different socio-economic environments and different personal backgrounds.

It aimed in fact at raising the awareness of young people about the importance of developing a good idea of respectful cultural, economic and personal diversity, based on common values.

The project was based on the work of 12 youngsters who volunteered for a period of 9 months in six countries: Italy, Spain, Portugal Kenya, Ghana and Mozambique.

The volunteers were engaged in a wide range of social activities that included assisting children, women, people suffering from HIV/AIDS, elderly and those with different abilities.

In the framework of this EVS project, AFSAI developed also a video documentary on the EVS experience of 8 volunteers from Europe in three Africa countries: Ghana, Kenya and Mozambique.

Leonardo da Vinci

AFSAI each year hosts some trainees within the Leonardo Programme with the aim of:

- supporting training and lifelong learning - education in the acquisition and utilization of knowledge, skills and qualifications to facilitate personal development, employability and participation in the European labour market;
- supporting improvements in quality and innovation of systems,

institutions in the practices of vocational education and training;

- increasing the attractiveness of education, training and mobility for employers and individuals and to facilitate the mobility of working trainees.

International culture and youth exchange (ICYE)

ICYE - International Cultural Youth Exchange is an international federation (working in the sector of cultural exchanges) that offers to youngsters up to 35 years old the opportunity to spend one year in a foreign country. ICYE is an independent Federation that cooperates with diverse institutions, bodies and international agencies; it has a consultative status at the United Nations Education Science Culture Organisation (UNESCO) and at the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC).

Furthermore, it is a member of the Geneva Informal Meeting of Youth International Non-governmental Organisations (GIM), of the Coordinating Committee for International Voluntary Service (CCIVS) and of Mobility International.

Seminars and congresses

The reference subjects of the seminars and congresses of AFSAI are strictly connected to youth problems, to the themes of intercultural education and to the relations between institutions.

Training courses are directed at youngsters belonging to youth associations and organizations either at local and regional level or at national level. The main goal is to train trainers, who can act as multipliers within the association itself and the organization of belonging.

National civil service (in Italy and abroad)

The National Service is directed at boys and girls aged 18 to 28. Such a project is strictly connected to the promotion of social solidarity at national and international level, to cooperation, to the protection of the envi-

ronment, of the historical and artistic patrimony and to civil protection.

Youth exchanges (Action 1)

On the contrary, the projects of cultural exchange organized for groups of youngsters are of shorter temporal nature: such programmes are normally developed in European countries and, in some cases, foresee the reciprocity of the exchange. The approached themes are relative to the interests of the youth group: for example, they might regard the environment, the socio-cultural promotion of the marginalized youth, youth cooperation between different countries and/or other themes of interest of youngsters.

Work camps

A valid opportunity to combine two fundamental elements of each individual's personal growth: solidarity and intercultural experience.

Solidarity because there is the possibility of helping people and/or structures that have the need to grow and do not possess great economic resources.

Partner organisations

In the fulfillment of our own programmes, AFSAI favors the collaboration with other youth realities that, not possessing direct contacts at an international level, do not always manage to build a constructive confrontation between their local engagements and the supranational dimension that each project potentially has.

Furthermore, the Association collaborates with various local bodies in the realization of courses, projects, programmes and congresses; the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Presidency of the Council of Ministers – National Civil Service Office is a privileged partner in the organization of short exchanges done within the protocols of cultural cooperation signed by the Italian State. AFSAI also collaborates with the Italian National

Agency in the ‘Youth in Action’ programme of the European Union, at the Ministry of Work and Social Politics.

Sectors of action

The organization AFSAI (Association for Intercultural Training, Exchanges and Activities) works in the sector of youth mobility since 1958.

From 1996, with the pilot-phase, it enters the communitarian programme Youth for Europe (later on called Youth and from January 2007 Youth in Action), through which it starts hosting international volunteers in Italian structures associated to AFSAI.

In the decade 1996-2006, AFSAI, in the quality of coordinating organization, hosted almost 300 international volunteers in diverse structures, which constantly increased in number, throughout the Italian territory. Such intercultural experiences constantly revealed to be a richness for those who took part in them: the volunteers, who developed human and professional competences of high level; the hosting organizations, which found the presence of volunteers to enrich their intercultural dimension and the activities progressively introduced; the hosts of the various hosting structures that, thanks to the presence of volunteers, received bigger stimuli to the international youth world, finding themselves learning new knowledge and developing hand skills; the sending and coordinating organizations, which boosted their own partnerships, leading them to submit and run projects of volunteering, training and evaluation, every time more complex and always in line with the changes and the priorities of the European Union, facing themes such as equality, xenophobia, intercultural learning and fight against social exclusion.

AFSAI regards that the Youth in Action Programme, specifically the European Voluntary Service, is a fundamental means for the growth of ‘our’ volunteers and the structures coordinated by us, and therefore aims at operating in the sphere of the above-mentioned programme with tools and capacities that are increasingly more innovative.

The goal is not only to provide volunteers more complex and well

structured projects, but also to satisfy their requests, along with the demands and changes of our society, bringing to our work, our partners and our structures, information and tools that are up to date and compatible with the various cultural diversities present in Europe, so as to offer concrete possibilities of growth for those who take in it.

The motivations that drive our organization to continue to take part in the EVS programme are heavily connected to the involvement of Italian youngsters who return from their experiences and find in our association the possibility to realize their ideas and projects, thanks to the use of knowledge and competent tools such as to assure them the fulfillment of new projects and/or the participation in running projects.

At the moment, AFSAI coordinates a dozen hosting organizations present over the Italian territory, within which some international volunteers are active.

On the basis of its mission and its conviction that stimulating youngsters through dialogue and cultural knowledge is one of the fundamental elements to make solidarity not only a support tool but also an element of strong educational impact, AFSAI wishes to start hosting volunteers in its own headquarters in Rome, at the national coordination office, setting the following main goals:

- to sensitize young volunteers (with particular care to those who are penalized by their geographical position in the tracing of information connected to youth opportunities) to develop interest in:
 - non-formal education;
 - youth exchanges;
 - international long-term volunteering;
 - European projects directed at youngsters and not;
 - social issues;
- to propose to youngsters a model of work different from the usual, stimulating autonomous organization, discussion and group work, the ‘learning by doing’ and the individual responsibility in subjects diverse from those traditionally dealt with;
- to contribute to the fulfillment of actions necessary to amplify the positive effect of the activities of non-formal education and cultural pro-

motion, be it for small communities as well as for big urban centers;

- to allow the volunteer to acquire theoretical and - practical notions in the following fields:

- youth transnational mobility;
- European Union programmes addressed to youth;
- group animation and management;
- administration and management of a youth association;
- computer science competences;
- linguistic competences;
- competences inherent to communication;

- other objectives to achieve are:

- to reflect on one self's specificities and cultural characteristics;
- to raise the importance of intercultural learning;
- to contribute to the development of initiatives and projects with the

scope of favoring cultural integration, the knocking down of stereotypes and the fight against xenophobia and racism;

- to favour the active participation of young volunteers;
- to encourage, through the further promotion of common initiatives and local experiences, the knocking down of cultural prejudices towards other countries.

Project environment

The activities proposed to AFSAI volunteers concern four main areas:

- social field;
- field of intercultural education;
- education to the development and knowledge of European citizenship, towards youngsters, through programmes and international projects;
- more generally, in the sector of youth mobility and volunteering, at national and international level.

The activities conducted in the last 10 years have seen a constant growth in the participation of youngsters and of the local territories with which AFSAI works. To sustain and improve the results obtained so far, it

was considered necessary to create a more structured and continuous link between AFSAI and partners of the Association.

AFSAI has always had the intention of bringing out the undertaken paths and activities, transferring the 'know how' at the local level and sustaining a series of local partnerships that facilitate the rooting of the Association on the territory.

The association AFSAI wishes to set up, and continue, new cooperation with different kinds of sending and hosting organizations, in order to reinforce and promote partnership and to transfer its own competences in the sector of the Youth in Action programme to other foreign associations, with the scope of increasing their knowledge and sharing new work tools in the field of non-formal education.

As far as the volunteers is concerned, the association does not set any restriction, emphasizing the respect for other people's diversities, seen as a source of enrichment and stimulus for the local community and the association itself.

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IX.2

Amnesty International

In 1961, British lawyer Peter Benenson ignited a worldwide campaign, shone a spotlight on the world's forgotten prisoners, and lit a candle of hope that still burns today. Appeal for Amnesty 1961 was launched with the publication of an article in the British newspaper The Observer. Learning of the imprisonment of two Portuguese students who had raised their wine glasses in a toast to freedom, moved Benenson to try to turn a reader's 'sickening sense of impotence' into a belief that change is possible.

His words were prophetic. 'Something effective' has been done. The world has changed. Amnesty International – as the organization became known – has been taking action, and empowering others to do so, for 50 years. The original campaign has grown with each success to become a worldwide human rights movement now with more than 2.8 million members, activists and supporters, all committed to changing our world.

Our vision is for every person to enjoy all the rights enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and other international human rights standards.

We are independent of any government, political ideology, economic interest or religion and are funded mainly by our membership and public donations.

The overwhelming majority of our income comes from individuals the world over. These personal and unaffiliated donations allow Amnesty International to maintain full independence from any and all governments, political ideologies, economic interests or religions. We neither seek nor accept any funds for human rights research from governments or political parties and we accept support only from businesses that have been care-

fully vetted. By way of ethical fundraising leading to donations from individuals, we are able to stand firm and unwavering in our defence of universal and indivisible human rights.

Since 1961, outraged by human rights abuses but inspired by hope for a better world, we work to improve human rights through campaigning and international solidarity that help keep hope alive locally.

The members, activists, supporters and staff have worked globally and locally, with institutions and individuals. As well as helping develop international law, for example, they have been instrumental in freeing hundreds of individual prisoners.

Our members and supporters exert influence on governments, political bodies, companies and intergovernmental groups.

Among the many activities we carry out, we send experts to talk with victims; observe trials; interview local officials; liaise with human rights activists; monitor global and local media; publish detailed reports; inform the news media, publicize our concerns in documents, leaflets, posters, advertisements, newsletters and websites.

We help stop human rights abuses by mobilizing our members and supporters to put pressure on governments, armed political groups, companies and intergovernmental bodies via: public demonstrations, vigils; letter-writing campaigns; human rights education; awareness-raising concerts; direct lobbying; targeted appeals; email petitions and other online actions; partnerships with local campaigning groups; community activities; co-operation with student groups.

One of the most effective form of action is the Urgent Action network. It consists of thousands of Amnesty members around the world who take immediate action in response to threats of execution, killing, torture or ill-treatment. Prisoners, human rights defenders and others at risk have testified to the impact of this action technique, which contributes to some improvement in nearly half of its appeal cases.

Over 50 years, Amnesty International has helped develop and draft international, regional and national human rights law – such as the UN Optional Protocol on Child Soldiers and the Convention on Enforced Disappearances. Our pressure and lobbying paved the way for the esta-

ishment of an International Criminal Court. Years of intense campaigning, with powerful partners, has resulted in a UN commitment to draft a treaty to regulate the Arms Trade.

And as country after country decides to stop executing people Amnesty International was at the heart of the coalition that convinced the UN to vote for a global moratorium on the death penalty.

Every day, around the world, someone is directly affected by our work: the accused, given a fair trial; the prisoner saved from execution; the detainee who is no longer tortured; the activists freed to continue their defence of human rights; the school children, learning about their rights in the classroom; the families escorted safely home from refugee camps; the ex-child soldier, burning his uniform; the policemen and women taught how to keep public order, without causing public terror; the marginalized communities marching to demand an end to discrimination; the father, whose 'disappeared' son's body is finally returned; the battered woman whose government finally outlaws the abuse she faces every day. And the leader, who presided over the rape, torture and slaughter of his opponents, who stands in the dock, finally called to account.

But until every person can enjoy all their rights, the candle will continue to burn. It will burn until all human beings can live in dignity; until no one is penalized for his thoughts, religion, gender, conscience, sexuality or place of birth; until no one is tortured, kidnapped or disappeared.

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If the ways to possibly conceptualize professional action and educational intervention are many and varied, in the same manner the practices through which these are materialised can be oriented in more than one direction. In this context, emphasis should be placed on two different, although interrelated, aspects: the first one is everything that concerns social activity, the second one concerns the effects produced by the first one. The term ‘social activities’ embodies a combination of these two elements. Compared to voluntary action as such, Progetto Laboratorio as an association is the formula for operating in one’s own field of specialisation: this also means that designing a service and managing it personally is the most direct way to achieve the association’s reference values. Alongside this aspect is the special attention that is paid to protecting and safeguarding employment.

Mission and values take on the role of ‘tools’ for interpreting and managing the association: they are the active components of the profession and daily contribution that we make to the development of a social community based on principles of solidarity and mutual support. Providing social services takes on a special meaning for us: beyond a logic of welfare that trivializes and impoverishes educational intervention, designing and managing services and projects addressing the individual is equivalent to weaving together what ultimately makes the social fabric of the local territory lively and cohesive. All this stems primarily from a common principle that is shared by all members of the association: management options and the definition of objectives are actions that are influenced by the values on which the Association is founded, and supported by ethical principles concretely adhered to during the meetings.

IX.3

ARSE, Progetto Laboratorio onlus

Therefore, our mission consists of a set of values and responsibilities primarily aimed at the pursuit of the community's general interest in promoting individuals and the social integration of citizens. We are well aware today that our association can make a contribution in developing the local community, working together with other actors to develop the most appropriate processes of social dignity. The role of our working and volunteer members becomes more meaningful in pursuing this goal. Recognizing the value and meaning of our actions is to make it no longer an end in itself or subordinate to market mechanisms or political interest, but to sustain it in promoting the growth of the local community.

The fact that we choose to continue to manage public funds means that we want to address the common good toward services and opportunities, promote concrete actions, and making public and free services efficient. The ultimate purpose of our action is to create a virtuous circle geared toward the gratification and satisfaction of all the parties involved in the process: from promoters to beneficiaries. To do this we have built the history of our association, which started in 1997. We were in Rome, in the second half of the 1990s. Our history is closely linked to the management of new services that have arisen in the city through the application of law 285/97. Despite the date shown at the bottom of the official registration, 5 November 1997, the day of inception of the Association is April 4, 1998, at Via Capraia 54, in the Tufello district, in the eastern outskirts of the city. On a beautiful sunny day, with the usual delay in the scheduled meeting, we entered a place left in disuse and neglected by the Directors and inaugurated the first District Center for Infants and Children. The walls of the large room at the entrance see the first Sunday of voluntary activity, with some of us, fans of the Rome soccer club, socializing with the patrons of the bar next door and, in the euphoria of the final score, struggling to explain a project of which the district has never heard.

Law 285/97 has yet to be enacted, but for us, exalted by the ongoing professional training, this is already a meaningful target and, in practice, we try to solicit the time-limits and project the innovative lines in a complete manner. The first video of those days symbolically shows a group of children running in the street, who open an old, worn out shutter, chased

by the youngest who cannot keep up with the older kids.

The first public contribution is a local tender on culture, two months of intense action with a packed calendar of activities: rehabilitation of green areas, sports promotion tournaments, video screenings, festival of games, all to be held in areas which are normally populated by cars or degradation. A great effort, including an opening meeting, a final event and an evaluation of the project with a representative of social work. A great satisfaction, a large number of people involved and a confirmation: showing us that it can be done. This was 1999. We recorded a second video in which the frames of the various milestones were freezed. We are among the promoters of local coordination, in the 4th Municipality, where, in March 2000 the project responsible for the inauguration of the Centro di Aggregazione Spazio 285 was developed. After months of sporadic initiatives, temporary projects, the time finally came for a long-term project funded on a continuous basis. The history of Area 285 is a rich history that lasted until December 2001. Many people, when they pass through Via Capraia, remember those passionate and intense days, in which a community was built to satisfy the needs of young people. Many boys and girls, some of them parents by now, grew up within those walls in the midst of heated debates and high values, breathing an intense air of respect and openness toward any issue: from sex to school, without pause.

In December 2001, Spazio 285 completed its course and, in the beginning, we refused to accept the idea that such a successful experience was to be terminated, but we were very naive then, and had just embarked on a series of projects and services that were interrupted despite the fact that we acted according to professional ethics and with determining passion in our work.

Does anyone still remember the ‘Kermesse di Teatraglia Antisgombero’ invented to prevent the interruption of the project by the owner of the premises, occasionally reminded of being in possession of a property fallen into disuse. The contract for the Headquarters at Via Capraia was finally signed and in the following years, it continued to carry out its operations as a Youth Center although poorly funded through sources obtained from Public Bodies. Finally, in 2007, the project was defini-

tively terminated with the publication of a pamphlet by the Center for Multimedia Communication, a sort of Telematics Platform for children aged under 18.

While faced with these difficulties in the 4th Municipality, the Association started new partnerships in the 5th Municipality, in the 7th Municipality, and in the 2nd Municipality. On all these occasions, it rapidly managed to implement several projects on issues concerning job placement for the disadvantaged, youth centres, playgrounds, participatory processes and workshops on historical memory. A long series of activities followed thereafter which led to an increase in the number of members and greater financial capacity and operational experience on the part of the Association, allowing it to fully penetrate Rome's third sector economy.

In 2003, the Association headed a joint-venture in the management of the 'Municipal Playground and parental support service', funded by L. 285/97, operating as municipal coordinators. In this project, it was the promoter of various initiatives, but the one most worthy of mention is the group dip in the Trevi Fountain, which, though very unprofessional, on July 10, 2008, it released funds which had been blocked since the beginning of the year. This gave the opportunity to give continuity to the 'Playground', which, in the meantime had become the Association's business card. Memories from that period include the commitment and professionalism of our team, capable in difficult situations to be known for its serious management. Ludomagicabù was its name: and for those who work, it's like a daughter. It may seem like a strong comparison to those who really have children, but that is really the common perception. Not only operational management, but also freedom to think, act, reflect and experiment a big Municipality and a large office 285 capable of materialising a dream project and support, valorize, discuss and bring to life for so many years this experience. In addition to the actions carried out with the children, the project included parental support activities through which many parents discover the pleasure to meet and share the problems of raising children.

This was June 2009, when the 'National Centre of the Innocents' recei-

ved an unexpected award. The Playground was selected at national level as one of the best management operations for projects 285/97 and a cry of joy accompanied the news passed by word of mouth, choked with emotion. It appeared to be the start of a new plan for a project, which after many years, could become a permanent service even in the plans of the competent authorities at institutional level.

Within these premises, during the morning hours, the toddlers from the Spazio Be.Bi. run about, a service launched in 2007. The original idea was to avoid leaving the premises on Via dei Lincei 93 empty and silent, then the need was raised to meet the needs of the local parents. By not paying the rent, since the premises are owned by City Hall, we plan to improve the quality of service by providing a better teacher / children ratio than that offered by the city of Rome. Another cause of rejoice. In the meanwhile, we were granted a location in the 11th Municipality, which is experimenting the first forms of participatory budgeting. The Association runs the first year of the District Assemblies and collaborates on the drafting of an account, as well as on training courses addressed to local Administrators.

In the district of Rome70, one of the priorities that have arisen from the 'Participatory Budgeting' is the creation of a Youth Centre. After having established contact with the young people from the district and subsequent meetings we propose a project, creating a vast network of partnerships, capable still today of managing the Centre. This takes us to March 2005, when the Centro di Aggregazione Giovanile 'Tetris' was opened.

Two years later, after the completion of a series of projects on the promotion of sport education, activities with schools in the Memory Laboratory, Memory trips to Auschwitz, tenders of ideas, social self-promotion, European youth exchanges, actions to valorize the Garbatella neighbourhood, video workshops, we finally opened a second Youth Center, named Inkiostro.

We quickly arrive to our present day, though omitting what in fact was a lot of hard work,¹ where we now operate with a wider point of view, which is nonetheless capable of keeping a straight course toward continuous qualification and innovation in a profession and sector which lie since time immemorial, like many others, at the margins of the economy

1.

Progetto Laboratorio has also edited a few books, such as: *Paths, walking through the Garbatella district*, 60 pages, Self-produced, Patrocinio Municipio XI, 2008; *Adolescence at risk or adolescents' risk?*, Centro di Comunicazione Multimediale, Social Report 2007, 60 pages, Self-produced, 2007; *Pillola Rossa, Pillola Blu - Politiche di Democrazia Partecipata nel Municipio Roma XI*, 196 pages, Carta Editions, 2005.

and which, instead, we consider essential to the development of a community.

Progetto Laboratorio was conceived by a group of young professionals who wanted to test their skills in training and educational services, gained through years of study and experience: recognizing specific autonomy to social and educational intervention in full compliance with the basin of users is the prerogative of our professional conduct, both in the past and in the future.

Progetto Laboratorio, as a training and cultural agent, is inspired by the notion of education as a public and collective reality, as a social asset, and tends to contribute to the overall social and civic growth of the whole community through the design, implementation and management of services. The research action as a method of intervention is aimed at developing critical skills and self-criticism by individuals both in group and in personal experiential activity: through our professional conduct, therefore, we are inclined to offer individuals, whether children adolescents or adults, a variety of opportunities of expression and sharing with the aim to create real opportunities for growth and self-enrichment, experimentation, meeting with others and the discovery of the new, while staying in tune with the challenges posed by a changing world. Our definition of education, therefore, is not the adoption or transmission of a model imposed from the outside, but rather, promoting the development of autonomy in the search for our own way of being in this world.

The particular attention paid to educational activity stems from the purpose of creating a landmark in the territory for all those who need a quality service which is centered on the person, restoring and confirming the irreplaceable value of the responsibility of 'human action': in this sense, the concept of Lifelong Learning is materialised in a practice that concerns all the various aspects of an individual, whether child, adolescent or adult: body, movement, intelligence, and emotion. Personal growth and enrichment takes place through action, through experience, that is by playing an active role, with and in the midst of others: 'working together to stay together'.

Over the years, the level of competence and commitment of the opera-

tors and volunteers who provided the services and implemented the projects has always been certified by academic titles, but, in particular, by a series of monitoring and evaluation activities of the work performed: this is the reason why we normally maintain that the search for quality in services addressed to the person is not a safe haven, but rather a way of navigating.

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Caritas Italy was founded in 1971 as the pastoral body aimed at promoting charity within the Christian community. «Caritas has a predominantly pedagogical function, in forms consistent with the times and the needs».²

Caritas Ambrosiana was founded in the Diocese of Milan in December 1974. It is the official instrument through which to «promote and coordinate charity and assistance actions, among the other specific responsibilities of the Diocese».³

In the Diocese of Milan, which includes 1.107 parishes, there are about 800 Parish Caritases, and over 300 Listening Centres. The Listening Centres together with SILOE (Work Guidance Educational Services), SAM (Milanese Reception Services) and SAI (Immigrants Welcoming Services) work to help and support people in need. The need areas are the following: Abuse and difficulties of women, Addiction, AIDS, Disabled, Elderly, Immigrants, Handicap, Housing and work, Human rights, Marginalized and homeless people, Mental health, Minors, Prisons, Roms, Social policies, Women's trade and prostitution.

Caritas Ambrosiana also makes emergency plans and carries on long and short term actions to help people struck by natural disasters or involved in wars and other emergency situations. It works together with associations, cooperatives and foundations acting in the non-profit and third sectors.

Caritas Ambrosiana makes use of the precious instrument which is voluntary work. «In a time when everything is monetized, voluntary work gets us to think that life becomes more beautiful if spent in favour of other people».⁴ Thus voluntary work becomes a prophetic message within the

IX.4

Caritas Ambrosiana and its commitment to voluntary work

2. Pope Paul VI, National Meeting of Caritas Italy, September 27, 1972.

3. Art.1, Charter of Caritas Ambrosiana.

4. Don Roberto Davanzo, Diocesan Meeting 2010.

Christian community and civil society; evidence of the fact that gratuitousness makes a person's life richer and more true.

Caritas Ambrosiana believes in voluntary work meant as active participation, gift, fight against poverty, precious instrument to contribute to the changing of society, gesture of solidarity which becomes lifestyle. Voluntary work does not replace the work of public bodies, but it has to work with them in order to improve people's services .

«The capacity of voluntary work to make needs emerge, to give concrete answers, to build up interpersonal relations, to support people's rights, to communicate with social subjects and public bodies, makes it evident that it can favour the building of a spontaneous social contract and thus become a brick used to build up a type of Europe able to defend the rights of the weakest».⁵

Caritas Ambrosiana promotes voluntary work actions both in the area of the Diocese and at national and international level, as it well knows that «you can contribute to build a better world by doing good works here and now, with passion and wherever there is the possibility, no matter what parties' strategies and programmes are».⁶

Best practices

Caritas Ambrosiana provides screening, guiding, training and accompanying services addressed to young people and adults who intend to do voluntary work for the weakest part of the population. It does it through the Voluntary Work Counter, and in collaboration with other Caritas offices especially as regards the planning of actions in the Diocese territory. Specifically, together with the Peace Office and Youth's Pastoral, it plans voluntary work actions addressed to young people between 18 and 30 years of age, within the project 'Young People and Service':

- Abruzzo earthquake: following the earthquake that struck Abruzzo on April 6th, 2009, Caritas Ambrosiana allows young people from the Diocese to work in a camp aimed at people struck by the earthquake, together with local Parishes during the summer season;
- diocese collection of second hand clothes: for 25 years now,

5.
Voluntary Work and Evidence
of Charity, Regional
Delegation of Lombardy
Caritates, 2001.

6.
Deus Caritas est n° 31 b.

Caritas Ambrosiana has organized the collection of second hand clothes. together with the Diocese parishes. The idea at the basis of this action is recycling, using things to support specific projects chosen in collaboration with pastoral areas. Every year a type of action is chosen to which to give the sum;

- Young people and prison: the project ‘Young people and Prison’ celebrates its 11th anniversary this year. 236 young people from all over the Diocese have participated in this action so far. The project includes a training section on the themes of justice and penalty, a meeting with prison chaplains, and entering jails where to have meetings with convicts;

- Solidarity camps 2011: they last from 10 to 25 days; they take place in July and August in Italy (Calabria, Sicily, Tuscany, Abruzzo), in Bulgaria, Georgia, Moldova, Jordan, Lebanon, Thailand, Sri Lanka, Kenya, Bolivia, Nicaragua and Peru. The project is addressed to young people between 18 and 30 years of age and is carried out in collaboration with the International Office of Caritas Ambrosiana. The idea at the root of the solidarity camps is to get young people to meet in a camp where to help people in need like refugees, old people, youths. The camps are places where the young people can also examine some aspects of globalization, think over themes like justice, forgiveness and reconciliation in order to create routes towards peace. All over these years, more than one thousand young people have taken part and worked in solidarity camps in different parts of the world;

- ‘Let’s volunteer’ project: it is a new project that Caritas Ambrosiana has meant for young Italians and foreigners who want to live an experience of qualified voluntary work for a period of 6 months. It allows them to do periods of training and to experience community life;

- Animondo: it is meant to train young volunteers on the theme of education to globality. It involves the whole Diocese including parishes, schools and groups of young people. Its objective is to think about the theme using games and playing. A group of young volunteers has worked with parishes and schools since 2005 on the following topics:

- dialogue among religions and cultures (getting to know your own identity, discovering diversity, immigration and integration in Italy);

- economy and globalization (poverty and development of nations, Millenium objectives of the United Nations, evolution and critical points of fair trade);
 - environment (the case of ‘water’, sustainability of human development, possible lifestyles);
 - peace and human rights (arms trade and possible disarmament, man’s fundamental rights, history and rights of migrants);
 - information (the ‘factory of news’ in Italy and all over the world, Internet revolution, a new approach to communication);
 - National civil service: it is an example of active citizenship. It consists in community service, lasting one year and carried out on the basis of a project, in Italy or abroad, according to current regulations. It is on voluntary basis and it is governed by law 64/01 and by Legislative Decree 77/02. It is addressed to young Italian citizens, both males and females, from 18 to 28 years of age. Civil service lasts twelve months with at least 30 hours of work per week. It provides for a monthly payment and a daily allowance for the projects that take place abroad. Caritas, whose task is to educate the single person and the Christian community to testify evangelic charity and to promote justice and peace, has been offering civil service since 1976, when Italian bishops recommended conscientious objection and civil service as the preferential choice for the Christian person. The features that characterize civil service with Caritas are:
 - service of the people living in the area;
 - training seen as an opportunity of human growth for the young people doing the service;
 - awareness as a tool to spread the culture of nonviolence and solidarity through which the community becomes aware of the problems of the area where it lives and of the value of civil service.
- Caritas Ambrosiana welcomes young men and women to work on service projects in the following fields:
- minors: in community centres, recreation centres, housing communities;
 - old people: in retirement homes, nursing homes, day care centres;

- disabled people: in socio-educational centres and lodging houses;
- foreigners; in sheltered houses and listening centres;
- new services: Rom people, women trafficking and prostitution, mental illness, marginalization.

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The Circolo Femminile di Amicizia Europea (CFAE) of Frascati was conceived in the '60s, when the City Administration expressed great enthusiasm in espousing the idea of town twinning between municipalities. Pietro Micara, Mayor of Frascati from 1952 to 1960 and a convinced supporter of European integration, conceived the town twinning with Saint Cloud in France, Bad Godesberg in Germany, Maidenhead in the UK and Kortrijk in Belgium.

Since town twinning was designed with the purpose to combine political Europe with a community of peoples linked together by relationships on a human scale, entrenching further the reciprocity of privileged links between Twinned Towns, Madame Honorine Clement of Saint Cloud and Frau Else Ammermann of Bad Godesberg endeavored to establish a Circolo Femminile di Amicizia Europea in every twinned town.

In Frascati, the proposal to form a Circle of Women made by Clement and Ammermann was met with enthusiasm by a number of Citizens imbued with the spirit of friendship, intellectual vitality, female intuition and profound vocation for peace. In 1965, the CFAE of Frascati was finally conceived, in 1969 a delegation of five ladies was sent to Saint Cloud and, later, after having adopted a Statute and elected a President, Maria Pia Benedetti, in 1974 in Bad Godesberg, the CFAE signed the Founding Charter associating the twin circles with each other.

The signatory of the Maidenhead Circle was Mrs. Greta Winton, whose husband Nicolas Winton was hailed by all newspaper headlines in 1988 when it came to be known of the story, kept secret until then, of the rescue of 669 Jewish children, for which he was responsible in 1939, planning their escape to England from Nazi-occupied Czechoslovakia. Mr. and Mrs.

IX.5 CFAE, Circolo Femminile di Amicizia Europea (Women's Group for European Friendship) of Frascati and its history

Winton have been very active in the exchange of hospitality, hosting in their home even the children of some of the members of CFAE. Two films were produced based on the story of Mr. and Mrs. Winton and on the extraordinary history of the rescue of 669 children. One of them, 'Power of Good' was screened at the initiative of CFAE to the members of the Club and in the city schools.

As provided for in the charter of incorporation, the signatory circles, duly constituted under the law in force in their respective countries, undertake to carry out joint action for peace, solidarity, and meeting between peoples. Emphasis is placed on the lack of a profit-making purpose and on the commitment to reject any monetary contributions that may jeopardize the independence of the Circles in carrying out an action in favor of a United Europe.

The exchange of hospitality by the various households was chosen as the most suitable means for friendship and mutual acquaintance, whilst cultural exchange was assigned to the presentation (*exposé*), in various forms, of local news, as well as news on tradition and on the art and history of each country, and to a program of organized visits during the period of hospitality (4 nights, 5 days).

From the very onset, the Circle has had female connotations. The emancipation of women is a purpose shared by the European Union which, since its inception, took into account women's issues and promoted equal opportunities as one of the priorities of its policy. Traveling is also a valid emancipation tool, especially if it allows one to enter the life of a country through the life of its inhabitants, and the exchange of hospitality in families, which host people in their homes and are hosted abroad, helps to overcome any misunderstanding and break down many preconceived ideas. The reports from members after each instance of hospitality tell of the initial surprise in finding that their problems are identical to those experienced by their guests, and then place emphasis on diversity as an opportunity for mutual enrichment.

Even in cultural exchange, there is a search for what unites countries with different histories and cultures, and the stages of common history are recounted for recollection purposes. During their stay at the Circle of Bad

Godesberg in 2009, the members of CFAE and their German guests visited the Abbey of Monte Cassino, founded by St. Benedict Patron of Europe, and destroyed during the Second World War. It was the 65th anniversary of that atrocious bombing of 1944 and, after a few days the German Pope Benedict XVI also paid visit. Some years earlier, a similar visit was made at the explicit request of the French guests.

Furthermore, all Circles undertake to plan for their Social Year several cultural activities and the programs are exchanged for appropriate information. If the CFAE places emphasis on the culture of the twinned towns, its European friends hold conferences on Palladian villas and go to the theatre to see plays by Pirandello.

Each event that takes place in Europe sees the participation of the Circle of Frascati. There was a large party for the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989.

In order to adapt to a world in rapid transformation: easier travel, families with members of different nationalities, new lifestyles, use of computers, faster communication, as well as women involved in professional work and in the family, the EU enlargement to 27 countries, the twin circles hold a conference on a rotating basis with the participation of 6 or 7 delegates for each Circle, and between one conference and the other, a meeting between Presidents and Vice Presidents. To date, a total of 9 Conferences have been held.

In recent years some municipalities have expanded their twinning to other cities: the City of Saint Cloud has been twinned with the Spanish city of Boavilla del Monte, Bad Godesberg with the Turkish town of Yalova. On the other hand, the attempt to found women's circles similar to our own was unsuccessful.

In 1995, Austria joined the European Union and the current President of CFAE, Fausta Roncoroni, entrusted a lady of Salzburg, whom she had met when their children were in their teens and with whom she had maintained friendly relationships, to create a Women's Circle of Europe. Since then, in Salzburg a group of ladies was formed willing to share the goals of our association and the exchange of hospitality as a means for implementing them.

At the Maidenhead conference in 2004, the Women's Circle formed in Salzburg has been officially recognized and fully accepted into the group of twinned circles. In addition to the inclusion of the Circle of Salzburg and, subsequently, a new timetable for the exchange of hospitality, the CFAE was confirmed as in charge of the task of organizing the Meeting of Presidents in 2007 and the Conference in 2010, thus deferring to these two meetings the task of updating the 'Founding Charter' (Charter), which regulates relations between the various circles.

The statutes of each circle, like the common 'Founding Charter', also had to be rewritten and their contents updated so that they would embody what was already accepted in practice.

For CFAE, rewriting their statute was an opportunity to redraw their identity as well as regulating the functioning of the latter and adapting it to applicable Italian law.

A comparison was made to try to harmonize the statutes of the various circles during the meeting of the Presidents, whilst the work concerning the review of the Charter was postponed to the next conference. After having read the 'Europe for Citizens' programme established by the European Parliament to encourage the active participation of citizens and organizations of civil society in the process of European integration, CFAE confirmed the validity of the activities undertaken so far and decided to adopt the same program as a set of guidelines for more rationally defining in the Charter the Circle's objectives and future programmes.

The CFAE recognizes that celebrating Europe Day, remembering the dates and modalities of the growth process of the European Union, taking account of the cities that have been assigned as European Capitals of Culture ... are not merely symbolic actions but an important way to instil a sense of belonging to Europe in its citizens. When, on May 9 this year, the city of Florence organized 'Blue Night' to commemorate the 60th anniversary of the Declaration of Robert Schuman, a group of members attended the events held in that city.

In rewriting the statute, a number of institutional activities were recognized, in addition to the exchange of hospitality, namely Women's Day (March 8), Europe Day (May 9), the Day of Friendship (September 23).

‘Women's Day’ is an opportunity to launch initiatives that help women understand the issues and their evolution over time remembering that, in the words of Pierre Loti: «If you want to know a country, you need to know the situation of women».

The Day of Friendship is a form of celebration of the many foreign ladies, mostly European, who work directly or through their families for various international scientific organizations present in Frascati, reside in the area and enrich it with their presence.

During ‘Europe Day’ the CFAE brings together the following events: the memory of historical events, the cultural knowledge of European countries, and emphasis on the European Capitals of Culture designated by the Council of Europe.

October 2006 marks the 50th anniversary of the invasion of Hungary by the Soviet Union, a painful chapter in European history. Hungary had recently entered the EU and, in preparing the annual program for 2007, the CFAE decided to dedicate to Hungary the first edition of Europe Day with a recital of Hungarian poems and music, and to organize an annual trip to visit that country. The performance, entitled ‘Parla la notte di Budapest’, was curated by director Lauro Versari, pianist Maestro Mattia Peli and actors Sonia De Meo and Nino D'Agata, who participated strictly out of friendship and common ideals.

The year 2006 also marks the 50th anniversary of the ‘Treaties of Rome’ and the City Administration joined the circle in celebrating Europe Day, affixing common posters inviting citizens to participate. It should be emphasized that the city administrations of Frascati have always offered their support to CFAE’s initiatives, always giving their welcome to the guests in the Residence Hall, attending all major initiatives and providing the facilities where to hold them. An even closer collaboration has been established recently with the Molinari, Posa and Di Tommaso councils.

Following the year dedicated to Hungary, the Circle of Frascati decided that the knowledge of a European nation was to become the theme of each Social Year.

After Hungary, the year 2008 was dedicated to Norway (Stavanger, European Capital of Culture), that of 2009 to Berlin (the anniversary of the

Fall of the Wall) and 2010 to Istanbul (European Capital of Culture).

To learn more about these cultural realities, an attempt was made to establish links with the respective Cultural Academies in Rome, conferences were organized and, in the last two years, a number of films which turned out to be very important in preparing for the trip to Berlin and Istanbul were screened.

In particular, in preparing for the trip to Istanbul, the members attended the screening of six films by Turkish directors or on Turkey, recounting stories, issues, settings such as to draw the viewer closer to a people whom negative language expressions may lead us to perceive as 'hostile'.

The respect for the different religions is constant: mosques and synagogues are visited with the intent to learn through them the messages that each faith offers to humanity. This happened in Rome, Bologna, Berlin, Szeged, and in Istanbul, there was almost a moment of synthesis with a visit to the Mosque of Fatih, the Church of the Orthodox Patriarchate, the Catholic Church of St. Salvatore, in Chora, and the Synagogue in the Galata district.

This year's 'Europe Day' was not only a time for celebration, but also an opportunity to reflect on the walls that need to be torn down and the bridges to be built between people and nations.

Over the course of the trips to the many destinations, it was pleasant to discover traces of Italy: paintings in the Council Chamber, in Kecskemet, that reveal links with the history of the Italian Resurrection, in Oslo, the new Opera House was built with marble from Carrara in Potsdam, in the Castle Cecilienhof, the painting of Villa Falconieri Frascati in front of which Truman, Churchill and Stalin decided the fate of Europe, in Istanbul, in the Gallery of Modern Art, the posters of the recently concluded exhibition designed by the painter Mario Levi, and in the central Piazza Taksim, heart of the official ceremonies, the War Memorial of Independence made by the Italian sculptor Pietro Canonica.

The other CFAE initiatives, namely: Guided tours of Rome, Travels to Italy, Art exhibitions, Theater performances, all seek, whenever possible, to focus on the points of contact between cultures. Having to choose between the many art exhibitions staged in Italy, the decision was made to

visit the exhibition ‘Caravaggio and Francis Bacon’, held in Rome, which satisfied the increasing need to compare events, things and characters with each other and, in Italy, the exhibition ‘The Dissemination of Impressionism in Eastern Europe’, held at Villa Manin, Udine, which highlighted the links that tie French painting of the Barbizon School to the painting of Central and Eastern Europe, successfully establishing a harmony of subjects and languages.

The visit to Trieste was also organized in that spirit, as being the border town in which three different cultures have lived together: the Italian, the Austro-Hungarian and the Slavic one.

Lastly, CFAE has always shown to be very sensitive to the issue of solidarity.

After having offered a ‘scholarship’ for many years, consisting of financial assistance to meritorious and needy students of the Didactic Circle of Frascati, it has widened its scope also beyond the local territory. Building on its only true wealth: the number of members (about 90!) it organized the following: shipment of medicines to the people of Kosovo, a concert by the ‘Ladri di Carrozzelle’ orchestra, made up of people with a handicap, a concert of folk songs from Abruzzo performed by ‘Corale Tuscolana’ to raise funds for the Conservatory of L'Aquila, which was partially destroyed by the earthquake; a collection of donations for the Children's Hospital NPH Saint Damien of Haiti, run by Fondazione Francesca Rava, an Italian miracle of the sensitivity of women, in the inferno of an island which was first devastated by an earthquake and then by a cholera epidemic.

During the conference, held on September 20 - 24, as agreed in the meeting of the Presidents, the various circles evaluated the revision of the ‘Charter’ of 1974, now obsolete, discussing it at the Presidents’ table, while at the round tables (one in Italian, one in French, one in English and one in German) the other delegations exchanged views on the topic of ‘Women in a Changing World’, topic of discussion suggested by the various circles.

The new ‘Charter’, which is the result of intense discussions and proficient diplomatic work thanks to which universal agreement was reached,

is an example of the development of a story that began 45 years ago, that is, the story of a group of women who, when faced with a stumbling block, decided to climb on top of it and look farther, and who are firmly determined to continue to build bridges to different countries, different stories and different cultures.

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The Italian Council of the European Movement (CIME) is aimed to coordinate the efforts of the Italian civil society organisations which are aware of the importance to achieve the unity of Europe, according to the original message of the ‘Ventotene Manifesto for a free and united Europe’ (1941).

For an organisation, association or institution to join the CIME means, in fact, showing its commitment to the further development of the European integration which will enable the EU to play a outstanding role in a globalized world and to actively contribute to establish an international order based on peace, economic and social progress and promotion of human rights.

The CIME is entirely funded through voluntary contributions and opened to accession by any Italian organisation which shares the above-mentioned purposes.

The CIME is also a founding member of the International European Movement, that, with its 43 national councils and its 27 member organisations, is today one of the most remarkable civil society organisations at European level.

The history of the CIME

After the ‘Congress of Europe’ held in Hague in May 1948, attended by the most important representatives of politics and culture of the postwar period, also in Italy a National Council of the European Movement was created in December of the same year, as a coordination structure between the political forces and European organisations established in the country.

IX.6 CIME, Consiglio Italiano del Movimento Europeo (Italian Council of the European Movement)

In 1956 the CIME was renewed due to arguments between the so-called functionalist, the supporters of a progressive integration of markets between the countries of the 'little Europe' as a necessary premise for any possible further development, and the majority of the Italian federalists, one of whose leaders was Altiero Spinelli, who had assumed, after the failure of the European Defense Community, a strongly critical position regarding the political strategies of the European governments. The rapprochement between the CIME and the European Federalist Movement (Movimento Federalista Europeo, MFE) occurred in 1966, on the basis of shared fundamental positions on a European federal strategy.

Thus, with the support of all European federalist associations, several political parties, and other organisations, the CIME has led important campaigns in Italy, in order to improve European integration. Among the achievements to which the CIME has contributed there are: the election by direct universal suffrage of the European Parliament, the creation of the single currency, the European constitutional perspective, the evolution of common policies on energy, defense, education and sustainable development.

Activities

Besides more traditional tasks, such as pressure on national and European institutions as well as on political forces, recently the CIME has been working in the field of communication, promoting awareness and information campaigns, particularly aimed to young people, given that the traditional Italian media do not dedicate the necessary attention to the impact that the EU has on our daily lives. Thus the CIME has involved thousands of citizens on issues related to European integration.

The CIME is also an important partner for all those institutions that at different levels deal with the enlargement of the European public sphere and debate, by means of innovative projects, especially in the field of political communication.

Even though the CIME is not a Study Center, it often collects data and analyzes the various problems concerning the process of European inte-

gration.

Through its broad network of contacts and its different members - including MFE with its nearly 100 local branches and more than 3,000 active volunteers registered - the CIME is able to promote various projects and awareness-raising initiatives, in order to foster active European citizenship.

Contact information

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Presentation of the Provincial Coordination of Civil Service

The Region of Emilia Romagna recognizes the value of voluntary service and issues regional law n.. 20 of 2003 which lays down the foundations for the establishment of the regional civil service system.

The region is the connecting point between the national and local authorities and decides to create a system of support and promotion at the provincial level, establishing the Provincial Coordination of the Civil Service Bodies - COPRESC, designed as second-level organization empowered to promote networking between the various stakeholders involved in community service and guide young people in evaluating this opportunity for active citizenship.

COPRESC is a mixed public and private association, formed by public and private non-profit organizations.

The bodies of the Association (President, Board of Directors and Shareholders' meeting) define the objectives and activities to be developed, whilst the operations office is in charge of the various initiatives in collaboration with members and local resources.

Coordination is carried out at provincial level with the aim to do the following:

- increase the culture and practice of voluntary service as an opportunity for local authorities, young people and the local community;
- provide an assistance, counseling and training service for members, thereby favoring the opportunity for discussion and the forms of collaboration;
- promote information campaigns and awareness raising initiatives

IX.7 COPRESC Coordinamento Provinciale degli Enti di Servizio Civile di Bologna (Provincial Coordination of Civil Service of Bologna)

on civil service and on the forms of participation and active citizenship.

COPRESC Bologna has been operating since 2005 and is responsible for coordinating and supporting institutions and organizations through the set up of workshops, training courses, consulting and public initiatives.

At the same time, it is addressed to young people, who are the real protagonists of the civil service, providing information, opportunities to meet, communication campaigns and training courses.

The Voluntary Civil Service, established by law n. 64/01, aims to fulfill the principles of social solidarity and unarmed and non-violent defense set out in the Italian Constitution, through the active participation of young people aged between 18 and 28 in community development projects and initiatives for the protection of artistic, cultural and environmental assets.

Subsequently, through law n. 20/03 of the region of Emilia Romagna, the Regional Civil Service was established which, echoing the goals of the national legislation, widens the bracket of people who are eligible to perform community service, thus including also:

- Italian and foreign girls and boys aged between 15 and 18;
- Foreign girls and boys aged between 18 and 28;
- Adults and seniors aged over 28.

Area Information and Communication

The Provincial Coordination of Civil Service Authorities of Bologna is actively engaged in the promotion and dissemination of community service among young people and has launched various communication initiatives, including information campaigns, guidance services and awareness-raising events.

A year-round service information desk is available at the COPRESC office, supported by its website, whilst promotional materials, press releases, radio commercials and press advertisements are disseminated during calls for selection of volunteers.

Awareness raising activities are carried out on an ongoing basis, throughout the year, and include the following: awareness raising events in

schools and vocational training centers; briefings held at Universities during lectures, presentation meetings at intercultural and youth centers; participation in volunteer service festivals organized in the various districts of the province; training courses for teachers as part of the Education for Solidarity and Active Citizenship project.

Promotional activities are carried out during calls for selection of volunteers and are aimed, on one hand, at providing visibility to any existing projects in the Bologna area and, on the other hand, at guiding young people in the choice of community service.

In particular, the following instruments are applied:

- public meetings to present the projects;
- information office desk for young people;
- website, mailing lists and newsletters;
- distribution lists of the University of Bologna;
- local media: press releases, ads, radio and video commercials;
- distribution of information materials and publications (posters, postcards, brochures, etc.);
- ‘open day’ organised by the civil service in collaboration with the local municipalities.

With regard to awareness-raising activities, the ‘10 minutes for the Civil Service’ project was launched in 2007 at the various faculties of the University of Bologna: a series of information briefings held during lectures are organized in collaboration with the office of the Presidency, aimed to illustrate how the civil service functions and to bring the direct testimony of the volunteers involved. This method makes it possible to promote civil service on a wide scale and to enhance the educational and training benefits that can be gained from the experience among university professors.

During the academic years 2007, 2008 and 2009 approximately 40 meetings were held involving volunteers from 15 civil service institutions, 10 University faculties and 1700 students.

For several years now, Coordination has also been promoting the awareness-raising project called ‘Open Access’, an educational opportunity to the values of active citizenship, solidarity and peace which are ‘co-essen-

tial issues of education and training' (law n. 20/03 of the Region of Emilia Romagna).

The project is addressed to secondary schools with three different objectives: contributing to the path of education for citizenship as provided for by law n. 169 of 30 October 2008, providing guidance with respect to after school training and participation and providing information on the various aspects characterizing the civil society.

The path of regional community service for minors meets this training requirement, offering both awareness-raising activities in the classroom and a hands-on experience in the field of social, educational, environmental and cultural activities.

The project proposal is basically structured into three different phases:

1) awareness-raising and promotion in the classroom, through recreational and educational activities, testimonials and the presentation of regional civil service projects;

2) receiving the young volunteers in the organization implementing the selected regional civil service project, for a total commitment of 35 hours of work activities next to the volunteers and operators of the applicant organization (including 5 hours of specific training and any additional time spent on common activities among all volunteers) to be carried out over a period of approximately three or four months, one afternoon per week, or during the summer period;

3) enhancing the experience by awarding a certificate of participation issued by the Region of Emilia Romagna, including the granting of training credits by the school.

The project involves several subjects who contribute to its implementation:

- civil service institutions: they present the regional civil service projects for young people aged 15-18, participate in promotional initiatives, follow and train volunteers over the course of their experience;
- schools: managers and school teachers promote voluntary civil service awareness-raising meetings recognizing the educational and training benefits of the experience;
- students and families: these are the privileged beneficiaries of the

project and a resource for the community;

- national civil service volunteers: these are the witnesses of their own active citizenship experience.

From the school year 2004/2005 to the school year 2009/2010, the following were involved overall: 20 civil service organizations, 30 schools and 10 vocational training centers.

With regard to the activities with students, we have organized approximately 270 meetings over the course of the six-year school period, meeting approximately 5000 students.

A total of 275 young people applied, of which nearly 170 completed the service for a total commitment of 35 hours.

In 2007 and 2009, COPRESC, in collaboration with the Region of Emilia Romagna and the Provincial School Bureau, organized two events for the awarding of participation certificates to all young volunteers who completed the practical regional civil service experience.

COPRESC also organizes meetings, conferences and seminars to provide visibility to the various civil service and active citizenship experiences that take place in the province.

Training Area

Training activities are targeted to municipal operators, volunteers, teachers and students.

With regard to municipalities and local institutions, a number of courses have been organized for local project operators, project managers and selection staff. Such profiles and figures are all provided for by the civil service regulations.

The courses for Local Project Operators (Operatori Locali di Progetto – OLP) are aimed at providing knowledge of civil service regulations and favoring the acquisition of skills and expertise in hosting, training and management of civil service volunteers.

The course for Selection Staff aims to address the selection activities that form the basis of the work of the organizations and authorities which, upon approval of a given civil service project, are responsible for exami-

ning the applications submitted by the potential volunteers and conduct the necessary evaluation interviews. There are two aspects that the course aims to deal with: first the method of selection as a means of assessing human resources and, secondly, the procedures and requirements prescribed by the regulations on civil service at the time of selection.

The course for Project managers intends to support the planning activities that each organization and authority must carry out in order to host civil service volunteers.

Based on the analysis of the needs of the territory with respect to the specific sphere of activity, the figure of project manager must foresee the objectives and action plan which are able to meet the needs of the community and contribute to the civic education of young volunteers.

The course offered in 2007 included an initial introduction to the technique of Logical Framework and a second more specific part on the rules for planning national civil service.

In 2009 a new training course was offered for project managers, building on the previous experience of participants with the aim to identify the strengths and weaknesses of existing projects and build a new project, on a 'step by step' basis, to be improved along the process and centered as much as possible on the needs of the territory and expectations of young people.

Since 2007, COPRESC has been in charge of organizing and coordinating general training activities addressed to civil service volunteers. In 2007, seven training courses were launched, which saw the participation of 130 young people volunteering for 20 local organizations; in 2008 six courses were launched with the presence of 119 young volunteers from 29 Italian and foreign civil service institutions and, in 2009, five courses were completed with 113 volunteers from 26 Italian and foreign civil service institutions.

The training generally involves the use of face-to-face and informal teaching methods to increase the awareness and knowledge of civil service-related issues: homeland defense, nonviolence, current laws and constitutional principles, forms of solidarity and active citizenship, civil protection, associations and voluntary work, as well as planning in the social,

cultural and environmental fields.

The underlying objective is to provide increasingly qualified and specialist training and create opportunities to meet and exchange experiences between young people who provide community service in different organizational contexts and in different areas of intervention.

From the confrontation and exchange of experiences between different trainers, skilled workers and experts who nonetheless share the same values and guidelines, an experimental coordinated and joint training course and a manual for general training has emerged. The manual, for internal use by trainers and tutors of COPRESC of Bologna, combines the theoretical contributions and practical drills provided by the people who participated in the work table.

As regards the face-to-face training courses, both trainers accredited by the competent civil service institutions and external experts who have the potential to enrich the quality of lectures are involved, with the support of information materials, bibliographies of reference, slides and handouts specially prepared.

As regards the informal training courses, the young participants are called to take active part in the discussions of the various topics through action learning techniques, group exercises, simulations, case studies and plenary discussions.

Coordination has designed and proposed to the local school teachers the project called PESCA (Progetto di Educazione alla Solidarietà ed alla Cittadinanza Attiva)., a course designed to enhance the role of educator that each teacher plays with his students, regardless of the related subject matter, developing their skills in the field of solidarity, active citizenship and peace.

Furthermore, COPRESC also signed a training agreement with the Faculty of Educational Science for students enrolled in the Master of Science programme in lifelong learning and continuing education or in the Master degree in Permanent Trainer of COPRESC.

The proposed training course aims to adopt the planning, tutoring and assessment activities of the general training courses addressed to the Italian and foreign volunteers of the local civil service organizations. In

particular, it requires to fulfill the role of Class Tutor with the task of closely monitoring the performance of planning activities and to participate in the conduct and evaluation of training activities in the field of adult training (young people in civil service attending courses aged from 18 to 28); to discuss the field of training addressed to foreigners and to those who interact with them, in a cross-cultural perspective; and to develop a monitoring report.

Area Planning and Advice

COPRESC provides support to institutions in the planning of regional and national civil service activities. Through workshops, seminars and training courses, it promotes knowledge between institutions and the establishment of various forms of collaboration. Furthermore, Coordination provides a consulting service to those institutions that request it.

The civil service system offers the opportunity to plan activities in various sectors and to host volunteers from different age groups and nationalities.

National Civil Service

Projects may be submitted by institutions accredited at both national and regional level to employ young people of Italian nationality aged between 18 and 28 in a project of 12 months in the social, environmental and cultural field or abroad.

The Region of Emilia Romagna provides for additional credits for institutions that are registered in the regional list and which participate in joint and coordinated activities with COPRESC and present projects together with other accredited institutions (co-planning).

The future goal is to build a Provincial Civil Service Plan which, based on an analysis of local needs, is able to foster a joint planning process by areas of interest and assistance and the exchange of good practices.

In this context, Copresc organizes in-depth meetings, seminars and district tables.

Regional Civil Service for Minors

Since its inception, COPRESC of Bologna has invested in planning addressed to minors as a means of spreading the culture of civil service and raising the awareness of young people about of the opportunities provided by the national civil service.

The regional civil service projects for minors are primarily designed to provide training, involving young people aged 15 to 18 in projects lasting 35 hours in the field of disability, education, promotion of welfare, cooperation, environmental protection, entertainment for the elderly and culture.

Meetings are organized to raise awareness in schools and in vocational training centers, although the information is disseminated also among families, social workers and youth centres.

Regional Civil Service for Adults and the Elderly

The regional civil service for adults and the elderly aims to be an instrument for offering the possibility, free of charge, to people aged over 28 of living an experience of active citizenship, of social involvement and of voluntary commitment.

The regional civil service projects for adults and the elderly, lasting from 8 to 12 months, have had as their priority intergenerational exchange, the protection of the most vulnerable groups, and the increasing of community welfare.

COPRESC has supported institutions in the presentation and dissemination of some experimental projects over the course of 2007 and 2008.

The goal for the coming years is to continue the experience and to develop new forms of participation and solidarity for this bracket of the population, based on the interests of the institutions involved.

Regional Civil Service for Youth Community Members and Foreigners

After a first experiment in 2005, every year the region of Emilia

Romagna evaluates and finances regional civil service projects involving the employment of EU and foreign young people aged between 18 and 28 for a period of 10 to 12 months.

Projects may be submitted by institutions which are enrolled in the regional civil service (1st and 2nd section) and members of COPRESC.

An interest has arisen within the province in this type of planning, and various forms of joint planning activities among civil service institutions have resulted from it.

In addition to promoting collaboration between institutions, COPRESC also favors the set up of meetings between foreign volunteers engaged in various projects, but also between young immigrants and Italians with a view to social sharing and integration.

In 2009, Copresc also expanded its horizons by presenting a European project as part of the 'Europe for Citizens' Programme. The aim of such project was to offer institutions and young people in the local community an opportunity for exchange and comparison of the various international experiences in active citizenship that are proposed in some European countries.

'You worth' project was carried out during 2009/2010, together with partners in other 3 countries (France, England and Greece) and has led the organization of two major international workshops and production of exciting communication tools.

Coordination is also highly dedicated to the launch of possible collaborations with other organizations and institutions in the territory to achieve the statutory objectives and to broaden its range of activities.

Area Search and Quality

COPRESC gathers data on civil service activities carried out in the local communities and monitors the performance of the system as a whole by conducting statistical surveys, in-depth interviews, questionnaires and annual monitoring.

In particular, it collaborates with the Regional Office of the civil service and other provincial coordination offices, Medec- the metropolitan polling center of the province of Bologna, GREP- Ethnography of Thought

Group research group at the University of Bologna, experts and freelance professionals.

Coordination is developing a provincial civil service plan with the aim of analyzing the civil service system in the province of Bologna and raise the quality of the projects and actions carried out.

The provincial plan is a tool for highlighting the strengths and weaknesses in the various spheres of intervention that make up the civil service system: planning, training, raising awareness, promotion, accreditation, regional civil service and so on.

This course will also include a common plan for the monitoring of civil service projects as well as a series of district meetings aimed at identifying the social products of civil service and at changing the future course of planning.

The development of the provincial plan was launched in June 2008 and relied on various contributions and theoretical methods that led to its publication at the end of 2010.

Institutions under COPRESC

The Provincial Coordination is composed of public and private non-profit organizations sharing the same goals and which have an interest in collaborating for the development of civil service. Currently, COPRESC is composed of 67 members, both public and private.

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Conceived in January 11, 2003 its purpose is to collect, provide continuity and enhance the experience of the Collegamento Nazionale dei Centri di Servizio set up in 1999.

Currently, it brings together and represents 72 service centers for Volunteer Services (CSV) of the 78 existing in Italy, with the aim to strengthen cooperation, exchange of experiences and expertise between CSV, in order to better realize their institutional purposes, while respecting their autonomy.

CSVnet is based on the principles of solidarity, democracy and pluralism and on the 'Charter of Values of Volunteering' and has adopted the principles expressed in the Charter of representation.

Chaired by Marco Granelli, in office since 2003, CSVnet is governed by the General Meeting, the Board of Directors and Executive Committee, which avail themselves of the technical structure divided into: management, organization of activities and services to members, Secretary-General, Administration and Accounting, Communication and Press Office. It provides training, advice, support and accompaniment to CSV members.

CSVnet is a member of the European Volunteer Centre (EVC) in Brussels, where it has its own division which provides information on tenders and guidance on European issues, as well as methodological support, training and technical assistance to CSV on the European Structural Funds and on the 'Youth in Action' Programme.

CSVnet is also a member of Euricse, (European Research Institute on Cooperative and Social Enterprises), the research foundation created to relaunch the scientific reflection and training on cooperation, social enter-

IX.8 CSVnet, Coordinamento Nazionale dei Centri di Servizio per il Volontariato (National Coordination of the Voluntary Service Centres)

prise and volunteering; it is also a supporting member of ID (Italian Institute of Donation), conceived to spread the culture and ethics of donation; in recent years it has become part of the Associazioni Osservatrici del Forum Terzo Settore.

CSVnet was also one of the promoters of the Foundation for the South, created in 22 November 2006 by the alliance between the bank foundations and the world of the third sector and voluntary sector to promote social infrastructure in the South.

Macro Area Europe and Mediterranean CSVnet

CSVnet is conducting specific and systematic work on European affairs since 2006, paying attention both to the development of skills within the CSV involved in European projects and to access to European funds for volunteering organizations, and to raise awareness of active European citizenship. The issues of Europe and the Mediterranean are designed areas where the system of Centers for Voluntary Service can help the Italian voluntary, with its characteristics, forms, experiences and support tools, to be involved in a meeting with the European and Mediterranean communities and with local forms of volunteering to help build a network of responsibility, solidarity and social cohesion in the large and complex system of Europe and the Mediterranean. This process was carried out in close interaction with important external entities, in particular with the European Commission Agency in Italy, the Europe Direct network, the National Agency for Youth, the National Table EU - civil society, the Third Sector Forum, and the movement Cittadinanzattiva. The initial impact was particularly strong and positive, realized in 2007 by the project 'Destination Europe' organized in collaboration with the European Commission Agency in Italy, which began training the CSV operators and their leaders by relying on high-profile teachers, on the subjects that form the core of the European CSV commitment: the central role of civic participation, values, rights and social responsibility on one hand, and the other European projects on the other. The project 'Destination Europe' has provided the initial impulse, some common tools and the national framework

for training initiatives (meetings, seminars and training courses) realized after by the CSV for local and voluntary organizations, volunteers, the world of associations and young people interested in civic engagement.

CSVnet is a member of the European Volunteer Centre (CEV) in Brussels, where since 2008 has its own European liaison office, which maintains direct relations with the European institutions and networks.

Among the facilities, the CSVnet Area of Europe and Mediterranean, directly from Brussels and in activities organized in Rome and at the different locations of the CSV, provides its members with information on European tenders, methodological support, training opportunities and technical assistance on funding opportunities and European policies. In addition, it also takes part in European projects that allow the CSV system to develop issues where its contribution and experience is significant and can be transferred to the whole system and voluntary sector.

Important work was carried out by CSVnet in volunteering for European institutions and the Italian Government, with the publication in 2009 of the Manifesto of Volunteering for Europe. This document is the result of a widely participated process initiated in collaboration with the major national volunteer networks accrediting CSVnet and the CSV system as one of the main stakeholders in the European Year of Volunteering 2011. The Manifesto of Volunteers for Europe was presented on December 4, 2009 to the Italian President, Giorgio Napolitano, and approved by the Italian Volunteer Assembly which was obviously invited on 5 December 2009 to participate in the International Volunteer Day.⁷

In order to support the activities conducted by the CSV system and to spread useful information and instruments to a wider audience, a website was created, www.destinazioneeuropa.eu, to collect documents and instruments which may be useful for training and information.

On the themes of volunteering and Europe, in particular, some specific work areas and work strands have been created. With a specific focus on youth and youth volunteering, volunteering of the elderly, exchange of knowledge and skills with the volunteering of countries in the Balkans. Moreover, an organic coordination between the various CSVs was developed to prepare as individuals and as a system for the European Year of Volunteering 2011.

7.

During the International Volunteer Day, celebrated every year on December 5th, 2009, ConVoi, CSVnet, the Forum del Terzo Settore and Consulta Nazionale presso il Forum decided to invite to Rome volunteers and leaders of the Italian Volunteer Organizations to reflect together on how volunteering can be the subject of change required to overcome the crisis, responding to the needs of protecting the rights of citizens and communities.

Young people and young volunteering

This area of work of CSVnet was a natural outlet to the many and varied activities carried out by CSV for years on the promotion of volunteer opportunities for young people in other European countries and in the rest of the world, to enhance the commitment of young volunteers and education for European active citizenship of young people.

In addition to major initiatives, projects and activities together and for young volunteers, many now are the CSVs which also have experience as dispatching, coordination and reception institutions in the European Voluntary Service (EVS). Hence the need has arisen to network the different experiences to enable the same CSVs to improve the quality of their services, to share information and offer innovative ideas for volunteer organizations who want to embark on the European project. EVS is an activity that fully reflects the vocation of the CSVs, as it aims to achieve the common goal of promoting active citizenship and a sense of solidarity among young people. Volunteering as an expression of active citizenship and tool that supports social cohesion, finds in EVS its European dimension and offers associations on the territory the opportunity to launch relatively simple volunteer projects with foreign partners.

From the common need among European partners and CSV resulted the project VVV - Enhancing the value of volunteering, co-funded by the European 'Youth in Action', which produced the Guidelines for the development of projects for Voluntary Service Europe. Developed by comparison with the foreign partners participating in the project, the Guidelines are intended to be suggestions for organizations in order to leverage the experience of young European volunteers, and at the same time provide a useful record of information and guidance to young volunteers. The Guidelines are available in both Italian and English (on www.destinazioneeuropa.eu) and can therefore be an easy to use tool and very useful in the comparison with foreign partners on EVS projects to improve the quality of the same projects.

Volunteering by the elderly

Volunteering is increasingly recognized as an informal learning quality, suitable for people of all ages. In particular, it is considered a valuable way to offer new opportunities to teach senior citizens in Europe, promoting an active third age and emphasizing the contribution of the elderly to our society. Senior citizens are in fact a very rich resource of wisdom and experience from which society can greatly benefit, as was normally in the past. This action, however, offers a new form of mobility to European senior citizens, enabling them to learn and share knowledge and experiences in a European country other than their own.

Thus reads the European Programme for Lifelong Learning (LLP) in the new action dedicated to the exchange of elderly volunteers named SVP-Senior Volunteer Program, under the Grundtvig sub-programme. The CSVs, then, to support the development of voluntary work, active aging and intergenerational dialogue have ventured for several years now in the exchange of experiences between older volunteers and giving everyone the opportunity to volunteer in other countries, regardless of age. They have also become precursors of European programs. In fact, SPES Lazio brought forward from 2008 to 2010 a project to promote the active involvement of older people in volunteering in Europe, through the creation of an international exchange program. The project 'Think Future, Volunteer Together', funded by the European Commission - Directorate General for Employment, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities within the project ENEA preparatory action on active aging and mobility of older people, involved 100 volunteers over 55 years from Slovakia, Slovenia, Hungary, Romania and Italy in group exchanges of two weeks as guests of local volunteers engaged in different business sectors.

Other CSVs, such as Cesvot Tuscany, Pavia and Catanzaro, were among the first to launch these SVP partnership projects, which were based on the sharing of volunteering experience with seniors in other countries.

Exchange of experiences and knowledge with the Balkan countries

The Service Centres for Voluntary Work have identified in the exchange and dialogue with representatives of volunteer organizations in other European countries an important opportunity for quality growth, openness, and modernization. But even more than collaboration and joint projects, the opportunities to meet are essential to know, understand, confront and, therefore, to educate to a shared exercise of civic engagement that no longer has national boundaries, but developed in the common cultural space and institutional framework of a united Europe.

Relaunching the process of construction of a new European and inclusive identity should focus on areas that have mostly suffered due to the fragility of identity and shared vision of common policies. The countries of southeastern Europe could attribute positive connotations to the term Balkans, if this would stand for cross-border and transnational cooperation initiatives for a joint investment in the development of civil society, and the value of culture as the foundation of development. Civic organizations are a precious seed of democracy and innovation in these countries in transition. Collaboration breeds development.

For these reasons, in 2008, at the Annual Conference of CSVnet in Friuli Venezia Giulia, the International Conference 'Italy - the Balkans. Volunteers for Peace and Development' was held at the same time. The two days of study and interaction have been an opportunity to meet and know each other for the Italian CSV and voluntary organizations, and centers for voluntary organizations of Slovenia, Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia, Montenegro, Kosovo, Albania, Macedonia, Romania, Moldova, Turkey and Lithuania. The conference brought together incentive opportunities for the promotion and consolidation of networking through an interactive space for training and dialogue, and to promote joint projects and future collaborations.

CSVnet since then has devoted great attention to cooperation with the European area as well as with other countries, specifically exploiting the potential that is inherent in transnational cooperation between voluntary organizations and civil society organizations, for democratization, innova-

tion and social integration.

Here are some examples:

- in 2009 there was a number of programmes for the exchange of experience between the CSV of the Region of Marche and the center of Spalato as part of a volunteer project co-financed by the European Programme 'Europe for Citizens';
- with the young volunteers of Foggia a project was launched in 2009, supported by Youth in Action that led to the creation and publication of the Charter of Comics Youth Representation, which was then presented in November 2009 during the EuroMed meeting MeYouMe of Falerna (youth gathering in the Mediterranean) and was the subject of training courses held in Durres in Albania, in Georgia, Sweden and Portugal.

How did the CSVs prepare themselves for the 2011 European Year of Volunteering?

The 2011 European Year of Volunteering is a great opportunity for CSVnet, for the whole CSV system and for all Italian volunteers.

For two years CSVnet and the CSVs have participated together with colleagues from the European Volunteer Centre (CEV) in the European campaign for the proclamation of the Year. They engaged directly and had various local voluntary organizations engaged in this programme so as to make it become a reality, and to make the process perceived, understood and shared. In a sense, therefore, the preparation for the European Year began as early as 2008. Since it was officially proclaimed in 2009 that 2011 would be the European Year of volunteering promoting active citizenship, CSV and CSVnet had to define the action plans and the procedures for liaising and enhancing local promotion to raise the awareness of CSV's commitment throughout the territories aimed at the voluntary participation in the entire path and activities to be carried out and increasing the number of organizations and CSVs as protagonists of the reflection and actions taken at local level.

In addition to voluntary organizations, the process of dialogue and participation in the preparation and management initiatives in 2011 saw the

involvement also of the government and other stakeholders of the third sector involving volunteers.

The activities and initiatives designed by CSV together with the volunteer service take account and harmonize with the Plan for 2011 approved by the National Observatory of Voluntary Service in July 2009, and elaborated by the Working Centre and the Ministry of Labour and Social Policies as a National Coordination Body, in which CSVnet has been actively involved with the institutional role of the Technical Secretariat of the National Coordination Body.

Over the course of 2011, CSVnet will continue its networking initiatives directed to implement the Plan for 2011, which focuses on the following areas: promotion and participation, exchange of good practices, young people, subsidiarity and dialogue with the institutions, research and data, enhancing the impact and the contribution of volunteering, volunteering infrastructures.

Centres for Voluntary Service (CSVs)

They are regulated by law 266/91 and by Ministerial Decree of 8 October 1997.

CSVs provide their services to Volunteer Organizations and, at the same time, they are managed by the latter, according to the principle of autonomy of volunteering as established by law 266.

They are present in all Italian regions, with the exception of the Autonomous Province of Bolzano. They are funded by law by bank institutions. Of the 78 CSVs, 66 are active at provincial level, 8 at regional level and 4 at inter-provincial and sub-provincial level. 95% of the members of CSVs is made up of 9000 Voluntary Organizations and by their coordination and federations which together represent 50.6% of Volunteers in Italy. There are 414 operating branches, each one serving, on average, 105 Voluntary Organizations and a user-basin of 143 thousand inhabitants.

Manifesto of Volunteering for Europe

Volunteers, European citizens

The proposals and demands formulated herein make reference to the following:

Article 118, last paragraph of the Italian Constitution;
the contents of the Charter of Values of volunteering;
the European Parliament Resolution on the contribution of volunteering to economic and social cohesion of April 22, 2008.

In particular, we place emphasis on the fact that volunteering is, in Italy as in Europe, a cornerstone for the development of civil society and the consolidation of democratic life.

Volunteering is based on the culture of generosity and gift and can help people to discover a new culture - that of solidarity, sustainable development, non-violence, respect for others and responsible citizenship.

In relation to the challenges posed by the new demographic profile of European society, volunteering, through its everyday practices and plans for active aging and the relationships between generations, opens important perspectives and is an important mode of involvement of the population, making it the protagonist of its time for individual well-being and promoting common good.

By its action, based on the principle of solidarity, volunteering is a major contributor to the creation and growth of capital, for the enhancement of interpersonal relationships and the self-realisation of the person, overcoming the limitations of an economistic vision of development. It is simplistic to measure the contribution of volunteers only in terms of economic value. Although significant, 5% of GDP according to official estimates, this figure does not take account of the contribution in terms of quality, innovation and social experimentation that is produced by voluntary action, as well as its ability to intervene during emergencies and limiting their impact.

It is also necessary to emphasize the irreplaceable role of volunteers in

promoting social cohesion, the most important objective of the Charter of Lisbon, which is materialised through the promotion of relationships between generations, support for the marginalized strata of the population, efforts to achieve paths of integration and mutual understanding in a time of great migration.

Through the points listed below, the Italian voluntary indicate their requirements to enhance and support the efforts of volunteers for the benefit of social cohesion and equitable and sustainable development of the European community of citizens, asking for the commitment of Members of Parliament to build a common European framework in pursuit of the objectives thus defined.

These requests and proposals fit into the general framework of the commitment of voluntary organizations at local and national level, from which arises our positive anxiety for the construction of a Europe for citizens, based on shared and inclusive rules, and which respects the needs of growth and participation of each individual.

Requests for commitment to the European Parliament

Adoption of the European Charter on Volunteering which includes the following definitions:

- Voluntary action: free, charitable, to the benefit of the community and the common good;
- Volunteer organization: its nature and role, its democratic rules;
- European organization of volunteers: the status, the minimum requirements and the nature of European networks;
- Volunteering as an expression of a more general phenomenon of active citizenship;

and which provides for the establishment of the following:

- The European Monitoring Centre on volunteering at the European Commission with the participation of representatives of European networks of volunteering with the role of monitoring and promoting innovation and networking, and to represent the requests of the voluntary services to the European institutions and with the objective of promoting cohe-

rent and consistent behavior by the Directorates General which, in various capacities, deal with volunteering.

(EP Resolution, paragraphs 13, 2, 7)

Definition of a stable institutional framework and binding on the voluntary participation of decision-making at all levels - European, national, regional and local - that includes:

- Explicit recognition of the role of volunteering in participatory democracy;
- The obligation of consulting the voluntary service in social policy, health, cultural, environmental, citizenship and sustainable development;
- Partnership Mechanisms that can be controlled in accordance with the principle of horizontal subsidiarity and respecting the specificity of volunteering;
- Support the various forms of representation of volunteering;
- Support the training of policy makers and the voluntary sector;
- Moments of joint verification.

(EP Resolution, paragraphs 1, 23, 5, 13)

Programme to develop the infrastructure for volunteering including:

- A long-term perspective, articulated at European, national and local level;
- Legislative framework, clear and harmonious;
- The obligation to check for new legislation impact on the work of volunteers;
- Sustainability of service centers for volunteerism;
- Policies for the enhancement and promotion of volunteering;
- Possibility of funding and access to funding for core activities at European, national and local level.

(EP Resolution, paragraphs 18, 21, 4)

Management and tax concessions for voluntary organizations and volunteers, including:

- Multi-annual funding for core activities with monitoring based on

indicators of quality and impact;

- The costs of insurance and training of volunteers;
- Exemption from VAT on purchases and services needed to carry out voluntary activities;
- Lasting tax democracy mechanisms with clear procedures for the allocation of a portion of annual taxes of individuals and companies to voluntary organizations;
- Exemption from state taxes on services and fees necessary for the conduct of the activities of volunteers;
- Recognition and unequivocal and guaranteed quantitative valorization of the hours of voluntary service as co-financing in activities co-financed by public institutions;
- Introduction of a specific exception to the Bolkestein Directive, laying down a separate channel in entrusting public services to voluntary organizations.

(EP resolution, sections 3, 15, 17, 8, 11)

Measures to ensure the accessibility of volunteering to everyone, so that:

- The possibility of accessing all forms of support for volunteer organizations and individual citizens, is enshrined as a universal right;
- Groups of citizens at risk of exclusion and voluntary organizations which are potentially, locally and culturally marginalized may use the services and the legislative framework, clear and harmonious support;
- Employers sought to reconcile the timing of paid work with a commitment to volunteering as a universal right of citizenship;
- Volunteering is explicitly considered in regard to visas and permits to carry out voluntary activities in Europe and for Europeans;
- Information on volunteering and the promotion of voluntary practice is in place and adequately met in the media.

(EP Resolution, paragraphs 11, 24, 26, 25)

Recognition of the educational value of volunteering in order to:

- Include volunteering and active citizenship practices in training

from elementary school to university, and to the professions;

- Recognize non-formal and informal learning in volunteering as a constituent part of life-long learning;
- Define the framework of the single European certification and enhancement of expertise in volunteering;
- Define the cross-sectional skills of citizenship in the European Qualification Framework (EQF);
- Make transparent the experiences and expertise to improve the mobility of citizens in the European Union.

(EP Resolution, paragraphs 16, 12)

Support networking, exchange of good practices and exchanges of volunteers:

- In the respect of equal opportunities for all ages;
- Providing mechanisms and adequate funding to facilitate the participation that is able to overcome the constraints of language, culture and social restrictions;
- Recognizing the role of service centers for voluntary work as promotion and support entities, to ensure their access to the design and European exchanges in all volunteer organizations.

(EP Resolution, paragraphs 20, 21, 22, 9)

Support research, statistical data and evaluation:

- Through specific funding, from a European perspective;
- Exploiting the potential of detection and analysis of the voluntary organizations involved in local communities.

(EP Resolution, paragraphs 6, 14)

Italy's volunteering calls for the commitment of Italian Members of European Parliament:

- Pursue the goals in the parliamentary activities related to the term of office as part of the Manifesto of Italian voluntary service for Europe;
- Join and be active in the activities of the European Parliament Intergroup on Volunteering;

- Ensure that the Government and the Italian Parliament and the Italian and European public institutions actively pursue policies in support of volunteering, which recognize a role of primary importance for the achievement of social inclusion and promote the common good and human development;
- Work to ensure that the European Parliament intervenes in Governments that have not yet done so to ratify the Council of Europe Convention against Trafficking in Human Beings, a plague which claims so many victims and is closely intertwined with other serious problems such as illegal trade of drugs, weapons, workers, and illegal acts committed by transnational criminal groups that make it their core business and source of income;
- Strategies to harmonize the laws of member states to ensure the protection of the rights of the disadvantaged categories of the population in accordance with the 1993 Hague Convention on Protection of Children and Cooperation in Respect of Intercountry Adoption, and with the European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms;
- Deal regularly with the volunteer services to assess jointly the objectives identified.

For the European Year of Volunteering 2011, Italy's Volunteering network has requested MEPs to be champions and promoters of the following:

- An appropriate financial and institutional support at European, national and local levels;
- The need for co-management and self-management training and activities of the Year by volunteers;
- To achieve concrete and measurable targets over the year to support and promote volunteering.

**The following have adhered National Volunteer Conference at the
Third Sector Forum Co.N.Vol. - Standing Conference of Presidents of
the Associations and Federations of Volunteer service**

ACISJF - Associazione Cattolica Internazionale al Servizio della
Giovane - Protezione della Giovane - Federazione Nazionale
ADA - Associazione per i Diritti degli Anziani
Ai.Bi. - Associazione Amici dei Bambini
AICAT - Associazione Italiana dei Club degli Alcolisti in Trattamento
ANCeSCAO
ANOLF - Associazione Nazionale Oltre Le Frontiere
ANPAS - Associazione Nazionale Pubbliche Assistenze
ANTEAS - Associazione Nazionale Terza Età Attiva per la Solidarietà
ARCI
Arciragazzi
AUSER - RisorsAnziani
AVIS - Associazione Nazionale Volontari Italiani del Sangue
CESIAV
Confederazione Nazionale Misericordie d'Italia
CSEN
Federazione AVULSS - Associazione per il Volontariato nelle Unità
Locali dei Servizi Socio-sanitari
Federazione Nazionale Legambiente Volontariato
Federazione Nazionale Società San Vincenzo De Paoli
FENALC
FIDAS
FISH - Federazione Italiana per il Superamento dell'Handicap
FITeL
FOCSIV - Federazione Organismi Cristiani Servizio Internazionale
Volontario
GVV - Gruppi di Volontariato Vincenziano AIC Italia
Legambiente
MODAVI - Movimento Delle Associazioni di Volontariato Italiano
Mo.V.I. - Movimento di Volontariato Italiano

SEAC - Coordinamento Enti e Associazioni di Volontariato
Penitenziario
Seniores Italia
TAI - Telefono Amico Italia
CNV - Centro Nazionale per il Volontariato

The Manifesto was formally adopted in the final document issued by the Italian Volunteers. Assembly on December 5, 2009

For further information and adhere to the Manifesto:
www.destinazioneeuropa.eu.

Contact information

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General aim

ESTER pursues the European social policies and in particular the equal opportunities policies between men and women and anti-discrimination policies in order to prevent social exclusion of new weak; develops initiatives of research, study, training, information and dissemination, building networks in accordance with the guidelines of the European Union in collaboration with institutional partners and organizations of the civil society at local level; promotes initiatives in the field of national and international cooperation in collaboration with countries or organizations in those countries.

Areas of intervention

- Promotion of fundamental human rights, in particular the prevention of and contrast to violence and women's exploitation;
- equal opportunities through the implementation of projects in harmony with the European concept of gender mainstreaming;
- environment and sustainable development through the promotion of economic growth in order to meet the needs for well-being of our society in the short, medium and long term, according to the idea that the development must meet the needs of the present without compromising the growth prospects of future generations;
- access to the knowledge society through the use of new information and communication technologies as a means of equal access to training and information in the knowledge society;

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- education to and realization of the co-development in collaboration with the countries of the South;
- co-operation with countries in the process of accession to the European Union.

Staff expertise

ESTER staff has a wide experience in implementing transnational project under, among others, INTEGRA, STOP, the PIC Equal I and II, the Progress programme, the 'Daphne' programme, the 'Europe for Citizens' Programme, the 'Fundamental Rights and Citizenship' Programme, the Drug prevention and information Programme, the 'Youth in action' Programme, EuropeAid, The Anna Lindh Euro-Mediterranean Foundation for the dialogue between cultures, IPA Programme and ESF.

Networking

The Association is member of the Anna Lindh Euro-Mediterranean Foundation for dialogue between cultures and member of the women's Association of Lombardy Region.

The ESTER President is founder and member of the board of Aretusa, international Association focused on the promotion of gender equality and antidiscrimination policies, who works, in particular, to prevent and contrast trafficking of women for sexual exploitation in 15 European Countries.

Activities

ESTER undertakes activities of consulting to:

- public institutions, and
- organizations of the civil society

for design, presentation, implementation, accounting, evaluation of projects co-financed in the area of European initiatives.

Training

ESTER promotes tailored training courses on the European programming and designing, specifically, the Project Cycle Management applying Logical Framework Analysis.

Construction of transnational networks

ESTER promotes the development of transnational networks in order to establish mechanisms for a major participation of the regional and local communities to the European decision making process.

ESTER implements transnational activities with the support of the European Union to promote European social policies at local and transnational level.

Technical Narrative report 2009 - 2010

European proposals:

- 'Fundamental Rights and Citizenship' Programme

Project Title: European self-portrait. A common Citizenship.

Partnership: Cooperativa lotta contro l'emarginazione, ESTER Association, Italy; Research Centre for Women's Affairs- RCWA, Greece; Foundation for the Women of Hungary - MONA, Hungary; Women's Issues Information Centre -WIIC, Lithuania. With the support of Lombardy Region.

General aim: to combat old and new stereotypes, racist attitudes and speeches so as to promote a culture of understanding and respect of different cultures and of the fundamental rights as stated in the European Treaty throughout the European Union.

- 'Daphne III' Programme

Project title: Young women's identity: preventing psychological violence in media and fashion

Partnership: Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore, ESTER Association, Italy; Research Centre for Women's Affairs- RCWA, Greece; Foundation

for the Women of Hungary - MONA, Hungary; with the collaboration of Karolinska Institutet, Sweden, Res Psicologica, Italy, The Institute of Equality, Greece.

General aim: to sensitize and create awareness among young Europeans, especially women, concerning the psychological violence regarding the female image used in the world of fashion and spread by media. The project specifically aims to provide young women with tools to form and strengthen their identity with critical attitude towards stereotypes and the world of fashion.

- 'Europe for Citizens' Programme

Project title: Gender and migration: diversity as resource for a common citizenship

Partnership: ESTER Association, Cooperativa Lotta contro l'Emarginazione, Italy; The world of NGOs, Austria; Research Centre for Women's Affair- RCWA, Greece.

General aim: to promote active citizenship and dialogue between citizens and institutions to complete the process of democratisation set by the European Union. To build and strengthen a public/private partnership in order to design and implement the equal opportunity and anti-discrimination European policies.

- 'Youth in Action' Programme

Title of the project: Feed the planet. Promoting an active and responsible European youth citizenship on global food security. A multimedia Campaign.

Partnership: Associazione Chico Mendes onlus, Cooperativa Chico Mendes, ESTER, Provincia di Milano, Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore – Italy; Equacao Cooperativa de Comercio Justo – Spain; Emeis Kai o Kosmos/Nuestro Mundo - Creta – Greece; Koperattiva Kummerc Gust- Valletta -Malta

General aim: strengthen the young European active citizenship promoting the debate on the food security and the eradication of poverty. Support youth workers in the production of informative material on the Millennium development goals.

Transnational proposal:

- International Cooperation Programme supported by Fondazione Cariplo.

Project title: Women empowerment and social inclusion in Rocinha slum, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil

Partnership: ESTER Association, Cooperativa lotta contro l'Emarginazione, Italia; Coopa-roca, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil.

General aim: to improve the living and social conditions of youth, especially young women, in Rocinha slum; to develop human resources and local know how, to develop commercial exchanges, to promote cultural exchanges between Italy and Brazil.

- Anna Lindh Euro-Mediterranean Foundation for the dialogue between cultures

Title of the project: Turkish and Italian young women: a bridge for the Euro-Mediterranean integration.

Partnership: Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore di Milano, Associazione ESTER- Italy, Omu University, Samsun -Turkey

General aim: to promote a better knowledge of social and cultural diversity among young Turkish and Italian people, especially women (in terms of languages, cultural practices, religious diversity, community life among others) exchanging their perceptions regarding each other and valuing diversity as an asset in order to prevent stereotypes and xenophobia.

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Basic Information on Asperger Syndrome

Asperger syndrome is a form of Autism which is a lifelong disability that affects how a person makes sense of the world, processes information and relates to other people. Autism is often described as a 'spectrum disorder' because the condition affects people in many different ways and to varying degrees. Asperger syndrome is mostly a 'hidden disability'. This means that you can't tell that someone has the condition from their outward appearance.

People with the condition have difficulties in three main areas. They are:

- social communication;
- social interaction;
- social imagination.

While there are similarities with autism, people with Asperger syndrome have fewer problems with speaking and are often of average, or above average, intelligence. They do not usually have the accompanying learning disabilities associated with autism, but they may have specific learning difficulties. These may include dyslexia and dyspraxia or other conditions such as attention deficit, hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) and epilepsy. With the right support and encouragement, people with Asperger syndrome can lead full and independent lives.

Gruppo Asperger onlus

Gruppo Asperger onlus www.asperger.it was founded in 2003 by a

IX.10 Gruppo Asperger onlus - The Italian Association for People with Asperger Syndrome

group of parents, when in Italy very few people with Asperger's Syndrome were adequately diagnosed.

The association is actively involved in the creation of a solidarity network among families and people with Asperger Syndrome (AS) and High Functioning Autism (HFA), collaborates with the major Italian associations dedicated to Autism and to Disability and participates in several Working Groups promoted by the Public Administration at national and local level.

Furthermore, Gruppo Asperger is part of FANTASiA www.fantasiaautismo.org (Federazione delle Associazioni Nazionali a Tutela delle persone con Autismo e Sindrome di Asperger), the Italian Federation for the safeguard of people with Autism and Asperger's Syndrome.

FANTASiA is an active member of Autisme Europe www.autismeurope.org and was directly involved in the organization of Autisme Europe IX International Congress 'A future for Autism' held in Catania, Italy, in October 2010.

The Association is non-profit, pursues the objectives of solidarity and survives through the voluntary work of its members and thanks to their subscriptions and the support of private donations.

Today in Italy awareness and knowledge related to these autistic spectrum disorders have increased significantly though many problems remain unsolved:

- diagnosis for adults;
- finding specific educational interventions, mainly starting from adolescence;
- adequate care at school and at university;
- structured programs aimed at work placement and social integration.

In recent years, Gruppo Asperger has contributed significantly to the finding of possible answers to these questions, in collaboration with professionals as well as with public and private social services.

Thanks to the initiative of the association and of its members, action is currently taken in different areas of interest:

- social and recreational gathering;

- parent training;
- mutual aid;
- specific training for operators and teachers;
- work placement;
- training in social skills and affectivity;
- congresses, conferences, meetings and seminars.

Selection of the most recent nationwide and regional Projects and Events

Social and recreational gathering

- In Milan, in 2008, 'Spazio Nautilus' is established. 'Spazio Nautilus' www.spazionautilus.org is a gathering place for teenagers and adults with Asperger Syndrome and High Functioning Autism where courses for educators, parent training, seminars, cultural and social events (debates, meetings, small exhibitions etc.) are held. At 'Spazio Nautilus' one can find also a library, a game corner and a counseling center on SA/HFA.

- In the Lazio region, Gruppo Asperger is sharing with other associations several gathering places. The most recent projects include an art laboratory and football and running projects for children, and a Social Theatre Group for young adults. To date the most significant achievement remains the Cine Club for young people 'Io speriamo che me la cavo' (see below).

- In Rome, in summer 2010, some young people have collaborated with the Social Co-operative 'Giuseppe Garibaldi' in the management of their 'Trattoria Sociale', an eating house where boys and girls with SA and Autism, supported by some educators, have experienced a short period of work training and socialization.

- 'Tutti a bordo di Nave Italia' is another important event which has taken place in May 2009. Nave Italia is a sailing ship, the world's largest brigantine, property of the Foundation Tender to N.I. and managed by the Italian Navy. After a preparatory weekend, for three days 8 youngsters together with some relatives and skilled educators have sailed on the

Tyrrhenian sea experimenting a very special way of living and having fun together. The sponsor of the initiative was the Foundation Paideia of Turin.

- In the province of Turin in 2009 a kitchen course for children was promoted thanks to the support of a local restaurant.
- Since last spring Gruppo Asperger has started a close cooperation with CEMEA del Mezzogiorno onlus within REPLAY (Resources for European Projects and Learning Activities for Youth). Four of our young people have already benefited of the Program.
- Besides the above, outings, social luncheons and parties as well as holidays are now currently organized - and very often by the members of the association on their personal initiative.

Parent Training and Mutual Aid

- Parent training courses are organized in Brescia, Genoa and Milan, while in Rome seminars addressed to siblings (a major problem, often disregarded) take place.
- Mutual aid groups are active in Genoa, Milan, Rome and Turin.
- Furthermore, Gruppo Asperger runs two mailing lists for the exchange of information and experiences. One is addressed to the families, the other is specifically for adults with AS and HFA. In some regions local mailing lists have been open mainly to facilitate local information.

The activity devoted to specific training for operators and teachers is very wide and multi-faceted. A short list of the most significant initiatives follows hereinafter.

- The training and information project 'I'm fine at school', held in Genoa and its province in collaboration with Genoa University and the Primary School Directorate which involved 400 teachers (2009/2010).
- The project 'In Service', held in Milan and its province. It consisted in three modules, one addressed to the managers of the Social Services, one to Social Services operators and one to the families, and was developed in collaboration with the University and a number of Public Agencies (2009/2010).
- In Rome, in November 2009, a two-day seminar on 'Asperger

Syndrome and HFA in the adults: how to recognize the syndrome and to organize the care’.

- The seminar ‘Affectivity and Sexuality in People with Asperger Syndrome and High Functioning Autism’, held by Isabelle Hénault, psychologist and sexologist at The Montreal University, Canada. (Rome, May 2010, at UNICEF premises).

- In the city of Naples and the Campania region, the Group is currently working for more visible actions in the area. In collaboration with a local organization of professionals, in November 2010 a seminar was held on ‘Asperger Syndrome and High Functioning Developmental Disorders - Diagnosis, Therapy, Experiences’.

The Asperger Group, within the framework of its mission of social solidarity, offers counseling and support to people with AS and HFA in the search of job opportunities, also through the collaboration with the public agencies. We point out some of the recent undertakings.

- In Milan, in 2007, the Co-operative L.E.M. is founded by people with AS connected with Gruppo Asperger. L.E.M. www.lem.coop.it operates in the publishing field: web, translations, books, graphics etc. During 2010, L.E.M. and Asperger Group have organized a training-on-the-job course lasting a few months for 7 young people with SA covering methods and technology for the optical filing of paper documents. The project was financed by the City of Milan.

- Call for Bid EU VP/2010/017 ‘Autistic Spectrum Disorders Employment Project’. In relation with this Call for Bid issued by the European Community, Gruppo Asperger is involved in the following Italian projects:

- project submitted by Istituto Boggiano Pico Don Orione of Genoa, the Genoa University and the Province of Genoa
- project submitted by the Province of Rome
- project submitted by the National Health Authority, AUSL RMF (Civitavecchia)
- project submitted by the Tuscany Region and the Opera Santa Rita
- project submitted by the Lombardy Region, City of Milan and Co-

operative Cascina Bianca, Milan.

Training in social Skills and Affectivity

- In Rome, since 2009, Gruppo Asperger participates in the periodical organization of courses in Social Skill Training (age 16 onwards) and Affectivity and Sexuality (addressed to adults with AS and HFA). The groups are formed by 8 to 10 people, 2 team leaders (psychologists specialized in Autism) and young psychologists/educators as auditors.

Case History: The Rome Film Club for young people and adults with Asperger Syndrome and High Functioning Autism

The history of the Rome Film Club, born in 2008 and now at its third Season, is illustrated here below reporting the text of the Poster presented by Gruppo Asperger at the IX International Congress of Autism in October 2010.

The project is described step by step so that it can be possibly used as a guideline for any similar project having similar aims.

‘Io speriamo che me la cavo!’, a film club offering an experience of social inclusion and gathering to young people and adults with Asperger Syndrome (AS) and High Functioning Autism (HFA).

A project by: Adina Adami, Laura Imbimbo, Simona Cherubini and Giovanni Magoni members of Gruppo Asperger Onlus, the Italian Asperger Association www.asperger.it

Young people with AS and HFA tend to make their parents their model or they assume external models in an exaggerated manner. They want to make adult experiences but they may have difficulty in finding the right context to try their skills and they cope dramatically with social exclusion.

This was the reason for an initiative which, starting from the basics of a typical film club, could provide in the course of time the possibility of attending social and recreational events in the common environment of the young people.

Method:

- finding a venue in a trendy area of the city (in this project the film

club chosen Detour www.cinedetour.it - was located in the Rione Monti in the city centre of Rome);

- setting up a working group: 2 young people with AS, 2 young psychologists/coordinators;
- 1 cinema expert, 1 parent;
- identifying the users: mainly adolescents and young adults with AS/HFA as well as friends, teachers, social and medical staff, supporters of the Association;
- scheduling the meetings: welcome, happy hour, introduction and projection of film, debate;
- selecting films focusing on interests of adolescents and young adults with AS/HFA;
- planning at least two meetings per month, promoting with special emphasis the first and the last one (in this project meetings started in December 2008 and ended in June 2009, for a total of 16);
- supervising and periodically reviewing the project (also with the contribution of parents) and making minor adjustments as necessary;
- involving those young people who attended regularly, with the help of coordinators, in the reception of the participants and club membership, the management of the happy hour (shopping, bar service, final cleaning), the selection of films and compilation of film cards, the film presentation to the audience and the debate.

Results:

- total attendance figure of 450 people during the 16 meetings;
- spontaneous development of social and cultural events: dinners, parties, happy hours, meetings, debates and blogs;
- development of new personal relationships;
- an increased awareness in the young people of their social difficulties and skills;
- creation of a mailing list, moderated by a psychologist, to share ideas and to arrange meetings;
- improvement and strengthening of personal and social relationships among families of young Aspies attending the cine club;

- as a spin-off, Detour involved a group of 7 people in a project for a short film: lessons in theory were held inside the cine club premises, shooting in the Monti district (8 meetings) and the short DOCaMONTI was shown on the closing day of the cine club during a big event;
- the project resumed, with minor changes, in 2009-2010;
- in fall 2010 the initiative has definitely open to the general public and ticket office and film projection are taken care of directly by AS people and Detour staff.

Communication and social gatherings among young people with AS and HFA and between them and the outside world can improve if/when ways and methods are appropriately conceived and applied.

Last but not least, *Detour*, the cultural association which has collaborated since the beginning of the project with *Gruppo Asperger*, has partly based on this experience its innovative project ‘Lo sguardo degli Aspie’ (‘The Aspie Sight’) which is the natural development and upgrading of ‘Io speriamo che me la cavo!’. The new project includes on-the-job-training of our AS people and the complete autonomy with respect to the direct involvement of parents and psychologists.

‘The Aspie Sight’ has obtained the financial support of the ‘Youth in Action’ Programme of the European Union.

Conceived at the end of 1997 GSI Italia is now an association of individuals and associations, some of which, GSI Lombardia and GSI Marche, are statutorily part of the National Association even though formally independent in terms of administration and representation.

In the early years, the association gained popularity by collaborating with Movimondo, in the attempt, which proved to be unsuccessful in subsequent years, to create a network of NGOs rooted in the territory and with a capacity to network and perform shared strategic programming at national and international level.

In the past ten years the terms of reference have fundamentally changed, the same as the subject of the role of NGOs in developing countries and development of educators and trainers in civil society. New players have claimed space and ownership, from local authorities in decentralized cooperation to associations as the bearers of new demands: fair trade, sustainable tourism, peace and rights, which have taken away space and representativeness from the traditional NGOs.

This is why organisations like GSI Italia have been forced by changes in the context to constantly reformulate their role and social mission, while trying to preserve the soul of original motivations: dialogue and partnership with the their South of the World.

If, in the early years of its activity GSI Italia has been an NGO for international cooperation and development education, as the majority of such associations are, in accordance with the guidelines of the basic national law 49/87, today our association is a social enterprise with a multi-faceted identity.

It is still an NGO, with Mae capabilities, which operates in Africa,

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GSI Italia, Gruppi di Solidarietà Internazionale

Latin America and Asia, but it is also an agency for higher education which, from 2002 until this day directs master postgraduate with success. And since 1999, it has been the co-ordination secretariat of a network of EE. LL. City by the name of City of Solidarity. It is one of the protagonist Italian associations throughout the strand in making policies for 'active European citizenship' and, in fact, was called starting from 2006 to play the role of representation for Italy, with ARCI, in Brussels, in the Board of Directors of the European Civic Forum, 14th Committee of the European Economic and Social Fund. It is an associate of TransFair Italy, a Fair Trade certification agency, and AITR, the Italian Association for Responsible Tourism. Since the early 2000 it is part of the Certification Committee 'Work Ethics', the Italian agency on Corporate Social Responsibility. Since 2005, it is one of the Italian authorities registered in the list and accredited for Civil Service.

The donors of the association have multiplied over the years and the wide variety of institutional and private lenders is an indication of the reliability and consideration of the political agreement reached by GSI Italia. From the European Union to the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, from the Italian Bishops' Conference to the Valdese Church, from Cariplo Foundation, Casse di Risparmio Lombarde, from regional bodies, Municipalities, Provinces and local authorities of Umbria, Tuscany, Marche, Calabria ... and above all from hundreds of individuals, with our partners that help deliver effective solidarity represented by the distance support and co-financing in support of micro-projects in developing countries.

GSI Italia is today all this and more. It 's also a capable and efficient structure, made of human resources and unpaid volunteers who provide a sense to a choral company, well-rooted, stable, and which has good reasons to look at its future with a fair degree of optimism.

GSI Italia Association is a Non Governmental Organisation for international cooperation and regional solidarity.

It operates in Italy with training and awareness-raising programmes on issues concerning development and underdevelopment, and at the same time promotes campaigns against racism and xenophobia.

It implements projects aimed at promoting human rights and works closely with the immigrant population through measures of acceptance, protection and support: it provides legal services and manages loan programs of honor and housing guarantees, promotes training courses and offers linguistic-cultural mediation services in the schools.

For years, GSI has been committed to issues concerning active citizenship as a means of building a more democratic society, where citizens are the protagonists of their future, their territory and that of Europe.

The association also promotes Responsible Tourism and Fair Trade and has created a cooperative that runs the World Shop Pata Negra.

It coordinates the activities of the Federation of Municipalities and Local Umbrian Authorities of the 'City of Solidarity'.

As a Training Agency accredited by the Umbria Region, it provides training in the macro-higher education and lifelong learning.

GSI operates in developing countries (Mexico, Burkina Faso, Togo, Sri-Lanka) and in eastern Europe (Romania) with development projects and through a remote support campaign.

In particular, the areas to which GSI is committed are those relating to the promotion of social justice, education, environmental protection, human rights and civil rights, rural development in collaboration with other national and international organisations, dispatching staff on the field and accompanying the management and evaluation of projects.

GSI Italia has operated in the immigration sector for many years, its main objective is to promote the integration of the non-EC Community population in Umbria.

This is achieved through a number of projects aimed at educating and informing the non-EU community, the local government and the citizens through practical services such as loans and housing guarantees.

Association of voluntary service

Registered:

- as ONLUS;
- in the Regional Volunteer Register;

- in the National Centre for Volunteering;
- in the national list of Civil Service organizations;
- in the National list (at the Office of the President of the Council of Ministers) of the associations involved in immigration;
- as a member of the Certification Committee 'Work Ethics', Cise, Forlì;
- as a member of the TransFair Italy Consortium;
- as a member of the Italian Association for Responsible Tourism (AITR);
- as a social observer CIPSI (Coordination of Popular Initiatives for International Solidarity);
- as an agency in charge of hosting and dispatching EVS, European Volunteer Service.

Promoter:

- of regional law 26/99, the region of Umbria, on decentralized cooperation;
- of the Federation 'City of Solidarity' (18 EE.LL.) of which the association is the official secretariat and coordinator. (City of Solidarity has access to Regional and EC funding, independently from GSI, of which GSI is manager and administrator);
- of Pata Negra, GSI Italia manages the fair trade shop by the same name, in Spoleto;
- of a group of university students (30): 'Youth for Peace', a youth group of GSI, operating mainly at the University of Perugia;
- of three groups of non-EU members (approx. 120 members), two in the city of Spoleto and one in Giano.

NGO for international cooperation

Operating:

- Mexico: with a three-year agricultural development programme (funded by CEI), and child sponsorship program;
- Democratic Republic of Congo: with humanitarian aid, private resources and those of the city of Perugia;

- Burkina Faso: with training and development programmes (private resources), and a child sponsorship;
- Togo: through child sponsorship and health care program and a program of veterinary and agricultural development, co-financed with Fondi Cariplo;
- Romania: development program funded by MAE / Region of Umbria, with resources allocated pursuant to L.84;
- Sri Lanka: building rehabilitation program, the fishing fleet, the water sector, health care, co-funded by Umbria Region;
- Brazil: with a child sponsorship program.

Loans (prestito d'onore)

The services provided by GSI Italia in recent years mainly in the territory of Spoleto in favor of non-EU Community members, with status of residents and immigrants, at risk of marginalization and serious difficulties, has identified a non-priority service niche but in any case valuable and extremely useful.

The verification of the adequacy and sustainability of the project was carried out by the Association over the last year, first on an occasional and episodic manner and then on a documented and systematic way.

The acknowledgement of difficult circumstances of a serious and unpredictable nature in which some individuals and families lived as a result of cases of force majeure, have prompted the association to explore a support method based on the experience of Grameen Bank, that of the 'prestito d'onore', that is, an occasional loan granted to individuals or families in distress and serious difficulty which would not otherwise be overcome except through help granted from entities other than the individual household or economy.

The sudden loss of employment, illness requiring drugs and therapies not covered by the NHS, travel for family reasons, housing evictions for financial difficulty, are the causes that we have most frequently encountered as worthy of our help. The loan amount varies depending on the needs documented by the applicant and may not exceed 1,500 euro. Essential

requirements for the granting of a loan are the possession of a valid residence permit or the registered request application. The Service is carried out thanks to the contribution of Regione Umbria.

Housing Guarantee

The housing guarantee project stems from the need to give a concrete and practical response to requests for 'housing' assistance and protection, made to an ever-increasing extent by citizens who have obtained their stay permit, whether in the past or recently, and forces institutions and civil society to benchmark themselves in a proactive way and operationally with this need.

This proposal attempts to provide various solutions, mediated by prior experience in cities and regions of northern and eastern Italy and that may be used as a helpful benchmark for reflection and for the proposition of municipal services in our area.

The housing guarantee service consists of a guarantee fund, which is requested by the landlord and / or tenant, in the event of default or inability to comply with contractual and formal obligations, or with those related to the lease of property used for residential purposes.

The service guarantees coverage as expressly and previously agreed when the contract is signed, for a number of months and up to a financial commitment of 3500 euro / contractual year.

Essential requirements for the granting of the loan are the possession of a valid residence permit or the activated procedure for obtaining the latter.

The Service is carried out through the contribution of the Region of Umbria.

Child Sponsorship

In the South of the world there are millions of children living in difficult conditions: they are marginalized, exploited, have no access to education and their living conditions are those of bare survival.

Child sponsorship is a gesture of solidarity toward these children, their

family and community.

To sponsor a child from a distance means to identify an area of intervention and plan, together with the community involved, actions which have the objective of addressing the causes of poverty, without the children having to leave their family, social and cultural background, thus promoting the development of the same local community.

How and where we operate

Through the child sponsorship program GSI is present in three countries in the Southern Hemisphere, and after the Tsunami also in Asia, Mexico, Togo, Burkina Faso providing medical care, education, food and clothing to the assisted children.

But more than that ... GSI, through the sponsorship program, aims to develop the community where the child lives by acting on the causes of poverty.

In fact, part of the contributions is used to create social infrastructure such as wells, build schools, provide practical help in times of serious difficulty achieving or training courses aimed at young women and thereby broadening the basin of beneficiaries of the program.

Mexico

GSI Italia, starting from the mid '70s, has worked with programs and development projects in Mexico in partnership with the local NGO 'El hombre sobre la tierra' and close to the Maya people.

In the Yucatan region, basic services such as health, electricity, water, transport and communication are irregular and insufficient. There is running water only two hours a day and stored in haphazard and unhygienic containers.

The frequent occurrence of natural disasters such as hurricanes and storms destroys much of the harvest, damaging fruit plantations. Think only of the recent hurricane Isidore.

Malnutrition causes high infant mortality and dramatically affects other

aspects of health, it has also caused a steady reduction of stature of the Mayan population. Diego de Landa in his writings tells that the Mayan population was tall and strong. Today it is difficult to even find among them a man who is 1.65 meters tall. There are many cases of premature deaths, of children with diabetes or mental illness, and women also frequently die during pregnancy or delivery.

The small number of schools and teachers in the region allows only for three hours of schooling per day. Many children do not finish even the first level of education and few of them go on to university. The Maya community in this area does not permit the development of major activities such as craft or eco-tourism as they encourage relatives and close family members to seek employment in the neighboring state of Quintana Roo, thus causing serious effects on family integrity and the loss of socio-cultural identity.

Thanks to the child sponsorship program, more than 30 children belonging to the families involved in the project 'Centro de Capacitación Integral para el desarrollo rural en el Oriente de Yucatán' receive practical help from their adoptive parents. In particular, their primary education, as well as food and medical aid is provided.

Togo

GSI Italia has worked for many years in the village of Kouvé in Togo on a child sponsorship program. Kouvé is located about 72 km from the capital, Lomé, and numbers around 40,000 inhabitants.

Moving from the much more westernized capital to this village which lies about 50 km away, you need to take an asphalt road, more or less ruined, after which there is a long winding road which is set against the spectacular savannah.

Driving through these alternate routes is uncomfortable, dusty but at the same time charming, as a spectacle of trees and crops, yroko, baobab and eucalyptus, teak, fruit trees and lush flowers unfolds before our eyes.

This rural village, with the exception of a few brick buildings, is a cluster of dilapidated houses, huts, chicken coops and churches.

Its inhabitants are still mainly farmers (corn, beans, cotton, palm trees, etc.), although with the passing of time, crafts and trade have developed with it (pottery, textiles) and trade.

A big problem is the lack of electricity, but above all water shortages. As to the latter, it has always made use of rainwater collected in cisterns, so most of the villagers are forced to set out early in the morning hours to cater water. In the last three years an aqueduct has been built, but unfortunately it is private.

In addition to these problems, the people of Kouvé also find themselves faced with the daily consequences of AIDS and many diseases resulting from malnutrition.

The proceeds of the child sponsorships promoted by GSI are therefore necessary to provide for all of this (food and medicines for family members as well as for children) and to offer adequate education which is privately owned almost everywhere. In particular, it is important to note the nursery school run by the Sisters of Divine Providence and the primary, secondary and parochial schools.

Asia

Orphans or children separated from their families as a result of the tsunami that struck countries bordering the Indian Ocean have an immediate need for support.

The urgency and magnitude of the disaster requires an effective organisation of emergency aid for emergency and reconstruction, at a time when even the real scale of the disaster is still only roughly estimated.

The strong response that was given to the event by Italian civil society requires the greatest commitment on the part of us all to alleviate the suffering of the populations affected by the tsunami, especially in the form of child sponsorship, and previous experience of GSI in this area, has led to the launching of the child sponsorship program also in this part of the world. Given the initial emergency nature of the programme, the work that will be carried out by GSI Italia in the early months of the sponsorship program will be used to fund UNICEF aid programs in the countries affec-

ted, support surviving children census operations, identify the community of belonging, select the most needy households and select our local representatives.

In operational agreement with other NGOs, 'Meeting between peoples', our Association has established contacts with Sri Lanka for the promotion of a sponsorship program addressing orphans, who are hosted in particular by the male orphanage of Baranasooriya and is planning the opening also of a girls' orphanage. The two NGOs also undertook to rebuild Wellawate, a fishing village swept away by the tsunami in southern Sri Lanka.

Given the enormous humanitarian challenge posed by the Asian tragedy we have launched a regional and national sponsorship and fundraising programme to extend our support to other disaster areas.

An on-site examination of our mission and of other Italian organisations will identify any additional commitments on the part of our Association in the areas of Galle, Matara and Trincomalee districts, which have been identified by Italian cooperation as the intervention areas of Italian humanitarian aid.

Burkina Faso

Children play an important role in society and grow under the protection of the extended family. The families want for their children what every parent would want in Europe for their children: a good education and a happy future.

However, because many families live on the poverty line, children must often contribute to the household, so they are often not able to go to school. In such situations, girls are often forced to marry early, while many others are sent to cities and towns to work as cleaning maids in households.

In the village of Saal, GSI Italia has contributed to the set up and is now collaborating with the group 'FAA I Tuora', which literally means 'take care'. A group of 40 widows hosts approximately 200 orphans. The main activities of the group are pig breeding, farming, selling Pagnes (traditio-

nal fabrics) and sweets.

Female members of the group wish to extend these activities by adding others, such as the sale of grain, the organisation of a pharmaceutical warehouse, the rearing of laying hens, but also provide for the education of girls and children of the group.

GSI Italia and its supporters are committed to this goal, seeking, moreover, to contribute to the overcoming of gender discrimination in access to education. This is because, as is well known, the education of girls leads to a 'virtuous circle': educated girls are educated women with better health, higher levels of nutrition and prenatal care, and the ability to access adequate incomes.

Their children will have an index of survival and access to higher education and better living conditions in general.

We can say that for a child, each additional year of school after the fourth year of primary school brings benefits in terms of a 10% lower infant mortality and a 10 to 20% increase in wages. The educated women have a greater chance of gaining access to public health services (although few ...), compared with non-educated people and have a lesser chance of contracting the AIDS virus.

Another interesting fact: the children of mothers who have completed primary school have, on average, the opportunity to attend school for 2-3 years longer than children of mothers who did not attend school. GSI and its supporters, thanks to the sponsorship program, provide schooling to more than 120 children aged 5 to 15 years.

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The Association is non-profit, spread throughout the territory, with the aim to promote social solidarity in order to protect of the environment, operating according to an anthropological vision of society, where the centrality of man and the protection of nature contribute to the creation of a better environment for us and for our children.

Guardie Ambientali d'Italia is a point of reference, in Italian society, for a new and modern approach in environmental policy, which should no longer be the prerogative of the few or of a single political faction. The Association works for the full recognition of human persons as the basis of a political strategy founded on man and his fundamental rights. Guardie Ambientali d'Italia carries out active surveillance activities for the purpose of compliance with the law and regulations protecting the flora and fauna and the environment; manages social, cultural and economic activities, as well as any other useful initiative in local government, in the workplace, in the schools, with the aim to favor and facilitate a wide understanding of the environmental issues. Our Volunteers are ordinary people who have decided to dedicate part of their leisure time, absolutely free of charge, to the community by engaging in environmental protection, information, prevention and surveillance activities. They are in charge of supervising the respect of the national and regional laws for the conservation of natural assets and the environmental structure set out in the institutional regional laws of the Voluntary Ecological Surveillance Service. They promote information on the legislation in force on matters concerning environmental protection; contribute to the protection of the environment and to surveillance in ecological matters, as well as to the ascertainment of violations of the ecological provisions, contained in separate laws set out

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Guardie
Ambientali d'Italia
onlus
(Sede nazionale)

in the decree of appointment; promote environmental education in collaboration with primary and secondary school teachers; collaborate with research institutes, ARPA, the province or the Municipalities in the conduct of environmental surveys, census of protected species and monitoring of rivers.

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We are citizens who have decided to dedicate part of our free time, absolutely free of charge, to the community, with the aim to protect the environment.

In carrying out our activities we act as security guards and public officers and we can proceed to the establishment of administrative offenses by imposing sanctions.

The 'Environmental Monitoring and Surveillance' project consists of an educational and awareness-raising campaign for the protection of public assets, also serving as a deterrent against vandalism. Guardie Ambientali onlus, with their presence, have in fact demonstrated the Public Administration's sensitivity to issues concerning the protection not only of the urban environment but also of the individual.

It should also be noted that, precisely in order to ensure greater efficiency and professionalism of staff in service, our Association introduced a strict selection criteria.

Even since the Association 'Guardie Ambientali d'Italia' onlus started to perform the task assigned to it by the Municipal bodies of Casale Monferrato for the territory concerning the environment, it appeared that the citizens acknowledged the work that we have carried out, even though a few of them still continue to ignore that we are the environment, and continue to litter and pollute with left-over material, despite the prohibition to dump waste.

The volunteers of the Guardie Ambientali d'Italia onlus have accomplished the following results:

- thousands of kilometers of patrolling, hundreds of on-site inspections, surveys, assessments, reports, notifications and service information

IX.13 Guardie Ambientali d'Italia onlus (Sede Piemonte)

notices, emergency interventions throughout the province;

- have accumulated thousands of hours of volunteer service and personal training, completed qualification, specialization, in-depth, and refresher courses, seminars and conferences both at local and national level, as well as continuous updates within the organization;
- have interacted with the population directly on service in the territory and in the office, and indirectly through the local newspapers, newsletters, events, etc., informing and raising the awareness of the population on environmental issues and distributing a huge quantity of leaflets, documentation and other materials;
- have collaborated and provided specialist documentation to institutions of other municipalities to attempt to embark on similar experiences as our organization's also in other territories and to search for operational and support synergies, as well as a multitude of initiatives all geared toward the protection and valorization of the environment.

Services rendered to the community always focus on correct behaviour and common sense, with the main purpose of informing and encouraging compliance with environmental regulations, and resorting to repression only when strictly necessary.

Our organizational, information and communication commitment was taken as a reference model in a number of territories and on the Internet, contributing to disseminate knowledge of our association and its particular approach and action for managing and protecting the environment.

The frequency and intensity with which we communicate on the Internet proves the validity of our strategic choices and the appreciation we receive from hundreds of social, institutional and non-profit organisations which interact with us.

Of particular success was our initiative to issue a newsletter on the web providing information on the environment, which is estimated to be read by thousands of readers.

Illegal landfills are the most serious environmental threat after 'Eternit' in the Municipality of Casale Monferrato.

The continuing reports from the 'Guardie Ambientali d'Italia' onlus evoke scenes of biological terrorism: the poisons that are injected into the

ground through landfills can pollute groundwater and permeate through these agricultural products that are consumed every day on our table. Perhaps they are not fatal bombs. But of the health effects of such pollution, little is known, and when we will know ... unfortunately it will be too late (see Eternit).

The 'Guardie Ambientali d'Italia' onlus has offered cooperation to the Municipality of Casale Monferrato, with a draft agreement for free with only the reimbursement of expenses, to ensure the services required by the new Legislative Decree 81/08 of 20 August 2009.

The presence today of polluted sites is mostly determined by 'bad' business practices conducted in the past. Hence the need for land reclamation, which often cannot restore the soil to its full original functionality.

Urban waste is mainly that originating from households and roads (including waste dumped on public ground), special waste, on the other hand, originates from production activities. Within special waste we then find 'urban assimilates': this is non-harmful waste, similar to household waste in terms of quantity and composition.

The monitoring of polluted sites and consequently their rehabilitation is an important element in the assessment of pressure induced by human activities on soil quality, and consequently into groundwater, hence our proposal to the Municipal Administration of Casale Monferrato.

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IDEA (Institute for Research and Prevention of Depression and Anxiety) is a non-profit voluntary association located in Rome and in other Italian cities which is on the forefront in backing people suffering from depression and anxiety and their relatives, endorsing and supporting research, informing and raising awareness in the public opinion, concurring in a better preparation for doctors and general practitioners and being at the same time a point of reference for institutes, ministries and other organisations.

The volunteers of IDEA in order to be able to support all those who suffer from those disturbances, so common and at the same time neglected and subject to many prejudices, were given a formation course at university level. They daily provide an helpline 'IDEA Risponde' and organise self-help groups.

This helpline is a service for people who suffer from mood and anxiety disorders and for their relatives as well. The aim of the service is lending an ear and providing solace and hope - the users need to know that their illness can be cured and, if cured correctly, this could be of great improvement in their quality of life toward a complete healing - giving precise information and useful indications to the users and their families regarding public structures and whom to turn to to receive help.

Another important activity of the volunteers is their participation to GAA whose social value is recognised by WHO.

The target of the GAA of IDEA are exclusively subjects suffering from mood and anxiety disorders and their relatives and it represents a supplementary activity to traditional psychological and pharmacological treatments.

IX.14 IDEA Roma, Institute for Research and Prevention of Depression and Anxiety onlus

Self-help groups enable the participants to share their experiences to get emotional support to fight and overcome isolation, confusion, fears and prejudices that nowadays still stigmatize psychiatric pathologies. By doing so the disturbance becomes easier to handle; the autonomy which was thought to be lost is restored and the hope for a healing grows stronger. By dismissing the passive role of the 'sick person' the user becomes a member of a micro-community where he/she realizes that it is possible to take up an active role to actually do something for oneself and the group and at the same time among the participants an empathic feeling starts to emerge.

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IDECO, Identity and Comparisons is an Association that, through the contribution given by its members and network friends, in personal, spontaneous and free of charge manners, plays an important role: the activity of cultural and professional volunteering. It is fully dedicated in spreading solidarity, and with absolutely no profit purposes. Its main objectives are:

- to deepen and spread spiritual values and expressive forms of European and western civilizations, by starting within their roots, classical and Christian, and within their various branches, traditional and popular, individual and community, making reference to ideals of social life, participation, solidarity, subsidiary, respect and concentrating on the protection of life, especially on the family and on any natural right;
- to promote every facility and innovation aiming toward the development of the cultural, scientific and socio-economic and toward the administrative simplification, fiscal and legal, also at an international level.

This cultural volunteering Association experience was founded in 2006 by four brothers, their cousins, and a group of friends from various professional realities (engineers, magistrates, doctors, economists, etc.), searching for a growth of their cultural formation, with a desire to study together cultural themes, news and values and also to involve all those who were interested.

The conviction of the founders and the President of the Association, Dr. Giancarlo Elena, is that the 'Cultural Challenge' is today of fundamental importance and that adequate training continues to be indispensable for addressing the many challenges facing in the time and in the history we live in.

IX.15 IDECO, Identità e Confronti (Identity and Comparisons)

To achieve our goals, the Association organizes meetings, conferences, etc. on different issues, both national and international, always treated with high cultural, political and social profile characters, guided tours, theatrical activities and various subsidiary initiatives.

Without sophisticated means of communication but only through the spreading of the word among acquaintances and without any public contribution, in these years the association has frequently organized (almost every month) events with many people (over 100 people each time), and to some special conferences more than 400 people came. The continuing numerical growth of the group, which is also very coherent thanks also to convivial moments that take place before the end of each meeting, show that people who live with us and who we see every day at work, during sports, and even at our children's schools, wish they could feel called in that sense.

In summary 'Identity and Comparisons' is an experience of volunteering cultural played by independent players, free to act, without any authorization or convention with the public sector, which is pursuing activities of high social value, thus giving proof of being the expression of solidarity, pluralism and participation in social life not only Italian but also in the whole world.

Following are some titles of the subjects treated in the meetings promoted by the Association:

- Saints and martyrs for Peace (Spain 1934/1939)
- The Family: resource present, future investment
- Europe: identity and the future
- By Turkey to the question Christian Armenian
- Tibet: spirituality and heroism (between the Dalai Lama and the Empire chinese)
- Solidarity and fitness
- Cuba and Latin America: the role of the Church, Italy and Europe
- Life: Brittleness and fullness
- End of the revolutionary illusion
- Iconographies of the Nativity
- Istria, Fiume and Dalmatia-persecution, the fears, the exodus and

the exile

- From the economic depression to a renewed economy
- Science, philosophy and religion
- China: Twenty Years After Tien' meaning
- South: Myth and Reality
- Families and adolescents today in Rome: Prospects for a good education with 'morals'

Contact information

IDECO, Identità e Confronti

IDECO, Identity and Comparisons

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History

IMAGINE, Improving Medicine and Growing International Networks of Equality was founded in Rome in 2005 by internationally renowned researchers and surgeons, who use their professional background, expertise and network to promote prevention and primary care in international cooperation worldwide and social cooperation in Italy. It promotes the right to health and a medical approach based on equity and solidarity, working on basic medical assistance and prevention for everyone, everywhere, focusing particularly on some of the most vulnerable groups, such as women and children.

IMAGINE's projects are supported by tailored communication campaigns that reach out to a large audience and aim to awaken public opinion on issues related to maternal and child health. Prestigious partnerships (e.g. World Health Organization, National Geographic Italy) and the use of artistic means (e.g. Christie's Italy) are also key to IMAGINE's uniqueness.

Vision

Working towards healthcare systems that are fairer and guarantee better, more sustainable and more effective conditions. Fighting disparities in healthcare due to the socio-economic status of entire countries or single individuals.

Mission

Working to guarantee the right to health to everyone, everywhere,

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through targeted projects based on prevention, education, informative campaigns on primary care and on strengthening local healthcare systems.

Our way to operate

IMAGINE and its staff believe in a form of cooperation that encourages relationships among people, around the world as well as within single countries. In Italy we stress the attention on a better understanding of the needs of migrants, as means of a complete integration. Assuring them the right of equal access to healthcare seems to us a key feature to make them feel ‘welcome’, in order to reduce possible factors of social exclusion and tensions among the population in Italy/Rome. When working abroad we promote the partnership with local institutions and organizations, strongly convinced that, local people being involved as far as possible, the projects are the most effective and sustainable. For this reasons, in Honduras, we collaborate together with the institutions of healthcare system, such as the hospitals, the Secretaria de Salud, the Región de Salud. We also involve directly some association of the indigenous population of Miskitos, who lives in the area where we operate; they include MASTA (Organización representativa del pueblo miskito) and MIMAT (Organización de Mujeres Indigenas Miskitas).

Closed projects

- IMAGINE International – Honduras

When IMAGINE started to operate in the international cooperation, our attention was drawn on the alarming morbidity rates of hepatitis B among pregnant women in Honduras.

Thus, in Honduras, in the cities of Tegucigalpa and San Pedro Sula, IMAGINE has implemented the ‘Experimental Integrated Program for the formulation of an Effective Strategy to Eradicate Hepatitis B, Globally’. We screened 7,725 pregnant women and provided information and follow-up to those who resulted positive for hepatitis B virus (HBV). We tested and vaccinated 650 children and educated them about HBV, HIV and

sexually transmitted diseases (STD) prevention.

Four thousand pregnant women were tested for toxoplasmosis and those who turned out to be positive were assisted as needed.

IMAGINE is currently committed to Moskitia, the region with the highest mortality and morbidity rates among mothers and children in Honduras. More specifically, we are implementing the 'Primary Care Program in the Gracias a Dios Department, Moskitia'. In the village of Tikiuraya, 1,700 women and 800 children under 5, can now count on a health centre that has been renovated and furnished, equipped with solar panels and a radio system, and staffed with healthcare personnel trained in emergency deliveries. The clinic also has a boat ambulance, equipped with an emergency call radio system, to transfer patients to Puerto Lempira Hospital - the only hospital in the area. Thanks to IMAGINE, the hospital is now equipped with solar panels that ensure sufficient electricity 24 hours/day for night operations and to keep incubators for premature babies working.

- IMAGINE Italy

Considering the growing migration that involves Europe as well as the entire world, IMAGINE is aware of the fact that this phenomenon involves also Italy and focused the attention on the increasing rates of access to the healthcare assistance by the migrant people and started to think about an intervention to improve the quality of health services when addressing people from foreign countries.

In Rome, working together with San Gallicano Hospital, IMAGINE has implemented the so-called Romainforma component of the 'Experimental Integrated Program for the formulation of an Effective Strategy to Eradicate Hepatitis B, Globally'. The project improved the orientation services available to immigrants in the Rome area regarding public health information on infectious diseases.

IMAGINE has implemented with San Filippo Neri Hospital in Rome the first Ospedale Amico (Friend Hospital) project in the Region of Lazio, aimed at facilitating the access to health services for immigrants and at improving their quality. The primary focus has been on training personnel and on producing educational materials in several languages that reflect

the hospital's multicultural clientele. Our pilot experience with San Filippo Neri Hospital will serve to create a certification system that could be adopted by all public hospitals in the region willing to become 'friends of immigrants'.

Current commitment

Thanks to the great already achieved outcomes, to the many contributions that IMAGINE has been receiving, and to the prestigious partnerships that facilitate IMAGINE to release its message, our commitment goes on...

- IMAGINE International - Honduras, Moskitia

The 'Primary Care Program in the Gracias a Dios Department, Moskitia' continues, through further projects, which will benefit women, newborn and children of the Moskitia region, in Honduras:

- project 'Women's Ward': in collaboration with Puerto Lempira Hospital and the Región de Salud, IMAGINE is creating a female internal medicine ward, which will also care for patients in quarantine for infectious diseases. Approximately 1,800 women will be assisted annually by competent personnel who have been trained in the best practices to decrease hospital infections;
- project 'A Neonatology Department for Puerto Lempira Hospital': IMAGINE, together with Puerto Lempira Hospital, will create a well-equipped Neonatology Department that will assist approximately 200 babies every year. Hospital personnel will be trained in the best practices to prevent neonatal infections;
- project 'A Life-Changing Journey': working with the Centro por Atencion Integrado and the HIV/AIDS Program of the Región de Salud, IMAGINE will strengthen local educational services and integrated assistance - clinical, nutritional, and transportation – for approximately 60 people living with HIV/AIDS in some of the most isolated communities in Gracias a Dios;
- project 'Moskitia Emergency Room': IMAGINE, Puerto Lempira Hospital and the Región de Salud will strengthen the healthcare services

currently offered by the hospital Emergency Room (ER). Over 15,000 patients will benefit from a proper, larger and reorganized ER Department, equipped with new operating and delivery rooms for both minor and major cases;

- project ‘Con las parteras por un futuro más seguro’: IMAGINE in collaboration with Puerto Lempira Hospital and the Región de Salud will provide further training for 60 community midwives and promote best practices on reproductive health in 25 local communities. Approximately 3 thousand women will be guaranteed a safer pregnancy and delivery.

- IMAGINE Italy

- ‘Friendly Hospital’ Project: following the success obtained with the Friendly Hospital project with San Filippo Neri Hospital in Rome, IMAGINE decided to replicate the experience in other public hospitals in the Lazio Region, to improve the quality of the healthcare services available to immigrants.

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Organisation Profile

INTERSOS is an independent no-profit humanitarian organization committed to assist the victims of natural disasters and armed conflicts.

It was established in 1992 with the active support of Italian Trade Unions.

INTERSOS activities are based on the principles of solidarity, justice, human dignity, equality of rights and opportunities, and respect for diversity and coexistence, paying special attention to the most vulnerable and unprotected people.

INTERSOS identifies with the core values of the Italian Association of Non-Governmental Organizations and adheres to the international humanitarian codes of conduct and to the values and principles expressed in these codes. INTERSOS is recognized by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the European Commission and the main UN Agencies. It enjoys the consultative status with the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) of the United Nations.

INTERSOS is an independent organization that was created to provide an effective response to crisis situations in the poorest regions of the world, where people are deprived of their rights and dignity and their basic needs are uncovered.

INTERSOS has a flexible operational structure, with the central headquarters in Rome, in charge of planning and coordination of operations, and of field offices in the countries of operation.

The bodies that, according to the Statute of the organization, orientate, decide and control the activities and its finances are: the Assembly of

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Members, the Council, the Auditing company.

Goals

- To give immediate response to humanitarian crises, by bringing relief to victims of armed conflicts and their long-term consequences (poverty, disability, mines and explosive devices, etc.), and of any other natural or man-made calamity;
- to begin, along with the relief intervention, laying the groundwork for return to stability, reconstruction and development;
- to activate, stimulate and involve Italian society, in order to develop and spread the culture of international solidarity.

Humanitarian aid workers

Humanitarian operators are the organization's vital force. They may be doctors, nurses, architects, engineers, land surveyors, psychologists, logisticians, administrators, de-miners, educators and social workers.

They work at providing water and food, and health assistance to affected populations; setting up and managing refugee camps; rebuilding houses, schools, hospitals and health centers; clearing landmines and explosive devices; carrying out vocational training; promoting peace-making, reconciliation and economic recovery processes; facilitating the development of civil society. They use their best professional skills in a spirit of solidarity and human commitment.

Where we work

INTERSOS intervenes everywhere there are objective needs and the possibility to operate. The countries of operation have been (in *italics* the current interventions):

- Africa – *Angola, Burundi, Chad, D.R. Congo, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, Liberia, Mozambique, Mauritania, Rwanda, Somalia, Sudan;*
- Central America – *El Salvador, Honduras, Nicaragua, Haiti;*

- Asia and Middle East – *Afghanistan*, Bangladesh, *Pakistan*, *Iran*, Iraq, India, Indonesia, Sri Lanka;
- Europe – Albania, *Bosnia-Herzegovina*, Chechnya, FYR Macedonia, *Kosovo*, Poland, *Serbia* and Montenegro.

Operational sectors

- Assistance to refugees and internally displaced people by setting up, organizing and managing refugee camps and collective centers;
 - emergency relief to civil populations affected by conflicts, paying special attention to the most vulnerable groups (women, aged, children) through distribution of food and basic necessities, family reunification for non-accompanied children, reintegration, education and the demobilization and rehabilitation of child soldiers;
 - return of refugees and displaced persons to their homes. Support to housing and restoration of community services, as well as economic recovery and democratic processes. Local building and vocational training abilities;
 - structural and functional rehabilitation of hospitals, health centers, schools, aqueducts, sanitation systems and other social and cultural structures;
 - humanitarian clearance of anti-personnel landmines and unexploded devices, mine awareness programs;
 - support to processes aiming at resuming dialogue, promoting peaceful coexistence and reconciliation.

Financial resources

Humanitarian aid necessarily implies an important component of official aid due to the need to intervene with appropriate resources in a very short time. At the same time it is a constant concern of INTERSOS to ensure that no governmental donor exerts any influence on the organization's strategic or operational choices. With this aim we have diversified our financial resources in order to prevent any donor becoming predominant in funding. Among official donors, we prioritize international bodies

with a more neutral profile.

INTERSOS receives part of its funding from its own member's contributions and donations from individual citizens, solidarity groups, associations, joint campaigns and private firms. Most of its budget comes from official funding: the European Union (ECHO, DG External Relations, DG Development), Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs (DG Development Cooperation), FAO, OCHA, UNDP, UNHCR, UNICEF, UNOPS, WFP, WHO, Italian Regions, Provinces and Municipalities. Italian Trade Union Confederations have been constant INTERSOS supporters.

A leading firm of auditors certifies the economic annual budget, which amounts to around euro 15,000,000.

Communication

INTERSOS has developed numerous ways of accounting for its activities and diffusing/exchanging information. They are:

- INTERSOS Notizie, quarterly magazine published since 1995 now replaced by Electronic Newsletter;
- books, handbooks and special issues;
- specific newsletters on major crises;
- regular letters to supporters;
- the website www.intersos.org

Participation in networks

INTERSOS is an active member of:

- AGIRE – Italian Agency for Emergency Response composed by 10 Italian NOGs member.
- Forum del Terzo Settore – Umbrella gathering Italian no-profit organizations engaged in social actions.

Fundamental charter

«Homo sum: humani nihil a me alienum puto»

«As a human being, nobody can be alien to me»

Terence, 195-159 b.C.

This sentence summarises the key principle of INTERSOS, the starting point from which all INTERSOS values originate, that characterises the philosophy of all INTERSOS interventions. This statement emphasizes the core position of the human being and implies the respect of the principles of equality, justice, peace, solidarity and therefore the duty of each individual to support all people in need and those who are suffering, in an unconditional way and regardless of any consideration of race, belief, religion, or of any other nature.

INTERSOS is:

- without barriers: INTERSOS operates in absolute coherence with the principles of both the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the European Convention of Human Rights: people in need must be assisted with no distinction or discrimination of race, gender, religious belief, nationality, ethnic origin or class;
- impartial: for INTERSOS, the victim is to be considered as such in any case, regardless of his belonging to any political, religious, or social group. INTERSOS' humanitarian activity must be impartial and aimed at helping all people in danger and in need. This does not prevent INTERSOS from singling out personal or institutional responsibility regarding any catastrophic event, both natural or man-made, and taking a public position;
- independent: INTERSOS is independent from any political or ideological influence, be it national or international. This independence of thought and judgement legitimates INTERSOS to condemn any violation of human rights and any form of injustice and inequity without conditions. The same principle of independence determines the choice of donors, both public and private;
- sensitive to local cultures: INTERSOS carefully avoids operations that can have traumatic effects on the people or the environment. INTERSOS strongly respects local cultures and traditions and the environment where they live and carefully appraise the use of appropriate behaviours, models, ways of working, technologies in order to improve living condi-

tions without damaging local cultures and the surrounding environment;

- supportive of local capacities: INTERSOS core value is the dignity of the human being. In its work, the local population is, from the very beginning, actively involved in all decisions and activities, aiming to give value and develop the capacity and competence of individuals and communities and gradually decrease their dependence on external assistance. INTERSOS relationship with local populations is based on dialogue and participation and aiming at developing partnership with local counterparts. INTERSOS is sensitive to political, social and religious conditions of the countries of operation; it promotes, whenever possible, initiatives for reconciliation and for the promotion of the values of respect, solidarity and peace;

- professional approach to solidarity: INTERSOS believes that motivation and professional capacity are two essential and inseparable components of humanitarian action. Solidarity motivation and professionalism are fundamental to be able to respond to the population needs with humanity, effectiveness and quality. INTERSOS aid workers are committed to respect professional ethics of humanitarian work and they contribute to spread the principles of solidarity and peace;

- transparent: INTERSOS activities are funded by private and public donors. The budget of every project is controlled by public auditors and certified audits. The organisation annual budget is certified and public.

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Who we are

A public non-profit institution with international prerogatives, whose purpose is to provide health and social assistance in peacetime as well as during conflicts. An important institution, it is under the High Patronage of the President of the Republic, subject to the oversight of the Ministry of Health and is under the jurisdiction of the Ministries of the Economy and of Defense (art. 49 of the Statute). The ItRC is part of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement. In its international efforts it coordinates with the International Committee of the Red Cross in conflict zones, and with the International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent for rescue operations in the case of natural disasters.

Identity – The Seven Fundamental Principles

Humanity: the Red Cross, born of a desire to bring assistance without discrimination to the wounded on the battlefield, endeavors – in its international and national capacity – to prevent and alleviate human suffering wherever it may be found. Its purpose is to protect life and health and to ensure respect for the human being. It promotes mutual understanding, friendship, co-operation and lasting peace amongst all peoples.

Impartiality: it makes no discrimination as to nationality, race, religious beliefs, class or political opinions. It endeavors only to relieve suffering, giving priority to the most urgent cases of distress.

Neutrality: in order to continue to enjoy the confidence of all, the Red Cross may not take sides in hostilities or engage at any time in controver-

IX.18 ItRC, Croce Rossa Italiana (Italian Red Cross)

sies of a political, racial, religious or ideological nature.

Independence: the Red Cross is independent. The National Societies, while auxiliaries in the humanitarian services of their Governments and subject to the laws of their respective countries, must always maintain their autonomy so that they may be able at all times to act in accordance with Red Cross principles.

Voluntary Service: the Red Cross is a voluntary relief organization not prompted in any manner by desire for gain.

Unity: there can be only one Red Cross Society in any one country. It must be open to all. It must carry on its humanitarian work throughout its territory.

Universality: the Red Cross is a world-wide institution in which all Societies have equal status and share equal responsibilities and duties in helping each other.

National structure

The ItRC in the national territory is composed of: 21 Regional branches that propose interventions and measures they deem necessary in relation to the development of the coordination, direction and vigilance functions in their regions; 105 Provincial branches that promote and develop the activities of the ItRC in the province, by coordinating and controlling the activities of the Local branches under their respective areas; 450 Local branches granted organizational and administrative autonomy that contribute heavily to reinforcing the capillary structure of the ItRC. Under these there are also more than 1,000 communal groups, that however lack any real administrative autonomy.

National and international activities

Health, social, welfare, civil protection and rescue, immigration, training, dissemination of international humanitarian law.

Volunteers

The ItRC relies on volunteer work, continuously undertaken and orga-

nized of more than 150,000 members, assisted by 5,000 permanent and temporary staff members, public servants and members of the military corps.

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Since 1981 Lavori in Corso Cultural Association has been working in the aggregation and prevention field. Lavori in Corso carries out different projects which deal with the link between culture and social context (stages, workshops, formation experiences, events), with a specific focus on youngsters and their relationship with theatrical and cinematographic language. Since 1990 the association promotes 'Momenti', youth culture festival which takes place in Perugia. The festival includes different kinds of artistic performance (theatre, dance, music, video) by youngsters. In all these activities volunteers are always present: young people, non-formal associations and groups, citizens, teachers, families, etc. In 1992 Lavori in Corso began a productive collaboration with the Presidency of the Council of Ministers. In frame of the programme 'Youth for Europe' the association, together with other European counterparts, organizes cultural exchanges in order to create together a work of art, such as a play.

Here is a short list of the projects carried out by Lavori in Corso in twenty years of activity:

- workshops for voluntary people in Perugia and at national level;
- projects addressed to University students (volunteering, apprenticeships, etc.), which are recognized in the formal University course;
- involving people, families, schools and district associations in different performances, workshops, events (especially the voluntary association 'Per una Città Solidale' whose aim is to improve the quality of life in Perugia);
- since 1996, the project 'Culture and aggregation', which consists in hosting young European volunteers in Perugia in the frame of the

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Lavori in Corso Cultural Association

‘European Voluntary Service’ (EVS). EVS helps young people aged 18 to 30 to develop their sense of solidarity by participating, either individually or in group, in non-profit, unpaid voluntary activities abroad. The young people are involved as European volunteers in various fields: environment, culture, social activities, children, etc. In our case they are involved in theatre and cinema activities with children, youngsters and schools;

- we hosted in Perugia the first volunteer, Veera, from Finland, in the 1997, with EVS. After this project, we hosted many volunteers from Ireland, Portugal, Greece, Germany, Latvia, Turkey, Belgium, France, Hungary, Spain, Netherlands, etc;

- 2001, Sala del Campidoglio (Roma): participation in the event ‘La fiera delle idee’ organized by CEMEA del Mezzogiorno. Meetings and open spaces about European projects for youngsters;

- July 2003: our hosting project for volunteers was recognized, by the Ministry of Social Policies, as the best Italian hosting project of the year;

- 28 September / 5 October 2003: Federico Menichelli e Matilde Pennacchi, and the volunteer Maria, from Germany, were in Brussels for the European youth week ‘Youth in Action’ Awards 2003 organised by the Directorate-General for Education and Culture (DG EAC of the European Commission). Our European voluntary service project was recognized among the best four ones supported by the ‘Youth in Action’ programme. The delegation of Lavori in Corso also participated in the meetings for the new European programmes led by Vivienne Redding, member of the European Commission, responsible for Education, Culture, Youth, Media and Sports (1999-2004);

- June 2006: Lavori in Corso organized in Perugia the Youth Project ‘Back to the future!’ – Action 5 – In which a lot of ex volunteers (from different projects and years) of our association came back to Perugia to share experiences, memories and new projects that started from EVS.

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Oxfam is an international confederation of 14 organizations working together in 99 countries and with 3,000 partners and allies around the world to find lasting solutions to poverty and injustice.

Oxfam Italia builds upon its previous work as Ucodep, an Italian non-governmental organization passionately and professionally committed over a period of more than thirty years to improve living conditions of thousands of poor people in the world and give them the power and energies to build their own future, to monitor and direct their lives, to exercise their rights.

Economic justice, access to essential services, citizenship and governance, humanitarian aid are the axes of our actions, consistent with our values of justice, human dignity, democracy, solidarity, commitment, and sobriety.

We work in 20 southern countries (Africa, Latin America, Middle East, Asia, Africa) to improve living conditions of thousands of people living in poverty around the world so that they will be able to live a dignified life, to benefit a fair compensation for their work, have equal access to food, income, water, health.

We work to prevent crisis situations and support victims of humanitarian crises, natural disasters and conflict.

We work to promote and support a society where citizens, civil society, businesses and governments feel responsible on humanity and environment, each for their part.

We work to encourage and participate by listening to each other, to ensure an equitable and sustainable future for the planet, both nationally and internationally.

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Oxfam Italia onlus

Through all our activities, we try to influence and change policies, ideas and behaviors in order to strengthen the capacity of vulnerable people and communities, giving everyone an equal and concrete exercise of their rights.

We work directly in vulnerable countries and community with development projects and post-emergency to strengthen local people's skills, supporting their energies in order to provide them with the power to exercise their rights and build their own lives and future.

At the same time, we act in Italy and around the world, through lobbying, advocacy, awareness, encouraging network processes and mobilization of civil society to achieve the change of economic rules, policies and international source of poverty and injustice.

Always, in all our activities in Italy and worldwide, we choose to work, in partnership with representatives of the region, convinced that only by listening local communities' needs and sharing expertise and capacity, it is possible improve our work and make a sustainable change in society.

We are responsible of our actions and resources: to be accountable is a central value for all our activities. For this reason, we yearly produce a social balance (we receive the Social Balance Italian Oscar in 2006) and we have the certification of the Italian Institute of Donation. We plan and manage all our activities according to criteria of Quality Management System, knowing that only by building relationships of trust and mutual respect with our partners we can build a better future together.

The world we wish

We want a world where all people have access to healthy food, to houses, a job and a worthy income for their labors. A world in which schools, hospitals and water systems are working and accessible to all. A world where everyone can enjoy the necessary protection and assistance in case of conflicts and natural disasters. A world in which everyone participates actively in the social, economic and cultural life of their community. A world in which citizens, institutions, enterprises and international organizations work together, to improve their communities and deliver a healthy

planet to their children.

Our approach

To better identify and address the priorities of our work, Oxfam Italia has adopted a strategic plan for next years (2010/2017).

There are four axes for 2010/2017 strategic plan: economic justice, essential services, humanitarian emergency, citizenship, democracy and participation, with a focus on all activities about gender justice and environmental sustainability.

Oxfam Italia's working method is based on the knowledge that to eradicate poverty and injustice an integrated approach is necessary. Such approach should include:

- development programs in the South of the world and in situations of social exclusion in Italy, to help vulnerable people improve their living conditions by providing them with support and resources to build a decent future;
- emergency response to ensure respect for people's basic rights in case of humanitarian crisis, bringing water, sanitary toilets, shelters and helping to start the development process once passed an emergency;
- campaigns and education initiatives to influence policies that cause global poverty and injustice and to encourage citizens to ask the leader a greater commitment to defending and promoting the interests of the poorest and most vulnerable.

We believe that the comparison and complementarity of views, experiences and skills can improve the efficiency, quality and sustainability of our actions. In addition, the development of partnerships and alliances can also create opportunities for exchange of experiences and ideas that form the basis for a cultural and operational growth that is our general objective.

For this reason we work as much as possible to active international networks, national and local NGOs and other civil society organizations. Great importance was given to the development of partnerships within projects and initiatives. Specially in our international cooperation' pro-

jects, we are used to involve different local stakeholders and to establish lasting relationships with other subjects complementary to us in terms of roles and experiences, which can give a strong added value to our work (Fair Trade organizations, ethical finance and microcredit, responsible tourism).

In our experience of education for citizenship in Italy we are building stable relations of cooperation with teachers and educators, local authorities and mass media.

Our goals for biennium 2011-2012

- Economic justice. Improve small farmers' capabilities in the southern hemisphere to produce food for themselves and their families, asking Italy, other governments and international institutions to protect their access to land and water and help fight climate change. Above all, we will strengthen the production capacity of 24,400 farmers - thanks to our programs in Ecuador, Dominican Republic, Bosnia Herzegovina, Palestine, Haiti - so that they can get a fair income from their work, able to ensure food security and worthy living conditions to their families.
- Essential services. Increase the commitment in the fight against poverty, asking Italian government to increase the quantity and quality of resources for official development assistance, in order to ensure health, education and clean water to all people. Making access to these rights a reality, giving assistance to 12,800 persons in Lebanon, South Africa, Dominican Republic, Vietnam.
- Humanitarian responses. Responding to humanitarian emergencies in collaboration with other partners in the network of Oxfam International, ready for action in countries where Oxfam Italia is present through campaigns to raise funds and stimulate the action of the Italian institutions in 99 countries where the Oxfam's network work.
- Gender justice. Involving more than 4,000 women in Bolivia and Vietnam in improvement activities and capacity building in order to enhance their power to guide the communities.

Our history

1970-1989

Born as a network of local committees, Ucodep acts as a voluntary association promoting awareness-raising and in 1985 helped found the Centro di Documentazione Città di Arezzo Sviluppo, Diritti, Pace, Intercultura

1989-1997

Ucodep develops the intercultural education and consolidate the promotion of fair trade opening in Arezzo the first 'Bottega del Mondo'. In 1995, the Committee for decentralized cooperation with the Dominican Republic, was born.

1998-2006

The number of projects, countries and managed resources, increase ucodep sets a quality management system (ISO 2000) to ensure efficiency, sustainability and a system of democratic governance and transparency.

2003-2006

The Seenet program connects a network of local bodies in Albania and Ex-Yugoslavia in partnership with 13 local institutions of Tuscany and relies upon the long experience of Ucodep in decentralized cooperation, a distinctive association with the promotion of local products and local area including the Coffee Jamao, now distributed in Europe through the channels of fair trade.

2006

First humanitarian and post-emergency actions after the tsunami. Ucodep builds 130 houses in the village of Weragama in Sri Lanka.

The process of quality and accountability takes the form of the OSCE budget and the certification of the Italian Institute of donations.

2007-2008

Opens Ucodep and Oxfam International campaign office, with the aim of sensitize the Italian civil society on issues of global poverty and injustice during the Italian G8 in 2009.

Opinion campaigns, fundraising and promotion of volunteering take on national level.

2009

During the week of G8 Summit in L'Aquila, Ucodep and Oxfam are at the forefront of the campaign 'Water Health Education for All', collecting one million signatures worldwide. Expanded its cooperation projects in Africa and in humanitarian assistance as a result of the conflict in Gaza. The Seenet program now involves 70 local authorities.

2010-2017

After the earthquake in Haiti, Ucodep is at the forefront of emergency response and reconstruction. The process of affiliation with Oxfam is consolidated and Ucodep changes its name in Oxfam Italia. The commitment in the fight against poverty is reflected in a strategic plan to be here in the next 8 years.

Oxfam Italia in action

For over two years Oxfam Italia has taken the path of the involvement of volunteers within their organization to become more and more open to association areas and where to exercise active citizenship in key topics where it operates.

The goal is to provide groups of local volunteers to form a national network that can offer locally and spread their campaign activities, fundraising to support projects of international cooperation, fair trade and where possible, activities of decentralized cooperation.

Most of the causes leading to poverty are rooted in the West and therefore it is necessary to accompany and to link projects in developing countries with a change in the public opinion. The change, therefore, consists in what you can do in the South and what you can change in thinking in the North.

The idea of volunteering is born, and develops over time with the goal of rooting in the territories ideas, projects, mission, values of the association.

Territory is the center of the action. Volunteers work in the territory trying to animate it and raise awareness of the major themes regarding human rights, combating poverty, raising the themes of solidarity and

international cooperation, our campaigns, our projects.

There are some fundamentals that characterize the actions and policies of volunteers in their work:

- glocal: volunteers are the ‘arm’ of the association in the territories and represent the operators, volunteers and members. This great principle is reflected in the search for contacts with newspapers, television, websites and local blogs, cultural associations, third sector, other nonprofits. It also translates into the ability of the group to network, to be able to engage and aggregate, to participate with a proactive role in the events and initiatives that have set themselves the goal to present and promote a change and a more equitable system in the North and South which is consistent with the values of the association;
- talk to people, stimulate interest and discussion: one of the biggest limitations of NGOs involved in development cooperation is the lack of ability to interact and communicate with the vast majority of citizens. In practice, the excessive professionalization degenerates in the tendency to communicate with / between experts. The development policy of volunteering and a branch network can make a u-turn;
- to be actors of change / promoters of a different culture: be actors of change means to promote the public knowledge and awareness of the great question of poverty reduction, international cooperation, development, integration. This is possible if the actors of change are people who know the territory characteristics and peculiarities;
- encourage private fundraising: NGOs are living times of economic instability due to various factors, including the global crisis, reduction of public funding and distrust of public opinion. Increasingly, Oxfam Italia needs to develop a capacity for economic independence from politics. Being more economically independent means to gain credibility in the defense of its choices and support.

Water

- Bolivia: work with the indigenous Guarani in northern Chaco, to ensure clean water to their communities.

- Vietnam: sources of drinking water and build latrines in the towns of Lao Cai province, inhabited mostly by ethnic minorities who live in extreme poverty.
- Cameroon: meet the water shortage afflicting the population of Haut-Nkam; were the women of the village of Bamelek, common Banwa, tell us where to build water sources and dig the trenches that house the pipes.
- Haiti: together with other members of the Confederation we have distributed thousands of gallons of water to sustain the first needs of the population, after the earthquake of January 2010.

Our approach: Oxfam Italia strengthens the capacity of institutions and local communities to plan, implement and manage an appropriate quality of water services, non-discriminatory, creating services and infrastructure, and promoting water awareness campaigns.

Campaigns and active citizenship

- Lebanon: work in Palestinian refugee camps claiming the right to education and fostering the integration of children in society.
- Palestine: promote children's rights through legal protection and psychosocial activities, training and information.
- Italy: promote the inclusion of the immigrant population, we support education for global citizenship and promote campaigns of opinion on a national scale.

Our approach: with particular attention to the Italian context, Oxfam Italia facilitates understanding of the causes of injustice and inequality by promoting socially and environmentally responsible behaviors and encouraging informed citizens commitment to support the promotion of rights and / or political pressure aimed at achieving structural changes in favor of economic justice, the guarantee of access to basic services, protection of rights.

Oxfam Italia Facilitates and supports the implementation of internal policies and cooperation with a coherent approach to human and sustainable local development, providing for active participation of citizens and ensuring transparency in decision-making.

Food and income

- We work for the protection of typical local products and of biodiversity, developing skills and providing training and financial and technical assistance to small producers in rural areas of Bosnia and Herzegovina, to harvester in Brazil and recovering and promoting ‘forgotten’ local cultures in Morocco and Ecuador.

- In Haiti we support the cooperatives of coffee producers, providing warehouses and processing plants, organizational and financial management training and marketing support.

- In Middle East we support the shepherds and farmers in Lebanon and Palestine, with assistance in artificial insemination and in the processing and marketing of dairy products.

- In South Africa we promote urban agriculture in the township.

- In Bosnia Herzegovina we work enhancing natural resources and promoting responsible tourism ensuring income to people of the valley of the Neretva, Drina and Una Sana.

Our approach: Oxfam Italia works with associations of small farmers and herders in the southern hemisphere ensuring their livelihood and improving their income, supporting the development of local territories and strengthening the capacity of institutions and local communities to prevent and mitigate the effects of natural disasters and climate change.

Campaigning to ensure that the governments of rich countries, particularly Italy, and the governments of developing countries in the world support the struggle of small farmers against hunger and poverty and address the consequences of climate change.

Climate and environment

- Biodiversity support: we provide training and financial and technical assistance to small producers in rural areas of Bosnia and Herzegovina, collectors of wild fruits in Brazil and restoring and promoting local cultures ‘forgotten’ in Morocco and Ecuador.

- Bosnia and Herzegovina: improve eco tourist supply of the three

Bosnian valley of Neretva, Drina and the Una Sana enhancing the area, promoting tourism and encouraging responsible disposal system and waste management while preserving the environment and protecting health.

- Ecuador: we promote sustainable management of natural resources and forestry, working with peasant and indigenous communities of the cantons of Lago Agrio, Cuyabeno Putumayo and enhancing the typical local crops, using organic and environmentally sustainable production systems.

Our approach. Oxfam Italia works to support and strengthen the action of continuous and sustainable organizations, networks and alliances that protect and promote the environment.

Campaigning to ensure that small farmers and vulnerable communities can assert their right to sustainable livelihoods.

Emergencies and humanitarian crises

Haiti: in the aftermath of the earthquake of January 12, 2010, we went down to the forefront of bringing drinking water and care to the injured and the homeless. Now, we are thinking about their future, supporting field hospital of Leogane, by reactivating agricultural production and engaging a major project related to improving nutrition.

Our approach: Oxfam Italia provides assistance to populations affected by conflicts, natural disasters or the effects of severe economic crisis, with the objective of ensuring food security, supporting reconstruction and facilitating the restoration of normal conditions.

Fair trade and solidarity economy

Italy: we promote fair trade and solidarity economy's products through fair trade shops and our 4 shops in Tuscany.

Our approach: Oxfam Italia is helping local communities, particularly farmers, to improve their production and sell their products it promotes the marketing of products from fair economy and of the products identified in

their local development projects through 'Botteghe del Mondo' thus local communities, particularly farmers, can benefit of local, national, international trade, managing to sell their products at a fair price.

With the International Oxfam confederation, campaigning to ensure the fairness of the rules and trade policies and their support to the struggle of small farmers against hunger and poverty.

Education

- Lebanon: we work with schools in Palestinian refugee camps providing educational support and organizing recreational activities.
- Dominican Republic: based on our decades of experience in teaching methods in the North-East of the country, intervened in support of kindergartens and primary schools in the South West of the country to provide classrooms equipped and experienced teachers.
- South Africa: we use new technologies to overcome language and geographical barriers putting in touch students from Tuscany and South African schools.

Our approach: Oxfam Italia acts to strengthen the capacity of institutions and local communities to plan and manage social services and high quality, and non-discriminatory education creating services and infrastructures, and promoting campaigns and awareness raising.

Health

- Bolivia: support access to health in the indigenous population of the Gran Chaco and Chuquisaca through training and health education, provision of equipment for clinics and workshops and courses in sex education and reproductive health and women.
- Haiti: provide medical services, gynecological, pediatric and dental and psychological assistance to children in field hospital of Leogane set up following the earthquake of January 2010.
- Lebanon: facilitate the care and prevention in Primary Care Centers of South Beirut, training medical and paramedical staff.

- Dominican Republic: promote maternal health, providing care for new mothers of Haitian origin and their children and strengthens the planning of health centers by creating a register of computer users.
- South Africa: support children whose parents died of AIDS and abused who attend day care centers in the townships and rural areas of East London.
- Vietnam: provide gynecological and medical examinations free of charge to mothers and children in the North of the country.

Our approach. Oxfam Italia acts to strengthen the capacity of institutions and local communities to plan and manage sanitation quality, creating non-discriminatory services and infrastructures, promoting campaigns about prevention and health promotion.

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The name ‘Progetto Famiglia’ originates from the conviction that the family is a resource for the entire society. We are convinced that, starting the family, it is possible to build a society fitting for human beings, a that respects the dignity of the human person. We know the crisis in which the family finds itself today. Statistics disconsolately tell us that family disintegration is increasing. But a more careful examination of social dynamics paints a different picture. Not only is the family resisting erosion, it also seems capable of providing a solution for social difficulties. In fact it can be said that it is the institution that plays the main role - all of the other institutions simply support it. Reestablishing the family’s central role ensures humanizing the development of the whole society.

Founded in 1990 by a group of young volunteers from the nocerino-sarnese area (in the province of Salerno), Progetto Famiglia is a large voluntary movement organized in several intervention areas, each one with one or more specifically dedicated Associations. The various ‘specific’ Associations are connected by another ‘general’ Association which acts as the Federation. Each Association is legally autonomous, and, although each one has its own specific activities, all have the common objective of ‘serving’ the family and minors.

Progetto Famiglia has extended itself to give a larger geographical coverage and it now operates in the following areas:

- In Italy, structured and continuous activities taking place in:
 - Campania: provinces of Salerno, Napoli, Avellino, Caserta, Benevento;
 - Lazio: provinces of Roma, Frosinone;
 - Basilicata: provinces of Potenza, Matera.

IX.21 Progetto Famiglia (Project Family) onlus – A Federation of Non-profit Bodies for Minors and the Family

Voluntary initiatives are starting up in:

- Lombardia: provinces of Milano and Brescia;
- Trentino Alto Adige: province of Trento;
- Sicilia: province of Palermo;
- Emilia Romagna: province of Bologna.
- Abroad:
 - North-West Africa: Burkina Faso;
 - Middle East: Israel, Palestine, Lebanon;
 - Eastern Europe: Ukraine.

There are eighteen Associations currently operating in the Progetto Famiglia Federation, distributed in five activity areas. Each area is linked to a specific ‘Coordinating Body’:

- Progetto Famiglia – Vita (Life);
- Progetto Famiglia – Affido (Foster);
- Progetto Famiglia – Genitori (Parents);
- Progetto Famiglia – Accoglienza (Refuge);
- Progetto Famiglia – Cooperazione (Cooperation).

Overall, approximately 500 volunteers and 40 operators are involved in the Progetto Famiglia Federation.

Progetto Famiglia adheres to the following Italian bodies:

- Forum Nazionale delle Associazioni Familiari (National Forum of Family Associations);
- Cismai (Italian Coordination of Services against the Mistreatment and Abuse of Children);
- PIDIDA (Italian Coordination for the Rights of Children and Adolescents);

Between 2009 and 2010 PROGETTO FAMIGLIA was honored with three ‘Special Mentions’ from the Italian Government’s Department for the Family.

Progetto Famiglia – Vita (Life - area present since 1990)

The support for mothers and unborn life is the first area in which Progetto Famiglia developed. In 1991, a group of young volunteers from the Agro Nocerino area began to operate in the town of Angri. Thereafter the operations continued to expand and led to the official creation of the Association in 1994. The social activities involve works to support and accompany expecting mothers with the objective of helping them to ‘give birth to the life’ that they carry in the womb and to ensure that they deal serenely with the post birth period. The Association is also involved in activities of awareness and promotion of a culture that is attentive to the importance of motherhood and life and offers information and learning courses for young people, families and professionals.

The Association is essentially divided in two intervention areas:

- ‘Education and Culture’ is responsible for preparing learning courses and teaching material to offer at all levels in schools and for professionals that operate in the social services/health service area. It also organizes meetings, conferences and public manifestations;
- ‘Support’ is formed by a few groups of volunteers – accompanied by a team of professionals – involved in offering support for mothers with difficult pregnancies. The first phase consists in meeting with expectant mothers experiencing difficulty and, quite often, extreme isolation. The second phase involves taking onboard the problems involved with the wider family, confronting and resolving both material and communication problems. This activity takes place in cooperation with the local authorities/bodies (health service, social services, associations, church bodies, etc.). Also, via distance adoption and contacts with suppliers of goods for children, an attempt is made to create a network of solidarity around the mothers and their children.

Progetto Famiglia Vita is currently active in three associations:

- Ass. Progetto Famiglia Vita di S. Egidio M.A. (Salerno);
- Ass. Progetto Famiglia ‘Franco Vitale’ di Poggiomarino (Napoli);
- Ass. Progetto Famiglia Vita Caserta (Caserta).

Groups of volunteers are also being created in Monterotondo (Roma)

and Policoro (Matera).

Progetto Famiglia Vita adheres to the network of 'Movimento per la Vita Italiano' (Italian Prolife Movement).

In 2006 it was heard in Parliament (Social Affairs Commission of the House of Deputies) with regard to the fact-finding investigation into the state of realization of the law 194/78.

Progetto Famiglia – Affidò (Foster – initiative started in 1994, consolidated as a structured area in 1998)

Based on a network of volunteering families willing to temporarily accommodate people in difficulty, this area is present in all of the provinces of the Campania region, in the regions Lazio, Basilicata and Sicily and also in Ukraine. The main focus of the area is that of accommodating children and youths (foster families). There are also other types of accommodation offered, principally for pregnant mothers and mothers with children. The volunteering families participate in ongoing training courses. They are also assisted and supported by a team of psychologists and social service workers that operate in conjunction with the local public services and the family court system. The families also involve themselves in various initiatives promoting awareness around the theme of fostering.

The following Associations are part of Progetto Famiglia Affidò:

- Province of Napoli
 - Associazione Progetto Famiglia Affidò Napoli;
 - Gruppo di affidatari della Caritas Diocesana di Acerra;
 - Associazione Progetto Famiglia Affidò Castellammare-Storrento (currently being set up).
- Province of Salerno
 - Associazione Progetto Famiglia Affidò di S. Egidio MA;
 - Associazione Progetto Famiglia Affidò Bellizzi;
 - Associazione Progetto Famiglia Affidò Teggiano.
- Province of Caserta
 - Associazione Progetto Famiglia Affidò Aversa.
- Province of Benevento

– Associazione Progetto Famiglia Angela Cancellieri Affido Benevento.

- Province of Avellino
- Associazione Progetto Famiglia Affido Avellino.
- First stages of voluntary movements in this area are also present in:
 - Salerno;
 - Policoro (provincia di Matera);
 - Frosinone, Alatri e Anagni;
 - Bar (Ukraine);
 - Palermo.

Since 1997 ‘Progetto Famiglia Affido’ is an active member of ‘Rete Bambini, Ragazzi e Famiglie al Sud’ (Children, Youths and Families Network of the South) along with dozens of other family associations in Campania, Basilicata, Puglia and Calabria.

From 2000 to 2006 it promoted and led ‘Il Coordinamento Regionale Affido Familiare della Campania’ (The Regional coordination of Foster Families of Campania).

Since 2003 it participates in meetings between public-private social services promoted by CNSA – Coordinamento Nazionale Servizi Affidi (National Coordination of Foster Services).

Since July 2010, along with other national and regional associations of foster families, it founded the Tavolo Nazionale Affido (National Foster Board).

In September 2010 Progetto Famiglia Affido was mentioned as an example of ‘best practice’ for its network of volunteering families on the occasion of the Report to the Italian Parliament on the state of the implementation of the law 149/01.

Progetto Famiglia – Genitori (Parents – area active since 1991)

Progetto Famiglia Genitori is a group of volunteers and experts that promote:

- education courses for preparation and support for motherhood and

fatherhood;

- education courses on intimate relationships and family relationships;
- education courses for responsible procreation.

The objective is that of promoting awareness and forming the skills necessary for the role of parents, with initiatives in:

- Teaching of Natural Methods (present since 1991);
- School for parents (started in 2003);
- Family Counseling (inaugurated in 2000).

Progetto Famiglia Genitori is represented in:

- Progetto Famiglia Genitori di S. Egidio M.A. (province of Salerno);
- Progetto Famiglia Genitori di Pompei.

It operates in conjunction with the National Center CAMEN of Milano.

Progetto Famiglia – Accoglienza (Refuge – area active since 1996)

Progetto Famiglia Accoglienza is the area designated for the management of Family Houses for minors and Refuge Houses for expecting mothers and mothers with children. These Houses are run by a nucleus of volunteers (married couples, youths, consecrated members) that have chosen to live daily at the service of others. The main objective of these Houses is that of creating a strong family environment that combines specialist support (social and psychological, provided by a specialist team) with the offer of key relationships, centered on supporting those who have been denied the benefits of a balanced family background capable of providing a normal upbringing. The duration of the housing varies depending on each specific case, with each case being tailored to the needs of the individual and to the objectives to be met. There are four Houses currently in operation:

- Oasi Nazaret, founded in 2000 in S. Giuseppe Vesuviano and relocated to a new and more suitable structure in 2004 in Striano, via Sarno 69/A - tel. 081/865.47.65;
- Oasi Maria Madre della Vita, active since 1998, located in

Sant'Egidio M.A. (SA), via B.A. Guerriore n° 1 - tel. 081/515.29.60;

- Oasi S. Paolo, active since 1998, located in Episcopio di Sarno (SA), via Vescovado - tel. 081/94.54.63;

- Casa Emmanuel, opened in January 2007 in Angri (SA), in via Del Monte - tel. 081/513.31.38.

Since 2000 the Association is a member of CORCOF (Coordinamento Regionale Comunità Familiari – Regional Coordination of Family Communities), of which from 2002 to 2005 it was representative for the province of Salerno.

Progetto Famiglia – Cooperazione (Cooperation – area active since 2002)

Involved in improvement projects in Developing Countries, Progetto Famiglia Cooperazione has implemented over 100 projects since its inception (of which many are still ongoing) in 5 countries (Burkina Faso, Ukraine, Israel, Palestine, Lebanon), guaranteeing direct benefits for more than 500,000 people. Funding is essentially private (from individuals or companies).

Currently the area is represented by:

- Associazione Progetto Famiglia di S. Egidio M.A. (SA);
- Associazione Progetto Famiglia di Koupela (Burkina Faso);
- Associazione Progetto Famiglia Ucraina (currently being set up).

Editorial Initiatives

In the last years Progetto Famiglia has also developed an area dedicated to cultural communications.

Since 2006 a bimonthly magazine has been published (www.puntofamiglia.net)

In 2010 the volunteer association ‘Comunicare la Famiglia’ (Communicating the Family) was founded.

The publisher ‘Punto Famiglia’ was founded in 2011.

Head Office

A federation head office has been developed to support the activities of the various associations. The main functions of this office are: general direction and coordination; administrative support; social planning; communications and shared events; marketing and fund raising; national civil service; European volunteer service (in start up); training and professional updates (in social and health services); specialized library.

Head Office also provides of teams of experts that provide the necessary specialized support for the volunteers in the various areas.

Since 2008 a few young volunteers have started a theatrical group called 'Compagnia del Sorriso' (Company of the Smile) that organizes fundraising shows.

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The 'Pro S. Alessandro', no-profit cultural association, founded in 1981 in Ischia, has been engaged for the last thirty years in the promotion of cultural heritage of the island of Ischia through the festival called 'Festa di S. Alessandro', named after the homonymous hill in the area. The 'Pro S. Alessandro' association is based on the joint and free work of all participants, that offer their expertise and professionalism in organizing the event.

Ischia, a beautiful Mediterranean island, today a tourist destination at national and international level, has an ancient history. It was the first colony of Magna Graecia founded by the inhabitants of Euboea in the eighth century. Magnificent archaeological finds such as vases, pottery and jewelry, still witness the ancient and flourishing civilization.

In the sixteenth century Ischia became an important literary coterie with the poet Vittoria Colonna, who chose to live in the Aragonese Castle of Ischia.

Thanks to its thermal waters, during the centuries the island was often a destination chosen by the various cultures (Spanish, French, Austrian) that came through the kingdom of Naples, creating a unique cultural *koiné*.

The St. Alessandro Feast was created with the intention of preserving and promoting the special features of the history of Ischia through costumes and traditions, from the most remote periods until the twentieth century, and with the objective of disseminating the local history through cultural exchange with communities from all over Europe.

With these goals, the 'Pro S. Alessandro' association promotes and organizes every year on August 26, the feast of St. Alessandro, a historical costume parade with over 300 participants, which starts from the

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Pro S. Alessandro,
St. Alessandro
Feast, Ischia,
August
24 to September 7

Aragonese Castel, a splendid monument of the sixteenth century, and reach the hill of S. Alessandro, near the port of Ischia, through the streets of the island.

The Greek colonists open the parade, since Ischia was the first Greek colony of the Mediterranean sea, founded in the eighth century BC. Retracing the path of the history of the island, the parade shows the protagonists of the Italian and Neapolitan Renaissance, with the historical families and personalities connected to Ischia: D'Avalos, Colonna and Aragonese dynasties, the Marquis of Vasto, kings and queens, princes and courtiers, with the costumes and the jewelry reproduced thorough studies on prints and portraits of the time, come back to life for a day in the streets of the island. The parade is also enriched by carriages, horses and flag-wavers, who perform during the parade, accompanied by the sound of drums.

The parade in historical costume, the central moment of the event, is accompanied by a series of initiatives that the 'Pro S. Alessandro' association organizes in the days immediately preceding and following the parade: folkloristic shows, concerts and local products tastings.

The event has grown significantly over the years and became an important opportunity for cultural exchanges and twinning with other cities in Italy and Europe.

This year, on the occasion of the 30th anniversary of the feast, the 'Pro S. Alessandro' association decided to pay tribute to the memory of the archaeologist George Buchner, who discovered the ancient city of *Pithecura* (Ischia) and who lived on the hill of S. Alessandro till his death in 2005, by establishing a scholarship for Italians and foreigner students in Archaeology.

The 30th anniversary of the feast was also celebrated by inviting all the folkloristic groups twinned with the town of Ischia in the course of the past editions of the feast, and by creating a new twinning with Britain, that has historically links with the island of Ischia. In 1553, in fact, the poet Vittoria Colonna had talks and correspondences with the Cardinal Pole, Archbishop of Canterbury and chief counselor of the Queen Bloody Mary; in 1809 Admiral Nelson cannonaded the Aragonese castle, occupied by the

French troops; today Prince Charles is the president of the Walton Foundation, which in Forio d'Ischia counts a unique botanical garden flower.

The feast of St. Alessandro is a completely free of charge initiative that takes place every year thanks to the generous efforts of the volunteers who work for an event that draws hundreds of tourists every year. The expenses of the festivals are supported by the generous contribution of public and private institutions that host the twin communities, generating friendship and cultural exchange.

Terra Nuova, Centro per il Volontariato onlus is a membership-based association working in international solidarity. It was established in 1969 as a nonprofit organisation, and was recognised in 1972 by MAE-DGCS (Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs – Development Co-operation General Directorate) as an NGO qualified to carrying out development co-operation projects; disseminating information on development issues and promoting development education in Italy and Europe.

In 1980 it was recognised by the European Commission for the implementation of cooperation projects.

The core activity of Terra Nuova is to identify, design and implement development co-operation projects. We operate in Africa and Latin America, combining a sound accountability with the expertise gained in over 30 years of initiatives. It is also very important for Terra Nuova to promote awareness-raising programmes, with the aim to inform, sensitize and to mobilize the European civil society. We constantly address many issues related to development, with a direct impact on the populations from both, the ‘South’ and the ‘North’ of the world. These issues include rural development, migration, access to public goods, etc.. Terra Nuova and its partners work to promote a new perspective on development, trade and agricultural policies, which should be more coherent, more equitable and should respect and enhance cultural diversity, as well as the sustainable use of natural resources. Terra Nuova strives to promote peace and human rights by supporting endogenous economic, political and social development processes at community and institutional level, while facilitating intercultural dialogue and solidarity.

Terra Nuova’s activities are mainly focused on socio-economic development in rural and urban areas and on capacity building of local institu-

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Terra Nuova, Centro per il Volontariato onlus

tions. Within this areas, the main fields of our activities are currently the following:

- sustainable management of natural resources;
- rural development (agriculture, animal health and production);
- promotion of income-generating activities and job creation, in particular through the support of micro- and small-scale enterprises;
- support to education and human health sectors;
- protection of human rights, and in particular of citizenship, linguistic and cultural rights, as well as the rights of children and adolescents.

Terra Nuova's activities are characterized by a full participation of the local communities in the planning and implementation of the projects, and the promotion of processes aimed at self-sustainability and/or post-crisis rehabilitation. Our work is constantly monitored by the association's members who are committed to verify its consistency with development co-operation ethics.

The main beneficiaries of Terra Nuova's initiatives are: children in difficult circumstances, women suffering discrimination, smallholder farmers, nomad shepherds, micro and small entrepreneurs of the urban and rural informal economy, indigenous populations. Our Association promotes the participation of these social groups in their local and national contexts by supporting democratic processes of development planning for a sustainable management of public goods and the environment.

Terra Nuova cooperates with other European NGOs in raising awareness on development cooperation issues through a joint definition of campaigns, also directed to fund-raising. As a membership-based association, Terra Nuova also raises regular membership fees, as well as private donations and contributions in kind (voluntary specialist and non-specialist work) from its members and staff.

Terra Nuova co-operates with a wide range of local and international institutions committed to sustainable socio-economic development, promotion of peace and human rights and natural resource management, and this at different levels as research, policy/strategy and programme/project level: NGOs, CBOs, grassroots groups and associations, universities and research institutes, local and national government, multilateral and bilate-

ral donor organisations. Terra Nuova also participates in many advocacy and representative networks, federations and platforms;; Italian NGOs Association for International Cooperation to Development (AOI); NGOs Coordination for Development Cooperation (COCIS); Italian NGOs Support Group for the Sahel Farmers Movement (Italiafrica); Italian NGO Council of Kenya; CONCORD (European NGO Confederation for relief and development); the More and Better Network (on rural development and policy coherence); CELEP (Coalition for European Lobbies on Eastern African Pastoralism) Seattle to Bruxelles Network (dealing with trade policies and development).

The eligibility criteria for collaboration are the following:

- ethical, transparent and efficient operational and financial management;
- democratic approach in the internal decision-making and implementation processes, as well as in inter-institutional relationships;
- mutual respect for relevant policies;
- full involvement and assumption of responsibility in the designing and implementation of common initiatives.

Our partners participate in the formulation, implementation and evaluation of programmes, projects and initiatives jointly developed. This approach applies from the onset of the project conception phase, under different forms and according to everybody's competence and ability.

Mission

Terra Nuova promotes a cooperation based on dialogue, on linguistic pluralism and intercultural exchanges. It respects cultural, social, gender and age differences, and believes in the supremacy of peace.

Terra Nuova looks at international cooperation not only as technical transfer but as a free choice among individuals and social actors, as an exchange among different cultures and experiences, and therefore as an opportunity for common growth.

Terra Nuova promotes the full participation of those social sectors who are most at risk of exclusion and marginalisation from the cultural and

economic dominant models thus becoming the agents of social transformation; it is also involved in the planning, promotion and implementation of projects focused on a sustainable local development.

Partnership is a way of operating for Terra Nuova involving local communities, indigenous populations, discriminated women, children and adolescents at risk, small urban and rural producers.

Terra Nuova has local coordination offices in Africa and Latin America, so to ensure a continuous presence in these continents. We are convinced that only through the active and continuous participation of local communities it will be possible to achieve sustainable changes in their life.

Strategic Sectors

Agro-ecology and sustainable rural development:

- farm management of genetic resources;
- agro-ecologic productive systems;
- sustainable agro-zoo technical systems.

Intercultural and world education:

- networks and campaigns;
- education and intercultural dialogue.

Traditional knowledge:

- strengthening the traditional, indigenous and community health systems in connection with the conventional medicine;
- defence and consolidation of local cultures and identities.

Sustainable management of natural and productive resources:

- environmental conservation and management;
- environmental education;
- socio-organisational and productive strengthening of small urban and rural producers;
- responsible tourism.

Participatory democracy and application of rights:

- indigenous populations rights;
- rights and participation of children and adolescents;
- rights of women;

- local power and basic democracy;
- bilingual intercultural education.

Italy-Europe

The activities in Italy and Europe are primarily focused on the creation and diffusion of a culture of co-operation and international solidarity. This is carried out through information and advocacy campaigns aimed at raising awareness of the problems, imbalances and distortion produced by the dominant development, trade and investment models. It is also an effort aimed at establishing communication processes on the experiences and the projects implemented in the South of the world.

Development education and awareness raising activities are part of DEP mid or long term programs co-financed by the EC, but also follow other activities carried out in collaboration with several Italian associations, agricultural organisations, trade unions and local entities dealing with decentralised co-operation. Such activities are aimed at the schools, farmers movements, consumers, citizens and other civil society organisations, which are the principle recipients but could act as multipliers of the messages as well.

We strongly believe that such activities may initiate some virtuous changes in the South as well as in the North, ameliorating consciousness on the consequences of our everyday activities and reciprocal knowledge.

South America

Terra Nuova started working in South America in the 70's, and is currently involved in five countries, with local offices in four countries: Brazil, Chile, Ecuador and Peru.

Terra Nuova action in South America is mainly linked to three main themes: the management of sustainable resources, the promotion of human, social and economic rights, the promotion of health.

These themes are defined according to the social subjects with whom Terra Nuova cooperates: indigenous population, children and adolescents

at risk, women's movements, small local producers. Terra Nuova is continuing its thirty-year involvement in South America by reinforcing the links with these social categories, and by expanding the intervention areas and the alliances, according to the specific situation of each country, primarily with those associations in Italy and Europe which share our values and our approach.

Central America And Caribbean

Terra Nuova works in this area since 1983, mainly in Nicaragua but also in Guatemala, Honduras and Dominican Republic. During these years Terra Nuova has based its strategies on the support of social groups such as women, children, small rural producers and the indigenous population. It worked for the promotion of networks and to reinforce organisational and methodological capacity of social actors and local organisations. The several intervention plans that have been developed are mainly concerned with the protection of children, adolescents and young people rights and the promotion of their participation; the appreciation of native cultures (ethnic and indigenous) and their right to self-determination; the sustainable management of the territory.

Western Africa

Terra Nuova has worked since the end of the 80's with several farmer organisations in Mali (Kayes region), proposing and realising a number of self-managed projects in the fields of sustainable agriculture and food sovereignty. During the 90's this commitment has gradually and naturally grown into supporting different initiatives of emergency and consolidation of the structure of different agriculture organisations at regional, national and international level (Sahel area), within the farmers movements which has grown in Senegal during the last 20 years and that is gradually spread into the neighbouring countries (Réseau des Organisations Paysannes et de Producteurs Agricoles de l'Afrique de l'Ouest - ROPPA).

The general objective is to enable civil society to participate in the deci-

sion-making process through autonomous representative structures. Considering the difficult situation of the public health sector in a country highly indebted and subjected to structural adjustment, as Mali, Terra Nuova interest gradually turned to the valorization of the community initiatives undertaken to respond to the crisis in the official health system, and to the enhancement of the traditional medicine and pharmacopoeia, currently being the only accessible resource for all the population.

Eastern Africa

The Eastern African countries where Terra Nuova worked or is now working are Somalia/Somaliland, Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda. Currently the activities are focused in Kenya and Somalia/Somaliland. Terra Nuova is active in the area since 1979. Different ecosystems exist side by side in Eastern Africa: the Somalia and Northern Kenya arid lands, inhabited by nomadic communities; the Kenya fertile plateau, where the population lives thanks to subsistence farming; the savannahs between Kenya and Tanzania borders, where pastoral communities have shared the land for millions of years with the most concentrated wild fauna of the world.

Terra Nuova main intervention fields are rural development, the promotion of small enterprise and the conservation and sustainable use of natural resources. Terra Nuova intervenes in the area in order to support the principal economic activities of the respective communities.

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VOICA, International Canossian Volunteering (1996), is first and foremost an idea that was conceived to share the charisma and vocational and missionary characteristic of the Canossians with lay men and women, ready to offer their spiritual and professional energy for the Canossian service in the *missio ad gentes*.

In the wake of St. Mary Magdalene, founder of the Institute of Canossian Mothers, who understood the preciousness of the laity as a receptacle for the flowering of the gift made to her by God Himself, such dynamic of sharing was also established in the missionary sphere. In 1996, the General Chapter of Canossian Mothers formalised this initiative through the publication of the document ‘Canossian International Volunteering’. Based on these guidelines supporting volunteering, a training and organizational structure was built to implement the VOICA. In the next six years the duration of the training courses and tasks to which they were dispatched became increasingly greater: 3 months of training before serving on a mission of at least 1 year. In the period 2002-2010 more than a hundred volunteers were sent on long-lasting missions, originating from different countries (Italy, USA, Poland, Malaysia, Slovakia, UK, Australia) they served in Togo, Malawi, Tanzania, Egypt, Sudan, Brazil, East Timor and West Timor (Indonesia) and Congo. Volunteering is also provided for short-term periods, both individually and in organized groups. Each year approximately 70 volunteers are dispatched for short periods (usually about one month of service). Also for this category of volunteers a preparatory course is provided in the form of both training for the same volunteers and useful for the mission that hosts them. In this area, the normal procedure provides for the assignment to each leaving group a

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small aid project to be sponsored by a variety of initiatives, from car washing to requesting donations from undertakings known to the volunteers. Subjects who are dispatched individually over the year are integrated in already existing long-term volunteering communities so as their experience can at the same time be a time of 'training' and assistance.

Canossian Mothers

These are people who have chosen to devote themselves to the Lord and live the charisma of St. Maddalena. Over the years, they have become a large group and are now present all over the world.

They are devoted mainly to education and human promotion, evangelization, pastoral care of the sick and health services.

Canossian Sisters live in the charisma transmitted by St. Maddalena. They belong to different cultures and lifestyles, but share the same desire to spread the word of Jesus and love Him. Many are the missionaries who have left their homelands to spread the message of the Gospel among peoples. Others, on the other hand, have remained in their respective home countries to witness the love of God. Wherever they may be, Canossian Sisters are women of faith who work with children, young people and lay adults with the aim of spreading the Kingdom of God among the poor and the neglected.

What exactly is VOICA

Voluntary service has always been a clear hallmark of the Canossian community. However, the investigation into the real meaning of the VOICA programme, as we know it today, only began in 1987 when we tried to establish the conditions for implementing a program aimed at and suitable for young people and adults who have a desire to render service, on full-time basis, to their less fortunate brethren.

VOICA is the response to the needs of modern times, and the expression of the Charisma of St. Maddalena, who said: «Love is like a fire, it tries to envelop everything». For the Canossian sisters, VOICA means

having the opportunity to receive ‘extra hands’ to make a contribution to missionary work. For the volunteers, VOICA means opting for a service addressed to the most needy and living an experience of faith in the Christian community. For the poor, VOICA means receiving the testament of young and adults who leave their homes and their daily life to become, with them, ‘poor in spirit’.

Presently, therefore, VOICA is perceived as follows:

- ‘a new way to express and to make Jesus known and love Him’, involving lay young people and adults;
- an attempt to open up to new forms of material poverty;
- a structure for transmitting the values of the Gospel while remaining within the ecclesiastical and socio-cultural sphere of the people;
- a way to empower the Lay Canossian Missionary Movement.

Canossian Volunteering, therefore, aims to support the cause of the poor.

The International Canossian Volunteering VOICA considers it essential to train its volunteers and integrate them in the operational management of its projects.

Its purpose consists of the following:

- provide a ‘new’ way to express the Canossian Apostolic identity: «To make Jesus known and love him»;
- to involve young people and to educate and train to the Gospel values lay volunteers;
- a way to make the Canossian missionary lay community flourish;
- provide direct support to the missions of Canossian Mothers and the most needy through targeted projects in harmony with the teachings of St. Maddalena: «I entrust you with my beloved needy».

VOICA onlus

As part of the project, it was decided in October 2001, to establish the VOICA as a non-governmental, non-profit organization with legal status in the form of Association. Therefore, VOICA is not just an idea, it is a non-profit organization, recognized by the Italian Government as having

legal status in the form of Association, which was finally recognised in 2003. It is a legally and naturally recognised association. It is governed by its own statute and by a Board of Directors elected by the shareholders. The non-profit organization keeps the minutes of the meetings, the accounting books and the list of shareholders. In addition, VOICA is a non-profit organization that supports the International Canossian Service in bringing volunteers into a recognized association, safeguards their assets and represents them legally.

VOICA onlus is therefore an entity that provides support to Canossian International Volunteering, brings together volunteers into an association recognized by the Italian State, protects their activities and represents them legally and fiscally. The projects it supports are strictly related to presence of VOICA volunteers in the various Canossian missions. It is also responsible for increasing the involvement of the laity at the level of responsibility in caring for the VOICA. Thus St. Maddalena di Canossa's dream of making Jesus known and loving him through a larger number of generous and missionary people has been realised.

In fact, International Canossian Volunteering, VOICA, is a prophetic expression of the charisma of St. Maddalena di Canossa which seeks to involve laymen, men and women, young and old, from anywhere in the world, in the great mission of the Universal Church for human promotion and evangelization, breeding their hearts so that they can live in solidarity with the members of their own community, serving the poor ... in 'Gratuitous Love.'

Projects in which the VOICA onlus takes part

It is specifically thanks to VOICA onlus' support that a large project was implemented, the S. Giuseppina Bakhita Social Medical Centre in Agoè, Lome, Togo, which was assigned to VOICA by the General Mother during the African visit in Togo, in 2003.

In addition to this project, VOICA also supports other numerous projects,

- Togo: Health care, education;

- Congo: Education and human development;
- Brazil: Human Development;
- East Timor: Education.

What are the pillars on which VOICA is structured?

VOICA is based on four pillars: spirituality, training, community and service. The order in which they are listed is highly relevant. Spirituality, considered by VOICA as the main pillar, affects all other aspects of volunteer service. Training provides volunteers with the necessary tools to adapt and develop along their path and participate in community life, which is the environment in which these can develop, gives it vital momentum and support it in performing the task undertaken. Service to the poor has the power to transform volunteers and enrich their spirituality. It is a chain where each link is of crucial importance.

Deciding to become a Canossian volunteer necessarily requires choosing a lifestyle characterized by commitment to prayer, community and ministry. To get the best results from the short experience as volunteer, you must accept and assume the responsibilities inherent in the choice itself.

Structure of VOICA

VOICA is represented first by the figure of its president who heads the association and represents it. He is responsible for its operation and performance. There is also a coordinator in charge of the association's activities and of organizing training programs, managing volunteers and the relations with the missions. Alongside these two figures is an Executive Board composed of laymen and religious people which cooperates with the latter in the management of the association activities. Such Executive Council also comprises a general advisor from the Canossian Mothers Institute which has vowed to guarantee Canossian inspiring principles.

The international coordinator and lay volunteers work full-time in the VOICA office of Rome or in other divisions outside Rome, contribute to coordinating the VOICA programme at various levels. The main activities

are the following:

- recruitment and placement of volunteers;
- training of volunteers before and after their service;
- acting as a link between the community of VOICA volunteers and of the Canossian Sisters which volunteers will make their own;
- promoting the charismatic VOICA aims and values within the institution;
- taking part in the overall preparation of projects and guidelines for VOICA;
- advertising the work performed by VOICA volunteers on mission;
- assess current volunteer job posts on mission and identify new opportunities for volunteers both on short and long term;
- maintain support communication with volunteers during their service on a mission;
- visit volunteers on duty at least once a year if possible;
- fostering, through reflections and reintegrations, volunteers returning from a mission;
- development of VOICA (fundraising, sponsoring projects and volunteers);
- collaboration with the service programs of the national Canossian volunteers;
- tackling problems of volunteers that may arise during the time on their mission.

What are your goals?

The general objectives of the VOICA Project are the following:

- to promote the training of people and their volunteers by transmitting the values of unity, selfless service, universality and sharing with the poor, through an experience of simple community life and of participation in the same religious and service creed;
- to provide research and in-depth analysis opportunities into the meaning and purpose of life;
- to spread the vision of a Church open to different cultures and to

the New Evangelization;

- to compare one's own training and experience relating to a particular type of service with the cultural reality of the place where ministry is exercised;
- to contribute to the development of the personality of those who are less privileged, through collaboration within the ministry and projects aimed at human development;
- to provide the experience of a life lived under the banner of faith through a Community lifestyle marked by simplicity;
- to reflect and understand these objectives will be very useful in focusing on the basic elements and adopt the right perspective on the mission you are about to begin.

How VOICA pursues its objectives

«We believe that the proposal concerning the volunteering experience provides many training opportunities, since it leads young people to come out of themselves, assume their responsibilities, gain knowledge and share the values and cultures of other nations, discover the beauty of diversity in the expression of one's faith and accept the project that God has provided for them». In the light of this objective, VOICA offers young people and adults the opportunity to serve the poor through educational experiences and of total immersion in the new context (1-2 months), as well as through short-term (1-6 months) and long-term (minimum one year) service.

Who are VOICA volunteers

The VOICA volunteer is a person, whether married or single, in good physical and mental conditions who has a deep desire to grow spiritually and live a life of prayer within the community, serving the poor, animated by a spirit of solidarity.

In addition, the VOICA volunteer is one who:

- puts into practice his or her faith and is motivated by it;
- contributes to the mission of the Church trying to make Jesus

known and love Him;

- is capable of adapting and willing to live a simple life, work with people from different cultures;
- is creative and optimistic even when faced with challenges and obstacles;
- has a strong sense of responsibility and is able to take initiatives;
- is an active witness and shows solidarity in the community to which he or she belongs;
- works hard to achieve an adequate knowledge of the host country's language as it allows him to fulfill his service;
- is open to assessment because it helps personal growth;
- wants to serve his ministry properly with respect to all, especially the poor, with humility and respect;
- has a sense of humor;
- first and foremost, he is open to the Lord, to others and to service.

The heart of the Association are its volunteers! After a period of discernment, the volunteer candidate must submit an application to the International Coordinator, one of the leading figures of the VOICA staff. From now on, a dialogue is established with the volunteer and the possible reception communities, who will determine if the candidate is eligible to serve on a mission. For volunteers leaving for a long-term service, a mandatory training period must be completed with a Canossian community. During this period, the volunteer continues to be assessed for his suitability to provide the missionary service and at the same time the volunteer will be able to know VOICA in greater detail and verify his willingness to engage in the requested service.

Volunteers live together for 2-3 months, learn the language necessary to communicate in region where the mission will be held and prepare for the missionary lifestyle, but at the same time, it also becomes an opportunity to know each other and come into contact and with the dynamics of community life. Through the dialogue established at this stage, VOICA volunteers can express their own personal preference on the destination of their service which is evaluated by VOICA in the decision-making phase

with the candidate and missions. Training is the continuation of the evaluation process which has already begun, and moreover, a time for preparing for the missionary life. It constitutes a fundamental part of the 'path' of each volunteer as, through it, volunteers are accompanied in the discovery and deepening of the values and even before the 'spirit' of the VOICA and in their application to their lives. Furthermore, specific training is provided related to the mission destination, in addition to learning and developing skills for the mission. Training is also a good time to know each other. Being accepted to the training period does not necessarily imply assignment to a mission. If during this period VOICA staff estimates that the candidate is not ready or suitable for the service, the volunteer may be asked to withdraw from the program.

Once this phase of training has been completed, the volunteer will serve in a Canossian mission that has made explicit request by living in a community with other VOICA volunteers. Throughout this period, the volunteer continues to receive support from the local Canossian community and the VOICA staff in Rome. For the entire duration of his experience, the volunteer will actively collaborate with VOICA, working together in a spirit of faith and service.

Once the volunteer experience has been completed, VOICA will encourage volunteers to stay in touch with the missions where they have served, be a witness in their own cities of the mission and lead a lifestyle which is more in harmony with the missionary ideals.

What criteria is adopted to allocate volunteers

The following criteria are adopted:

- the type of work requested by the mission (educational, health care, pastoral);
- the skills of the volunteer;
- the period in which the volunteer is ready to begin.

Lastly, VOICA undertakes to facilitate the creation of harmonious volunteer communities through the accomplishment of a balance based on age, sex and nationality.

Requirements

Most of the long-term missions require knowledge of the English language; in some cases, of the French or Portuguese languages. Although some missions do not require a second language, volunteers are encouraged to learn the basics of the local language.

Volunteers are requested to endeavor to collect 1,500 euro to cover the expenses that will be incurred by VOICA; should a volunteer not be able to collect the total sum requested, a joint assessment of the difficulties will be carried out.

Lastly, given that voluntary service represents for VOICA an integral part of the mission of Jesus Christ, requires volunteers to respect the Gospel values and the willingness to live in a Canossian community with utmost respect and commitment to community life.

Service

Gratuitous service is at the heart of volunteering and the ultimate expression of such work.

Through the activities, volunteers can contribute to the development of the region in which they serve, of the life of the people and of the mission. We need to remember that, through their work, volunteers become a part of the synergic movement of a community, which thus develops and acquires the ability to become integral part of the history of those people, as they work with them. All possible efforts are made to find the mission where the volunteer has the opportunity to capitalize on his talents and gifts, with particular preference for the Canossian Ministries of Canossian Charity: Education and human promotion, evangelization and Pastoral Care of the Ill and Health Services. The work of the mission requires the same level of professionalism, diligence and responsibility necessary for any other type of work; however, unlike other areas of work, the values of the Gospel must always be the primary motivation.

Missions

After completing the training period, volunteers leave for their service and for the period agreed in one of the many Canossian missions that request it. VOICA volunteers have been in Europe (Albania, Poland), Africa (Togo, Congo, Egypt, Uganda, Malawi, Tanzania, Sao Tome and Principe, Angola), South America (Brazil, Paraguay), Asia (India, Indonesia, East Timor).

VOICA promotes also voluntary civil service

VOICA NPO has established a partnership with FOCSIV and with other associated NGOs, to gain access to the National Civil Service program promoted by the Italian Government. In 2009-2010 the first 7 volunteers were dispatched to 3 different and accredited mission locations: Dili, East Timor, Cairo-Egypt and Lome-Togo. Their experience is currently coming to an end.

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