

New trends in the development of volunteering in the European Union

A study for The European Economic and Social Committee (EESC)

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Research question and project objectives

What are the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT) that volunteering is facing in the EU in the coming years?

The trends are separated in two blocks

- Trends that influence **The willingness, capability and availability to volunteer** (volunteer energy)?
- Trends that influence **The opportunities to volunteer** (volunteer infrastructure)?

Underlying the SWOT analysis are three recent and new developments

- The (new) **profiles and classification** of volunteers?
- The (new) **volunteer activities** / scenarios?
- The (new) **organizations involved** such as companies, educational institutes etc?

The study is a combination of

- a literature review of the relevant academic publications,
- desk research into the trends in Europe and the five selected countries
- 10 (e-mail) interviews with experts and local representatives / reports from local experts.

Croatia, Hungary, Spain, Finland and the Netherlands have been chosen deliberately because of

- The dominant emotion on volunteering (see Dekker 2002), unpaid labour (Croatia, Hungary), active membership (Netherlands, Finland) and active citizenship (Spain).
- The dominant discourse on the value of volunteering for society (see Bos, 2014), welfare (Hungary, Croatia), economy/community (Netherlands) and democracy (Spain, Finland).
- The non-profit regimes (Salamon & Anheier, 1998) (Corporatist (Netherlands, Spain), Social Democrat (Finland), Statist (Croatia, Hungary)).

The volunteer match

Volunteer energy: willingness, capability and availability

- Nonprofit regimes
- What is volunteering for civil society and social economy
- Characteristics of volunteers
- Motivation to volunteer
- Benefits for society
- State of economy

**Explain the actual
volunteering
activities, rates, hours in a
country**

Volunteer infrastructure and opportunities

- Volunteerability and the marketing of volunteering
- A (new) classification of volunteers
- A (new) classification of volunteer activities

Institutional factors for volunteer energy

	Nonprofit Regime	Nonprofit sector/ volunteer role	Size of the nonprofit sector*	Income inequality**	traditional dominant religion
Croatia	Statist	Service	Small to Medium	Medium	Roman Catholic
Hungary	Statist/ social democratic	Expressive	Small	Medium	Roman Catholic
Spain	Corporatist	Service	Medium	High	Roman Catholic
Finland	Social democratic	Expressive	Medium	Low	Protestant
Netherlands	Corporatist	Expressive	Large	Low	Mixed

- 1 Traditional explanations of low / high volunteering rates in a country
- 2 Almost impossible to influence or change by policy

Volunteering infrastructure factors for opportunities ^{RSM} Erasmus

- 1 profiles / classification of volunteers
- 2 volunteer activities or scenarios
- 3 parties involved in volunteering infrastructure

- 1 Explanation for changing volunteering rates in a country
- 2 Possible to influence or change by policy (but maybe not by government)

The (new) profiles and classification of volunteers?

Perception of volunteering	Traditional volunteer	Voluntary third-party volunteer	Mandatory third-party volunteer	Spontaneous volunteer
Amount of free choice	The ability to voluntarily choose	Relatively uncoerced	Obligation to volunteer	The ability to voluntarily choose
Kind of remuneration	None at all	Expenses reimbursed	Very clear benefits	None at all
	None, Expenses reimbursed	Instrumental benefits	Stipend / low pay	
Degree of organization / structure	Formal	Formal	Formal	Informal
Intended beneficiaries	Service context: Benefit / help others / strangers	Benefit / help others / strangers & Benefit oneself (as well)	Benefit / help others / strangers & Benefit oneself (as well)	Benefit / help others / strangers & Benefit oneself (as well)
	Associational context: Benefit oneself (as well)			

The (new) volunteer activities / scenarios?

	Volunteers	Volunteer activities	Costs/ benefits
Traditional scenarios	Higher educated, being employed, gender is equal, smaller communities, religious	traditional volunteering with high availability, high commitment to one organization and all kinds of assignments that develop (grow) over the years this includes almost all volunteer activities	High costs for volunteers Low costs for organizations High benefits for volunteers, organizations and society
Episodic scenarios	Generally spoken younger generations but also traditional volunteers that cannot resist the temptation to participate	Do-in-one day activities such as National Days of service, project type of volunteering or event volunteering	Low costs for volunteers High costs for organizations Medium benefits for volunteers and organizations High benefits for society
Virtual scenarios	Younger generations / professionals in many cases impact driven and highly involved Boomed during Covid-19	Activities will be focused on awareness building (voice/tweet) or citizens science projects (using phones to count or report). Following Covi-19 many traditional volunteer activities have moved to more virtual chatting etc.	Low cost for volunteers and organizations Low benefits volunteers, organizations and society

The (new) **volunteer activities** / scenarios?(continued)

	Volunteers	Volunteer activities	Costs/ benefits
Spontaneous scenarios	<p>The non-usual suspects, many cases young and well educated</p> <p>Extremely boomed during Covid-19</p>	<p>In many cases 'simple' things that people want to do during a situation of crisis like covid19. Activities can be done in minutes like applauding for health care workers etc. but also be long and dangerous as in the case of natural disasters.</p>	<p>Low cost for volunteers and organizations</p> <p>Medium benefits volunteers and society, Low benefits organizations</p>
Third party scenarios	<p>Individuals or groups from companies, educational institutes or send by government</p>	<p>Activities that serve a double purpose of supporting the volunteer involving organization and the goals of the sending third-party, e.g., a consultancy project to an NPO by business students</p>	<p>Cost for volunteers, organizations and society are either comparable to traditional scenarios or episodic scenarios.</p> <p>Cost and benefits for the third party are new to the volunteerism world leading to the risk of third-party benefits becoming too important</p>
Team scenarios	<p>Groups coming from companies, educational institutes and churches.</p>	<p>Team building activities (clean ups, party organizing, foodbank etc.)</p>	<p>Organizations face additional costs of creating specific scenarios</p>

The (new) organizations involved

Two pan European new trends on volunteer infrastructure

- The third party such as companies, educational institutes and (national) days of service
- The spontaneous volunteer that reacts on crises and/or also uses technology

Volunteer energy

- Large differences in participation will stay
- Some countries have more young people that volunteer
- Uncertain political and economical conditions

Volunteer infrastructure

- Third parties (organizations and themes)
- Spontaneous
- Volunteer centered marketing of volunteer opportunities instead of organizational sales perspective