



New trends in the development of volunteering in the European Union

STUDY



European Economic
and Social Committee



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Study

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Foreword



By Séamus Boland

*President of the Civil Society Organisations' Group
European Economic and Social Committee*

There is no doubt that volunteers play a major role in shaping our societies and responding to societal needs. During extreme climate and weather events, which we have seen increasing, or the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, volunteers – often supported by civil society organisations – were and continue to be at the forefront of the emergency response, showing solidarity and providing essential services to those in need. Furthermore, volunteers are part of our daily lives. In Europe, one in five people aged over 16 is involved in voluntary activity, in one way or another², demonstrating the enormous potential of the sector, both in its economic value and its societal impact.

The benefits of volunteering are manifold, as the EESC has underlined in several opinions³. While it should not replace the basic tasks of governments, volunteering creates societal ties, solidarity, as well as social and cultural capital, to name only a few. Beyond the mere provision of services, volunteering is also an example of active participation in shaping our societies, which, I am convinced, is key for the health of our democracies.

Crucially, let us not forget that volunteering in its essence is about offering one's free time to act upon values and objectives and improve the life of human beings. Every day, volunteers undertake activities out "*of free will, for the general public good and where monetary reward is not the principal motivating factor*", as defined by the UN⁴.

However, and despite its major potential, the topic of volunteering has in recent years been less present in the European debate. Little continues to be known about the characteristics of the actual volunteers and volunteering activities, as well as about the major changes, challenges and opportunities the sector has experienced in the last ten years and is facing in the future.

I am therefore pleased to commend to you this report on "*New trends in the development of volunteering in the European Union*", which was commissioned by the European Economic and Social Committee (EESC), at the request of the Civil Society Organisations' Group.

The study, which was carried out by the Rotterdam School of Management, Erasmus University, defines the terms "volunteer energy", "volunteer opportunities" and "volunteerability". These offer insights into the different kinds of volunteers and volunteering activities, as well as some major European trends. It focuses on five EU countries with very different traditions in terms of volunteering, i.e. the Netherlands, Spain, Hungary, Croatia and Finland.

² Eurostat (2015), "Social participation and integration statistics".

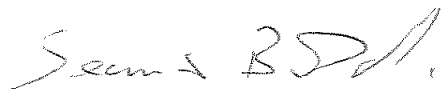
³ Cf. <https://www.eesc.europa.eu/en/tags/volunteering>.

⁴ UNV (2018), State of the world's volunteerism report.

What is particularly interesting to me is that the study reveals the emergence of "spontaneous volunteering" and the, seemingly opposed, increasing involvement of "third parties", such as companies or educational institutes.

Firstly, we have indeed seen that crises often provoke spikes in solidarity, which however tend to fade over time, and it is worth underlining the key role that civil society organisations are playing in sustaining and structuring this volunteer energy. Secondly, when it comes to "intermediaries" in the management of volunteers, which are newcomers in the sector, it is essential that volunteers are provided with a *safe* and *quality* volunteering environment. Especially when involving young people, organisations must be supported so that no volunteer is being taken advantage of, so that sufficient health and safety measures are in place and, crucially, so that every volunteer is provided with adequate support and training, an aspect which is particularly important in the case of international volunteering or service learning.

To conclude, this study will undoubtedly stimulate the debate on these topics. My hope is that it will also lay the ground for informed decisions that take into account the value of volunteering and the recent development in the sector. I wish you a good read!



Séamus Boland
November 2021

Executive Summary

Volunteering is continuously changing: new people become volunteers, new forms of activities arise and new parties become involved. “**New trends in the development of volunteering in the European Union**” contains the results of a research project on changes in the European Union within the field of volunteerism, volunteering and volunteer activities. The most general concept, volunteerism, consists of two connected and inter-related parts: supply (from potential volunteers) and demand (from organizations). Volunteer activities, actual observable volunteering, are created when supply and demand come together. The objective of the study is to create classifications of potential volunteers (supply) and potential volunteering opportunities (demand) to explain that particular combinations will lead to actual volunteering or volunteer activities. The number of potential volunteers can be explained at the macro level by institutional factors. The amount of potential volunteer opportunities can be explained by the volunteering infrastructure. Potential volunteers, potential volunteer opportunities and the matching process are investigated by combining a theoretical and empirical perspective. The theoretical part provides a theoretical framework to analyse volunteerism, volunteering and volunteer activities based upon academic literature. The empirical part is based upon interviews and desk research and focusses on five countries: the Netherlands, Spain, Hungary, Croatia and Finland. This selection is based on a representation of the following criteria:

- Dominant emotions concerning volunteering (see Dekker 2002): unpaid labour (Croatia, Hungary), active membership (Netherlands, Finland) and active citizenship (Spain)
- Dominant perspectives on the value of volunteering to society (see Bos, 2014): welfare (Hungary, Croatia), economy (Netherlands), democracy (Spain, Finland) and community (Netherlands)
- Nonprofit regimes (Salamon and Anheier, 1998): Corporatist (Netherlands, Spain), Social Democrat (Finland) and Statist (Croatia, Hungary)

The theoretical perspective

Potential volunteers are conceptualized as ‘volunteer energy’ (Brudney & Meijs, 2009), referring to the notion that some individuals will offer to volunteer when asked or given the opportunity. This is the supply side of volunteering. ‘Volunteer energy can be measured according to the concept of volunteerability, which translates the concept of employability to the context of volunteering. Volunteerability is composed of three elements: willingness, capability and availability (Meijs et al., 2006). At the individual level, volunteerability is influenced by various factors, including the volunteer tradition of the local context, volunteer motivation, incentives provided, perception of volunteering and individual resources. Although the greatest influence on the supply part is exerted by national institutional factors (e.g. nonprofit regimes, volunteering discourse and religion), emergencies (e.g. the COVID-19 pandemic) can provoke spontaneous eruptions of volunteer energy almost independently of national institutional factors.

Indeed, the national differences between the 5 countries are considerable. First of all, that the countries have different types of non-profit regimes (Salamon & Sokolowski, 2001) leading to variations in the size of their nonprofit sector and the roles of nonprofit organizations. The most important roles are the service role (consistent with the economy and welfare discourses on value for society) and the expressive role (consistent with the democracy and participation discourses on value for society) (Hilger, 2005). Activities of service-oriented non-profits are related to social services, education, housing, health care and community development (Salamon & Sokolowski, 2018). The purpose of the activities of non-

profits with an expressive role “is the actualization of values or preferences, such as pursuit of artistic expression, preservation of cultural heritage or natural environment, political mobilization and advocacy, or the enhancement of the quality of life” (Salamon & Sokolowski, 2001; p.15). Clearly, the size of the non-profit sector has a direct link with volunteer participation because “the non-profit sector represents the organizational resource base that, at least in part, promotes and sustains volunteer participation” (Salamon & Sokolowski, 2001, p.14). The nonprofit-regime perspective is linked to governments and systems that are either supportive of nonprofit organizations (high volunteering rates) or hostile towards them (low volunteering rates) (see also Kamerade et al., 2016). While government policies are too complex to measure directly, government funding for the non-profit sector can be a tool to measure government attitude toward non-governmental organizations (Salamon & Sokolowski, 2001). Second, from the economic perspective, economic development increases volunteer participation, due to an increase in the number of volunteer-involving organizations as more financial resources become available (demand or opportunities), as well as in the amount of individual capital, in terms of time, money or other resources (supply or volunteer energy). The relationship is nevertheless complicated by the fact that income inequality is likely to play an even more important role in explaining volunteering rates, as it decreases volunteer participation for two main reasons (Damian, 2018). First, citizens with low income are less likely to volunteer due to a lack of resources (actual or perceived). Second, in countries with substantial inequality, there is less trust and cooperation between individuals from different social classes, leading to less social participation in general (Damian, 2018). A third factor is religion, which is known for promoting certain shared values in society such as altruism and solidarity, which promote social involvement (Damian, 2018). The influence of these values stretches beyond religious individuals to other people in their direct environment. Social networks in which there is a norm and social pressure to volunteer influence both religious and secular people (Wiepking and Handy, 2015). In addition to the overall effect of religion, national volunteering rates might differ according to type of religion. For example, historically Protestant and Catholic countries score differently, with the latter generally exhibiting slightly lower volunteer rates.

Volunteer opportunities refer to possibilities for being asked to volunteer. This is the demand side of volunteering. Volunteer opportunities depend primarily on the development of a supporting volunteering infrastructure of volunteer-involving organizations and new partners such as community service in secondary school, corporate volunteering with companies and days of service.

The first key theoretical element to discuss in relation to the volunteering infrastructure is the concept of volunteerability. The concept of volunteerability translates employability into the field of volunteering. The focus is on the following question: ‘What makes a person more or less willing and able to volunteer?’ The answer integrates three levels of analysis (Meijs et al., 2006):

- 1) Micro (individual): Volunteerability refers to the willingness of individuals to volunteer and to have the necessary time, skills, experience and background.
- 2) Meso (organizational): Volunteerability refers to the attractiveness of organizations to potential recruits, their flexibility in creating volunteer opportunities and their success in retaining volunteers.
- 3) Macro (community or societal levels): volunteerability is an expression of societal will and receptivity to volunteerism and of the civic ‘space’ provided for acting as a volunteer.

Volunteerability is also a lens for assessing the attractiveness of particular volunteer activities. In an investigation of why people decide to accept one volunteer offer and reject another according to the volunteerability framework, Doosje (2018) reports that, in choosing specific activities, volunteers do not necessarily make their choices according to whether they like the activity or the organization, but according to their availability or, more specifically, their subjectively experienced availability. They must also feel that they have the right skills and that they can overcome any emotional or physical barriers that the activity might involve. This has been supported by Haski-Leventhal and colleagues (2018), whose results suggest that volunteering can be made more attractive for people in three steps. The first step is to ensure that they have a good feeling about the cause. This involves general promotion of why the organization is useful and how volunteering would help. The second step is to remove barriers that prevent people from volunteering in terms of availability and capability. One important strategy is therefore to ensure that the place and time of commitment are determined by potential volunteers, and not by the organization. Volunteering should fit into the schedule of the volunteer, instead of requiring the volunteer to fit into the schedule of the organization. The choice to return to an activity depends on the extent to which the experience is both meaningful and rewarding.

Efforts to market volunteering should be based on understanding the perspective of the volunteer and fitting the volunteer activity to the life and wishes of the volunteer, instead of the organization. In fact, the marketing of volunteering activities is almost diametrically opposed to simply promoting the concept of volunteering in general. In the broadest terms, the marketing of volunteering is aimed at convincing the volunteer to say ‘yes’ by removing barriers to actual volunteer through the creation of volunteer assignments that are independent of time and place. The focus should be on the recruitability of the assignment, instead of on its useability for the organization.

The second theoretical element is a new classification of volunteers based upon two new trends: third party involvement and spontaneous volunteering. The rise of ‘third parties’ is a relatively recent phenomenon that has been having an influence on volunteering (Haski-Leventhal et al., 2010). In the past decade, volunteering matches have started to be made through the involvement of ‘intermediaries’, including companies (corporate volunteering), educational institutes (service learning, community service), the government (welfare volunteering) (De Waele & Hustinx, 2019) specific intermediaries (volunteer centres) (Bos, 2014), organizers of family volunteering, and local/national/international days of service. This is the emerging shared approach to volunteer management in which access to volunteer energy is separated from guidance of volunteers (Brudney et al., 2019).

Almost in diametric contrast to the highly organized third-party model is the growth of the spontaneous volunteer. Although they are quite common in response to disasters, spontaneous volunteers can also be observed in political activism and fundraising. The driving forces behind these efforts include increasing levels of resources (e.g. education) that make it possible for people to do things themselves, along with modern technology, which creates simple access to broad audiences, and social media, which can facilitate action mobilization. In short, there is often less need for a volunteer-involving organization to organize and control volunteer opportunities. People can simply participate in the real or virtual world. Interesting examples could be observed in the countless ‘applaud for healthcare workers’ initiatives emerging during the first wave of the COVID-19 pandemic, as well as in earlier fundraising initiatives (e.g. the Ice Bucket Challenge).

The introduction of the third party and the spontaneous volunteer combined with the existing types of volunteers leads to a new classification of volunteers consisting of four profiles:

- 1) The regular, traditional volunteer: This profile fits the pattern of ‘pure’ volunteering within a context of ‘service to others’, with a potential debate concerning the ‘intended beneficiaries’ becoming broader within the context of member-benefit and other types of associations.
- 2) The voluntary third-party volunteer: This profile has a mixed pattern, in which ‘free choice’ and ‘remuneration’ are seen within a broader perspective, although ‘structure’ is regarded in a purer form. The ‘intended beneficiary’ is complex, as these volunteers usually perform activities for people in need, although they also have very explicit instrumental goals for themselves or their third-party organizations (e.g., government, corporations, educational institutes).
- 3) The mandatory third-party volunteer: This profile has a very broad perspective, with the broadest possible interpretation of ‘free choice’, ‘remuneration’ (e.g. preventing the loss of welfare benefits) and ‘intended beneficiary’.
- 4) The spontaneous volunteer: This profile is largely quite pure on the dimensions of ‘free choice’ and ‘remuneration’, extremely broad in terms of ‘structure’ and mixed with regard to ‘intended beneficiary’.

The third theoretical element related to the volunteering infrastructure is the concept of volunteer scenarios (Meijs & Brudney, 2007). A volunteer scenario is a combination of Availability (e.g. when, where, how many hours, how long), Assets (e.g. specific skills or general skills) and Assignments (what will actually be done). It can be used to describe the perspectives of both potential volunteers and volunteer-involving organizations with regard to the match that must be made. A winning scenario consists of a successful, mutually acceptable combination of Availability, Assets and Assignment (AAA or triple A). A losing scenario involves a gap between what the individual wants to offer and what the organization needs. Drawing on the four volunteer profiles outlined previously, four scenarios can be presented for traditional, voluntary third-party, mandatory third-party and spontaneous volunteering. From the perspective of opportunities, the demand, the options must be expanded to include three additional scenarios for episodic, virtual and team-based volunteering.

The Empirical European perspective

This study yields three key empirical findings. First, the European countries addressed in the study differ in terms of the reported percentage of the population volunteering, with underlying aspects of both volunteer energy (supply) and volunteer opportunities (demand). Variations can also be observed with regard to the forms and levels of volunteer activities.

Second, these differences can be explained by national institutional factors (nonprofit regimes, volunteering discourses and religion), which influence volunteer energy, and volunteering-infrastructure factors (volunteer profiles, volunteer scenarios and third parties), which influence opportunities. The relative abundance or lack of opportunities plays a more important role than the relative abundance or lack of energy. With the possible exception of the older generations in Hungary and Croatia, volunteer energy seems to be available in most countries, as demonstrated by the eruptions of spontaneous volunteer at the start of the COVID-19 pandemic. Nevertheless, even the older generations in Hungary and Croatia do help each other (demonstrate solidarity), without calling it volunteering. The pandemic has also revealed that spontaneous volunteering is difficult to maintain for a longer period of time. It has

also highlighted the vulnerability of existing volunteer-involving structures (e.g. sports associations, museums).

Third, similar changes in the volunteering infrastructure are taking place throughout Europe, thereby suggesting a broader trend. This new volunteering infrastructure has two components: third-party involvement and spontaneous volunteering. The most visible forms of third-party involvement in Europe are corporate volunteering, service learning and community service. The local, national and international days of service that are becoming well-known throughout Europe constitute an especially important form. Spontaneous volunteering is usually associated with crises (e.g. earthquakes, the arrival of refugees or even the COVID-19 pandemic). Examples of spontaneous volunteering can be observed throughout Europe, thereby providing evidence of the general willingness of people to help humankind. The greatest challenge associated with crisis-driven spontaneous volunteering has to do with the amount of time that people can and will maintain their volunteering. The pandemic once again provides a good example: after some time, the energy starts to wane, and some or most of volunteering will stop. On the other hand, social media and internet-based forms of spontaneous volunteering (which are more likely to be based on campaigns) tend to involve activities that people can do for a longer time.

Conclusions and recommendations

The most important conclusion of this research is that a new volunteering infrastructure is being developed throughout Europe, based on two components: third-party involvement and spontaneous volunteering. Third-party involvement can lead either to the autonomous creation of volunteer opportunities (as observed in multinational CSR programmes) or to an increase in the pressure to create volunteer opportunities (as observed in service learning and community service). Spontaneous volunteering is linked to the growth of technical possibilities for self-organization. As revealed by recent crises (e.g. earthquakes, the arrival of refugees, the COVID-19 pandemic), in many countries, people will start to spontaneously self-organize or join organizations to address urgent issues.

A second conclusion of this study is that the institutional factors that influence volunteer energy are difficult to influence and change. It will thus not be easy to change the current wide variations in volunteer rates in Europe. In some cases, they might even increase. In short, the political outlook for volunteering energy is not favourable in all countries, as some regimes are pushing back on the rights of civil society. The economic outlook is unclear, due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Some countries might have only had an extremely rough year, while others might be facing prolonged economic setbacks that prevent societies from developing more volunteering opportunities.

In terms of policy (by governments or other third parties), the general advice is to not invest in developing a general culture of volunteering, given the difficulty of changing national-level institutional factors. It would be wiser to invest in the development of more third-party involvement and the creation of more examples of spontaneous, individual volunteering. Likewise, it would be better to help volunteer organizations to investigate what volunteers are willing to give in terms of availability and capability, in order to create effective marketing activities. The goal is to make recruitable, winning volunteer scenarios that are based on the preferences of potential volunteers, and not of organizations.

1. Introduction: The general story

This report contains the results of a research project on changes in the European Union within the field of volunteerism, volunteering and volunteer activities. The most general concept, volunteerism, consists of two connected and inter-related parts: supply (from potential volunteers) and demand (from organizations). Volunteer activities, actual observable volunteering, are created when supply and demand come together. In the absence of a match, only the good intentions of individuals or the unmet demands of organizations remain. Issues are indeed likely to arise when supply and demand do not match. In that case, a society might have a high level of volunteerism but a low level of actual volunteering, thus possibly failing to realize the benefits of volunteering for individuals and organizations, as well as in terms of service/voice and social capital.

The objective of this study is to create classifications of potential volunteers (supply) and potential volunteering opportunities (demand) to explain that particular combinations will lead to actual volunteering or volunteer activities. The results provide a qualitative overview of the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT) that volunteering is facing in the EU. They are intended to support the three major goals of EESC and the Group III motto: ‘Achieving real participatory democracy in the EU, through civil dialogue’, along with the ethos underpinning its activities. The study offers a theoretical analytical approach that can be used to inform volunteering policies.

1.1 Theoretical perspective: volunteer energy and volunteer opportunities

The study applies a theoretical framework to analyse volunteerism, volunteering and volunteer activities. Consisting of three parts—volunteer energy (supply), volunteer opportunities (demand) and volunteer activities (the match)—the theoretical framework offers the opportunity to separate ongoing, long-term trends that explain volunteer energy from newly emerging trends that explain changes in volunteer opportunities. These insights can be applied to analyse the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT) associated with volunteering in Europe.

The supply part of the framework concerns individuals who are currently volunteering or who might volunteer in the future. The supply part is conceptualized as ‘volunteer energy’ (Brudney & Meijs, 2009), referring to the notion that some individuals will offer to volunteer when asked or given the opportunity. Volunteer energy can be measured according to the concept of volunteerability, which translates the concept of employability to the context of volunteering. Volunteerability is composed of three elements: willingness, capability and availability (Meijs et al., 2006). At the individual level, volunteerability is influenced by various factors, including the volunteer tradition of the local context, volunteer motivation, incentives provided, perception of volunteering and individual resources. Although the greatest influence on the supply part is exerted by national institutional factors (e.g. nonprofit regimes, volunteering discourse and religion), emergencies (e.g. the COVID-19 pandemic) can provoke spontaneous eruptions of volunteer energy almost independently of national institutional factors.

The demand part concerns activities offered to potential volunteers. In this regard, the concept of ‘volunteer opportunities’ is used to refer to possibilities for being asked to volunteer. Volunteer opportunities depend primarily on the number of nonprofit organizations needing volunteers, the

development of a supporting volunteering infrastructure (including such elements as community service in secondary school, corporate volunteering with companies and days of service) and technological innovations, which are playing an especially important role in the emergence of new trends within the European volunteering landscape.

The relationship between volunteer energy (supply) and volunteer opportunities (demand) and their likelihood of resulting in actual volunteer activities is complex. First, the availability of more volunteer energy (e.g. when people perceive themselves as being available) might lead nonprofit organizations and communities to offer more volunteer opportunities. At the same time, however, the availability of more volunteer opportunities might also increase the level of volunteer energy, as people become aware of these opportunities and their willingness increases. In both cases, the level of volunteering might increase.

Second, and more importantly, a mismatch between volunteer energy and volunteer opportunities will result in no actual volunteering, even despite high levels of both supply and demand. An example of a mismatch is when individuals are willing to volunteer for causes for which they are not allowed to volunteer or that are not represented by volunteer organizations within a certain context. A mismatch could also occur when individuals are available only at times when volunteer organizations do not offer opportunities or when individuals do not offer the capabilities (skills) that volunteer organizations are seeking. From an individual perspective, such mismatches lead to frustration and a waste of personal involvement. For example, not being able to volunteer might deprive young people of the opportunity to develop certain skills and build competitive résumés. From the perspective of volunteer-involving organizations, mismatches are also frustrating, as they prevent organizations from achieving their missions. From a societal perspective, mismatches result in the sub-optimal use of volunteers to generate potentially positive benefits in terms of welfare, economy, democracy and community. The ability to achieve better matches and fewer mismatches could support a variety of goals, including diversity in democracy, consensus-building and greater civic engagement and local action.

Third, there is no clear division between factors that influence volunteer energy, the number of individuals wanting to volunteer, and volunteer opportunities (i.e. potential volunteer activities). For example, a booming economy results in good funding opportunities for nonprofit organizations, thereby improving the opportunity structure and increasing demand for volunteer activities, while also ensuring that more people have the fundamental resources needed in order to volunteer, although fewer hours might be available than in a depression. Likewise, a restrictive political climate does not make it attractive for people to offer volunteer energy, and it is likely to restrict the ability of the nonprofit sector to create opportunities.

The link between (individual) volunteer energy and volunteer opportunities is formed by concrete volunteer activities, as described in volunteer scenarios (Meijjs & Brudney, 2007). A volunteer scenario is a combination of Availability (e.g. when, where, how many hours, how long), Assets (e.g. specific skills or general skills) and Assignments (what will actually be done), and it presents the whole picture of a volunteering activity. It can be used to describe the perspectives of both volunteer energy and volunteer opportunities. A winning scenario consists of a successful, mutually acceptable combination of Availability, Assets and Assignment (AAA or triple A), thus resulting in actual volunteer activities.

A losing scenario will not generate any actual volunteer activities, due to the mismatch between what the individual wants to offer and what the organization needs. In general, the goal is to achieve more winning scenarios, thereby increasing the level of volunteering activity.

1.2 Empirical European perspective

Following the theoretical perspective, this study is based on three main empirical perspectives. First, European countries differ in their reports of the percentage of the population volunteering, as well as in terms of the underlying aspects of volunteer energy (supply) and volunteer opportunities (demand). Differences between countries can also be observed with regard to forms and levels of volunteer activities. Second, an explanation of these differences can be found in the historical developments of specific countries (social origin approach), which have resulted in differences in nonprofit sectors, emotions concerning volunteering and perceptions of what constitutes true volunteer activities, along with interesting twists in the segments within which the population participates. Such aspects reflect the local embeddedness of volunteering, and they are likely to be difficult to change. Third, a pan-European or even global trend can be observed in similar changes in the volunteering infrastructure, as with the rise of corporate volunteering, service learning, days of service and spontaneous volunteering. This trend reflects a globalization of volunteer opportunity structures.

The current study results in a qualitative overview of the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT) faced by volunteering in the EU, which could be used at least to prevent mismatches between volunteer energy and volunteer opportunities and, if possible, to improve matches. The study takes into consideration changes and developments occurring in the past decade (historical and ongoing trends), as well as new processes that are likely to have an impact on volunteering (contemporary and developing trends).

1.3 Structure of the study

Section 2 consists of a review of the literature on volunteering, highlighting topics that influence both volunteer energy and volunteer opportunities and connecting them to past and contemporary developments in Europe. Sub-section 2.1 addresses the social origins of the different nonprofit sectors existing within Europe. This important institutional factor largely explains differences between countries in terms of actual volunteering, primarily by explaining differences in volunteer opportunities. Sub-section 2.2. addresses fundamental questions concerning what volunteering and volunteer activities are. Although there is a general, global consensus on the abstract conceptualization of volunteering, public perceptions of volunteer activities are substantially more complex. What is seen as a prime example of a volunteering activity in one country might not even be regarded as volunteering in another country. Issues relating to the perception of volunteer activities bear a fundamental influence on the level of volunteer energy, as individuals might not perceive certain activities as volunteering, such that the demand for these activities is likely to go unrecognized. In Sub-section 2.3, the focus shifts to the individuals who volunteer. In general, it shows that people who want to and can volunteer tend to have a high level of resources (e.g. higher education, full-time employment). The next concept is the motivation to volunteer (2.4), which forms a bridge between volunteer energy and volunteer opportunities, as a match might happen when what an individual is seeking to achieve through the volunteer experience is offered by the volunteer-involving organization. Sub-section 2.5 touches on the four clusters of benefits that volunteering might have for a society: welfare, economy, democracy and community. The final sub-section translates the previous findings into an overview of volunteering

trends in Europe (2.6). It demonstrates the diversity in Europe that leads to differences in volunteer energy and volunteer opportunities, thereby explaining the heterogeneity of the European volunteering landscape in terms of size and type of activities. This sub-section also sets the stage for the new developments that are taking place in volunteering infrastructure, including corporate volunteering, education-based community service, days of service and local/national/global events, which are considered in the SWOT analysis. These new developments are changing the opportunity structure of volunteering.

Section 3 introduces the notion of using volunteer scenarios to discuss volunteer activities. The first step is the concept of volunteerability (Sub-section 3.1), which refers to the level of potential volunteer energy created by the willingness, capability and availability of an individual. From the perspective of volunteer opportunity, volunteerability can be enhanced by altering current volunteer assignments to suit the capability and availability of potential volunteers. In general, this has to do with the marketing of volunteering (as opposed to the ‘sale’ of volunteering), as it involves adapting the demand to suit the potential volunteer. Whereas the concept of volunteerability is largely rooted in traditional volunteering, Sub-section 3.2 introduces two new perspectives emerging in the past decade. One important recent trend, the third-party perspective (e.g. the involvement of companies, educational institutes and governments in volunteering) is changing the match-making process between individual volunteers and volunteer-involving organizations. The diametrically opposite trend of spontaneous volunteers making very limited use of volunteer-involving organizations, but nevertheless finding ways to self-organize (primarily using technology). This sub-section ends by introducing three new profiles of volunteers, followed by the presentation of volunteer scenarios in Sub-section 3.

Section 4 consists of SWOT analyses of trends in the five countries, based on academic literature, other studies and interviews with experts. The analyses focus on trends that either widen or narrow the gap between volunteer energy and volunteer opportunities in the volunteer scenarios. Weaknesses and threats thus consist of trends and forces that create fewer winning scenarios, while trends and forces that bring the two together (i.e. strengths and opportunities) generate more winning scenarios. The analysis is based on institutional factors that influence volunteer energy (Section 2) and factors relating to volunteer infrastructure (Section 3). Given the long-term embeddedness of major institutional factors, the demonstrates that interventions and changes are taking place within the volunteer infrastructure.

Section 5 presents a general conclusion and offers several recommendations for national or international volunteering policies that combine the insights from the preceding sections in order to promote the development of winning volunteer scenarios and volunteerability.

1.4 Project and methodology

The objective of this study is to create classifications of potential volunteers (supply) and potential volunteering opportunities (demand) and to explain how particular combinations might lead to actual volunteering or volunteer activities (a match). The study provides a qualitative overview of the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT) facing volunteering in the EU. The theoretical-analytical approach presented in this study can be used to inform volunteering policies.

The study focusses on five countries: the Netherlands, Spain, Hungary, Croatia and Finland. This selection is based on a representation of the following criteria:

- Dominant emotions concerning volunteering (see Dekker 2002): unpaid labour (Croatia, Hungary), active membership (Netherlands, Finland) and active citizenship (Spain)
- Dominant perspectives on the value of volunteering to society (see Bos, 2014): welfare (Hungary, Croatia), economy (Netherlands), democracy (Spain, Finland) and community (Netherlands)
- Nonprofit regimes (Salamon and Anheier, 1998): Corporatist (Netherlands, Spain), Social Democrat (Finland) and Statist (Croatia, Hungary)

The study combines a review of relevant academic literature, desk research on trends in Europe and the five selected countries, and interviews with experts and local representatives. In the empirical study, more attention was paid to countries without a recognized history of volunteering (Hungary and Croatia), as they are simply not as visible in the international academic literature. Expert interviews were conducted with a representative of Scouting (an international organization with a national presence in all countries) and a European corporate volunteering expert who is responsible for corporate volunteering programmes in several European countries. A feedback meeting with representatives of the EESC was held on 2021/06/30. Two data-collection activities were performed in each of the countries investigated. Examples included a request to write a paper or conduct interviews (some by email; the semi-structured interview guide is included in Section 6/appendix). An initial interview was organized with representatives of the leading national body on volunteering/civil society organization, or with a national academic expert. A second interview (or other form of data collection) was based on a specific information request to a national volunteering practitioner (the list of respondents is included in Section 6/appendix).

2. Volunteers and Volunteering in Europe

In this section, we introduce the topics of volunteer energy (people wanting to volunteer) and volunteering activities (people actually volunteering), based on a review of recent literature. We present an overview of potential fundamental differences between countries. The first sub-section consists of an analysis of differences existing amongst European nonprofit and third sectors. The focus of the second sub-section is on the fundamental question of ‘what is volunteering?’ The third sub-section sketches a picture of ‘volunteers’ and discusses the motivation of volunteers. The final sub-sections present background information on trends in Europe and the five focus countries.

2.1 The various nonprofit/third sectors in Europe

Salamon and Anheier (1998) devoted substantial effort to addressing variations in nonprofit or third-sector organizations across countries, ultimately resulting in a theory of social origins theory. By linking the nonprofit sector and volunteering directly to institutional factors, their social origins theory provides a general theoretical framework for comparing volunteering across contexts and countries (Hustinx et al., 2010; Kamerade et al., 2016). Table 1 illustrates four basic nonprofit regimes according to the amount of government welfare spending and the scale of the nonprofit sector (based on employment, expenditures and volunteer input).

Table 1: *Models of Nonprofit / Third-Sector Regimes (Salamon & Anheier 1998, p.228)*

Government social welfare spending	Nonprofit scale (based on employment, expenditures and volunteers/volunteer time)	
	Low	High
Low	Statist	Liberal
High	Social Democratic	Corporatist

In the liberal and social democratic models, the government and the nonprofit sector are perceived as alternative mechanisms for providing services. In these two regimes, welfare services extended by the government displace nonprofit organizations, thus implying an inverse relationship between government social-welfare spending and the scale of the nonprofit sector. This further implies that the nonprofit sector is funded predominantly by private sources of money (donations) and time (volunteering). The liberal model is characterized by high monetary value of such private support for all activities, while the social-democratic model is characterized by lower private (monetary) streams, which are largely directed towards activities that the government ignores. These differences are obviously related to differences in the levels of taxation in the two regimes.

The opposite situation is characteristic of the corporatist and statist models, in which government social-welfare spending and nonprofit scale are positively related. In the corporatist model, the state and nonprofit organizations are partners: the government provides financial support to nonprofit organizations, which also have a meaningful input from volunteers and are legally independent from government. The statist model is characterized by limited levels of governmental spending and size of the nonprofit sector, as well as by limited philanthropic activity in terms of money and time. In some statist-model countries, most philanthropic input comes from non-domestic NGOs.

The conceptualization of nonprofit regimes has been supported by cross-cultural empirical evidence, including in Europe. For example, the United Kingdom exemplifies the liberal regime, while Sweden and Italy represent the social democratic regime, and France and Germany follow the corporatist model. Outside Europe, Japan represents the statist model. The four-quadrant framework was further extended

to all EU Member States in the 2010 report *Volunteering in the European Union*, indicating that the liberal regime is common in Anglo-Saxon countries, with the corporatist regime being more common in continental Europe (e.g. the Netherlands) and the social-democratic model being more common in Nordic countries (e.g. Finland). The report further notes, however, that the original social origin theory does not accurately capture post-Communist countries (e.g. Croatia and many other Central and Eastern European countries), which could better be classified as a hybrid of the statist and social-democratic models.

Moving from the general nonprofit level to volunteering, Kamerade and colleagues (2016) propose a revision of the framework that more reliably predicts cross-national differences in volunteering rates, particularly in countries where democracy has yet to be firmly established. The notion is that political-institutional changes affect the degree of civil liberties, which in turn affects the extent of possible volunteering activities. Countries with higher levels of civil liberties have higher levels of volunteering, suggesting that volunteering is an outcome of democratization, rather than a driver (Kamerade et al., 2016). This perspective also suggests the existence of a time lapse between the onset of democratization and the resulting increase in the level of volunteering. In an investigation of variability in formal volunteering across Europe based on the capability approach, Enjolras (2021) concludes that, at the individual level, human capital (education and health), economic capital (income) and social capital (social connections and network) increase the likelihood of volunteering, with a positive association between civil liberties and volunteering at the macro level (as originally established by Kamerade et al., 2016).

In summary, European countries differ with regard to the potential for their citizens to volunteer, based on differences in their individual capital, combined with differences in the volunteering opportunity structure, based on civil liberties and social origin, including the level of social services.

2.2 What is volunteering in civil society and social economy?

This sub-section presents a discussion of the origins of the concept of volunteering, followed by a general definition of volunteering, based on four components: extent of free choice, level of organization, type of remuneration and intended beneficiaries. The general definition is placed within the perspective of European diversity and the net cost approach (in general, activities that cost a volunteer more and provide less return are regarded as more consistent with volunteering). This approach is linked to the International Labour Organization (ILO) perspective on volunteering.

The origin of terms related to volunteering traces back through the Old French *voluntaire* to the Latin *voluntas* (meaning ‘will’ or ‘desire’) and *voluntarius*, (meaning ‘willing’ and ‘of one’s own choice’). The first English incarnation of the word is the noun ‘volunte’, which appeared in a poetic section of the treasured Auchenleck manuscript from around 1330. Although the Old English noun ‘will’ would ultimately prevail over the Latin *voluntas*, the Latin root would be preserved in other forms, including ‘voluntary’ and ‘volunteer’.⁵ Although the noun ‘volunteer’ had an almost solely military connotation (i.e. a person entering military service willingly) until the 1650s, various forms of volunteering in Europe can be traced back as far as the 12th century. In Italy, communes were formed in which neighbours voluntarily committed to assist others and to work together for economic development and common defence. Later manifestations of volunteer behaviour include the establishment of labour associations in the 1850s in the Netherlands, France and other countries around the world. The notion of volunteering as an actual activity was established much later, with the first formal definitions emerging around the

⁵ <https://www.wordorigins.org/big-list-entries/voluntary-volunteer?rq=volunteer>

1950s in Europe and North America (Bos, 2014). A wide variety of notions have developed since then, with cross-national differences depending on cultural and political traditions (Anheier & Salamon, 1999).

In a content analysis on worldwide definitions of the term volunteering, Cnaan and colleagues (1996) identify four key components that drive social perceptions of volunteers and volunteer activities: extent of free choice, level of organization, type of remuneration and intended beneficiaries. These components, together with their sub-categories, form a continuum of public perceptions of volunteering, as shown in Table 2.

Table 2: *The perception of volunteering (based on Cnaan et al., 1996)*

Component of perception	Pure interpretation		Broad interpretation
Free choice	The ability to choose voluntarily	Relatively uncoerced	Obligation to volunteer
Remuneration	None at all	None expected/expenses reimbursed	Stipend/low pay
Structure	Formal		Informal
Intended beneficiaries	Volunteer work benefits/helps others/strangers	Volunteer work benefits/helps friends or relatives	Volunteer work can also benefit the volunteer

At one end of this continuum is a volunteering act performed out of free will, within the context of a formal organization, for absolutely no remuneration and for the benefit of strangers. This encapsulates the ‘purest’ form or profile of volunteering (Cnaan et al., 1996). At the opposite end of the spectrum is the broadest interpretation of volunteering: an activity with implied coercion, within an informal organizational context, that is compensated at least to some extent and that entails a personal benefit. The authors introduce the term ‘net cost’ (i.e. total costs minus total benefits to the volunteer) as the underlying principle guiding public perceptions of volunteering. The public generally tends to perceive individuals who incur higher net costs more as volunteers than is the case for those who incur lower net costs. Handy and colleagues (2000) present a conceptual and empirical analysis demonstrating that, as an individual moves through the volunteering spectrum from ‘broad’ to ‘pure’, the costs of volunteering for the individual increase. Higher net costs elevate the individual’s perceived contribution and, consequently, the public perception of that contribution. This dynamic is largely universal, with empirical support having been reported from Canada, India, Italy and the Netherlands, as well as from the state of Georgia and the city of Philadelphia in the United States. In a further study in this vein, Meijs and colleagues (2003) demonstrate that, although there is a strong cross-national consensus with regard to activities that are definitely perceived as volunteering, there is less consensus on what might or might not be volunteering. Interestingly, the lowest consensus (about 20 years ago) has been observed for what could generally be described as newer forms of volunteering (e.g. corporate volunteering). The trend within the field of volunteering is to move towards broader perceptions of volunteering.

Acknowledging that the contested perceptions of the term with regard to activities inevitably inhibits any cross-national comparisons, the United Nations General Assembly adopted the following inclusive definition in 2002: ‘activities undertaken of free will, for the general public good and where monetary reward is not the principal motivating factor’ (UNV, 2018). This definition close resembles that of the International Labour Organization (ILO, 2011. p. 13): ‘Unpaid non-compulsory work; that is, time

individuals give without pay to activities performed either through an organization or directly for others outside their own household'. As postulated by Cnaan and colleagues (1996), however, and as demonstrated by Handy and colleagues (2000), public perceptions concerning concrete activities differ between countries. To support the measurement of volunteer activities, the ILO (2001, p. 17) provides an interesting summary of what it regards as falling within or outside the scope of volunteering.

Table 3: Examples of activities regarded as falling within or outside the scope of the recommended definition of volunteer work (International Labour Organization, 2011, p. 17)

Within the scope	Outside the scope
Buying groceries for an elderly neighbour	Buying groceries for one's own household
Working in a soup kitchen cooking meals for the homeless	Cooking meals for one's household
Volunteering as a teacher in a public school	Helping one's child with homework
Performing a union function on one's own time	Performing a union function on company time
Serving on a neighbourhood clean-up committee	Cleaning one's own house or yard
Helping an organization create or maintain a website	Participating in internet-based social activities (such as MySpace or Facebook)
Working on a voter registration drive	Voting
Distributing food, medical or material assistance at a shelter	Driving one's spouse to hospital for medical care
Serving as an usher or otherwise working on behalf of a religious organization	Attending a religious service
Helping a non-profit environmental organization gather water samples without compensation	Doing research for one's occupation
Providing unpaid legal advice at a legal services agency	Receiving payment for legal advice or assistance
Serving as a coach for a children's sports league, including one in which one's own child is involved	Helping one's own child to practice a sport
Making clothes for disadvantaged children	Making and repairing clothes for one's own children
Constructing housing for homeless families	Engaging in housework in one's own home
Assisting stranded animals or animals that are victims of an environmental disaster	Being paid by an organization that caters to animals in distress
Providing marginally paid foster-care services on a short-term basis	Providing foster-care services on a long-term basis
Providing counselling support or mentoring to another person without compensation	Offering advice to a neighbour in the course of a friendly conversation
Volunteering with co-workers outside working hours for which one is not paid	Volunteering during paid time-off granted by an employer
Sewing a blanket for a sick neighbour	Sewing a blanket for a sick household member
Driving a neighbour to a medical appointment	Ridesharing with a neighbour to work.

As a consequence of differences in definition, the information found in national, European and international surveys varies widely. Such discrepancies imply that the data should be treated as indicative rather than as statistically accurate.

In addition to differences in perceptions of volunteering, Dekker (2002) distinguishes three basic meanings of volunteering, which can influence how people perceive and engage with voluntary activities:

- Unpaid work: performing a voluntary activity out of a desire to sacrifice/give time.
- Active membership: performing a voluntary activity as an additional task for an organization to which one belongs.
- Active citizenship: performing a voluntary activity out of a sense of individual responsibility towards the community.

Dekker (2002) further concludes that the unpaid-work perspective is prominent in Anglo-Saxon countries, while the active-membership perspective is more consistent with the Scandinavian model of volunteering and the active-citizenship perspective is more coherent with the German idea of *Ehrenamt*,

One recent development is a project designed to reconceptualize the elements of the third sector or civil society, as described by Salamon and Sokolowski (2016) with regard to the overlapping fields between traditional nonprofit organizations and cooperatives, social movements and social enterprises. For volunteering, they propose shifting the focus more towards unpaid activities that might be broader than traditional volunteering (e.g. the unpaid social-media activities in social movements that have replaced many traditional volunteer activities). They further propose recognizing the unpaid activities that people are willing to perform in support of social enterprises (and especially start-ups). One good example is the campaigning that some people are willing to do in order to support the crowdfunding activities of a social enterprise. In this case as well, many of these activities take place almost exclusively online, although they are sometimes carried out offline as well. From the traditional perspective of ‘pure’ volunteering, similar unpaid work aimed at supporting the start-up of what could potentially become for-profit activities in the social economy is not recognized as volunteering. Given that it is indeed an unpaid activity aimed at social change, however, it is clearly volunteering as well, but in a ‘broader’ sense.

In summary, there is no evidence that the spirit or concept of volunteerism is not universal. Volunteer energy can be found all over the globe, albeit at different levels. What is regarded as volunteering based on the actual activity nevertheless differs between countries. Such cross-national differences in volunteer opportunities and activities thus complicate any effort to make international comparisons of the scale of volunteering.

2.3 Characteristics of volunteers (current or potential)

In this sub-section we shift the focus away from definitions based on activity towards the description of the people who perform volunteer activities. To this end, we provide a brief overview of the demographic characteristics of volunteers, based on academic literature and national/international surveys. Although we provide a concise summary of data available in Europe, the empirical data gathered for this study are presented later (see Section 4).

According to national surveys, the total number of Europeans over 15 years of age who are engaged in volunteering is between 92 and 94 million. In contrast, estimations based on international and European studies range from 100 to 150 million (GHK, 2010). The discrepancies are due to differences in the age brackets (e.g. 18–65 years) and strict definitions and perceptions (e.g. only formal volunteering) that are often adopted in national surveys. The 2018 UN *State of the World's Volunteerism* report estimates the total volunteer workforce as amounting to 109 million FTE. This enormous economic force exceeds the size of many major industries throughout the world (UNV, 2018). In terms of compositions, 70% of all global volunteer activity occurs informally, with 30% being performed through official nonprofit organizations. Formal volunteering is equally distributed amongst men and women, while informal volunteering has higher levels of female participation at both the European and global level. Given that informal volunteering accounts for the majority of voluntary efforts in all regions, women perform a larger share of overall volunteering. Gender differences can be observed not only in the type of volunteering (i.e. formal vs. informal) but also in the sectors of volunteering. The sports, rescue-services and religious sectors tend to attract predominantly men, while healthcare, social services and education attract more women.

Age and employment status are often investigated as social-demographic factors that might influence volunteer participation. The age of volunteers generally follows an inverted U-shape, although this also depends on the type of volunteer work. It might also be different in some countries where young people volunteer more. In terms of the employment status of volunteers, a study of European countries indicates that people with full-time employment are more likely to volunteer than are those who are unemployed (Gil-Lacruz et al., 2017). The likelihood of people to volunteer at all appears to be influenced primarily by busy personal schedules, while the number of hours that they volunteer is more affected by their amount of free time. This means that, in most countries, older people (retirees) are more visible as volunteers, although the percentage of people volunteering is higher amongst the active workforce.

In summary, in most countries, volunteering tends to be performed by active, employed people of middle age. Gender differences can be observed when considering formal versus informal volunteering, as well as in terms of sectors.

2.4 Motivation to volunteer

Having identified the people who volunteer, the next question that we address is ‘Why do people volunteer?’ Based on studies of the functional motivation to volunteer (e.g. based on the Volunteer Functions Inventory, or VFI) and the solidarity and prosocial behaviour perspective, we present an analysis of potentially different profiles of volunteer motivation within Europe. The general idea is that some national cultures or volunteer-involving organizations tend to frame their volunteering more as unpaid labour, thus emphasizing functional motivation, while other countries or volunteer-involving organizations focus more on participation, thereby placing more emphasis on solidarity and prosocial behaviour.

According to the functional approach to volunteering, people engage in volunteering to satisfy social and psychological needs (as also noted by Cnaan et al., 1996). Clary and colleagues (1996) operationalize these needs into a six-factor structure of motivational functions: values, understanding,

career, social, enhancement and protective functions. Volunteering serves a values function when individuals engage in activities that express values that are important to them. It serves an understanding function when volunteers acquire new knowledge and skills. Volunteering that allows individuals to gain experiences that support their professional development serves a career function, while activities that allow them to interact with social groups that are important to them serves a social function. The enhancement function refers to activities that are conducive to the personal development of volunteers, and the protective function is served by activities that offer ego protection during periods of adversity (Clary et al., 1996).

Sociologists have traditionally turned to the theories of socialization and rational choice to explain solidarity. According to the theory of socialization, individuals are governed by conformity to norms. Closer to the functional approach, rational-choice theory argues that individuals are governed by self-interest. A framework for prosocial and solidary behaviour developed by Fetchenhauer and colleagues (2006) includes characteristics of the actor, characteristics of the situation, the resulting definition of the situation from the actor's point of view and, finally, the extent to which the actor exhibits solidarity (i.e. cooperation, fairness, altruism, trustworthiness and considerateness). In short, the degree of solidarity in each situation depends on an individual's subjective definition of the situation, which includes both motivational aspects (e.g. What are my goals?) and relational aspects (e.g. Who am I in relation to the other?). The framework illuminates the complex interactions between cognitive, situational and trans-situational factors, positioning them as explanatory factors for solidary behaviour.

Although these two perspectives help to expose the intricate nature of volunteer motivation, they provide little insight into the relationship between an individual's motivation to become active as a volunteer and how such motivation can be organized into actual volunteering. For this perspective, a distinction can be made between enjoyment-based intrinsic motivation, obligation-based intrinsic motivation and extrinsic motivation, with a clarification that intrinsically motivating activities provide a sense of autonomy, relatedness and competence (Bridges Karr & Meijs, 2006). Weaving the two perspectives together, community-based approaches seek to sustain the motivation of volunteers by tapping into their intrinsic motivation, cultivating relationships and ensuring that their needs are met. In contrast, the approaches of nonprofit and social-services organizations depend largely on extrinsic rewards to sustain motivation, while devoting little attention to fostering connections between members.

In summary, each individual has a unique profile of motivations for volunteering. Approaches that regard volunteer motivation from the individual perspective of receiving compensation for unpaid work differ slightly from those that regard volunteer motivation from the perspective of community relations. Although both of these approaches are globally valid, they might have different emphases in different European countries and organizations.

2.5 Benefits of volunteering for society

In 2001, the Commission for Social Development of the United Nations Economic and Social Council (Report of the Commission for Social Development, December 2000, cited in: Hodgkinson, 2003: 36) stated, 'Volunteering constitutes an enormous reservoir of skills, energy and local knowledge which can assist Governments in carrying out more targeted, efficient, participatory and transparent public programmes and policies. However, it is unusual for volunteering to be recognized as a strategic

resource that can be positively influenced by public policy and even rarer for it to be factored into national and international development strategies'. This can be translated into three broad categories of volunteering for society:

- Volunteering is a way to improve the quality of life and (career) possibilities of individual volunteers, thereby leading to projects aimed at improving general or specific knowledge and skills for everyone within a designated target group (e.g. disadvantaged groups).
- Volunteering is a way to keep services affordable by reducing their cost or improving their quality by adding specific quality components or giving voice to clients.
- Volunteering is a way to maintain or develop social capital, to provide an additional signalling function (when volunteering initiatives are used to discover new developments within society) and to emancipate certain excluded groups by increasing their participation.

These three broad categories of benefits of volunteering can be linked to the four discourses on civic engagement (Hilger, 2005) that underlie perspectives on the benefits of volunteering. From this perspective, the welfare discourse focusses on providing more and better services, while the economic discourse emphasizes the positive effects of volunteering on individuals themselves, and the community and democracy discourses refer to the more abstract issues of social capital, signalling and emancipation.

Table 4: *Four discourses on civic engagement (Hilger, 2005, p.7)*

Discourse	Focus	Main fields	Example	Emphasis	Aim	Central motive/ mode
Welfare	Services	Social Health	Food bank, Care work	Provision	Support, Well-being	Altruism, Doing for
Democracy	Participation	Politics	Social movements, NGOs	Advocacy	Influence, Expression	Shared interests
Economy	Economic impact	Economy, labour market	Social enterprise, citizens work	Innovation	Employment	Material benefit
Community	Social integration	Neighbourhood	Neighbourhood help	Value, guardian, trust	Creating ties	Proximity, Doing with

The welfare discourse discusses the role of volunteers in the provision of services to the needy, and it is likely to be most common in the field of social policy. This discourse has a long history and is most consistent with the common or traditional understanding of volunteering in Western literature, as well as with the unpaid-labour approach. The democracy discourse stresses the role that volunteering plays in shaping the political perspective. Volunteering is a way to provide input into the political system, as well as to participate in the implementation of decisions (Hilger, 2005; Merrill, 2006). The economic discourse has a strong focus on the impact that volunteering has on the economy, and particularly on work. It is also the discourse underlying the use of volunteering to acquire skills needed on the labour market and for education. The community discourse is about the enhancement of close neighbourhood relations and trust through volunteering. In other words, this discourse focuses on the enhancement of social capital (Merrill, 2006).

Each of the four different discourses places a different emphasis on the match (or mismatch) between volunteer energy and volunteer opportunities. In the welfare discourse, a mismatch occurs when not enough capable volunteers are matched. In the democracy and community discourses, potential mismatches result primarily from people being excluded from volunteering due to political and social reasons, while the economic discourse emphasizes the importance of offering everybody the opportunity to volunteer as a means of self-development.

2.6 Volunteering trends in Europe

In this sub-section we use the 'PEST' (politics, economy, socio-culture, technology) framework to provide a brief summary of the volunteering trends that have taken place in Europe in the past decade. The diversity in social origins, religion, traditions and political regimes (both past and current) have defined the manifestations of volunteering in different parts of Europe.

2.6.1 Politics

The political-institutional reality of a country affects its volunteering rates through the extent of civil liberties. The freedom to assemble and freely participate in organizations is a prerequisite for the existence of civil society and its agents (e.g. nonprofit organizations), which are clearly connected to the perspectives of active membership and active citizenship. As an outcome of democratization, therefore, civil liberties enable volunteering (Kamerade et al., 2016).

As suggested by the theory of democratization, improved economic circumstances slowly cause changes in cultural values, thereby resulting in elevated self-expression (amongst other outcomes), and thus political participation and engagement in volunteering. Different former Soviet Union countries embarked on different democratization trajectories. For example, the Baltic States (Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia) aggressively sought European Union membership, establishing democratic systems of governance similar to that of other EU member states. As a result, they enjoy higher levels of volunteering. In contrast, the Russian Federation and Belarus did not witness mass mobilization, and they effectively formed a semi-democratic governance by mixing democratic participation and authoritarian rule. The restricted activity of the nonprofit organizations has resulted in low rates of volunteering (Kamerade et al., 2016).

2.6.2 Economy

In the economic domain, the dichotomy between the 'developed North' and the 'developing South' is affecting the third-sector discourse. The dominant understanding of volunteering has been framed by the experiences of the Global North, with the Global South often serving as the 'host' of volunteering from the North. This has placed the volunteering practices of the South at a disadvantage through the imposition of Northern frameworks (Millora, 2020). A similar pattern might have been at play in Europe, between the Western and Eastern parts.

The activation of the private sector has been a parallel trend. Global businesses seek to expand their investments through programmes of corporate social responsibility, which they see as both a means to and an end of serving their larger socioeconomic role in society (UNV, 2018). As a result, there has

been an increase in corporate volunteering across Europe, accompanied by an increase in quality and management support. Modes of corporate volunteering vary widely from country to country, depending on local history, tradition, religion and public perceptions of volunteering. The main challenge associated with corporate volunteering is its ‘purity’: can company-supported volunteering be ‘real’ volunteering, does it intrude the work-life balance of employees, and can a relationship of trust exist between an NGO and its for-profit counterpart? (see Allen et al., 2011).

2.6.3 Socio-culture

Several developments can be identified within the socio-cultural domain. First, the need for independence and flexibility is bringing about a shift from traditional to episodic volunteering, with volunteers being more likely to undertake emergent and sporadic activities (even one-off events) than they are to engage in regular commitments. The flexibility of opting in and out of volunteering activities fuels individualism, ultimately creating a tendency of individuals to engage with specific causes and outcomes with which they personally identify, or those that are ‘fashionable’ and ‘trendy’, instead of showing long-term loyalty to any specific organization (Millora, 2020). Second, the increased awareness of social and environmental concerns is driving an upward trend in the number of active volunteers in nearly all EU countries.

Third, greater emphasis is being placed on the relational aspect of volunteering. The *State of the World's Volunteerism* report argues that it is the capacity of volunteering to stimulate self-organization and create and develop human connections that allows it to contribute to community resilience. It further frames volunteering as a means to supporting participation and inclusion with regard to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) on an individual and collective basis, both locally and globally.

Another socio-cultural aspect is the public image of volunteering, which varies across Europe. For example, many post-Communist countries exhibit a somewhat negative attitude towards volunteering. This is because citizens continue to have strong associations related to the history of compulsory volunteering for state-controlled organizations: a legacy of the Communist era. As a result, most citizens in post-Communist countries simply refuse to participate in any type of collective civil initiative, asserting their ‘new right’ not to volunteer (Kuti, 2004). As observed by Meijs and colleagues (2003), in many Western countries, volunteering has become more broadly defined according to the ‘level of freedom’ (some obligation allowed), while in post-Communist countries, this characteristic is seen from an extremely puristic perspective (no obligation). In addition, the continuing dominance of Soviet clientelism (i.e. the exchange of goods and services for political support, with implicit or explicit *quid pro quo*) and similar cultural traits has reinforced perceptions of corruption and dysfunction, as well as a lack of trust in the government and other institutions (e.g. formal nonprofit organizations) by the wider population (Kamerade et al., 2016). The Communist legacy also explains the particularly low level of participation in organizations that address social welfare, as most people in post-Communist countries hold the opinion that responsibility for addressing social issues rests with the state, and not with citizens (GHK, 2010).

2.6.4 Technology

In the technological realm, the rapid rise of new technologies is changing the ways in which volunteers and volunteer-involving organizations engage and create new forms of volunteering (e.g. online volunteering and micro-volunteering) that are disconnected from specific times and locations. In

addition to making volunteering more accessible to tech-savvy individuals, however, these developments can create a digital divide and inhibit the participation of marginalized and vulnerable groups (UNV, 2018).

The recent experience of COVID-19 has revealed the massive potential offered by technology, including for regular volunteering (e.g. board work and friendly visiting). At the same time, the pandemic has clearly shown how much work (paid or unpaid) cannot be done virtually. The expectation is that the technology will help volunteer-involving organizations to organize volunteering activities in ways that make it easier for people who cannot volunteer during office hours or on organizational premises.

3. A framework and classification for volunteer energy, volunteer opportunities and volunteering

As clearly demonstrated in the previous section, the concepts of volunteerism, volunteer energy and volunteer opportunities can be observed in all European countries. Moreover, the extreme diversity in the European volunteering landscape can be traced to differences in background factors. Sizeable differences can be observed between countries with regard to concrete volunteering activities, and perhaps the parties involved. At the same time, the COVID-19 pandemic has shown outbursts of solidarity, volunteer energy and new volunteer opportunities everywhere, and civil society organizations have proven that they take their responsibilities seriously.⁶

In this section, we analyse the success of realizing matches between the volunteer energy that is offered and the volunteer opportunities that have been created. To improve this match, or help prevent a mismatch, this section provides a classification framework based on the concept of volunteerability (3.1), third-party volunteer involvement and types of volunteers (3.2) and volunteer scenarios (3.3).

3.1 Volunteerability and the marketing of volunteering

The concept of volunteerability translates employability into the field of volunteering. The focus is on the following question: ‘What makes a person more or less willing and able to volunteer?’ The answer integrates three levels of analysis (Meijs et al., 2006):

- 1) Micro (individual): Volunteerability refers to the willingness of individuals to volunteer and to have the necessary time, skills, experience and background.
- 2) Meso (organizational): Volunteerability refers to the attractiveness of organizations to potential recruits, their flexibility in creating volunteer opportunities and their success in retaining volunteers.
- 3) Macro (community or societal levels): volunteerability is an expression of societal will and receptivity to volunteerism and of the civic ‘space’ provided for acting as a volunteer.

Meijs and colleagues (2006) apply the concept of volunteerability to connect governmental volunteering policy goals (aimed at the support and promotion of volunteering and volunteerism in general) to organizational volunteer policies (aimed at the recruitment and management of volunteers) and individual volunteer energy. Volunteerability is based on three elements: the willingness of a person to volunteer (e.g. motivation), the capability of a person to volunteer (e.g. perceived skills and self-efficacy) and the availability of a person to volunteer (e.g. time and emotional availability). In general, a community will have a high level of volunteerability when there is a good fit between the supply of and the demand for volunteers. If there is a mismatch between supply and demand, volunteerability will be low. This means that even people with high levels of volunteerability could be non-volunteers, although they are obviously likely to be highly recruitable (Meijs et al., 2006).

With regard to volunteer energy, governments, third parties and volunteer-involving organizations can enhance volunteerability by promoting volunteering more effectively, by reducing barriers to involvement and by providing training to prospective volunteers. With regard to volunteer opportunities,

⁶The response of civil society organizations to face the COVID-19 pandemic and the consequent restrictive measures adopted in Europe. <https://www.eesc.europa.eu/sites/default/files/files/qe-02-21-011-en-n.pdf>

volunteer-involving organizations are advised to offer more flexible assignments and introduce rewards for volunteering (Meijs, et al., 2006). The concept of volunteerability can be used to offers insight into mechanisms for overcoming barriers that prevent people from volunteering at the individual, organisational and societal levels. In contrast to employability, however, the pressure to convert volunteerability into actual volunteering rests primarily on the recruiting organization, which must offer attractive volunteer roles instead of expecting individuals to adapt (Meijs et al., 2006).

The willingness to volunteer can be set into motion by internal or external processes. Important external processes are based on clear rewards and a general recognition of volunteering (Chinman & Wandersman 1999); the impact of volunteering (Haski-Leventhal et al., 2011); the signalling function to employers and educational institutes (Handy et al., 2010); and good relationships amongst volunteers (Haski-Leventhal & Cnaan, 2009). Important internal mechanisms are based on positive or negative attitudes and beliefs about volunteering, as well as on an individual set of values (Haski-Leventhal et al., 2018). These internal processes are embedded within larger societal institutions (e.g. religion), making willingness difficult to influence. As described in sub-section 3.2, however, third parties can impose considerable pressure on people to volunteer. A person's capability to volunteer is based on actual and perceived skills, competencies and knowledge required for volunteering in specific roles or organizations. Volunteer-involving organizations can influence capability to volunteer by adapting their 'job offers' to the capabilities of potential volunteers. Availability is also based on perception. As indicated by older studies conducted in the United States, when people are asked why they do not volunteer, lack of time is usually the first barrier to be mentioned (Sundeen et al., 2007). At the same time, however, other studies have identified busy people as the individuals most likely to volunteer. In this regard, Haski-Leventhal and colleagues (2018) argue that it is much more the perceived availability than the absolute availability that explains high levels of volunteer energy and actual volunteering. However, it is the real availability that explains part of the number of hours volunteered. Volunteer-involving organizations can influence the availability to volunteer by adapting their 'job offers' to the availability of potential volunteers. Many new forms of volunteering (e.g. virtual volunteering, micro-volunteering and episodic volunteer) cater to this need to adapt to the availability of the volunteer energy that is offered. They simply reduce the 'costs for participation' to volunteers.

Volunteerability is also a lens for assessing the attractiveness of particular volunteer activities. In an investigation of why people decide to accept one volunteer offer and reject another according to the volunteerability framework, Doosje (2018) reports that, in choosing specific activities, volunteers do not necessarily make their choices according to whether they like the activity or the organization, but according to their availability or, more specifically, their subjectively experienced availability. They must also feel that they have the right skills and that they can overcome any emotional or physical barriers that the activity might involve. This has been supported by Haski-Leventhal and colleagues (2018), whose results suggest that volunteering can be made more attractive for people in three steps. The first step is to ensure that they have a good feeling about the cause. This involves general promotion of why the organization is useful and how volunteering would help. The second step is to remove barriers that prevent people from volunteering in terms of availability and capability. One important strategy is therefore to ensure that the place and time of commitment are determined by potential volunteers, and not by the organization. Volunteering should fit into the schedule of the volunteer, instead of requiring the volunteer to fit into the schedule of the organization. The choice to return to an activity depends on the extent to which the experience is both meaningful and rewarding. Volunteers want to feel that they

are adding something, that they are important and that they are in some way needed. People are unlikely to return to activities in which they feel superfluous or unnecessary.

Efforts to market volunteering should be based on understanding the perspective of the volunteer and fitting the volunteer activity to the life and wishes of the volunteer, instead of the organization. In fact, the marketing of volunteering activities is almost diametrically opposed to simply promoting the concept of volunteering in general. In the broadest terms, the marketing of volunteering is aimed at convincing the volunteer to say 'yes' by removing barriers to actual volunteer through the creation of volunteer assignments that are independent of time and place. The focus should be on the recruitability of the assignment, instead of on its useability for the organization. One globally renowned example is the DigiVol programme of the Australian museum that uses virtual volunteers, many of whom are housebound, to make the collection accessible through the internet (Alony et al., 2020).

3.2 A new classification of volunteers: Traditional, third-party and spontaneous

From the perspective of volunteer energy, and in contrast to many popular voices, the changes that have taken place in the past decade have not been related to the amount of volunteer energy. The most important changes have been observed with regard to ways of accessing the available volunteer energy. Traditionally, it has been volunteer-involving organizations that recruit volunteers. Although this is still the major gateway through which people are recruited, two new avenues can be found in the third-party model and spontaneous volunteering.

The rise of 'third parties' is a relatively recent phenomenon that has been having an influence on volunteering (Haski-Leventhal et al., 2010). Volunteering matches have traditionally been made when a volunteer-involving organization recruited an individual volunteer. This is the unitary approach to volunteer management. In the past decade, volunteering matches have started to be made through the involvement of 'intermediaries', including companies (corporate volunteering), educational institutes (service learning, community service), the government (welfare volunteering) (De Waele & Hustinx, 2019) specific intermediaries (volunteer centres) (Bos, 2014), organizers of family volunteering, and local/national/international days of service. This is the emerging shared approach to volunteer management (Brudney et al., 2019).

In the shared approach, access to new volunteers is separated from the guidance of these volunteers. These dual volunteer-management models involve two organizations—a 'sender' and a 'receiver'—that share the offering of an opportunity and guidance of volunteers. The sending organization organizes volunteer energy and helps to seek volunteer opportunities, and the receiving nonprofit organization offers volunteering activities for this volunteer energy. The sending third party can be a real organization (e.g. a company or educational institute), or it could be a theme that is used to generate volunteer energy by combining it with other activities. Examples include dating in single volunteering,⁷ family quality time in family volunteering,⁸ and 'voluntourism', which combines volunteer and vacation experiences. National or thematic days of service are also part of the third-party movement as, in many cases, they are supported by national campaigns aimed at promoting volunteering and offering concrete opportunities. Days of service are also organized in a smaller (private) groups and by theme. One example is the '72

⁷ www.singlevolunteers.org

⁸ <https://familyvolunteering.eu/>

hours without compromise' initiative, in which about 50 000 young people in six European countries perform about 5 000 voluntary activities.⁹ Another example is 'World clean up day' organized in some 180 countries claiming to activate 20 million people to volunteer¹⁰.

Third parties and dual-management systems play an important role in enhancing volunteerability and recruitability at the individual and organizational levels (Haski-Leventhal et al., 2010). Dual systems are important to the functional and normative re-embedding strategy, as proposed by Hustinx and Meijs (2011), by introducing normative pressures and functional organizing. A considerable body of evidence does indeed confirm that community service in schools (Haski-Leventhal et al., 2010), corporate volunteering (Meijs et al., 2006), obligatory forms of volunteering (Bridges Karr, 2007) and national days of service (Maas et al., 2021) can introduce individuals to volunteering by creating a normative context and offering concrete possibilities. A new influx of volunteers in South Africa has been attributed in part to national days of service (Compion et al., 2020), and a similar upsurge in Russia has been attributed in part to corporate volunteering (Krasnopolskaya et al., 2016). This shared approach does indeed present a major opportunity for volunteer-involving organizations, although these opportunities might differ across countries in terms of magnitude and new sources of volunteers.

Third parties can apply considerable pressure on their constituents to participate in volunteering activities. According to Hustinx and Meijs (2011), this is part of the normative-pressure strategy that has been used to re-embed volunteering in many Western European societies. Following a study on corporate volunteering (Meijs et al., 2009), Hustinx and Meijs (2011, see p 13) describe five levels of normative pressure within third parties, ranging from 1) voluntary with a socialising effect, 2) limited pressure by showing the rewards of volunteering, 3) social pressure by creating clear expectations and information about the kind of volunteering that is wanted, 4) organizational expectancy by making the volunteering an important part of the constituent functioning, and 5) obligation. The fifth level of obligation is obviously in tension with the 'free choice' component of the definition of volunteering, as described in Section 2. In the perception of some actors, however, even obligated forms of 'volunteering' are presented as volunteering. One clear example is the representation of mandatory, curriculum-based community service or service learning as volunteering on the résumés of students (Handy et al., 2010).

Almost in diametric contrast to the highly organized third-party model is the growth of the spontaneous volunteer. Although they are quite common in response to disasters, spontaneous volunteers can also be observed in political activism and fundraising. The driving forces behind these efforts include increasing levels of resources (e.g. education) that make it possible for people to do things themselves, along with modern technology, which creates simple access to broad audiences, and social media, which can facilitate action mobilization. In short, there is often less need for a volunteer-involving organization to organize and control volunteer opportunities. People can simply participate in the real or virtual world. Interesting examples could be observed in the countless 'applaud for healthcare workers' initiatives emerging during the first wave of the COVID-19 pandemic, as well as in earlier fundraising initiatives (e.g. the Ice Bucket Challenge).

The introduction of intermediaries by the third-party model and the evaporation of the role of traditional volunteer organizations in spontaneous volunteering, broadens public perceptions of volunteering (see

⁹<https://www.72h.eu/info.htm#:~:text=72%20hours%20without%20compromise&text=50.000%20young%20people%20%2D%206%20countries,youth%20centres%20or%20social%20institutions> (accessed 2021.10.10)

¹⁰ <https://www.worldcleanupday.nl/en/> (accessed 2021/10/10)

the discussion of Cnaan et al., 1996) in Sub-section 2.2: ‘What is volunteering in civil society and social economy’), although the formal definition might remain unchanged. Three volunteer profiles have been added to the ‘pure’ regular, traditional volunteer profile of an individual who engages in an activity on a completely voluntary basis, without any compensation at all (probably even without any reimbursement of expenses), while serving in a defined volunteer position within a well-established organization with a clear focus on public benefits. The first newer profile is the ‘voluntary third-party volunteer’, as exemplified by an employee participating in a corporate volunteering activity (e.g. cleaning up a beach), without being pressured by the company to participate, or by or a student participating in a service-learning elective. Third-party volunteers can be individuals although, in many cases, they come as a group or team. This profile can be contrasted with that of the more mandatory third-party volunteer. For example, a company might decide to use a beach clean-up activity as a mandatory team-building, a service learning or community service might be part of the compulsory school curriculum, or an activity could be included as part of a welfare-volunteering programme. As explained in Sub-section 2.2, one could question whether these activities are actually volunteering, as they violate the criterion of free will. Nevertheless, community service is a common requirement for graduation from secondary schools and universities throughout the world, and students often list these experiences on their résumés as volunteering (Handy et al., 2010). The third emerging profile is that of a spontaneous volunteer outside of any organizational context. Examples include the many individuals who help in times of emergencies, who are active in campaigning on social media or who systematically engage in environmental clean-up activities on their own. This is clearly in contrast to the traditional notion of volunteering as a structured activity. Van Overbeeke and colleagues (2021) define four profiles or classifications:

- 5) The regular, traditional volunteer: This profile fits the pattern of ‘pure’ volunteering within a context of ‘service to others’, with a potential debate concerning the ‘intended beneficiaries’ becoming broader within the context of member-benefit and other types of associations.
- 6) The voluntary third-party volunteer: This profile has a mixed pattern, in which ‘free choice’ and ‘remuneration’ are seen within a broader perspective, although ‘structure’ is regarded in a purer form. The ‘intended beneficiary’ is complex, as these volunteers usually perform activities for people in need, although they also have very explicit instrumental goals for themselves or their third-party organizations (e.g., government, corporations, educational institutes).
- 7) The mandatory third-party volunteer: This profile has a very broad perspective, with the broadest possible interpretation of ‘free choice’, ‘remuneration’ (e.g. preventing the loss of welfare benefits) and ‘intended beneficiary’.
- 8) The spontaneous volunteer: This profile is largely quite pure on the dimensions of ‘free choice’ and ‘remuneration’, extremely broad in terms of ‘structure’ and mixed with regard to ‘intended beneficiary’.

These profiles lead to the following classification of volunteers:

Table 5: Classification or profiles of volunteers (Van Overbeeke et al., 2021; adapted)

Component of perception	Traditional volunteer	Voluntary third-party volunteer (individual/team)	Mandatory third-party volunteer (individual/team)	Spontaneous volunteer (offline/virtual)
Extent of free choice	Ability to choose voluntarily	Relatively uncoerced	Pressure to volunteer	The ability to choose voluntarily
Type of remuneration	None at all Expenses reimbursed	Expenses reimbursed Instrumental benefits	Expenses reimbursed, Stipend/low pay Very clear benefits	None at all
Degree of organization/ structure	Formal	Formal	Formal	Informal
Intended beneficiaries	Service context: Benefit/help others/strangers Associational context: Allows for self-benefit	Benefit/help others/strangers & Allows for self-benefit	Benefit/help others/strangers & Allows for self-benefit	Benefit/help others/strangers & Allows for self-benefit

3.3 A classification of volunteering activities: Volunteer scenarios

When the focus is shifted from volunteer energy to volunteer opportunities, a different classification can be developed. This classification is based on the concept of volunteer scenarios (Meijs & Brudney, 2007), which link volunteer energy to volunteer opportunities. A volunteer scenario is a combination of Availability (e.g. when, where, how many hours, how long), Assets (e.g. specific skills or general skills) and Assignments (what will actually be done). It can be used to describe the perspectives of both potential volunteers and volunteer-involving organizations with regard to the match that must be made. A winning scenario consists of a successful, mutually acceptable combination of Availability, Assets and Assignment (AAA or triple A). A losing scenario involves a gap between what the individual wants to offer and what the organization needs.

Drawing on the four volunteer profiles outlined in the previous sub-section, four scenarios can be presented for traditional, voluntary third-party, mandatory third-party and spontaneous volunteering. From the perspective of opportunities, the demand, the list must be expanded to include three additional scenarios for episodic, virtual and team-based volunteering.

Episodic volunteering has gained popularity and recognition almost everywhere in the world. MacDuff (1990) points to an increase in the number of people performing only tasks of short duration (e.g. one-off or specific projects), instead of doing the same tasks on a weekly basis. To refer to this situation, MacDuff (1990) coined the term ‘episodic volunteers’, as these volunteers take part in only a brief episode in the ongoing story of the organization. It is important to note, however, that an individual can engage in both ongoing and episodic volunteering, although the scenarios are different. One important aspect of volunteer scenarios has to do with the costs and benefits of the activities to volunteers and organizations. Costs to volunteers might entail actual out-of-pocket expenses or, perhaps more importantly, the time investment, unrealized income and social costs (e.g. not spending time with the family or forgoing recreational activities) associated with the work. Benefits might include small semi-monetary rewards (e.g. free tickets), as well as social status, interesting opportunities, new networks, business and work opportunities, and the possibility of signalling to others (Cnaan et al., 1996). Following this reasoning, traditional volunteering—which is characterized by high investment in terms of hours—comes at a high cost to volunteers, but it also has the potential to yield high benefits. Episodic volunteering—which is characterized by limited investments in terms of time and commitment—comes at a lower cost to volunteers, but it could still yield interesting benefits. Organizations thus face the risk that volunteers will try to minimize the hours that they invest, in order to reduce their costs, while trying to keep the benefits. Volunteering becomes more attractive for volunteers when the costs go down and the benefits go up. Organizations can achieve this by eliminating barriers (i.e. hidden costs) to volunteering (see Haski-Leventhal et al., 2018). More specifically, organizations should adopt strategies of marketing and recruitability that centre on the volunteer instead of the organization. In general, traditional volunteers come at a low cost to organizations, given the healthy balance between recruitment efforts and hours donated. Moreover, many traditional volunteers can manage themselves. Episodic volunteers come at a relatively high cost in terms of recruitment and, probably, management. If recruitment can be outsourced to a third party, however, episodic volunteers (perhaps in teams) might suddenly become less expensive. Major developments in episodic volunteering include event-based volunteering for a wide variety of sectors (e.g. sports, culture, religion, social welfare) and the growth of local, national or international days of service. The objective underlying days of service is to achieve something special or challenging within a short time, as can also be observed in various television shows (e.g. *DIY SOS edition*),¹¹ which rely on the support of local communities, companies and volunteers. A global example of days aimed at promoting episodic volunteer energy is, as mentioned before, ‘World Clean-up Day’. Such initiatives can also serve as drivers of corporate volunteering and other team-based involvement.¹²

Another development that can change the costs and benefits of volunteering and create a new type of volunteer scenario is the emergence of virtual volunteering. Broadly defined, virtual volunteering encompasses all forms in which volunteers use social media or the internet to volunteer. Although it can be something created specifically for this purpose, it can serve as a supplement to existing volunteering. It changes the volunteer scenario, however, as the activities become independent of place, time or both, such that individuals can volunteer at the locations and times of their own choosing.¹³

¹¹ <https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/articles/2Qt5FqBmMkd3K3tXVQkj2Nv/volunteer-to-help-on-a-diy-sos-build> (accessed 2021.10.10)

¹² <https://www.worldcleanupday.nl/en/> (accessed 2021-10-10)

¹³ For an overview of the virtual volunteering spectrum, see the work of Jayne Cravens, <http://www.coyotecommunications.com/me/aboutme.html>

One interesting feature of the third-party profiles is that they allow volunteers to come in groups, instead of as individuals. The first step in analysing changes in volunteer scenarios is to recognize that, for traditional volunteer profiles, the general trend in volunteer management is to shift from an approach that centres on the organization to one that is more focussed on the volunteer. The matching process should not proceed from what the organization needs, but with what the volunteer wants to offer. A flexible approach is generally preferred, including making the volunteering independent of time and place. The more extreme flexible approach of episodic volunteering also includes virtual volunteering. The voluntary and mandatory third-party patterns are sometimes essential for bringing individuals into contact with volunteering opportunities. A third party can serve as a negotiator to help individual or team volunteers find volunteering assignments. In fact, as stated by Overbeeke and colleagues (2021b), third parties can use three strategies to enhance volunteer inclusion: encouraging, enabling and enforcing.

Taken together, this leads to a new combination of the classifications of volunteer scenarios and opportunities (table 6).

Table 6: Classification of volunteer scenarios (opportunities) (based on Van Overbeeke et al., 2021)

	Volunteers	Volunteer activities	Costs/ benefits
Traditional scenarios	Higher level of education, employed, equal gender distribution, smaller communities, religious	traditional volunteering, involving high availability, high commitment to one organization and a wide variety of assignments that develop (grow) over the years; refers to almost all volunteer activities	High costs to volunteers Low costs to organizations High benefits for volunteers, organizations and society
Episodic scenarios	Generally younger age, but also older, traditional volunteers who are attracted to participate	Do-in-one day activities (e.g. days of service, project-based volunteering, event volunteering)	Low costs to volunteers High costs to organizations Medium benefits for volunteers and organizations High benefits for society
Virtual scenarios	Younger volunteers/professionals, in many cases impact-driven and highly involved Proliferated during the COVID-19 pandemic	Activities focus on awareness-building (voice/tweet) or citizen-science projects (using phones to count or report). In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, many traditional volunteer activities have moved to more virtual forms (e.g. chatting).	Low costs to volunteers and organizations if equipment is available Low to high benefits for volunteers, organizations and society depending on volunteer activity (e.g. tweeting versus virtual board meeting)
Spontaneous scenarios	Not the typical volunteer population, many young, well-educated people	In many cases, ‘simple’ things that people want to do during a situation of crisis (e.g. COVID-19). The activities can be done in	Low or high costs to volunteers and organizations (see the two examples)

	Proliferated profusely during the COVID-19 pandemic	only a few minutes (e.g. applauding for healthcare workers), although they may also involve extended and dangerous tasks (e.g. in the case of natural disasters).	Medium benefits for volunteers and society, Low benefits organizations
Third-party individual scenarios	Individuals from companies, educational institutes or sent by the government	Activities that serve a dual purpose of supporting the volunteer-involving organization and the goals of the sending third-party (e.g. a consultancy project for an NPO, conducted by business students)	Costs to volunteers, organizations and society are either comparable to traditional scenarios or episodic scenarios. Given that third-party situations are new to the field of volunteerism, there is a risk that the benefits to third parties will assume too much importance
Third-party team scenarios	Groups from companies, educational institutes and churches.	Team-building activities (clean-ups, organization of parties, working at a foodbank)	Organizations incur additional costs associated with creating specific scenarios

4. Comparing volunteering in European countries: Building a European (five-country) SWOT analysis

As explained in the introduction, the actual volunteering rates in a country, as measured and observed in the types of activities that are performed, is a result or combination of general institutional effects at the national level (supply) (Section 2) and the volunteering infrastructure and opportunities (demand) (Section 3). In this section, we provide an overview of trends in volunteering in five countries, based on a combination of existing data sources and empirical data collected for this report. Each country analysis discusses the influence of institutional factors (based on the concepts described in Section 2) and the volunteering infrastructure (based largely on expert interviews and additional country-specific data). The final part of each individual country analysis is a SWOT analysis concerning trends that are either widening or narrowing the gap between volunteers and potential volunteer activities. Weaknesses and threats consist of trends and forces that create fewer winning scenarios, while strengths and opportunities consist of trends and forces that bring the two parts together to create winning scenarios. A summary of the individual SWOT analyses is provided in Sub-section 4.6.

Before presenting the individual country analyses, we provide a brief recap of Sections 2 and 3. Most importantly, it should be recalled that the countries included here have different types of nonprofit regimes (Salamon & Sokolowski, 2001) leading to variations in the size of their nonprofit sector and the roles of nonprofit organizations. These differences influence both the supply (volunteer energy) of and demand (opportunities) for volunteering. The most important roles are the service role (consistent with the economy and welfare discourses on value for society) and the expressive role (consistent with the democracy and participation discourses on value for society) (Hilger, 2005). The nonprofit-regime perspective is linked to governments and systems that are either supportive of nonprofit organizations (high volunteering rates) or hostile towards them (low volunteering rates) (see also Kamerade et al., 2016). Second, from the economic perspective, economic development increases volunteer participation, due to an increase in the number of volunteer-involving organizations as more financial resources become available (demand or opportunities), as well as in the amount of individual capital, in terms of time, money or other resources (supply or volunteer energy). The relationship is nevertheless complicated by the fact that income inequality is likely to play an even more important role in explaining volunteering rates, as it decreases volunteer participation for two main reasons (Damian, 2018). First, citizens with low income are less likely to volunteer due to a lack of resources (actual or perceived). Second, in countries with substantial inequality, there is less trust and cooperation between individuals from different social classes, leading to less social participation in general (Damian, 2018). To measure the economic development in the five EU countries, we use the 2019 real GDP per capita data for the average population, as provided by Eurostat.¹⁴ Data on income inequality were also taken from Eurostat. The measure for income is the income quintile share ratio, which measures the ratio of the total income of the 20% of the population with the highest incomes to that received by the 20% of the population with the lowest incomes. A third overall institutional factor is religion, which is known for promoting certain shared values within society (e.g. altruism and solidarity) that promote social involvement (Damian, 2018). The influence of these values extends beyond religious individuals to other people in their direct surroundings. Social networks in which there are norms and social pressure to volunteer influence both religious and secular people (Wiepking and Handy, 2015). In addition to the overall effect

¹⁴ <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/products-eurostat-news/-/DDN-20190718-1> (accessed 2021.05.10)

of religion, national volunteering rates might differ according to type of religion. For example, historically Protestant and Catholic countries score differently, with the latter generally exhibiting slightly lower volunteer rates. These factors are summarized in Table 7 and combined with the Eurostat 2015 measures (last column).

Table 7: Summary of national institutional factors, combined with volunteering rates

	Nonprofit regime	Nonprofit sector/ volunteer role	Size of the nonprofit sector*	Income inequality **	Cultural characteristics (historically dominant religion)	Volunteer participation (formal; Eurostat 2015)
Croatia	Statist	Service	Small to Medium	Medium	Roman Catholic	9.7%
Finland	Social democratic	Expressive	Medium	Low	Protestant	34.1%
Hungary	Statist/ social democratic	Expressive	Small	Medium	Roman Catholic	6.9%
Spain	Corporatist	Service	Medium	High	Roman Catholic	10.7%
The Netherlands	Corporatist	Expressive	Large	Low	Mixed	40.3%

*Based on the FTE percentage, as will be described in the 5 country analysis (<5% of total national employment is low, 5–10% is medium, and >10% is high).

**Relative for the five countries, based on the ratio in 2019 (<4 is low, 4–5 is medium, >5 is high).

As described in Section 3, volunteering takes place at the concrete level of volunteer activities when volunteer energy (an intention to volunteer) is met by a volunteer opportunity (the possibility of volunteering). This match serves as the level of analysis and intervention. It is with regard to this matching mechanism that the volunteering landscape has undergone considerable change in the past 20 years. Interestingly, this study reveals considerable cross-national variation in the progress of these changes, but not in their existence and their direction. The first trend is the extension of the profile or classification of volunteers from only ‘regular, traditional volunteers’ to include the categories of ‘voluntary third-party volunteers’, ‘mandatory third-party volunteers’ and ‘spontaneous volunteers’. This trend is either impeded or accelerated by changes in the prevailing volunteer scenarios or opportunities. In general, these changes reflect a shift towards more episodic or short-term forms of volunteering, more virtual volunteering and a greater emphasis on team-based volunteering. The extension of the profiles of volunteers and the shift towards other scenarios are based on the emerging involvement of third parties, including corporations (in corporate volunteering) and educational institutes (in service learning) that match their employees or students to volunteer opportunities, thereby also achieving their own instrumental goals (Haski-Leventhal et al., 2010). In addition, new technologies (e.g. smartphones and social media) have made it possible for individual citizens to organize their volunteering without the interference of larger organizations. Volunteering has also become more spontaneous and less strictly organized, although it might also have become more or less effective in particular cases.

4.1 Croatia

4.1.1 Institutional factors

Historically, Croatia occupied a borderline area between the statist and social-democratic regimes, with a relatively small third sector and a relatively high level of state funding, due to the Soviet-style central planning scheme, with its focus on social welfare spending. In light of the post-Soviet decrease in governmental funding and the parallel rise in anti-social attitudes in the country (e.g. nationalist movements), Croatia is currently categorized by the statist regime, with a third sector that fulfils a predominantly service role. With regard to the size of the nonprofit sector, the country has 70 512 FTE of paid employees and 29 412 FTE of volunteers. The volunteer workforce thus constitutes 6.4% of total national employment (data from 2014). The most recent country report prepared by the Croatian Volunteer Development Centre (CVDC) indicates a very low level of volunteering (CVDC, 2018). There is no significant difference between genders (female: 10%, male: 9.4%), and the share of informal volunteering is substantially higher than that of formal volunteering (Eurostat, 2015; UNV, 2018). From an economic perspective, the country's GDP amounts to EUR 12 450, with an income inequality ratio of 4.76 (data from 2019). With regard to cultural characteristics, Croatia has the largest percentage of people who identify as religious (84%) of all the countries included in this study, and it also has the highest percentage of people who attend religious services at least once a week (22%). The use of early-retirement policy options, the demographic trend of an ageing population and the fact that retirees often help the church suggests that the number of volunteers engaged in the religious sector could be expected to increase in the future (see CVDC, 2018). The main provider of financial aid is the Croatian Ministry of Demographics, Family, Youth and Social Policy. Support comes in the form of one-year funding for local and regional volunteer centres (CVDC, 2018). The lack of sustainable funding extended by the government is a barrier to the development of volunteering within the country.

4.1.2 Volunteer energy and opportunities

According to the academic expert consulted for this study, although Croatia does not really have a long tradition of volunteering but there is a contemporary movement to promote volunteering. In terms of policy, Croatia adopted a specific law on volunteering in 2007, with subsequent amendments in 2013, including specifications of the definition, rights and obligations of volunteers and NPOs, as well as the principle of inclusive volunteering (CVDC, 2018). The law defines the following principles for volunteers: “non-discrimination of volunteers and volunteering beneficiaries, protection of volunteering beneficiaries, non-exploitation of volunteers, protection of volunteers minors, education for volunteering purposes (educating for values), inclusive volunteering, non-chargeability for volunteering, free will and solidarity of volunteering and mobility of volunteers” (CVDC, 2018, p6). The law also provides a definition, which incorporates the four components described in Sub-section 2.2.: “Volunteering is an investment in personal time, effort, knowledge and skills out of free will to carry out services and activities for the well-being of another person or the wider public, and are executed by the persons without existence of any conditions of a financial reward or any other material benefit for the work done, unless otherwise stated by the Law” (Article 3) (CVDC, 2018, p5).

There is a national policy aimed specifically at the development of volunteering or volunteerism. Volunteering development is included in a national strategy for the development of civil society. The country also organized several programmes intended to encourage volunteering, including the

celebration of International Volunteer Day (December 5th).¹⁵ Support continues for the actions of associations, including Croatia Volunteers and 72 Hours Without Compromise, which assemble large numbers of volunteers in a short time throughout Croatia and which send a strong message about the importance of volunteering.¹⁶ The Ministry of Labour, Pension System, Family and Social Policy¹⁷ plans to adopt and implement the National Programme for the Development of Volunteering for the period 2021–2025, along with amendments to the Law on Volunteering and related bylaws, while also providing additional methods for financing volunteer programmes.¹⁸

The Croatian Volunteer Development Centre (HCRV¹⁹) contributes to building an open, democratic and vibrant society based on the active participation of citizens. The Centre's basic mission is to lead the development and provide support to the strengthening of resources for the affirmation and development of volunteering in Croatia. The centre "encourages the development of volunteerism through promotion and information, capacity building and knowledge and quality management, connectivity, networking and advocacy and strengthening organizational capacities".²⁰

As in other countries, the COVID-19 pandemic has had a negative influence on the scale of volunteering as many opportunities stopped. The Croatian Ministry of Labour, Pension System, Family and Social Policy reports a modest decline (7%) in the number of hours of formal volunteering between 2019 and 2020, with a larger decline (25%) in the number of volunteers. The number of volunteers also decreased for both men and women, with 28 536 women volunteering in 2020 (59% less than 2019) and 19 850 men (46% less than 2019). Despite these declines, the number of reports of organized volunteering received in 2020 was 5% higher than in 2019. It is important to note that the COVID-19 pandemic might have been a key factor of the decline of these numbers, and informal volunteering should also be taken into consideration (Ministry of Labour, Pension System, Family and Social Policy, 2021).

One important trend, albeit with still limited numbers of participants, is the rise of (national) days of service or volunteering. Croatia has a national campaign, Croatia Volunteers, which has now been held for 10 years in a row. The objective of the campaign is to highlight the importance of volunteering to the development of a modern democratic society, in which every individual has the right and responsibility to contribute and in which such contributions are valued.²¹ One interesting example of days of service has also been observed in other European countries (Germany, Austria, the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Hungary, Slovenia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Italy, Switzerland, and Croatia) is known as 72 Hours Without Compromise. This campaign is intended to encourage young people to volunteer at different places and for different organizations within a 72-hour timeframe.²² It is a good example of how the episodic perspective on volunteering (one-off, project-based) is used to generate volunteer energy within certain groups, in this case youngsters. Another example is the participation in

¹⁵ <https://voluntaris.cat/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/Volunteering-in-Croatia.pdf>

¹⁶ Student research paper prepared for this study

¹⁷ <https://mrosp.gov.hr/en>

¹⁸ *Last year, volunteers set aside more than three million of their hours to help others - Minister Josip Aladrović presented State Awards to the best* (2020). [online] Ministry of Labour, Pension System, Family and Social Policy. Available at: <https://mrosp.gov.hr/vijesti/volonteri-prosle-godine-izdvojili-vise-od-tri-milijuna-svojih-sati-za-pomaganje-drugima-ministar-josip-aladrovic-urucio-drzavne-nagrade-najboljima/12131> (accessed on 2021.05.08)

¹⁹ <https://www.europeanvolunteercentre.org/croatian-volunteer-development-cent>

²⁰ *About us*. [online]. Croatian Volunteer Development Centre. Available at: <https://www.hcrv.hr/o-nama/hcrv-misija> (accessed on 2021.09.05)

²¹ *Croatia Volunteers*. [online]. Croatia Volunteers. Available at: <https://www.hrvatska.volontira.vcz.hr/> (accessed on 2021-10-05)

²² *Objectives and characteristics*. [online]. 72 Hours Without Compromise. Available at: <http://72sata.hr/ciljevi-i-karakteristike/> (accessed on 2021-10-05)

World Clean-up Day 2021, with 13 projects in Croatia.²³ Spontaneous volunteering has been recognized in the popular media, not only in the recent pandemic but also, and perhaps more importantly, in times of natural disasters (e.g. earthquakes).²⁴

The involvement of educational institutes and companies as third parties in volunteering is slowly taking off, although it remains relatively underdeveloped.²⁵ One example is Volunteer Centre Zagreb, which started a project in 2019, entitled ‘School volunteer community: A force for sustainable development’. The main beneficiaries of the project are primary and secondary school students and schools (as institutions).²⁶ Service learning, which is much more likely to be observed at institutes of higher education, is currently developing as well. While CSR is no longer an uncommon phenomenon, corporate volunteering is still very new, although some front-runners do organize national days for their employees (e.g. Grawe²⁷).

Interestingly, one of the experts consulted for this study explained the potential for growth in volunteering in Croatia according to the voluntary action undertaken by Scouting Croatia for the reforestation of burned areas.²⁸ According to this expert, the lack of existing organizations and structures represents a potential for growth in opportunity structures that would not be possible in other countries (e.g. the Netherlands). Indeed, low participation rates make it possible to grow fast, while high participation rates like in The Netherlands or Finland lead to pessimistic stories about the future of volunteering.

4.1.3 SWOT analysis

Volunteer opportunities are currently limited in terms of the more traditional volunteer scenarios. In addition, institutional factors (e.g. lack of financial support for volunteer organizations) are not supportive of the growth of volunteering. At the same time, however, the volunteering infrastructure is developing rapidly, as a result of increased efforts by the government to encourage volunteering. Key opportunities relate to the involvement of third parties (e.g. by promoting corporate volunteering).

SWOT – Croatia

Strengths	Weaknesses
<p>Institutional factors:</p> <p>Governmental support in the form of legal systems and continuous promotion of volunteering</p> <p>Volunteering infrastructure:</p> <p>The influx of young people into volunteering</p>	<p>Institutional factors:</p> <p>Lack of a tradition of volunteering</p> <p>Unfavourable perspective, as older people associate volunteering with mandatory volunteering</p> <p>Volunteering infrastructure:</p>

²³ <https://www.worldcleanupday.org/#countries> (accessed on 2021-10-10)

²⁴ <https://www.total-croatia-news.com/interviews/47765-zagreb-volunteers> (accessed on 2021-10-10)

²⁵ Based on a student research paper prepared for this study

²⁶ *School volunteering*. [online]. Volunteer Centre Zagreb. Available at: <https://www.vcz.hr/info-pult/skolsko-volontiranje/> (accessed on 2021-10-05)

²⁷ <https://www.grawe.hr/en/corporate-volunteering/>

²⁸ <https://sdgs.scout.org/post/croatian-scouts-are-organizing-largest-voluntary-action-reforestation-burned-areas-croatia> (accessed 2021-10-10)

Space for all kinds of new organizations to start and involve volunteers	Limited volunteer opportunities in the traditional scenarios
<p>Opportunities</p> <p>Institutional factors: Recognition of the importance of and need for volunteering</p> <p>Volunteering infrastructure: High potential for third-party scenarios, due to the growing involvement of companies and the development of service learning Further development of episodic scenarios through the addition of more days of service, if possible, based on European or global campaigns Recognition of spontaneous volunteering Further development of volunteer centres</p>	<p>Threats</p> <p>Volunteering infrastructure: Current lack of diversity in volunteer scenarios, in addition to the already limited traditional scenarios</p>

4.2 Finland

4.2.1 Institutional factors

Finland exemplifies a social democratic regime. In line with the expectation for this regime, the Finnish nonprofit sector fulfils a predominantly expressive role (78%). This is due in part to the fact that, after the establishment of the social security system in the 1960s, the state extended a plethora of public services and saw the voluntary sector as a threat to their professionalization (CEV, country report, 2018). Volunteering is currently perceived as a platform for expressing opinions and interests (Ibid). In terms of size and composition, the volunteer sector has a total of 67 000 FTE of paid employees and 78 146 FTE of volunteers. The volunteer workforce thus accounts for 5.9% of total national employment. Given its social democratic regime and still relatively large nonprofit sector outside the areas of social security and welfare, the expected relationship between regime and the size of the nonprofit sector does not really hold for Finland (data from 2014). The country reports more or less equal participation in volunteering for men (35.8%) and women (32.5%) (Eurostat, 2015). Finland has the highest GDP of the five countries addressed in this study (EUR 37 230). It also enjoys the lowest income inequality ratio (3.7) (data from 2019). From a cultural perspective, about half of all Finns say that they are religious, although church attendance is much lower. According to the 2018 country report on volunteering infrastructure, there are 1 300 NPOs engaged in the combined religious and philanthropic sector (CEV, country report, 2018). Finland does not have a specific law to define volunteering, although volunteering is regulated in other laws such as the Associations Act and Act on Rescue Services (CEV, country report, 2018). There are also many sectoral organizations to support and promote volunteering (CEV, country report, 2018). Although Finland has no specific budget for volunteering, it does support voluntary organizations. Of the total income of the voluntary sector, approximately 32% is from public sources. An essential contributor to education, culture, social affairs and health, is the national government-run gaming organization Veikkaus, which has a monopoly over the Finnish gaming market and ensures a sustainable

form of funding for the sector (CEV, country report, 2018). In addition to Veikkaus, sources of funding for Finnish NPOs include EU funds, private companies, membership fees and fundraising, amongst other sources. Compared to other European countries that are more consistent with the corporatist regime, this percentage of state funding is relatively low, and voluntary organizations are largely dependent on self-financing. The state provides tax benefits to nonprofit organizations. For example, they are tax exempt for income from donations, membership fees, fundraising and other sources, as well as from VAT and property taxes. The most important prerequisite is that these organizations operate for the public good (CEV, country report, 2018). At the same time, there might be complications for taxation if skilled health care professionals do skill-based volunteering in Finland (CEV, country report, 2018)

4.2.2 Volunteer energy and opportunities

Finland has a long history and tradition of volunteering. To illustrate the breath of volunteering opportunities in a country like Finland, CEV (country report, 2018, p10-11) presents a long list of volunteer involving organizations: “Sports and exercise clubs, Cultural associations, Leisure and hobby organizations, Social and health associations, Youth organizations and student societies, Political organizations, Trade unions, Economic and industrial associations, Advisor organizations, Religious and ideological associations, Pedagogical, scientific and study organizations, Ecological associations, Pensioner and veteran organizations, Village and local organizations, National defense and peace organizations, Friendship societies, ethnic organizations and development cooperation organizations and Service organizations”. The number of people volunteering is relatively stable, with more or less half of the population participating. At the same time, and like many well-developed traditional volunteering societies, Finland is experiencing an increase in short term, irregular episodic volunteering, combined with the shift towards online activity.²⁹ Online and social media are also increasing the prominence of self-organized spontaneous volunteering, including during the COVID-19 pandemic. It is interesting to note that churches are also playing a role in this move by helping their congregations to become active in these ways.³⁰ This development can also be linked to a slowly growing trend, which represents a fundamental change for Finland, in which individuals showcase their volunteering to others (e.g. around Christmas). The highly traditional, Protestant ethic of ‘not letting the left hand know what the right hand is doing’ seems to be becoming less prominent. Volunteering is something that can be consumed as well.³¹ According to the academic expert consulted for this study, this might have the effect of increasing inequality in the ability to participate in volunteering.

Traditional, high-commitment volunteering (traditional scenarios) seems to be somewhat on the decline. To counter this, large national volunteer-involving organizations are offering the new types of scenarios more often, albeit with some reluctance, as this seems to make life more complicated for them. They also seem to trust that the new volunteer scenarios will not replace the traditional ones, but will compliment them.

Volunteering is on the political agenda of Finland, and a national strategy for volunteering is under development. The country has also set up working groups consisting of public and private actors to discuss barriers to nonprofit organizations and how they can be resolved. Several working groups are relevant to volunteering, including the working group on taxation, which will analyse problems relating

²⁹ Interview with academic expert

³⁰ Interview with academic expert

³¹ Interview with academic expert

to relevant tax policies for nonprofit organizations. In addition, several programmes have been established to promote volunteering (CEV, country report, 2018).

With the ongoing retreat of the government, an increase has been observed in volunteering in the areas of social welfare and healthcare. According to the academic expert, this trend is combined with an ongoing trend towards the professionalization of volunteer management, which does not always combine well with the traditional perspectives on volunteering. In Finland, volunteering is currently becoming less bottom-up, with less of a grassroots character. Funding from new sources (e.g. lotteries) are also resulting in the professionalization of the field, which is apparently following a management approach based more on practices in the United States, with much more attention directed towards the aspects of 'unpaid labour' than those relating to 'active belonging'. The same professionalization trend can be observed in another important volunteering sector, sports, which is becoming less association-based and more business-like. According to the academic expert, volunteering in sports associations is becoming more a kind of activity that can be consumed, while also allowing people to keep their own fees lower.

The involvement of third parties occurs primarily in educational institutes. Service learning has become a trend in polytechnical schools, although it is not always part of the curriculum. Corporate volunteering is still very limited. It is important to note that, as in other countries (e.g. the Netherlands), the introduction of third-party involvement has complicated the discourse on volunteering. This is raising a number of fundamental questions. Are these systems of normative pressure making volunteering less voluntary? Is volunteering becoming less of a private, individual decision and more of a duty related to school or work? Likewise, there are no real national days of service, although an increase has been observed in clean-up walking days, and Finland has had 37 activities associated with World Clean-up Day.³²

As a final point, although diversity is increasing in Finland, volunteering is still not very inclusive. One explanation is the continuing dominance of the associational base of volunteering. By definition, this leads to both in-group volunteering and in-group volunteer recruitment. One example is the nearly non-existent possibility of participating in volunteering for people who do not speak Finnish.³³

4.2.3 SWOT analysis

The institutional factors for volunteering in Finland are favourable. In addition, the volunteering infrastructure for offering opportunities has traditionally been very strong. On the other hand, the current volunteer scenarios are highly traditional with limited development of new scenarios (e.g. third-party involvement) although the spontaneous scenario seems to be on the rise. Nevertheless, this lack of new scenarios is threatening the engagement of young people as volunteers, and it is not supporting a more inclusive volunteer workforce. The most important opportunities for the further development of volunteering thus lie in the development of new volunteer scenarios.

³² <https://www.worldcleanupday.org/#countries> (accessed 2021-10-10)

³³ Interview with academic expert

<p>Strengths</p> <p>Institutional factors: Long tradition of volunteering, deeply embedded within a social democratic regime</p> <p>Volunteering infrastructure: Existing volunteer infrastructure offers many opportunities to volunteer</p>	<p>Weaknesses</p> <p>Volunteering infrastructure: Very traditional volunteer scenarios and limited development of new scenarios, especially third-party models and national days of service</p> <p>Limited inclusion in volunteering</p>
<p>Opportunities</p> <p>Volunteering infrastructure: Strong traditional volunteering infrastructure of volunteer centres and church-based groups can be used to introduce new scenarios, including third-party involvement and national days of service Spontaneous and episodic volunteering is also supported by highly traditional volunteer-involving organizations.</p>	<p>Threats</p> <p>Institutional factors: The growing marketization of social services (and, to a lesser extent, sports) is leading to the demise of the ethos of volunteering</p> <p>Volunteering infrastructure: Lower influx of young people in traditional scenarios</p>

4.3 Hungary

4.3.1 Institutional factors

Hungary combines the statist and social democratic regimes, accompanied by an expressive volunteer role (46.5%). As in other former Soviet countries, voluntary organizations became an important political vehicle in the run-up to the regime change in Hungary. With the 1989 passage of the Law on Association, guaranteeing the freedom of association, organizational life in Hungary took off. The number of organizations tripled during the 1990s, and a previously almost non-existent foundational sector of almost 20,000 organizations was born. During the past decade, however, popular participation in civil society has remained low, due in part to the rise of anti-social attitudes.³⁴ Of the five countries included in this study, Hungary has the smallest nonprofit sector, with 84 203 FTE of paid employees and 15 965 FTE of volunteers. The volunteer workforce thus constitutes 2.4% of total employment (data from 2014). In Hungary, the volunteering rate amongst women (7.4%) is slightly higher than that amongst men (6.3%). People between the ages of 16 and 24 years are the most active as volunteers (Eurostat, 2015). Interestingly, the data indicate that participation is highest amongst job-seekers (47.4%). With regard to economic development, Hungary's GDP is EUR 13 260, with an income inequality ratio of 4.23 (data from 2019). More than half (55%) of all Hungarians consider themselves religious, with 10% attending religious services at least once a week. In Hungary, the national and local governments commit approximately EUR 25 million per year to voluntary organizations, accounting for 35% of the total budget of the voluntary organizations in 2007. The 2020 country report on volunteering infrastructure outlines a focus on initiatives aimed at generating economic development, as contrasted with those

³⁴ Based on an interview with a volunteer centre and on the 2020 CEV report on Hungary

aimed at community development. Government funding is directed partly towards nonprofit organizations that perform public tasks. Private donations make up only a small percentage of the total income of these organizations. Citizens can choose to donate 1% of their income taxes to a nonprofit organization. In Hungary, nonprofit organizations are not required to pay income tax for economic activities included in their statute, but no exemptions are made for VAT (CEV, country report, 2020). According to CEV (2020, country report, p3), the official definition of volunteering, following the components describes in Sub-section 2.2 except that interestingly there is no real mentioning of structure, is an “activity based on free will, carried out outside of one’s family or circle of close friends, without remuneration or financial gain and to serve the public interest, done for a community cause and not for individual interest”. Following the law on volunteering, organizations can choose to officially register their volunteering programmes or not. Registration however means that organizations would benefit from positive aspects such as some costs being tax-exempt (CEV, country report, 2020).

Major institutional challenges are likely to arise with regard to the right to be recognized as a nonprofit organization and the possibilities of the volunteering infrastructure being controlled by the government, instead of being independent. Another major challenge for the coming years is related to the availability of volunteer programmes to those interested in volunteering. If the demand from individuals cannot be met by the supply provided by both NPOs and institutions, people will be disappointed, and the image of volunteering might ultimately be impaired. This is a country-level risk. In addition, volunteering is obviously independent. If an organization becomes activist against the government, however, it is likely to encounter additional difficulties. Although 98% of all volunteer programmes are neutral, it is becoming increasingly difficult to remain neutral in Hungary. During the socialist period, there were three categories of organizations: forbidden (those critical of the government), neutral and supportive (pro-government). This logic seems to be returning.³⁵

4.3.2 Volunteer energy and opportunities

As previously noted, according to the volunteer centre, volunteering is gaining momentum. This can be illustrated by the example of the chair of a local Rotary, who is also involved in starting a new all-volunteer organization to help pupils in primary schools. The need for social activities is clear, which could also explain situations such as that of Rotaries in Hungary, which are having no problem at all finding local causes to support.

In addition, volunteer-involving organizations are increasingly understanding the need to take volunteering seriously. Not long ago (15–20 years), most organizations were highly *ad hoc*, and they tended to take volunteers for granted. Currently, larger organizations understand that, if they are going to sustain volunteers for a longer period of time, they must have a professional framework and apply the principles of volunteer management.³⁶ Volunteering has come to involve many actors. This complexity can arise in many different settings. For example, environmental and social crises have also generated new waves of volunteering, with people self-organizing to alleviate the risk of floods and to help during the 2015 refugee crisis. The same applies to the COVID-19 crisis, which has energized large numbers of volunteers. For their part, many local governments have become recruiters and engaged volunteers.

³⁵ Interview with a volunteer centre

³⁶ Interview with a volunteer centre

According to the respondent from the Volunteer Centre, at the individual level, Hungary is certainly not mature with regard to volunteering, although the availability of possibilities for volunteering is increasing. For several years, students in secondary school have been required to volunteer 50 hours for a local organization. The Erasmus+ programmes have apparently been having an effect as well. In general, it is much easier to find people for any types of volunteer work than was previously the case. This is due to a combination of increasing willingness (volunteer energy), higher demand (opportunity structure) and a proliferation of self-organized activities.

On the other hand, as the instrumental effects of volunteering (e.g. volunteering to develop a résumé) are becoming clearer, some volunteers are tending to stay for shorter times. Volunteering in Hungary seems to be dominated by young, well-educated people, with a slight majority of women. In villages, however, some activities might not be recognized as volunteering, but as spontaneous community support. Such efforts are not highly institutionalized. People in the village know what their neighbours need, and they simply provide services spontaneously. The act of volunteering nevertheless exists in villages and cities alike, however, and it would not be accurate to say that volunteering is exclusively a phenomenon for the young, well-educated urban population.

The same perspective of diversity with regard to who volunteers and what volunteering is should be applied to the relationship between religion and volunteering, which is becoming increasingly important. In this case as well, the vocabulary is different. An individual performing community service as part of an NGO and someone performing community service at a church are both doing the same thing. In churches, however, these efforts are not referred to as volunteering. In addition, individual churches have their own actions. Some actions are organized jointly, including the national 72 Hours Without Compromise programme, which also exists in Croatia. About five events were organized in Croatia as part of World Clean-up Day.³⁷

Corporate volunteering is becoming increasingly important, as many multinationals and larger companies are creating KPIs. One large insurance company has three staff members who are involved part-time in the organization of corporate volunteering.³⁸ About 10% of the employees participated in a charity run. During the COVID-19 pandemic, outdoor trash-collecting events became popular. The pandemic seems to have had a very positive effect on volunteering in general. Corporate volunteers tend to perform the same types of activities as ‘regular’ volunteers do. The same applies to the educational system, as secondary schools require students to perform a certain number of hours volunteering. These sources are uncertain, however, as companies and schools were forced to close and reduce their in-person operations due to the pandemic. For example, Vodafone had a large programme, but it no longer seems to be a priority.³⁹ Only 8% of all Hungarian companies have volunteering activities, as compared to 20% of all multinationals. There is clearly room for development.

Secondary schools have a mandatory 50 hours community service program based upon the Hungarian Law of Education (2011).⁴⁰ According to CEV (country report, 2020) this service is not called volunteering but for example volunteer centres play a central role in organizing the community service.

³⁷ <https://www.worldcleanupday.org/#countries> (accessed 2021-10-10)

³⁸ Interview with the corporate volunteering officer at an insurance company

³⁹ Interview with a volunteer centre

⁴⁰ <https://www.bmegimnazium.hu/activities/community-service/> (accessed 2021/10/10)

4.3.3 SWOT analysis

Despite a developing tradition of volunteering, the institutional context and volunteering infrastructure continue to be less favourable in Hungary. More specifically, volunteer opportunities are limited, and the relatively low level of freedom for civil society is threatening the expansion. At the same time, the volunteer culture is growing and the volunteer infrastructure is developing, creating more opportunities and attracting young people to become volunteers (e.g. due to volunteering through educational institutes). Opportunities include the further development of third-party volunteer scenarios.

SWOT – Hungary

<p>Strengths</p> <p>Institutional factors: Tradition of volunteering within a social democratic regime Government support in the form of funding, legal systems and support for volunteering Clear need for more and better social services through the involvement of volunteers Growing volunteer culture</p> <p>Volunteering infrastructure: Existing volunteer infrastructure of volunteer centres Influx of young people into volunteering Space for a wide variety of new organizations to start and involve volunteers</p>	<p>Weaknesses</p> <p>Volunteering infrastructure: Limited volunteer opportunities</p>
<p>Opportunities</p> <p>Volunteering infrastructure: The potential of third-party scenarios, due to an increase in the involvement of companies Further development of episodic scenarios by adding more days of service</p> <p>Volunteering infrastructure: Further development of new scenarios Broaden the perspective on volunteering to include more activities (e.g. church-based social service)</p>	<p>Threats</p> <p>Institutional factors: Pressure on civil society is leading to less freedom for civil society and more governmental control, which might suppress certain volunteer opportunities.</p> <p>Volunteering infrastructure: Current lack of diversity in terms of scenarios</p>

4.4 Spain

4.4.1 Institutional factors

Spain can be described as reflecting the corporatist regime. In line with the expectations for this regime, the nonprofit sector is mainly service-oriented (54%). The country has a large nonprofit sector, with 683 800 FTE of paid employees and 330 272 FTE of volunteers. The volunteer workforce accounts for only 5.8% of the total national employment (Salamon & Sokolowski, 2018) (data from 2014). In Spain 11.7% of all women and 9.8% of all men participate in volunteering. Participation is highest amongst people between 65–74 years of age, followed closely by the 25–64 year and the 16–24 year groups (Eurostat, 2015). The high level of participation amongst students is attributed to the fact that one hour of voluntary work per week has been embedded in the formal curriculum as part of religious education classes.⁴¹ With regard to employment, 31% of all employed people volunteer, as compared to 9% of unemployed people.⁴² In Spain, it is mostly people with higher levels of education who volunteer.

Spain's GDP amounts to EUR 25 200, with an income inequality ratio of 9.94 (data from 2019), the highest amongst the five countries included in this study. About half (49%) of all Spanish people claim to be religious, and 17% attend religious services regularly.⁴³ Volunteer-involving organizations in Spain receive 57% of their income from public sources and about 28% from private funding (Alarcón et al., 2020). Public funding is allocated by the national and local governments. As in many other countries, the economic crisis has led to a decrease in government funding, and the pursuit of private funding is creating challenges for voluntary organizations. Nonprofit organizations are exempt from income taxes for several income streams, including donations and membership fees, although VAT is charged for the services provided. Spanish citizens can also donate a percentage (0.7%) of their income taxes to a social or religious cause.

4.4.2 Volunteer energy and opportunities

According to the academic expert who was interviewed for this study, Spain has a solidarity-based (Roman Catholic) philanthropic culture, which does not generate much volunteering (gifts of time), although it does lead to higher levels of organ donations (gifts in kind) and substantial financial donations (gifts of money). The lack of volunteering can apparently be explained by a combination of perceived or actual time pressure (in Spain, working hours have been increasing in the past decade) and a lack of opportunities, instead of by any general aversion to helping others. In Spain, volunteering has been stable or growing slowly in recent years.

Most volunteers in Spain are interested in tasks related to helping the elderly, childcare and excluded groups. Most volunteering is formal, on-site instead of virtual, and regular or traditional. It is largely related to social issues and international cooperation (at least until the COVID-19 pandemic). New areas are currently emerging, including environmental volunteering, which has forcefully entered the scene, along with volunteering relating to migrants and refugees.⁴⁴

⁴¹ A good illustration of the complication of the free-will component of public perceptions of volunteering

⁴² <https://www.barcelonesjove.net/sites/default/files/filelibrary/FactsandFiguresSpainFinal.pdf> [accessed on 2021-10-10]

⁴³ <https://www.atlasofeuropeanvalues.eu/> [accessed on 2021-10-10]

⁴⁴ Academic expert and own RSM research

Variations can be observed with regard to age and gender. Motivations to volunteer range from a need to feel useful and achieve personal growth to a desire to change the world and gain personal experiences. Most volunteers in Spain find their volunteer work through particular communication channels (68%), university centres (56%), special events (44%), social media (32%) and corporate volunteering programmes (20%) (FT, 2019).

Spain has a complex administrative structure, which cascades down to a complex legal framework for volunteering (Alarcón et al., 2020). Volunteering has been on the national political agenda since the 1990s, with national-level responsibility shared by several ministries. The national and regional volunteer promotion programmes are informed by a national volunteering plan (Alarcón et al., 2020). Spain has a high unemployment rate and protective labour legislation. Outside of large, traditional volunteer organizations (e.g. Red Cross, Caritas and Manos Unidas), established outlets (e.g. hospitals, nursing homes) or corporate volunteering programmes, volunteering is likely to be regarded as cheap labour, and it is discouraged. Unlike the situation during the 2008 economic crisis, volunteering is currently not perceived as a point of entry for employment. According to the law (45/2015) on volunteering, volunteering activities must meet the following requirements: “are characterised by solidarity, are carried out by free will, without any personal or legal obligation, are carried out without payment, without prejudice to the right to reimbursement of expenses, incurred in the performance of the voluntary activity, and are developed through private or public organizations and under programmes or projects” (CEV, country report, p6).

As in some other countries, corporate volunteering is helping people to volunteering and involving people who have never volunteered before. Having everything organized makes it easier for people to participate in a wide range of volunteer activities, which are relatively similar to regular volunteering. Corporate volunteering is currently increasing amongst companies that have understood that their responsibilities as economic actors include helping society and that doing so strengthens their employee-branding propositions, thereby helping them to attract more talent. According to the Spanish network of corporate volunteering (Voluntare, n.d.), around 67% of all Spanish companies now offer corporate volunteering programmes (Voluntare, n.d.). Most of these programmes are still quite new, with about 58% having been created in the past five years (Voluntare, 2020). The majority of Spanish corporations allocate a specific budget towards their corporate volunteering programmes (on average, somewhere between EUR 50 000 and 20 000). About a quarter of all companies designate a specific number of hours that employees can spend volunteering, with most offering between 6 and 20 hours per year. Most (90%) corporations offer these programmes in order to give their employees a channel through which to participate in social activities and strengthen their HR policies. Interestingly, about 80% of all corporations allow their employees to volunteer together with their families or friends as part of their corporate volunteering programmes (Voluntare, 2020). About half of the corporate volunteering programmes in Spain offer only hands-on volunteer work, with only 7% involving only skill-based volunteering and around 40% offering both forms of volunteering.

Volunteering is also prominent in the more than 2 000 educational institutions in Spain that participate in service learning or community service programmes. In particular, universities are making a major contribution, with a total of 19 782 students participating in volunteering in the 2017/2018 academic year. These programmes are a way of introducing new people to volunteering while enhancing a sense of community (FT, 2019).

4.4.3 SWOT analysis

Although Spain has some supporting institutional factors, it lacks a strong tradition of volunteering. In addition, the volunteering infrastructure continues to be relatively weak, leading to a lack of volunteer opportunities. New volunteer opportunities are nevertheless arising due to an increase in third-party involvement and, perhaps, the spontaneous volunteering arising during the COVID-19 pandemic.

SWOT – Spain

Strengths Institutional factors: Tradition of volunteering within a corporatist regime Volunteering infrastructure: Very well-developed service learning and culture of activism in institutes of higher education	Weaknesses Institutional factors: Philanthropic culture is less focussed on giving time Volunteering infrastructure: Limited volunteer opportunities
Opportunities Institutional factors: Existing base of solidarity could be used to develop volunteering (giving time), as observed during the COVID-19 pandemic Volunteering infrastructure: Potential for third-party scenarios through the development of service learning and, perhaps, corporate volunteering Development of days of service Volunteering infrastructure: Spontaneous volunteering during the COVID-19 pandemic shows potential for volunteer energy and new profiles	Threats Institutional factors: Uncertain economic outlook Volunteering infrastructure: Current lack of diversity with regard to new scenarios

4.5 Netherlands⁴⁵

4.5.1 Institutional factors

The Netherlands has a corporatist nonprofit regime. Contrary to the expectations associated with this regime, the nonprofit sector is predominantly expressive (52%). Of the five countries addressed in this study, the Netherlands has the largest nonprofit sector, comprising a total of 847 082 FTE paid employees and 482 389 FTE volunteers, together accounting for 16.1% of the total national employment

⁴⁵ The Dutch chapter is based on the deep involvement of the research team with the two-year program 'people make The Netherlands (Mensen maken Nederland)' aimed at supporting volunteering in The Netherlands.

(data from 2014). The country is characterized by a gender-balanced high level of volunteering across all age groups, with a pronounced preference for donations to charitable organizations over engagement in long-term voluntary activities. For some time, the participation of young people has been encouraged through the introduction of compulsory social traineeships as part of the secondary school curriculum. The assumption that full-time workers are more likely to volunteer than are those who are unemployed does not hold for the Netherlands, where 42.5% of the employed population volunteers, compared to 47.6% of the unemployed (Movisie, 2012). In terms of economic development, the Netherlands has the second-highest GDP of the five countries (EUR 41 870) and the second-lowest income inequality ratio (3.94; data from 2019). It also has the lowest percentage of the population reporting adhering to a religion (44%), and the percentage of people attending religious services at least once a week is only 11%. Volunteering in the Netherlands is funded from both the national and local levels. Following a process of decentralization, most of the funds have come from the municipal budget. Funds are also provided for collective insurance for volunteers (Movisie, 2012). The country's high level of public spending has made the nonprofit sector dependent on government funding. Because of this involvement, citizens also expect the government to provide public goods and services to specific sectors (e.g. sports, recreation, culture, research and education). Since the economic crisis in 2008, the Dutch government has reduced its contributions to nonprofit organizations. As a result, nonprofit organizations that were formerly depended primarily on government subsidies are having to shift from public to private funding sources. Voluntary organizations that have earned a specific quality label pay a tax rate of 8% on donations (Movisie, 2012).

4.5.2 Volunteer energy and opportunities

The Netherlands has a long history and tradition of volunteering. The number of people volunteering is relatively stable at about 50% of the population. Interestingly, the ongoing process of secularization has not had a negative effect on the rate of volunteering. The sports sector continues to be dominant in terms of volunteering, although there has also been an increase in short-term, irregular episodic volunteering. One interesting difference can be observed with regard to of the number of hours spent volunteering. Although the rate of volunteering tends to be higher in younger age groups, they tend to volunteer for fewer hours. When older people do volunteer, they tend to do so for more hours.

According to national volunteer centre, it is difficult to judge whether traditional, high-commitment volunteering is on the decline, or whether newer forms of episodic involvement—including a successful national day of service (NLdoet) and corporate volunteering—have been added. A large percentage of the people participating in these events are already volunteering elsewhere as well. In general, however, there is a clear trend towards shorter commitment to volunteer opportunities.

Volunteer management has become highly professional in the Netherlands, with several formal educational routes in various sectors, including sports. The national and local volunteering infrastructure is well-developed, with a national umbrella organization and many local volunteer centres. The year 2020-2021 has been declared the year of *Mensen maken Nederland* (People Make the Netherlands), which is focused on attracting new people to volunteering and promoting corporate volunteering. In the Netherlands, decision-making on volunteering is decentralized, and municipalities are responsible for funding and developing policies and strategies. There is no specific national legal framework for volunteering. The Social Support Act provides a basic framework within which municipalities can

operate. Several support programmes for volunteering have been implemented at the national level, and most municipalities fund centres that promote volunteering (Movisie, 2012).

The ongoing retreat of the government from social welfare and community care has been and will continue to be exerting pressure on both formal and informal volunteering. Although it is having a major impact on the social welfare and community care of the volunteer community, the consequences for other, larger volunteer-involving sectors (e.g. sports, recreation) appear to be limited.

Corporate volunteering has become an important factor within the Dutch volunteering community. Its importance is less due to the number of hours donated than to the fact that it represents a different recruitment channel that can convince regular volunteers to do more or that can attract new volunteers. At educational institutes, the situation is different. Even after the national compulsory community service programme in secondary schools was discontinued, some schools have continued to offer it. It is no longer available at a large national scale.

4.5.3 SWOT analysis

Overall, the institutional factors for volunteering in the Netherlands are favourable, and the volunteering infrastructure is very well-developed. In addition, new volunteer scenarios (e.g. third-party involvement in the form of corporate volunteering) are developing rapidly. The decrease in the duration of the commitment of volunteers to the volunteer activities might pose a threat in the future, potentially leading to a mismatch between the available volunteers and volunteer activities of a more traditional character.

SWOT –Netherlands

<p>Strengths</p> <p>Institutional factors: Well-established culture of volunteerism</p> <p>Volunteering infrastructure: Clear developed volunteer infrastructure, with many local volunteer centres and strong umbrella organizations</p>	<p>Weaknesses</p> <p>Volunteering infrastructure: Slow adaptation of some volunteer organizations to new scenarios and profiles</p> <p>Limited inclusion in volunteering</p>
<p>Opportunities</p> <p>Volunteering infrastructure: Growth of new volunteering profiles and development of new scenarios</p>	<p>Threats</p> <p>Volunteering infrastructure: Growing mismatch between new volunteer profiles and traditional volunteering opportunities (scenarios) that is creating issues for traditional organizations</p>

4.6 Comparison of country-specific SWOT analyses

The analyses of the five countries reveal an interesting paradox. The well-developed volunteering infrastructure and abundance of volunteering opportunities in the Netherlands and Finland have led to ongoing complaints about a lack of volunteers on the part of volunteer-involving organizations. The less-developed volunteering infrastructure and lack of opportunities (or at least well-organized opportunities) in Spain, Hungary and Croatia have translated into almost a sense of contentment with the number of volunteers. For the future, such a lack of volunteering opportunities poses an ongoing threat and weakness with regard to the growth of volunteering in many Southern and Eastern European countries. Although the complaints about the lack of volunteers do not have much impact on the rate of volunteering in the Netherlands and Finland, they set the stage for negative stories in public media. On the other hand, the ongoing complains could potentially redirect the available volunteer energy into new organizations and forms that are less likely to complain and are more positive about the offered volunteer energy.

On a positive note, in four of the five countries investigated (except Finland), both a strength and opportunity can be found in the emerging involvement of third parties as new sources of volunteer energy. Many countries, including in Eastern Europe, are currently familiar with days of service, community service in secondary school, service learning in universities, and corporate volunteering. This also indicates that younger people are entering the volunteering communities, both in countries that have traditionally had high rates of volunteering (e.g. the Netherlands), as well as in those with less of a tradition or culture of volunteering (e.g. Croatia and Hungary). It also seems to hint at the influence of globalization in for example the corporate social responsibility movement but also the influence of popular media.

Similar developments can be observed with regard to volunteer infrastructure and opportunities. In this case as well, the most promising interventions have to do with the growing involvement of third-party and spontaneous volunteering. Third-party involvement can lead either to the autonomous creation of volunteer opportunities (as observed in multinational CSR programmes) or to an increase in the pressure to create volunteer opportunities (as observed in service learning and community service). Even in the case of mandatory community service, volunteer centres are involved in organizing the activities. Spontaneous volunteering is linked to the growth of technical possibilities for self-organization. As revealed by recent crises (e.g. earthquakes, the arrival of refugees, the COVID-19 pandemic), in many countries, people will start to spontaneously self-organize or join organizations to address urgent issues.

5. Conclusion and recommendations

The European volunteering landscape is diverse with regard to rates of volunteering, who is involved and the form and level of concrete activities. The results of this study offer two explanations. First, the context of institutional factors (Section 2) influences the general level of volunteer energy: the actual willingness, availability and capability of people to volunteer. Although there is no evidence that the spirit of volunteerism is not universal, an abundance of evidence indicates that these macro-level factors do indeed influence the level of volunteering. Important factors include nonprofit regimes (Salamon & Sokolowski, 2001), discourses on the role of volunteering (Hilger, 2005), income equality (Damian, 2018) and type of religion (Wiepking and Handy, 2015). Second, with regard to the volunteering infrastructure, the most important elements are as follows: 1) volunteer profiles (regular, voluntary third party, mandatory third party and spontaneous); 2) volunteer scenarios that form a successful combination of willingness, availability, capability and the actual volunteer activity for each profile; and, 3) most importantly for the purposes of this study, the emerging involvement of third parties (e.g. corporations, educational institutes and days of service) and spontaneous volunteering. The state of the volunteering infrastructure also differs across European countries. The empirical findings in the five countries support the theoretical framework.

Although the relationship between institutional factors (volunteer energy) and volunteering infrastructure (volunteer opportunities that lead to concrete volunteer activities) is bi-directional, the differences in actual volunteering rates can apparently be better explained by the relative abundance or lack of volunteering opportunities than by the relative abundance or lack of volunteer energy. With the possible exception of the older generations in Hungary and Croatia, volunteer energy seems to be available in most countries, as demonstrated by the eruptions of spontaneous volunteering at the start of the COVID-19 pandemic. Nevertheless, even the older generations in Hungary and Croatia do help each other (demonstrate solidarity), without calling it volunteering. The pandemic has also revealed that spontaneous volunteering is difficult to maintain for a longer period of time. In addition, the COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted the vulnerability of existing volunteer-involving structures (e.g. sports associations, museums). Although it is difficult to predict what is going to happen in the post-pandemic period, the rates of traditional volunteering for 2020 and 2021 will likely be lower in almost all countries. At the same time, there is no reason to expect volunteering not to bounce back.

The most important conclusion of this research is that a new volunteering infrastructure is being developed throughout Europe, based on two components: third-party involvement and spontaneous volunteering. The first component (see Haski-Leventhal et al., 2010; Brudney et al., 2019) refers to the involvement of various intermediaries, including companies (corporate volunteering), educational institutes (service learning, community service), the government (welfare volunteering) (De Waele & Hustinx, 2019) or specific intermediaries (volunteer centres, Bos, 2014). More thematic third parties can be observed as well, combining activities. Examples include dating in single volunteering, family quality time in family volunteering and ‘voluntourism’, which combines volunteering and vacation experiences. One especially important form refers to the local, national and even international days of service that are becoming well-known throughout Europe. Third-party models always involve two organizations—a sender and a receiver—that share the offering of an opportunity and guidance of volunteers. The sender organizes volunteer energy and helps to seek volunteer opportunities, while the receiver offers volunteering activities for this volunteer energy. Recent research has highlighted the potential importance of these models for increasing inclusion in volunteering (van Overbeeke et al., 2021b).

The second component of the new volunteering infrastructure, spontaneous volunteering, tends to be associated with crises (e.g. earthquakes, the arrival of refugees or even the COVID-19 pandemic). Examples of spontaneous volunteering can be observed throughout Europe, thereby providing evidence of the general willingness of people to help humankind. The greatest challenge associated with crisis-driven spontaneous volunteering has to do with the amount of time that people can offer and whether they will maintain their volunteering. The pandemic once again provides a good example: after some time, the energy starts to wane, and some or most volunteering will stop. On the other hand, social media and internet-based forms of spontaneous volunteering (which are more likely to be based on campaigns) tend to involve activities that people can do and are doing for a longer time.

A second conclusion of this study is that the institutional factors that influence volunteer energy are difficult to influence and change. It will thus not be easy to change the current wide variations in volunteer rates in Europe. In some cases, they might even increase. In short, the political outlook for volunteering energy is not favourable in all countries, as some regimes are pushing back on the rights of civil society. The economic outlook is unclear, due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Some countries might have only had an extremely rough year, while others might be facing prolonged economic setbacks that prevent societies from developing more volunteering opportunities. An optimistic perspective seems to be that although religion is an important explanation for volunteering, a steep decline in formal religion does not automatically lead to a decline in volunteering (see The Netherlands).

In terms of policy (by governments or other third parties), the general advice is to not invest in developing a general culture of volunteering, given the difficulty of changing national-level institutional factors. It would be wiser to invest in the development of more third-party involvement and the creation of more examples of spontaneous, individual volunteering. Likewise, it would be better to help volunteer organizations to investigate what volunteers are willing to give in terms of availability and capability, in order to create effective marketing activities. The goal is to make recruitable, winning volunteer scenarios that are based on the preferences of potential volunteers, and not of organizations.

Appendix: Research team, interview guide and data collection

Research team

Prof. Dr. Lucas Meijs (1963) is a professor of Strategic Philanthropy and volunteering at the Rotterdam School of Management, Erasmus University in the Netherlands. His research focuses on volunteer/nonprofit management, third-party involvement and cross-sector relations, as observed in corporate community involvement and co-production, as well as in involved learning/service learning. He has published in a variety of nonprofit, business and public policy journals, including the *Journal of Business Ethics*, *Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Quarterly*, *Voluntas* and *Youth & Society*. For six years, he served as the first non-North American editor of *Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Quarterly*, the premier journal in the field. In addition to being a board member of several Dutch nonprofit organizations, he has on the Dutch Council on Social Issues, the official advisory body to the Dutch Government and in the Dutch national task force on volunteering policy. He is currently chairing the ZonMw committee for the selection of projects for the Social Year (*Maatschappelijke DienstTijd*, or MDT) projects, in addition to being involved in the Dutch Year of Volunteer 2021. Over the years, he has been involved in many externally funded projects, including two EU-funded projects on service learning.

Puck Hendriks holds a Master of Science degree in political science. She is a lecturer and PhD candidate in Corporate Philanthropy at the Rotterdam School of Management, Erasmus University in the Netherlands. She was previously the manager of a corporate foundation.

Interview guide

Semi-structured interviews were conducted, using the following:

1. What is your relationship to the volunteer community in your country?
2. How has the landscape of volunteering changed in your country, compared to 10 years ago?
 - a. What is the general trend?
 - b. Are there more or fewer people who want to volunteer?
 - c. Are there more or fewer opportunities for people to volunteer?
 - d. Are there more or fewer actual volunteers?
3. Have there been any changes in age, gender, educational attainment and employment status of volunteers?
 - a. Are younger people attracted to volunteering? How?
4. Have there been any changes in volunteering activities in terms of type (formal vs. informal), mode (onsite vs. online), intensity (episodic vs. regular) and sector (e.g. sport, healthcare, social services)?
5. Which factors are driving the changes that have been observed?
 - a. Do you observe involvement of companies?
 - b. Do you observe involvement of schools?
 - c. Do you observe any pressure for people to volunteer?
6. Have any wider social patterns and challenges influenced the volunteering scene (e.g. climate emergencies, humanitarian crises, migration, changes in the nature of work, political change)?

7. What do you have to say with regard to mismatches in volunteering?
 - a. Are there many people who are unable to find opportunities to volunteer? If so, who are they?
 - b. Are there many opportunities that are unable find volunteers? If so, what are they?
8. What type of volunteering practices do national policies in your country promote?
9. How do you see the future of volunteering in your country?

Data collection

The following data collection activities were performed

Data collection activities

	Volunteer expert	Academic expert	Third source	European Volunteer Centre (CEV) country report
Croatia:		Academic expert, University of Zagreb (service-learning) (short interview)	Long research paper from a student (University of Zagreb), at the request of a local academic expert	Volunteering infrastructure 2018
Hungary	CEO of Volunteering Hungary		CEO of local volunteer organization, president Rotary club (e-mail interview) Hungarian Organizer of the corporate volunteering programme for a multinational insurance company	Volunteering infrastructure 2020
Spain		Academic expert, University da Coruña (nonprofit management, philanthropy, CSR)	Paper by Spanish speaking Dutch volunteer expert, Erasmus University Rotterdam Spanish organizer of the corporate volunteering programme for a	Volunteering infrastructure 2020

			multinational insurance company	
Finland		Professor, University of Helsinki (general volunteering expert)		Volunteering infrastructure 2018
Netherlands	Monthly conversations with leading national body on volunteering as part of the Annual year of Volunteering in the Netherlands (Mensen maken Nederland)	The research team can be regarded as the academic experts For the past year, involved in 10 webinars on the future of volunteering and the effect of the COVID-19 pandemic		Volunteering infrastructure 2012

General experts

Fedde Boersma, Director of Scouting Netherlands, representing Scouting NL internationally. Expert on involving youth and on associational differences in Europe

Lonneke Roza, PhD, community investment manager, Nationale-Nederlanden (NN Group), world-renowned expert on corporate volunteering.

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