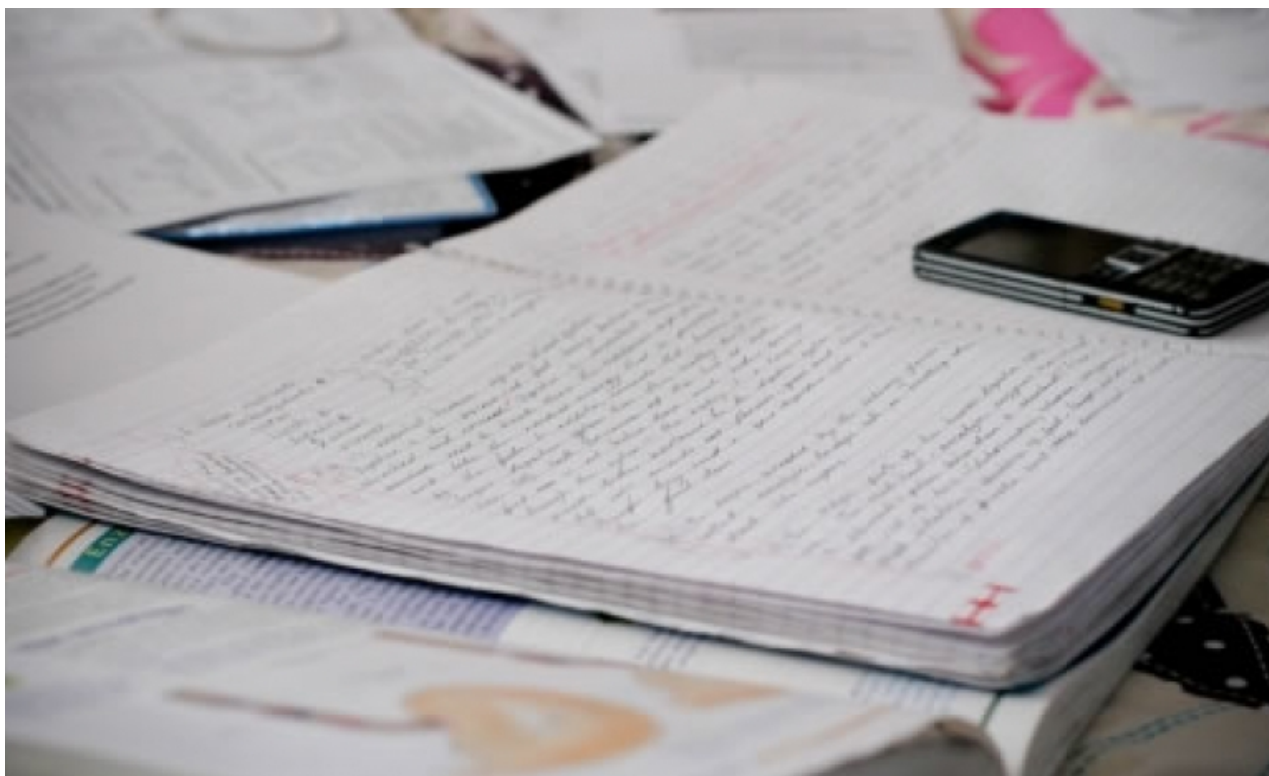# Volunteering policy in Europe

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Volunteering supports social inclusion, solidarity, tolerance and needs to be better recognised as such by policymakers.

Gabriella Civico

Submitted by F Pere Tarrés on Fri, 03/11/2016 - 11:58
Description:
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Volunteering supports social inclusion, solidarity, underpins active citizenship and social engagement, promotes shared responsibilities & European values. Volunteering contributes to the European Social model, to security, peace and prosperity. It provides a framework for an alternative narrative to extremist and populist views and actions, and at the same time can contribute to its prevention. Volunteering actively prevents Hate Speech, promotes inclusion and tolerance, and enables citizens to be directly active in developing the Europe they strive for. CEV's mission and daily activities involve connecting individual and collective volunteer efforts to the European context, and local & national volunteering strategies with relevant European policy frameworks. Currently there are three significant policy frameworks for volunteering in Europe.

The roadmap towards the implementation of the **2012 Council Recommendation on Validation of Non-Formal and Informal Learning** (NFIL) expires in 2018. Volunteering is an important component of NFIL and needs to be better recognised as such by policymakers. Volunteer organisations and their infrastructure networks also need to become more significant actors in the implementation and policy process in order that volunteers can better benefit from the new opportunities for validation of competencies and learning outcomes if they so wish.

Another large areas of **focus for European volunteering policy is Sports**. Sport is the field that attracts a high number of volunteers in Europe although the amount varies from country to country. Financial support for sport has been available since 2014 as part of Erasmus+ programme for education, training, youth and sport (2014-2020). A specific objectives in the field of sport is to: "Promote voluntary activities in sport, together with social inclusion, equal opportunities and awareness of the importance of health-enhancing physical activity, through increased participation in, and equal access to sport for all".

The development of the **European Solidarity Corps (ESC)** is an additional significant area of work and will be an opportunity to adapt European Voluntary Service (EVS) so that it can re-focus on solidarity and volunteering activities that are needs-led for the community or the beneficiaries of the action, rather than centred on the needs and interests of the volunteers themselves. Whilst learning and personal growth can be an important added value for volunteers, it should not be the main driving force and motivation for their effort.

2018 will be watershed year for volunteering in Europe. There will be more policy attention and resources placed on volunteering than ever before. It will also be the year when future priorities for the different EU programmes currently dealing with volunteering such as the Europe for Citizens programme, Erasmus Plus, ECS, Civil rights, justice and environmental programmes will be decided for post 2020. CEV, together with members and other stakeholders, will continue to pursue a coordinated policy approach leading to an enabling environment for volunteering in Europe and ensure that volunteering remains included and even strengthened as a priority aspect in all these programmes.

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