

VOLUNTEERING: WHAT'S IN IT FOR ME?



European Union

The importance and benefits of volunteering have long been acknowledged in the EU. Volunteering activities contribute to strengthening some of the fundamental European values, such as solidarity and connecting with your community. It helps individuals to play a significant role in creating a more democratic, caring and responsible society.

2011 the year of volunteering

Give your CV a boost • Meet new people
Become a team player • Do something for yourself!



In order to draw public attention to volunteering as well as to encourage more people to become volunteers and recognise the value of their work the EU has designated this year as the "European Year of Volunteering." In the European Union, almost 100 million citizens of all ages make a positive contribution through an active involvement in volunteering activities in a wide range of organisations including civil society organisations, youth clubs, hospitals, schools, sport clubs and many others.

Objectives of the European Year of Volunteering:

The EU will use the European Year of Volunteering to work towards four main objectives:

1. To create an enabling and facilitating environment for volunteering in the EU;
2. To empower volunteer organisations and improve the quality of volunteering;
3. To reward and recognise volunteering activities; and
4. To raise awareness of the value and importance of volunteering.

The European Commission expects that the European Year of Volunteering will contribute to an increase in volunteering and to greater awareness of its added value, and that it will highlight the link between voluntary engagement at local level and its significance in the wider European context.

Under the European Year of Volunteering, there are many activities planned including events, competitions, publications and other communication and awareness-raising measures.

To find out more visit: www.europa.eu/volunteering

European Voluntary Service (EVS) is a European Commission initiative that allows a young person (aged between 18 and 30) to become a volunteer in another country for a specified period, normally between two and 12 months. The service activities can be, for example, in the field of environment, arts and culture, activities with children, young people or the

elderly, heritage or sports and leisure activities. Each project has three partners, a volunteer, a sending organisation and a host organisation. The project has to take place in a country other than where the volunteer lives, is non-profit-making and unpaid and lasts for a limited period (a maximum of 12 months). An EVS project involves a triangular partnership: a volunteer, a sending organisation and a host organisation. One of the countries involved in a project must be an EU Member State or an accession country.

European Volunteering Service (EVS) in Serbia

Organisations that are based outside of the EU and are interested in sending volunteers to EU countries, hosting EVS volunteers, or coordinating an EVS project need to be accredited first. In Serbia, the currently accredited organisations are based in Belgrade, Kikinda, Kragujevac, Krusevac, Leskovac, Novi Sad, Obrenovac, Sid, Subotica, Velika Plana. You can find a full list of them at the following link:

http://ec.europa.eu/youth/evs/aod/hei_list_from_query.cfm



Jelena Oprčić
Volunteer at European Movement in Serbia

"It feels great!
You can meet some great new people, gain experience, but also to do something good and useful for others"



The impact of volunteering

Volunteering contributes substantially to the development of our society, the economy and individuals in the EU.

Economy - it is estimated that volunteering contributes in the range of 0.5% to 3% of the GDP of EU Member States.

Social inclusion and employment – many voluntary activities and services involve the promotion of social cohesion, as well as social inclusion and integration. It enhances social solidarity and quality of life in general.

Education and training – volunteering can provide individuals with an opportunity to learn new skills and gain the experience needed to integrate into the labour market.

Active citizenship – volunteering leads to the direct involvement of citizens in local development, and therefore plays an important role in the fostering of civil society and democracy.

Sport – voluntary activities and services in the field of sport have a significant impact on the lives and well-being of local people, as well as on the local environment.

Types of voluntary activities

In over half of the EU countries most volunteers are active in the field of sport, exercise and outdoor activities. Health and social care, recreation and leisure, and training and research are also popular areas. Many volunteers work for charity organisations, cultural organisations and educational organisations.

Why volunteer?

Volunteering can help you get a job, change your career or just simply be a way of giving something back to an organisation that you've benefitted from. You can gain new skills, knowledge and experience and a qualification in the process. This is a great way to get a reference, new work experiences and to fill gaps in your work life.

Volunteering can simply have big benefits to your personal life. You can meet people from different cultures and backgrounds and make new friends with like-minded people. Learning new skills and meeting new people can really increase your confidence. You can feel valued as part of a team and in your local community whilst you make a difference to the lives of others.

Volunteering in Serbia

Who can be a volunteer in Serbia

The Serbian Parliament voted for a law about volunteering on 26 May 2010, introducing the opportunity for organized voluntary work and services of common benefit. It recognizes the public and national interest in volunteering. This opened up several opportunities for volunteering in government and non-government organisations (NGOs) during the year. According to this law, those who are older than 18 can volunteer and those aged between 15 and 18 can volunteer as long as they have written permission from their parents.

How can I become a volunteer in Serbia?

Volunteering has always been popular in Serbia. Today, many NGOs run projects that involve volunteers and more and more young people are involved. You can contact some of them:

EU funded project - Youth in Action: www.mladiuakciji.rs

This is the website of two officially accredited Contact Points for the Youth in Action programme in Serbia, NGO Group "Let's..." (Grupa "Hajde da...") from Belgrade and NGO Educational Centre Krusevac, from Krusevac. The website promotes the Programme and provides information and advice to applicants and beneficiaries.

Olympic Committee of Serbia: www.oks.org.rs

The Olympic Committee of Serbia offers volunteer opportunities on the occasion of sport events and the openings are published on their website during the year.

Young Researchers: www.mis.org.rs

Young Researchers of Serbia is a non-profit organization that provides volunteering opportunities to young people relating to the environment. Their volunteer placements aim to solve problems in the local community and to establish a better understanding among communities and create friendship and peace.

Belgrade Greeters: www.BelgradeGreeters.rs

Belgrade Greeters offer volunteering opportunities to a range of people who are passionate about Belgrade; who can show visitors what life is really like in Belgrade; introduce them to cultural highlights and make them feel at ease in the city.

Volunteers of Belgrade: <http://www.volonteribeograda.rs>

This organisation offers a 'matching' service, linking those who want to volunteer to existing opportunities in Belgrade in areas such as education, the environment and tourism.

Volunteers of Serbia: <http://www.volonterisrbije.rs>

This organisation aims to develop and promote volunteering and its value through engaging young people to volunteer in sport activities.



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