

Procedure file

Basic information		
CNS - Consultation procedure Decision	2009/0072(CNS)	Procedure completed
European Year of Volunteering 2011		
Subject		
4 Economic, social and territorial cohesion		
4.10.16 Social and community life, associations, foundations		
4.45.02 Cultural programmes and actions, assistance		

Key players			
European Parliament	Committee responsible	Rapporteur	Appointed
	CULT Culture and Education		05/10/2009
		PPE SCURRIA Marco	
	Former committee responsible		
	CULT Culture and Education		
	Committee for opinion	Rapporteur for opinion	Appointed
	BUDG Budgets		21/10/2009
		PPE MATERA Barbara	
	LIBE Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs	The committee decided not to give an opinion.	
	REGI Regional Development		02/09/2009
	Vers/ALE DELLI Karima		
EMPL Employment and Social Affairs		21/07/2009	
	ALDE HARKIN Marian		
Former committee for opinion			
BUDG Budgets			
LIBE Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs			
REGI Regional Development			
Council of the European Union	Council configuration	Meeting	Date
	Education, Youth, Culture and Sport	2978	27/11/2009
European Commission	Commission DG	Commissioner	
	Education, Youth, Sport and Culture	FIGEL' Ján	

Key events			
02/06/2009	Legislative proposal published	COM(2009)0254	Summary
	Committee referral announced in		

14/07/2009	Parliament		
23/11/2009	Vote in committee		Summary
24/11/2009	Committee report tabled for plenary, 1st reading/single reading	A7-0077/2009	
26/11/2009	Results of vote in Parliament		
26/11/2009	Decision by Parliament	T7-0094/2009	Summary
27/11/2009	Act adopted by Council after consultation of Parliament		
27/11/2009	End of procedure in Parliament		
22/01/2010	Final act published in Official Journal		

Technical information

Procedure reference	2009/0072(CNS)
Procedure type	CNS - Consultation procedure
Procedure subtype	Legislation
Legislative instrument	Decision
Legal basis	Treaty on the Functioning of the EU TFEU 352-p1sub2
Other legal basis	Rules of Procedure EP 159
Stage reached in procedure	Procedure completed
Committee dossier	CULT/7/00317

Documentation gateway

Legislative proposal		COM(2009)0254	03/06/2009	EC	Summary
Document attached to the procedure		SEC(2009)0725	03/06/2009	EC	Summary
Committee draft report		PE430.366	22/10/2009	EP	
Economic and Social Committee: opinion, report		CES1716/2009	04/11/2009	ESC	
Committee opinion	REGI	PE430.326	05/11/2009	EP	
Committee opinion	EMPL	PE430.438	05/11/2009	EP	
Amendments tabled in committee		PE430.665	13/11/2009	EP	
Committee opinion	BUDG	PE430.546	17/11/2009	EP	
Committee report tabled for plenary, 1st reading/single reading		A7-0077/2009	24/11/2009	EP	
Text adopted by Parliament, 1st reading/single reading		T7-0094/2009	26/11/2009	EP	Summary
Committee of the Regions: opinion		CDR0273/2009	10/02/2010	CofR	
Commission response to text adopted in plenary		SP(2010)484	23/02/2010	EC	
Follow-up document		COM(2012)0781	19/12/2012	EC	Summary

Additional information	
National parliaments	IPEX
European Commission	EUR-Lex
Final act	
Decision 2010/37 OJ L 017 22.01.2010, p. 0043 Summary	

European Year of Volunteering 2011

PURPOSE: to designate the year 2011 as the 'European Year of Volunteering'.

PROPOSED ACT: Council Decision.

BACKGROUND: volunteering is a core expression of civic participation and democracy, putting European values such as solidarity and non-discrimination into action and contributing to the harmonious development of our societies.

However, volunteering is far from having fulfilled its potential. Although 3 out of 10 Europeans actively volunteer, close to 8 out of 10 consider helping others an important part of their life. The gap between actual and potential volunteers is even more significant among young people: although only 16% of young Europeans are engaged in voluntary activities, almost 3 in 4 are in favour of making more programmes encouraging voluntary work available.

Big differences between countries prove both the need for and the potential of mutual learning. Real potential can also be unlocked by increasing the mobility of volunteers in the European Union. Appropriate incentives must be devised for individuals and companies. The right balance should be struck between achieving a higher degree of professionalism and preserving the freedom and flexibility that are such valued characteristics of the sector.

In all Member States there are also real barriers to realising the potential positive impact of volunteering, such as the lack of awareness, information and support systems (training etc.), discouraging legal provisions, limited international exchange schemes and the absence of a legal status.

The European Year of Volunteering 2011 aims to overcome those barriers.

CONTENT: this proposal designates 2011 as the 'European Year of Volunteering'. In line with the EU's renewed social agenda, the overall purpose of the European Year will be to encourage and support - notably through exchanging experience and good practices - the efforts made by Member States, local and regional authorities and civil society to create the conditions conducive to volunteering in the EU.

Four objectives are proposed:

- (1) Work towards an enabling environment for volunteering in the EU - to anchor volunteering as part of promoting civic participation and people-to-people activities in an EU context;
- (2) Empower volunteer organisations and improve the quality of volunteering ? to facilitate volunteering and to encourage networking, mobility, cooperation and synergies between volunteer organisations and other sectors in an EU context;
- (3) Reward and recognise volunteering activities - to encourage appropriate incentives for individuals, companies and volunteer-development organisations and gain more systematic recognition for volunteering by policy makers, civil society organisations and employers for skills and competences developed through volunteering.
- (4) Raise awareness about the value and importance of volunteering - to raise general awareness of the importance of volunteering as an expression of civic participation and an example of people-to-people activity which contributes to issues which are of common concern of all Member States, such as a harmonious societal development and economic cohesion.

The measures to be taken to achieve the objectives include the following initiatives organised at Community, national, regional or local level, such as: (i) exchange of experience and good practices; (ii) dissemination of results of related studies and research; (iii) conferences, events and initiatives to promote debate and raise awareness of the importance and value of volunteering and to celebrate the efforts of volunteers; (iv) information and promotion campaigns to disseminate key messages. Details of the initiatives, which are eligible for Community funding, are set out in the Annex to the proposal.

The proposal also contains provisions in order to strengthen international cooperation with other relevant international bodies (Council of Europe and United Nations) and to ensure that the measures provided for are consistent with other Community, national and regional schemes and initiatives.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS: the budget for the 2011 European Year will be EUR 6 million. In addition, the Commission has proposed allocating EUR 2 million under the preliminary draft budget for the year 2010 to carry out preparatory work.

European Year of Volunteering 2011

This Commission Staff Working Paper proposes an ex ante evaluation of the future European Year of Volunteering to be implemented in 2011.

In particular, the document focuses on the main objectives to be reached and the challenges to be met in order to improve volunteering in

Europe.

Moreover, it defines the target group of the future initiative as well as a plan of actions to be undertaken, including details of the financial implications for the Community budget.

European Year of Volunteering 2011

The Committee on Culture and Education adopted the report drawn up by Marco SCURRIA (EPP, IT), approving unanimously, under the consultation procedure, the proposal for a Council decision on the European Year of Volunteering (2011).

The main amendments are as follows:

Designation of the Year: Members consider that, as it stands, the Commission's proposal does not sufficiently stress the need to highlight to the public the importance of volunteering for European society. In the same vein, they consider that it is vital to give greater emphasis to the objective of making volunteering activities more attractive to citizens. This is why they have amended the title of the Year so that it now becomes **'European Year of Voluntary Activities promoting active citizenship'**.

Legal base: MEPs stress the fact that volunteering is inextricably linked with the notion of citizenship. In their view, the Treaty establishes a Union citizenship that complements national citizenship of the Member States and which is a vital element for strengthening and safeguarding the European integration process. This is why they insist on the need to reconcile the proposal with the competences devolved to the Union by the Treaties. The report indicates that the Parliament's Legal Service stressed the need to better explain the choice of using Article 308 as the legal base, as is the case of this proposal.

Objectives of the Year: Members have added important details to the Year's objectives. In addition to the exchange of experience and good practices, the Year should also support innovative approaches and create, in civil society, the conditions conducive to volunteering in the Union, as well as raising the profile of volunteering activities in the Union. Members stress, in particular, the fact that volunteering is an essential element in fostering active citizenship, nurturing civil society and strengthening solidarity.

The other main objectives of the Year may be summarised as follows: i) highlight the vital concept of partnership, with a view to ongoing cooperation between administrations at all levels and volunteer organizations; ii) promote volunteering and volunteer organisations' access to adequate, sustainable funding; iii) encourage initiatives in urgent humanitarian and/or environmental situations; iv) provide for proper health and safety cover for volunteers in the form of accident and personal liability insurance during periods of voluntary work; v) facilitate the validation of experience acquired by volunteers and the recognition of equivalence for the purposes of training and job seeking; vi) encourage international and European solidarity by promoting peace, North-South cooperation and protection of the environment through volunteering; vii) promote good practices and their disseminations throughout the Union.

According to MEPs, the Year should also be the occasion to encourage Member States to create legal certainty for volunteers as regards their legal status. They also insist that European volunteering should contribute to the harmonious development of European societies, promoting social inclusion, combating racism and contributing to intercultural and interreligious dialogue. This is the reason why they ask that volunteering activities should be open to asylum seekers.

On the other hand, they stress that volunteering should be used neither as a means of meeting basic needs normally met by social services nor as a substitute for action by the public authorities.

Actions to be undertaken: in addition to the amendments to the Year's objectives, a number of amendments were made to the actions to be undertaken. These include: i) the creation of efficient systems of cooperation and networking between volunteer organisations; ii) improved dialogue and raising of awareness of the importance and value of volunteering; iii) the creation of a European portal on volunteering; iv) the establishment of a European online database of the actors, organisations and stakeholders involved in a given volunteering area; v) the promotion of the use of volunteer time as matching funding for European projects. Members also underline the important role played by vocational training in voluntary activities. This has a vital role to play in the personal growth and well-being of individuals, bringing an added value to the society.

Role of the national coordinating body: Members consider that each Member States should ensure that the national coordinating body properly involves a wide range of stakeholders at national, regional and local level, particularly when drafting the national work programme and national measure(s), for the entire duration of the European Year. The funds foreseen to fulfil the objectives of the Year shall be granted to civil society organisations involved directly with voluntary activities and work. In this regard, they insist that special attention must be paid in each national programme to the simplification of administrative procedures.

Budget: MEPs consider that the budget for the Year is inadequate to attain its objectives. The amount proposed by the Commission was EUR 6 million. Instead, they call for a budget of EUR 10 million, stressing, however, that the change in the allocation should not undermine the funding of other programmes or activities in heading 3b of the current financial framework.

Contributions in kind: co-funding of national actions may amount to a maximum of 80% of total costs, according to the Financial Regulation. However, Members propose that the possibility of in kind calculation should be given to beneficiary organisations in the Member States where the legislative framework allows in order to help them to obtain the grants.

Cooperation with other organisations: in addition to cooperation with the international organisations concerned (United Nations, Council of Europe), MEPs also suggest that there should be cooperation with other international organisations so as to promote programmes for international volunteering aiming to encourage the exchange of best practices on volunteering in third countries.

It should be noted that the annex to the proposal has also been amended in line with the amendments to the main body of the proposal. A series of measures was also added to clarify the activities that are eligible for co-funding in the Member States.

European Year of Volunteering 2011

The European Parliament adopted by 551 votes to 19, with 10 abstentions, a legislative resolution amending, under the consultation

procedure, the proposal for a Council decision on the European Year of Volunteering (2011).

The main amendments are as follows:

Designation of the Year: Parliament considers that the Commission's proposal does not sufficiently stress the need to highlight to the public the importance of volunteering for European society. In the same vein, they consider that it is vital to give greater emphasis to the objective of making volunteering activities more attractive to citizens. This is why it has amended the title of the Year so that it now becomes '**European Year of Voluntary Activities promoting active citizenship**'.

Reconciliation the proposal with the Treaty in regard to citizenship: Parliament insists on the fact that volunteering is inextricably linked with the notion of citizenship. The Treaty establishes a Union citizenship that complements national citizenship of the Member States and which is a vital element for strengthening and safeguarding the European integration process. This is why Parliament stresses the need to reconcile the proposal with the competences devolved to the Union by the Treaties.

Objectives of the Year: Parliament has amended substantially the Year's objectives. Besides the exchange of experience and good practices, the Year should also support innovative approaches and create, in civil society, the conditions conducive to volunteering in the Union, as well as raising the profile of volunteering activities in the Union. Members stress, in particular, the fact that volunteering is an essential element in fostering active citizenship, nurturing civil society and strengthening solidarity.

The other main objectives of the Year may be summarised as follows: i) highlight the vital concept of partnership, with a view to ongoing cooperation between administrations at all levels and volunteer organizations; ii) promote volunteering and volunteer organisations' access to adequate, sustainable funding; iii) encourage initiatives in urgent humanitarian and/or environmental situations; iv) provide for proper health and safety cover for volunteers in the form of accident and personal liability insurance during periods of voluntary work; v) encourage international and European solidarity by promoting peace, North-South cooperation, protection of the environment and the social economy through volunteering; vi) promote good practices and their disseminations throughout the Union.

Parliament also emphasises the following points:

- opening of actions to asylum seekers: the Year should also be the occasion to encourage Member States to create legal certainty for volunteers as regards their legal status. Parliament also insists that European volunteering should contribute to the harmonious development of European societies, promoting social inclusion, combating racism and contributing to intercultural and interreligious dialogue. This is the reason why it calls for volunteering activities to be open to asylum seekers, refugees and legally resident immigrants, in particular because they are not eligible for employment. This would help combat discrimination in their regard;
- recognition of the experience acquired by volunteers: Parliament underlines the importance of the role played by vocational training in volunteering activities. It stresses, in particular, the need to ensure the recognition of volunteering as an appropriate activity through which to acquire competences and skills, (e.g. through YOUTHPASS with a linkage to EUROPASS);
- volunteering should be used neither as a means of meeting basic needs normally met by social services nor as a substitute for action by the public authorities.

Actions to be undertaken: in addition to the amendments to the Year's objectives, a number of amendments were made to the actions to be undertaken. These include: i) the creation of efficient systems of cooperation and networking between volunteer organisations; ii) improved dialogue and raising of awareness of the importance and value of volunteering; iii) the creation of a European portal on volunteering; iv) the establishment of a European online database of the actors, organisations and stakeholders involved in a given volunteering area; v) the promotion of the use of volunteer time as matching funding for European projects. Parliament also underlines the important role played by vocational training in voluntary activities. This has a vital role to play in the personal growth and well-being of individuals, bringing an added value to the society.

Role of the national coordinating body: Parliament considers that each Member States should ensure that the national coordinating body properly involves a wide range of stakeholders at national, regional and local level (particularly small associations of limited means), particularly when drafting the national work programme and national measure(s), for the entire duration of the European Year. The funds foreseen to fulfil the objectives of the Year shall be granted to civil society organisations involved directly with voluntary activities and work. In this regard, it insists that special attention must be paid in each national programme to the simplification of administrative procedures.

Budget: Parliament considers that the budget for the Year is inadequate to attain its objectives. The amount proposed by the Commission was EUR 6 million. Instead, Parliament calls for a budget of EUR 10 million for the period 1 January 2011 to 31 December 2011, stressing, however, that the change in the allocation should not undermine the funding of other programmes or activities in heading 3b of the current financial framework.

Contributions in kind: co-funding of national actions may amount to a maximum of 80% of total costs, according to the Financial Regulation. However, Parliament proposes the possibility of in kind contributions, where this is possible, in order to recognise the value of the work of volunteers and to facilitate voluntary organisations in carrying out their activities.

Cooperation with other organisations: in addition to cooperation with the international organisations concerned (United Nations, Council of Europe), Parliament also suggests that there should be cooperation with other international organisations so as to promote programmes for international volunteering aiming to encourage the exchange of best practices on volunteering in third countries.

It should be noted that the annex to the proposal has also been amended in line with the amendments to the main body of the proposal. A series of measures was also added to clarify the activities that are eligible for co-funding in the Member States.

European Year of Volunteering 2011

PURPOSE: to designate 2011 as the European Year of Voluntary activities.

LEGISLATIVE ACT: Council Decision 2010/37/EC on the European Year of Voluntary Activities Promoting Active Citizenship (2011).

CONTENT: this Decision designates the year 2011 as the European Year of Voluntary Activities Promoting Active Citizenship. The overall purpose of the European Year is to encourage and support - notably through the exchange of experience and good practices - the efforts of the Community, the Member States, local and regional authorities to create the conditions for civil society conducive to volunteering in the EU

and to increase the visibility of voluntary activities in the EU.

The objectives of the European Year are as follows:

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

Actions and initiatives to which the Community may make financial contribution: the measures to be taken to achieve these objectives may include the following initiatives organised at Community, national, regional or local level linked to the objectives of the European Year: (a) exchange of experience and good practices; (b) undertaking of studies and research as well as dissemination of their results; (c) conferences and events to promote debate and raise awareness of the importance and value of voluntary activities stimulating the engagement of citizens and to celebrate the efforts of volunteers and their organisations; (d) concrete initiatives in the Member States aimed at promoting the objectives of the European Year (at least 25% of the total budget of the year will be used for this purpose; and (e) information and promotion campaigns to disseminate key messages. Details of the measures referred to in the first subparagraph are set out in the Annex. There are specific financial provisions applying to each of the actions:

- for direct Community initiatives, (such as information and promotion campaigns and others described in Part A of the Annex), financing will generally take the form of direct purchase of goods and services under existing framework contracts. It may also take the form of grants;
- for co-financing Community initiatives, (such as high-visibility events on a European scale that aim to raise awareness of the objectives of the European Year, possibly organised in cooperation with the Presidencies in office during 2011, as noted in Part B) there is possible a Community grant of up to 80% of the total eligible cost
- for cofinancing national initiatives, where the grant application must describe the national coordinating body's work programme as specified in Part C, the Community grant can cover up to 80 % of the total eligible cost.

At the insistence of the European Parliament, the text stresses the promotion of active citizenship which will provide the opportunity to demonstrate in a European context that voluntary activities increase civic participation and can help foster a sense of belonging and commitment of citizens to their society at all levels ? local, regional, national and European.

Cooperation with Member States and implementation: each Member State shall designate a body responsible for organising its participation in the European Year. In carrying out its actions, in particular when drawing up the national programme, the national coordinating body shall closely consult and cooperate with a wide range of relevant stakeholders, including civil society organisations and where appropriate the national agencies or contact points of relevant Community programmes. The Decision sets out the rules on coordination with regard to meetings and work programmes. Member States, the European Parliament and other Community institutions will be associated in the activities.

Budget and financing: the financial envelope for the implementation of this Decision for the period from 1 January 2011 to 31 December 2011 shall be EUR 8 000 000. Annual appropriations shall be authorised by the budgetary authority within the limits of the financial framework.

The Decision contains further provisions on cooperating with relevant international organisations, in particular with the United Nations and the Council of Europe, while ensuring the visibility of the EU's participation. There are also provisions on complementarity with other Community, national and regional schemes and initiatives, as well as protection of the Community's financial interests.

Monitoring and evaluation: by 31 December 2012, the Commission shall submit a report to the European Parliament, the Council, and other Community institutions on the implementation, results and overall assessment of the initiatives provided for in the Decision.

ENTRY INTO FORCE: 23.01.2010.

European Year of Volunteering 2011

In accordance with the Decision establishing the European Year of Volunteering 2011, this report offers an overview of the implementation, results and overall achievements of the European Year, building on the conclusions of an external evaluation of the European Year.

In 2011, a total budget of EUR 7.7 million supported activities at European level and in the 27 EU Member States. A separate budget of EUR 2.994 million for preparatory actions had been available in 2010 to develop an information and communication campaign for the EYV2011 and to set up the coordination structure bringing together the main stakeholders at European level.

The main conclusions of the report are as follows:

- The European Year of Volunteering has had a positive impact on the world of volunteering, both at European and at national level. The objectives and activities of the Year were relevant, and the targeted, results-oriented approach was successful in reaching the objectives in all Member States, even though the impact varied according to specific national situations.
- The European Year created and catalysed changes in the volunteering environment at European and national level and led to the adoption or modification of volunteering strategies and legislation in some Member States. For example, a specific legal framework was created for the first time in Slovakia, Slovenia and Lithuania during 2011. In Bulgaria, a law on volunteering was elaborated during

2011 and adopted in 2012. Poland adopted a new strategy on volunteering, Austria renewed its law on volunteering and Portugal prepared a new law to be adopted in 2012. The idea of a European Charter for Volunteering, built on a rights-based approach and initiated by the European Youth Forum, was discussed during 2011.

- The EYV empowered organisers to improve quality, and to focus attention on areas such as corporate volunteering and volunteering as a non-formal learning experience. It increased the recognition of volunteering through a wide range of initiatives and raised awareness of volunteering and its value to society through the media and the European communication campaign. The national activities had a valuable multiplier effect for these EU-level activities.
- The European Year contributed above all to the development of networks and new initiatives. It complemented existing activities and it highlighted the European dimension of volunteering.
- The EYV 2011 left a legacy in the continuation of activities and structures which were put in place during 2011 and in the adoption of good practices that will bring changes in the years to come.
- The EYV 2011 triggered the adoption of five EU policy documents dealing with volunteering in the European Union, i.e. a [Commission Communication](#), two sets of Council Conclusions, an Opinion of the European Economic and Social Committee and a [Report of the European Parliament](#).
- The European Year of Active Ageing 2012 has ensured some continuity with EYV 2011 through some specific actions. Sustainability will be assured through synergies with the European Year of Citizens 2013. By organising a series of European years on themes related to citizenship focussing on different aspects (European Year for Combating Poverty and Social Exclusion 2010, European Year of Volunteering 2011, European Year of Active Ageing and Intergenerational Solidarity 2012 and European Year of Citizens 2013), the Commission has sought to contribute to the exploration of the concept of civic engagement in its different dimensions.