

# European Year of Volunteering 2011

2009/0072(CNS) - 27/11/2009 - Final act

**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.