



# **Manifesto of volunteering for Europe**

## **Volunteers, European citizens**

All proposals and requests hereby put forward assume the following as constitutive elements:

- ★ Article 118, last subparagraph, of the Italian Constitution, stating that public authorities support the autonomous initiative of citizens for activities of public interest;
- ★ the content of the Italian Charter on Volunteering; and
- ★ the European Parliament Resolution on the role of volunteering in contributing to economic and social cohesion, dated April 22nd 2008.

Our starting point is that Italian as well as European volunteering are crucial factors for both the development of civil society and the strengthening of democratic life. The very basis of volunteering is the gift of self – an unpaid activity in the spirit of solidarity or for common good.

Volunteering is based on the culture of freely giving one's own time and on unpaid work, and can therefore help everybody discover a new culture, guided by principles of solidarity, sustainable development, non-violence, mutual respect and responsible citizenship.

In relation to the challenges for European society posed by the new demographic profile, volunteering, through its daily practice and projects for active ageing and intergenerational relations, opens important perspectives and stands out as a significant way of involving citizens, who thus become the protagonists of their own time by promoting social inclusion and common welfare.

Through its actions based on solidarity principles, volunteering plays a key role in contributing to the creation and the growth of social capital and to the enhancement of interpersonal relations and individual achievement, overcoming the limits imposed by a view of development focused only on financial issues. Any estimation of the contribution of volunteers merely assessed in terms of economic value would be oversimplified. Although considerable – 5% of GDP according to official estimates – it does not describe in detail its qualitative contribution, nor does it portray the capacity of innovation and social experimenting produced by voluntary action, not to mention its ability to take action at the first sign of social emergencies, thus reducing their impact.

In addition, it is important to highlight the irreplaceable role of volunteering as promoter of social cohesion, which is one of the most relevant objectives established by the Lisbon Treaty; such task is fulfilled by encouraging relations among generations, by giving support to marginalised sectors of the population, by engaging in the creation of paths of integration and mutual understanding in a time of great migration flows.

In the following points, Italian volunteering outlines its requests, which are aimed at improving and supporting the commitment of volunteering to the enhancement of social cohesion and of an equal and sustainable development of the European community of citizens, by soliciting the Members of the European Parliament to engage themselves in the construction of the common European framework, thus fulfilling the objectives so defined.

Such requests and proposals are included in the general framework of commitment of local and national voluntary associations, from where our genuinely positive tension in the construction of a citizens' Europe sprouts, based on collective and inclusive rules and respecting any demand for growth and individual involvement.

## **Our requests for commitment to the European Parliament**

- ★ Adoption of the European Charter on Volunteering including the definitions of
  - voluntary action: free, unpaid, for the benefit of the community and the common good;
  - voluntary organisation: its nature and role, its democratic rules;
  - European voluntary organisation: its status, basic requirements and nature of its European networks;
  - volunteering as expression of the larger phenomenon of active citizenship;and the setting up of
  - the European Observatory on volunteering at the European Commission with the participation of representatives of European volunteering networks, working for monitoring, promoting innovation and networking, in order to represent the requests of the volunteering world to the European institutions, and aiming at promoting coherent and homogeneous behaviours from the different Directorates-General that deal with volunteering.  
(EP Resolution, points 13, 2, 7)
  
- ★ Creation of a stable and binding institutional framework for the participation of volunteering at every decision-making level – European, national, regional and local – providing for:
  - clear recognition of the role of volunteering in participative democracy;
  - compulsory consultation of volunteering for policies related to social issues, health, culture, environment, active citizenship and sustainable development;
  - verifiable partnership systems respecting the principle of horizontal subsidiarity and the unique nature of volunteering;
  - support for volunteering representing bodies;
  - support for training local authorities decision makers and volunteers;
  - framework for a participated evaluation of the process.  
(EP Resolution, points 1, 23, 5, 13)
  
- ★ Programme for volunteering infrastructure development including:
  - a long term perspective, well-constructed at European, National and local levels;
  - a favourable, clear and harmonious legal framework;
  - compulsory verification of the impact any new norms might have on voluntary action;
  - sustainability and core funding for the voluntary support centres;
  - policies for valorising and promoting volunteering;
  - funds and access to funding for grassroots activities at European, national and local level.  
(EP Resolution, points 18, 21, 4)
  
- ★ Management facilitations and tax breaks for voluntary organisations and for volunteers, including:
  - funding lasting over several years for grassroots activities with monitoring based on quality and impact indicators;
  - cover for volunteers' insurance and training expenses;
  - exemption from VAT on goods and services necessary for implementing voluntary activities;
  - long lasting tax provisions with clear procedures for assigning a part of personal and businesses' yearly income taxes to voluntary organisations;
  - state taxes exemption on services and expenses necessary for carrying out voluntary activities;
  - unambiguous, guaranteed and quantitative recognition and valorisation of hours of voluntary engagement as co-funding in activities co-funded by public institutions;
  - introduction of a specific exception to the Bolkenstein Directive, defining a separate channel for entrusting public services to voluntary organisations.  
(EP Resolution, points 3, 15, 17, 8, 11)

- ★ Measures that grant accessibility to volunteering for all, in order that:
  - the possibility of access to all forms of support, both for voluntary organisations and single citizens, can be declared a universal right;
  - potentially marginalized groups of people and potentially territorially and culturally isolated voluntary organisations can have the opportunity of making use of services and support;
  - employers will pursue the conciliation between professional life and commitment to volunteering as a universal citizenship right;
  - volunteering will be explicitly considered in relation to visas and permits for the development of voluntary activities in Europe and for European citizens;
  - information on voluntary activities and promotion of volunteering will be introduced and properly pursued in the media.

(EP Resolution, points 11, 24, 26, 25)

- ★ Recognition of the educational and vocational value of volunteering in order to:
  - include volunteering and active citizenship activities in educational paths from primary school, to university, and at professional level;
  - recognize non formal and informal learning within volunteering as a constitutive part of lifelong learning;
  - define a single European framework for certifying and valorising the competences acquired in volunteering;
  - define citizenship transversal competences within the European Qualification Framework (EQF);
  - render experiences and competences more transparent to improve citizens' mobility within the European Union.

(EP Resolution, points 16, 12)

- ★ Support networking, exchange of good practice and volunteers' exchange:
  - ensuring equal opportunities and for all ages;
  - providing for proper systems and funds in order to foster participation overcoming linguistic, cultural and social barriers;
  - recognising the role of the voluntary support centres as promotion and support bodies, to ensure that every voluntary organisation gets access to project planning and European exchanges.

(EP Resolution, points 20, 21, 22, 9)

- ★ Support to research, statistical survey and evaluation:
  - with specific funds, within a European perspective;
  - valorising the survey and analysis potential of voluntary organisations working at local level.

(EP Resolution, points 6, 14)

### **Italian volunteering requests the commitment of the Italian Members of the European Parliament :**

- to pursue in their parliamentary activity the outcome objectives of their mandate as specified in the Manifesto of Italian Volunteering for Europe;
- to join and be active in the Intergroup on Volunteering of the European Parliament;
- to do their best for ensuring that the Italian Government and Parliament and the Italian and European public institutions actively pursue policies supporting volunteering, since volunteering is recognized as having a key role in realising social inclusion and promoting common welfare and human development;
- to support a European Parliament action in order to bring those Governments that have not yet done so to ratify the Convention of the Council of Europe against human trafficking, a curse which harms many and is closely linked to serious issues such as illegal trade in drugs, weapons, workers, carried out by transnational criminal groups which deal and earn on them;

- to adopt strategies for the harmonisation among Member States of those laws protecting the rights of the disadvantaged sectors of the population, in conformity with the 1993 Hague Convention on Protection of Children and Cooperation in Respect of Inter-country Adoption and with the European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms;
- to pursue dialogue on a regular basis with the voluntary sector in order to evaluate together the implementation of the given objectives.

For the 2011 European Year of Volunteering the Italian volunteering asks European Members of Parliament to be the supporters and promoters

- of an adequate financial and institutional support at European, national and local level;
- of the necessity of co-management and self-management by the voluntary sector of the preparation and activities for the Year 2011;
- of the implementation throughout the Year 2011 of concrete and measurable objectives for supporting and promoting volunteering.

## **Supported by**

### **Consulta Nazionale del Volontariato presso il Forum del Terzo Settore**

#### **Co.N.Vol. - Conferenza Permanente dei Presidenti delle Associazioni e Federazioni di Volontariato**

ACISJF - Associazione Cattolica Internazionale al Servizio della Giovane - Protezione della Giovane - Federazione Nazionale

ADA - Associazione per i Diritti degli Anziani

Ai.Bi. - Associazione Amici dei Bambini

AICAT - Associazione Italiana dei Club degli Alcolisti in Trattamento

ANCeSCAO

ANOLF - Associazione Nazionale Oltre Le Frontiere

ANPAS - Associazione Nazionale Pubbliche Assistenze

ANTEAS - Associazione Nazionale Terza Età Attiva per la Solidarietà

ARCI

Arciragazzi

AUSER - RisorsAnziani

AVIS - Associazione Nazionale Volontari Italiani del Sangue

CESTAV

Confederazione Nazionale Misericordie d'Italia

CSEN

Federazione AVULSS - Associazione per il Volontariato nelle Unità Locali dei Servizi Socio-sanitari

Federazione Nazionale Legambiente Volontariato

Federazione Nazionale Società San Vincenzo De Paoli

FENALC

FIDAS

FISH - Federazione Italiana per il Superamento dell'Handicap

FITeL

FOCSIV - Federazione Organismi Cristiani Servizio Internazionale Volontario

GVV - Gruppi di Volontariato Vincenziano AIC Italia

Legambiente

MODAVI - Movimento Delle Associazioni di Volontariato Italiano

Mo.V.I. - Movimento di Volontariato Italiano

SEAC - Coordinamento Enti e Associazioni di Volontariato Penitenziario

Seniores Italia

TAI - Telefono Amico Italia

CNV - Centro Nazionale per il Volontariato

The Manifesto was formally adopted in the conclusive document of the National Italian Volunteering Assembly on December 5<sup>th</sup> 2009.

**For more information and to support the Manifesto by adhesion**

**[www.destinazioneeuropa.eu](http://www.destinazioneeuropa.eu)**