

Research Report

Youth Civic Service in Europe

Association of Voluntary Service Organizations


Research Report

2004



**Center for Social Development
Global Service Institute**



 **Washington**
WASHINGTON · UNIVERSITY · IN · ST · LOUIS
George Warren Brown School of Social Work

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Association of Voluntary Service Organizations

RESEARCH REPORT

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**This report is the result of a project supported through the
Center for Social Development's
Global Service Institute Small Research Grants Program,
funded by the Ford Foundation.**



Youth Civic Service in Europe

Policies and Programmes:

France,

Germany,

Italy,

the Czech Republic,

Poland,

and at the European level

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Calophon

This research was supported by grants from the

Center for Social Development, Global Service Institute (GSI), Washington University in St. Louis, with funding from the Ford Foundation, USA,

Federal Ministry of Families, Seniors, Women and Youth, Germany,

Robert Bosch Foundation, Germany,

Action Committee Service for Peace, Germany,

Ost-West Institute for Social Management, Germany

Arci Servizio Civile, Italy,

Comité de Coordination pour le Service Civil, France.

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2004, October, Pisa

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PART I:

YOUTH CIVIC AND VOLUNTARY SERVICE IN EUROPE - RESEARCH APPROACH

1. Introduction

Civic service is considered as a means of active citizenship, non-formal education and a tool for peace building. Interest has been growing in the development of civic service – and youth voluntary service as one form of it – not only in Europe, but also worldwide.¹ A number of studies have been carried out to assess the impact of national youth voluntary service, for example on the development of professional skills among young people², community development³, civil defence and youth participation and engagement⁴. Much less research has been done on international and transnational voluntary service.

Language skills and sensitivity to other cultures are more important than ever for young people today both for an understanding of an increasing interdependent planet and as growing prerequisites for employment and success in a career⁵. For the voluntary service organisations, who are members of AVSO and for others, international voluntary service is an invaluable tool for promoting intercultural understanding and engaging young people from all backgrounds in projects contributing to the common good. It also plays a role in supporting the development of a European civil society, where citizens of its nations consider themselves Europeans and have greater ownership of and responsibility towards Europe's common future. Although international voluntary service has a history in Europe going back to 1919, until recently it has had little support at a policy or resource level from governments. Consequently, international voluntary service has been restricted to a small number of young people. The European Voluntary Service (EVS) programme of the European Commission is currently the largest source of public financial support. In 2003, with an expenditure of 25 million Euros, it enabled approximately 3,500 young people to perform an international voluntary service for periods of between 3-12 months. Another 1000 to 2000 volunteered through national government supported schemes, and perhaps another 3000 through privately funded programmes (participant fees, individual and business donations, foundations). Though exact figures for these latter are not available, it is clear that the number of actual chances to volunteer abroad is far from satisfying the demand.

Furthermore, it is mostly the better educated and/or wealthy who take advantage of these opportunities. International Voluntary Service is largely unknown among young people with limited formal education and/or low income.

This research study has been carried out at a time when interest in youth civic service is increasing rapidly in Europe. In 2000, there was only one country in Europe with a legal framework and (some) government support for voluntary service. Today there are six, with discussions going on several other countries.

¹ UN General Assembly Resolution A/RES/57/106 (2002, November 26). "Follow up to the International Year of Volunteers(adopted); Global Service Institute (2003): *The Forms and Nature on Civic Service: A global assessment*; Innovation for Civic Participation (2004): *Worldwide Youth Service Policy Scan*.

² Mtnez de Soria, B . Martínez-Odría, A.(2002). *Voluntariado de los jóvenes y formación de competencias profesionales*. GECEI, Madrid (in press).

³ Friese, J. (2000). Welchen Stellenwert haben Freiwilligendienste für Jugendliche und für die Gesellschaft. In Guggenberger, B. (Ed.), *Jugend erneuert Gemeinschaft, Freiwilligendienste in Deutschland und Europa*.Baden-Baden: Nomos.

⁴ Kreft, G.(2000). Frühe Erfahrungen mit Beteiligung und Engagement. In Guggenberger, B. (Ed.), *Jugend erneuert Gemeinschaft, Freiwilligendienste in Deutschland und Europa*.Baden-Baden: Nomos.

⁵ See article "From conscientious objection to apprenticeship, from au-pair- to studying" in the German newspaper Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung (2000 April 22). In 1999, the Staufenberg Institute for Education and Career Planning did a survey of German employers. The results show that 64 per cent of the businesses require knowledge of a foreign language for the employment of technical skilled workers and managers. 46 per cent expect the applicant of have lived for a longer period of time in another country. In 1991, 26 per cent of the businesses surveyed expected foreign language skills, and only 2 per cent of the employers felt an experience of living abroad was important.

Some of these countries are in the process of abolishing or suspending compulsory national service and establishing policy frameworks and infrastructure for voluntary programmes to carry on activities that formerly were compulsory. In addition to volunteering for military service, each country has defined other fields where volunteers can serve full-time. All the countries covered in this study include some opportunities for youth voluntary service in another country within their policy frameworks. Some foresee foreign volunteers coming to serve in their country as well.

2. Research aims and objectives

The study aims to understand the legal, financial and administrative frameworks of youth voluntary and civic service being developed in France, Germany, and Italy. The reports on Poland and Czech Republic illustrate the situation in two new Member States in the enlarged European Union. The study compares the national developments and programmes in order to identify the major incompatibilities regarding international youth voluntary service and to see how these can be overcome through the application of EU political or legislative instruments, and through future policy developments in the Member States themselves.

In addition to a comparison of the different national youth and civic service programmes, the development of programmes and policies at the European level is also explored. The special status created for the European Voluntary Service (EVS) - programme in many countries and its impact on national youth policy development is an example of the interaction between both levels.

Despite some bilateral declarations on developing volunteer exchange programmes⁶, the legal frameworks for voluntary civic service in the countries studied are very different and present many practical and administrative obstacles to such exchanges. This study aims to identify the challenges to increasing significantly the number of international voluntary service opportunities for young people in Europe and where they exist, to recommend examples of good practice in one country that could be worth implementing in the other countries surveyed and beyond.

There was no research hypothesis, but a set of research questions. Nevertheless, these are based on several assumptions which have acted as reference points for the national research and especially for the comparison of policies and recommendations. The organisations that co-ordinated the research all support the development and expansion of international voluntary service. They have a common perspective that international voluntary service is something that is needed to further international understanding and therefore that it should be accessible legally and practically to all young people (and other ages) without requiring them to have particular skills. Further, there is a common assumption that it is horizontal, i.e. that in international service volunteers should move across borders in both directions rather than vertical, as in development aid volunteering where the assumption is that people with skills should go from „more developed“ to „less developed“ countries/regions. The distinction between this kind of „open access“ „horizontal“ volunteering for international understanding is explained more in section 4.

Another assumption, not one that was evident as the research began, is that the term „voluntary“ is an essential element of the existence of civil society institutions. In this sense, full-time voluntary service is a form of the voluntary engagement that is the defining characteristic of civic society, the third sector or as it is often called - the voluntary sector. This assumption only became apparent when comparison of national policies revealed that in some official contexts voluntary service was understood simply as a negative adjective, as the opposite of compulsory. This assumption was also used in comparing the effect of compulsory national service policies on the development of the third sector.

⁶ like 'Declaration sur le volontariat civil' during the summit on 10th November 2001 between France and Germany.

The research questions were:

- 1. How can national frameworks develop legal, administrative and funding compatibility in order to expand significantly international voluntary service opportunities for young people?*
- 2. What policy developments in the Member States are necessary in the mid- term and long-term future to develop international voluntary service opportunities?*
- 3. To what extent do EU political or legislative instruments facilitate the development of international voluntary service for young people in the countries studied?*

3. Methodology

The methodological approach was developed and continually reviewed by a research team comprising practitioners from the voluntary service sector and academics from the social and political sciences. Regine Schröer (MA) as researcher and John Stringham as president from the Association of Voluntary Service Organisations (AVSO) co-ordinated the study. The members of AVSO are organisations managing national and international full-time and longer-term voluntary service programmes.

Holger Backhaus Maul from the Martin Luther University of Halle-Wittenberg and Prof. Gisela Jakob (Ph.D.) from the Fachhochschule Dramstadt in Germany provided academic supervision.

Three national research partners carried out the research in France, Germany and Italy. Valérie Becquet (Ph.D.) elaborated the national report of France in collaboration with Eric Sapin, Comité de Coordination pour le Service Civil. Wolfgang Schur (MA) from the Ost-West Institut für Sozialmanagement e.V. wrote the German report and Prof. Pierluigi Consorti (Ph.D.) from the Public Law Department and the Interdepartmental Center Sciences for Peace of the University of Pisa and Licio Palazzini, National President of Arci Servizio Civile, were authors of the national research on Italy. The national research was supported through national funding in Germany and France.

Three team meetings were organised over the course of the project (May 2003 - March 2004⁷) in order to define the study objectives, content and structure of the four research components and to review and discuss completed drafts.

The three countries Italy, France and Germany- originally four with Spain⁸ – were selected because all countries have either recently ended compulsory military service for young men, or are discussing its end. Each country has established new or amended existing frameworks for national voluntary service for young men and women. It was also thought that research on the development of civic voluntary service programmes in three large and influential EU Member States would be relevant for assessing how programmes at the European level could/would/should develop.

In light of the gap left when Spain was dropped from the analysis and in view of EU enlargement the team agreed to expand the scope of the study and to explore developments in two countries of Central and Eastern Europe as well. Poland and the Czech Republic were selected because both countries adopted legal frameworks to promote volunteerism in 2003. The study coordinator Regine Schröer carried out the research on these two countries basing it on documentation available in English or German and telephone interviews with stakeholders in those countries.

⁷ The 2 day meetings took place in May 23-24 and November 8-9, 2003 in Brussels and March 24-26, 2004 in Pisa.

⁸ Unfortunately the analysis of the Spanish situation needed to be withdrawn due to a lack of support on the national level. The initiative of the Spanish government for the creation of a future Voluntary Civil Service Law in Spain encountered a strong opposition from the civil sector (Trade Unions, Youth Councils and NGOs) and was withdrawn. This makes it unlikely that voluntary service will be officially recognized and supported by the Spanish government in the near future.

The research is composed of four components:

1) National reports for the five countries

The national reports provide a detailed analysis of the political background and the current system of youth voluntary and civil service programmes. The situation in each country is presented according to a common format:

- tradition and policy context for youth voluntary/civic service as an element of civil society development;
- description of the current voluntary service administrative system;
- analysis of the impact of voluntary/civic service;
- analysis of quantitative data;
- links to EU policy/programmes (EVS)⁹.

2) Validation through case studies based on stakeholder interviews in Italy, France and Germany

The case studies in Italy, France and Germany illustrate existing experiences of international voluntary service from the perspective of different national stakeholders. Four stakeholders were interviewed in each country using a common set of questions. In each country, the interviewees included representatives from a government body and from NGOs operating at national or regional level.

3) Analysis of European – level policy, legislation and programming

At a European level, the study analyses the existing European policy, and legislative and administrative instruments and the extent to which they have influenced and could influence the development of national frameworks for volunteers. It examines the current status of the European Voluntary Service and the possible future scenarios for it in the medium and long-term, in particular in regard to how it can facilitate the expansion of international youth voluntary service.

4) Comparative analysis and recommendations

The comparative analysis is based on the findings of the research team (national reports, case studies, analysis of the European level). The analysis explains differences between the countries and discusses conditions for a common perspective on international youth voluntary service in Europe. The recommendations aim to give practical suggestions on how co-operation between stakeholders at national and at European level can be facilitated.

4. Limitations

The study is broad. The limited resources and relatively short time frame did not allow for an in-depth investigation of all the issues that could affect the development of youth service in the five countries. It was not possible to provide a complete picture of the different forms of voluntary service developed by all organisations in each country. The research on Poland and the Czech Republic relies only on English and German documents and interviews conducted in those languages.

Another limitation of the study is the dynamic situation in each of the countries. The five countries involved are all in a policy transition regarding youth voluntary service. The impact of recent legal changes in the countries is examined until April 2004¹⁰ but there have been further developments since

⁹ Differences appear in the reports due to different backgrounds of the national researchers, available information and interpretation of the agreed structure. In addition, the different stages of national & transnational voluntary service in the five countries (long tradition and variety of international voluntary service programmes in Germany compared with France, Italy as well as in the new EU member states Poland and Czech Republic) needed to be taken into account.

¹⁰ The national reports cover the Italian development until March 2004 and the development in the Germany, Poland and France and at European level until April 2004. The report on the Czech Republic covers the situation until August 2004.

then. Furthermore, it was not always possible to have access to the relevant information because some of the issues are quite sensitive (e.g. unemployment, competition with recruitment for volunteer armies) and officials were not at liberty to talk about them.

The team's hope is that this project can stimulate further comparative research in this field, at the least that it will encourage similar national-level research in countries not covered in this survey.

5. Terminology

The research team agreed in the first team meeting to change the term "transnational" into "international". According to the typology developed by the Global Service Institute "transnational" programmes are defined as "co-operative programmes between two or more countries where the servers are expected to serve in a host country as well as their country of origin (during the programme)" (Mc Bride et al., 2003, p. 9) while "international" service programmes send people from the home country to another country. According to the definition of the Global Service Institute, the term "civic service" defines "an organised period of substantial engagement and contribution to the local, national, or world community, recognised and valued by society, with minimal monetary compensation to the participant" (Mc Bride et al., 2003, p. 1). "Civil service" or "civilian service" in the five European countries researched is defined as an alternative to compulsory military service for young men and therefore not voluntary.

The definition of "voluntary service" can vary according to the organisations or networks active in this field. According to AVSO (2001), a "volunteer engaged in long-term voluntary service is someone who:-

- is active in an unpaid activity, full-time, for a defined period of time, on the basis of an agreement between him/herself and the voluntary organisations involved
- serves at home or abroad following a free and informed personal decision without compulsion (direct or indirect) by the State
- serves in projects which promote the common good and are non-profit. Projects may be run by non-governmental associations, by religious groups, by local authorities, by communities etc.
- engages in a personal, social and (in the case of international voluntary service) intercultural learning process both individually and in interchange with other volunteers, throughout their period of service" (p.7).

The group agreed to focus on full-time "international voluntary and civic service" programmes according to the following criteria:

- that they involve young people aged 16-28 years old, who are
- carrying out a full-time voluntary or civilian service for at least for 6 months in another country
- that the volunteer is not expected to have special training or skills in advance.

In order to understand the differences in the countries, the research had to look at voluntary civic programmes in the country as well as at the history of and the current national civilian service.

PART 2:

NATIONAL REPORTS ON YOUTH CIVIC AND VOLUNTARY SERVICE

OVERVIEW

The following section provides the different national reports on youth voluntary and civic service. Each national report summary presents the tradition and policy context for youth voluntary service in the country, introduces the legal basis for youth voluntary service and describes the current voluntary and civic service programmes in the country as well as that operate outside that framework (if any).

On the basis of available quantitative figures at national level, each report analyses the impact of youth voluntary and civilian service in the country. The national reports of Italy, France and Germany are followed by case studies - interviews with four stakeholders from responsible ministries/administrations and NGOs of the sector. They highlight the experiences of the actors in the three countries and illustrate the different approaches for international youth voluntary service.

The level of public debate in the countries studied is quite different. In Germany and Italy voluntary and civic service are high on the political agenda and have been the subject of ommissions, conferences and workshops where both government and the voluntary sector were/are represented. Social organisations in France were much less involved in discussions leading up to the new law and have had to wait seven years from the presidential announcement of the creation of new forms of civic voluntary service and the regulations allowing implementation of the programme in the frame of social cohesion and solidarity, the last of the five categories of voluntary national service to be activated. The situation in Poland and Czech Republic is strongly influenced by the negative experiences with forced 'voluntary' work of the population under the communist regime. In these countries the impetus to establish youth voluntary service comes mainly from the need to establish cooperation between government and NGOs within the social field.

YOUTH CIVIC AND VOLUNTARY SERVICE IN FRANCE¹¹

1. Introduction

Voluntary service is a concept that has only recently received media attention in France. It was primarily at the time when national service was reformed (1997) that the term *volontariat* (voluntary service) entered the public discourse, although programmes such as European Voluntary Service, volunteering for international solidarity and projects run by various associations existed already. The previous silence surrounding *volontariat* was essentially due to the use in France of another term referring to an active commitment of time for the benefit of the community, especially within associations: *bénévolat*. Although «volunteer» can translate both the terms *bénévolat/bénévole* and *volontariat/volontaire*¹², there is in France a difficulty in specifying their exact meanings and a debate about the essential differences between them.

The national service reforms and the creation of three *volontariats civils* (voluntary civic service programmes) to replace the civilian forms of national service that had existed until then (including conscientious objection) confused the use of the term, *volontariat* being considered in this context to be the opposite of obligation. Indeed, the law adopted on 27 October 1997 gives military and civilian volunteering the same objective: “to provide a personal, temporary contribution to the national community as part of a mission of benefit to all, developing solidarity and a sense of belonging to the nation”. No reference is made to “voluntary service”, which would have distinguished these programmes from *bénévolat*. In fact, in other fields, such as international solidarity, *volontariat*, rather than *service volontaire* (voluntary service) or *bénévolat*, is also the term used. The same applies to the term used by certain associations offering international work camps and long-term volunteer programmes.

These references to *volontariat* rather than *bénévolat* aim to make a real distinction, at least in France. The voluntary civic service programmes created under the new national service, volunteering for international solidarity and associations' previously existing programmes do have points in common: the existence of or demands for a legal framework, a limited duration of the service, a full-time commitment, a formal agreement, a subsistence allowance, insurance and social security cover etc. None of these characteristics are readily associated with the notion of *bénévolat*. The report by the *Conseil National de la Vie Associative* (national council of associations) also adds that “while it is possible to be a *bénévole* at any time, within or outside an association, a *volontaire*, by definition, can only express his desire to make a commitment within an organisation. You can define yourself or claim to be a *bénévole* on your own, but not a *volontaire*.”¹³ The clarification process currently underway in France also addresses another issue, namely the need to avoid any confusion between voluntary service and employment. This is because the absence of a precise legal status, except for voluntary civic service, which is defined by public law, has caused some voluntary service agreements to be reclassified as employment contracts.

This report is exclusively concerned with voluntary programmes in the sense of voluntary service (*volontariat*), despite the fact that this expression is little used in France. The programmes covered will thus consist of those created under the national service reforms, the volunteering for international solidarity programme - which enables non-governmental organisations (NGOs) to send volunteers abroad on

¹¹ The report analyses the situation in France until July 2004.

¹² Maud, S. (1998). *Le bénévole et le volontaire : ce que traduire veut dire* (The *bénévole* and the volunteer: what translation means). La revue du MAUSS, No. 11.

¹³ Conseil national de la vie associative (2003). *Bilan de la vie associative, 2000-2002* (Assessment of the life of associations, 2000-2002). Paris: La documentation française.

humanitarian or development missions, the European Voluntary Service, and programmes of associations already existing which are soon to be given a legislative framework and which are currently being inventoried as part of the national research following on from this report.

All these programmes have an international aspect: either they are open to young people from other European countries, as are voluntary civic service, European Voluntary Service and the programmes of various associations, or they enable French volunteers to be sent abroad, as is possible under volunteering for international solidarity and one of the three government voluntary civic service programmes (economic and cultural co-operation).

The report consists of three sections:

- the first section (2) presents the gradual creation of civilian forms of national service starting in the 1960s and their development, the difficulties of integrating conscientious objectors, the national service reform process and the debates surrounding the civilian aspects of the reforms;
- the second section (3) introduces the various voluntary service programmes that presently exist in France;
- the third section (4) provides data about the different programmes: the numbers of volunteers, their social origins, countries of origin or service and their motivations.

The report is constrained by a number of factors. Few analyses of voluntary service, descriptions of existing programmes and comprehensive documentation have been done. This made it difficult to rely on established. The job of patching together the disparate data was fairly long. It was rendered more complex by the segmentation of government supervision of the voluntary sector with a number of ministries being separately involved, and all of them needing to be consulted. These factors make this report essentially descriptive. The analyses offered deserve to be developed in greater detail, but they already give an overview of the main characteristics of the French situation. Clearly, recent policy changes will make their mark and significant evolution will take place in the coming years. If these policies remain as they are, it is highly probable that voluntary service will develop into a significant aspect of youth policy. Currently, this is far from being the case, for reasons which this report describes: segmentation and separation of the voluntary service programmes, their objectives and their stakeholders; reluctance of different ideological groupings in society to engage due to the conceptual fuzziness surrounding the term "volontariat".

2. Tradition and policy context

It is no easy task to situate the various forms of voluntary service in the context of French tradition, due to the absence of studies in this field. To arrive at an understanding of the present situation, information must be sought from documents that vary widely, and do not always provide the perspective required to place the issues involved in voluntary work within the context of French society. This first part is thus necessarily incomplete, and cannot offer a detailed analysis. It is currently limited to a presentation of developments relating to the transition from mandatory to voluntary national service on the one hand, and voluntary community activities, including reference to voluntary service in international peace projects on the other. There is a need for a more in-depth study to give a greater understanding of these developments, which would have to collect a great deal of information from the parties involved and to compile relevant documents. Only with such a study would it be possible to give a more informed and critical reading of the emergence and development of "voluntary civic service" and "voluntary service".

2.1 The gradual development of civilian forms of national service

In France, civilian forms of national service, and particularly service by conscientious objectors, developed relatively late. The military institutions, both the ministry of defence and the chiefs of staff, were for many years unprepared to recognise any means by which an obligation to serve militarily could be by-passed. It was only through individual and then collective resistance, particularly relating to

conscientious objection, combined with the changing needs of the armed forces, that the gradual implementation of civilian forms of national service took place.

Without entering into the detailed history of these civilian programmes, it is still possible to describe the essential points¹⁴. Fundamentally, it was the idea of conscientious objection that met the most opposition within the armed forces and the defence ministry. Almost 40 years had to pass before a specific legal status was first offered to young people who, due to their convictions, did not wish to perform military service or, especially, to bear arms. The First World War, especially the way in which it unfolded and the human losses it incurred, was the origin of the first calls for an official status for conscientious objectors. Desertions and mutinies were already taking place during that war. The perpetrators were usually shot "as an example".

After the war was over, in 1924, a league campaigning for the recognition of the status of conscientious objectors was formed. In 1934, a new campaign was organised, encouraging conscripts to send back their military papers to show their opposition to forced membership of the reserve forces. In the same year, measures were passed punishing the sending back or destruction of military papers with up to a year's imprisonment and up to five years' deprivation of civil rights. After the Second World War, the question of an official status for conscientious objectors, seen as "draft-dodgers", again came to the fore. Several bills were submitted to parliament, but, despite the growing numbers of young men refusing to carry out their military obligations, none was adopted. The colonial wars, and in particular the war in Algeria, which saw a large number of conscripts sent overseas, accentuated this phenomenon, despite the personal consequences of such a choice (going to prison or fleeing abroad). In this context, a humanitarian measure was taken by the armed forces ministry in 1958: the imprisonment of young draft-dodgers was limited to 5 years, although it could be prolonged to the age of 50 due to the existence of the requirement to serve in the reserve forces¹⁵. The prison term was further reduced to 3 years in 1962. In 1963, the situation changed. On the initiative of the president of the French republic, Charles De Gaulle, a bill was submitted in the national assembly, against the wishes of his own party, then in a majority. Nevertheless, the bill was voted in, and an initial statute was adopted in December 1963¹⁶. It provided the option for young men to fulfil their national service obligations as conscientious objectors as long as they "declare before enlisting that they are opposed under all circumstances to using weapons due to their religious or philosophical convictions".

This text was a turning point, clearly showing a willingness to put an end to resistance to military call-up. Although the number of draft-dodgers was not high (less than 500) compared with the number of those called up, their attitude was an embarrassment to the military institutions. However, despite this vote, things were not made easy for the young men who wished to take advantage of their new rights. The 1963 text banned any publicity for the statute¹⁷, and imposed a difficult set of application procedures and deadlines to discourage potential candidates. They had to submit a written request setting out their precise motivations. This request was addressed to the national defence minister, and was to be examined in private session by a committee made up of three officers, three people appointed by the prime minister, and a magistrate. If the request was submitted within the deadline and accepted by the committee, the objector had to work "either in an unarmed military training programme or a civilian training programme carrying out work of general usefulness", for a period twice the length of military service. Thus the purpose of this text was to resolve the situation of young men refusing to undertake armed military service, while at the same time limiting access to the provisions of the statute. The 1963 text was included in the new *Code du service national* (national service code), which became law in 1971 (articles 41 and 50)¹⁸.

¹⁴ See: Auvray, M. (1983). *Objecteurs, insoumis, déserteurs. Histoire de réfractaires en France* (Objectors, draft-dodgers, deserters : a history of draft evasion in France). Stock.; Cattelain, J.-P. (1975). *L'objection de conscience* (Conscientious objection). *Que sais-je?* PUF. (1993). *Mouvement des objecteurs de conscience* (the conscientious objectors' movement). *Le guide de l'objection de conscience* (guide to conscientious objection).

¹⁵ On 7 January 1959, an order relating to the general organisation of defence reduced the total duration of military obligations (active and reserve) from 28 to 17 years.

¹⁶ In October 1963, the length of active military service was reduced to 16 months.

¹⁷ Any form of publicity could be punished with a fine or between six months and three years in prison.

¹⁸ In 1970, the length of active military service was reduced to 12 months.

Between 1963 and 1983, the date of the next statute, a number of difficulties arose, relating particularly to the postings allocated to conscientious objectors. The allocation of postings was initially entrusted to the interior ministry, then the social affairs ministry, then the agriculture ministry, and finally again the social affairs ministry. Throughout this period, conscientious objectors organised collectively to campaign for the right to choose their postings and for their national service to take place in the voluntary community work sector.

In 1983, a new statute was adopted making the access conditions more flexible: it made it possible for information about conscientious objection to be disseminated, made application deadlines more flexible, removed the obligation of proving motives of conscience (by providing a standard letter) and introduced a right of appeal for applications that were refused and the option to state a preference of postings. The management of conscientious objectors' national service became more and more organised. The number of host organisations – associations and public bodies – increased from 160 in 1983 to 2000 in 1989, while the number of conscientious objectors rose from 1000 in 1983 to 4900 in 1989¹⁹.

Other civilian forms of national service were gradually put in place parallel to the conscientious objection programme. For example, 1965 saw the creation of *coopération* (national service abroad) and *aide technique* or technical aid (national service for young people in France's overseas territories). These programmes too were included in the new *Code du service national* in 1971 – article 1: "the purpose of the civilian forms of national service is to respond to other defence needs and the requirements of social integration". In the years that followed, civilian programmes multiplied: national service within the framework of a protocol agreed between the army and other ministries from 1976, national service with the national police force from 1985, and national service in civil defence from 1992²⁰. These civilian programmes, unlike conscientious objection, were created as "an annex to military service and an overflow channel, making it easier to manage the growing pool of conscripts that could no longer be absorbed by military service, even after the term of service had been reduced several times"²¹.

Thus, at the point when the move towards professionalising the armed forces was undertaken, there were five civilian forms of national service: co-operation service, technical aid service, service in the national police force, service in civil defence and service as a conscientious objector. To this list should be added the "military forms with civilian purposes", or the eight protocols linking the defence ministry with other ministries and making conscripts available for civilian missions (see table 1). There were also the "atypical military forms of national service": the *gendarmerie* or rural and traffic police, military service in French overseas territories and fire brigades.

¹⁹ Joinet, L. (1989, May 18). Speech at the conference *Service civil et développement de la vie associative* (civilian voluntary service and the development of associations), organised by the CCSC. Assemblée Nationale (national assembly).

²⁰ In 1992, the length of active military service was reduced to 10 months (law of 4 January 1992 modifying the Code du Service National or national service code).

²¹ Gresles, F. (2003). La «société militaire». Son devenir à la lumière de la professionnalisation (the "military society": its future in the light of professionalisation). *Revue française de sociologie* (French sociology review). 44-4.

Table 1: Civilian forms of national service and military forms for civilian purposes					
Defined by book II of the national military service code before the 1997 reforms					
Forms of service	Duration	Intended numbers	Numbers	Purpose	Allowance
Conscientious objection (1963)	20 months	No limit	5982 (1999)	Involves conscripts opposed to the personal use of weapons for reasons of conscience, who carry out civilian service with a public body or a social or humanitarian organisation	Average monthly pay of 2,200 francs
Co-operation (1965)	16 months (up to 24 months for teachers)	Set every year by decree	7700 (1998)	Contributing to the development of foreign countries and the national effort towards economic expansion and the dissemination of French culture	Varying monthly allowance
Technical aid (1965)	16 months	Set every year by decree	700 (1999)	Contributing to the development of French overseas territories	Variable monthly allowance
Protocols (1976)	10 months	Dependent on the needs of the armed forces	4250 (1999)	Missions serving the public good in various ministries (particularly employment and social integration)	Conscripts' monthly pay, travel expenses and other benefits in cash or in kind allowance of 1700 francs
National police force (1985)	10 months (up to 24 on request)	A maximum of 10% of the active staff of the national police force	7000 (1998)	Reinforcing the police force in its missions of crime prevention, informing the public, community outreach and general monitoring, but excluding restoring public order	Monthly pay of 531 francs plus a special fixed benefit of 262.90 francs
Civil defence (1992)	10 months (up to 24 on request)	A maximum of 10% of the professional fire-fighting personnel	700 (1999)	Fire-fighters or auxiliary foresters	Monthly pay of 531 francs plus travel expenses

The numbers involved with these civilian forms of national service grew steadily. More and more young people sought to carry out their military service in the civilian sector. This development can be explained primarily by the desire to make the most of the year devoted to military obligations. A number of young people, seeing this period as a waste of time or considering that the activities offered under basic conscription had little interest for them, sought to transform their military obligation into an experience in which they could use their skills or gain further training. On the other hand, the movement towards civilian service still only concerned a small proportion of conscripts. There were two reasons for this: on the one hand, the numbers of places available were limited, and on the other, recruitment was selective (requiring certain administrative procedures and applying aptitude criteria). Only national service as a conscientious objector offered unlimited places. For conscientious objection, recruitment was carried out via cards describing the postings available, but remained more open than the procedure for co-operation, for example. The main limiting factors on the development of this civilian form of national service were its duration (20 months) – twice the length of military service – and, after January 1997, the government's withdrawal of funding, making host organisations solely responsible for the costs of the conscientious objectors. In 1995, two years before the national service reforms began, civilian service represented almost 13% of conscripts²².

Development of civilian forms of national service												
source DCSN												
conseil économique et social												
(national service directorate's economic and social committee) – 1994												
	1984	1985	1986	1987	1988	1989	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995
Co-operation	3436	3469	3435	3673	4340	4571	4709	5185	5010	4765	4766	5272
Technical aid	913	873	985	931	1218	1126	864	805	842	793	878	668
Conscientious objectors	1717	1703	2390	2379	2616	2861	3162	4085	4933	7265	8023	10218
National police force	----	----	639	1678	3223	3637	3580	4299	5601	7437	8004	8044
Civil defence							204	216			460	650
Protocols	133	138	231	357	373	255	605	315	206	179	234	7961
Total	6199	6183	7680	9018	11770	12450	13124	14905	16592	20439	22365	32844

2.2 The armed forces professionalisation and the creation of voluntary military and civic services

The armed forces reform in France was part of a more general process of reorganising the defence sector. In early 1996 (22 February), the president of the French republic, Jacques Chirac, announced his intention to restructure the armaments industry and to professionalise the army. He launched a national consultation process and invited the houses of parliament to consider not only the relevance of professionalising the armed forces but also the national service reforms that would be required along with it. Thus during the whole reform process the debate did not address defence policy and the practical means of putting it into practice, but concentrated instead on "the problem of national service seen as a technical system (as a means of recruitment) and as a national social institution (inasmuch as it symbolise a certain kind of citizenship and a certain concept of the nation)"²³. The central question would therefore

²² In 1995, there were 257,838 conscripts: 32,844 carried out their military service in a civilian context.

²³ Paquetteau, B. (1997, September). *Analyse des termes du débat sur la réforme du service national (1996-1997)* (analysis of the terms of the debate on national service reform). Centre d'études en sciences sociales de la Défense (defence centre for social science studies), Montpellier III University.

be whether or not national military service should be replaced by an alternative, and whether this alternative should be obligatory or voluntary.

The debate on military service reform took place primarily in the houses of parliament and in the media, which relayed the viewpoints of a large number of politicians, intellectuals and experts²⁴. Although local authorities were invited to organise debates, enabling direct consultation with the population, it appeared that the French citizenry lacked enthusiasm for the reform. Only a third of local authorities organised debates, and the level of public participation was very low. True, a number of opinion polls revealed that most people were broadly in agreement with the reform and this may explain the absence of participation. In contrast, a large amount of work was done by the houses of parliament, and particularly the parliamentary committee chaired by Philippe Séguin, which resulted in the publication of a detailed report entitled *La France et son service* (France and its service)²⁵. In May 1996, the president announced his decision: the end of military service, and its replacement with a "citizen's rendezvous" - a special seminar on defence issues and service opportunities for young people upon reaching the age of 16 and the creation of military and civilian voluntary work programmes. In June 1996, a budget-planning act was passed, followed in March 1997 by an act establishing the new national service and in March 2000 by an act covering civilian voluntary work.

Although the process of professionalising the armed forces officially began in 1996, the measure had been in discussion for a number of years previous to this, for example in the 1994 defence white paper, which recommended reforming military service but not removing it completely²⁶. The development also corresponded to socio-political changes that clearly showed a gradual decline in the need for a mass army (which began in the 1960s), making the elimination of conscription and the transition to a professional army acceptable. Bernard Boëne insists on the existence of three founding myths that have now become obsolete: "universal conscription originally depended on a number of effective legitimising myths, which gave an enchanted vision of citizens serving under arms":-

- **the link between conscription and access to enfranchisement as a citizen. This was weakened by the vote being granted at 18 rather than 21 and by the inclusion of women. There was previously also a link with certain social benefits: these were partially dependent on a citizen's individual merit (including recognition of military service). The rise of the welfare state modified the ways in which such social benefits are accessed.**
- **the universality of national service and the social intermingling it generates – this was called into question by the improved education system and the social inequalities in recruitment.**
- **the idea that the armed forces, being "socially representative of the Nation", can serve as a counterweight to the political influence of the officers corps.**

In preparing the defence white paper, Prime minister Edouard Balladur commissioned a report from Alain Marsaud in 1993 on civilian forms of national service²⁷. In 1995 the Economic and Social Committee, made up of representatives of civil society and chaired by Jean Bastide, also published a report on civilian forms of national service²⁸.

Alain Marsaud and Jean Bastide came to similar conclusions about the civilian aspect of national service. Their analyses were used at the time of the 1996 reforms, particularly by the parliamentary committee (*Mission commune d'information sur le service national* - a joint fact-finding mission looking into national service)

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Séguin, P., Chairman, Darrason, O., (reporter). (1996, May). *La France et son service* (France and its service). Report No. 2810.

²⁶ Boëne, B. (2003). La professionnalisation des armées: contexte et raisons, impact fonctionnel et sociopolitique (the professionalisation of the armed forces: context and reasons, functional impact and sociopolitics). *Revue française de la sociologie*. French sociology review, 44-4.

²⁷ Marsaud, A. (1994, January 27). *Rapport sur les formes civiles du Service National* (report on civilian forms of national service).

²⁸ Bastide, J. (1995). *Les formes civiles du service national* (civilian forms of national service). Conseil économique et social (economic and social committee).

chaired by Philippe Séguin, and again in 2000 in the discussions about the law on civilian voluntary work²⁹.

They made three important observations: -

- **a problem managing the pool of conscripts:** the ways in which young people were enlisted had become more and more complex to take into account the possibilities of putting off national service for educational, professional or family reasons. Consequently, it had become increasingly difficult for the Bureau du Service National to estimate the numbers of conscripts available. In addition, certain civilian forms of national service only took in limited numbers of young people, while the numbers in other forms changed from year to year (the protocols) or were unlimited (national service for conscientious objectors).
- **more and more civilian forms of national service:** Civilian forms of national service had multiplied over the years, but lacked a common framework for their organisation. They had been created as a response to the excess of conscripts in relation to the armed forces' needs and the increasing requirements of other state authorities.
- **increasing inequality in relation to national service:** access to the civilian forms of national service was unequal, requiring understanding of the administrative application procedures and possession of the particular skills being sought. This situation worked to the advantage of applicants with higher qualifications, who used the period to enrich their CVs, and called the egalitarian nature of military service into question. This degree of selection had consequences for the army, depriving it of the most skilled candidates.

Alain Marsaud and Jean Bastide also questioned the relevance of the business form of international co-operation national service, which they saw as a deviation from other civilian forms: “the co-operation service, and particularly the national service co-operation in business programme, certainly contributes to defending the economy, but under conditions which lead one to wonder whether it is really part of the purpose of national service.”³⁰

These observations were taken up in the report of the 1996 parliamentary committee chaired by Philippe Séguin. In his introduction, he insisted that national service had been hi-jacked by the administration. In his view, opposition to the national service reforms had less to do with the principle of conscription than with the fact that they would deprive the administration of a source of low-cost workers: “it quickly became apparent that the reason, or the main ulterior motive, which could explain the biased terms of the debate had nothing to do with the need either to maintain a link between the Army and the Nation, or to offer a second chance to certain young French people, or even to maintain the conditions of a national melting-pot or social mix. In reality, it involved, much more prosaically, the needs of a certain number of civilian ministries. (...) The disappearance of mandatory national service, and the practical difficulties of guaranteeing the same numbers through a voluntary service, would force these administrations to accept a drop in the quality provided or to recruit a significant proportion of the corresponding personnel at their real cost.”

Thus the reform of national service, while it might satisfy the requirements of the armed forces by enabling the creation of an army with the benefit of competent personnel, would deprive public bodies and companies of human resources. For this reason, the discussion focused less on rethinking national service than on more technical aspects - the replacement of the conscripts engaged in the civilian forms of national service: “the civilian forms of national service are in an unusual position, because they are chosen by conscripts within the obligation to serve which applies to all young people. The question arises therefore of whether they would still volunteer in the absence of any compulsion. And although most of them gain enriching experience from their service, and although some may be motivated by a desire to

²⁹ Vauchez, A. (2000, January 12). *Rapport au nom de la Commission de la Défense nationale et des forces armées sur le projet de loi adopté par le Sénat, relatif aux volontariats civils institués par l'article L. 111-2 du code du service national*. (Report in the name of the national defence and armed forces committee on the bill adopted by the Sénat relating to the civilian voluntary work programmes instituted by article L.111-2 of the national service code). Assemblée nationale (National assembly), 2076.

³⁰ Marsaud, A. , op.cit.

volunteer or more prosaically a wish for adventure, a large number of them are just seeking a way out of military service.”³¹

The discussion therefore focused on whether it would be possible to maintain a mandatory civilian service or whether a transition to voluntary service would be necessary. The debate about the appropriateness of maintaining a mandatory civilian service programme for its social usefulness was quickly put to one side in view of its cost. Certainly, one of the objectives in professionalising the armed forces was to reduce the defence budget. The defence ministry could not finance the creation of a mandatory civilian service. When budgetary aspects were taken into account, the reform moved towards setting up civilian voluntary work programmes and the creation of a “citizens’ rendezvous”.

In May 1996, the president announced his decision: the end of military service, with a period of discussion about defence issues and the creation of military and civilian volunteer programmes. Once a budget planning law had been voted on in June 1996, discussion of the bill to reform national service began in March 1997. The *délégation interministérielle à l'économie sociale* (DIES, inter-ministerial delegation on social economy) led a working group to come up with possible arrangements for the civilian aspects of the law³².

In June 1997, following the dissolution of the *Assemblée nationale* (national assembly) by the president, national elections were organised, leading to a change in majority party. A period of “cohabitation”, when the president represents one political party and the government another, began under the leadership of Prime Minister Lionel Jospin. It ended in 2002. The national service reform was slowed down: the law putting the reform into effect was not adopted by the *Assemblée nationale* and the *Sénat* (senate) until October 1997.

Book I of the new *Code du service national* announces the principle of military and civilian volunteering as an integral part of the new national service in its first article, and defines the concept in the third article L111-3:

“Voluntary work aims to provide a personal, temporary contribution to the national community as part of a mission of benefit to all and to develop solidarity and a sense of belonging to the nation. Volunteer placements are carried out in one of the following three areas:

- defence, security and prevention;
- social cohesion and integration;
- international co-operation and humanitarian aid.

In France's overseas dependencies, voluntary technical aid is a particular form of volunteering for social cohesion and integration.”

Although the existence of civilian voluntary work had now been enacted, it had still to be the subject of a specific law to take effect. The drafting and adoption of this subsequent law would take two and a half years. During this time, young people continued to be called up, and the professionalisation of the forces took place gradually. It is likely that the reduction in enlistment led the state administrations with the largest stake in the issue to apply gradual pressure for the civilian aspects to be given a legislative framework. For example, the foreign ministry (involved in the international co-operation form of national service) clearly had to consider how to replace the conscripts occupying posts in embassies, French cultural centres and companies.

This second discussion phase hinged on the link between previous forms of national service and the new civilian volunteer programmes. For example, the report by *député* (member of the *Assemblée nationale*) André Vauchez emphasised both the relation between the two and their differences. He also took up the arguments deployed in 1997: the diversification of the civilian forms of national service and the increasing

³¹ Séguin, P. *France et son service* (France and its service), op.cit.

³² Sapin, E. (2002, May). *Réforme du service national 1996-2002. Point de situation* (national service reform 1996-2002, an assessment of the situation). CCSC.

numbers of young people affected: “on both the formal and the conceptual levels, there is a direct relationship between the civilian forms of national service and the civilian voluntary work programmes as defined by this bill. The end of the conscription system makes it necessary, however, for the voluntary system to find its own logic and to evolve its own specific operating methods. Consequently, the civilian volunteer programmes should not be seen as substitutes for the civilian forms of military service.”³³

The national service reform has thus resulted in the creation of a new national service based on registration, the “citizens’ rendezvous”, now called the *Journée d’appel et de préparation à la défense* or defence preparation day, and the option of joining the army or embarking on a military or civilian volunteer programme. According to Bernard Paquetteau³⁴, a direct transition to a professional army and the definitive removal of any reference to national service would not have been in keeping with French traditions. In this way, the reform professionalises the institution while conserving references to national service.

Comparison of civilian forms of the old national service and voluntary civic service programmes of the new national service		
	Civilian forms of compulsory service	Voluntary civic service programmes
Options	Overseas co-operation in administration (VSNA) Overseas co-operation in business (VSNE)	International co-operation: cultural and environmental activities, technical, scientific and economic development, humanitarian aid
	Technical aid in the overseas territories	Aid in the overseas territories and in New Caledonia
	National police force Security and civil defence	Prevention, security and civil defence
	Conscientious objectors Military forms for civilian purposes: the “urban policy”, “health”, “CEA” (atomic energy commission), “former combatants”, “culture”, “integration”, “handicapped person”	Social cohesion and solidarity
People affected	Young men subject to national service obligations and born before 1 January 1979	Young men aged between 18 and 28, born after 31 December 1978 who are free of the obligations in book I of the <i>Code du service national</i> ; young men born before 1 January 1979 who are free of the obligations in book II of the <i>Code du service national</i>
	Young women volunteers	Young women aged between 18 and 28
	Aptitude criteria	Aptitude criteria and conditions fixed by decree
		Loans available from the budget

2.3 The links between the civilian forms of national service, voluntary service and the community associations sector

While the birth of the civilian voluntary work programme in France is primarily the result of the national service reform, some associations referred to voluntary service and more specifically to civic service as the

³³ Vauchez, A., op.cit.

³⁴ Paquetteau, B, op.cit.

core of their work. In the majority of cases, these ideas have been imported from abroad through international associative networks. The French tradition of associations favours the concept of *bénévolat*, understood as “unpaid work in the form of time spent assisting various groups or organisations outside the circle of family and friends”³⁵.

Little work has so far been done to study the process by which voluntary service and civic service practices have been imported³⁶. The process began after the First World War, at the same time as the conscientious objection movement. The first French associations offering voluntary work camps emerged through reference to foreign experience. For example, Service Civil International already existed in other countries when the French branch was founded in 1935. Other French associations and branches of associations were gradually created, often echoing German or Swiss experiences, and joining the movement for reconciliation and promoting peace begun abroad. These associations defended the idea of voluntary work in the service of peace, referred to with the term “voluntary service”.

The organisation of international camps intended to encourage mutual understanding continued to develop following the Second World War. Such associations were supported by UNESCO with the creation in 1948 of the Co-ordinating Committee for International Voluntary Service. In France they took part in the development of youth camps with the creation in 1959 of COTRAVAUX, on the initiative of the *Haut Commissariat à la Jeunesse* (youth high commission) led by Maurice Herzog. The war in Algeria motivated several of them to join forces. These associations often came into contact with the conscientious objectors’ movement: before the 1963 statute, they welcomed draft-dodgers, and after it they provided placements for conscientious objectors.

Not only associations working to promote peace have used the notions of voluntary service and volunteering. They are also to be found in the field of international solidarity. Following the wave of decolonisation, a large number of associations were formed to assist with development, and they too utilised voluntary service: 1967 saw the creation of the *Délégation catholique pour la coopération* (Catholic delegation for cooperation), and 1979 the *Service de Coopération au Développement* (cooperation service for development). As with the work camp associations, the government intervened in the structure of the sector by creating the *Association française des volontaires du progrès* (the French association of volunteers for progress) in 1963. In 1979, the principal development aid associations came together within a single co-ordinating framework, the CLONG-Volontariat, in order to gain recognition and legal status for volunteers posted abroad. In 1986, a first decree officially recognised their activities. It was followed by a second in 1995, which gave recognition to the status of “volunteer for international solidarity”.

While some associations looked to civilian service or voluntary service as part of their activities, this was perhaps because they also had a relationship with the conscientious objectors’ movement. Before 1963, militants in the movement were in contact with these associations, sharing their values and getting involved in international work camps. Then after 1963, these associations and others began to provide placements for conscientious objectors carrying out their service. Especially after the new act in 1983, they benefited from the increasing presence of conscientious objectors. Conscientious objectors have been a valuable labour resource for the associations in the same way as they have for public bodies.

Associations have therefore been directly affected by the national service reform and the removal of national service for conscientious objectors. It is currently difficult to evaluate the role played by the associations in the debate on the national service reform. It would seem that they contributed to the working group within the *Délégation interministérielle à l’Economie sociale* focusing on voluntary civic service in social cohesion and integration. The *Conseil national de la vie associative* (national council of associations) published an opinion paper in June, 1998, six months after the vote on the law reforming national service. The text called for a legal status for volunteers. It was followed by an opinion on the bill relating to

³⁵ Archambault, E. (2002, October-December). *Le travail bénévole en France et en Europe* (voluntary work in France and Europe). *Revue française des affaires sociales* (French social affairs review): La documentation française, 4.

³⁶ The information presented here is taken from the thesis by Loustalot, A. (2002, June). *Le volontariat civil. Approches historique et thématique d’un mouvement* (civilian voluntary service: historical and thematic approaches to the movement). Postgraduate degree in 19th and 20th century social and cultural history under the tutorship of Jean-Louis Robert). Paris I University .

voluntary civic service. The council's latest assessment speaks of the associations' disappointment with how the voluntary civic service³⁷ system has been developed.

Conclusion

The development of the civilian forms of national service and of voluntary service has thus taken place very gradually in France. On the one hand, the recognition afforded to conscientious objectors to military service was slow and difficult in coming. A widely accessible legal status was only finally created in 1983. The 1963 text noted the possibility of performing national service in a non-military context, but the access conditions were difficult and the way in which conscientious objectors were handled was fairly discouraging. However, it was at the same time that the first civilian forms of national service appeared: conscripts retained a military status but spent their service period with an administrative body, or a company in the case of the overseas programme (co-operation). They emerged in response to evolution in two separate areas: the needs of the army and the attitudes of young people to national service. As time passed, the numbers of conscripts involved increased. While there were 6199 conscripts involved in civilian service in 1984, this number had jumped to 32,844 by 1995. The number of conscientious objectors also increased, growing from 1717 in 1984 to 10,214 in 1995.

The development of the civilian forms of national service gradually emphasised the inequalities in terms of conscription, despite the fact that national service had always been associated with the republican ideal of equality. The reports published during the 1990s underlined the lack of equality between conscripts and the growth of this divide caused by the development of the civilian forms. The reports also noted the civilian forms dual function: helping the army to manage the flows of conscripts, and providing economical labour for administrative bodies, associations and companies (in the case of overseas programmes). Observations such as these fed the debates at the time of the national service reforms. A fear was expressed that such programmes would compete with the armed forces option if a mandatory national service period were to be maintained, and the prospect of the total abolition of a period devoted to national defence also aroused concern. From these worries, not to mention the budgetary questions, was born the 1997 law creating the new national service, known as universal national service. While the compulsory element was reduced essentially to registration and attendance at a national defence information day, the new service also offered young people the opportunity to take part in a military and civic volunteer system. The pre-existing civilian forms largely inspired the civic part, except that the transition removed the reference to conscientious objection. The three voluntary civic service programmes joined a variety of other programmes, which had been developed long before or in the more recent past by associations which were involved with public policy at a national level, such as volunteering for international solidarity, or, on a European level, such as the European Voluntary Service. The next chapter is devoted to a presentation of these various arrangements.

3. Voluntary civic service and voluntary service programmes in France

3.1 Voluntary civic service in relation to the new national service

The law of 28 October 1997 defines the new form of national service: universal national service. The text of the law states that "citizens contribute to the defence of the Nation". This involves several obligations: registration, *appel de préparation à la défense* (participation in a day of defence preparation) and conscription when necessary. These obligations are complemented by defence education: "the aim of this education is to strengthen the ties between the army and the Nation, while making young people aware of their defence duties".

³⁷ Conseil national de la vie associative. (2003). *Bilan de la vie associative 2000-2002* (assessment of association life 2000-2002). Paris : La documentation française.

Registration affects all French 16-year-olds. They must report to their local town hall to declare their marital status and family and school situation. In return, they receive a registration certificate bearing an identification number. Up to the age of 25, they must report any change of address or of family or professional situation to the national service administration. The defence preparation day (or JAPD) involves everyone aged between 16 and 18. The day provides them with information about "the general implications and objectives of national defence, civilian and military means of defence and their organisation, forms of voluntary service, as well as military preparations and the possibilities for joining the armed forces and the reserve forces".

This universal national service also includes volunteers, known as *engagés volontaires* in the armed forces and *volontaires* in civilian life. These forms of voluntary service aim to "provide a personal, temporary contribution to the national community as part of a mission of benefit to all, developing solidarity and a sense of belonging to the nation". This voluntary service can be carried out in three areas: 1) defence, security and prevention; 2) social cohesion and integration; 3) international co-operation and humanitarian aid. For France's overseas dependencies, there is the concept of *volontariat de l'aide technique* (voluntary technical aid), focusing on social cohesion and integration.

The new service applies to men born after 31 December 1978 and women born after 31 December 1982. The systematic registration of women began on 1 January 1999. This means that young men born in 1979 and after are exempt from military service.

The common framework for the three forms of voluntary civic service

The law of 14 March 2000 and the decree of 30 November 2000 define the voluntary civic service aspects of the new national service regime. The law defines the general framework, and the decree specifies the conditions under which it is applied.

Voluntary civic service programmes are open to those aged between 18 and 27, whether they are French citizens or citizens of a "member state of the European Union" or another "state in the European Economic Area". Programmes range in length from six to twenty-four months. They may be extended once. The placement may be with local or regional authorities or with any legal person such as a company or an association. Volunteers come under the rules of public law, with the signing of an agreement between the state and the host organisation. It is possible to carry out voluntary civic service as part of the European Voluntary Service programme. In this case, the European Commission signs the agreement.

The agreement contains various pieces of information, such as:

- "the nature of the activities entrusted to the civic volunteer,
- the conditions under which expenses arising from the volunteer programme are dealt with (allowances, services, social protection),
- training to be undergone by the volunteer, and the conditions of supervision,
- the ways in which work is allocated and carried out".

Under certain circumstances, the volunteer placement may be terminated.

The March 2000 law also defines the volunteer's rights and obligations. The placement consists of a full-time activity, which cannot be carried out in conjunction with any other public or private paid activity. There are a few exceptions to this. These concern the production of scientific, literary or artistic work. Volunteers must also respect the rules of the host organisations. In terms of the volunteer's rights, the law specifies that he or she will receive a subsistence allowance exempt from income tax. The 2000 text also specifies the amount of the allowance. The amount is intended to be identical for all voluntary civic service, not exceeding "50% of the salary corresponding to the *indice brut* 244 (a point on the French civil service pay scale)". This was equal to 570.86 € on 1 February 2002, 573.72 € on July 2004. This allowance may be revised upwards for placements abroad. Separate allowances for accommodation, food and equipment may also be payable. Volunteers also benefit from paid holidays.

A distinction is made between volunteer placements in France and those abroad in relation to social security cover. In the first case, the host organisation is supposed to provide for the volunteer's social protection by paying a fixed contribution. In the second case, the host organisation also takes responsibility for the volunteer's social security cover but this cover has a wider scope than in France, as it includes professional indemnity and repatriation.

Time in service is taken into account at three levels:

- in calculating pension entitlement
- for access to civil service employment (age requirements are pushed back)
- in the recognition of professional experience.

Both texts define the common framework for the three forms of voluntary civic service. Specific conditions are added by further *arrêtés* or orders, which introduce the differences between the three forms of voluntary placements.

Real differences between the three areas of voluntary civic service

The first voluntary civic service programme to be made operational by decree was international voluntary work in the areas of economic co-operation or cultural and social co-operation, November 20, 2000. This was quickly followed by civic voluntary work in the areas of prevention, security and civil defence, January 11, 2001.

The text relating to volunteer work in integration and social cohesion did not appear until December 2002. The text was followed six months later in July 2003 by the circular necessary for it to become operational. Thus between three and seven years passed between the announcement that the voluntary civic service programmes would be created and their actual implementation.

Voluntary work in the field of international co-operation: international voluntary civic service in business (VIE) and in administration (VIA).

Two ministerial orders were published on 1 December 2000. They specify the conditions under which voluntary civic service abroad can take place. The existence of two texts is intended to underline the distinction between international voluntary service within companies and international voluntary service with other organisations.

▪ **Economic co-operation**

The Ministry of the Economy, Finance and Industry and the State Secretariat for Foreign Trade, issued the first text. It created the title of *volontaire internationale en entreprise* (international volunteer in business - VIE), which encompasses placements carried out "within the framework of international co-operation, at foreign offices and representations of French companies or companies affiliated with French companies through a partnership agreement" or "in the form of economic co-operation missions within local or regional authorities or French organisations engaged in co-operation with France or a French local or regional authority".

The main aim of the voluntary service is to contribute to "the internationalisation of French companies' economic activity and of French expertise" through activities such as:

- "researching and prospecting for new international markets;
- providing technical or commercial reinforcement for existing local teams;
- seeking partners, agents or distributors;
- creating and setting up local structures".

Volunteers are supervised by a specific agency: the *Comité français des manifestations économiques à l'étranger – agence pour la promotion internationale des technologies et des entreprises françaises* or CFME-ACTIM (French committee for economic activity abroad – agency for the international promotion of French technology and business), which has now become UBIFrance (French Agency for International

Business Development). The text specifies that the *Direction des relations économiques extérieures* (Department of Foreign Economic Relations) can also allocate volunteers to its foreign offices and to French chambers of commerce abroad. In this case, volunteers take part in "actions undertaken to favour the development of economic and commercial relations between France and the allocated area".

- **Cultural and social co-operation**

The Foreign Affairs Ministry issued the second text. It sets out a list of approved activities for volunteers allocated placements by the ministry. The list includes diplomatic missions, consular posts, research, school and cultural establishments, various types of organisations abroad and international intergovernmental or non-governmental organisations. The text sees voluntary work as a part of a wider web of cultural and social co-operation and humanitarian intervention.

The *Centre d'information sur le volontariat international* (information centre for international volunteering (CIVI)) was set up by the government at the end of 2000 to provide information and promotion for the international volunteer programmes created to replace the old "co-operation" programme following the national service reform.

Its aim was to facilitate the transition from a mandatory programme to a voluntary programme, as the institutions feared that young people would not take advantage of the opportunity to volunteer and the government administrations, businesses and NGOs still needed young people, being geared up for them since the creation of the co-operation form under the old national service. Given the high level of interest shown by young people in this form of volunteering, the CIVI developed other focuses for work such as partnerships with schools and universities and links with business. One of the main jobs of the CIVI is still to handle volunteers' registrations and to publish mission vacancies on its web site but the actual recruiting of volunteers is not part of its remit.

CIVI comes under the responsibility of UBIFrance, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Department of Foreign Economic Relations, which is answerable to the Ministry of the Economy, Finance and Industry.

The administration of volunteers in business (VIE) is entrusted to UBIFrance. UBIFrance is also responsible for promoting VIE to companies. Volunteers sign a contract under the public law of voluntary civic service. The companies, which recruit them, enter into an agreement with UBIFRANCE, which is responsible for the administration of the volunteers, invoicing these costs to the company. This means that the volunteer works within a company but is not directly employed by it. UBIFrance receives a subsidy from the Foreign Trade Ministry (45% of its budget) for all its activities promoting French business abroad. It also earns income for its services (55% of its budget). Mission vacancies and volunteers for VIA are handled directly by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Department of Foreign Economic Relations.

The subsistence allowance paid to volunteers is made up of a fixed monthly allowance applicable to all the voluntary civic service programmes, amounting to €573.72, and a supplementary allowance, which varies according to the destination country, calculated in proportion to the salaries paid to expatriate public servants (decree of 28 March 1967). This allowance is intended to cover all expenses associated with the expatriation (cost of living and living conditions in a specific country: quality of the sanitation system, distance from France, level of insecurity, climatic conditions, quality of communications and transport, frequency of contact with France, availability of cultural and leisure activities, quality of the education system etc.).

Examples of allowances payable from June 2004			
source: www.civiweb.com			
Country	Fixed allowance	Geographical allowance	Total monthly allowance
Germany	€573.72	844.46	€1418.18
Australia	€573.72	1337.72	€1911.44
Cameroon	€573.72	1174.93	€1748.65
China	€573.72	1048.52	€1622.24
USA (New York)	€573.72	2134.87	€2708.59
Italy	€573.72	812.19	€1385.91
Tunisia	€573.72	536.19	€1109.91

For VIE, the cost of the volunteer for the company also takes account of the length of the mission and the company's turnover, administration expenses being invoiced by UBIFrance.

Examples of volunteer cost for a 12-month mission	
source: www.civiweb.com	
Characteristics	Cost before tax
Germany Company turnover: between €30,000k and €60,000k including travel card	€20,028.16
Poland Company turnover: between €30,000k and €60,000k including travel card	€19,404.56
USA Turnover: between €30,000k and €60,000k including travel card	€36,385.08

Voluntary civic service in the areas of civil defence, security and prevention

The text launching this form of voluntary work appeared in January 2001. It sets out "the list of approved activities and the applicable rules". Signed by the Interior Ministry, it also refers to legal texts governing the role of volunteer firemen. For instance, article I specifies that volunteers can be called on to "participate in all the activities assigned to the fire and rescue services". In particular, volunteers take part in "actions aimed at fire prevention, prediction, training and the rescue operations required to safeguard people, property and the environment". The volunteer is clearly comparable with a voluntary fireman, subject to the same psychological and physical requirements and benefiting from the same conditions of employment and training.

Voluntary civic service in solidarity and social cohesion

The order relating to voluntary civic service in solidarity and social cohesion defines the ministries and sectors concerned. Twelve ministries are mentioned, highlighting the interdisciplinary nature of this form of voluntary service.

The list of activities included is relatively long:

- "preventing and combating social exclusion,
- assistance and support for people with difficulties due to their age, handicap or state of health,
- public health risk prevention, education and information,
- participation in actions undertaken within a town's political framework,
- actions to support the social inclusion and integration of immigrant populations or populations arising from immigration,
- actions to prevent delinquency and aid the social inclusion of delinquents,

- mediation and conciliation actions,
- humanitarian actions and actions in support of human rights, citizenship education and the combat against all forms of discrimination,
- risk prevention, disaster relief and training in emergency techniques,
- youth work, popular education, sport and leisure,
- actions in the fields of education and artistic and cultural mediation,
- actions resisting the depopulation of the countryside,
- enhancing the environment,
- developing the agricultural and forestry sectors,
- protecting and promoting the nation's historical heritage".

Translating these ideas into action is delegated to the directors of the relevant authorities. The circular dated 28 July 2003 gives further detail about how the programmes are organised. It covers the arrangements for:

- establishing an agreement between the host organisations and the responsible authorities,
- youth volunteer applications,
- the way in which applications are processed,
- the allocation of placements to volunteers and subsequent follow-up,
- allowances and social security.

Organisations wishing to take in volunteers must submit an application to the local prefect's office so that an agreement can be drawn up. The agreement will specify the organisation's obligations in relation to the volunteer, "in particular in terms of training and the exercise of the activity, and the conditions under which the voluntary placement will occur". Young people wishing to volunteer must also submit an application to their chosen host organisation. The organisation examines the application and defines a volunteer project covering various areas such as the volunteer's activities, allowance amounts, the ways in which training will be provided, the duration of the placement etc. Once this project document has been agreed, a letter of appointment is prepared and a date on which the volunteer will be assigned to the organisation is selected.

Volunteers benefit from social security coverage and a subsistence allowance amounting to €573.72 (50% of the salary corresponding to French civil service pay scale 244). The host organisation is currently responsible for all the costs associated with the volunteer. The circular specifies that associations should be exempted from paying the €293.29/year contribution for social security.

A special type of programme exists for France's overseas dependencies: voluntary technical aid. This comes under the designation of social cohesion and integration: "it contributes to scientific, economic, administrative, health and social, educational and cultural development overseas".

The volunteers are assigned:

- to a state authority, a local public authority or a public body,
 - to non-profit-making organisations, associations or projects whose purpose is vocational training, education or sanitary or cultural activities,
- for a period of 12 months, extendable for a further 12 months.

A list of activity sectors has been drawn up, with an associated list of criteria and qualifications required of applicants. At least two years of higher education are required. Candidates must contact the authorities overseas and submit an application consisting of a curriculum vita, a covering letter and various other documents. The conditions for allowances and social security cover are the same as those for all the voluntary civic service programmes.

3.2. International solidarity voluntary service (Volontariat de solidarité internationale)

Decree 95-94 of 30 January, 1995 relating to volunteers and voluntary associations working for international solidarity defines the role of "volunteer for international solidarity". This replaces a previous text dating back to 1986. Any citizen of France or another EU member state aged 18 or over may volunteer. There is no upper age limit. The duration may range from one year to six years.

A contract defines the reciprocal commitments of the volunteer and the international solidarity NGO (*Association de Solidarité Internationale*, or ASI). The volunteer undertakes to participate in a project for international solidarity and to carry out one or more tasks of general benefit. For its part, the association must take part in "implementing a programme or project for international solidarity" and must "call on the voluntary contributions of one or more physical persons associated with the association by contract". It offers training to the volunteer and pays a subsistence allowance. It pays for travel and provides social security cover for the volunteer (illness, maternity, invalidity, accidents at work, repatriation etc.). On their return, volunteers receive a reintegration allowance.

The association receives approval from the Foreign Affairs Ministry, based on advice from the *Commission du Volontariat* (voluntary work committee), founded in 1995 and made up of representatives of the government (Foreign Affairs Ministry, Social Affairs Ministry, Ministry of Finance and FONJEP, an organisation specialising in employment in associations) and of five NGOs which send volunteers on missions. Associations that wish to obtain an agreement as an *agence solidarité internationale* (ASI) must fulfil three conditions:

- “the association signs contracts lasting more than a year with its volunteers;
- the association must be able to prove that it has operated on the ground for at least three years;
- the association’s private resources must amount to more than 15% of its annual budget”.³⁸

The *Commission du Volontariat* also looks at the conditions under which volunteers are employed: the methods for selecting and recruiting volunteers, training before departure, types of contracts signed with volunteers, level of and justification for subsistence allowances, job descriptions, methods of supervising and supporting volunteers during their missions and assistance provided when they return home. Obtaining this approval enables the association to benefit from the fixed sum allocated by the Foreign Affairs Ministry (a contribution to spending on social security cover, administration and volunteer training), and provides volunteers with training before they leave, a subsistence allowance, benefits in kind, payment of travel costs and repatriation expenses, insurance, social security cover for themselves and any accompanying dependents, and help in returning to the job market at the end of the mission.

The association and the volunteer sign a volunteer contract defining the volunteer’s mission, working conditions, the duration and the amount of the subsistence allowance. The *Guide du Volontariat de Solidarité Internationale* (Guide to Volunteering for International Solidarity) produced by the CLONG-Volontariat draws the attention of associations to the way a volunteer contract should be written to avoid its reclassification as an employment contract. The need to avoid this, which also occurs in associations offering volunteer programmes in France, bears witness to the absence of a legal status for volunteers and the difficulties that can result in relation to French employment law. The amount of the subsistence allowance has been capped since 1993 to preserve the specific nature of volunteering. Performing a voluntary service mission does not give the right to unemployment benefit. Only people who have worked before leaving on the mission can claim benefit on their return. Volunteers are exempt from income tax.

A ministerial order defines the countries concerned. The following countries are excluded: Australia, Austria, Belgium, Canada, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Luxembourg, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Portugal, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom and United States of America.

³⁸ CLONG-Volontariat. (2000, March). *Guide du Volontariat de Solidarité Internationale* (Guide to Volunteering for International Solidarity).

Volunteering for international solidarity is funded by the Foreign Affairs Ministry and the NGOs. A budget is set by the finance law voted on by the Assemblée Nationale (national assembly) (about €18,293,900 or 120 million francs). Fixed sums covering some of the expenses are paid to the NGOs in proportion to the numbers of volunteers they have. These sums have not been re-valued since 1987, and thus cover an ever-smaller fraction of the cost of a volunteer. This cost varies from one country to another. For a two-year mission, it ranges from €16,655 to €35,482, of which between €5,488 and €7,851 is paid by the state and between €11,167 and €27,631 is paid by the NGO³⁹. NGOs may receive additional state funding within the framework of specific projects, but these funds are not intended to finance volunteers. To fill the gap, they use their own funds (donations from individuals or institutions, for example). Partners in the South may also take responsibility for part of the cost. FONJEP, the organisation specialising in employment in associations, manages the state's financial contributions and distributes them to the NGOs as required. Only the Association Française des Volontaires du Progrès (French association of volunteers for progress) can manage this money directly.

An umbrella NGO was founded in 1979: CLONG-Volontariat⁴⁰. It brings together fifteen NGOs that send volunteers for international solidarity on missions abroad⁴¹. The CLONG umbrella group has two major objectives:

- “in ethical and philosophical terms, to reflect on the future of volunteering as an expression of citizenship (the roles and usefulness of volunteers etc.);
- in legal and statutory terms, to standardise the contractual relationships between associations and their volunteers and to campaign for the legal recognition of the status of volunteers for international solidarity.”

It carries out three functions:

- advising NGOs and sharing knowledge and experience,
- representing NGOs to the public authorities and on various committees,
- informing the general public and promoting volunteering for international solidarity by organising information meetings and taking part in events such as International Volunteer Day and International Solidarity Week.

This co-ordinating body has contributed to the adoption of successive decrees covering volunteering for international solidarity: the decree of March 1986, replaced by the decree of January 1995. It is currently taking part in discussions on the adoption of a law relating to a “contract on volunteering for international solidarity”. The CLONG-Volontariat is one of the three founders and a member of Coordination Sud, which is the largest international NGO umbrella group in France.

3.3. European Voluntary Service

The European Voluntary Service programme was piloted in 1996 and 1997, and became a full programme in 1998 (decision 1986/98/CE of the European Parliament and Council). It is now one of the most important aspects of the Youth Action Programme 2000-2006. It is open to young people aged between 18 and 25. Placements can last between six months and a year. European voluntary service is based on a tripartite contract between the volunteers, the sending organisation (a local authority or non-profit-making public organisation) and the host organisation (*idem*).

The aim of the service is "to stimulate the mobility of young Europeans as part of their active citizenship, to enable them to acquire valuable experience in several sectors of activity and to encourage an active

³⁹ These figures include all costs: recruitment, training, follow-up, travel, passport, visa, social security cover, subsistence allowance (between €228 and €914 per month), administration.

⁴⁰ The quotes are taken from the organisation's website (www.coordinationsud.org). The objectives were confirmed during the interview.

⁴¹ Twenty-six NGOs have approval to send volunteers on missions. Those which are not members of CLONG are either members of other collectives or do not belong to any umbrella group.

contribution to European construction and co-operation between the Community and other countries, through their participation in trans-national activities of collective benefit". There is a National Agency appointed by the national government in each programme country. Its purpose is to implement the various actions planned as part of the European Youth Programme. It reports not to the national authorities but to the European Commission.

With regard to European Voluntary Service, it is responsible for:

- examining associations' projects and sending them on to the European Commission's selection committee,
- paying subsidies to organisations,
- examining applications from young volunteers,
- training the employees mentoring the volunteers in the host organisations, the programme's regional correspondents and young European volunteers arriving in the country (a linguistic and cultural introduction),
- evaluating the progress of the volunteer service.

In March 2003, the management of part of the European Youth Programme was decentralised in France. Regional committees were set up within the Regional Departments of Youth and Sport. Their job was to "implement the new European youth policy and the Youth Programme on a regional scale, to select 'Youth Exchange' and 'European Voluntary Service' projects, and to monitor and evaluate the chosen projects."⁴²

3.4. NGOs' voluntary service programmes

We can distinguish between three types of associations offering voluntary work to young people:

- o associations organising work camps for young volunteers which are engaged in long-term voluntary projects whether associated with European Voluntary Service or not;
- o associations sending and/or hosting volunteers
- o associations which make reference to voluntary work.

Only the first two cases are relevant here. It is a preliminary categorisation. This will be added to as research in France continues.

Voluntary service in work camp associations

The first group consists mainly of associations in the Cotravaux⁴³ umbrella group. Some offer both short-term youth placements and medium- to long-term voluntary projects. They are generally involved in the EVS programme, but not all their projects come under this heading. They include Concordia, Service Civil International, Solidarités Jeunesse, Les Compagnons Bâisseurs and Jeunesse et Reconstruction. Information about three of these programmes is provided here:

▪ Les Compagnons Bâisseurs (Building Companions)

Les Compagnons Bâisseurs offer placements to conscientious objectors, EVS volunteers and young people seeking to volunteer individually outside of any institutional framework. The young people form teams of three to five and work with disadvantaged families. Their main focus is on renovating accommodation: providing technical, financial and labour support on-site. They may

⁴² Instruction no. 03-049 JS. (2003, March). Department of Youth and Non-Formal Education.

⁴³ List of Cotravaux member associations: Alpes de lumière, Action d'urgence internationale, Concordia, Compagnons bâtisseurs, Espace chantier environnement local, Fédération unie des auberges de jeunesse, Jeunesse et Reconstruction, Neige et merveille, Service civil international, Solidarités Jeunesse, Union Rempart, Union Nationale des Associations Régionalisées d'Etudes et des Chantiers (UNAREC).

also contribute to supervising international construction projects for young volunteers in France and work in the association's various offices.

They benefit from technical training and learn about associations, social work and leadership. They receive a subsistence allowance covering food and pocket money. The association handles accommodation and insurance. A medium-term volunteer programme (3-6 months) was created in 2002 at the request of young volunteers.

In 2002, Les Compagnons Bâisseurs hosted 29 volunteers (18 men and 11 women): 6 had European Volunteer status, 10 were conscientious objectors (including 8 Germans) and 13 had no official status. The association also sent 10 young EVS volunteers elsewhere in Europe.

▪ **Solidarités Jeunesse (Youth Solidarities)**

Solidarités Jeunesses⁴⁴ is an “*Association Nationale de Jeunesse et d'Education Populaire* (national youth and non-formal education organisation) approved by the Ministry for Youth and Sport. It organises both short- and long-term international work camps, social integration activities, training programmes and actions for international solidarity, and manages small activity centres in rural areas.”

The association's aims are:

- “voluntary participation by all, particularly the young and the most disadvantaged, in local, national and international life;
- local development focused on the individual, the environment and cultural heritage;
- breaking down the barriers between generations, cultures and nations;
- the concrete construction of peace.”

The association has seven regional branches. It is the French wing of Youth Action for Peace, or YAP, an originally Protestant movement founded after the First World War to promote popular reconciliation, with a particular focus on the young.

Solidarités Jeunesses offers several volunteering packages:

- short-term volunteering, which essentially takes the form of international work camps in France or abroad, lasting about three weeks.
- short-term European Voluntary Service (three weeks to six months) for “young people in difficulty”.
- long-term volunteering, based essentially on European Voluntary Service (young people received and sent from 6 months to a year).

It is also possible to volunteer for a longer period with this association without being involved with European Voluntary Service. This is the association's own programme that existed before the creation of European Voluntary Service. The volunteer receives an allowance of €100 per month, and is fed and accommodated. He or she is covered by insurance and has social security cover. However, he or she must pay a registration fee of €220, and may sometimes be responsible for his or her airfare. This programme does not is not restricted by the limits imposed by European Voluntary Service (budgetary and administrative limits, but also limits in terms of nationality and age).

Volunteers are funded either by European Voluntary Service or by the association's general budget.

▪ **Jeunesse et Reconstruction (Youth and Reconstruction)**

Jeunesse et Reconstruction has been co-ordinating exchanges offered by the International Cultural Youth Exchange federation in France since 1987. Voluntary placements of 6 months or 1 year have been offered in Africa, Latin America and Asia since 1998. They are open to volunteers aged

⁴⁴ The quotes are taken from a document presenting the association.

between 18 and 30. There is no requirement for qualifications or knowledge of the country's language.

The volunteers undertake projects aiming to remedy social injustice in various areas (social work, education, health, the rights of local communities, local development, the environment) and to promote intercultural understanding. They are accommodated with families or on-site by the host projects. They take part in several seminars: before leaving, on arriving, an evaluation after six months, an assessment before returning, and on returning.

The registration fees vary from country to country. In general, they are relatively high, as they cover the full length of the volunteer's stay. This programme involves about 60 young people a year: 30 received in France and 30 sent abroad.

Other NGOs programmes

▪ **L'Année Diaconale (Diaconal Year)**

L'Année Diaconale is a member of the French Protestant Federation, and part of the Ecumenical Diaconal Year Network or EDYN.

It offers programmes to volunteers aged between 18 and 25, lasting 10 to 12 months, in the sanitation, social and educational sectors in France, Europe and the United States. Volunteers are hosted by various organisations: homes for children, adolescents, the elderly and handicapped, clinics, educational establishments, youth clubs etc. Their level of motivation is an important criterion. They must also "be well balanced personally and relationally in order to be able to face the variety of situations which may arise".

The association used to provide placements for French conscientious objectors, and continues to do so for German conscientious objectors. It is involved with the European Voluntary Service programme (receiving young Europeans or sending young French volunteers to work with members of the European partnership network).

Volunteers take part in on-arrival, in-service and end-of-service seminars and are monitored throughout their service. With regard to social security cover, there are three possible situations for volunteers not working under the EVS programme:

- French volunteers: remain covered by their parents' social security coverage for the year,
- foreign volunteers from elsewhere in the European Community: contribute to coverage in their country of origin,
- foreign volunteers from countries outside the European Community: contributions for social security coverage are paid by L'Année Diaconale.

Volunteers receive a subsistence allowance of about 190 euros. They are fed and accommodated by the host organisation.

▪ **Action Signe de Réconciliation (Action Reconciliation for Peace – ASF)**

The association ASF, or Action Signe de Réconciliation, was founded in 1958 in Germany, and has been sending volunteers to France since 1961. It offers voluntary service working for peace, with the aim of stimulating remembrance and awareness of the crimes of the Nazis. The minimum age is 18 years. Experience of community work or politics and an interest in history are desirable. Programmes currently last for 12 months.

Volunteers are involved in projects touching on four main areas:

- historical and political education (combating racism and anti-Semitism, especially in museums about the Shoah)
- elderly people, Holocaust survivors and their families
- handicapped people

-people on the margins of society (the homeless, refugees and asylum seekers, disadvantaged children and adolescents, women in distress...).

The volunteers benefit from private welfare insurance. They are accommodated and receive a subsistence allowance of 290 Euros, which also covers food. ASF provides a high level of support consisting of seminars encouraging volunteers to think about the stages of their service.

Volunteers are currently sent to France, Belgium, Germany, Great Britain, the Netherlands, Norway, Poland, the Czech Republic, Russia, Belarus, Ukraine, the United States and Israel. About 150 volunteers are involved every year. Twenty volunteers are currently working in France.

- **L'arche de Jean Vanier**

L'Arche de Jean Vanier has been working with volunteers since its foundation in 1964. It currently operates 118 communities across 29 countries. 25 communities are located in France, giving a home to nearly 900 people with learning disabilities and special needs.

The volunteer programme is aimed at over-18s, with no upper age limit, and lasts up to two years. The voluntary service takes place in a home for mentally handicapped people, in France or abroad. Volunteers live in the home, taking part in the life of the community at all times. They are responsible for spending time with the residents, leading activities and administrating and managing the home.

Volunteers benefit from basic social security coverage and receive a subsistence allowance equivalent to 25% of the French minimum wage (about 250 Euros) for the first year and 35% for the second year. The association also receives young EVS volunteers, and used to receive conscientious objectors. Volunteers undergo training and are monitored in their work, with regular evaluations. A "membership contract" is signed with the association.

- **ATD-Fourth World**

The association offers two forms of voluntary scheme: "summer work camps" (international) and "permanent volunteers". Within the "permanent volunteers" programme, a full-time open-ended commitment, working with the world's poorest, there is a variation aimed more specifically at the young: one year's full-time voluntary work. This option is open to volunteers aged between 19 and 24. Volunteers are paid a monthly allowance of about 300 Euros.

- **Unis-Cité**

Since 1994, Unis-Cité has been offering a programme to combat social exclusion for young volunteers aged between 18 and 25. Over a period of 9 months, teams work full-time to carry out locally focused projects in France. , in . During their voluntary service, the young volunteers carry out several missions in different associations that consent to host a team. Volunteers are given training on arrival. The volunteers receive a subsistence allowance of 380 Euros/month. Only transport is paid in addition; accommodation and food being financed by the volunteers themselves.

Since 1995, 160 young people have done voluntary work through this association. At the beginning of 2004, Unis-Cité decided to register its programme under the legal framework of Volunteering for Social Cohesion and Solidarity, which modifies the conditions under which volunteers are received and the amount of the subsistence allowance. Unlike the other associations mentioned, Unis-Cité does not use the European Voluntary Service programme to receive volunteers.

Conclusion

This presentation of voluntary programmes in France shows the diversity of the experiences on offer. With regard to the voluntary work aspect of universal national service, there are significant differences

between the three forms available. Additionally, they have elements in common with the former civilian service programmes, giving the impression of renewing existing arrangements.

In the community associations sector, it appears that associations are basing their own volunteer programmes on the EVS programme and the conscientious objectors service. They have not yet taken up the option of then new national service voluntary work in integration and social cohesion. This scheme is still too recent. Moreover, the conditions set do not always correspond to those of the associations. The fact remains that some of them encounter difficulties with volunteers being comparable to employees, which has a real impact on costs. It is quite likely that changes will come about in the voluntary programmes offered by associations in the next few years.

There are also associations that make reference to volunteers without themselves offering such work. For example, the AFEV, a student association, uses the concept to name a health promotion activity ("les Volontaires de la santé" – health volunteers) and a social support programme ("Volontariat Etudiant de Solidarité" – student volunteers for solidarity). The JPA, an association providing holidays and leisure activities for children, puts the work of the activity leaders and directors of its holiday and leisure centres into perspective as a voluntary commitment, speaking of "animateurs et directeurs volontaires" (voluntary activity leaders and directors) and "animation volontaire" (voluntary activities). Finally, although the Centre National du Volontariat (now become France-Bénévolat), the national volunteers' centre, concentrates on unpaid work for retired people, it can cover certain areas of youth volunteering through its knowledge of full-time unpaid work.

As regards international volunteering, most of the programmes provide for sending or receiving young people in France and the rest of Europe. As the table shows, only international volunteering, volunteering for international solidarity, EVS and certain association programmes give young French volunteers the opportunity to go abroad. Volunteers from other countries can be received in all the programmes except volunteering for international solidarity, which is restricted to young Europeans.

4. Survey of voluntary programmes

There is currently no complete analysis of the impact of voluntary service in France. A preliminary view can be obtained by referring to the figures produced by ministries and associations. This data gives an impression of the numbers of young people being allocated voluntary work, but rarely describes their voluntary experience. In this section there is first a quantitative description of the different volunteer programmes, based on three types of data: the number of volunteers, their profile, and, for international postings, the countries involved. Following this, there is a clarification of several common themes.

Volunteers in the armed forces

Although this study is primarily concerned with civilian volunteering, it may be useful to examine briefly the voluntary situation in the armed forces following the national service reforms.

The audits published by the Ministry of Defence make it clear that the aims of the 1997-2002 military planning law, in particular the reduction in size of the armed forces, have been achieved. The removal of military service (30 November 2001) has gradually led to the reduction in the number of call-ups, until the category was eliminated altogether. The 1999 audit shows military volunteers among the categories of military personnel. As the table shows, their numbers are increasing rapidly. Unfortunately, no distinction is made between volunteers (serving 1 to 5 years) and those who decide to join the armed forces as a career. The distribution by activity sector shows that the army seems to be less attractive to young people. The social audits do not show the profiles of the young volunteers. Only the average age is given: 22 years old.

Composition of armed forces personnel

Source: 2003 Social audit

	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003
Career soldiers	316,636	316,230	319,038	322,294	326,922
Volunteers	3574	10,186	14,179	17,550	20,247
Conscripts	84,255	53,574	13,654	0	0

Number of volunteers in each armed force

Source: 2003 Social audit

	2000	2001	2002	2003
Army	2162	2635	3031	2951
Navy	408	841	1252	1441
Air Force	275	553	841	1210
Gendarmerie	7287	9999	12,196	14,284
Other	0		0	361
Total	10,186	14,179	17,590	20,247

Volunteers in VIE and VLA programmes

There are currently 53,883⁴⁵ young people registered with the *Centre d'information sur le volontariat international* (information centre for international volunteering or CIVI) Website for a period of 6 months. Their registrations are renewable until the age limit of 28. Some of these are ready to leave on assignment quickly, while others may not be but have registered simply to obtain information or to access the vacancies. Half the candidates are women. A large majority are over 25: 58.3% are aged between 25 and 28, 38.1% between 21 and 24 and 1% between 18 and 20. This distribution can be explained by the conjunction of three factors: the target group addressed by the CIVI (graduates), the profile sought by companies and administrative bodies and the aims of this voluntary programme (support at the beginning of a professional career). The educational level of these candidates is necessarily high, a little more so among the men than the women.

Educational level of candidates in 2003

source: CIVI 2004

	Men	women
5 years or more of higher education	64%	51.2%
3 or 4 years' higher education	22.7%	33.3%
2 years' higher education	8.5%	10.6%
Qualifications obtained at age 18	3%	3.3%
Qualifications obtained before age 18	1.1%	1.1%
Other	0.7%	0.5%

Candidates are graduates from universities (36%), business schools (14.6%), engineering schools (13.1%) and political studies institutes (2.3%). The lengths of placement they are looking for vary: 24.1% are looking for a placement lasting between 6 and 11 months, 45.1% between 12 and 17 months and 30.8% between 18 and 24 months. One third are seeking placements within companies.

⁴⁵ 2004, July.

Types of mission sought in 2003	
source: CIVI 2004	
Activities within a company	28.4 %
Economic and commercial study activities	11.7%
Activities in cultural co-operation	11.6 %
Humanitarian activities	10.3 %
Scientific co-operation activities in an embassy	6.9 %
Teaching activities	6.8 %
Chancellery or press department etc. activities	5.6%
No preference	11.9 %

Although the number of candidates is very high, the number of volunteers is significantly lower. However, it has been growing steadily since 2001: 984 volunteers in 2001, 1790 in 2002 (of which 194 were mission renewals) and 2372 in 2003 (of which 706 were mission renewals). There are currently (July 2004) 3919 young people on missions abroad.

During 2003, 1666 were sent abroad under an agreement with a company, 560 by the Foreign Affairs Ministry and 90 by the Foreign Economic Relations Department. One third of young people devote between 1 and 3 months to looking for a placement, and 16% spend 6 months. For VIA postings, they respond directly to the vacancies advertised on the CIVI web site, which are limited in number. For VIE on the other hand, they can either respond to the vacancies on the CIVI web site or contact the companies directly. In fact, 30% of VIE departures are generated by vacancies posted on the site, 25% follow an unsolicited application and 24% come after a work placement with the company.

The duration of placements is a little shorter than that sought: 57.6% last between 6 and 11 months, 26% between 19 and 24 months and 16.5% between 13 and 18 months. Compared with previous years, the length of service seems to be increasing (16.7 months on average), as does the number of renewals. As the following tables show, certain countries and activity sectors are more favoured than others. 434 companies have sent volunteers abroad, and almost 900 are currently approved to do so. Nearly 51% of companies which have sent a volunteer abroad have a turnover less than €60 million, and 68% of volunteers currently on postings were sent by a large company (turnover > €220 million).

Country			Geographical area	
Source: CIVI 2003			Source: CIVI 2003	
United States	252	10.9 %	Western Europe	32 %
United Kingdom	194	8.4%	Asia/Oceania	18 %
Germany	159	6.9%	North America	12 %
China (+Hong-Kong)	126	5.4 %	Africa	19 %
Italy	79	3.4 %	Latin America	8 %
Belgium	70	3 %	Eastern Europe	6%
Japan	69	3 %	Near and Middle East	2 %
Spain	57	2.5 %		
Mexico	57	2.5 %		
Czech Republic	42	1.8 %		

Activity sector	
Source : CIVI 2003	
Banking	518
Automobile equipment	486
Petrol and gas	209
General construction	152
Telecommunications	132
Food processing	131
Commerce and distribution	111
Industrial engineering, consulting and surveying	111
Pharmaceuticals	96
Air transport	78

The profile of volunteers who are actually placed differs from that of candidates. Men show a clear majority: 69%, against 31% women. High educational levels have more representation: 84.6% of volunteers have an educational level corresponding to 5 or more years in higher education, and 12.8% corresponding to 3 or 4 years.

Volunteers for international solidarity

As the sending of volunteers in this category is subject to state funding administered by a specific organisation, data on the profiles of the people concerned is relatively accessible. The CLONG-Volontariat, which brings together several NGOs, has published the results of a survey carried out in 2003 of a sample of 501 volunteers who had returned from volunteer postings in the previous five years. The survey provides information not only about the profiles of the people involved, but also their experience as a volunteer for an NGO.

In terms of age, the data shows that the 25 to 29 years group is the most represented. There is also a small proportion aged 20 to 24, making volunteers for international solidarity a relatively young group, despite the lack of an upper age limit. The survey also points out that 75% of volunteers are aged between 25 and 34.

They are generally graduates: 36% had spent 3 or 4 years in higher education and 40% five years or more in 2002. This disproportionate quantity of graduates can also be seen among employees, the majority of whom belong to the category of senior executives or administrative and commercial professionals. There are more men than women, although the gap is gradually narrowing, probably due to the disappearance of the category of *coopérants*, (men who opted to serve internationally as a way of doing their compulsory national service), who formerly constituted a significant proportion of NGO volunteers. Before the national service reforms, NGOs received both *coopérants* and volunteers for international solidarity.

Volunteer profile			
Source: FONJEP 2003			
	1998	2000	2002
Women	43 %	51%	48%
Men	57 %	49 %	52 %
20-24 years old	22 %	7%	5%
25-29 years old	43%	42%	45%
30-39 years old	25%	37%	38 %
40+ years old	10%	14%	12%
16-18 qualifications only	25%	6 %	22%
1 or 2 years' higher education		21%	
3 or 4 years' higher education	36 %	44%	36%
5 or more years' higher education	35 %	28%	40%
Total	1557	1613	1811

The 2003 survey does not cover the motivations of the volunteers. However, there was a question dealing with their commitment to associations, trade unions and political parties. The data obtained shows clearly that the volunteers are politically and socially committed, often more so than the average French citizen. The survey also places more emphasis on documenting what the volunteers feel they have gained from their work, the difficulties of returning home and professional recognition of their achievements. In general terms, the volunteers recognise that they have acquired many skills during their postings. This is true equally for personal qualities (attitude, openness etc.) and professional knowledge.

Volunteers' destination countries		
Source: FONJEP		
	2000	2002
Eastern Europe	8 %	4 %
Africa	52 %	50 %
Near and Middle East	10 %	15 %
Latin America/Caribbean	13 %	16 %
Asia	17 %	16 %
Indian/Pacific Oceans		1 %

Volunteers of the European Voluntary Service

The European Voluntary Service has developed steadily in France. While the number of young French volunteers sent elsewhere in Europe and the number of European volunteers received in France doubled between 1996 and 1999, the increase has been significantly greater since 1999. In 1999, 329 young people benefited from the programme, 525 in 2000 and 351 in 2001. In 2003, 436 volunteers were sent to other European countries and 303 were received in France. It is likely that this progression stems from the improved circulation of information about EVS.

These figures are limited by the budget allocated to the programme. About fifty additional volunteers could be sent. Part of the budget is also intended to develop short-term European Voluntary Service. The National Agency wishes to devote 15% of its budget to this purpose. In 2003, 7% of the budget was allocated to short-term placements, enabling 70 young people to benefit from this less demanding form of volunteering (35 sent and 35 received). The budgetary constraints necessitate selection of volunteers. According to the European Youth Programme evaluation carried out in 2003, 30% of the projects cannot be fulfilled, although credits sometimes remain at the end of the year⁴⁶. The sending and hosting organisations also tend to select candidates. The sending organisations inform and advise young people interested in voluntary service, and those looking for a work placement with a company abroad, or who wish to undertake an international solidarity project, will be invited to look at other programmes. The hosting organisations tend to select candidates on the basis of their language or technical skills, despite the fact that the programme stipulates that no specific skills are required to access the programme. To these selection criteria are added the registration procedure, which can appear complex, and the time between making the application and leaving for the placement (about 5 months), which may discourage some less motivated volunteers or those who are less able to deal with administrative requirements. Thus the considerable number of highly-qualified graduates among the volunteers can be explained by the nature of the procedures for accessing European Voluntary Service, among other things. As emphasised by a study carried out in 2002, “young people with low levels of training would like to volunteer, but either the procedures are too complex or they are not adequately supported during their search for a placement”⁴⁷.

⁴⁶ Labadie, F. (reporter) (2003, September). *Evaluation du Programme Européen Jeunesse, France. Rapport final* (Evaluation of the European Youth Programme, France, final report).

⁴⁷ Flichy, B. (2002). *Le Service Volontaire Européen, avant, pendant, après* (European Voluntary Service – before, during and after). Association Inter-Echanges. INJEP.

European Voluntary Service thus appears to be a relatively selective programme, and the evaluation report reinforces the point, which emerges clearly from the data on the volunteers. “Long-term EVS is mainly aimed at students of varying ages and at different stages of their studies, who consequently have diverse motivations (looking for career directions, language, indecision on completing their studies, looking for a way to use their studies etc.).”⁴⁸ Of the 335 volunteers surveyed in 2002, 31% had school-leaver qualifications only, 23% had two years of higher education, 27% had three or four years, and 13% five years⁴⁹. 57% of them became students after they left the programme, 23% got employment, generally on fixed-term contracts, and 15% were looking for work.

This privilege granted to students, who are eligible for other European mobility programmes (ERASMUS), is necessarily at the expense of other young people. “Among the young people having difficulty accessing EVS, two groups should be distinguished: on one hand a group made up of young people with no or only low-level qualifications with problems finding work, who can nevertheless access long-term EVS via short-term EVS or as part of a community project (such as Unis-Cité), and on the other hand a group made up of young people with a professional qualification (a professional *baccalauréat* or school-leaver qualification, a *Certificat d’aptitudes professionnelles* (CAP, a vocational qualification), a *Brevet d’enseignement professionnel* (BEP, a technical school certificate) or a completed *contrat de qualification*, a kind of apprenticeship leading to a vocational qualification), and young people with a graduate-level qualification from a working-class background, who rarely manage to access the programme (lack of link-up between arrangements or necessity of entering the job market immediately)”⁵⁰.

EVS attracts mostly women: 76% to 24% of men. This imbalance probably results from the option – until 2001 – for men to serve abroad through their national service. The removal of this civilian form of national service will probably lead to an increase in the number of men. According to the French agency's audit, the volunteers have an average age of 22.

Breakdown of EVS volunteers						
Source: audit by the French agency						
	Pilot scheme (1996-1997)		1998-1999		2000-2002	
	French Volunteers Abroad	European volunteers In France	French volunteers	European volunteers	French volunteers	European volunteers
	247	202	582	405	1373	924
Men	33.13 %		33.16 %	17.28		
Women	66.87 %		66.83 %	82.71		

The motivations of the volunteers vary between the desire to discover a country in a new way (23%), to learn a language (18%) or to take a break in an academic or professional career (16%). Most have already spent time abroad: 23% have spent three months or more abroad on a European mobility programme such as Erasmus or working as a trainee or an employee. These are young people with a certain level of experience of foreign travel, therefore, who have consequently already broken through certain symbolic barriers associated with travelling. Indeed, half the volunteers had already visited the country chosen for their European Voluntary Service. Nearly half had no knowledge at all of the language of the country, but this did not lead them all to learn it before leaving. Thus, as shown by the 2002 study, knowledge of the language is not a determining factor in whether to volunteer.

⁴⁸ Labadie, F., op.cit., p. 11.

⁴⁹ Data from Flichy, B., op.cit.

⁵⁰ Labadie, F., op.cit., p. 12.

The social work and social exclusion sectors attract the most volunteers. Beyond the inherent interest of the projects, the volunteers are motivated by various factors, including the discovery of a country through other means than tourism, learning a foreign language, acquiring skills that may be useful for the future, or taking a career break.

In general, the first choices of destination of young French volunteers are directed towards France's traditional partner countries: the countries of the South (Spain, Italy, Greece), Germany and the United Kingdom. Since 2000, the option exists of carrying out an EVS project in the countries of central and Eastern Europe. 12% of young French volunteers set out to discover the countries of Eastern Europe, and particularly Poland, Hungary, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania and the Czech Republic. France has principally received volunteers from Germany and Spain. The opening of links with central and Eastern Europe has mainly attracted Hungarians and Czechs to France.

	Countries hosting French EVS volunteers			Countries sending EVS volunteers to France		
	1996-1997	1998-1999	2000-2002	1996-1997	1998-1999	2000-2002
Spain	15	100	319	15	38	147
Italy	55	113	240	24	28	64
Germany	48	108	167	89	182	331
United K	37	77	142	14	21	36
Greece	23	18	102	2	7	24
Portugal	9	25	63			10
Austria	9	33	34	23	53	54
Denmark	6	13	31	5	14	9
Ireland	11	33	29	14	5	1
Poland			26			19
Belgium	5	14	24	8	16	50
Finland	11	11	24	3	12	19
Sweden	13	12	23	4	10	29
Netherlands	1	13	23	1	9	16
Slovakia			21			10
Norway	2	5	17	1	6	20
Latvia			14			6
Slovenia			11			1
Czech Republic			11			17
Hungary			10			34
Luxembourg		4	10		3	5
Estonia			9			7
Lithuania			8			2
Iceland	2	3	6		1	5
Romania			5			7
Bulgaria			2			1
Malta			2			0
Total	247	582	1373	202	405	924

The volunteers emphasised the difference between the project as presented by the host organisation and the reality they found on arriving, pointing to failures of support on the ground. Despite such problems, they were satisfied overall with their placement, “experienced as safe and even comfortable (follow-up by the sending organisation, project and working conditions, living conditions, integration into the country)”, says the evaluation⁵¹. They acquired a set of technical and social skills which could lead them to modify their academic or professional plans on their return: “immediate effects can be seen in the volunteers in terms of socialisation and personal development:

⁵¹ Labadie, F., op.cit., p. 14.

- long-term EVS is a maturing experience (living far from parents, with other young people, in an unknown environment which enables them to test themselves and open up new possibilities)
- an experience from which they can learn differently (cognitive knowledge, particularly of the language, know-how, social skills)
- an experience which opens up new discoveries (of other cultures and lifestyles, other socio-economic and political situations, ways of working, a Europe with human dimensions, new friends)
- an experience which forms a citizen (openness to politics, new awareness of European construction and citizenship, discovering the life of an association, an experience of involvement and commitment)⁵².

Volunteers sometimes find it difficult to readapt to their own countries and their former situations on their return.

Short-term European Voluntary Service affects a different group. Designed as a bridge to long-term EVS, it is aimed more specifically at “young people in difficulties”, a population whose precise membership criteria are not clear. Currently, “short-term EVS mainly involves not young people in precarious social situations, but young people who are very unsure of their future careers and the young unemployed, with varying levels of qualifications.”⁵³ The young people who undertake this voluntary service are trying primarily to improve their own personal situations. A first assessment covering the period from April 2002 to September 2003 lists the problems facing these volunteers: educational failure, financial difficulties, psychological fragility and problematic family and cultural environments (constituting a handicap to their personal independence)⁵⁴. Their experience of volunteering is presented as positive in the assessment. The young people cite a variety of aspects, such as the experience of travel leading them to think more positively about relocating, the acquisition of skills and insight into themselves (techniques, language skills, communication) and the will to search actively for work, accentuated by a clarification of their own personal projects and pride in having completed the voluntary service⁵⁵. The mentors and advisors who introduced them to the programme or worked with them in preparation for the departure also refer to changes in behaviour.

The volunteers learn about the programme through organisations specialising in social inclusion. Seventeen organisations have National Agency approval to implement the short-term programme. Their role is to support the volunteers during the process of preparing for the voluntary service and during the mission. In relation to long-term EVS, supporting the volunteers is given a higher priority. Compared with other European countries, it would seem that France is in the forefront with this programme.

The evaluations of both forms of European Voluntary Service reveal the benefits for the associations in becoming involved with these programmes. They also indicate several implementation difficulties, relating essentially to the quality of the projects offered to young people, the unequal support provided to volunteers, particularly for long-term service, and the complexity of the procedures for handling applications.

Volunteers in NGOs

There is no complete data on associations offering voluntary work. The data presented here is supplied by COTRAVAUX, and relates to the long-term volunteer placements offered by some of the member associations of this umbrella group.

⁵² Ibid., p. 14.

⁵³ Ibid., p. 19.

⁵⁴ Hogervorst, K., Winkler, J., Helvadjan, R., Barata, J. (2003). *Le Service Volontaire Européen court terme, Evaluation-Bilan* (Short-term European Voluntary Service, Evaluation/Assessment).

⁵⁵ Ibid., p. 36.

Volunteers in work camp associations

In 2002, 4018 young French volunteers were involved with short work camp projects (2-3 weeks) in France and 3477 abroad (mainly in Europe). Medium-term placements (from 3 up to 6 months) and long-term placements (6-12 months and above) attracted significantly fewer volunteers. Almost half the exchanges were arranged under the EVS programme, with the rest operating through programmes offered by the associations themselves.

Women make up the majority of the volunteers (more than 60%). 95% were aged between 18 and 25.

Volunteer breakdown						
Source: COTRAVAUX						
	2000		2001		2002	
	received	sent	received	sent	received	sent
3 to 6 months	7	0	8	17	14	26
6 to 12 months	111	82	86	80	104	85
Over 12 months	6	0	8	0	3	0
	124	82	102	97	121	111
EVS	70	55	51	50	63	61
ICYE (one NGO)	18	26	13	28	19	34

Volunteer breakdown and geographical areas						
Source: COTRAVAUX						
	2000		2001		2002	
	volunteers received in France	French volunteers abroad	volunteers received in France	French volunteers abroad	volunteers received in France	French volunteers abroad
France	n.a.		n.a.		15	
European Union	62	27	40	25	56	25
Other European countries	7	6	8	2	12	1
Outside Europe	27	36	Np	55	29	70

n.a. – information not available

Volunteers with the Diaconal Year

Since the Diaconal Year was founded, the numbers of volunteers have been rising from year to year. The data shows a gradual increase in EVS volunteers and the disappearance in France of civilian service and conscientious objectors. Between 80 and 100 young people are currently doing voluntary work for this association. Volunteers are generally aged between 19 and 21, with a majority of women. 90% of them carry out their posting directly after their school-leaving exams.

They are looking for concrete experience to help in selecting a future career, or for a break before commencing university, often in the fields of medical or social work or teaching. They are also looking for human experience, working for causes they believe in or learning more about themselves. For

volunteers from abroad, there is also the motivation of learning the language of the host country and immersing themselves in another culture.

Most of the volunteers come from or got to serve in European countries (for example: Austria, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Germany, Spain etc.) and the United States.

Volunteer breakdown								
Source: Année Diaconale								
	Received			Sent		Conscientious objectors		Total
	French	Foreign	EVS	French	EVS	French	German	
97/98	10	45	18	5	5	17	9	86
98/99	11	40	34	4	1	12	10	77
99/00	15	51	44	7	5	9	11	93
00/01	12	63	50	10	8	7	11	103
½	14	59	48	9	7	3	12	97
02/03	11	56	31	6	5	0	11	84

Volunteers with L'arche de Jean Vanier

Between 200 and 300 young volunteers register per year in France. Two categories of volunteer come together at L'Arche de Jean Vanier: those who have applied individually, and those who have come through French or foreign organisations (Jeunesse et Reconstruction, L'Année Diaconale) or government programmes (EVS, voluntary civic service in other countries). The volunteers are usually aged between 18 and 30 (21 on average). They generally commit to a placement lasting a year. They volunteers have an average of two years' higher education (ranging from none to five). They often hold qualifications in the medical, social work and educational fields. A third are French, another third come from other European countries and a third come from outside Europe. They usually have a good knowledge of French.

This preliminary data gives a glimpse of the voluntary situation in France, but needs to be completed and explained. For example, the number of volunteers cannot be explained solely by young people's interest in this form of commitment. It also results from the limits inherent in the voluntary programmes, as with international volunteering in business, volunteering for international solidarity and EVS, and the financial capacities of the associations.

The publicity given to volunteering should also be taken into account. Where civilian volunteering as part of the new national service is concerned, this is supposed to be presented during the defence preparation day that all 16-18 year olds are obliged to attend, but it is difficult to be sure of the quality of the information provided on the subject. There are probably disparities between the information on the three forms of volunteer programmes. For example, the promotional media for international volunteering in business are highly developed: a prospectus and a web site exist.

The defence preparation day does not provide information about EVS, volunteering for international solidarity or the programmes offered by associations. These organisations and associations take responsibility for their own publicity. Clearly, disparities exist: brochures and web sites for some, word of mouth and community networks for others. Thus, while it is possible to make a connection between the attraction of a type of voluntary work and the number of volunteers, it is also necessary to keep in view that the numbers will be affected by the publicity available on the programme in question.

Three profile groups of volunteers emerge. The first group includes international volunteering in business and volunteering for international solidarity. Organisations tend to look for particular skills, which explain the predominance of highly qualified volunteers. It would also seem that candidates use the opportunity to do voluntary work in the expectation of finding permanent employment after their service. The

placement provides them with extra experience to do this. However, motivations differ between these two types of programme, and it would be a mistake to take the comparison too far. The second group includes just one programme: EVS. Recruitment appears to be more open. The volunteers are qualified, but less so than in the previous group. The third group consists of volunteer programmes offered by associations. Here, volunteers are younger and less qualified. Their motivation seems to count for more than their skills.

The data presented here should be put into perspective with the general profile of French youth, even if in general terms it would appear that international volunteering in business and volunteering for international solidarity are socially selective programmes.

Conclusion

Voluntary service in France can be divided into four categories of activity:

- the *volontariats civils* (voluntary civic service programmes), created as part of the national service reforms in 1997 and governed by the law of March 2000. Open to young people aged between 18 and 28, they cover three fields of action: civil defence and security, social cohesion, and economic, cultural and social co-operation. They have several points in common with the previous civilian forms of national service.
- volunteering for international solidarity, governed by the decree of 1995, enabling adults (with no age limit) to carry out missions in the areas of development and humanitarian action.
- voluntary service programmes offered by associations, outside any specific legal framework.
- European Voluntary Service, a part of the European Youth Programme, enabling young Europeans aged between 18 and 25 to travel to another European country. French associations receive and send volunteers. They often combine European Voluntary Service with their own programmes.

There are differences between these programmes which relate to the objectives of the voluntary service, conditions of access, nature of the service, level of allowance paid, social security cover, state funding etc. On the other hand, as the data shows, these programmes all seem to be relatively selective, with an intake composed primarily of highly-qualified young people.

The programmes are unequally developed in France, due in certain cases to their recent creation, but also to unequal state support for their implementation. The fact remains that changes are currently taking place and a certain initiative on the part of the government can be seen, as shown by various declarations by the Prime Minister and other ministers involved in these programmes.

Three of the programmes are especially affected:

- **International volunteering in business** (*volontariat international en entreprise*), in which numbers of volunteers are set to double to 4000 by 2005. To achieve this target, the programme's access conditions were modified during 2003. For example, access to the programme has been facilitated for small and medium-sized businesses (SMEs) to enable them to benefit from this pool of qualified, handpicked workers. For SMEs that do not yet have a foreign presence, it will now be possible for the volunteer to spend part of the placement in France (5 months) in order to research markets abroad. Businesses will also be partially exempted from the financial requirements. The requirement of membership of the agency for international business development (UBIFrance) has also been waived – now companies need only take charge of subsistence allowances, travel expenses and supervision and social security costs. The agency takes responsibility for the administration of the volunteers, removing a burden from the companies. Recourse to international volunteering in business has also been defined in law 2003-721 of 1 August 2003 on economic initiatives, which also provided for the creation of the UBIFrance agency. The state is committed to funding promotional measures for the programme (to the tune of €1.35 million per year over three years) in order to convince potential business

partners involved in exports of the benefit of the package. Currently, only half of the approved companies have sent young volunteers (about 500 out of 950). The potential for further development is considerable: the customs authorities list 120,000 export companies, including 105,000 SMEs.

- **Volunteering for solidarity and social cohesion** (*volontariat de solidarité et de cohésion sociale*), which was made operational by a circular published in 2003, and which is slowly being implemented. The management of this programme is delegated to the *Préfectures* or local authorities, which must select a decentralised administration to take care of the implementation. Currently, about a hundred young people benefit from this status, and about a dozen *Préfectures* have organised the necessary administrative supervision. The fact remains that this programme is not subsidised by the state, and that it is one which relatively few young people, associations and local communities know about. Associations have expressed their dissatisfaction with the programme in the report by the *Conseil national de la Vie Associative* (national council of associations), pointing to the complexity of the administrative procedures leading to approval as a host organisation, the costs associated with volunteers and their status under public law. The *Comité National des Associations de Jeunesse et d'Éducation Populaire* (a youth and non-formal education NGO) has also set up a working group to look at voluntary service. As recently as May 2004, the Prime Minister, Jean-Pierre Raffarin, acknowledged the need to support the development of this voluntary service by creating thematic action programmes in the area of social cohesion. His declarations were taken up by the Minister for Youth, Sport and Associations, Jean-François Lamour, who has made the development of voluntary service a theme of his youth policy and his association policy, and who suggests the creation of a legal status for volunteers. The relationship with the March 2000 law on voluntary civic service remains to be specified.
- **Volunteering for international solidarity** (*volontariat de solidarité internationale*), which is currently being reformed at the request of NGOs and with the support of the Deputy Minister for Co-operation and the French Language. A forthcoming law is likely to create a new contract for volunteers for international solidarity, replacing the 1995 decree, which NGOs claim does not go far enough. This law is currently being examined by the *Sénat* (Senate). Modifications are to be made to the programme, relating in particular to the duration of missions (two continuous years at most, with an option to include breaks over a period of up to six years, no minimum duration) and the opening of the programme to citizens of other member states of the European Union and the European Economic Area. This law is likely to be passed in 2005. It should be recalled that NGOs can benefit from the status granted by the March 2000 law, but they feel it is unsuitable for their work (due to the age limit and the excessive financial requirements with no state support).

Thus the situation in France is far from stable. Successive private bills submitted by members of parliament and senators at the same time as the recent changes, reveal a certain acceptance of the civic service programme but also show an attachment to conscription. Most of these proposals confer similar objectives on voluntary service: teaching citizenship and civic sense, communicating republican values, reinforcing social and national cohesion.

The programmes proposed by these private bills vary from one project to another:

- **private member's bill to create a citizenship placement:** submitted in September 2003, this bill proposed that all young adults should carry out an unpaid three-week or 100-hour mission on behalf of the state, a local authority or an association in one of the following sectors: "social cohesion and integration, the humanitarian and charitable sectors, prevention, education, the environment and sustainable development";
- **private member's bill to create a new civic solidarity form of national service to react to natural disasters** (October 2003): the service would be aimed at all French citizens aged between 18 and 65. It would have a voluntary basis, but could become mandatory in certain cases.
- **private member's bill to create a civic service for all young people:** submitted in November 2003 and rejected due to its mandatory nature, this project proposed a service consisting of two

month-long periods spread over two years (one month of theoretical training in civics and citizenship and one month of practical work) and an optional period lasting six months to a year.

- **private member's bill to create a civic citizens' service** (April 2004): this service, largely inspired by the bill just mentioned, would be based on the principle of voluntary service and carried out after the *baccalauréat* school-leaving qualification or at 18. It would consist of two periods: the first would last two weeks and be devoted to theoretical training in the fundamental principles of society (republican values, citizenship, civics etc.) and the second, lasting a month, would be devoted to working on a project. The service could be done in a European Union country, "with the aim of developing the feeling of belonging to Europe and to a European citizenship". The service could be extended for an extra period of six months.

So far, none of these proposals has been voted on, but their existence is evidence of interest in this form of volunteering. The Defence Minister, Michèle Alliot-Marie, has also proposed the creation of a humanitarian civic service lasting three or four weeks, which could take place during the school holidays.

Developments such as these will be taken into account in further analysis. It is planned to carry on collecting information about the origins and implementation of the different programmes, and to monitor the position of volunteering on the political agenda, so as to be able to refine the analyses offered in this document in a second national report.

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French EVS agency: www.injep.fr

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6. Annexes: Case studies

The case studies illustrate existing experiences of international voluntary civic service from the perspective of different national stakeholders.

The French researcher interviewed:

- two representatives of NGOs operating at the international and national levels: Roel Forceville, director of Solidarités Jeunesses, and Laurie Chambon, official representative of CLONG-Volontariat,
- one representative from a governmental body: Roberto Diez, director of CIVI,
- one representative from the French National Agency for the European Youth Programme: Emilie Guillaume.

It had been intended that the project should include a fifth interview, with a representative of the French government. However, given changes within the French government and the geographical spread of possible contacts implementing volunteer programmes, this interview was not possible. The interviews were recorded with the permission of the four participants. The four were asked identical questions in order to give a comparative perspective to their opinions.

The following text presents the principal points which emerge from the statements given. Some of the information presented also appears in the body of the report. After a brief description of the organisations concerned, four points are covered:

- the programmes and their funding
- recruitment and profiles of volunteers
- the relationship between the programmes and the European dimension
- the development of voluntary civic service

The analyses offered below deserve to be developed in greater detail. Further interviews should be carried out in order to refine them.

Presentation of the organisations

1) Solidarités Jeunesses

Solidarités Jeunesses⁵⁶ is an “*Association Nationale de Jeunesse et d’Education Populaire* or national youth and non-formal education organisation approved by the Ministry for Youth and Sport. It organises both short- and long-term international work camps, social integration activities, training programmes and actions for international solidarity, and manages small activity centres in rural areas.”

The association’s aims are:

- “voluntary participation by all, particularly the young and the most disadvantaged, in local, national and international life;
- local development focused on the individual, the environment and cultural heritage;
- breaking down the barriers between generations, cultures and nations;
- the concrete construction of peace.”

The association has seven regional branches. It is the French wing of Youth Action for Peace, or YAP, an originally Protestant movement founded after the First World War to promote popular reconciliation, with a particular focus on the young.

⁵⁶ The quotes are taken from a document presenting the association.

2) The CLONG-Volontariat

The CLONG-Volontariat⁵⁷ was founded in 1979. It brings together fifteen NGOs that send volunteers for international solidarity on missions abroad⁵⁸.

The CLONG umbrella group has two major objectives:

- “in ethical and philosophical terms, to reflect on the future of volunteering as an expression of citizenship (the roles and usefulness of volunteers etc.);
- in legal and statutory terms, to standardise the contractual relationships between associations and their volunteers on the one hand, and to campaign for the legal recognition of the status of volunteers for international solidarity.”

It carries out three functions:

- advising NGOs and sharing knowledge and experience,
- representing NGOs to the public authorities and on various committees,
- informing the general public and promoting volunteering for international solidarity by organising information meetings and taking part in events such as International Volunteer Day and International Solidarity Week.

This coordinating body has contributed to the adoption of successive decrees covering volunteering for international solidarity: the decree of March 1986, replaced by the decree of January 1995. It is currently taking part in discussions on the adoption of a law relating to a “contract on volunteering for international solidarity”. The CLONG-Volontariat is one of three founders and a member of Coordination Sud, which is the largest international NGO umbrella group in France.

3) CIVI – Centre d’Information sur le Volontariat International (International Volunteering Information Centre)

The CIVI is a centre providing information and promotion for international volunteering in business (VIE) and in administration (VIA). It comes under the responsibility of UBIFRANCE (the French Agency for International Business Development), the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Department of Foreign Economic Relations, which is answerable to the Ministry of the Economy, Finance and Industry.

It was set up at the end of 2000 in order to distribute information about the international volunteer programmes created to replace “cooperation” following the national service reform. Its aim was to facilitate the transition from a mandatory programme to a voluntary programme, as the institutions feared that young people would no longer take advantage of the opportunity to serve and the administration, businesses and NGOs still needed them, being geared up for them since the creation of the cooperation form of national service. Given the high level of interest shown by young people in this form of volunteering, the CIVI has developed other focuses for work such as partnerships with schools and universities and links with business. One of the main jobs of the CIVI is still to handle volunteers’ registrations and to publish placement vacancies on its web site. Recruiting volunteers is not part of its remit.

The administration of volunteers in business (VIE) is entrusted to UBIFRANCE, which is a public body reporting to the Ministry of Foreign Trade. UBIFRANCE is also responsible for promoting VIE to companies. Mission vacancies and volunteers for VIA are handled directly by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Department of Foreign Economic Relations.

⁵⁷ The quotes are taken from the organisation’s website (www.coordinationsud.org). The objectives were confirmed during the interview.

⁵⁸ Twenty-six NGOs have approval to send volunteers on missions. Those which are not members of CLONG are either members of other collectives or do not belong to any umbrella group.

4) The French National Agency for the European Youth Programme

The National Agency's purpose is to implement the various actions planned as part of the European Youth Programme. It reports not to the national authorities but to the European Commission.

With regard to European Voluntary Service, it is responsible for:

- examining associations' projects and sending them on to the European Commission's selection committee,
- paying subsidies to organisations,
- paying subsidies to organisations,
- examining applications from young volunteers,
- training the employees mentoring the volunteers in the host organisations, the programme's regional correspondents and young European volunteers arriving in France (a linguistic and cultural introduction),
- evaluating the progress of the volunteer service.

In March 2003, the management in France of part of the European Youth Programme was decentralised. Regional committees were set up within the Regional Departments of Youth and Sport. Their job was to "implement the new European youth policy and the Youth Programme on a regional scale, to select 'Youth Exchange' and 'European Voluntary Service' projects, and to monitor and evaluate the chosen projects."⁵⁹

Programmes and funding

1) Solidarités Jeunesses: European Voluntary Service and long-term non-EVS volunteering

Solidarités Jeunesses offers several volunteering packages:

- short-term volunteering, which essentially takes the form of international work camps in France or abroad, lasting about three weeks.
- short-term European Voluntary Service (three weeks to six months) for "young people in difficulty".
- long-term volunteering, based essentially on European Voluntary Service (young people received and sent on missions from 6 months to a year).

It is also possible to volunteer for a longer period with this association without being involved with European Voluntary Service. This is the association's own programme. It existed before the creation of European Voluntary Service. The volunteer receives an allowance of €100 per month, and is fed and accommodated. He or she is covered by insurance and has social security cover. However, he or she must pay a registration fee of €220, and may sometimes be responsible for his or her airfare. This programme does not fit within the limits imposed by European Voluntary Service (budgetary and administrative limits, but also limits in terms of nationality and age). Volunteers are funded either by European Voluntary Service or by the association's general budget.

2) The CLONG-Volontariat: Volunteering for international solidarity

The NGO members of the CLONG-Volontariat work in the field of international solidarity. Their volunteers are sent on missions with the status of *Volontaire de solidarité internationale* (Volunteer for International Solidarity), regulated by the 1995 decree. These voluntary placements last between one and six years, and, according to Laurie Chambon, their aim is for the volunteer "to be available for an association with a project in a Southern country, or a partner organisation in the territory, to satisfy a demand. The work involves either humanitarian projects or development projects on behalf of the

⁵⁹ Instruction of the Department of Youth and Non-Formal Education, (2003, March), No. 03-049 JS.

poorest or most disadvantaged populations or victims of disasters. It is a commitment for the volunteer, who makes his or her skills available for a well-defined duration. It is a commitment with everything that involves: adherence to the values of the association and the principles of volunteering.”⁶⁰

Volunteering for international solidarity therefore combines a general level of commitment with technical skills. These two dimensions are given different priorities by different NGOs: some place more emphasis on “the notions of sharing, intercultural meetings, exchange with the population, richness of experience”, while others focus mainly on the skills of the volunteers.

Volunteering for international solidarity is funded by the Foreign Affairs Ministry and the NGOs. A budget is set by the finance law voted on by the Assemblée Nationale (national assembly) (about €18,293,900 or 120 million francs). Fixed sums covering some of the expenses are paid to the NGOs in proportion to the numbers of volunteers. These sums have not been revalued since 1987, and thus cover an ever-smaller fraction of the cost of a volunteer. This cost varies from one country to another. For a two-year mission, it ranges from €16,655 to €35,482, of which between €5,488 and €7,851 is paid by the state and between €11,167 and €27,631 is paid by the NGO⁶¹. NGOs may receive additional funding within the framework of specific projects, but these funds are not intended to finance volunteers. To fill the gap, they use their own funds (donations from individuals or institutions, for example). Partners in the South may also take responsibility for a proportion of the cost: “if we imagine a community centre, or a hospital asking an NGO for a medical co-ordinator, the hospital could pay some of the costs associated with the volunteer, at least accommodation and food, and perhaps the air fare.” The fact remains that this freezing of a part of the budget could threaten organisations’ ability to send volunteers abroad. For Laurie Chambon, the balance is always fragile and part of the CLONG-Volontariat's remit is also to lobby for the budget to be preserved.

3) The CIVI: International Volunteering in Business and International Volunteering in Administration

International Voluntary service in Business (VIE) and International Voluntary service in Administration (VIA) are civilian volunteer programmes arising from the national service reforms (from the March 2000 law). They replace the two forms of “co-operation” which existed previously (CSNE and CSNA). The first is aimed at young people who wish to carry out a mission within a company. It is described by Roberto Diez as a legal status which facilitates foreign travel for young people and provides opportunities for companies to develop international projects. The young people can only obtain a placement by registering with the CIVI and being recruited by a company. The second programme is aimed at young people who wish to carry out a placement abroad within a French administrative body. Missions are offered by the Foreign Affairs Ministry and the Department of Foreign Economic Relations and are limited in number (about 1000 a year). This figure has not really increased since the national service reforms. As with VIE, young volunteers must register with the CIVI and apply for vacancies.

VIE is managed directly by UBIFrance, a public body, with which volunteers sign a contract under the public law status of voluntary civic service. The companies, which recruit them enter into an agreement with UBIFrance, which is responsible for the administration of the volunteers (invoicing the supervision costs to the company). This means that the volunteer works within a company but is not directly employed by it. VIA is managed by the two ministries involved.

These two voluntary civic service programmes are funded differently:

- VIE is funded entirely by the companies. The cost of a volunteer varies depending on the country, the length of the mission and the company’s turnover. UBIFrance receives a subsidy from the Foreign Trade Ministry (45% of its budget) for all its activities promoting French business abroad. It also earns income for its services (55% of its budget).

⁶⁰ The quotes are taken from the interview.

⁶¹ These figures include all costs: recruitment, training, follow-up, travel, passport, visa, social security cover, subsistence allowance (between €228 and €914 per month), administration.

- VIA is entirely funded by the ministries concerned, since it sends volunteers to work in public administrative bodies.

4) The National Agency for European Voluntary Service

European Voluntary Service is one of the actions of the European Youth Programme set up by the European Commission. It is aimed at young people aged from 18 to 25, has no requirements regarding qualifications, and lasts 6 to 12 months. It involves the 25 EU member states and the three members of the European Economic Area (Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway). There is also a short-term European Voluntary Service programme lasting between 3 weeks and 6 months, aimed at “young people in difficulties” (psychological, family-related or economic) as part of the European Commission’s inclusion policy. Young volunteers are offered specific projects and specific support.

According to Emilie Guillaume⁶², European Voluntary Service enables the volunteer “to experience European solidarity and to serve a local community and an association”, and “to experience European citizenship, and citizenship in a wider sense, because the volunteer can become more involved in his own country on his return”. European Voluntary Service is entirely free for the volunteer. The sending and hosting organisations receive a subsidy from the European Commission covering some of the expenses incurred due to the project, and must also make their own financial contributions through national, regional or local co-funding. The volunteer receives a subsistence allowance of between €140 and €210 and is covered by insurance.

One of the features of EVS is to put a host organisation, a sending organisation and a volunteer in touch with each other, creating a three-way partnership. According to Emilie Guillaume, organisations sometimes send young people to work on projects without knowing much about the host organisations. This is mainly true for large organisations sending large numbers of volunteers within Europe (between 20 and 50 volunteers a year). The French Agency tries to favour organisations with real European projects over organisations which just repeat their project year after year without improving its content or implementation. In doing this, it tries to avoid institutionalising the use of volunteers. The associations are selected on the basis of their projects and their capacity to support the volunteers.

Projects hosting young Europeans are approved Europe-wide by a selection committee. Associations submit an application which is examined by the National Agency and sent on to the European Commission. Set criteria have been defined for evaluating the appropriateness of the project: European dimension, connection with the local community, benefit for the volunteer, support, presence of a mentor, time reserved for the volunteer’s personal projects etc. With regard to the volunteer’s personal projects, Emilie Guillaume emphasises that this is an aspect to which the Agency is paying more and more attention: “the hosting project must include time and resources for the volunteer to work on his own project, within either the association or the host town.”

Since 2003, host projects have also been inspected at regional level by the regional committees co-ordinated by the Regional Departments of Youth and Sport. These committees make it possible to improve the qualitative monitoring of how European Voluntary Service, and, more widely, the European Youth Programme, are implemented. The members generally have a better knowledge of the associations submitting projects. The Agency continues to administer the submissions and the allocation of credits to the selected organisations. The presence of local authorities on the committees also encourages the development of partnerships and co-funding arrangements. The regional committees function differently from one region to another, as the European Youth Programme is not necessarily a priority for all Regional Departments of Youth and Sport. The financial support from local authorities is very unequal. Setting up the regional committees has improved the handling of submissions, but it has also increased the Agency’s workload, with committee follow-up being added to the administration of submissions.

⁶² The quotes are taken from the interview.

Recruitment and profiles of volunteers

In 2003, **Solidarités Jeunesses** hosted 73 volunteers. 48 were carrying out European Voluntary Service, and 25 a separate non-EVS long-term volunteer programme. EVS volunteers are selected according to the National Agency's procedure. Non-EVS volunteers are generally sent to France by partner associations so that they can learn new skills, which will benefit the associations on their return. Whether sending or hosting non-EVS volunteers, Solidarités Jeunesses and its partners abroad do select volunteers.

For both three-week work camps and long-term placements, the volunteers are mainly students from the middle and upper classes. According to Roel Forceville, the procedure is intrinsically socially selective. For example, although EVS is open to all young people between 18 and 25, with no conditions on qualifications, some partners will select volunteers on the basis of their curriculum vitae (level of education and spoken language skills). He also believes that many young people would have ample financial and cultural means to set off for several months abroad without using the EVS programme, which fully meets all costs. Associations must keep this situation under scrutiny, and try to limit its effects. The development of a short-term EVS, open to "young people in difficulties", may facilitate access to European programmes for the less advantaged.

According to data from the **National Agency**, short-term European Voluntary Service involved 35 young volunteers in 2002 (mainly sent elsewhere in Europe) and 70 in 2003 (35 sent and 35 received). The National Agency works mainly with England, Belgium and Spain, and is developing projects with Poland and the Baltic states. Seventeen French associations have approval to send young volunteers to these countries. Details of the programme can be found in *Missions Locales*, which are structures designed to encourage the social inclusion of young people.

The number of young people benefiting from European Voluntary Service (normal version) is significantly higher. 400 volunteers are sent to other European countries a year, and 350 are received in France. 700 associations are approved for hosting volunteers.

The National Agency does little promotion work for EVS. Documents are available in the *Centres d'Information Jeunesse* (youth information centres, where information affecting the young public is available), the *Foyers de jeunes travailleurs* (accommodation for young workers) and the *Maisons de quartiers* (local community organisations). Emilie Guillaume emphasises that the Agency does not have specific resources for promotion. In addition, she says that it would be difficult to target the young people at whom European Voluntary Service is aimed: "for us, this is not for students. The EVS target group is a delicate question. We do not wish to send only students. We do not wish them to take the place of other young people. It is just easier for them to look for information on mobility programmes." The aim is also to avoid young people who could benefit from other mobility programmes, such as students eligible for the European Erasmus programme, registering for European Voluntary Service.

In reality, although the programme is designed to be accessible with no preconditions relating to qualifications and the projects cannot demand specific skills, selection of young people does exist. The associations involved often do it. When sending volunteers on missions, they sometimes redirect young people to other programmes, while associations hosting volunteers sometimes impose restrictions relating to competence in French and educational level so that volunteers are immediately operational. For Emilie Guillaume, vigilance is required, as the benefit of the project and the motivations of the volunteer are both fundamental in the European Voluntary Service framework.

Nearly 2000 people are currently engaged in a programme of volunteering for international solidarity. According to Laurie Chambon, official representative of the **CLONG-Volontariat**, recruitment methods and the profiles and motivations of volunteers vary widely from one NGO to another. "If we look at the profile of volunteers recruited by associations, it is clear that more and more volunteers have five years or more of higher education, often with experience in France or abroad. Certain associations recruit volunteers who are completing their studies and have perhaps not yet worked," she clarifies. These differences are mostly related to the activities of NGOs in Southern countries and the expectations of

their partners. In addition, the fact that there are considerably more candidates than missions (about one mission for every ten candidates) increases the level of selection.

Recruitment methods vary between NGOs. They use the Coordination Sud website, or other websites, to post their mission vacancies. Some recruit exclusively from unsolicited applications, such as the *Délégation Catholique à la Coopération* (DCC) or the *Association Française des Volontaires du Progrès* (AFVP). All the NGOs have fairly strict selection procedures (application, group or individual interviews with a psychologist, etc.) in order to avoid sending somebody who would not be appropriate or who would be unable to adapt to life in the foreign country. “It is important to make sure that everybody is on the same wavelength in terms of the values of the association and its philosophy of action. (...) If we send someone who is not at all ready, who is running away from a complex situation, he is likely to find things far more complex at the ends of the earth with no support around him,” emphasises Laurie Chambon, insisting that these selection procedures are essential. On the volunteers’ side, motivations vary: “They may be people looking for on-the-ground experience before working in management for an NGO or embarking on an international career. This may be one motivation among the many which exist. Or salaried employees who have been working in France for 20 years and who want to try something different, offering their skills to a different organisation than their company. There are many different scenarios.” To complete the process, the selected candidates undergo training. Thus the selection of volunteers is spread over the whole year, with the majority of departures taking place in September. The CLONG-Volontariat does not intervene in selection procedures, and only the *Charte du Volontariat* (volunteers’ charter) sets out rules common to all the NGOs.

Turning to International Volunteering in Business and International Volunteering in Administration, these programmes involved 2372 young volunteers in 2003 (1666 sent abroad and 706 missions renewed). The CIVI circulates information leaflets in higher education institutions whose students are possible recruits – business schools, engineering schools, universities etc. – aimed at students with three to five years of higher education. Partnership agreements are signed with these establishments with a view to promoting VIE and VIA to students and the institutions’ partners (companies in particular). These partnerships do not entail any priority given to students at the institution.

VIA vacancies are posted on-line by the ministries on the CIVI web site. This is the main method by which placements are obtained. Offers usually only remain on the site a few days, as the numbers of applications are often high. The numbers of placements are limited. They involve working in embassies, consulates, cultural services, cultural centres, French institutes, French semi-public bodies, the *Missions Economiques* (commercial services run by French embassies), French chambers of commerce and industry abroad (CCIFE), foreign public universities and various local organisations. The skills required are relatively varied.

For VIE, offers are posted on the CIVI web site by the host companies, but placements can also be found by other means. In fact, the young volunteers must find their placements themselves, either by applying for a vacancy or by convincing a company to send them abroad with the VIE status. Roberto Diez compares looking for a placement with looking for a job: volunteers need to present their skills in the best light and adopt a professional approach. A third of all placements are currently found through offers on the web site, a quarter through unsolicited applications, a quarter following a work placement within the company and the rest by other methods.

Clearly, the number of applications is much higher than the number of offers. Nearly 60,000 young people are registered with the CIVI web site for a period of 6 months, renewable until the age limit of 28. Some of these are ready to leave immediately, while others simply register to obtain information or access the vacancies. The number of registrations can be explained by both the simplicity of the process (an on-line form) and the absence of commitment involved.

The number of applications reinforces the need for selection up-front, as companies become more and more demanding. “It is not uncommon to find a company asking for fluency in two languages, work placement experience in the country to which the volunteer is to be sent and a year’s traineeship or professional experience,” observes Roberto Diez. While the large numbers of candidates are one

explanation, the age limit is also a factor. As voluntary civic service is available until the age of 28, companies do not hesitate to recruit people who are a little older and thus have more experience. Thus although VIE concerned mostly 23- and 24-year-olds in 2001, it now concerns more 25- and 26-year-olds. It would appear that CIVI and UBIFRANCE are relatively powerless to regulate this initial selection, as the companies themselves are solely responsible for recruiting volunteers.

The periods of service also have a tendency to grow longer (16.7 months on average) and can end, in half of all cases for VIE, in a permanent job. Certain activity sectors are favoured:

- management auditing, accounting, finance,
- international trade, sales,
- mechanical, civil and chemical engineering,
- electronics, IT, telecommunications.

VIE and VIA are clearly voluntary civic service programmes which emphasise skills, as was the “co-operation” form of national service. They are not associated with any idea of “the public good”, acting rather as springboards for starting on a professional career.

The relationship between the programmes and the European dimension

The European dimension

The European dimension appears in different ways in the different interviews. In the case of **Solidarités Jeunesses**, the main issue was the implementation of European Voluntary Service. Roel Forceville underlined two points.

The first concerned relations with the National Agency. Solidarités Jeunesses receives European volunteers and suggests placing their voluntary service within the framework of the association’s projects, necessarily defining its content and progress. Roel Forceville described discussions with the National Agency about the approach to volunteering and the training to be implemented. Solidarités Jeunesses was criticised for the difficult conditions under which the volunteer must sometimes work, relating mainly to the meeting of cultures which the association aims to promote. Some volunteers have apparently seen this meeting of cultures as a failure, due to the conflicts it can generate. For Roel Forceville, the existence of conflicts between participants does not mean that the voluntary work was a failure, because it can give rise to longer-term reflection about human and intercultural relationships.

The second aspect emphasised by Roel Forceville related to the relationship between European Voluntary Service and non-EVS long-term volunteering. As volunteers do not receive the same subsistence allowance – €190 for EVS and €100 for other volunteers – Solidarités Jeunesses wanted to reduce the EVS allowance to ensure equality between the programmes and make it possible to provide placements for more volunteers. The National Agency refused this arrangement. The association therefore decided to suggest that EVS volunteers pay a portion of their allowance into a Solidarity Fund, which no volunteers have accepted. Roel Forceville believes that this aspect should be worked on to promote the value of sharing among volunteers. He also emphasises the meaning of European Voluntary Service. While recognising the aim of training European citizens, he also points out a tendency to use EVS as a way of acquiring experience to improve young people’s job prospects. He underlines the need to pay attention to volunteers’ motivations to avoid EVS becoming too selective, and notes that EVS should be more than just a way of discovering a culture and learning a language, the impression that could be given by the brochures.

Laurie Chambon of the **CLONG-Volontariat** focuses more on the gap between the international solidarity sector and European youth policy. The European Commission has little involvement in the field of international solidarity. It can provide funding for people expatriated as part of a humanitarian or development project through the European Development Fund, but it does not directly subsidise volunteers. She observes that there is a need for more detailed discussions with NGOs to analyse the way they use European funds. In contrast, she notes the changes that have come with enlargement. For example, NGOs working with Eastern European countries can now request permission to send

volunteers within the EVS framework, where previously they did so with the status of Volunteers for International Solidarity.

Young volunteers on the **VIE** and **VIA** programmes are often sent to serve within European territory: 32% in Western Europe and 6% in Central and Eastern Europe. This situation arises mainly from the geographical presence of French administrative bodies and the export markets of French companies. Roberto Diez distinguishes these voluntary civic service programmes from European Voluntary Service. In his view, they do not have the same objectives: the former have a much more professional vocation and call for greater skills than the latter.

But in the end, these two voluntary civic service programmes should encourage mobility for all young Europeans, as any young European can use the programme. Currently, only those young people who have already had contact with France and speak a little French know about it. For example, in 2003, 24 young Europeans carried out a VIE or a VIA. Ultimately, companies could be interested in sending young Europeans to other countries, European or not, for linguistic reasons. But the fact remains that voluntary civic service is not yet recognised by all European countries. In Spain, for example, the volunteers are not considered as such but as employees of the company under contract in the country, not to mention the quotas imposed by other countries such as the USA and Australia.

The relationship between the programmes

The interviewees' thoughts on the European dimension reveal an absence of connection between the programmes. While it is possible to combine them (carrying out a VIE and an EVS, or a VIS and an EVS), the different organisations have little contact and see themselves as working in different areas. This means that the approach to and implementation of voluntary civic service in France is relatively segmented. To this are added real differences between conceptions of voluntary service.

On the subject of volunteers for international solidarity, Roel Forceville believes that Solidarités Jeunesses has no "humanitarian logic", the association's role being not to offer skills abroad but rather to propose an intercultural exchange, the success of which is difficult to judge. International Volunteering in Business comes in for more criticism: "for us, voluntary service is something which should be of benefit to the community. It is difficult to see how action within a company can benefit the community." Roel Forceville also finds that these volunteers do not tend to integrate themselves into the local community, remaining separate from the inhabitants, which is entirely contrary to the aims of Solidarités Jeunesses.

For Emilie Guillaume, "initiatory volunteering" should be distinguished from "technical volunteering", with European Voluntary Service coming under the former heading and Volunteering for International Solidarity and International Volunteering in Business or Administration coming under the latter. She also emphasises the differences between European Voluntary Service and the long-term voluntary programmes offered by certain associations which have no legal definition. These two forms of volunteering sometimes sit uneasily side by side within associations, particularly in terms of the objectives pursued by the associations. While the associations offer young people the opportunity to gain experience relating to the associations' own projects, they must not leave out the specific objectives of European Voluntary Service.

The CLONG-Volontariat position in relation to International Volunteering in Business and Administration is fairly close to that of Solidarités Jeunesses. According to Laurie Chambon, a volunteer should not be confused with an expatriate employee. The volunteers' allowance is judged to be too high, and the experience is not seen to involve any commitment to the local population. Again, conceptions of volunteering differ. But in contrast with Solidarités Jeunesses, NGOs can benefit from this status. Before the national service reforms, NGOs received *coopérants* carrying out alternative military service. The text of the March 2000 law on voluntary civic service, modelled on the existing "co-operation" provisions, mentions NGOs as beneficiaries of International Volunteering alongside administrative bodies and companies. But no NGOs use this option, preferring the 1995 status of Volunteers for International Solidarity and campaigning for the adoption of a specific law. Laurie Chambon gives two reasons for this: the conception of voluntary service, and, above all, the financial requirements that must be met for volunteers, judged to be too high for NGOs.

In the eyes of Roberto Diez of the CIVI, it is true that the use of the term “volunteering” to refer to an experience within a company appears somewhat inappropriate. He recognises that it gives rise to certain reactions on the part of companies, which associate it with a form of commitment and do not necessarily see its relevance for their activities, and on the part of other countries, such as the USA for example, which, given their traditions in this area, do not see this programme as voluntary service. Roberto Diez emphasises that the term “voluntary civic service” (*volontariat civil*) is used in the March 2000 law, and that it would seem difficult to change it. However, a thought process is currently underway, led by the CIVI and UBIFRANCE, to find an alternative name, such as “traineeship” for example. As for the fact that NGOs have not adopted voluntary civic service, he believes that this comes down to the cost and the absence of public funding when an NGO is approved, in contrast with the sum paid for Volunteering for International Solidarity.

The development of voluntary civic service

All the interviewees agree on the benefits of further developing voluntary service in France and abroad. But this development will be subject to certain conditions.

For Solidarités Jeunesses, the existence of European Voluntary Service has provided clear benefits in developing the association’s activities, and its disappearance would pose a problem. The association is also keen to conserve a more flexible long-term arrangement for volunteering, so as to go beyond the limits imposed by European Voluntary Service. Roel Forceville would like the number of EVS volunteers to increase, the programme’s implementation to become a little more flexible and the programme to conserve its openness to all young Europeans. The association is also involved with setting up Volunteering for Solidarity and Social Cohesion across the country.

Emilie Guillaume from the National Agency points out that it would be difficult to increase the number of EVS volunteers without increasing the budget. About fifty more volunteers could be sent to European countries with the current budget, but there is a lack of host organisations in some countries. The number of short-term EVS missions could also increase. The Agency has reserved 15% of its budget for this. The aim is currently to improve the quality of European Voluntary Service: handling applications, the nature of the projects and the way in which voluntary work is conducted. The French Agency is also seeking to develop collaborations with other agencies, particularly for the training of mentors. Co-operation between agencies is currently fairly weak, limited to exchanging administrative information, except where there is a problem with an organisation. In general terms, it would be beneficial to raise the status of voluntary service by creating a clear legal definition and recognising the positive results it provides. Unfortunately, Emilie Guillaume believes that non-formal education is still accorded little value in France, which does not necessarily favour the development of this form of commitment.

The CLONG-Volontariat is currently campaigning for the adoption of a law which would establish a contract for volunteers for international solidarity. The aim is to obtain a legal status to replace the decree, which can be withdrawn at any time. Their text also modifies certain aspects of volunteering for international solidarity, such as its duration. The text is currently under consideration. The association is also lobbying for the maintenance of the international solidarity budget. The previous Minister for Co-operation had announced his intention to increase the number of volunteers in the international solidarity sector tenfold (from 2000 to 20,000 volunteers a year). This announcement was received favourably by the NGOs, who, given the numbers of applications, would be able to fulfil this target. But they pointed out that it would be impossible to send this many volunteers without a proportional increase in the budget. The development of volunteering for international solidarity thus currently depends on public finance. As to the law, this would clarify the situation of volunteers and avoid them having to meet various administrative difficulties.

Increasing the numbers of volunteers is also on the agenda of the CIVI. The press conference held by Prime Minister Jean-Pierre Raffarin in July 2003 announced his wish to see the number of volunteers tripled in two years. This target primarily affects International Volunteering in Business. For Roberto Diez, numbers could be increased as long as companies can be encouraged to recruit young people for

missions. Currently, only 500 companies out of the 1000 which have been approved have used volunteers. The potential is even greater if all companies involved in export activities are taken into account (over 10,000). However, companies still need to be convinced of the advantages of this package. This is the mission the CIVI has set itself, establishing partnerships with higher education institutions with the aim of promoting VIE to local companies, networks of former students, student organisations liaising with business and UBIFRANCE, by signing agreements with chambers of commerce and industry and informing companies' foreign subsidiaries. It would seem that International Volunteering in Business also faces competition from long placements abroad offered by companies and from local contracts (the recruitment of a local resident under local market conditions), both of which can work out cheaper depending on the country concerned. Beyond the CIVI's development mission, specific attention is paid to providing support when volunteers return home, with a particular focus on administrative procedures as voluntary civic service carries no rights to unemployment benefits.

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YOUTH CIVIC AND VOLUNTARY SERVICE IN ITALY⁶³

1. Tradition and policy context

Introduction

In the last few years the Italian juridical norms for social phenomena involved with achieving *social solidarity achievement* have been redefined. There are now “young” rules for activities implicated with “volunteerism”, that indeed concern – directly or indirectly - social assistance, health assistance, co-operation for development, preservation of cultural heritage and environmental care. All these fields are deeply connected with policies that promote *associations* in general and youth policies in particular. *Peace policies* have played a very important role, – above all those that were designed for *conscientious objection*, as a choice that implicated the obligation to perform a mandatory civilian service for a predefined period.

In Italy, this reform process sped up during the last decade of the past century: as witnessed to by the continual enactment of rules that renewed radically the then-current legislation which dated back to the late years of the Nineteenth Century and that was strongly based on liberal beliefs.

The most recent decrees have built up a new and complex legal framework that now includes not for profit organisations in areas once reserved to the public sector. Building blocks of the new framework are: the first act on co-operation for development (1968), reformed by the act regulating international non-governmental organisations (1987)⁶⁴, the act on conscientious objection and civilian service as an alternative to military service (1972), the first specific regulations of volunteering organisations (1990) and social co-operatives (1991), the act for the reform of public assistance and charity institutes (usually, religiously oriented) (2001), the acts in favour of social promotion associations, the establishment of specific rules for civil protection volunteering organisations and the most recent law that establishes the new National Civic Service (NCS) (2001).

The new national service is no longer to be considered only as a consequence of conscientious objection to military service. With the suspension of the constitutional obligation for compulsory military service, it is almost a new “civic service”.

At the moment, there are two kinds of civic service: the one performed by conscientious objectors (i.e.: *Civil Service*), and the one performed by those who choose voluntarily to join it (i.e.: *National Civic Service - NCS*) meaning women, and men who are not obliged to fulfil military service. When the suspension of mandatory military service will be operational (from January 1st, 2005), there will only be the NCS⁶⁵.

From “old” to “new” citizenship

⁶³ The report analyses the situation in Italy until July 2004.

⁶⁴ In Italian context the acronym «ONG» [NGO] is referred only to organizations involved in Third World development, according with law n. 49/1987 (see Sacerdoti, G. (1989). *Cooperazione economica internazionale*, in «Digesto delle discipline pubblicistiche», (p. 178 and ff). Torino. UTET. It means that other private foundations, associations, etc., are not defined ONG [NGO].

⁶⁵ More informations *infra*.

This continuing reform process shaped a new framework, based on activities that underline the *supremacy of people over things* and acknowledge *solidarity* as a value⁶⁶.

This framework shows also the evolution of social relationship, which took place in the past century, according to a renewal of the concept of citizenship. Citizenship does not involve anymore the old idea of a people subjected to a State (an idea prevalent also in the Age of Enlightenment which, although it acknowledged the principles of equality, freedom, and fraternity, still kept citizens under the sovereignty of the State and the power of the law). Nowadays citizenship concerns the forms of mutual relationship of individuals and groups to a community, which represents them.

The “citizen” has always been considered as the centre of rights and duties defined by law, and not always as a “fellow of social community”. The concept of citizenship as a *personal condition of membership by mutual consent in a State community* is relatively modern. The concept in historical tradition is rather connected with the opposition between citizen/subject and State/power, considered in the perspective of acquisition of civic rights, gradually reached as the chances for a personal participation in public life have been increased. This cannot be applied only to the right to vote (universal suffrage in Italy was granted only in 1946) but also to different kinds of *active participation* in the public life.

Power in the contemporary State is not only based on the force of the law, but also on the agreement that citizens make to accept public decisions. Indeed, citizens are no longer subjects, but performers of the public care. Starting from the original opposition between «public» and «private», there have been various movements which, after several vicissitudes, have developed little by little the predominance of ideologies, cultures, interests and even feelings of a different sort. For the purpose of this research, it is noteworthy that, through a fair enforcement of the rule of law, the Italian State undertook the management of social tasks, thereby dismissing the Church from these duties and absorbing them into the public sector.

In Italy it happened first in the educational field – that became public and mandatory – and was then followed up in regard to charity and social assistance.⁶⁷ These fields - originally managed by Churches - were undertaken by the State as civil tasks. In this way the State came to include social needs not as private concerns but rather as public ones.

The Italian welfare state and the third sector

This is the origin of the Italian “Welfare State”. The term “welfare state”, means “well-being State”, not only the State that takes care of social needs. The “Welfare State” is a State charged with the responsibility to promote active performance of social solidarity. It is also a State, which, through law, grants civil, political, social and economical rights, organises activities devoted to the public enhancement and takes care of defined private interests and needs involved with the “common good”. Through these devices, the Welfare State enhances citizenship as the complex of rights that give every *citizen* the chance to cooperate in pursuing egalitarian and distributive goals⁶⁸.

Significant examples of this type of evolution are lay *religious brotherhoods*, founded centuries ago, *political parties* and *trade unions*. Religious brotherhoods were founded in Middle Age as lay people coming together to promote and care for *communitarian interests* (using an expression they actually used, and quite improper for that age!). Their *raison d'être* had a religious ground, but from a social point of view they were also unique areas where “*bourgeois*” could hold public positions both in the spiritual and in the temporal sectors. These groups were generally founded to promote the development of health care, strictly tied with charity: meaning assistance for the sick, for pilgrims, and for prisoners and their families who would otherwise be in indigence. The religious ground was often secondary. People would partake in these

⁶⁶ For a general survey see Barbeta, G. P., Cima, S., Zamaro, N. (Ed.). (2003). *Le istituzioni nonprofit in Italia*, Bologna: Il Mulino.

⁶⁷ See Dalla Torre, G. (1979). L'attività assistenziale della Chiesa nell'ordinamento italiano. *Aspetti dogmatici e spunti ricostruttivi*. (p. 92 and ff). Milano: Giuffrè.

⁶⁸ There are plenty of works on this topic. For all, see the recent work by La Rosa, M. (2002). *Il Welfare State e le sue trasformazioni*, in *Le organizzazioni del nuovo Welfare: l'approccio sociologico*. In La Rosa, M. (Ed.), *Pubblico, privato sociale, cooperazione e non profit* (p. 39 and ff). Rimini: Maggioli.

activities not only in order to do well, but also to foster their spiritual and secular interests (the border between religious and secular interests was often so blurred that there could be no clear-cut distinction⁶⁹). Such tasks were later appointed to the public authority, but their philanthropic features were not thoroughly understood: They rather suffered from an overload of bureaucracy and were spoiled of their human aspects.

Political parties and *trade unions* also share some common traits with such communitarian experiences, although they operate in very different contexts. The well-known troubles brought about by the process of industrialisation also determined a major crisis in ideologies and traditional cultures, so that serious adjustments in the structure of government were vehemently demanded. The gradual extension of suffrage to larger sectors of the population has already been mentioned. The increasing number of people who felt personally involved in the political process was the outcome: they began gathering under *political parties*, a very different kind of organisation if compared to the political and cultural clubs which, from the French Revolution on enlivened the political scene in an *elitist* way. Anyway, political parties also experienced a deep identity crisis determined by the way they had organised their political strategies. The civic community and the political class drifted apart so that the former felt more and more involved in different kinds of social activities, such as volunteering⁷⁰.

Trade unions, too, are a result of industrialisation. In the beginning, they were structured as societies for mutual aid, devoted to supporting indigent workers since there were no social devices that would grant assistance in case of disease or death. They were almost *self-aid societies*⁷¹ based on *workers' solidarity*. But before long, class-consciousness (shaped by the development of Socialist theories) forced labour unions to sharpen their own means and struggle in order to obtain the acknowledgement of those civil and political rights which were not still granted. Nevertheless, it is a fact that labour unions too experienced a crisis in their institutional roles, and that they are now turning into movements for social catalysis focused on solidarity.

The adhesion to these kind of groups, whether political parties, trade and labour unions, brotherhoods or whatever has always been the result of a highly motivated personal choice. The idealistic core of these groups has always been fundamental: the pursuit of altruism has been their main aim together with the overcoming of material or individual interests. In order to do this, they evolved as structures, which promoted commitment and social unity.

Solidarity and fraternity as basic principles for civic service

For the aim of this research, it is also useful to note that in the Italian context groups which are engaged in this social sector are often non-profit organisations – to use the well known Anglo-Saxon expression. There is a special Italian inclination to evaluate these social phenomena according to North American terms. But these are not always useful tools to understand the Italian domestic experience that connects volunteering above all with solidarity and anthropocentric choices, deeply rooted in pacifism. This is quite different from the North-American model that finds its definition in the free-market context and in the non-profit area, according with the current theories of *communitarism*⁷². Italian civic service is deeply rooted in conscientious objection, which is a different experience from – although linked with – volunteering. The most recent studies on North American volunteering highlight the communitarian impacts, with civic service being a synonym of volunteering⁷³.

⁶⁹ See Baroncelli, F., Assereto G. G. (1983). *Sulla povertà. Idee, leggi e progetti nell'Europa moderna*. (p. 38 and ff). Genova: Ivrea.

⁷⁰ On this topic see Scoppola, P. (2000). *La Repubblica dei partiti*. Bologna: Il Mulino.

⁷¹ See Ardigo, A. (1984). Nuovi valori e nuovi attori per la rifondazione del Welfare State. *La ricerca sociale*, p. 36. Kramer, R. M. (1987). *Volontariato e stato sociale*. U. Ascoli (Ed.), (pp. 222, 227 and ff). Roma: Edizioni lavoro.

⁷² See Etzioni, A. (1993). *The Spirit of Community Rights, responsibilities and the communitarian Agenda*. New York: Crown Books.

⁷³ See Mc Bride, A. M., Benitez C.& Sherraden, M. (2003). *The forms and nature of civic service: A global assessment*. Research report St. Louis: Center for Social Development, Washington University and Davis-Smith, J., Ellis A. (2003). *Civic service across nations and cultures: The range of effects and ways to study them*. Report for the International Symposium *Civic Service: Impacts and Inquiry*. Global Service Institute. Center for Social Development. George Warren Brown School of Social Work. Washington University in St. Louis. Mo.

Leaving to one side for the moment these comparative aspects, one could consider that the adoption of the welfare state model in Italy decreased the role of non-profit organisations. The welfare state, its deficiencies and well-known problems notwithstanding, has undertaken the solving of social problems, such as those related to health and education, as its proper task, either in a direct way or by getting rid of those impediments which hinder people from reaching their goals⁷⁴. But several obstacles block these from being realised. First, financial lacks, because public resources available for this aim are always too little; and second, the mode of implementation eliminates the human and spiritual aspects that embody such social areas, and are normally the grounds and the *raison d'être* of personal and collective involvement.

The distinction between «people» as socially relevant actors and «subjects» as essentially anonymous elements is the noble starting point for these social policies, but also for their ambiguity. Citizens are both persons with certain rights of their own, and also subjects with undifferentiated duties. The State bureaucratic overload has brought about a gradual shift from material needs – to which an answer could have been found – and human needs – which were still unanswered⁷⁵. In the long run «new needs» and «new poverties» have appeared, but the State has not always been able to meet them. Indeed, the State has subsequently decided not to meet them, instead giving way to those forms of private assistance which have again come into play in civic society and which fit these aspects of human and social marginalization⁷⁶. In this new framework new forms of volunteering have appeared. Although they are still rooted in the catholic and socialist-based culture, they also show a variety of forms of personal participation in the lives of people, above all in those of the most poor. In this way voluntarism is not an alternative to the welfare state; indeed volunteers co-operate with the State, starting a dynamic where delegation and stimuli alternate. This is a very important point to be stressed; voluntarism is a constant source of new activities, some of which the state later picks up. Voluntarism put into concrete forms the *institutional principle of solidarity*, which, although granted by the Constitution, was not realised enough. Voluntarism is now an institution. It has caused the expansion of a whole sector of intervention: the one that *promotes solidarity choices*. This result is both a secondary cause and a consequence of the increasing estrangement of the State, due to its will to let «public areas» be available for a larger civic commitment, but also due to the state's inability to accomplish some of its social tasks and to the state's ontological failure to answer the very intimate personal needs such as those linked with conscientious aspects⁷⁷.

The new NCS has been placed in this sector. Its core is the development of free and personal choices by sharing communitarian forms to enhance social solidarity. This aspect ensures a special significance to NCS and volunteering: both are defined as expressions of a free personal choice to devote oneself to one's neighbours. The definition of these activities as service means that somebody wants to serve, and that somebody needs to be served.

In this respect, the NCS can be appreciated as a form of communitarian engagement associated with the new concept of citizenship; that means the acknowledgement of the substantial supremacy of the human person in his/her relation with the State. It is in fact the State that has to kneel in front of human dignity and acknowledge the sociality of people who fulfil themselves «through a mutual economical and spiritual solidarity»⁷⁸.

⁷⁴ See Italian Constitution, art. 3.

⁷⁵ For example, orphans would have found shelter and daily meals, but not a human structure equivalent to a family; the sick would have been looked after for free, but would also have turned into identity-less numbers.

⁷⁶ See Consorti, P. (1993). *L'assistenza spirituale nell'ordinamento italiano*, in: In Consorti, P. and Morelli, M. (Eds.), *Codice dell'assistenza spirituale* (p. 3 and ff). Milano: Giuffrè.

⁷⁷ On this evolution see Ardigo, A. (2001). *Volontariati e globalizzazione. Dal «privato sociale» ai problemi dell'etica globale*. Bologna: EDB.; Dalla Torre, G. (2000). Stato e società civile. Una prospettiva storico giuridica. *Diritto ecclesiastico*, I.

⁷⁸ The text is now reprinted in Dossetti, G.(1994). *Ordine del giorno Dossetti*. In Melloni, A. (Ed.), *La ricerca costituente. 1945-1952*. (p. 103 and ff.). Bologna: Il Mulino. [Quotations from Italian works have been freely rendered in English by the translator. Translator's note]

A clear form of solidarity has then been shaped: public and private subjects, single persons and groups are so engaged in a circular dimension of *reciprocity*⁷⁹. This type of solidarity is not to be interpreted as a “legal duty” that ties all the people of a community together, but rather as the personal freedom to *express choices that are not remunerated*⁸⁰.

The Italian Constitutional Court, referring to the act on voluntarism, included this principle among the *supreme principles of the Constitution*⁸¹ as «the way to realise that substantial equality that ensures the development of personality, as stated by the second subsection of the 3rd article»⁸². According to this viewpoint of Constitutional jurisprudence, solidarity is connected with the notion of citizenship already mentioned. . It alludes to the relationship that ties a citizen to other people⁸³ and urges him/her to contribute to the construction of justice and the defence of *communitarian values*. The principle of solidarity does not involve the citizen *uti singulus* only, but also *uti socius*: it is related to a person’s membership in a certain *societas* so both his/her nature and that of the community are engaged. From this point of view, the State – that is the utmost subject of a community – must undertake specific enhancements to subsume as its own task the promotion of activities that can make Constitutional values concrete - among those peace and non-violence. In other words, the State must initiate the activities of *communitarian solidarity*⁸⁴: that move from the State towards its citizens. This aim also legitimates - and sometimes forces - the accomplishment of certain risky initiatives such as the founding of a NCS not only *autonomous* and, consequently, independent of military service, but wholly distinct.

Conscientious objection and pacifism as bases of civic service

From this viewpoint it is worth looking specifically at the *principle of fraternity*. It has its roots in the French Constitutional tradition⁸⁵, but it also appears in an original way in the Italian Constitutional grid as an expression of *personal responsibility toward a community*. Fraternity consists in the expression of «solidarity among men and women joined together by a common condition»⁸⁶. The parity among similar persons is the core element of social cohesion and also the main feature of national common identity⁸⁷. It promotes the most dynamic and innovative aspects of *subsidiarity*⁸⁸. The State is gradually losing its role of intervention in favour of the role of mediator among different social needs: This situation requires the State to enhance those personal understandings that foster a communitarian answer to social needs, understandings that all citizens should act autonomously, but within a well-organised framework.

The real value of this perspective is better understood if one bears in mind that the *third sector* is not a mere safety-valve of a State unable to answer its social needs, but rather a proof of a «will to do»⁸⁹ carried out throughout several activities of general interest. From this point of view, NCS shows a typical scheme of social intervention: it is tangible, effective, and personal; it promotes an *active engagement*, to some extent

⁷⁹ This term seems to be more suitable if compared to the traditional distinction between *vertical solidarity*, which refers to the State, and *horizontal solidarity*, which refers to private subjects. See DURET, P. (2000). *La sussidiarietà «orizzontale»: le radici e le suggestioni di un concetto*. *Jus.*, (pp. 102, 104). On the Constitutional value of the solidarity principle see, among others, Casavola, F.P. (1994). *S Dalla proprietà alla solidarietà: appunti*. *Tema di diritti individuali e sociali*. Padova: CEDAM.; Galeotti (1996). *Il valore della solidarietà*. *Diritto e società*. (p. 14 and off)., Lipari, N. (1989). *La cultura della solidarietà nella Costituzione italiana*. *Parlamento*, N 12. (p. 24 and off).; Morozzo Della Rocca (1998). *Gratuità, liberalità, solidarietà*. Milano: Giuffé.

⁸⁰ See Pizzolato, F. (2001). *Appunti sul principio di fraternità nell’ordinamento giuridico italiano*. *Rivista internazionale dei diritti dell’uomo*, (pp. 745, 797).

⁸¹ See the Decision of the Constitutional Court. (1992, February 28). *Giurisprudenza costituzionale*. No. 75. (p. 404).

⁸² Decision of the Constitutional Court. (1993, December 31). *Giurisprudenza italiana* (1994), No. 500, I, 322.

⁸³ From a global perspective, ‘other people’ is also understood to include «the others». See GAMBINO, A. (1996). *Gli altri e noi: la sfida del multiculturalismo* (p. 16). Bologna.

⁸⁴ Galeotti, S. also calls it “paternal solidarity”. See Galeotti, S. (1996). *Il valore della solidarietà*. *Diritto e società* (p. 14).

⁸⁵ See the exemplaire work by Borgetto, M. (1993). *La notion de fraternité en droit public français. Le passé, le présent et l’avenir de la solidarité*. Paris.

⁸⁶ Pizzolato, F. (2001). *Appunti sul principio di fraternità*. *Rivista internazionale dei diritti dell’uomo* (p. 753).

⁸⁷ Resta, E. (2003). *Il diritto fraterno*. Roma: Bari. Laterza.

⁸⁸ Duret, P. (2000). *La sussidiarietà «orizzontale»: le radici e le suggestioni di un concetto*. *Jus.* (p. 102).

⁸⁹ The expression is in Menghini, L. (1989). *Nuovi valori costituzionali e volontariato*, (p. 111). Milano: Giuffré.

replacing the traditional means based on the idea of *delegation*. The value of *political participation* – strictly tied to the principles of *democracy* – is reinforced because personal engagement involves a public dimension that, although it develops from private choices, grows away from private business and spreads communitarian interests⁹⁰. On the other hand, the most significant sectors of intervention of National Civic Service volunteers promote and protect several constitutional values: defence of minorities, promotion of human rights and pluralism, preservation of ecosystem and cultural heritage, enhancement of pacifism and justice, social and sanitary assistance, health care and re-education of prisoners, parity of the sexes, spreading of education, fight against poverty, international co-operation, and assurance of a good public administration⁹¹.

An “old” and a “new” Italian civic service

At this point it is very important to remember and underline the original role that pacifism plays in the arrangement of NCS.

Italian civic service is strongly rooted in the conscientious objection to military service movement. But this relation has been changed with act no. 64/2001 that instituted the “new” NCS. It is not any more directly connected with conscientious objection.

Civil service as an alternative to military mandatory service was instituted by Act no. 772, December 15th, 1972, afterwards consolidated by the still-in-force Act no. 230, July 8th, 1998. It will soon be effective only in regard to special conscriptions as a result of the suspension of the constitutional obligation to serve. But the 1972 Act did not define civil service, it just recognised conscientious objection to military mandatory service, requiring the youth to be «employed as soldiers in a non-armed force or in the civic service for a period eight months longer than the compulsory conscription» (5th article). As an interim measure, the 5th article also added that «in case the youth chose civic service in place of Military service, the Ministry of Defence, while waiting for National Civic Service to be legally defined, will appoint those admitted to the service to institutions, organisations or structures of assistance, education, civil defence or care and enhancement of public woods and forests. If necessary, the State will also draw up special agreements with those institutions, organisations or structures to which the subjects are to be appointed». It was not a right, only a chance, since the law didn't define civilian service. A conscientious objector could do neither military service nor civilian service. He simply stayed home!

The objectors of this period, to whom the law prudently referred to as «young people allowed a legal advantage», had the same status of those «citizens enlisted to the *usual military service*» (11th article). It seemed almost natural that the objectors would choose a non-armed military service and not «civic service», still considered «in place of» military service but that was indeed «alternative» in practice. The original law allowed the replacement of compulsory military service with a longer personal engagement to be carried out in non-military sectors defined in the regulations. Since the National Civic Service had not yet been created, the objectors were to be appointed to «institutions, organisations or structures» that the State would determine.

In the beginning, civic service was only intended to replace the compulsory military service.⁹² The process was also hindered in several ways: for example delaying the agreements between the State and certain organisations or generally hampering conscientious objectors' activities. However, the idea of a «civil structure» selected by the State and engaged in the sector – which originally was considered as an interim measure – became the only way to make civic service function. Also today it is the natural solution for conscientious objectors' service. This development brought about a deep interaction between

⁹⁰ See Caillé, A. *Dono e associazionismo. Le organizzazioni del nuovo Welfare. loc. cit.*, (pp. 201, 209 and ff).

⁹¹ See also Menghini, L., *op. cit.* (p. 125).

⁹² This tendency is the main feature of some acts. For example, the present regulations allow a number of applicants to be appointed to the National Force of Fire fighters. Their civil task is “to protect people and things through the prevention and putting out of fires and also through general assistance” (act no. 1570, 1st article, December 27th, 1941). Nowadays, the act no. 1083, November 8th, 1966 allows an exemption from Military Service to those people who are engaged in international services of social relevance (the act has been slightly altered and has also received some additions, but its core has been kept unchanged).

conscientious objection to military service and civic service, so much so that the latter is commonly considered the natural consequence of the former. In short, the objectors' option for peace turned into a civic service activity⁹³, so civic service represents the most clear practical form of *pacifist and non violent personal choice*. The rejection of weapons and warlike training implied, and still implies a social commitment as communitarian servers.

From a historical point of view, it is undeniable that *civic service is firmly related to conscientious objection to military service*. The *social significance* of this civic commitment has resulted in conscientious objection being seen as a positive value in society. All this has been possible despite the fact that civic service once lasted more than military service and many people were thereby discouraged from doing it. During the last few years, conscientious objection has met with an increasing favour, thus spreading a pacifist and non-violent culture⁹⁴.

The public favour granted to civic service is also manifest by the juridical evolution of the phenomenon. Not the legislature, but the courts issued an increasing number of decisions *pro* conscientious objection⁹⁵. The first important shift was the decision, taken by the Constitutional Court, to grant the same duration to civil and military service (1985). Later, objectors were also allowed to serve in structures they had themselves chosen, so that a favourable reduction of mobility was the consequence: a few hours a day of civic service would replace an entire day spent in the barracks. Although this situation was not so widespread, it forced a gradual gap between conscientious objection and civic service. A lot of young people chose civic service even if they were not *real* objectors. Many of them simply *preferred* it in place of a military service felt as a waste of time, although they had not taken a conscientious stand against using weapons.

Although such a tendency has resulted in a problem for the training of servers, it must not be labelled as negative: it has in fact forced many young people to approach unknown – or little known – social situations and has also given them the right tools to deal with them. The large number of objectors (more or less committed to conscientious objection) has established and enhanced «civic service» so that it has acquired new forms and has spread on several social levels. Conscientious objection has in fact evolved together with other forms of communitarian commitment. From this viewpoint, *civic service, voluntarism* and *collaboration for the developing countries* appear as contiguous phenomena. They are not only exclusive areas for conscientious objectors, but have been recently legally acknowledged in autonomous ways, as already mentioned in writing about the legislative evolution in regard to recognition of organisations in the Third Sector. This area nowadays is the sector in which individuals can find the answers for their communitarian commitment as social problem solvers, i.e. as *civil servers*.

The positive reaction from society to the different aspects of civic service resulted in several parliamentary bills that tried to establish a new concept of *civic service* (national service) independent from conscientious objection. The idea to break the ties between conscientious objection and civic service has forced a new consideration of the *Constitutional principles* about this new civic service. The first step was to explore the legality of founding a mandatory civic service for all young people, especially for women. It aimed at being a new kind of rite of passage into adulthood, analogous – but not identical – to the then still compulsory military service for men.

The establishment of NCS – whether compulsory or optional – has evolved independently from the reformation of military service, although the debate to reorganise the armed forces has had its share in the development. The core of the matter was a proposal to change the armed forces into «Forces of Defence» and a project to turn them into *professional* «Military Forces». Moreover, cuts in public spending were being considered as well. The reforms – especially the suspension of the compulsory military service – have had

⁹³ “In case [the conscientious objector] has accomplished [his Civic Service task] with commitment and reliability (and this is the most important aspect, although it is also the less known), his work has manifested how enduring the ties between peace and freedom of mankind are” (Milanese, F. (1985). Lettera ai giudici: un itinerario educativo aperto al futuro. In Catti (Ed.). *Don Milani e la pace* (p. 115). Torino G.: EGA.

⁹⁴ There are many sociological surveys on this topic. See for example the recent *L'obiettore cooperativo* (2000). p.1.

⁹⁵ It is not accidental that many judges *a quo* had been conscientious objectors when they were young.

this as a main aim. Another aim was to reshuffle the Italian military service in order to bring it closer to the military services of other NATO members. This was one of the most important causes that forced the State to establish a voluntary military service and also a military service for women.

It is clear that the persistent legal connection between conscientious objection to military service and civic service *as a mandatory alternative* to military service forced the legislature to handle the matter with caution. The parliamentary bills to reform the 1972 act have been distinguished by a care in the process of reorganisation of the armed forces. But civic service was still interpreted as a mere substitute for military service. In fact, many people thought that the suspension of compulsory military service also resulted in an abrogation of civic service and not of conscientious objection only.

Defence policies and civic service

The 1998 Act reformed the notion of conscientious objection but did not deal with civil/civic service as a whole. In practice, it has simply founded an *Ufficio Nazionale per il Servizio Civile* (Office for NCS) located in the *Presidenza del Consiglio dei ministri* (8th article) and has taken the bureaucratic load off the military structures. It has also obviously tried to define NCS as a service connected with conscientious objection. The 1st article declares that objectors «can fulfil their military duties throughout civic service, autonomous and different in substance from military service, but still recognising homeland defence as an obligation established by constitutional ‘Fundamental Principles’».

This notion of civic service accomplished either by objectors to military service or by other kinds of subjects, had huge bounds to escape from, such as its *implicit nature of alternative service to military service*. Whether it is considered “substitutive” or “alternative”⁹⁶, the service appears as a mere appendix of military service, that is, a prerogative of those men enlisted in the army and not a service «different in nature and autonomous» from military service. It seems the legislator of the 1998 act could not really imagine a civic service *separate* from military service (that is as a national service).

A new Act (no. 331, November 14th, 2000; «Rules for the establishment of a professional military service») has limited compulsory military service to some exceptional events (78th article of the Italian Constitution) described as «a serious international crisis – in which Italy is directly concerned with or involved as a member of an international organisation – that forces the Government to increase the number of people enlisted in the Armed Forces» (2nd article). The same act also allowed the Government to enact a decree on the gradual substitution of soldiers in the compulsory army – within seven years to start from the date when the decree comes into force – with military volunteers and civil personnel from the Ministry of Defence, according to the principles of the 3rd article. This decree (no. 215) came into force in the year 2001 (May 8th) and declared the suspension of compulsory military service to start from the year 2005⁹⁷.

Such a «revolution» left no chances for a civic service to be still interpreted simply as a substitute to military service. The end of the latter meant necessarily the end of the former. This situation received scant consideration, at least until the ratification of Act no. 64 («Establishment of a NCS», March 6th, 2001). It empowered the Government to enact, within March 22nd, 2002, one or more decrees to regulate the practical aspects of the new system⁹⁸. An act soon to be promulgated by the Presidente del Consiglio

⁹⁶On the difference, once dear to the objectors’ movement, see Venditti, R. (1985). *Dovere costituzionale di difesa e servizio civile dell’obiettore di coscienza* (sent. 164/1985 della Corte costituzionale). *Obiezione di coscienza al servizio militare. loc. cit.*, (pp. 9, 15 and ff).

⁹⁷The present Government (the second held by Mr. Berlusconi, S.) decided to speed up the suspension, initially fixed for December 31st, 2006. On the matter see Romboli, R., *Il servizio civile alla luce dei principi costituzionali. Le prospettive del servizio civile in Italia: dalla legge n. 64/2001 ai decreti attuativi*. Rossi, E. and Dal, F. (2002). *canto* (Eds.). (p. 33). Padova: Fondazione Zancan.

⁹⁸The act(s) will define: 1. the general characteristics an applicant should have to service in the national service; 2. the formalities to access this service; 3. the duration of the service in general and of the different kinds of employment in particular; 4. the legal and financial treatment (3rd article). The act also defines several points of reference, such as: *a)* admission of men and women to the national service on the basis of objective and fair requirements; *b)* the legal and financial treatment of volunteers for national

dei Ministri (hopefully by January 1, 2005, will establish the qualifications the applicants should have in order to serve in the different kinds of NCS.

The 2001 constitutional reform: between defence and solidarity

In the meantime, the Constitutional Act no. 3, October 18th, 2001, was enacted too. It reformed the Fifth Chapter of the Italian Constitution, concerning the connection between the national State and the Regions⁹⁹, and inverted the previous dispositions. In brief, it says that the Regions are concerned with all matters, except those that the “new” 117th article reserves to the State. From this point of view, NCS seems now to be under the jurisdiction of the *Regions*, except for those kinds of services that concern national defence and security (article 117, second subsection, letter *d*)), and perhaps – stretching the meaning of the disposition – the «definition of essential degrees of service concerning civil and social rights which must be recognised throughout the nation» (article 117, second subsection, letter *f*)).

On July 18th, 2004, the Italian Constitutional Court decided that Italian national civic service is a way to defend the Homeland, according to article 52 of the Italian Constitution. De facto, it means that in Italy can have two kinds of civic service: the national one, that is, a way to defend the Homeland, and several regional civic services, according to different regional laws, that are not formally connected with peace and defence but with social policies.

To summarize, the present legislation still imposes a formal distinction between civil service (performed by objectors to military service) and National Civic Service (performed by other persons). The former is still interpreted as a personal rejection of war (as stated by the 11th article of the Constitution). The reason that could drive people to choose the “new” kind of civic service (the one established by the 2001 act) seems more related to one’s *duty to solidarity*, a principle stated by the second article of the Constitution concerning the protection of inviolable rights of men and women. In this way, both the State and the citizens are involved in solidarity. The Italian Republic must «get rid of those impediments which hinder the full development of human personality and the effective workers’ involvement in the politic and economic organisation of the Nation» (article 2). The citizens must «accomplish certain tasks and functions, in accordance with their possibilities and personal choices, so that both the material and spiritual aspects of society should be developed» (art. 4)¹⁰⁰.

Within this constitutional framework, it is worth noting that not only are *solidarity and fraternity principles* important basic principles for the NCS, but also that the *Labour principle plays a special role*. The latter has been traditionally related to a labour-union-based economic framework only¹⁰¹, and connected with the concept of paid work; but the notion can also be interpreted in a larger sense, to mean *work as a value*. In other words, NCS can reasonably be placed under the 4th article that urges the State not only to grant its people a job so that they can earn their livings, but also as an effective tool for personal achievement and for communitarian commitment. In this context, the Constitutional reference to *spiritual progress* cannot be

service in accordance with the treatment granted to the annual volunteers for military service and in accordance with the available resources of the National Fund for Civic Service; *c*) the benefits, granted to the volunteers, functional to their formative and professional development and also to their potential jobs, in accordance with what is granted to military volunteers; *d*) social utility of national service in different sectors, and in organizations which work abroad; *e*) duration of national service, its suitability and functionality in the different sectors, in accordance with the criteria defined in *c*) and *d*); *f*) synchronization of Parliamentary decrees so that they should come into force before the last group is enlisted in the army; *g*) approval of the measures established by the act no. 230, July 8th, 1998, and the Parliamentary bill no. 324, September 16th, 1999 (subsequently modified by the act no. 424, November 12th, 1999), now aligned with the present legislation; *h*) measures to be taken in case military service is again turned into a compulsory service, with special reference to conscientious objectors; *i*) equal terms granted to military and national service in accordance with a person’s natural inclinations and choices concerning the kind of duty, the working hours and spare time; *l*) the possibility accorded to a subject, belonging to a linguistic minority, to service in the territory where this minority lives.

⁹⁹ Italy is divided in 20 administrative districts, named «regions», which have some legislative power according to the Constitution.

¹⁰⁰ Casavola. *Dalla proprietà. op. cit.* (p. 19).

¹⁰¹ For a first survey, see Manchini, G. F. *Art. 4. Commentario della Costituzione, op. cit.* p. 199; LUCIANI, M. *Art. 4. Stato della Costituzione, op. cit.*, (p. 119).

underestimated. From this viewpoint, a freely chosen *work* voices the identity of every man and woman; and in this context the work of civic servers gains a high ethical significance.

The 4th article ratifies the «duty that people have to be what they can, in accordance with their natural talents, so that the largest expansion of this community will be reached only when every man and woman, fulfilled in their essences, will have already attained the greatest benefits for the common good»¹⁰². In fact, the «Constitution granted [this principle] a primary value in the legal system and considered it both as a special moment of personal fulfilment [...] and as a duty to which every citizen is committed ‘so that both the material and spiritual aspects of society should be developed’»¹⁰³. Such interpretation of the constitutional principle subsumes *work* not only as a right, but also as a duty connected with people’s means and choices to be engaged in the material and spiritual development of society: someone’s work is consequently placed in a *solidarity scheme*, where it is not only useful to him/herself but also to other people. A notion like this «implies a State that is provided with a *modicum of ethics*, with which the Italian State is supplied since it is based on work, requests its people to accomplish their solidarity tasks, and is engaged in the development of an equal society»¹⁰⁴.

NCS can be rightly placed in this paradigm. So, the Labour principle can be used as a constitutional point of reference for the «new» civic service, which, more than the «old» one – too tightly connected with conscientious objection to military service – shows a deep constitutional commitment to overcoming inequalities and in promoting communitarian engagement.¹⁰⁵

2. The current system

Introduction

This chapter deals with the two types of civic service provided in Italy (i.e. civil service in the strict sense of the word, and National Civic Service), their political aspects and how they work. Some references to international co-operation and European Voluntary Service (EVS) are also made. Legal provisions and experiences of civic service abroad are also covered. The most significant fact is the enactment of act n. 230, July 8th, 1998 and act n. 64, March 6th, 2001 both dealing with a kind of civic service. The former regulates civil service by conscientious objectors to military service; the latter regulates voluntary National Civic Service, open to women and to men exempt from the draft. Once military service will be suspended in 2005, National Civic Service will be open to both Italian men and women between 18 and 28 years of age.

From civil service by conscientious objectors to national civic service (SCN)

In Italy, civic service did not arise as a social commitment subsequently regulated by suitable acts (such as act n. 266/91 or act n. 383/2001) but rather as a secondary matter of a more general legislative debate. It was the answer to the question: “What are conscientious objectors to military service to do during their period of conscription?”

Theoretic standpoints on civic service had been devised nonetheless, above all in the work sector. The proposal by Ernesto Rossi on the “army of workers”,¹⁰⁶ that later inspired also the economist Sylos

¹⁰² *Atti assemblea costituente*, III p. 2369.

¹⁰³ Di Giovine, A. (1984). *Il principio lavorista*, in *Stato della Costituzione. op. cit.* (p. 8). On the notion of “spiritual progress” see Casuscelli, G. *Postconfessionismo e transizione.* (p. 34). Milano: Giuffrè.

¹⁰⁴ Mancini, *loc. cit.*, p. 258.

¹⁰⁵ Civic Service could become a “necessary factor for the development of a new spiritual unity implying social uniformity that is the premise for a new organization and for a new type of connection between State and Community.” (C., Mortati, C., *Art. 1. Commentario della Costituzione. loc. cit.* (p. 10). [this author was referring to work as a whole and not to Civic Service]).

¹⁰⁶ Rossi, E. (1977). *Abolire la miseria.* Laterza, (p.120-131).

Labini, are significant examples. But these were only minority stands. In 1972 the radical, anarchical and religious movements claimed for a quick solution of the problem concerning the numerous “martyrs” imprisoned. The situation put strong pressure on the most important parliamentary forces, so that both the Majority parties and the Left Opposition passed an act to “acknowledge conscientious objection”. Great attention was paid to the personal right (still denied) for freedom of conscience and antimilitarism (that was to be disguised).

It is not by accident that the 1972 act hardly mentioned civic service. Only in 1998 a thorough reshuffle of the matter took place: first of all, the load of responsibilities was taken off the Ministry of Defence and transferred to the *Presidenza del Consiglio dei Ministri*; second an *Ufficio Nazionale per il Servizio Civile* was established. As already stated in Chapter 1, this reshuffle does not appear adequate for the new cultural changes and trends, which are still developing. The original reform proposal suggested the establishment of a National Bureau for National Civic Service to act in the way that the American Corporation for National Civic Service does; that is, as an organisational “knot” for all forms of civic service, for example, for a programme (now suspended) of a civic service for elderly people.

The actual development of civic service has changed the scenario that the legislature had foreseen (i.e. hoped for). As *Figure A* shows, instead of having the expected involvement of a hundred or so people, several factors have brought about a more complex scenario distinguished by tens of thousands of conscientious-objection applications and people serving on duty.

FIGURE A

Applications for conscientious objection 1982-2002

Year	Applications	
1982	6,917	(*)
1983	7,557	
1984	9,903	
1985	7,430	
1986	4,282	
1987	4,986	
1988	5,697	
1989	13,746	
1990	16,767	
1991	18,254	
1992	23,490	
1993	28,910	
1994	33,339	
1995	44,342	
1996	47,824	
1997	57,284	
1998	72,196	
1999	108,000	
2000	62,524	
2001	64,059	
2002	48,986	
	TOTAL	686,493

SOURCES: Ministry of Defence, UNSC

(*) Applications of the previous years are also included

The providers of civic service

The nature of the Italian third sector (as related in the previous chapter) can offer a number of explanations for this phenomenon.

During the early 1980’s, even if with difficulty, civil service gradually lost its nature of “sporadic experience” and began to develop into a more common engagement among young people.. This new situation was the outcome of a national collaboration between associations for social enhancement, social co-operation, volunteerism, and the Catholic Church that consciously decided to invest on civil service.

For example, the members of the *Conferenza Nazionale degli Enti di Servizio Civile* (National Conference of Institutions for Civil Service; CNESC)¹⁰⁷ were able to offer 14,192 different types of engagement in 1997, a number that increased to 26,511 in 2001 (12,319 new different seats, that is +53%, were added).

FIGURE B – Number of seats Member Institutions of CNESC; years 2001-1997

	2001	2000	1999	1998	1997
CNESC	26,511	24,486	19,595	17,597	14,192

These developments met the interests of an increasing number of young people who decided to turn to conscientious objection. At the same time, the Constitutional Court passed an important Decision (n. 470, 1989) to state the unconstitutionality of the act, which forced conscientious objectors to be engaged for a period eight months longer than military service. If the applications were only a few thousands in number in 1988 (5,697), they increased to 13,796 in 1989 and reached 71,043 in 1998; the peak, more than 108,000 applications, was reached in 1999, then it decreased to 62,524 in 2000, and to 48,986 in 2002.¹⁰⁸

The involvement of Public authorities as institutions empowered to utilise conscientious objectors came much later. In fact, the first agreements between municipalities (*Communes*) and the Ministry of Defence date back only to the early 1990's. But their involvement rose appreciably: if in 1997 the agreements between *Communes* and the Ministry of Defence were 2,372 out of 3,846 total agreements, in 2001 they were 3,723 out of 5,923.

FIGURE C – *Communes* selected by the State; years 2001-1997

	2001	2000	1999	1998	1997
<i>Communes</i>	3,723	3,391	3,026	2,712	2,372
Seats	26,513	24,640	19,081	16,882	14,061

It is noteworthy that not all of the 8,000 Italian *Communes* were involved: only 46% of them came to an agreement for the engagement of objectors and they were mostly located in the central and northern part of the Country. But this situation does not weaken the “popularity” of civil service. As mentioned later, the establishment of NCS (SCN) appeals especially to the Southern *Communes*. The 14,061 seats for engagement available in 1997 had become 26,513 in 2001. The political value of these figures is manifest in the gradual involvement of public authorities that started to avail themselves of civil service as a means for social, cultural, environmental and educational policies to be carried out by them directly and not through collaboration with the Third Sector.

Civil service lessened the negative outcomes of cuts in the public spending, but on the other hand it may have slowed down the development of co-operation between public administrations and Third Sector organisations. This situation may even grow worse with the development of the National Civic Service.

The connection between demand and supply of civil service

Despite the large supply of placements for civil service, it could not satisfy the demand, so that the necessity to “park” the applicants awaiting a placement was feared.

¹⁰⁷ CNESC was founded in 1986. Today it consists of Acli, Aism, Anpas, Arci Servizio Civile, Caritas Italiana, Cecasca-Cisl, Cesc, Federsolidarietà-Confcooperative, Focsiv, Ispettorie Salesiane, Italia Nostra, Legacoop, Misericordie d'Italia, and the Italian branch of WWF.

¹⁰⁸ See the Third Report on National Service. (2002). CNESC.

FIGURE D

1997-2001: APPLICATIONS – PLACEMENTS

YEAR	APPLICATIONS	PLACEMENTS
1997	57,284	50,015
1998	72,196	57,620
1999	108,000	65,579
2000	62,524	46,464
2001	64,059	85,400

For the years 1980-2002, *Figure E* shows the gap between the date of the application and the date when the applicant started service (sources: samples of *Archi Servizio Civile*).

The solution of an “endless wait” was put into practice until 1986.¹⁰⁹ Around that year, a number of court decisions forced the Ministry of Defence, and then the *Ufficio Nazionale*, either to appoint the applicant to his service within a certain number of months, or to discharge him.

FIGURE E

DATE OF APPLICATION–DATE OF SERVICE
WAITING TIME

Year of application	Average wait (months)	Year of application	Average wait (months)
1980	22.8	1991	17.9
1981	21.1	1992	16.9
1982	19.9	1993	16.5
1983	18.6	1994	16.4
1984	18.9	1995	16.2
1985	19.5	1996	15.8
1986	17.7	1997	14.6
1987	19.1	1998	15.0
1988	18.9	1999	13.6
1989	18.0	2000	7.3
1990	17.6	2001	6.9
		2002	6.8

The shock of the year 2000

A critical situation took place in the year 2000: the amount of applications for 1999, the remaining applications for 1998 (whose requests were still unanswered), and the 10-month limit to bring an applicant into duty upset the system, so that there was a serious imbalance between applications and placements offered. The National General Elections held in April 2001 caused other difficulties. The issue was partly solved through providing new reasons for a legal discharge from the obligation to serve. A Decree, passed in February 2001,¹¹⁰ established a new clause called “guaranteed occupation”. It granted an immediate discharge from the service to all those applicants who could show they had received a

¹⁰⁹ Circular of the Ministry of Defence. (1979, September 19). N. 500081/3.

¹¹⁰ Decree of Presidente del Consiglio dei Ministri. (2001, February 9).

promise of employment. As a consequence, about 30,000 applicants did not have to do civil service. It is common knowledge that these measures were taken to solve certain financial problems - an applicant who did not do a civil service resulted in savings in the public spending. The upcoming suspension of military service as a compulsory duty also had its share in the decision.

The first government led by Romano Prodi and brought down in October 1998, meant to preserve compulsory military service, although within a project of professionalisation of the *FFAA* (Armed Forces), and also to invest on civil service. But the following governments had other projects. An act passed in November 2000 regulated the suspension of compulsory Military Service and also a professionalisation of the *FFAA*.¹¹¹

The SCN lobby

The same organisations that had previously been involved in civil service, especially the *Conferenza Nazionale degli Enti di Servizio Civile*, worked together in order to shape a sort of civic service open to men and women too (National Civic Service). A dispute on the possibility to establish a compulsory civil service was still in progress as they did so.

Main features of civil service

The legal provisions that regulate civil service are as follows.¹¹²

Duration

The 1972 act, which was in force until June 1989, established that civil/civic service should be eight months longer than military service. It meant a 20-month civil/civic service for those conscripted to the Army or Air Force but it reached 26 months for those enlisted conscripted to the Navy. Decision n. 470 (June 1989) by the constitutional court established that such a longer duration for civil/civic service was groundless and unfair. It also demanded that the Parliament devise a solution on the matter, which should consider the real nature of civil/civic service per se, and which would not be unfair. Although the Parliament had been engaged in the reform of the 1972 act since 1987, the reform act was only passed in 1998: it established an equal duration for both constitutional duties to serve the Homeland. Nowadays, civil service lasts 10 months.

Remuneration

During 2003, conscientious objectors daily receive € 3.15 (weekends included, even if they are off duty) that is € 94.50 a month. (A girl engaged in National Civic Service receives much more –see later).

Health assistance

From 1972 to 1998 Military Health assistance had been applicable also to objectors, (otherwise they would have had to pay for National Health Assistance). The act was subsequently changed (act n. 230/98, article 6th, subsection 4) so that from 1998 on, objectors can avail themselves of National Health Assistance. The care is granted by its territorial structures. The same act (article 9th, subsection 7) also establishes that the Ministry of Defence will grant objectors health assistance when they are engaged in humanitarian missions abroad. In case the sick leave exceeds 15 days, the daily allowance is suspended from the 16th day on. The objector will make up for the lost time at the end of his service, so that a fair number of days are always granted. In any case, he e can ask for an exemption.

¹¹¹ Act on Rules for the establishment of a professional National Service”(2000, November 14). N. 331.

¹¹² UNSC. (2003, February 26). Provisions for the management of National Service (prot. n. 14991/II/4, published 2003, June 25).

Leaves

Leaves allow objectors to be absent from work for more than 24 hours. Objectors are granted ordinary leaves (up to 10 consecutive days) and short period leaves (allowed directly by the placement. They consist of up to 15 days, trips included. A short period leave can be split into subsequent leaves, which should not last more than 5 days. Extra and special leaves can be granted under certain circumstances. Since civil service has social solidarity as its core, the right to a one-day leave for blood donation has been acknowledged also. Great care has been reserved for two very special events, both concerning a right politically acknowledged: the right to vote and the right to accomplish one's course of studies. Objectors can avail themselves of their own leaves even when serving abroad, without any particular permission by the *Ufficio Nazionale per il Servizio Civile*.

Hourly leaves

Hourly leaves are granted to meet the objectors' personal needs and must not exceed the daily working hours. The person in charge of the objectors can grant hourly leaves only when the manager of the project agrees, unless in a matter of urgency. The objectors will make up for the lost hours by the end of the following month (the total number of hours must not exceed 36 hours a week). The objector, who holds an elective position (i.e. was elected to a public office in a municipality or legislature), can avail himself of hourly leaves in those cases (stated by act n. 265, August 3rd, 1999).

Working hours

Objectors are supposed to work between 36 and 40 hours a week. Working hours are divided into five/six days so that objectors can take a day off. Work is to be accomplished in the daytime. Practical and different needs can force an Institution to select a different working hour plan. Objectors are to comply with it, provided that volunteers and employees of the Institution do so as well. If an objector should exceed the limit of 40 working hours a week, he is to claim this credit in hours within the following two weeks. Both the amount of excess hours and the way the credit has been balanced must be entered on his service card. In case an objector cannot profit from a public holiday that occurs during working days, he is to obtain compensation for the loss within 15 days.

The Institution is forced to supply the objectors with a meal at its expense, in case the daily working hour plan allows a break for a meal (i.e. the service exceeds six hours of continuous work), even if the option "board only" is not recognised in the agreement. Journeys to and from work as well as breaks for meals are not to be considered within daily working hours. The Institution can decide (with no further financial burden for the Ufficio Nazionale) to refund an objector for his expenditure (the cost of public means of transport only) with the proviso that the related documents of travel are produced.

Night working hours

The Institution can require of its volunteers and employees as well as objectors to do night working hours, on condition that the objectors carry out only supporting tasks. By "night working hours" is meant that period of time from 11 p.m. to 6 a.m. Night working hours are to be immediately followed by an extra day off.

Mobility

The Institution may legally transfer its objectors to one of its branches or to another Institution for short periods of time, provided that the objectors agree. Mobility can occur: 1. for the accomplishment of certain projects of the Institution that transfers the objectors; 2. for the accomplishment of certain projects of the Institution where the objectors are transferred to; 3. by reason of *force majeure*, such as when the branches of the Institution do not stick to what is established in the agreement any longer.

Transfers

Transfers of objectors from an Institution to another Institution come under the jurisdiction of the *Ufficio Nazionale* that takes the place of the Ministry of Defence. The measure can be taken:

- on the objector's request;
- for public prosecution;
- on the request of the Institution, on reasonable grounds.

An objector can ask for transfer for the following reasons:

- to be closer to his family;
- to be closer to the place where he holds an elective position;
- for his course of studies;
- for his job;
- for his activity of research and development of high importance in the scientific, artistic or cultural fields, provided that his absence may cause the research to slow down or stop;
- for his sport activity, carried out at a competitive level;
- for his desire to continue his activity of volunteerism, apprenticeship or collaboration with the Institutions selected by the State;
- a new physical medical inspection has stated he is not fit for service any longer;
- the objector has been appointed to an Institution, but it is not the one that had requested his engagement on the basis of a previous collaboration or apprenticeship;

A transfer is granted on condition that all documents on the previous activities are produced.

The Institution can also ask for the objector's transfer in a case where:

- the project in which the objector is employed cannot be fulfilled;
- the project in which the objector was employed has been fulfilled;
- after the objector has been placed, a lack of capacity to supply him board and lodging develops.

Motor vehicles

Act n. 230/98, article 6th, subsection 1, applies with regard to the driving of vehicles. To accomplish his tasks, an objector can drive vehicles which belong to the Institution, or are otherwise at its disposal. The drawing up of an insurance policy to cover all the risks (included the driver's) is compulsory. The Institution is compelled to obtain the objector's acceptance of the task and also to ascertain that he has a driving licence.

Board and lodging

With regard to board and lodging, act 230/98 applies. Those Institutions that wish to offer board and lodging to their objectors must comply with the agreement drawn up with the *Ufficio Nazionale*, so that a proper administrative management may be ensured (the training of the institution's staff person responsible about the rules the National Office has created, for example, to register the stay in the apartment, to request the reimbursement of the rent monthly from the National Office).

Some Institutions may supply board and lodging as an indivisible aspect of their projects. The objectors who are appointed to these Institutions, whether they reside in them or not, must comply with the host institution's internal regulations on the matter.

If the objector should refuse lodging, he must also refuse meals, except for the situations already mentioned in the *Working hours* section. The objectors, who avail themselves of board and lodging, may occasionally do without this service, provided that the Institution is informed and that the project they are carrying out will not be jeopardised. The objectors who avail themselves of a board-and-lodging service must comply with the regulations concerning its use and also with the opening/closing time of the structures, as well as with the scheduled meals supplied directly by the Institution or by another Organisation. The structures which accommodate objectors must comply with the laws in force. They must not be used by clients or frequent visitors of the Institution. The Institution can supply the objectors with a board-and-lodging service or with a "board only" service, if this is established by the agreement. This situation also applies to those agreements which grant both board and lodging.

The service with “board only” supplies only one meal a day. It is supplied when daily working hours exceed six hours of *continuous* work or a break for a meal is allowed. The meal is supplied in accordance with what is laid down for the other employees or volunteers. Supplying a meal is compulsory for those Institutions that choose a working hour plan where this service is laid down by law. Those Institutions that have not drawn up an agreement concerning board or lodging either can meet the expenses by themselves or can ask the *Ufficio Nazionale* for a change in their agreement. As laid down by act n. 230/98, article 11th, subsection 3, the Institutions that supply board and lodging or “board only” are granted a refund to cover the expenses, in accordance with the type and nature of the services provided and on condition that the related documents be produced (i.e. the monthly attendance schedule of the objectors who avail themselves of such services). According to what is established in the agreement, the Institution can change the type of service only at the end of every scheduled period.

Refundable meal expenses for the year 2002 were:

- board only: per day € 4.00 (one meal)
- board and lodging: per day € 8.00 (two meals, breakfast and lodging).

Both sums are to be refunded only for days of actual service. Unfortunately the same does not apply to rented flats, maintenance expenses, or kitchen and canteen facilities. To have an idea of the real value of such refunds, one must consider that the typical Italian breakfast (i.e. *cappuccino* and *croissant*) costs almost € 2.00! The Institutions must bear the larger part of these expenses but are not always willing to do so. This situation can help to explain the average objector’s preference for having his placement near where he has his residence.

There are also cultural reasons, such as the typical Italian *mammismo* (excessive attachment to one’s mother) or one’s circle of friends, to want to serve close to home, but the previous reason seems the most important. It prevented arranging placements for many young objectors, so that a detachment from friends and families was practically impossible. As a result, objectors had almost no chance to meet with new social realities and young people in another part of the country.

In short, the solution to participate in the expenses for structures of reception has had unexpected and unpleasant outcomes. One of the common aspects of military service, the chance to “know something new”, could not be applied to civil/civic service, so that the youth were denied a chance to meet new realities. As will be explained later, the National Civic Service has the same problems.

Applications with preferences

One of the harshest battles that distinguished the history of civil/civic service in Italy was about the criteria used to match objectors and Institutions. The Ministry of Defence has always solved the matter by applying the same criteria used for military service: soldiers were simply military units to fill in a post. Conscientious objectors should be treated the same.

From the beginning, the members of the CNESC strongly argued that both the objectors’ and the Institutions’ preferences should be taken into consideration, in order to obtain an appropriate rapprochement between demand and supply. This system is now known as *segnalazione nominativa*, a sort of “application with preferences”: it underwent several redesigns between 1980 and 1998.

The chances for a positive solution of the issue tended to increase or decrease according to the Minister of Defence who was in charge. 1986 is sadly famous for its “call-ups by public prosecution”, whose outcome was a double paradox. On the one hand, there were objectors with a degree in medicine, appointed to watch over statues in museums; on the other hand, an institution could not immediately involve its objectors, because they had to be given basic instructions in their duties before they could do the work.

Many objectors reacted with a “self-assignment” strategy: an objector and an institution would agree on the kind of activities to be carried out and the objector would consequently work in that institution to accomplish his civil service.¹¹³ The same system was used to overcome another form of obstructionism devised by the Military Administration: - keeping the objector waiting for a very long time before appointing him to a specific institution. The self-assignment strategy was considered as a crime from a military point of view and as a crime it was prosecuted. But the military authority gave up at last and the civil authority sided with the objectors, recognising the “positive” core of their reasons.

The 1998 reform legally acknowledged applications with preferences, and regulated them as follows. Institutions must clearly state on the application with preference the following: the name and surname of the applicant, his date and place of birth, address, fiscal code (a document issued by the *Ministero delle Finanze* which identifies every person by an alphanumeric code), the military district to which the applicant belongs, and above all, the date in which the application is made. In case military service has been postponed (for example, because the applicant is still a student), the institution must also clearly state the date when the deferral ends. Applications must reach the *Ufficio* four months before the objectors’ engagements are supposed to start.

The *Ufficio* will not consider applications lacking even one of the points mentioned above, or sent in beyond the time limit. Those applications which have the objector’s signature of approval at the end of the form will be favoured, depending on the actual availability of placements with the institution.

Inspections

Inspectors are always identified by authorizing letters sent by the *Ufficio* to the person in charge of the institution. Inspections are meant to check the consistency and formality of the engagement; the institutions’ observance of agreements and projects; the updating and maintenance of the objectors’ personal documents; and the accurate maintenance of accounting documents concerning civil service. Inspections are provided by the *Ufficio* in accordance with the inspection programme laid down by a Decree by the Presidente del Consiglio dei Ministri. An inspection can also be provided based on reports which refer to a possible mismanagement of civil service in an institution. At the end of inspection, the *Ufficio* will inform the person in charge of the institution. If inspections take place in an institution, the person in charge of the objectors must be informed as well. The final account is also sent to the institution.

Civil service abroad

Till 1999, the Ministry of Defence denied objectors the possibility to serve abroad. In the early 1990’s, those objectors who went to the Balkans in order to carry out the same kind of activities they would perform in Italy had to use on their leaves or be sued for desertion. The issue was later settled by the insertion of a specific subsection in the reform act.¹¹⁴ This situation prevented the Italian Institutions that engaged objectors to develop a network with practical experience and planning/managing know-how. It also prevented the international NGOs (Non-Government Organisations) from being involved in civil service.

The 1998 reform opened the way for a civil service abroad. Unfortunately, the general reorganisation engaged both the *FFAA* and civil service to such an extent that the possibility of considerable investments in this area was prevented. With the exception of a few sporadic missions (such as those in the Balkans), there were no chances for Italian civil service to develop abroad.

Act n. 64/2001

¹¹³ Venditti, R. (1999). *L’obiezione di coscienza al servizio militare* and Giuffrè, MI. (1998, July 8). Act No. 230. Article 9. Subsection 8.

¹¹⁴ UNSC, Financial plan for the year 2002. (1998, July 8). and Act n. 230. Article 9. Subsection 8.

Act n. 64 on “establishment of National Civic Service” was passed in March 2001. It stuck to generalities and also repeatedly referred to a forthcoming Decree that was supposed to settle the matter. On the one hand the Legislature was about to end its mandate, on the other hand there had been no conclusive parliamentary debates on the matter. There was also a lack of qualified people who could handle the critical issues properly.

Act n. 60/2001 and Decree n. 77/2002 are divided into two sections:-

- the first section deals with the general issues for the period following the suspension of compulsory military service and its reorganisation into a voluntary service;
- the second section deals with the “transition period”.

Permanent provisions

SCN and its aims

Act n. 64/2001, article 1st defines the aims of SCN. It should: -

- contribute to Homeland Defence, as much as compulsory military service, through non-military means and activities;
- enhance the constitutional principles of social solidarity;
- enhance solidarity and co-operation at a national and international level, with special regard to the promotion of social rights and human needs, the education to peace among peoples;
- preserve the National cultural heritage, with special regard to Civil Protection, the environment, (agriculture in mountain regions included), forests, historical, artistic and cultural sectors;
- develop youth’s civic, social, cultural and professional conscience through certain activities performed in Italy or abroad

Financial resources

The 12th article defines the nature of financial resources, how they can be obtained and how they are to be exploited.

The previous National Fund for Civil Service is also available for National Civic Service. It consists of:-

- the yearly amount destined to the Fund as stated by the State budget ;
- the allocations coming from *Regions, Provinces*, Local Institutions, Public Bodies, and Bank Foundations;
- the allocations coming from public and private subjects.

Donors can clearly state that their allocations are to be used for “the development of National Civic Service in specific areas and engagements”. At the moment, the most important outcome concerns the funds obtained by the Committee for fiscal objection to military expenditures: it uses its funds for the promotion of Unarmed Civil Defence.

During the “transition period”, the funds allotted for SCN come from the remaining funds of the «old» civil service. In 2002, the first year of SCN, UNSC could count on € 119,000,000.00. The development activities were allocated € 41,000,000.00.¹¹⁵ In 2003, the availability of the same amount allowed € 68,000,000.00 to be allocated to the same activities.¹¹⁶

¹¹⁵ UNSC, Financial plan for the year 2002.

¹¹⁶ UNSC, Financial plan for the year 2003.

Figure F shows the statistics about the number of projects approved in 2002 and in the first months of 2003 together with the number of persons involved.

FIGURE F
RECAP of PUBLIC NOTICES on SCN, 2002

PUBLIC NOTICES	NUMBER PROJECTS	VOLUNTEERS REQUESTED	APPLICATIONS	VOLUNTEERS ENGAGED	Placements filled as % of those requested	Placements not filled %
I	103	1,061	1,282	536	50.52	525
II	380	3,412	2,965	1,841	53.96	1,571
III	79	831	1,023	366	44.04	465
IV	923	8,152	9,575	5,122	62.83	3,030
V	376	2,604	1,604	979	37.60	1,625
TOTAL	1,861	16,060	16,449	8,844	55.07	7,216

SOURCE: UNSC

Provisions for the "transition period"

UNSC has passed the following provisions which will be in force until the suspension of compulsory military service.¹¹⁷

Who can perform SCN

For the "transition period" the following measures are to regulate access to SCN. Both men and women can voluntarily perform the 12-month SCN if the structures of the *Servizio Sanitario Nazionale* (National Healthcare Service) judge them fit and qualified for that specific sector, and in accordance with the number of volunteers allowed that varies yearly:-

- Italian women can apply for SCN if they are between 18 and 26; from 2005 on, the age limit will be between 18 and 28;
- Italian men, under 26 years of age, can apply for SCN if they have been judged unsuitable for military service, even if this happens after their call-up or if they have received a certificate of discharge.
- From 2005 on, men between 18 and 28 will be allowed to serve as well.

Duration

SCN (12 months) is longer than civil service (10 months).

Italian citizens only

The original Government Bill, in accordance with what some non-profit organisations had demanded, would have allowed both Italian and foreign citizens, provided that they were resident in Italy to be engaged in SCN. This option was deleted during the Parliamentary discussions. The official reason was

¹¹⁷ UNSC. (2002, November 29). Institutions and projects for National Service. Provisions for the selection of volunteers. Circular n. 31550/III/2.16 (2002, December 5).

that they wanted to avoid debates on the possibility that Italian nationality could be acquired after the service. In reality, there were two more reasons to oppose this option: the xenophobic attitude of some members of the parliamentary majority, and the fear that SCN could compete with the *FFAA* for the engagement of volunteers. Ironically a few months later some bills were submitted to allow the professional *FFAA* to enlist foreign “legionnaires”, who would consist mostly of non-EU citizens!

Number of required volunteers

The number of volunteers accepted for SCN varies yearly. In fact, a Decree by the *Presidente del Consiglio dei Ministri* establishes the number in accordance with the available financial sources. The number includes both the volunteers admitted to civic service in the “transition period” and those who chose conscientious objection to military service as stated by act n. 230/1998. The latter are granted preferential treatment.

SCN abroad

The possibility to perform SCN abroad is also allowed. The 9th article asserts that National Civic Service can be performed abroad, in institutions or administrative structures that carry out civic service projects connected to certain programmes of the European Union. Institutions established by the European Union or other international bodies with similar aims that deal with activities related to peace-building and co-operation among nations are considered as well. It is understood that what was laid down by act n. 230 (July 8th, 1998) is still in force. The *Presidenza del Consiglio dei Ministri* defines the ways in which SCN should be performed abroad.

The «crediti formativi» strategy

In order to promote the involvement of youth in SCN and also to link this experience to their course of studies or work, the law grants certain cultural and professional benefits to participants.

Several Ministries grant certain *crediti formativi* (i.e. educational credits, a value attributed to experiences which give competencies relevant to the volunteer’s programme of study or work) applicable in Secondary School or University. Unfortunately, the present reorganisation in the school and the university systems has almost negated the importance of these benefits.

How SCN works

In view of its transitory nature, UNSC has issued several general provisions to regulate both the projects and the involvement of the youth. Unlike the old civil service that required only general plans for the engagement of objectors, SCN calls for more specific projects.

Who can submit projects for SCN

As it was in the past, projects can be submitted either by Third-Sector Organisations or by public authorities. They are required to have non-profit aims and to have at least three years’ experience in the sector for which the project is submitted.

The Institution register

In order to avoid the short-term involvement of some institutions that submit projects once only, an Institution register has been devised. This way, institutions can invest in SCN in the long term, and UNSC can rely on them for many years. Against a higher level of investment, these Institutions are allowed to manage the quantity and quality of their projects more freely. Since the first Public Notices, projects can be submitted by Local Institutions (voluntary associations, voluntary groups, social co-operatives, *Comune* and so on) and also by National Bodies, especially those connected with the non-profit sector. The problem at issue is the management of a large number of human resources (several

thousand people a year) who either can be engaged in many micro projects or in several larger projects performed in different cities. It is clear that a large part of the territory will be covered.

Requirements

UNSC requests the Institutions to have:-

- a management structure for the planning, supervision and accomplishment of SCN projects. They also should have appropriate means (such as computers, editors for documents, and the usual means for proper communication and information) for the enhancement of National Civic Service. National institutions, as well as those under the jurisdiction of Regions and Provinces, are to be organised as centralised structures able to supervise their branches during the process of project preparation and selection. They should also allocate suitable means and personnel to those structures where the National Civic Service projects are to be carried out.
- suitable and qualified personnel during
- a process of preparation, implementation, management (financial administration included), and supervision of SCN projects;
- selection, accounting and administrative management, and preparation of formation courses; the same applies to the supervision of the training of volunteers;
- a process of information and communication, with special regard to reaching youth.
- certificates, specifying the training level accomplished, so that volunteers can use them at the end of SCN.

The debate on the quality and reliability of SCN projects is still going on as this is being written. The debate should reach an end on January 1, 2005, after which only specific institutions selected by the State will be allowed to submit projects.

One-year projects

From the same date on, in order to avoid a circular and fruitless process of “preparation-submission-implementation” of projects, those institutions which are not selected but that possess the requirements nonetheless, will be allowed to submit one-year National Civic Service projects involving no more than thirty volunteers. The project can be submitted for approval only once.

SCN projects

If all general requirements are assessed positively (the submitted projects possess the general features requested, the Institution is non-profit and has at least a three-year experience in the sector) UNSC requests proper management skills and that the project be suitable for National Civil Service, as well. UNSC also requests:

- personnel with proper knowledge of training of volunteers (in case the Institution lacks qualified personnel, the volunteers can be trained by external trainers, either public or private), proper tutorial meetings for the volunteers,- social preparation and supervision of National Civil Service projects, data processing (programmes such as Excel, WinWord, Acrobat Reader, WinZip, Internet and Email);
- the institution has its own portal on the internet and an email address.

FIGURE G

FINANCIAL SUPPORT OF CIVIL SERVICE

<i>ITEM of EXPENDITURE</i>	<i>STATE</i>		<i>INSTITUTION</i>		<i>TOTAL</i>
A. PER CAPITA					
IN €	<i>ANNUAL</i>		<i>%</i>	<i>ANNUAL</i>	<i>%</i>
	<i>AMOUNT</i>		<i>AMOUNT</i>		
<u>OBJECTORS' ALLOWANCE</u>	945.00				
<u>SUBSISTENCE</u>	704.00		640.00		
<u>TRAINING of OBJECTORS *</u>	40.00		60.00		
<u>TRAINING of OPERATORS **</u>			100.00		
<u>PROJECT MANAGEMENT</u>			50.00		
<u>ADMINISTRATION***</u>			300.00		
<u>INSURANCE ****</u>			15.00		
<u>TOTAL</u>		1,689.00	1,165.00		
<u>ACCOMMODATION (1)</u>	704.00		3,000.00		
B. TOTALS FOR YEAR 2002					
<u>45,000 objectors in service</u>	76,005,000.00		52,425,000.00		128,430,000.00
			59.18		40.82

Legend

* Public share only after 16 hours of training
 ** First training and annual refresher course included
 *** Annual lump sum
 **** Annual premium per objector

(1) This sum is estimated since objectors requiring accommodation are not very common

FIGURE H

FINANCIAL SUPPORT OF NATIONAL CIVIC SERVICE

<i>ITEM of EXPENDITURE</i>	<i>STATE</i>		<i>INSTITUTION</i>		<i>TOTAL</i>
<i>In €</i>	<i>ANNUAL</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>ANNUAL</i>	<i>%</i>	
	<i>AMOUNT</i>		<i>AMOUNT</i>		
<u>MONTHLY ALLOWANCE</u>	5,205.60				
<u>SUBSISTENCE</u>	704.00		640.00		
<u>TRAINING of VOLUNTEERS *</u>	50.00		100.00		
<u>TRAINING of OPERATORS **</u>			150.00		
<u>PROJECT MANAGEMENT ***</u>			100.00		
<u>ADMINISTRATION***</u>			400.00		
<u>INSURANCE ****</u>	160.00		25.00		
<u>TOTAL</u>	6,119.60		1,415.00		
<u>ACCOMMODATION (1)</u>	704.00		3,000.00		
<u>TOTALS FOR YEAR 2002</u>					
<u>9,000 volunteers in service</u>	55,076,400.00		12,735,000.00		67,811,400.00
		81.22		18.78	

Legend

* State contribution only after 25 hours

** First training and annual refresher course included

*** Annual lump sum

**** Annual premium per volunteer

(1) The sum is the result of a general estimation, since volunteers requiring accommodation are not very common

FIGURE I

FINANCIAL SUPPORT OF NATIONAL CIVIC SERVICE ABROAD

ITEM OF EXPENDITURE	STATE		INSTITUTION	TOTAL
In €	ANNUAL AMOUNT	%	ANNUAL AMOUNT	%
<u>MONTHLY ALLOWANCE (for the service in Italy)</u>	1,735.20			
<u>MONTHLY ALLOWANCE (for the service abroad)</u>	6,940.80			
<u>SUBSISTENCE (for the service in Italy)</u>	352.00		640.00	
<u>ACCOMMODATION (for the service abroad)</u>	3,600.00		2,400.00	
<u>TRAINING of VOLUNTEERS *</u>	180.00		180.00	
<u>TRAINING of OPERATORS **</u>			200.00	
<u>PROJECT MANAGEMENT ***</u>			200.00	
<u>ADMINISTRATION ***</u>			700.00	
<u>INSURANCE ****</u>	160.00		50.00	
<u>TOTAL</u>	12,968.00		4,370.00	
<u>YEAR 2002</u>				
<u>100 VOLUNTEERS in service</u>	16,000.00		5,000.00	21,000.00
		76.19		23.81

Legend

* Public share only after 25 hours

** First training and annual refresher course included

*** Annual lump sum

**** Annual premium *per* volunteer

(1) The sum is the result of a general estimate, since accommodation is not very common

There have been also “invisible” costs at the volunteers and their families’ expense. An example may be the low quality of board and lodging, or the complete lack of both, that have hindered both the Institutions and the volunteers from innovative experiences. In the same way, the withdrawal of sums destined for planning, training and supervision has created a grid of easy alibis that has sometimes concealed such deficiencies, which cannot be tolerated in a system that employs objectors and should offer top-quality services to its citizens.

Act n. 64/2001 and the new Decree open the way to further development. New supporters can invest in National Civic Service and new institutions can avail themselves of the State funds for the same purpose. If act n. 64/2001 is interpreted correctly, institutions will be allowed to combine their forces with local public bodies, who can now invest on National Civic Service. Institutions will be free to choose the public body they want to work with, the social sector or the geographical area to support and so on.

Another issue is the purpose with which the local public administrations will choose to endow their financial resources: will they enhance informative campaigns of projects in progress? Or will they promote competitiveness against the Third Sector (for example, increasing the monthly stipends the objectors receive from UNSC or their *Regions*)?

The informative campaigns of SCN

The use of informative campaigns to promote SCN is another novelty. UNSC has broken with a very bad State tradition and has highlighted the public importance of individual choice. Between 1980-2002 costs of information campaigns were borne by the institutions connected to Civil Service: in this situation *passaparola* (information from friends and relatives; *passaparola* is an Italian game similar to “Chinese whispers”) helped to spread the message. That is why Civil Service became so popular. The transition to a voluntary system “forced” the institutions to use informative campaigns, advertisements, gadgets and short films. UNSC was concerned with the national dimension of the new strategy: between 2002 and 2003 the Ufficio invested almost € 8,000,000.00 in information campaigns and funded Regions and self-governing Province with a further €5,000,000.00.¹¹⁸

International co-operation

A brief reference can be made here to international co-operation programmes carried out by the NGOs involved with SCN. A harsh economical crisis has been affecting the NGOs for the last several years. It has almost completely prevented a young man who complies with his duty to do military service performing a two-year international voluntary service as allowed by act n. 47/1989. Despite many attempts to change its form, this act still regulates international co-operation.

The European Voluntary Service (EVS)

There are many problems in this programme. First, the chances to dispatch Italian citizens abroad (i.e. to foreign organisations) to perform their service become slimmer every year. Second, this European experience is likely to disappear forever. It is very difficult to link the EVS organisations and those concerned with SCN together in a reliable organisational network that could provide common planning. In Italy this possibility is also hindered by the following:

- there are two different types of public administration, i.e. the *Agenzia Italiana per il Programma Gioventù* (Italian National Agency for EU-Youth Programme) by the *Ministero del Lavoro* (Department of Employment) and the *Ufficio Nazionale per il Servizio Civile* by the *Presidenza del Consiglio dei Ministri*;
- SCN projects still cannot provide a double service, being hosting organisations and sending organisations, given the fact that foreign people are still denied the right to participate in SCN;
- the two public administrations apply different deadlines for projects;
- the youth are required to have a different degree of motivation in order to carry out a project (it is very high for the *Programma Gioventù*, but it is not required at all by SCN);
- the present national measures on visas and stay still do not recognise a 7-month period abroad.

As shown during the seminar organised by the *Arvi Servizio Civile* (September 4th-6th, 2003), there is a chance for teamwork between the two administrations. This situation could lead to practical collaborations by the year 2004. This synergy may lead to a number of innovations such as:

- an exchange of data about foreign organisations involved in both programmes;
- more pliability in the beginning of SCN programmes, in order to bring them closer to EVS;

Despite the European exhortation to promote the youth mobility, we still lack significant data about the Italian Government’s degree of involvement in this matter.

¹¹⁸ UNSC. Financial plans for the years 2002 and 2003.

FIGURE J

EVS in Italy

(Drafting based on data provided by the *Agenzia Italiana Progetto Gioventù*)

HOSTING ORGANIZATIONS		
YEAR	SUBMITTED PROJECTS	ACTUAL Placements of volunteers
2000	413	*
2001	437	392
2002	550	393
* N.A.		
SENDING ORGANIZATIONS		
YEAR	SUBMITTED PROJECTS	ACTUAL Placements of Volunteers
2000	228	*
2001	223	181
2002	273	209
* N.A.		

Conclusion

The present scenario offers many viewpoints on the international dimension of SCN. The present situation of SCN can be labelled as “year zero” of the service: the Italian National Civic Service, apart from certain worthwhile peace – building projects, has not shown itself so rich in international activities yet. Prospects for the future are very positive, however. There are at least three sectors that have stated an interest in the development of international service:

- 1) associations operating principally in Italy,
- 2) associations operating principally abroad (NGO’s in Italian usage) and
- 3) local municipalities (commune).

To begin with, during the 1990’s, many associations and *communes*, although they did not set up an NGO for the purpose, started several decentralised co-operation programmes to join local groups together for international projects. Moreover international foster parents’ programmes and mobilisation of local people to give clothes, school equipment, etc. after floods and other disasters have helped in shaping a supranational conscience, one of the most fruitful ways for the culture of globalisation to develop. As SCN consolidates its position, an analysis of how the attitude of the international NGOs to it develops will be of high value.

3. Analysis of national civil and civic service and their social effects

The universe of youth and the performers of National Civic Service

The “host” of young people involved in civil service was minimally defined by the laws: only men between 18 and 26 years of age and, among them, only those fit for military service. Only some of this group, those whose application for conscientious objection was accepted.

The result was a very clearly-defined group of young people, whose level of education was generally above average (N.B. in Italy the average level of education of women is higher than that of men).

A sample can be taken from the *Arci Servizio Civile*'s database. About 33,000 records show the following statistical distribution by educational level:-

- | | | |
|-----------------------------|-------|--------|
| - Only compulsory education | 1.47% | |
| - High School completed | | 93.10% |
| - University completed | 5.43% | |

A significant proof of these data is the occupation of volunteers during their period of National Civic Service:-

- | | |
|-------------------------------|--------|
| - university students | 76.51% |
| - employed | 1.68% |
| - unemployed/looking for work | 21.83% |

These data can be compared with the National average: in 2000 only 60.9% of the youth (between 15 and 19) held a diploma and only 14.9% out of 36.1% of University students (between 25 and 29) were able to get a Degree. The analysis clearly states that the youth involved in National Civic Service consist mostly of university students.¹¹⁹ This situation fuels several controversies; for example, the National Civic Service has been accused of being an opportunity only for a limited kind of young people.

A closer analysis of the phenomenon reveals hidden aspects, such as:-

- the lack of any type of informative campaign in the past;
- the natural concentration of information in Universities;
- the chain-reaction started by *passaparola*;
- only 15 days from the physical examination to declare one's conscientious objection, so that all those who had not yet decided were virtually excluded;
- more than 12-months wait before starting the service, (common up to the year 2000).

For such limiting of choice on civil service many public institutions and the Ministry of Defence above all, are to blame.

It is too early to analyse further data to foretell whether National Civic Service will appeal to larger sectors of young people. Until the equation "compulsory military service equals NCS" is no longer true; National Civic Service will be open only to men discharged from military service and women. The "transition period" will have to end before it will be possible to obtain more useful information on the matter. Then the reaction of people to a new situation can be examined. For the first time in two centuries no service will be compulsory.

At the moment what can be said is that the number of women involved in NSC, who hold a diploma, is very large: it fits with the national statistics about women of the same age.

Statistics on university degrees show a deeper relation with age. The number of women with a university degree is very large around 26 years of age, but the number decreases with younger women: the chance to find a University Degree, or even a University Student among them is very low (there has been a change in the last couple of years with a university degree course lasting only 3 years with an extra 2-year period for specialisation).

National Civic Service and social equality

One may wonder whether civil and civic service helped to spread (and secure) the notion of social equality throughout their social activities in favour of excluded social groups. Indeed, civic service did enhance the social assistance sector and also the educational and cultural areas, even though these engagements have taken place primarily in the central and northern part of the country. In order to fully understand this situation, one must consider the different geographical distribution of the Institutions selected to be involved in the civil and civic service schemes. A minor investment in the environmental

¹¹⁹ AA.VV (2002). *Giovani del nuovo secolo*. V Rapporto IARD. Il Mulino, p. 75.

sector has resulted in less significant outcomes for this area. Certain obstacles, which hindered objectors to be placed abroad, virtually prevented all forms of international co-operation and solidarity.

Civil and civic service have also accomplished another important aim: they have encouraged (some objectors would say “forced”), young people to meet with unknown social and cultural realities, so that different social groups are now closer.

Motivations to serve

Motivations to serve have developed appreciably over the years. For civil service, in the 1970’s and early 1980’s, the core motivations were rejection of weapons and of the dominant social model. During the second half of the 1980’s and 1990’s, motivations changed: “to be useful for one’s community” and the need “to live significant experiences” became the most important reasons. The passage from a 20-month period to a 12-month and then a 10-month period also encouraged this development. At the end of the 1990’s, given the possibility that Military Service could be suspended and the shock of the year 2000 (see earlier in this report), objection was mainly used as an easy way to obtain an exemption from every kind of service. The history of National Civic Service is too short to allow an authoritative and detailed analysis of motivations. Nevertheless, *Arci Servizio Civile* conducted an experimental opinion poll among voluntary women (2001 and 2002), performed by an institution of statistical research. The results are shown below: items under *December 2002* refer to the first women who performed SCN in Italy and had started their service in December 2001; those under *April 2003* refer to women who started their service in September 2002. It is not surprising that the most striking difference between the two groups concerns the possibilities of previous experiences in the same sector.

FIGURE K - *Have you already had experiences in the voluntary sector?*

	April 2003	December 2002
YES, in the same Institution where I am now performing National Civic Service.	7	21
YES, in the same Institution but also elsewhere.	6	24
YES, in another institution,	32	34
NO, never.	55	21

Opinion Poll SWG, Trieste, 2003

FIGURE L – *Why did you choose this kind of experience? And then?*

	April 2003	December 2002
For my personal improvement.	26	30
To work in an interesting project.	17	23
To improve my vocational training.	20	22
To carry on the project I started in the same institution.	8	10
To live an experience that could be useful for my future job.	19	10
To pay my way through college/university.	10	4
Other.	-	1

Opinion Poll SWG, Trieste, 2003

The high participation of young people from the southern regions of Italy and its islands, together with an increasing youth (above all female) unemployment rate may imply that National Civic Service is being (wrongly) interpreted as a simple work policy tool.

The different kinds of National Civic Service and their potential dimensions

During the 1980s and 1990s Italy witnessed the establishment of countless local organisations, such as social co-operatives, associations and the like, which highlighted the importance the non-profit sector was gaining in the country. The development was connected to many issues. There were cultural factors such

as the growth of civic spirit and private engagement as a consequence of the socio-cultural movements of the late 1960s; organisational factors such as the implementation of social reforms on education, health, and employment in the 1970s which resulted in the foundation of non-profit organisations dispensing those services now provided for by the law; and political factors (the crisis of the left-wing parties, which generally failed to fulfil certain civic needs. Also the effects of the reforms after the Second Vatican Council within the Catholic Church brought about a higher confidence in the autonomy of the non-profit sector. There is no cause-and-effect relationship between civil service and non-profit sector in Italy, since the former developed at least 10 years later.

In the short run, civil/civic service simply provided the sector with concrete support: objectors were able to consolidate traditional non-profit sector activities and test new sectors of involvement. In the long run, all this resulted in the rejuvenation of leadership and in contact between different generations. This is of great importance at a time when the non profit-sector must face a dangerous ageing of social workers in Italy as well as abroad. From a gender-related perspective while the civil service impaired women's and claim for leadership in the sector, such a tendency reverses with SCN, since women are again predominant in this service. It is still to be assessed whether the Italian men's level of involvement in SCN after compulsory service ends, will be as strong as that of women.

All the four types of civic service (the one performed by objectors, National Civic Service, European Voluntary Service and International Co-operation) are dependent on specific financial sources. It is significant that, while for the *FFAA* the financial analysis starts from the needs and then the funds are allotted accordingly, for the activities connected to civil/National Civic Service the process is the opposite: first the funds are set, and then the activities and the number of volunteers "needed" are decided accordingly.

From 1999 on, applications for civic service have always outnumbered the possibilities of the funds allotted. In the autumn of that year, lack of appropriate funds forced UNSC to a 3-month suspension of appointments. From that time on, UNSC has decided to increase the number of exemptions from service in order to deal with the low level of financial resources. This attitude brought a paradoxical financial surplus in 2001 and 2002: it allowed UNSC to set up its SCN projects without any extra funds. The present year shows the same tendency.

In 2002 and 2003 SCN, although still in its experimental phase, could count on funds adequate to the number of volunteers placements applied for (9,000 in 2002 and 15,000 in 2003). But it is very likely that from 2004 on, such funds *would not* be enough to face both the offer (the number of positions requested in the projects) and the demand (above all youth coming from the southern regions of Italy) for National Civic Service. There is no doubt that from 2005 on (assuming compulsory Military Service will be suspended); such funds *will not* be enough. UNSC will have to turn down many projects and reduce the project placements requested. This situation appears even more drastic if one thinks that, military service being then voluntary, National Civic Service will be open to *all* men.

In regard to international service, since the general situation of international co-operation and civil service has been blurred, it is difficult to assess clearly the relationship between demand and actual experience in this field and to make projections about future demand.

Main differences between political aims and practice

In the long run, the positive response to civic service has nullified one of the political aims that both Governments and the Ministers of Defence were expecting, that is, that the number of young people involved in civil service would gradually shrink till the total disappearance of the phenomenon. It was not by accident that the State only passed provisions about organisation, financial aspects and inspections. Unfortunately, only under Minister Andreatta (1996-1998) did the State set the following positive aims concerning civic service: -

- promotion of policies against social exclusion (above all that of elderly people);
- promotion of national civil protection and preservation of environment;
- promotion of contacts with the Italian communities abroad,

in addition to the policies for social assistance and the promotion of the cultural and educational sectors, already in progress. Against all odds, civil service developed to such an extent, that a reshuffle in the system of the *FFAA* was highly recommended. Because of this, even though the information is partial, an analysis of the aims and the practical policies of the Institutions can be carried out.

Institutions, the poor awareness of some of them notwithstanding, had tried to reach the following aims:-

- delivering certain services to people;
- training of people who wished to have an active role in their communities;
- searching for qualified personnel;
- reorganising of their managerial staff;
- operating stability of their structures.

Such varied aims turned into several different policies. The level of planning commitment needed, the carrying out of certain activities, the investments in training required, the equilibrium between the institution's and the objectors' needs were critical points used to judge the positive or negative outcomes of the experience.

It is too early for a general appreciation of National Civic Service from this point of view. But there are Signs that allow a certain degree of optimism. To begin with, the current Government has established a Ministry appointed to this issue: something that has not existed since 1980. Second, the way the projects are shaped should decrease the number of inappropriate placements; at least, the description of the project should offer a volunteer a tool to rebuff them. Third, the aims as they are set by act n. 64/2001, article 1st, letter *e*) ("promotion of the youth's civic, social, cultural and professional conscience throughout certain activities performed in institutions which work abroad") force the Institutions to large investments on training and also to an analysis of the outcomes.

Linkage of outcomes to project descriptions

In the civil service, the outcomes were often different from what were established in the projects. There were two likely reasons for this.

Even though the projects were supposed to be about certain specific activities, the real situation turned out to be worse or to be simply different than what had been expected. The objector had to come to terms with an unwelcome and disappointing situation. On the other hand, on some occasions, the different activity was because the objector really had a chance to help the institution improve a situation and achieve a very good aim. It is striking that both the Ministry of Defence and UNSC have been mainly concerned with the first situation and have hardly considered the second one.

The role of the regions (Regioni)

Defence is a duty of the National State. This principle prevented the *Regions* being involved in civil service. As a result, up to now, most of them have planned no activities for the training of operators for the new civic service. Nevertheless, two *Regions* have carried out some projects to this end - Tuscany and Emilia Romagna.

Tuscany was the first *Region* to pass an act (1996) to undertake the training of objectors and operators and to promote both information and planning of high quality. It has also established a consultative organisation for all the institutions involved, both public and non-profit sector, in order to permit a fair exchange of information and homogeneity of strategies. Emilia Romagna passed a regional act in 1999: it laid down similar provisions but also established co-ordination organisations in every *Provincia*, in order to help smaller institutions and *commune*, as well. Some *Regions*, such as Liguria and the Abruzzo, have passed similar provisions, but they have not been implemented up to now.

Today, the new structure of SCN, the federalist tendency and Decree n. 77/2002, appoint both *Regions* and self-governing *Provinces* to new roles. Emilia Romagna, for example, is about to pass a new provision

that deals with National Civic Service and not with an *optional* civil service. It is likely that the *Regions* will show a very real interest in organisation and a vigorous production of enabling legislation in the next few years. This is also the outcome of the appeal submitted to the Constitutional Court by the self-governing province of Trento and of the general reaction of the Government to it. However, the possibility of extra funds in the next future is anyway uncertain.

The effects of programmes on the policies for youth and work

The legal tie between conscientious objection and civic service has long clouded the real role the latter has played within the field of social policies. Only towards the end of the 1990s did the debate on voluntary civic service alter this limited understanding, so that the connection between civil service and social policies was not a concept for a chosen few any longer but turned into a common inheritance.

The link between civic service and policies for youth calls for further thinking. Although such a connection is more than obvious, it has long been covered over in Italy, since both the Government and the Ministries lacked adequate organisation to make the connection. Policies for youth are not considered as an independent field in Italy as yet: they are still scattered among several other policies (education, employment, family...) and run the risk of disappearing altogether. The lack of a Department for Youth and the consequent fragmentation of strategies among different Ministries are additional evidence of the situation. This inadequacy could have been overcome at the inception of the EVS programme and the foundation of an *Agenzia Italiana per il Programma Gioventù* (Youth Programme Italian Agency), through the establishment of a working relationship with the *Ufficio Nazionale per il Servizio Civile*. Unfortunately, collaboration was prevented by the fear of seeing one's own role and financial resources usurped. Although there was a strong need for it already in 1996, the year the European Voluntary Service was established, the first official meeting between representatives of the *Agenzia Nazionale per il Programma Gioventù* (Youth Programme National Agency) and those of the *Ufficio Nazionale per il Servizio Civile* took place only in September 2003 at a seminar organised by the *Arci Servizio Civile Nazionale*.

The topic of civic service hardly entered the debates on the policies for youth or policies on work mainly because of civil service's firm connection with compulsory military service, but also because of the reasons mentioned in the previous pages. The positive aspect of this is that civic service was never compared to a job, even though many objectors have reported that they felt "exploited" as cheap labour. The few assertions by opinion makers tended to interpret civil service as a subsidiary tool to back both the non-profit sector and, to a less extent, local government institutions. It is noteworthy that those opinion makers were more or less critical of the situation, according to their particular political standpoint, but generally had a poor knowledge of the topic.

National Civic Service is more likely to stimulate debates inside policies for youth and policy on work once it is fully in force. It is striking that such debates have not risen yet. The increased monthly stipend for volunteers (€ 433.80 instead of € 94.50), now equal to that of someone involved in socially useful programmes, and the "excessive" interests of many *Communes* in the NCS will surely cause strong controversies.

The perspectives of international and multinational programmes of civic service

During the 1980s both the international NGOs and the policies for international co-operation developed rapidly. The Italian Foreign Office invested in these fields to such an extent that, although the NGOs did not have large funds of their own, significant projects were carried out, above all in Africa and South-East Asia. In this period, the NGO volunteers who chose civic service in place of military service reached about 150 a year. Around 3500 development workers were employed in the numerous Italian NGOs.

This trend was curbed between the end of the 1980s and the first years of the 1990s, when several scandals raised questions about kickbacks and illegal appropriation of international co-operation-funds, some of which were used secretly to back political parties. The amount of international co-operation activity has never reached such significant levels again, also because of the Italian financial distress and the need to comply with the Maastricht Treaty restrictions on government spending.

A new role has been devised for many NGOs that have readapted themselves to join in international missions. Often a fund is attached to certain projects and not to others, so that specialisation is chosen on

the basis of the money available with great damage to certain types of projects, such as those dealing with the prevention of poverty, social exclusion and hunger. There are nevertheless interesting local expressions of international co-operation: the first is the so called *affidamento a distanza* or 'sponsorship' through which a family or a single person can 'foster' someone living in a developing country; another example is the 'decentralised co-operation' which developed during the war in the Balkans and was supported by some Italian local associations and Municipalities.

The pilot programme of the National Office of Civic Service about the enlargement of the European Union is a new sign of this interest on the international aspect of civic service. The government's sponsored the first European conference on voluntary civic service, held in Rome in November 2003. The proposed follow up Conference in 2004 will be the place to know the intensity and the quality of the European Commission's engagement to support the first steps toward a European civic Service. In terms of multinational programmes, the crucial point will be the decision of the Italian Government to open the army and the civic service to foreign people living in Italy. This decision is expected on 2005 when the professional army will be the only model of the army and the question of the numbers who volunteer will be crucial.

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5. Annexes: Case studies

Introduction

These case studies illustrate the existing experience of international voluntary service from the perspectives of the different national stakeholders. The Italian researchers interviewed two representatives from a governmental body and two from NGOs operating at national or regional level. Face-to-face interviews were done, which were recorded in Italian and then translated into English. The first interview took place on March 5th, 2004 with Mr. Massimo Palombi, General Director of the National Office for Civic Service. The second one took place on March 12th, 2004 with Mr. Romolo De Camillis, Director of the Youth Program in the Ministry of Welfare (*rectius* Ministry of Labour and Social Politics). Written questionnaires were also used and sent to three organisations involved in civic service and voluntary service projects: Caritas Italiana, ACRA and AFSAI, of which only ACRA and AFSAI answered. ACRA responded in Italian, while AFSAI did so directly in English.

ACRA (Association of Rural Co-operation in Africa and Latin America)¹²⁰, was founded as an Italian NGO in 1968 and is located in Milan. It is recognized by the Italian Foreign Affairs Department and is affiliated to COCIS, one of the three Italian federations of international NGOs¹²¹. Programme activities of ACRA are run in several African countries (Cameroon, Chad, Senegal and Tanzania) as well as in South and Latin America (Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Honduras, Nicaragua, El Salvador). ACRA is a member of Arci Servizio Civile and has had young Italian volunteers within the National Civic Service since 2002, sent to projects in Senegal, Nicaragua and Ecuador.

AFSAI (Association for training, exchanges and international activities)¹²² was founded in 1963 and represents one of the largest Italian organisations in terms of number of youth exchanges and EVS. Situated in Rome, AFSAI is member of Italian Council of Youth Organisations and at an international level is affiliated with the International Cultural Youth Exchange (ICYE) network and with AVSO. Since 2002, AFSAI cooperates directly with the National Office for Civic Service and sends young Italian volunteers to El Salvador as well as to several European countries.

The same questions were asked of all stakeholders (see Part 5: Annexes No 2).

Stakeholders from the government

From the governmental side, it appears that there are no formal connections between civic service and European Voluntary Service. The National Office and the Ministry of Welfare do cooperate, but focus on different projects and pursue different aims. Their approach is mostly a managerial one, since they are operating agents of the state. Therefore, they have largely excluded research about the operation and effects of voluntary service from their work up to now, though the National Office on Civic Service is giving research and data gathering more attention.

The Youth Program Office is a department of the Italian Work and Welfare Department. The National Office for Civic Service (NCOS) is a branch of the Presidency of the Council of Ministers. These branches are usually called “departments” and are headed by a Chief of Department. In the case of the NCOS the department is called an office, but it is actually the same as any other department. It has a general director and two vice general directors, each of whom heads a “department” within the NCOS.

Two departments are headed by a vice-director and two report directly to the General Director.. The first department, managed by a vice-director is project and volunteer operations and has five sections:

- Projects and conventions (both for conscientious objectors and volunteers);

¹²⁰www.acra.it

¹²¹ the two other umbrella organisations are Transfair and Banca Etica.

¹²² www.afsai.it

- Application and employment (both for conscientious objectors and volunteers);
- Management (at the moment only for conscientious objectors,);
- Training
- Control

The second department, also managed by a vice-director is finance and administration and has four subsections:

- Personnel;
- Administration and budget;
- Legal affairs
- Computer management.

The other two departments deal with, Communication/public relations and Institutional Relations and report directly to the general director. In 2004 the National Office for Civic Service has had to coordinate close to 30.000 conscientious objectors and about 37.000 volunteers (this is the first year when the number of volunteers exceeded that of conscientious objectors¹²³), more than 60.000 people who served in different areas and countries.

By contrast, the Youth Program Office only deals with the international volunteer projects involving no more than 200 young people per year¹²⁴.

It is significant that no special relations exist between these two governmental bodies. The EU Youth Programme, including the European Voluntary Service differs substantially from civic service. As noted in the body of the Italian report, both programmes run projects that are presented by public and/or private bodies and are approved by the governmental offices. Only accredited organisations can present projects – both for EVS and civic service - according to fixed standards.

1) National Agency of the EU-Youth Programme (EVS) – Interview with Mr. Romolo De Camillis, Director of the Youth Program in the Ministry of Welfare

The managers noted that all projects were placed at the same level. There were no special objectives related to special projects. Due to its formal lack of competencies for the Youth Program, “there are no political goals related to civic service, and this office has not developed a program for civic service». If they need to choose from different projects, preference is given to new projects. This means projects which have not yet benefited from any funding. For this reason, a project is normally granted funding only once.

Mr. De Camillis thinks that civic service could be a tool of youth policy, but he could not express more than a personal opinion because he was not competent on the subject. He thinks “that civic service could be a tool for European citizenship, but this doesn’t involve this office. We are involved in EVS, and I think that EVS and civic service are related, but not on the administrative side. Surely, EVS can be a tool to develop European engagement, but this is not our goal”. He specified also that there is no connection between EVS and peace or defence policies.

As for the target group, Mr. De Camillis said that he did not know that too well because there were differences between the projects and the NGOs and his office was not involved in the recruitment process. Only the organisations decide on the recruitment. «I do think that motivation is more what is needed, rather than other specific requirements.” The Office does not do any specific work for information and/or promotion purposes. In Mr. De Camillis’ opinion, “there is probably a need for more information, since we do not give particular information on EVS, only the organisations do.”

¹²³ Note that c.o. are all men, volunteers are 95% women.

¹²⁴ The interviewed officials did not know the exact number. « A few organisations in Italy are involved in EVS and a few people too. I do not know the numbers. I do not know the problems and the potential».

Concerning the financial aspects, he answered that the Italian government “only uses European funds, but gives staff and material support.” He did not know the exact amount of funding per year, but he thinks that each volunteer receives more or less 150 Euro per month.

The Office is not involved in training and does not dispose of quality control models. They only receive projects that they approve or reject. There is no official recognition of EVS and no credit is given. The Office does not control the activities of the organisations whose projects have been approved, and any control is exercised while the project is running. There are only “a campione” controls for the correct use of the funds.

Lastly, Mr. De Camillis said that there is no connection between EVS and the international or national voluntary service, and that actually there is no discussion on EVS and the International voluntary service. He also noted that EVS runs according to EU directives, while no directives about voluntary service exist on part of the Council of Europe.

2) National Civic Service – Interview with Mr. Massimo Palombi, Chief of the National Office for Civic Service

Mr Palombi clarified that his office “manages all of the Italian civic service. We do not exclude study and research, but these are not our priority activities. We do commission research and surveys. Moreover, to have a better understanding of civic service, we test volunteers at the end of the service, and we use administrative data in order to be aware of the correct frame of our work.”

Also for this office “all projects are placed at the same level. There are no preferences and there are no differences between the governmental organisations and the third sector organisations». In his opinion “civic service is to be separated from politics. It targets social aims that in our culture are not related to a specific political stand. Civic service is autonomous from politics. On the other hand, as everything is politics, so too is civic service related to politics. But this office does not have any political priorities. Organisations – both public and non-governmental, that are involved in civic service are free to do what they want as long as they comply with the law. No limitations are imposed. In actual fact, 60% of the projects are connected with social assistance, 25-30% with culture, and the remaining deal with environmental care and civil protection.

As for the development of civic service, “I can say that when I began this work in November 2002, my assignment was to build a voluntary civic service system with the same dimensions as that of civic service of conscientious objectors. At this moment, we can say that we have met this challenge. When military service will no longer be compulsory, we will have a new civic service system covering 60.000 young people per year. Certainly, we have to improve the projects, but the system is working. I can add that the economical provisions have improved. Volunteers receive about EUR 430 per month free of tax.”

“Moreover, we are expecting a real novelty. That is the suggestion by Corpo nazionale vigili del fuoco (fire fighters) to use the civic service system for recruitment, as they have done before with the compulsory service system. This will be an important opportunity for volunteers who could continue their work as fire fighters after their civic service is over as a permanent job.”

“Civic service is connected with youth policy even though it falls under the competence of the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy. This competence is above all for the European Voluntary Service, but it only concerns a few people. Our targeted age group is 18-26 (and as soon as possible 18-28), so our work is really connected with youth policy, and probably dealing with the most qualified part of our youth.”

“Civic service is strictly linked to the new concept of citizenship, especially European citizenship as we demonstrated when we organised the European conference on civic service in November 2003. Italian civic service has a European spirit. Last year we sent 440 volunteers abroad, almost in every EU country (during the Italian Presidency of the European Union).”

“Civic service is also linked to defence policy, because civic service is a defence activity just as military service is. We serve our homeland through both civic and military service. These are two different

expressions of the same value. From this point of view, civic service is a service of peace. Military service is now also a peace service, but civic service is more so”.

Concerning the financial aspects, he noted that «The Civic service office has at its disposal about 120.000.000 Euro per year. The amount has been the same over recent years as Based on predicted trends in numbers of conscientious objectors_(in 1999 there were about 120.000, but we had only 90.000 placements). But for 2004, we have 270.000.000 Euro due to past savings. So this year we could have 30.000 conscientious objectors and 37.000 volunteers. But we will have a problem in 2005, and if we want to maintain our capacity, we shall need 250.000.000 Euro in 2005».

On the issue of training, he answered that:

- “We are not directly involved in training. The organisations must do the training for the volunteers and the conscientious objectors. We control the projects. Initially, we approve them according to fixed standards (according to the law). In December 2004 we changed the system. Organisations joining the system had to gain credits according to new, more restrictive standards (i.e. not for profit, it has a website, someone is responsible for training, there is a coordinator, a supervisor for every 4 or 6 volunteers, it has a nation-wide presence, etc.). On December 31st 2003, about 1.900 organisations presented their applications. As of January 1st 2004, we also introduced new standards for project evaluation and we will give organisations different credits. We will not simply approve or reject. The most important element will be how much funds the organisation will invest in a civic service project. Moreover, we will have final control over projects. We will exercise step-by-step control over a single project, but not over every project: i.e. the “sample” method of control will be used. We do not use an external office for quality control.”

On the question of recognition / certification:

- “Doing civic service gives a volunteer (academic) credits. The recognition depends on each university. There are universities that are very involved, that have their own civic service projects, and there are universities for whom civic service is a remote concept. We are managing an agreement with the Ministry of Education and the umbrella organisation of the Universities’ Rectors to improve civic service.”

To the concrete question on the relationship between the Office and NGOs, he added that there is an institutional structure for cooperation with non-profit organisations: Consulta nazionale servizio civile.

Regarding the experience with EVS/international voluntary service, he answered:

- “We have no competence. There is no connection between EVS, international voluntary service and civic service. EVS in particular is not a communitarian activity, but a cultural exchange program. We have connections with the Labour Ministry, but EVS is another reality. There is no connection between EVS and the national voluntary service either. There is no discussion at the moment on EVS and the International voluntary service.”

Regarding the influence of the EU/Council of Europe directives and initiatives on the national development of voluntary service:

- “Italy held the first European conference on civic service, so we are very interested in improving the European dimension. We have no contacts with the Council of Europe but would be interested in establishing links. We would like to create a European civic service. We hope that the EU institutions will support the implementation of civic service through funding as well”.

He also said, that “There is no major focus towards either third countries in Europe (those outside of the European Union), or towards Third World countries. Few people serve abroad. In 2003 there were only about 200 (440 more served in the EU). That makes about 0, 9%. We are not able to control the running of these projects abroad. We can use our embassies etc., but we cannot exercise real control. These offices can only support the volunteers’ work as they are Italian citizens working abroad.”

On the question of recruitment:

- “Recruitment is governed by the law but in actual fact personal motivation is of primary importance. Not only solidarity - because young volunteers often say that they want to do something useful for themselves, yet normally these reasons are linked to community care”(as well).

From the non-governmental side, we received the following answers:

3) ACRA

International voluntary service is not a priority for ACRA. “In the countries where we operate, local staff is always engaged, even when they need expert guidance. ACRA devotes itself to voluntarism too, although it does not engage primarily in organising voluntary service. The reason is that it does not promote emergency projects determined by political choices, but stresses rather self-development projects. Unfortunately, it is too early to obtain a reliable appraisal of the international Civic Service placements. We mostly aim at a balance between the need for knowledge and experience voiced by the young and the need to make the best out of their skills and potential within those projects dealing with the South of the world.”

On the subject of the objectives of programmes to build European Citizenship:

- “I do not think that this question concerns the type of civic service abroad performed by our youngsters. I would rather talk of ‘global citizenship’, the one that we promote in Italy and in the countries where we operate through education and development. These projects use culture as a solid tool to promote cooperation between the North and South of the world within a relationship based on common interests and mutual exchange.”

About the background of the young people involved in their projects:

- “The selection procedures are defined by the Italian Law. As for us, we generally examine the applicant’s *curriculum vitae* and look for those competencies which are useful for the young person to operate in the selected foreign country, such as knowledge of the foreign language, but also certain expertise that our projects could benefit from, such as basic experience with hydraulic engineering. Our procedure mainly consists of an interview attended by the applicant, the project manager, the geographic area coordinator and a psychologist. Our volunteers are mainly engaged in projects of integrated development cooperation which ACRA promotes in the rural sector. There are differences among countries and among regions according to the kind of activities that are already being carried out.

ACRA projects are roughly divided into:

- Assisted economy;
- Health and quality of life;
- Environmental resources;
- Cultures and territories.

Our aim is to involve volunteers engaged in the civic service in projects supporting developing countries and to enhance the volunteers’ competencies.”

About information and promotion:

- “We spread information and promote our activities mainly by two channels: standard communication tools (mailing lists, our Internet portal, and ACRA news) and, in the case of particular requirements, specific recruitment is organized in selected university faculties or departments.”

About management:

- 40 staff all together, half of them work in Italy (one of them is a full-time worker) and the second half abroad (5 in Senegal, 6 in Bolivia, 6 in Nicaragua and 3 in Tanzania).

About financial resources:

		Financial resources:		
		Staff	€	160'650.00
		Placements and equipment	€	24'350.00
		Telephone, electricity, heating..	€	7'400.00
		Information materials	€	460.00
		SCN advertisement	€	580.00
		Specific training	€	2'350.00
		Travelling expenses	€	8'160.00
		Consumable stores	€	8'400.00
		Other	€	0.00
		TOTAL	€	212'350.00

About recognition/certification:

- “We issue an attendance certificate for the training courses.”

About the expectations of the EU’s role in the development of voluntary service:

- “Unfortunately, I must stress the unreliability of the Italian National Office of the EU youth programme. We hope that the European dimension of the civic service, if ever promoted in the near future, will be a great help and will diminish the bureaucratic burden.”

About the recognition and control of international voluntary service:

- “Control is a responsibility assigned to the geographic area coordinator who is supervised by the project manager. Information is collated through e-mails and faxes.”

Other topics asked in the questionnaire such as compatibility between EVS and national voluntary civic service programmes, improvements in both programmes or about the potential of more young people as participants in voluntary civic service programmes were not answered.

4) AFSAI

International voluntary service is an absolute priority for AFSAI:

- “... for our association it is an instrument to reach our goals and accomplish our mission. AFSAI’s mission is to promote **non-formal education through international youth mobility.**”

The majority of AFSAI’s activities relate to three main areas:

- intercultural education through international youth exchanges;
- the development and raising awareness of European Citizenship through programmes and projects in the frame of the European Youth programmes;
- youth mobility and national, European and international voluntary youth service and training.

They involve young people from 18 to 30 years of age, in some cases even up to 35. “We try to give preference to young people with fewer opportunities in terms of their social, economical and geographical backgrounds. Recruitment is managed on the basis of the procedures we set up in the framework of each programme. We also prefer not to speak of *selection* as such. We think that since we are not a professional volunteering body, anybody can be an international volunteer. What we consider necessary is a strong and good orientation action in order to combine the expectations of the volunteer and those of the hosting project.

AFSAI runs three programmes in three different co-operations: with the International Cultural Youth Exchange (ICYE) network, with the British organisation Community Service Volunteers (CSV) and within the framework of the EVS programme. The information and promotion of these initiatives are mainly managed electronically. “The instruments we use are mainly Internet and e-mail. But another very important way is “word of mouth”, through which many young people discover the experience of other volunteers.

Regarding human resources, in order to ensure the high quality of the programme, the management needs a structure with at least one person responsible at national level for a number of volunteers not exceeding 50 for outgoing volunteers and 30 for incoming volunteers. In addition, it is absolutely necessary to have local mentors for each volunteer (not more than 2/3 per mentor).

About financing:

- “It is very low and absolutely disproportionate to the needs in a country in which very much is demanded of personal initiative of individuals. There are realities that cannot exist without voluntary service”. International voluntary service may represent a concrete support to improve the project situation and to enrich the volunteer at the same time. The only feasible programme currently able to finance both the sending and hosting of international volunteers is the EVS within the EU Youth Programme. This programme is however quite limited since it currently finances a total of about 3.500 volunteers all over Europe. This programme has problems with the release of the financial grants to the organisations.

The Italian National Civic Service enables Italian citizens to go abroad but does not foresee the possibility to host volunteers from abroad. Currently, the programme suffers from some serious problems regarding the payment of the volunteers’ allowances. We strongly believe in the potential of the NCS programme. The rest is nothing, all the other opportunities have to be financially supported partially by the volunteers and the organisations without any kind of external support.”

About the obstacles to mixing national and international volunteers (seminars, practical modalities, etc):

- “Honestly we do not see any particular obstacle. We have already managed activities in which Italian volunteers volunteering abroad and foreign volunteers lived together for a week and the result has been excellent. In fact, with an adequate programme it is possible to stimulate the personal perception of their experiences and point out the common feeling they have from volunteering. It is of course different to mix foreign volunteers with national volunteers that do not have the international perspective since they are volunteering only in their own country.”

About the objectives of training compatible with requirements of funding:

- “According to our experience, the training should take into account the intercultural dimension of this kind of projects. According to us, the training structure should be able:
 - to prepare the volunteers before their departure;
 - to train the volunteers upon their arrival in the host country;
 - to evaluate the on-going experience;
 - to evaluate the experience at the end.”

About certification/recognition:

- “The International voluntary service experience should be certified. However, it seems there is no official recognition of this experience even if the private companies give this experience the right importance. The EC issues a certificate within the EVS and we also as an organisation certify participation in these projects but still only a few universities recognise this certification for credits.”

About the relations between the government and NGOs:

- “The relations between the government and the NGOs is a strange one. Normally, there are no major problems, even though it is clear that the government has the power to manage these relations from a stronger position. The main difficulties naturally concern delays in the payments. This does not help the NGOs which need everything to advance smoothly in order to be able to run the projects.”

AfSAI has experience with EVS/International voluntary service. It has been working in the framework of EVS since the beginning of the programme in 1996. Even before then (since 1978), it had implemented several international voluntary service projects in the framework of the ICYE Federation. They hope for compatibility between EVS and the national (civic service) programmes, “even if at the moment we do not see any concrete action/contact between the two public institutions in Italy in charge of the NCS and EVS programmes.”

About the discussion on EVS/international voluntary service:

- “This is indeed a point, which Italian NGOs should emphasize in order to help the public institutions to start a dialogue and maybe a co-operation.”

About the influence of the EU/Council of Europe directives and initiatives on the national development of voluntary service:

- “In the history of the EVS programme we thought there were clear signs that the EU was looking for a direct involvement of the national government in programmes like the EVS. The idea was mainly to launch the process with the hope that one day the member states would have been able to get on with it. It is a long process even though we think that certain aspects of the programme cannot be followed by the member states only».

About the expectations of the EU’s role in the development of voluntary service:

- “The EU’s role is extremely important at this moment in time for the following reasons:
 - It is in a position to transfer the experience gained with the EVS programme;
 - It is in a position to lobby the governments to combine what already exists at national level with the international/European programmes;
 - It is in a position to establish a dialogue with the NGOs that are already experienced in the sector, adding value to the initiatives.”

YOUTH CIVIC AND VOLUNTARY SERVICE IN GERMANY¹²⁵

1. Tradition and policy context

Summary introduction

International Voluntary Service in Germany today is a wide range of personal commitments and engagements for civil society through short-, medium- and long-term voluntary services at national or international level, organised by a broad spectrum of NGOs. It involves young volunteers from different countries, promoting peace, reconciliation, international understanding and co-operation, providing non-formal, intercultural learning experience in a large variety of fields. It is implemented under many different conditions, terms and regulations.

National schemes for long-term voluntary work evolved from the 1960s through the 1990s. The voluntary social year (Freiwilliges Soziales Jahr –FSJ) and later on the voluntary ecological year (Freiwilliges Ökologisches Jahr –FÖJ) are each of them based on acts of the federal and state parliaments, implemented by recognised non-governmental and voluntary service organisations. During the last ten years both schemes added a European dimension. As of 2003, volunteers can also do their service in any country.

The European Voluntary Service, set up as a pilot programme in 1996, now part of the EU YOUTH programme (2000-2006) gave new opportunities for small local organisations to get involved in international voluntary services.

In recent years, voluntary service programmes and their potential to promote the values of civil society gained public interest. At the same time there has been a growing interest among young people with voluntary services experiencing constantly rising demand. This is confirmed by several opinion surveys. Young people between the ages of 14 to 24 form a particularly active group within society¹²⁶.

Volunteering - the active participation of citizens, is the heart of civil society and the basis of the third sector. Related to this is the 'subsidiarity principle', one of the core ideas of German federalism. Subsidiarity describes the relation between the third sector and the state. There is a progressive scale of authority and responsibility, extending upwards from each individual to the family, the neighbourhood, district, town or village, right through to the state and central government.

The subsidiarity principle as understood in Germany gives priority to non-profit providers over public sector institutions for core welfare and other important services¹²⁷, thus encouraging a plurality of providers and co-operation between public and private organizations. It acknowledges the self-governance of non-profit organisations with federal or state governments or local authorities supporting them financially.

An ongoing intensive public dialogue about more attractive concepts of volunteering and developing the culture of civic involvement of citizens started during the legitimacy crisis of welfare providers and the growth of new social movements in the 1980s. It is still taking place today on different levels among the

¹²⁵ The report analyses the situation in Germany until June 2004.

¹²⁶ Volunteering in Germany. (2000). Results of the 1999 Representative Survey on Volunteering and Civic Engagement, Study commissioned by the Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth.

¹²⁷ Priller, E., Zimmer, A., Helmut, K., Anheier, Toepler, S., Lester M. Salamon (n.d.). Germany: Unification and Change. In: Salamon, Lester et al (Eds.): Global Civil Society. Dimensions of the Nonprofit Sector, Baltimore: Center for Civil Society Studies.

main actors: researchers, experts, practitioners, NGO managers and staff, volunteers and politicians. The crisis was because certain parts of the third sector, mainly traditional non-profit organisations, were less able to attract volunteers. Traditional concepts of volunteering did not meet with the personal interests and motivations of potential volunteers – motivations such as ‘personal involvement’, ‘the need for political change,’ and the intention to gain qualifications that might be useful on the labour market.¹²⁸ New concepts were needed to attract the involvement of more citizens and especially the younger generations.

The German army has been in a permanent process of change since the end of the East-West conflict. Public debates on voluntary work became closely related to future scenarios on the possible termination of compulsory military and civil service and its impact on the social sector at a time when changing economic parameters affect social politics. From its beginnings in the 1960s up to the present approximately 1.9 million young men have done compulsory civil/civic service¹²⁹. These human resources are of great value to the social welfare sector.

One of the change scenarios discussed was a proposal from 1993 to introduce a compulsory voluntary service year for young people¹³⁰. This concept conflicted with the idea of volunteering (a person’s free decision to spend time, effort and skills for the community and civil society) and triggered off a controversial debate in public media. Under recent legislation, the two national voluntary service schemes for young people were opened up for recognised conscientious objectors thus mixing two different concepts, i.e., the voluntary service concept and compulsory service.

Increasing the availability of long-term voluntary service programmes was regarded as desirable by several national commissions and parliament in recent years. Despite this political good will and the growing interest of young people, however, only about 23.000 annual voluntary service placements are available. This capacity includes all national and international long-term voluntary service placements. However about 11 million young people between the ages of 15 to 27 ¹³¹are eligible to serve. The fact is that due to the dominating reality of the numbers involved in compulsory civil service (more than 100.000 a year for the last several years, the extension of voluntary service was a political priority.

The historical dimension of a new enlarged Europe and increasing globalisation opens up new challenges for the development of international voluntary service. The societies of the old and new member states still have to come together more to develop a common sense of European citizenship. Encouraging direct involvement of European citizens in the integration process¹³² and bridging the gap between young people and active citizenship is a priority of the EU-Commission. Therefore, the promotion of an increased international exchange of long-term volunteers and the co-operation of voluntary organisations at the European level is an important contribution to strengthening a civic sense beyond national borders. The new possibilities for international service within the national voluntary years in Germany is a first step in this direction but the framework conditions of national voluntary youth schemes do not support its the extension sufficiently.

Live and work together to prevent future wars – A model for an alternative civil/civic service

The first modern international voluntary service movement goes back to the eve of World War I and was inspired by the religious, humanitarian, and civic-minded visions and values of the “International Peace Movement” at the beginning of the last century. The ‘World Alliance for Promoting International Friendship through the Churches’¹³³, the religious Society of Friends (Quakers), the inter-confessional peace alliance ‘International Fellowships of Reconciliation’ (IFOR), and others were part of the peace

¹²⁸ Braun, (1990). Die Aktualität ehrenamtlicher Arbeit.

¹²⁹ Source: Bundesamt für den Zivildienst (Federal Office for the compulsory non-military service – civil service)

¹³⁰ In 1993 chancellor Helmut Kohl called for a compulsory community service for society of young people

¹³¹ Source: Bundesamt für Statistik (Federal Statistical Office), 10, 2003

¹³² Source: EU-Commission, communication on "Citizenship in action", March 9, 2004, guidelines for future programmes

¹³³ Founded at Konstanz, Germany, 1914, August 1 to 3

movement. They aimed at building friendship and co-operation between the peoples, to diminish tensions between them and opposed pacifism and non-violence to militarism, including conscription, to build mutual understanding between people¹³⁴.

The first concept of an international voluntary service originated on the battlefields of Verdun, France. From November 1920 to April 1921, Pierre Cérésolle, secretary of IFOR and founder of the first international voluntary service organisation 'Service Civil International' (SCI), organized a group of Austrian, English, French, German and Swiss volunteers, some of them former soldiers and thus ex-enemies, to rebuild the village of Enes, near Verdun, destroyed in a battle with more than a million casualties. No more war - this group of volunteers demonstrated that people from different nations could live and work together to prevent future wars. They hoped their experience would serve as a model for an alternative civil service for conscientious objectors. At the same time, the 'The Covenant of the League of Nations'¹³⁵ came into force and War Resisters International was founded in 1921, opposing every form of war and organized violence.

National youth services in the post-war society and during the worldwide depression.

Against the background of the abolishment of compulsory military service after World War I in Germany¹³⁶ and the problem of high unemployment during the 1920s and 1930s, public debate to develop voluntary labour services for young people was influenced by the ideologies of many different interest groups reflecting the whole political spectrum: replace military service, mitigate the social and economic impact of high unemployment of young people; be a means of conservative, nationalist education; offer a progressive education for a new social community be a way develop citizenship in the values of the Weimar Republic, etc..

Independent schemes of both national and international service were organised to work with jobless young people. Non-governmental institutions and youth organisations from different spectrums of society implemented them. A liberal service scheme grew out of experimentation carried out in the 1920s by Eugen Rosenstock-Huessy¹³⁷ to counteract social tensions.¹³⁸

Unemployment grew in 1930 and 1931. The Government established a national 'Voluntary Labour Service'¹³⁹ for young unemployed people under 25, who volunteered for labour services for up to twenty weeks. Its initiation owed much to pressure from the political right, who saw a voluntary scheme as the first step to a compulsory scheme, which then would act as a substitute army. It was to create jobs for youth unemployed as a result of the worldwide depression. In contrast, the republican work camps aimed to educate participants to understand their role in and duties to society. The camps were open to all young people of good will and characterized by a more open nationalism. These youth services met with a positive response from across the political spectrum. The Republic considered them an important part of its educational system. By November 1932, the capacity of these services was more than 285,000 placements.¹⁴⁰

The Nazis took power in 1933 and established the German National Labour Service (Reichsarbeitsdienst, R.A.D.) in July 1934. It was expanded and made compulsory in 1935. The 1935 law¹⁴¹ required all male Aryan Germans (17 to 25 years of age) to serve for 6 months. The R.A.D. was the official state and party

¹³⁴ Source: IFOR, Conference at Bilthoven, Netherlands. (1919).

¹³⁵ The 'Covenant of the League of Nations' was superseded by the United Nations Organisation in New York in 1946

¹³⁶ The Peace Treaty of Versailles. (1919, 28 June). Article 173: Universal compulsory military service shall be abolished in Germany.

¹³⁷ He took refuge in the United States in 1933 and inspired the US Peace Corps. Planetary Service, by Rosenstock, E. (1978).- Huessy. Translated by Mark Huessy and Freya von Moltke. Argo Books.

¹³⁸ Gillette, A. (1968). One million Volunteers – The story of voluntary youth services.

¹³⁹ Zweite Verordnung des Reichspräsidenten zur Sicherung von Wirtschaft und Finanzen v. 5.6.1931 - RGBl. I

§ 139a, Verordnung über die Förderung des freiwilligen Arbeitsdienstes v. 23.7.1931 - RGBl. I S. 398.

¹⁴⁰ Steffen, J. (1994). Notstandsarbeit, Fürsorgearbeit, Pflichtarbeit, Freiwilliger Arbeitsdienst, Die öffentlich geförderte bzw. erzwungene Beschäftigung in der Weimarer Republik - 1918/19 bis 1932/33. Bremen.

¹⁴¹, Reichsarbeitsdienstgesetz, (Law on German National Labour Service). (1935, June 26).

labour service providing jobs for unemployed men before they were called up for military service. Thus the Hitler regime distorted and alienated the idea of voluntary service from its internationalist and humanitarian beginnings. By 1939, national youth work camps schemes of different sizes and with various functions existed in nearly thirty countries.¹⁴²

First north-to-south long-term voluntary service

The ideas of Mahatma Gandhi to create civil peace services and his thoughts on conflict resolution through the services of multinational volunteer teams and peace corps ("Shanti Sena"¹⁴³) influenced the growing volunteer service movement in Germany. After Gandhi's visit to Switzerland, international groups of volunteers, including German volunteers, organised the first international voluntary service activities in India, working with the poorest of the poor. They rebuilt a village in Bihar after an earthquake in 1934. This pioneer team can be regarded as the start of the north-to-south long-term voluntary service action. National development-aid oriented voluntary service organisations like the "German Development Service", the British "Volunteer Service Overseas" or the UN Volunteers programme came much later.

The idea of an international voluntary service spread around Europe and was integrated into new educational concepts. German volunteers participated in various medium and long-term international volunteer service actions to support people threatened by natural catastrophe through disaster relief work in Switzerland, Liechtenstein and France.

International friendship - A new fundamental experience for young people

After World War II, in the late 1940s and throughout the 1950s, young German volunteers participated in international teams to help with the reconstruction of the country, they cleared rubble from bombed-out hospitals and houses, worked in refugee camps, built houses for refugees, worked with children and repaired meeting places for young people, etc. International and cross-border friendships, encountering different opinions and new models of civil society and democracy became a new fundamental experience for the young German volunteers after a long time of national socialist influence, war and isolation.

Once again, the discussion on volunteer service as an alternative to military service began. British and Swiss volunteers also inspired this. British, French, Swiss and US voluntary service organisations¹⁴⁴ helped to organise the first volunteer activities in Germany after the war. Branches of these organisations are still active today. In addition, several new national volunteer organisations evolved.

In 1948, the students' councils from Hannover organised their first youth voluntary service in Germany, which led to the foundation of the Internationale Jugendgemeinschaftsdienste (IJGD). In 1952, young German volunteers of several new voluntary organisations started an initiative aimed at taking care of war graves in France, in order to strengthen the exchange and reconciliation activities as part of the peace process during the post war period. In 1958, young volunteers of Aktion Sühnezeichen Friedensdienste (ASF) started peace service projects in countries suffering during the Nazi time in World War II as a "sign" of atonement and reconciliation.

International east-west and north-south volunteer exchange programmes

The first Europe-wide international volunteer service exchange programmes were organised at this time and a system of relationships among volunteer organisations around the world established. International conferences and meetings were held to plan common activities. The 'Coordinating Committee for International Voluntary Services' (C.C.I.V.S.) set up in 1948 and supported by the UNESCO Youth Division became an important international platform and focal point. At the beginning of the Cold War,

¹⁴² Gillette, A. (n.d.). One million Volunteers – The story of voluntary youth services.

¹⁴³ Gandhi-inspired so called 'peace army', the Shanti Sena, involved in conflict resolution on a grass-roots level, using peace-building techniques that have inspired international peacekeeping groups.

¹⁴⁴ International Voluntary Service for Peace, American Field Service, Quakers, Brethren, SCI and others.

first contacts with the youth and volunteer organisations in Eastern Europe were made. Exchange programmes with the Soviet Union, Hungary, the German Democratic Republic and Poland were organised in the late 1950s. Relationships with the volunteer movements throughout Asia, Africa and Latin America were established and strengthened.

'Give one year' - The Voluntary Year of Social Service

Economic progress was impossible without progress in the social field. The reconstruction of social and health care systems was hampered by the lack of nursing and other care staff. Voluntary service was regarded as a chance to mobilise potential resources within society for social support, solidarity and to motivate young people for future employment in the care sector. Starting with an appeal by a protestant social care director in Bavaria in 1954, many young women enrolled for voluntary service in social and health care institutions, mainly hospitals. The programmes were run by ¹⁴⁵the two largest church-related welfare associations Diakonie and Caritas and shortly after by secular welfare associations like the German Red Cross, Paritätische Wohlfahrtsverband, Arbeiterwohlfahrt, etc. The volunteers gained useful experiences in social welfare work during their time of service. Taking care of old people, disabled persons and those with learning disabilities and special needs became a strong focus of these programmes in the 1960s.

This service developed into a well-recognised national programme within the social welfare system. Since 1964, the **'law on the promotion of the Voluntary Social Year'** governs its operation. It prescribes the acknowledgement of organisations, the duration (12 months, now up to 18), the age limits (18 to 26, now 15 to 27), the pedagogical support, the allowance ceilings, and the required social and health insurance coverage for the volunteers.

Alternative services to military service

During the time of rearmament, NATO integration and re-introduction of a military service, government resistance against **alternative services to military service** was strong. Some of the voluntary service organisations supported the national **campaigns for alternative services**. It was only in April 1961 that, the first conscientious objectors started their service. According to the Constitution and the 'Act on Conscientious Objection', young men who are recognized as conscientious objectors have to do a compulsory civil service. This obligatory service is governed by the Act on Compulsory Non-Military National Service¹⁴⁶, and is controlled and monitored by the state. Recognised conscientious objectors can do an 'alternative service abroad' instead of the national compulsory civil service in Germany, but is several months longer and without any state financial support.¹⁴⁷ According to the 2003 changes of the laws governing the voluntary years and compulsory civil service, recognised conscientious objectors can do voluntary service within the framework of the voluntary years either in Germany or abroad as an alternative.¹⁴⁸

Voluntary service at the heart of an expanding civil society

¹⁴⁵ Gesetz zur Förderung eines freiwilligen sozialen Jahres, (Law on the Promotion of a Voluntary Year of Social Service). (1964).

¹⁴⁶ Gesetz über den Zivildienst der Kriegsdienstverweigerer (Act on Compulsory Non-Military Service). (BGBl I S. 10). (1960, January 13).

¹⁴⁷ The alternative service abroad was based on an administrative provision ruling compulsory civil service since 1969 and was incorporated into the Act on Compulsory Non-Military Service in 1986.

¹⁴⁸ Federal Law on the Promotion of a Voluntary Year of Social Service. Last amended 2002, May 27. (1964). Federal Law on the Promotion of a Voluntary Year of Ecological Service. Last amended, 2002, May 27. (1993). Gesetz über den Zivildienst der Kriegsdienstverweigerer – Zivildienstgesetz (Act on Compulsory Non-Military National Service). Last amended in 2002, August 21 by Article 67 of the Third Law to amend administrative provisions. (Version 1994, September 28).

During the 1970s and 1980s, international voluntary service organisations established a co-operation with the growing number of citizen action groups that emerged in the context of the 'new social movements' which introduced new political values and issues into the public debate on civil society development. These common projects involving international volunteers, mainly in short-term work camps, but also in some medium- and long-term placements, included alternative education of children, young people and adults the promotion of alternative energy and anti-nuclear activities, new types of social work with self-help groups of vulnerable people, work with immigrants and guest workers, renovation of socio-cultural centres, environmental protection and nature conservation, actions with the new German Peace and One-World movements, work in former concentration camps to learn from German history (to mention just a few). International voluntary service action during this time discovered many new fields of activities and developed innovative non-formal education methods: It became very popular particularly among young activists from the age of 16 to 25.

Extension of the voluntary year and the European dimension

A pilot long-term voluntary service project started in 1987 supported by the regional government of Lower Saxony. Young people who were interested in and committed to protect the environment participated in this project, which later on evolved into a national programme called the "Voluntary Ecological Year". Due to its educational character, the Federal States became involved since education is one of their primary responsibilities. A federal Law on the Promotion of the 'Voluntary Ecological Year' passed in September 1993 governs this national long-term voluntary service activity. It established conditions similar to the 'Voluntary Social Year'.

A few years later NGOs and ecological institutions in all regions were offering placements within the framework of the 'Voluntary Ecological Year'. The duration of both voluntary years was extended beyond the obligatory twelve months to up to a maximum of 18 months (inside Germany). The duration for the voluntary service abroad was limited to a period of 12 months, due to limited applicability of German social insurance law regulations in other countries. Both voluntary service years were extended to the whole of Europe (not only EU member states) in 1993. According to the latest changes to both programmes in 2002, effective in 2003, volunteers can now do their service in any part of the world.

At a conference in 1989 in Loccum, Germany, a group of national and international voluntary service organisations discussed the barriers and needs for a common, relevant legal status for volunteers at national and international level. They initiated a European lobbying process to promote longer-term voluntary services, at first as the 'Steering Group of Voluntary Organisations', later as the Association of Voluntary Service Organisations (A.V.S.O.) One of their efforts was directed at the European Union and helped to create the 'European Volunteer Service'. This process was supported by the European Conference of Youth Ministers¹⁴⁹ and the European Commission. The European Volunteer Service (EVS) was established in 1996 by the European Commission under the 'Youth' programme. It incorporates experiences and standards of the European voluntary service organisations and includes short medium and long-term activities in and outside Europe.

Long-term volunteering in development aid and emergency aid

German volunteers serve as peace workers or as development workers for a minimum of two years in a variety of projects in many less-developed countries to help build solidarity, to provide humanitarian aid or are active in fields of crisis prevention and non-violent conflict resolution in countries and regions of conflict. These types of international voluntary services are organized by a group of voluntary overseas

¹⁴⁹ On the Vienna Conference in April 1993, the European Ministers responsible for youth felt that there was an imperative need to deal with long-term voluntary service, recommending "the promotion of a voluntary service for young people, especially long-term at national and European level, and the recognition of a relevant legal status covering the young volunteers' period of engagement".

services and perform their independent programmes based on their own funding and regulated by the “Law on Development Workers”¹⁵⁰. Parallel, to these NGOs, the “German Development Service” (Deutsche Entwicklungsdienst) was established as a state-related development service in 1963.

The role of the international volunteer service organisation in community mobilisation proved to be an important tool to strengthen civil society in development processes. International voluntary services and their partners in Asia, Africa and Latin America thus became an instrument for development aid. Specialised organisations were established in the field of emergency aid with a strong voluntary element on local and national level, regulated by a specific legal framework. This is an acknowledged field for conscientious objectors to do alternative civil service.

Voluntary service and the third sector –citizen self-organisation

Germany has a long and rich history of self-administration, self-governance and non-profit activities over the last 200 years. Germany’s large third sector provides services in all dimensions of society and is strongly supported financially by government. There is an extensive partnership framework between the state and the third sector based on the ‘subsidiarity principle’ giving preference to non-profit providers over public sector institutions for core welfare and other important services, thus encouraging plurality of providers and cooperation between public and private organisations.

Free Welfare Associations¹⁵¹, re-established after World War II along ideological and religious lines from the beginning of the 20th century, play an important role for the German Welfare system. Working both with full-time workers and volunteers the Welfare Associations provide a broad range of services including hospitals, social counselling, and care for elderly people. Their role is important for the well being of citizens, for social cohesion and integration of all people within society based on overall social respect.

This ‘subsidiarity principle’ acknowledges the self-governance of non-profit organisations while the government supports them financially at the same time. It protects individual rights and the autonomy of smaller units in society and encourages social solidarity. At the same time this also presupposes the government’s obligation to provide help if smaller institutions are unable to solve problems on their own. Direct governmental programmes are limited to those areas where the welfare agencies are not active.¹⁵² The active involvement of the socially vulnerable has become another important element of the subsidiarity principle. In addition to the ‘non-statutory welfare services group’, the government, the regions and the municipalities also support smaller and less well-established self-help organisations, in which the vulnerable people are highly involved.

New challenges, economic constraints, changes in social policies, market orientation and the debate about the welfare state and participation of citizens have stimulated a strong tendency towards welfare pluralism- a shift from the welfare state to a welfare society.¹⁵³ The commitment of citizens, the participation of individuals or civic movements represent the society’s social capital. Civic participation, the concern for it, obligation and responsibility are the centre of civil society. Non-governmental organisations and, institutions and self-help groups are the most important actors in civil society. They

¹⁵⁰ Entwicklungshelfer-Gesetz (Development Workers Act). BGBl. I S. 549. (1969, June 18).

¹⁵¹ The Bundearbeitsgemeinschaft der Freien Wohlfahrtspflege (The federal working group of non-statutory welfare services) unites the six main welfare associations: Arbeiterwohlfahrt (Workers’ Welfare Association), Caritas (German Caritas Federation), Deutsches Rotes Kreuz (German Red Cross), Diakonie (Service Agency of the Protestant Church in Germany), Zentralwohlfahrtsstelle der Juden in Deutschland (Central Welfare Office Office of the Jews in Germany).

¹⁵² According to section 10 of the of the Federal Social Assistance Act public social assistance agencies are required to cooperate with the welfare agencies, while respecting their independence regarding their objectives and implementation. Section 93 only allows governmental agencies to act if private initiatives are insufficient:

¹⁵³ Evers and Olk, Wohlfahrtspluralismus. Vom Wohlfahrtsstaat zur Wohlfahrtsgesellschaft, 1996

give people the opportunity to assume their civic responsibility and to make a contribution for society as a whole.

Against the background of rising unemployment during the last decades, the third sector also gained public interest because of its potential to provide work possibilities, opportunities for training and on-the-job experiences, to improve social integration of groups of people who are facing life transitions; for instance, the transition from school to employment or the transition from full-time employment to retirement.

In the early 1980s Welfare Associations faced a deep crisis of legitimacy. They were losing their integrative role. New social movements, self-help groups, local initiatives and ecological movements which evolved during the 1970s, became important stakeholders of civil society and an integral part of the welfare mix at the local level. The changing relationship between the modern state and its tax-paying citizens stimulated a broad and continuing debate about citizen involvement and civic culture. The key role of the third sector is its ability for citizens to self-organise to handle individual needs and common interests, to open pathways and fields for active citizen participation, to work out common grounds to mobilise resources and build capacities to solve problems. In addition the third sector is an important place for debate and struggle for human, social and cultural values. Common values and commitment of citizens are essential while expanding and strengthening the role of civil society. These competences make the third sector attractive for the needs of modern and changing societies.

Voluntary service - the feeling of being a part of society and of active citizenship

Voluntary service is an individual act of commitment that contributes to social care or to the positive development of a changing civil society. It provides and expresses values. As such it is an essential part of the third sector. There are also benefits for the volunteer offering enriching opportunities for new experiences by gaining social and other skills which will enhance employability and, moreover, the feeling of being a part of society, of active citizenship. Voluntary work is not a one-way relationship. It is an exchange of value.

International voluntary service offers new intercultural learning experiences within the framework of a growing Europe. Enhancing international relations is fundamental to build open and tolerant societies, solidarity, mutual assistance and understanding among people. International voluntary service is a social learning process of great importance for the development of young people's personal value systems. It has an important impact on their choice of professional career.

Due to a new orientation for values - the search for alternatives to existing political, economic, social, and cultural institutions and life-styles, the engagement of young people in voluntary service projects has increased. Voluntary services with open structures and interesting fields of activities, like the cultural and environmental areas have profited most. Because voluntary service focuses on personal commitments and active participation, for many young people voluntary service provides a vital means to express their active concern and responsibility towards others and towards society. This creates a lively relationship between citizens and society, brings focus from the grassroots and fresh ideas and enthusiasm. Voluntary service organisations play an important role as intermediaries in the exchange of information and opinion between society, government and the individual.

New culture of civil society instead of compulsory civil service

On the 20th of May 2003, the Minister for Family, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth, Ms. Renate Schmidt, constituted a commission on "Impulses for the civil society – future perspectives for volunteer and civilian services in Germany". The commission regarded itself as a workshop to strengthen those values which form the basis of German society and to foster, stabilise and further develop mutual responsibility towards others and towards the society as a whole. All major stakeholders in the area of voluntary and compulsory civil/civic service participated in the work of the commission.

The report of the commission was submitted to the Federal Minister for Family, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth, who supported the recommendations, regardless of the decision on compulsory military service that the current coalition government makes. If there is a decision in favour of an abolition of the military service in 2006, there will be a transitional period until at least 2010 for legal and practical reasons.¹⁵⁴ A general obligatory service was rejected by the Commission as being against the constitution and international law. According to the commission, a possible termination of the compulsory military service would be a chance to create a new culture of self-evident volunteerism. This development has to be supported by the state. Likewise, non-monetary, monetary and money-like types of new voluntary services have to be considered.

They reported a high willingness of German citizens to become voluntarily active in civic affairs and to assume common responsibility in public affairs, adding value to those tasks, which are already looked after by the government. In view of the future demographic developments and the possible abolishment of compulsory civil service the commission discussed how the current 100.000 compulsory civil service placements could be compensated for by other services. One of the suggestions of the commission was to introduce an extension of voluntary services for all generations, men and women alike.¹⁵⁵

Abolishing compulsory military service - A European trend

If there would be a joint European military force, a European military co-operation and a common intervention force as was already decided at the EU summit in Helsinki in 1999, not all the European countries would need their own army. Until recently, compulsory military service existed in 10 of the 16 "old" NATO states. Since, then France and Spain have transformed their armies into professional and voluntary ones and Italy will have suspended compulsory military service by the end of 2004. The Netherlands completely abolished it. From the NATO point of view Germany's compulsory military service tends more and more to be an obstacle for the creation of a European military force and for the modernisation of the German army.

The end of the German compulsory military service is approaching. The debate on the necessity of such a step is already taking place: the Green Party demands a professional volunteer army, while the majority of the Social Democrats right now speaks in favour of the present system. The leader of the Liberal Party calls for abolishing the compulsory military service. The new concept of the defence Minister is to reorganise the task of the army and to reduce its size from its current strength of 285,000 troops to 250,000 by 2010. But he is, however, still committed to maintain compulsory military service and therefore, civilian service for conscientious objectors. Of the current numbers, some 81.300¹⁵⁶ are on nine month compulsory national military service. The defence Ministry wants to bring those numbers down to 55,000 by calling up only a portion of those in the annual draft. This will influence the number of conscientious objectors in compulsory civil service too.

Additional funds are needed for a comprehensive modernization of the army. At the same time, these funds are also needed for a sustainable modernisation of the social and health care system and the social security system. Both debates are continuing and influencing the debate on the future of voluntary and civil service, even though these are different problems, each of which needs its own solution.

General compulsory service and voluntary service

When discussing the abolition of compulsory military service, the introduction of a general civil service is popping up time and again. This opposing concept conflicts with the idea of volunteering. According to

¹⁵⁴ Bundesministerium für Familie, Senioren, Frauen und Jugend (Ministry for Family, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth). (2004, January 15). Internet editing. Press Information No. 121.

¹⁵⁵ Ibid

¹⁵⁶ Source: Bundesamt für den Zivildienst (Federal Office for the Compulsory Non-Military Service - Civil Service). (2004, May). Monthly figures of conscientious objectors in compulsory civil service, 81.287 placements.

those speaking in favour of a general service, everybody could still choose whether they would like to do their service in the social, ecological or disaster relief areas.

The agency for the 'Right and the Protection of Conscientious Objection', however, strongly opposes such a measure calling it unrealistic. For about 850.000 young people of the same age group in Germany, 500.000 young people would have to be placed in newly created vacancies which would, according to the Ministry of Family, Seniors Women and Youth, cost about 6 billion Euro in addition to the costs for an expanded compulsory civil and military service administration. Regardless of these practical considerations, the following laws apply in the Federal Republic of Germany: Article 12 of the German Constitution and international regulations and agreements do not allow a general compulsory service, according to Art. 4 and 23 of the General Declaration of Human Rights nobody should be forced to do a special job with the exception of a general public civil service like the fire brigades. The following rules and regulations also apply: the international agreement on civil and political rights, the international agreement on economic, social and cultural rights, the agreement on compulsory and mandatory work, the agreement on the abolition of compulsory work, the convention of the European Council on the protection of human rights and basic freedom and the European Social Charter.

Another discussion refers to the replacement of compulsory civil service of conscientious objectors by new salaried jobs whereby two regular jobs would replace three compulsory civil service placements. Those figures¹⁵⁷ are becoming especially important when they are compared with the (rising) unemployment figures published by the Federal Labour Agency. In view of present (financial) limitations it cannot be assumed that the voluntary services will, to a full extent, compensate for the abolition of civil service within the short run. This, however, does not eliminate considerations or initiatives with regard to how voluntary services can be shaped in the event of abolition of compulsory service, so that new possibilities for voluntary service can be opened up - including extending voluntary services abroad.

2. The current system

The Federal Ministry for Family, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth (Bundesministerium für Familien, Senioren, Frauen und Jugend – BMFSFJ) is in charge of children and youth policy, of compulsory civil service, citizens' involvement, volunteering and voluntary services. Each of these services is implemented under different legislative frameworks by non-governmental organisations.

Conscientious objectors programmes

These activities fall under the following major headings:

- 1) Compulsory Civil Service, an obligatory alternative civil service for those who object to compulsory military service;
- 2) Alternative services to compulsory civil service in development aid, which is carried out abroad by certain state recognised non-governmental organisations.
- 3) Alternative services to compulsory civil service abroad.
- 4) Alternative services to compulsory civil service within the framework of national programmes of the voluntary year in the social and ecological voluntary years and the social year's extension in the fields of sports, culture, etc.
- 5) Civil Defence with to protect the civilian population in case of war and to provide disaster relief.

¹⁵⁷ Tobiassen, P. (2001). Eine Bestandsaufnahme - Zivildienst aus volkswirtschaftlicher Sicht (Stocktaking compulsory civil service from an economic perspective). Sicherheit und Frieden. Heft 4. Nomos:Verlag.

Compulsory civil service (#1 above)

Based on the German Constitution¹⁵⁸ Article 4, paragraph 3, no one may be forced against his conscience to do military service.

*According to the Constitution and the Act on Compulsory non military National Service, young men officially recognized as conscientious objectors have to do a compulsory civil service performing tasks promoting the common good. At present, civil service lasts for 10 months.*¹⁵⁹The general conditions governing compulsory military service also apply to civil service – level of monthly payment, social security coverage, other benefits.

In 2004 81.300 young men are doing civil service, giving a total of 1.9 million since its inception.¹⁶⁰ Their placements are supported by the government with an annual amount of 843 million Euros. The reimbursement of costs civil service placements has been reduced to 50% in March 2003 but will increase to 70 % in 2004, however the number of placements will be less. More potential civil service placements than conscientious objectors are recognised to ensure that all of them can do their service. Most of the conscientious objectors do their compulsory civil service in welfare and health care services. 20.000 of them serve in hospitals. Their human resource is of significant value to the social welfare sector. About 4% of conscientious objectors do their compulsory civil service in the field of individual care for seriously disabled persons.¹⁶¹

The 'Federal Office for Compulsory Non-Military Service - Civilian Service' (Bundesamt für den Zivildienst -BAZ) is a federal authority under the supervision of the Federal Ministry for Family, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth (BM FSFJ). The office is responsible for the implementation of the instructions and the laws governing this field, recruitment policies and the social conditions related to conscientious objection and civil services. It runs 18 civil service schools, which provide training courses for young conscientious objectors in civil service.

Alternative services to compulsory civil service (# 2, 3, 4 and 5 above)

For reasons going back to international law, compulsory civil service as a rule can only be done within the territory of the Federal Republic of Germany.

The obligation to do a compulsory civil service may be lifted in case of a commitment to and participation in voluntary work programmes in the area of civil defence, disaster control and emergency aid, in development aid, within the framework of a voluntary social year or voluntary ecological year or in case of an alternative service abroad. This, however, does not apply to unlimited civil service in case of armed defence.

Civil defence – disaster control and emergency aid (#5 above)

According to § 14 of the Compulsory Non-Military National Service Act, a young man who who commits himself to do part-time voluntary service for at least six years in the field of civil defence, disaster control and emergency aid will be exempted from military service.

¹⁵⁸ Das Grundgesetz für die Bundesrepublik Deutschland (The German Constitution). BGBl. I S. 1. (1949, May 23).

¹⁵⁹ Gesetz über den Zivildienst der Kriegsdienstverweigerer –Zivildienstgesetz (Act on Compulsory Non-Military National Service. Last amended by Article 67 of the Third Law to amend administrative provisions, August 21, 2002, (BGBl. I S. 3322, 3341). (1994, September 28). The parliament has decided to reduce the length of service to 9 month. This decision will come into force in October 2004.

¹⁶⁰ Source: Bundesamt für den Zivildienst (Federal Office for the Compulsory Non-Military Service - Civil Service).

¹⁶¹ Bundesamt für den Zivildienst (Federal Office for the Compulsory Non-Military Service - Civil Service). Special Information. 6/2003

All civil defence organizations are civilian and there is a strict separation from military matters. Governmental and non-governmental organizations are authorized by the Government or government agencies to carry out civil protection tasks side by side on an equal basis. Voluntary service in the areas of civil defence or disaster relief service can be done with the following institutions:

- public institutions such as municipal fire brigades (except in large cities, most fire fighters are volunteers) and the Technical Aid Service (Technisches Hilfswerk, THW) a federal government unit responsible for salvage and rescue tasks and technical support in disaster relief in Germany and abroad
- institutions for self-protection
- air protection services
- private institutions like the German Red Cross and the Malteser Aid Service (Malteser Hilfsdienst), the Workers Samaritan Federation (Arbeiter-Samariter-Bund) or the Knights of St. John Accident Aid (Johanniter Unfallhilfe).

About 10,000 men perform Civil Defence as alternative service annually.

Alternative service in development aid (#2 above)

According to § 14 a of the Compulsory Non-Military National Service Act, until the age of 30 acknowledged conscientious objectors will be exempted from military service and not obliged to do compulsory national civil service if they commit themselves to serve for at least two years with an international development service recognised under § 2 of the “Law on Development Workers”¹⁶². The Federal Minister for Economic Cooperation must agree to the placement and the conscientious objector must complete his contract.

The Service in Development Aid may be performed either with the German Development Service (DED) or with one of the recognised non-governmental international development aid volunteering associations.

Alternative service abroad (Andere Dienst im Ausland – ADA; #3 above)

Since 1969 recognised conscientious objectors can do an ‘alternative service abroad’ instead of the compulsory civil service in Germany if they are accepted by a recognised NGO who has permission to organise alternative long-term services abroad. The ‘alternative service abroad’ (§14 b Compulsory Non-Military National Service Act – alternative service) is not a compulsory civil service.

The alternative service abroad has to promote peaceful understanding of peoples, practical social aspects have to prevail and it should be done without receiving any payment. Projects of the alternative service abroad can range from social work with children, elderly people, less advantaged people, to youth in general, social work within the community, hospitals, sports, educational centres or cultural institutions. The rules and conditions of national civil service or of basic military service with regard to social security, payment and allowances etc. do not apply to this alternative civil service abroad. Funding has to be arranged by the volunteer himself and the sending/host organisations. The government makes no financial contribution.

The ‘alternative service abroad’, which is at present 11 months long, has to be started before attaining the age of 26. If, however, the conscientious objector has already been drafted for compulsory civil service it is not possible to do an ‘alternative service abroad’; he must apply for the service beforehand. The service will be done based on a civil law contract between the conscientious objector and the acknowledged non-governmental organisation. In general, the institution will take care of travel expenses, food and lodging – often in co-operation with its partner organization abroad. According to § 14 b of the Compulsory Non-Military National Service Act, the institution is obliged to insure the volunteer for the duration of his

¹⁶² Entwicklungshelfer-Gesetz (Law on Development Workers). BGBl. I S. 549. (1969, June 18).

“alternative service abroad” since this service is not covered by the national social security plan. The insurance must provide coverage for:

- accidents in Germany and abroad - a minimum coverage of at least 51,000 EUR in case of becoming disabled or 15,000 in case of death,
- medical expenses and nursing care.

According to the second law on family benefits, which entered into force on 1.1.2002, child allowance will be paid when doing the ‘alternative service abroad’ and having done an ‘alternative service abroad’ will be considered for the allocation of places in universities. The institution and the Federal Office for Civil Service give certificates after termination of the service as a proof that they completed an “alternative service abroad”. If conscientious objectors, before attaining the age of 28, prove that they have completed the minimum required time for an alternative service, the obligation to do civil service will be cancelled.

Recognised conscientious objectors in the voluntary years of social and ecological services (#4 above)

According to the changes of the law governing the voluntary years and conscientious objection passed in May, 2002, recognised conscientious objectors who apply to do a voluntary year of social or ecological service can serve within the framework of the voluntary years either in Germany or abroad. The period of service is 12 months.

This kind of service, based on § 14c of the Compulsory Non-Military National Service Act, is considered to be a compulsory service. Conscientious objectors who commit to the voluntary social or ecological year, upon recognition of their exempt status will no longer be required to enter the compulsory civilian service programme. The service has to start, at the latest, one year after the commitment and before done before they become 25 years of age (§14 c Compulsory Non-military National Service Act – alternative to military service)¹⁶³. It should be a full-time, all-day service for a period of at least twelve months, including the time needed for attendance at the required voluntary social/ecological year non-formal education group training events (minimum of 25 days) and with 24 days leave. The service should be done with an approved Voluntary Year institution.

The Federal office for Compulsory Non-military - Civil Service is not in charge of supervising voluntary services within the framework of the Voluntary Social or Ecological Year. Even though the overall budget for conscientious objectors who wish to do their service in a voluntary year programme is limited, their number is growing¹⁶⁴. It is estimated that at the moment about 600 recognised conscientious objectors do a voluntary year abroad. The financial support and benefits for young men serving in this way are much better than for young men doing an alternative service abroad based on § 14 b or for a young person volunteering under the law governing the voluntary years, generally women, or young men who were not called up for compulsory service.

Voluntary service years – (government programmes)

At the national level, the Federal Ministry for Family, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth implements its children and youth policy by taking overall responsibility for federal laws looking after the interests of children and young people in various policy areas, giving financial support to federal and national institutions and programmes and providing stimulus through model projects for the development of specialised tasks and policies. The international and national youth assistance department supports some

¹⁶³ Federal Law on the Promotion of a Voluntary Year of Social Service. Last amended in 2002, May 27. (1964), Federal Law on the Promotion of a Voluntary Year of Ecological Service. Last amended in 2002, May 27. (1993); Gesetz über den Zivildienst der Kriegsdienstverweigerer – Zivildienstgesetz Zivildienstgesetz (Act on Compulsory Non-Military National Service). Last amended by Article 67 of the Third Law to amend administrative provisions in 2002, August 21. BGBl. I S. 3322, 3341. (1994, September 28).

¹⁶⁴ The Bundesamt für den Zivildienst (The Federal Office for the Compulsory Non-Military Service – Civil Service) has allocated an amount of 15,5, Million € for 3000 placements in 2004.

of the activities of youth organisations including those engaged in international voluntary service through the Children and Youth Plan.¹⁶⁵

The federal 'Children and Youth Service Act'¹⁶⁶ is the legal foundation of the children and youth policy carried out by the Federation, federal states, local authorities, youth and also voluntary organisations. The subdivision family, welfare and citizen involvement is responsible for programmes to improve participation of citizens in society, voluntary service programmes and voluntary service laws. A project group within the ministry is in charge of the national commission 'impulses for civil society – future perspectives for volunteer and civil services in Germany', which was founded only recently.

Voluntary year of social and ecological service

Both, the 'Voluntary Social Year' and the 'Voluntary Ecological Year' primarily target young people between secondary school and professional (higher) education. The voluntary years bear a strong educational character. The educational experiences of the volunteers are supported by different training activities. Voluntary work within both programmes is an important field of learning, orientation and training after school. Volunteers learn to assume responsibility for their own development, for others and for society. The demand for volunteer service placements has been steadily increasing over the last 10 years.

In 1993, about 7.700 young people took part in both voluntary years. In 2002, about 15.600 young people volunteered in both programmes. Both voluntary years are well-recognised long-term voluntary service programmes (the Social Year celebrated its 40th anniversary in 2004); a federal law governs each of them.

With financial support from the federal government for pilot programmes the opportunities for voluntary years of social or ecological service have been constantly expanded.¹⁶⁷ The latest changes in legislation by the Federal Government on May 27th, 2002, have increased the opportunities for young people to take part in both programmes. A new feature is that voluntary service is no longer tied to a minimum age (previously 17) but can be completed directly after acquiring obligatory school-leaving qualifications at the age of 15 or 16 (maximum age: 27). Those under the age of 18, however, are subject to the 'Protection of Young Persons at Work Act'¹⁶⁸.

Also, as described earlier in the section on conscientious objection, recognised conscientious objectors can do a twelve-month period of social or ecological voluntary with a recognised organisation instead of compulsory civil service.

The scope of opportunities of voluntary social service has also increased through allowing volunteering in new fields, like sports and culture and the preservation of historical buildings and monuments.

Since 1993 young people can do a voluntary year of social or ecological service abroad in another European country. Since 2002, the amended law allows the voluntary service to be carried out worldwide. No further regulations taking into account the different situation of volunteers abroad have been worked out yet. Since the start of both long-term voluntary services more than 300.000 young people have participated in the volunteer programmes.¹⁶⁹

Volunteers do their service without any profit-making intention. The voluntary year involves full-time voluntary work, i.e. a 38,5 hour working week, supporting work in non-profit-making institutions in the areas of social welfare, child and youth services, youth education, and health care. Volunteers are given 24

¹⁶⁵ Kinder- und Jugendplan des Bundes, Richtlinien (Children and Youth Plan of the federation, Guidelines). (2003, January 30) and Kinder- und Jugendhilfegesetz KJHG (Children and Youth Service Act). (1990, June 26) and its amendments.

¹⁶⁶ Kinder- und Jugendhilfegesetz (Children and Youth Service Act and its amendments). (1990, June 26).

¹⁶⁷ Evaluation of statistics from 1996 to 2002. Federal Working Group of the Voluntary Year of Social Service. (2003, January 18). See also chapter 4.1.

¹⁶⁸ Gesetz zum Schutz der arbeitenden Jugend (Protection of Young People at Work Act and its amendments). (1976, April 12).

¹⁶⁹ Source: Bundesministerium für Familie, Senioren, Frauen und Jugend (Federal Ministry for Family, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth).

days vacation during their year of service. They must receive training and pedagogical support for at least 25 days during their year, 15 of these days must be in units of at least 5 days each. The costs are partially supported by the Federal Children and Youth Plan according to the regulation relating to the Voluntary Social/Ecological Years. Pedagogical support when the voluntary year is done abroad - preparation, follow-up, language courses, has to be done in Germany. Additional seminars in the host countries may be attended.

There are unified social security regulations for volunteers serving in Germany and abroad. Volunteers are treated as workers and vocational trainees. The host organisation/project has to cover payments into social insurance funds for health and accident, rehabilitation, old age pension, unemployment insurance, and provide as personal liability insurance coverage. For any damage that occurred during the performance of their service, the volunteers will only be liable to the same extent as workers. The social insurance contribution is set at 41% of the value if the stipend and material benefits (including food and lodging) received.

The volunteers receive accommodation, food, working clothes and a pocket money of 153 € per month on average (the organisations are free to pay more or less up to a limit of about 270 €).¹⁷⁰ If housing, food and working clothes are not available or provided at the assignment location, appropriate monthly allowances for these can be reimbursed.¹⁷¹ Volunteers are awarded the same price reduction on public transport as school children, students and apprentices. Reimbursement for local travel costs can be up to 77 €/month. Payment of child benefits and child allowances will be continued during the period of voluntary service. Volunteers will enjoy the same legal status as young people who have entered vocational training.

The organisations providing the voluntary years are responsible to cover pocket money, lodging and subsistence allowances except for conscientious objectors doing a voluntary year. The Federal Office for the Compulsory Non-Military Service - Civil Service (Bundesamt für den Zivildienst BAZ) will reimburse the costs for conscientious objectors during their voluntary year, including the monthly allowance and social security payments.

The law promotes recognition of experiences and qualifications gained during the time of service for the future career planning of young people. Certificates are issued by the host organisation indicating the nature and scope of service as well as the volunteer's performance. The voluntary social and ecological year programmes are managed by experienced voluntary service organisations, welfare associations, youth organisations, environmental organisations and counseling services located throughout the country. Within the framework of the ecological year, several of the federal states provide additional funds for the pedagogical support, organised by the NGOs who implement it.

Member organisations of the 'Federal Working Group of non-statutory Welfare Organizations', religious communities which have a status of a body corporate under public law and territorial authorities are authorized federally to organise both voluntary years.¹⁷² A federal state government can authorize additional non-governmental organisations, exclusively and directly not-for-profit, as specified in section 51 to 68 of the fiscal code, to organise a voluntary year programme within that state.¹⁷³ The organisations offering voluntary services abroad can also be authorised by the competent federal state authority.

The 'Bundesarbeitskreis Freiwilliges Soziales Jahr' is the umbrella of the national non-governmental bodies co-operating with the Ministry to organize the social voluntary year. This umbrella safeguards their members' interests vis-à-vis the Ministry, coordinates and further develops the content and format of the

¹⁷⁰ Legislation considers a sum of pocket money appropriate if it does not exceed 6 per cent of the contribution assessment limit valid for the Workers' and Employees' Pension Insurance (§ 159 of the Sixth Book of the Social Code). The contribution limits were fixed in 2002 at a monthly rate of 4,500 (in the western part of Germany) and 3,750 (in the eastern part of Germany). The amount paid to the volunteers by the host organization/project should not exceed this amount and is generally lower.

¹⁷¹ Federal Law on the Promotion of a Voluntary Year of Social Service. Last amended in 2002, May 27. (1964).

¹⁷² Ibid

¹⁷³ German Fiscal Code, Abgabenordnung (AO). §51 to 68. BGBl. I S. 613, ber. 1977 I S. 269 and its amendments from June 26, 2001. BGBl. I 2001 S. 1310. (1976, March 16).

voluntary social year and counsels the members with regard to funding and public funding regulations. The members are: Deutsches Rotes Kreuz, Arbeiterwohlfahrt, Internationaler Bund für Sozialarbeit, Paritätischer Wohlfahrtsverband, Bund der Deutschen Katholischen Jugend, Evangelische Freiwilligendienste für junge Menschen - Freiwilliges Soziales Jahr und Diakonisches Jahr im Ausland, Jugendaufbauwerk Berlin-Zentrale für Freiwillige soziale Dienste, Bundesvereinigung Kulturelle Jugendbildung, Deutsche Sportjugend and other central NGO bodies who receive grants from the federal children and youth plan.

Another umbrella organisation, the Bundesarbeitskreis Freiwilliges Ökologisches Jahr, represents the interests of 39 recognised ecological organisations. The group provides exchanges of experiences and counseling and training services for organisations involved in the voluntary ecological year.

New opportunities - Voluntary year of social service in other fields - Culture, sports and preservation of historical buildings and monuments

New initiatives were started by the German Sports Youth (Deutsche Sportjugend), the Federal Association of Cultural Youth Education (Bundesvereinigung Kulturelle Jugendbildung) and the International Youth Voluntary Services (Internationale Jugendgemeinschaftsdienste) to promote a voluntary service year in the fields of sports, culture and cultural heritage. The Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth supported the pilot experiences with these new programmes. According to the new regulations included in the Law on the Promotion of a Voluntary Year of Social Service, voluntary services rendered by young people shall also be possible in other areas, e.g. culture, sports and preservation of monuments.¹⁷⁴

Voluntary social year in the cultural sector (Voluntary Cultural Year)

In Sept 2001, the Bundesvereinigung Kulturelle Jugendbildung started a three-year pilot project 'Into Life - Voluntary Social Year in the cultural sector' in five Federal States. 125 local projects took part to promote voluntary services in the cultural sector - youth clubs, museums and theatres, cultural projects with handicapped young people, projects in high poverty areas, arts schools, rock-music initiatives or socio-cultural centres. The Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth co-funded the initiative with 1 million € in cooperation with the five Federal States (Berlin, Lower Saxony, Saxony, Saxony - Anhalt and Thuringia) and with private foundations. The voluntary cultural year has become an official field of activity for long-term voluntary youth services with the changes in the Voluntary Social Year Law that went into effect on June 1st, 2002.

The pedagogical concept of the voluntary cultural year includes four seminars per year for each group of volunteers (total of 25 days). They are conducted by the co-ordinating agencies at a Federal State level and are facilitated by professional artists, social workers and former volunteers. The subjects of these seminars range from individual motivation, teamwork, and conflict resolution to specific artistic techniques and political questions. Quality standards were developed and the following principles provide guidance for active participation of young volunteers in cultural projects at the local level:

- Target groups of this service are children and young people. Under the heading: "Youth for Youth", they develop and manage activities for other young people.
- The service does not replace paid labour.
- Openness and innovation are conditions for volunteer participation.
- Volunteers learn about working in a cultural institution and can find out if a job in this cultural field would suit them.
- The promotion of cultural-artistic skills, concrete life-experience and the training of key qualifications like knowledge sharing, problem solving and co-operation are the educational basis of learning at the project level.

¹⁷⁴ Federal Law on the Promotion of a Voluntary Year of Social Service. Last amended in 2002, May 27. (1964).

The pedagogical coaching of young volunteers during their practical work at the project level by local professionals is an essential element. External mentors can be involved for specific technical questions. An introduction period of 4 weeks is organised for each volunteer. The activities of the volunteers are documented in a work diary. Volunteers conduct individual work projects during their Voluntary Cultural Year based on a contract with the local agency and present their project results. Local volunteers are supported in their decision-making process with regard to their professional career and the selection of their vocational training.

Voluntary social year in the area of sports (Voluntary Sports Programme)

After a pilot phase, the Voluntary Sports Programme has become an official field of activity for long-term voluntary youth services within the framework of the Voluntary Social Year Law through the amendments that went into effect on June 1st, 2002.

The aim of the programme is:

- to expand participation in the voluntary social year through sports for children and young people;
- to take advantage of the values conveyed through sports in order to develop knowledge and skills whereby young people in particular can develop their physical powers and readiness for personal achievement as well as social abilities such as teamwork, solidarity, tolerance and fair play in a multicultural framework;
- to promote awareness of the positive contribution of sports rendered with regard to non-formal education, especially for young people;
- to promote the educational values of mobility and exchange, particularly in a multicultural environment through the organisation of sport and cultural contacts;
- to encourage the exchange of good practice concerning the role sports can play in educational systems with the purpose to promote social integration of disadvantaged groups.

Sports assignments are to institutions that regularly organise games, sports and extra-curricular activities for children and young people such as sports clubs, sports associations, holiday camps, exercise programmes for kindergarten children, sports schools and activity centres for children and young people. Duties and activities may include working with clubs or associations, games or sport events, activity or game outings, adventure sport events, skating parties, adult-children tournaments or other interesting areas in the field of sports. The regulations of the voluntary social year also govern the voluntary sports programme. The main hosts of the programme, the regional sports youth associations (Landessportjugend) cover the costs for health and social insurance, pension schemes, as well as personal liability insurance.¹⁷⁵

Voluntary Year in Business

For a few years, there was a pilot initiative for a voluntary year in the business sector modelled also on the Voluntary Social Year. However, it was not successful

Voluntary social training year¹⁷⁶

¹⁷⁵ Source: Deutsche Sportjugend (German Sports Youth).

¹⁷⁶ The Social Training Year of the Federal Ministry for Family, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth (BMFSFJ) combines the possibilities of the Federal Law on the Promotion of a Voluntary Year of Social Service with the Social Code Book VIII, Children and Youth assistance, § 13 Social Work for young people.

Considerations with regard to labour market policies were decisive for the implementation of the model programme Voluntary Social Training Year (FST) in 1999. This Social Training Year is part of a federal programme for social inclusion of young people from socially disadvantaged local areas. The Social Training Year aims at improving social and professional key qualifications for socially disadvantaged young people in order to facilitate their access to professional and vocational training. New areas of activities and working conditions enabling individual education perspectives as well as extended services abroad combined with intercultural learning offer favourable framework conditions in that regard.

The Federal Ministry for Family, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth and the Federal Agency for Employment have decided to extend the number of placements from 1000 to 2000 young people and to establish more than 40 new local qualification offices during the second pilot phase which ends in September 2004. Funds for this programme mainly come from the government employment agencies. The local municipalities provide 10 % of the project costs.

NGO international programmes

A broad spectrum of international voluntary services is provided by a large number of voluntary and youth organisations, church related associations, initiatives, welfare organisations. Some of them are members or branches of international networks or associations. International voluntary services can be done under many different conditions: short-term - 1 to 4 week work camps, medium-term - 3 to 6 months service longer-term - voluntary service activities from 6 to 24 months. International voluntary services have developed their own terms and regulations covering health and accident insurance, personal liability coverage, pocket money etc. These are determined in a private contract between the sending and/or hosting organisation and the volunteer. Most of the costs for these voluntary services are funded by fees or fund-raising from the volunteers themselves, project grants and private donations.

Some voluntary service organisations offer both voluntary service opportunities governed by a specific governmental framework such as the voluntary social year and programmes without a specific government framework based only on private contracts between the organisation(s) and the volunteer. This is especially true for international service. In a placement there may be volunteers doing the same voluntary work who serve under very different conditions in regard to benefits, insurance coverage, whether they paid a fee, etc. A common legal volunteer status has not yet been established.

A first group of programmes includes youth voluntary services, peace-orientated organizations and educational institutions aiming at reconciliation and international understanding, mainly through short-term programmes. Many of them are members of the umbrella the **‘Trägerkonferenz der Internationalen Jugendgemeinschafts- und Jugendsozialdienste’** (Conference of International Youth and Voluntary Social Services). Its members are an important part of international youth work and can be regarded as an integral part of adult education and lifelong learning in Germany.

Most of these voluntary work organisations are independent NGOs, with a not-for-profit status who are officially recognised actors in the field of youth work according to the ‘Children and Youth Service Act’ (KJHG)¹⁷⁷. Most of their international youth and voluntary service activities are organised within the context of the regulations stipulated in the guidelines of the Federal Children and Youth Plan. The ‘Conference of International Youth and Voluntary Services’ has about 60 member organisations. Twenty of them organise all types of international and bilateral volunteer exchange programmes in nearly all parts of the world, mainly short-term voluntary services but also medium and long-term services (3 to 12 months). Some of the members also provide international placements for the voluntary social and ecological years including placements under the recent extension of the voluntary social year in monument preservation in Germany and abroad.

¹⁷⁷ Kinder- und Jugendhilfegesetz, KJHG (Children and Youth Service Act and its amendments). (1990, June 26).

Some of the organisations provide recognised placements for conscientious objectors to do their civil service in Germany or are recognised to place conscientious objectors to do an alternative service abroad (§14 b Law on National Civil Service – Alternative Service) or do placements for conscientious objectors within the voluntary years of social and ecological services (§14c)¹⁷⁸ in Germany or abroad. Other members are active in solidarity work and development aid and send long-term volunteers to Africa, Asia and Latin America (from 6 to 24 months) or receive volunteers from these continents (see below). Furthermore, some members organise educational programmes related to volunteering, intercultural learning and international relations or even on local issues. Depending on their background, vision and mission, they relate to other umbrella groups or to other humanitarian or religious groupings.

A second group of international voluntary service organisations is active in the field of north-south volunteering and development aid. The umbrella organisation for many of them is the **Arbeitskreis Lernen und Helfen in Übersee** (Working Group Learning and Helping Abroad). Some international voluntary organizations are members of both umbrellas, the Trägerkonferenz der Internationalen Jugendgemeinschafts- und Jugendsozialdienste' and the Arbeitskreis Lernen und Helfen in Übersee.

Local governments and voluntary service

The German federal system delegates social responsibilities to a large extent to local associations close to the people, as this is also the case in the field of child and youth services. The subsidiarity principle allows societies, NGOs, associations, churches, foundations and other independent institutions to take the lead in providing services for children and young people. Thus, a wide range of services has emerged, reflecting the actual social tendencies of society and providing a broad choice for young people and their parents.

This subsidiarity concept also applies to municipalities. Local authorities have the right to regulate, manage and plan a substantial share of public affairs under their own responsibility and in the interests of the local population. Social affairs and youth are part of these tasks transferred to the municipalities. The children and youth Service Act entrusts them with major decisions relating to individual welfare cases and with responsibility for compulsory care. Thus they can also organise youth exchanges with partner municipalities in other countries.

Main public funding for voluntary service is provided by the 'Federal Child and Youth Plan' which also covers the activities of federal youth and child care organisations as well as out-of-school projects for young people in areas such as political, social and cultural youth work and international youth exchange programmes. The Federal Child and Youth Plan' covers the costs for trainings, methodological and study elements and how to facilitate international groups of young people, which includes public funding based on bilateral agreements on youth exchanges by the "Ministry of Families Affairs, Seniors Citizens, Women and Youth". In addition, they receive public funding through other bilateral agreements with other countries on youth exchange and programmes that are organised by quasi-governmental bodies, like the Franco-German Youth Office and the German-Polish Youth Office.

The 'Diaconical Year'

The 'Diaconical Year Abroad' (DjiA), a Christian voluntary service, is organized by the German protestant church welfare association, the 'Diakonisches Werk' (DWEKD) and the protestant youth association (Arbeitsgemeinschaft Evangelischer Jugend –AEJ). It is a full-time year of social orientation, which offers possibilities of service with partner programmes in several European countries and in the USA for young people between the age of 18 and 25. The DjiA is a member of an umbrella, the Ecumenical Diaconal Year Network (EDYN).

¹⁷⁸ Federal Law on the Promotion of a Voluntary Year of Social Service. Last amended in 2002 May 27. (1964). Federal Law on the Promotion of a Voluntary Year of Ecological Service, 1993, last amended in 2002, May 27. (1993). Gesetz über den Zivildienst der Kriegsdienstverweigerer –Zivildienstgesetz Zivildienstgesetz (Act on Compulsory Non-Military National Service). Last amended by Article 67 of the Third Law to amend administrative provisions, August 21, 2002. BGBl. I S. 3322, 3341. (1994, September 28).

Accommodation, food and pocket money are covered by the partner organisations of the voluntary project. Volunteers enjoy health, accident and personal liability insurance coverage, provided either through the partner organisation or by a private insurance scheme of the organisation. The volunteers are prepared for their stay abroad in a one-week preparatory seminar in Germany. During their stay abroad, the partner organizations provide assistance to the volunteers. Orientation, intermediate and end of service seminars are organized by the partner organization abroad, which also provides personal assistance and supervision. After their return to Germany, the volunteers participate in a seminar for all returning volunteers. Work and seminars are an integrated part of the Diaconal Year.

Volunteers within the Diaconal Year abroad do much the same work as volunteers servicing in Voluntary Social Year programmes. There is, however, no clear legal basis for child allowance or orphan's allowance to be paid since the DjiA (Diaconal Year Abroad) is not recognised as a Voluntary Social Year since it does not pay into the German social insurance scheme and its training programme does not meet the formal requirements set down in the law (25 days, 3 seminars of 5 days each, bulk of the training in Germany). In many cases the DjiA however, is recognized as an internship that is prerequisite for being admitted to a course of studies or vocational training. In such a case, the internship forms part of a training, which is acknowledged by the institution that provides the training and, consequently, the volunteer will be considered a student and her/his family, will have the right to receive child allowance. The university or institution providing the vocational training has to certify that the internship is a prerequisite for admission.

The ICJA voluntary year abroad

The voluntary service programme of the International Cultural Youth Exchange (IC JA) applies to young people – students, people doing an apprenticeship, employees and students between 18 and 30 years of age.

A pedagogical support programme forms part of all exchange programmes. These are organized by the partner organisations abroad and comprise:-

- an introductory seminar with language course,
- an intermediary evaluation seminar after half of the stay,
- an evaluation seminar at the end.

These programmes take place in Europe, Brazil, Bolivia, Costa Rica, Honduras, Mexico, Canada and Africa with a duration of 6 to 12 months.

New model projects of voluntary services

New pilot models are being tested to increase new approaches of voluntary service. This new forms of voluntary service are individually tailor-made offers for pupils, vocational trainees and students aged between 16 and 26. They offer flexible working times, part-time involvement for a certain number of hours over several years, a combination of working areas and new forms of remuneration. Support measures are provided to improve the participants' ability for social learning and to enhance the acquisition of key qualifications. The new impulses should motivate young people for a social involvement.

Regular voluntary work part-time for a fixed time period. Male and female students from grades 9 – 12 get involved for approx. 2-3 hours per week for the duration of one scholarly year in an institution or initiative of their choice.

Flexible working times. Students agree with their institution or initiative on an overall engagement of, for example, 500 working hours. The work can be distributed according to mutual agreement and thus allows for an individual arrangement according to times of examination or university vacations.

Full-time work in various institutions. Over a period of 10 to 12 months work can be done in two to three different fields; for example, working in an institution with disabled people and obtaining basic knowledge in radio journalism to use the working experience for public relations work for the institution.

This approach gives insight into additional working areas in the field of social work combined with project-oriented work. Social institutions and volunteers agree on a working schedule, which is clearly defined in terms of time and content.

The savings model. The basic idea: Within the framework of a new type of acknowledged voluntary service, a total of 800 working hours have to be done (which approximately comes up to six-months of full-time work). This form of work may, if needed, be stretched over a period of several years and be accomplished by a combination of several individually composed modules – for example, studying at school followed by three months full-time voluntary service between school and further education and can finally also be done in addition to vocational training or studies. This is tied to certain advantages, such as a reduction in the student study loan (Bafög) that will have to be reimbursed or alternative forms of remuneration besides financial or money-based incentives (possibilities of further education and qualification, certificates, improved access to vocational training or universities). The ‘Diakonische Werk Württemberg’ and the ‘Evangelische Jugendwerk’ in Württemberg organize these new pilot model projects jointly. The project time schedule was May 2000 until April 2003. The project was funded mostly through the organizations and supported with funds from the Robert Bosch Foundation and the state lottery ‘Glücksspirale’.

Programmes supported by the Robert Bosch Foundation

The Robert Bosch Foundation is not a voluntary service organisation but has been an important institution in lobbying and financially supporting voluntary work. The foundation supports two-way volunteer exchange programmes between Germany and Central and Eastern Europe. The aim of these programmes is to improve the quality and the visibility of voluntary services in Germany and Eastern Europe. In addition, the foundation supports voluntary service in civic involvement and innovative projects in the new federal states (former German Democratic Republic- East Germany) and voluntary services in humanitarian aid in Eastern and Central Europe. Their focus is on involving young people in civil society through voluntary service.

To promote voluntary service, the Bosch Foundation published a manifest “A call for voluntary service in Germany & Europe”¹⁷⁹ which has influenced the debate on the future of voluntary service in Germany. The manifest suggests the creation of a foundation for voluntary services to be funded by private donations (corporate and individual) and public grants with the aim of increasing the number of voluntary service placements to 100.000 beginning with a pilot phase that should end in 2005. Based on the recommendations of the manifest, the Robert Bosch foundation launched its support programme on voluntary services in civic initiatives in 1999. 190 volunteer projects were supported during the first two years. The total funding for these projects was one million Euros. In 2002/2003 about 700.000 Euros were allocated to support medium and long-term voluntary service from 6 to 12 months. Each volunteer placement received up to 70 % of the total monthly costs to a max. 500 Euro/month.¹⁸⁰ Since 1999 the foundation also supported 273 volunteer exchanges between Germany and Central & Eastern European countries (156 going to CEE and 117 coming from CEE). The programme has a strong focus on intercultural exchange and overcoming prejudice.¹⁸¹

North–south long-term volunteering in development service

In the course of more than 40 years of development cooperation, non-governmental organizations, private institutions and the Federal Government together have accumulated valuable experience and created a broad range of voluntary service instruments for assisting partner countries in the South and the East. The establishment of an equal partnership between ‘North and ‘South’ and building a world of justice are essential aims of the One World (formerly Third world) movement and the international voluntary services.

¹⁷⁹ Youth Renewing the Community: A Manifest for Voluntary Service in Germany and Europe (1998). Robert Bosch Foundation.Stuttgart.

¹⁸⁰ Robert Bosch Foundation (n.d.). Jugend-Freiwilligendienste. Förderlinien.

¹⁸¹ Erb, S. (2002, April 17 to 21). Presentation of the Bosch programme in CEE on AVSO Regional Training Seminar. Bratislava.

The "Development Workers Service" programme recruits and places women and men in development cooperation projects in Africa, Asia, Latin America and, more recently in Central and Eastern European (CEE) countries. The development workers must be fully trained in a recognised occupation and have several years of professional experience. The period of service is for a fixed term (two or three years) with the option of a further extension, if needed.

These volunteers have a recognised status, based on their specific project. The title of these volunteers was changed from volunteers or 'development aid assistants' into 'development workers'. Their status is based on their voluntary activities and their intention not to earn money in a professional occupation¹⁸² but to assist development for a limited time in their 'host countries' (more than 50 countries in Africa, Latin America, Central and Southeast Asia and CEE). Their placements, legal and social status are based on the German Development Worker Act (Entwicklungshelfer-Gesetz, EhfG), which, in addition to a comprehensive social insurance coverage, ensures payment of a monthly allowance and a reintegration allowance. Development workers have a different status than "experts" or "volunteers". Experts are generally highly paid specialists working for programmes and projects of technical cooperation. Volunteers are young adults who participate without prior vocational training and professional experience in services for solidarity, peace and humanitarian action. Development workers will be placed based on the requirements from the host countries with economies in transition (CEE) and less-developed countries through organizations, which are acknowledged according to the Development Workers Act.

Most of the voluntary service organisations active in the North-to-South voluntary service (exchanges) programmes (short and medium term or incoming programmes) or North-to-South long-term volunteering are members of the umbrella organisation called 'Arbeitskreis Lernen und Helfen in Übersee' (Working group on Learning and Serving Overseas)¹⁸³ mentioned earlier. This umbrella organization has about 25 members, including most of the organisations sending personnel to Africa, Asia and Latin-America. Six member organizations are recognised as development workers service/voluntary service organisations active in the field of development aid and are funded on the basis of the Development Workers Law.

The six organisations recognised as development workers services/voluntary services in the field of development aid are:

'EIRENE', founded in 1957 by Christians committed to the practice of non-violence and providing an alternative to rearmament after the Second World War. Its founders were members of the historic peace churches - Mennonites and the Church of the Brethren and the International Fellowship of Reconciliation.

'Weltfriedensdienst' was founded in 1959 with the aim of making a contribution for reconciliation. The underlying idea was to perform a voluntary 'peace service' instead of a military service.

The 'Arbeitsgemeinschaft für Entwicklungshilfe e.V.' (AGEH) (Association for Development Aid), founded in 1959, is the specialist agency of the German Catholics for international cooperation. The 'f.i.d.' Project Services Office of AGEH is assigned by the German Commission for Justice and Peace to advise action groups and church-based or church-affiliated organizations wishing to offer long-term voluntary service in development cooperation projects operated by the church.

'Evangelischer Entwicklungsdienst' (EED) (Church Development Service), is an association of the Protestant churches in Germany working in the area of development aid. Since August, 2000, this

¹⁸² Entwicklungshelfer-Gesetz - EhfG (Development Workers Act. Last amendments in 2002, June 21.. §1, BGBl I 1969, 549. (1969, June 18).

¹⁸³ The 'Arbeitskreis Lernen und Helfen in Übersee' (AKLHÜ) is a network of recognised development, voluntary, youth voluntary and peace services and for other organisations active in development co-operation.

umbrella brings several protestant development organisation like, i.e. Service Overseas (Dienst in Uebersee - DUE), the Protestant Association for Cooperation in Development (EZE), the Churches' Development Service (KED) and the Committee for Ecumenical Mission and Service (OEMW) together under one roof.

The 'Christian Expert Service International' prepares and sends experts to development programmes.

All of these organisations offer voluntary engagement (duration 3-24 months) for qualified men and women in Africa, Asia, and Latin America and in countries under transition and reform in Eastern Europe and fulfill the necessary requirements to conclude contracts for assigning qualified personnel in accordance with the German law governing the placement of development workers/volunteers (EhfG).

The 'Deutscher Entwicklungsdienst' - DED (German Development Service) was founded in 1963. Since then, more than 10.000 development workers have committed themselves to improving the living conditions of people in Africa, Asia and Latin America through DED. Rather than being a government agency like the US Peace Corps, the DED has the legal form of a non-profit, limited liability company owned jointly by two shareholders, the Federal Republic of Germany and the working group "Learning and Helping Overseas Arbeitskreis Lernen und Helfen in Übersee." The DED is financed by the federal budget. With a budget of nearly € 85 million in 2004, the DED has the capacity to place about 1,000 development workers in 45 countries worldwide. About 75 percent of all DED volunteers are university graduates. The average age has risen from 25 in 1973 to around 40 in 2003.¹⁸⁴ DED volunteers may be not only from Germany but also from other countries of the European Union.

The core of the organization's philosophy is still the aim to help people to help themselves.

The DED has the following tasks:

- It places professionally experienced and socially committed specialists at the disposal of developing countries.
- It supports local organizations and self-help initiatives by counselling and financing small programmes and promoting local specialists.
- It recruits German development workers wishing to serve as United Nations Volunteers.
- It promotes understanding for the situation of people in developing countries among the German public and draws attention to questions concerning the common interests and problems of the One World.

The 'European Volunteers Programme' (EVP) was founded at the European Council at Fontainebleau in June 1984 when the Council called on its members to support measures to enable young Europeans (without professional experience) to work together as volunteers in development projects in the so-called Third World. In November 1985, President Mitterrand and Chancellor Kohl created the EVP as a Franco-German initiative as a first step. After the experimental phase, other countries were invited to join this programme. This initiative has been incorporated into the regular programme of the German Development Service.

The Civic Peace Service

Recognized NGOs working in the field of development or peace work, like Aktionsgemeinschaft Dienst für den Frieden (AGDF), the Forum Ziviler Friedensdienst (forumZFD), the Weltfriedensdienst (WFD), the Arbeitsgemeinschaft für Entwicklungshilfe (AGEH), the Evangelischer Entwicklungsdienst (DÜ/EED), Christliche Fachkräfte International and the German Development Service (DED), established the 'Konsortium Ziviler Friedensdienst'¹⁸⁵

¹⁸⁴ Deutscher Entwicklungsdienst (German Development Service). Press Release 40 Anniversary. (2003, June).

¹⁸⁵ Source: Evangelischer Entwicklungsdienst (Church Development Service).

This programme recruits specially trained and educated experts for international development projects in the field of conflict prevention, reconciliation work and post-conflict care. Placements are effected on the basis of the German Development Worker Act (EhfG). The normal duration of a contract is three years. In an expert evaluation, the methods for selecting professionals and their preparation for the peace service within the framework of development work were positively assessed. For the sake of even greater effectiveness of the civic peace service, a more precise observation of the impacts, a certification of the applied procedures and a marked increase in the funds provided by the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development was recommended.

The 'civic peace services' are focussing on reconciliation activities, on the promotion of peace alliances and confidence-building measures, on work with traumatised groups, on peace education and the training of psychotherapists to deal with the aftereffects of conflicts on individuals. They are organised in co-operation with local non-governmental organisations and other institutions. The civic peace service is not linked to financial development co-operation but is engaged in the deployment of expertise and professional capacities. Normal duration of a contract is 2 or 3 years, the training part is from 4 to 6 months. The experts work under the legal framework of the German Development Worker Act (Entwicklungshelfergesetz, EhfG).

Other civic peace services

The Association for Social Defence (Bund) has developed and promoted a concept to organise a one-year civic peace service for women and men of all ages who want to learn and practice non-violent ways of intervention and conflict transformation, either in Germany or abroad. The volunteers undergo an extensive education in non-violent conflict resolution and work in crisis areas such as neighbourhoods with high racist violence in Germany or conflict areas in other countries. After the completion of the one-year service, the volunteers have to be available for international peacekeeping efforts. The Bund has been involved in the international coalition project 'Balkan Peace Team' which finished at the beginning of 2001. The Bund is exploring possibilities for new activities in the field of non-violent conflict intervention.

The European Voluntary Service

The European Voluntary Service Programme (EVS) started in 1996. As Action 2 of the current EU Youth Programme (2000-2006), the programme is under the overall responsibility of the Federal Ministry of Family, Women, Seniors and Youth in Germany. The ministry has appointed a national agency, located in Bonn, to implement it. EVS aims to facilitate and promote the free movement of European citizens and 'European citizenship' and thus a 'European society'. An additional important objective of the EVS is to promote the recognition of the value of non-formal educational experience acquired in a European context thus embedding the EVS in the EU strategy to build a European knowledge society in which lifelong learning plays an important role.

To a large extent the set up of the EVS was based on the experience of international voluntary service organisations as well as on the voluntary social year programme experience in Germany. It offers young people between the ages of 18 and 25¹⁸⁶ the opportunity to volunteer for periods from three weeks up to twelve months working in a non-commercial project in a European or non-European country. The EVS is open for all young people legally resident in Germany or in an eligible third country. The EVS activities cannot be a substitute for the compulsory civil service of conscientious objectors (for detailed information see presentation of the EVS programme in the report on voluntary services at European level).

Within the framework of the European guidelines for the EVS, the 'German Agency for the EU Action Programme Youth', responsible for the operation of the EVS, and the Federal Ministry for Family

¹⁸⁶ The Interim evaluation of the Youth Programme 2000-2006, (covering the period 2000-2003) suggests that an 18-30 age limit be introduced, while allowing this limit to be lowered in exceptional cases.

Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth determine every year specific criteria for EVS project selection that take into consideration the needs of national youth work development.

In 2004, the EVS programme in Germany supports sending and hosting projects that involve:

- young foreigners with legal residence in Germany
- young unemployed or youth with lower school leaving qualifications
- disadvantaged youth who normally do not have their own resources, chances and access to participate actively in a European voluntary action
- young people with disabilities
- young men (only for sending – most German volunteers are women)
- short term projects
- projects dealing with children and youth or youth work, youth information, youth policy, leisure activities,
- projects targeting migrants or tackling racism and xenophobia
- projects dealing with sport as a method to combat social exclusion or racism
- projects that introduce voluntary work as a new element and impulse in existing international co-operations active in the social, cultural and environmental field or in the youth sector
- projects that involve initiatives or organisations never involved in international voluntary work before
- local initiatives
- projects in the fields of art and culture, environment, equal opportunities, social exclusion, prevention of crimes, media and communication, European awareness or the fight against drugs.
- projects that open new or innovative fields of action

Priority in sending volunteers is given to volunteers sent to countries, which have hosted only a small number of German EVS volunteers so far: Austria, Bulgaria, Cyprus, Greece, Italy, Liechtenstein, Luxembourg, Norway, Spain. In addition, sending organisations situated in regions in Germany that have had little EVS activity are also prioritised.

Priority in hosting volunteers is given to receiving volunteers from countries, which have send only a small number of EVS volunteers to Germany so far: Denmark, Finland, Greece, UK, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, Malta, the Netherlands, Norway, Portugal and Cyprus.¹⁸⁷

Volunteers receive travel costs, also for pre-project visits (100%), insurance, and an allowance. In Germany, the monthly allowance is 175 Euro (41 Euro per week). A further lump-sum grant to the organisation which can be used for food, accommodation as well as the costs for pedagogical support, administration and the volunteer's local travel (calculated on the basis of 300 Euro per month of service plus a fixed sum of 600 Euro).

3. Impact analysis

Voluntary Services meet with growing interest among young people and in society

Voluntary service programmes and their potential to promote the values of civil society among young people have gained in public interest. An ongoing intensive dialogue about the future of voluntary service programmes has taken place among its main actors on different levels: researchers, experts, practitioners and politicians. This discussion also raises the issue of future changes of the compulsory military and civil service programmes.

With regard to the development of civil society, increased offerings of voluntary service programmes have been considered desirable and are regarded a priority. Voluntary service programmes for young

¹⁸⁷ The exhaustive list of priorities can be found on the Website of the German National Agency (www.jugendfuereuropa.de/programm/europfreiwo/foerderprioritaeten/) The list of priorities is unfortunately only available in German.

people are recognised as important learning opportunities providing personal development and orientation, broadening individual horizons and expanding young people's capabilities.

Voluntary services in Germany have experienced constantly rising demand in recent years. Whereas in 1993 around 7.700 young people decided to participate in a Voluntary Social Year, in 2002 the total number of volunteers in the voluntary social and the voluntary ecological years was around 15.700 young people. The growing interest of young people is confirmed by several surveys. Young people are open to voluntary involvement if they see it as a personal enrichment and will open up new fields of experience and contact for themselves.

Young people aged between 14 and 24 form a particularly active group within society. Firstly, they have a stronger tendency to participate in clubs and societies, groups and projects than those in all other age groups.¹⁸⁸ Despite the increase in types and numbers of voluntary service placements and the growing interest of young people for medium and long-term voluntary work, at present there are overall only about 22.000 voluntary work placements available to accommodate them. This capacity includes all present national and international voluntary work placements. This total capacity should be seen in relation to 9,5 million young people who are in the age group from 15 to under 25 in Germany¹⁸⁹.

Inside experiences of foreign cultures in times of globalisation

International voluntary service programmes are well recognised as an active way of intercultural learning and exchanging common experience among young people worldwide. Short-term programmes have become a regular part of many youth organisations and environmental groups. The decision to volunteer for social service abroad is based on a number of reasons, such as the desire to help others, to improve language skills, to get insight into foreign cultures etc.

Evaluations show that international voluntary service with a strong focus on personal development has a significant, positive impact on the young people participating in terms of raising their inter-cultural awareness and stimulating intercultural learning. Involvement in international voluntary service builds new capacities for their own initiative and creativity. Volunteers acquire new skills. Their self-confidence, their commitment and responsibility for society improve. Upon their return they communicate their inter-cultural experience to other young people and encourage them to take part in other international activities.

The 'Shell Youth Study' of 2002¹⁹⁰ showed that individual achievement orientation and responsibility towards others are not mutually exclusive. Many young people want to shape their own lives. In this time of globalisation, life perspectives must be developed on one's own initiative and on one's own responsibility based on the values of society. An international volunteer service provides insight into the views and values of other cultures. In addition, international voluntary service provides an interior view into the working environments of other countries and possible professional careers. Experiencing other ways of living and working conditions brings a new orientation and qualifications and helps in making well-grounded decisions for future personal development. Regarding the educational background of the volunteers, the data of different voluntary organisations show that a majority of them are young women who completed secondary education. Well over half of the volunteers have been influenced by their service in their choice of career. This is revealed by the questionnaires that participants in the Initiative Christians for Europe (ICE) complete at the beginning, during and upon completion of their social service.¹⁹¹

¹⁸⁸ Volunteering in Germany, Results of the 1999 Representative Survey on Volunteering and Civic Engagement, Study commissioned by the Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth.

¹⁸⁹ Source: Federal Statistical Office (2003). N 10.

¹⁹⁰ Deutsche Shell (Ed.) (2002). Jugend 2002, 14. Shell Jugendstudie. (These studies are considered the most authoritative in observing attitude trends among German youth)

¹⁹¹ ICE Evaluierung des Zusammenwirkens von politischer Bildung und sozialen Diensten von Freiwilligen in Europa. (1996).

Capacity-building within the sector provide a broad spectrum of commitments

A variety of international voluntary service organisations evolved during the last 50 years, providing a broad spectrum of commitments and fields of work in many different spheres of civil society. National networks of international voluntary service organisations have been set up. Many initiatives and programmes related to the churches were created.

New standards for co-operation and volunteer activities, new methods of work and new educational approaches and methodologies have been developed. Training frameworks and support programmes accomplish the educational goals of international volunteering. New possibilities for conscientious objectors to do their service abroad (§ 14a, 14b and 14c) have enriched the spectrum of long-term volunteering abroad, thus increasing the number of young males participating in international service. In addition to the well-established networks of international voluntary service organisations, more than 200 other organisations and institutions have been recognised to organise alternative service for conscientious objectors abroad (§14 a and §14 b).

The 'Voluntary Social and Ecological Year' and other long-term voluntary programmes have become stable and meaningful educational opportunities of high quality within the framework of youth policy. Both voluntary service years developed a European dimension; volunteers can even do their service outside the EU. But despite these developments, the number of volunteers and of recognised conscientious objectors doing their compulsory civil services abroad under the condition of the legal framework regulating the two national voluntary years is still relatively low.

Increased experiences and knowledge at the local level

The European Voluntary Service has become a well-recognised programme in Germany that ensures adequate training and personal support throughout the project for each volunteer. The EVS has been a stimulus for new activity. It has promoted new partnerships for international voluntary service at the local, regional and international level. New international long-term placements have been created. The EVS also gave new opportunities for small local organisations to get involved in European activities, to establish new partnerships and to participate in European wide networks. Also more experienced organisations got an opportunity to open up to international voluntary services or to increase their international volunteer placements. Local and regional public administrations have increased their awareness and knowledge about international volunteering and youth -related issues in a European context.

In the past the EVS supported already existing types and approaches of voluntary projects including activities which have been part of the national voluntary schemes. This policy has changed. The national agency wants EVS projects in the future to provide additional support and increase value. In this context EVS financial support for more established international volunteer organisations is not a stable and long-term base of funding. It is difficult to measure the direct impact of the EVS on national administration legislation and policies, if and how it has improved the compatibility and the international dimension of national voluntary services or if it has increased the proportion of international voluntary work placements within national voluntary work schemes. The EVS impact on national legislation up to now seems to be relatively low. This is may be due to the fact that the scale of the programme is limited. Recent dialogues on the future of voluntary services are very much concentrating on more national issues e.g. in view of the possible termination of compulsory military and civil service. Within the national dialogue the new historical dimension of an enlarged Europe does not seem to be a driving force.

Demand for international volunteer services has seen a steady increase

Also the demand for international volunteer services has seen a steady increase over the last few years. Young eastern Europeans are very open to social service in the West. According to the German Red Cross their interest to participate in a voluntary year in Germany is increasing. A clear east-west tendency can be seen. Voluntary service organisations have assessed the numbers of requests from young people willing to participate in international voluntary services. The potential interest is estimated three times higher than placements available, in spite of the fact that a comprehensive information service on the

opportunities of international voluntary service is not implemented systematically in schools or universities. This of course would increase the number of volunteer demands.

Despite the increased demand for international voluntary service, the solid infrastructure capacities, experiences and the liveliness of the international voluntary sector, the total number of placements abroad and international placements in Germany is relatively small, partly due to unequal financial conditions and status in regard to state benefits of the volunteers in the different programmes and partly because of the high social security costs of applied for German volunteers abroad and international volunteers in Germany who participate in the officially approved social and ecological year programmes.

Positions on the future of voluntary service

The foundation model

From the point of view of many voluntary service organisations the desired objective to integrate all forms of voluntary service in Germany under one legal framework has not been reached till now. Several programmes for voluntary services abroad as well as the European Voluntary Service still exist outside the legal framework of the voluntary social and ecological years. This is especially true of smaller organisations that cannot afford the costs of for social security. (The government has decided to monitor the effects of the recent amendments to the voluntary year laws to see their effect).

An approach with a strong civil society focus, the foundation model, was proposed by the ‘Manifest on voluntary service’ of the Robert Bosch Foundation. While there was not agreement on all aspect of the manifesto, this suggested model finds support from several important voluntary service organisations. It suggests a non-governmental institution in the form of a foundation with funding from public and private sources. Those funds coming from the federal government would be those which are allocated for the compulsory civil service should there be an abolition or reduction of compulsory civilian service. This foundation capital would be increased by donations from individuals, businesses and other foundations and used for a more comprehensive promotion of voluntary services for young people.

Future of citizens’ involvement - impulses for the civil society

The Enquete-Commission “Future of Citizens’ Involvement” of the German Bundestag proposed in its report in 2001 some legal initiatives and recommendations for action to strengthen and develop voluntary citizens’ involvement. The report of the commission underlined the importance of voluntary services as learning opportunities providing personal development and professional orientation, broadening individual horizons, expanding young people’s capabilities, while supporting vulnerable people and engaging society in looking for solutions. The commission recognised voluntary services as an important field for social integration and the development of civic engagement.¹⁹²

Shortly after, the federal government and the Federal Council of the German States took further initiatives to improve the framework conditions of volunteering by adopting important changes of the Federal Laws on the Promotion of a Voluntary Social and Ecological Year (May 2002) and the Act on Civilian Service, August 2002.

These changes have improved the possibility of NGOs to be approved and opened up new possibilities for conscientious objectors and other volunteers to participate in international, long-term voluntary activities within the EU and outside.

The Enquete-Commission also recommended that an appropriate social security coverage for volunteers within the European Voluntary Service Programme should be worked out in co-operation with other

¹⁹² Source: Bericht der Enquete-Kommission „Zukunft des Bürgerschaftlichen Engagements“ (Report of The Enquete Commission). (2002, June). Deutscher Bundestag, 14. Wahlperiode. Drucksache 14/8900.

member states of the European Union. In order to increase the possibilities for voluntary service, the commission also underlined the need to clarify the status of volunteers at a European level and to think about new models for financial support to smaller organisations who do not have sufficient resources.¹⁹³

Creating equal conditions for the voluntary service abroad - points of view from voluntary service organisations

According to the majority of international voluntary service organisations, the changes of the Federal Laws in May 2002 and August 2002 were steps in the right direction, but, more for voluntary service inside Germany than for international service. In their view, the needed increase of international voluntary service opportunities, a strong request from young people is not possible within the framework of this law.

Their criticism¹⁹⁴ of the law is directed particularly at the following weaknesses:

- International Voluntary Services should, according to German law, enjoy complete social insurance coverage (health, unemployment, pension, nursing care), which makes it very expensive and may lead to legal problems in some countries. Due to the fact that it is subject to the social insurance law, service abroad is limited to 12 months and preparatory training has to take place in Germany. For many international voluntary service organisations and their partners it is therefore difficult to offer a voluntary social year or an ecological voluntary year abroad.
- The laws on the voluntary social and ecological year are not compatible with the European Voluntary Service. The recommendation for mobility of the European Union which requests all member states to reduce obstacles for mobility and award volunteers the status of non-employees to which the German government also agreed is not being followed.
- The new legal framework for the voluntary years is in favour of the male conscientious objectors who take part. These young men enjoy a higher recognition, a “benefit in competition” within the voluntary year programmes. They are better off than young men, who are not conscientious objectors, volunteering in the social and ecological years and young men doing an alternative service abroad based on § 14 b. And they are better off than all young women. The organisations fear that chances for women who do not have access to the same state support for a placement abroad will decrease.

In order to increase their international voluntary service activities, the organisations request:

- A law which considers the interest of international voluntary services and the recommendations of the European Union and makes it possible to increase social and intercultural services as a possibility of learning.
- Reduction of the total package social insurance contribution burden by the elimination of the retirement and unemployment insurance elements of it or at least a subsidy from the government for the social security expenses for all volunteers serving abroad so that those organizations offering international voluntary service placements are in the position to finance them.
- Payment of child allowances also for volunteers serving in voluntary services not governed by the laws on the voluntary social and ecological years or participating in the European Voluntary Service or who are conscientious objectors under paragraphs 14a, and 14c of the Civilian Service Act. Furthermore, they demand an increasing of the amount of financial support of these voluntary services.

¹⁹³ ibid

¹⁹⁴ Source: Action Committee Service for Peace and 14 other International Voluntary Service Organisations. (2002, February 21). Press release.

Participation of the organizations in drafting the administrative guidelines and in the evaluation of the voluntary year frameworks to verify if the objectives have been reached; especially if additional placements for volunteer services abroad have resulted.

Creating more favourable conditions for voluntary services as compared to compulsory services.

The commission on “Impulses for civil society – future perspectives for volunteer and compulsory civil services in Germany” proposed an equal duration of civil service and military service and an extension of volunteer services for all generations, men and women alike. In responses to this report, the Action Committee Service for Peace (AGDF) and the Federal Working Group on International Medium-Term Social Voluntary Services (BAG FWD) welcomed the Commission’s rejection of a general obligatory service and called for an increased number of voluntary service placements as an urgent task.¹⁹⁵

Both responses point out that “voluntary service and compulsory service do not play an equal role in society. The desirable and necessary structural change from compulsory to voluntary services cannot be achieved by them becoming more and more similar to one another but rather by them getting more differentiated from one another and also through improved and more favourable conditions for voluntary service activities. Only then can voluntary service can play an important role in public conscience as a fully-fledged service independent from compulsory service. This will also be an appropriate way to challenge gender disparities”. Both organisations are critical of the fact that the the Commission in its report fails to consider that compulsory civil service is an obligatory service controlled and monitored by the state. Even if it meets societal needs and supports participants’ individual development, compulsory civil service from its origin and justification remains, like the compulsory military service, an obligatory service and the system of imminent punishment applies to both. Voluntary service, in contrast, is based on self-commitment and is organised, controlled and carried out by non-governmental organisations, which allows for project placements to be selected and shaped according to different criteria.

AGDF and BAG FWD welcomed the Commission’s emphasis on the learning character of voluntary service. They, however, point out that these learning objectives were more defined in a context of professional training with only a general remark that voluntary and compulsory civil service should offer a ‘reflection on society’. Both responses recommend simplifying volunteers’ health and accident protection by abolishing obligatory social security as is the case in the European Voluntary Service Programme (EVS) which provides health, accident and personal liability insurance coverage only. Social security regulations for international volunteers should not be based on those applying to employees.

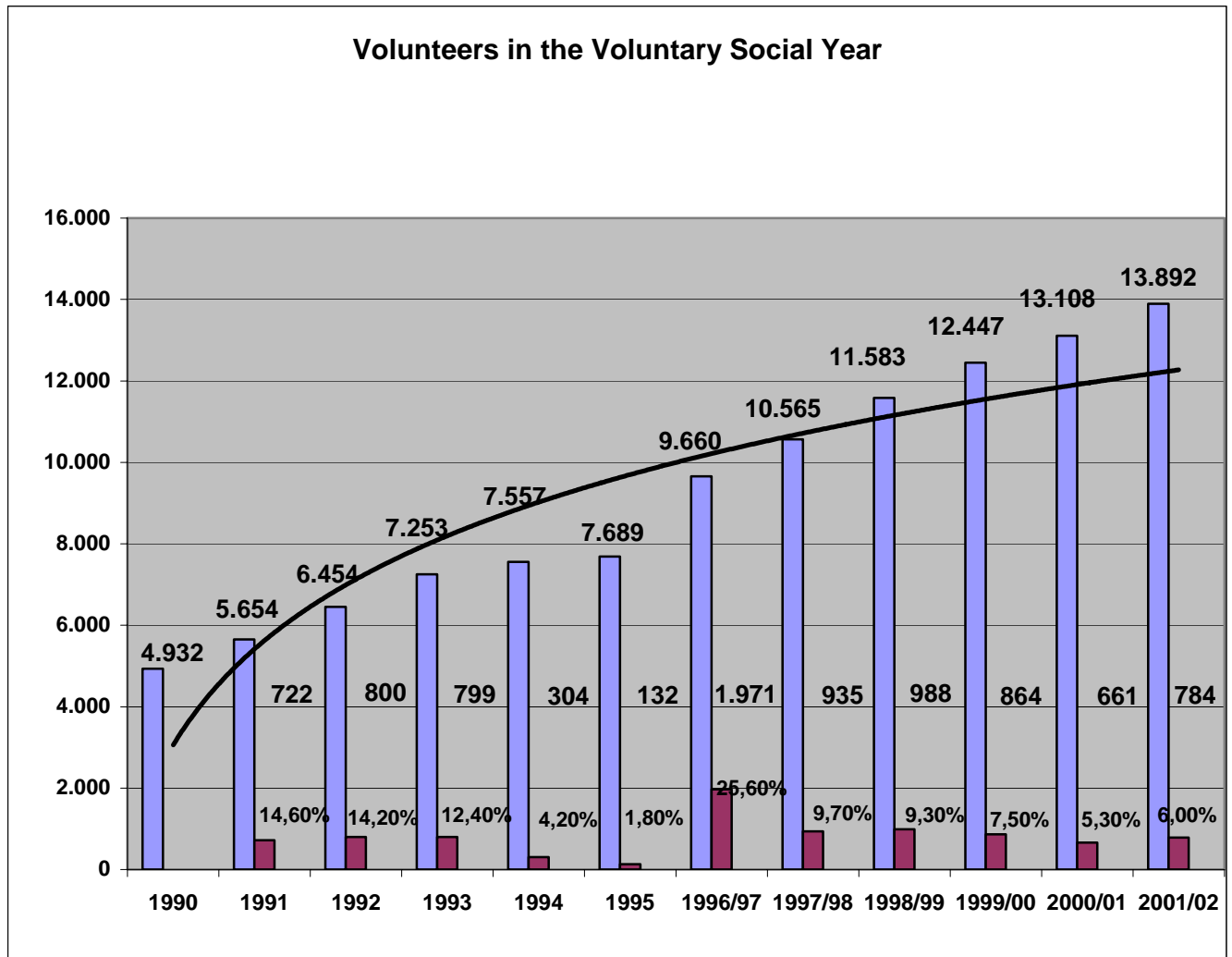
They regret that the report does not contain any precise suggestions on funding. The report of the Commission explicitly underlined the extremely different financial conditions of compulsory civil service and voluntary services but they are, however, not questioned. Therefore, they welcomed the comments of Renate Schmidt, the Minister for Family, Seniors, Women and Youth when submitting the report, that she agrees that part of the financial means of compulsory civil service should be transferred to support voluntary service.

¹⁹⁵ Source: Action Committee Service for Peace and Federal Working Group on International Medium Term Social Voluntary Services (BAG FWD). (2004, February 19). Press release.

4. Quantitative data

Voluntary Years of Social and Ecological Service

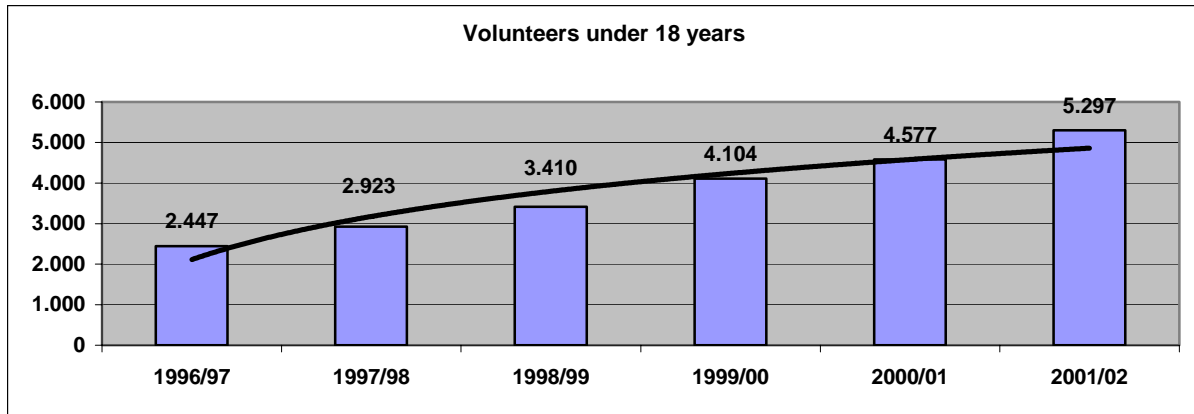
The data collected within the framework of the voluntary social year were evaluated for the first time in 2002.¹⁹⁶



Total numbers of placements per year, increase in numbers, increase in percent

The evaluation of the data shows a continuing growth of the number of volunteers between 1990 (4932 volunteers) and 2001/02 (13.892 volunteers). The peak of growth was from 1996/97 to 1998/99. During the last six years this development slowed down from 9.7% in 1997/98 to 6% in 2001/02. More young people under 18 are doing the voluntary social year. Their number increased from 25.3% in 1996/1997 to 38.1% in 2001/02.

¹⁹⁶ Evaluation of statistics from 1996 to 2002, Federal Working Group of the Voluntary Year of Social Service, January 18, 2003.



Given the fact that graduation from the highest form of secondary school (Abitur from a Gymnasium) is seldom possible before 18-19 years of age, this rapid increase in the number of younger participants shows that more graduates of the lower forms (Realschule, Hauptschule) are choosing to volunteer. The percentage of higher secondary school graduates participating decreased from 59.5% to 39.1%. The number of intermediate school graduates increased from 31.3 to 37.6%. The highest increase was in those with the minimum obligatory secondary education qualification. Their number increased from 6.7 to 22.6%. The image of the typical voluntary social participant as a well-educated upper middle class young woman, never entirely true, is now definitely due for a change. The number of male volunteers also increased from 4.3% to 12% in the same period.

The size of the voluntary social year (about 13.900 placements in 2002)¹⁹⁷ is nearly 8 times larger than the voluntary ecological year (about 1.800 placements in 2002). In addition, it is estimated that about 600¹⁹⁸ recognised conscientious objectors participated within the voluntary years abroad. The total number of volunteers participating in medium and long-term voluntary services in relation to the total number of young people of the different years (each year group with an average of 865.000 young people¹⁹⁹) who are eligible to participate in the programmes (15/16 to 27 years of age) is very low.²⁰⁰ This is also the case in relation to the total annual number of conscientious objectors or young men in compulsory civil service. One of the main reasons is that the total capacity of the presently available voluntary service placements is only 23.000 places. According to the Shell Study²⁰¹ of young girls aged 12 to 25, 3 % of them have done a voluntary year, 19% are interested in doing a voluntary social or ecological year, about 18 % don't know about the voluntary year opportunity and about 60 % have no interest.

Compulsory civil service

189,644 young men objected to military service for conscientious reasons in 2002. During 2003, the number of conscientious objectors is also high but not as high as in 2002. The annual number of conscientious objector placements in compulsory civil services during the last 13 years varied from 80,000 to 145.000. In 1999 the possibilities for financed places were reduced by 38.000 placements. In 2004, the government has allocated 843 million Euros in the federal budget to finance a total of about 100.000 compulsory civil service placements in the federal budget. Today, 160.565 compulsory civil service placements, mainly in welfare services, are available and 81.287 young men are in service. Out of this

¹⁹⁷ Statistic.1996 to 2002.'Federal working group of the voluntary social year'.

¹⁹⁸ Source: Federal Ministry for Family, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth (BMFSFJ).

¹⁹⁹ Source: Federal Statistical Office (2003). From about 82 Million inhabitants, 9,5 million are in the ages groups from 15 to 25 years.

²⁰⁰ Rauschenbach, T, Liebig, R. (2002). *Freiwilligendienste - Wege in die Zukunft* (Voluntary Services – Pathways into the future). Friedrich Ebert Foundation.

²⁰¹ Shell-Study 2002.

number 63.791 do their service in the old federal states and 17.496 of them in the new federal states.²⁰² Up to now, 1.9 million young men have done compulsory civil service²⁰³. It is estimated that about 3000²⁰⁴ recognized conscientious objectors are doing a voluntary social or ecological year (§14 c). About 600 of them did a voluntary year abroad in 2003. This number is increasing because the financial support is much better than for conscientious objectors doing an alternative service abroad (§14b) who have to arrange their financial support with the help of the sending organisation themselves. The annual number of conscientious objectors who do an alternative service abroad (§14b) is decreasing. The estimated annual number of these volunteers is about 400.

Civil defence as alternative service

Annually about 10,000 men are performing Civil Defence as an alternative to compulsory military service.

Unrecognised (under government frameworks) International voluntary service

That is service not done as a recognised voluntary social or ecological year, as alternative service abroad or other form of conscientious objection; service not done as development work.

There are no comprehensive statistics available about those volunteers who do a long-term voluntary service not falling under the legal regulation of the voluntary years or the regulation of the compulsory civil service and its alternatives. The statistics available, since they are incomplete, are therefore difficult to compare with those mentioned earlier. Taking the statistics only of the larger international voluntary service providers²⁰⁵ it can be estimated that about 1.800 volunteers²⁰⁶ did a longer-term service abroad in 2003.

European Voluntary Service Programme

The total number of EVS volunteers in Europe was 3 430 in 2001 and 3 432 volunteers in 2002. These total figures relate to an annual grant of 23.9 million euro in 2001 and 21.9 million euro in 2002, i.e. 6967 €/ EVS volunteer in 2001 and 6381€/volunteer in 2002. In 2001 the EVS Programme in Germany received 1.252 applications. Out them 885 were selected for a grant, of whom 291 were foreign volunteers in Germany. 36 of these volunteers did a voluntary service of 6 months, 37 volunteers from 6 to 9 months, 218 volunteers from 9 to 12 months. 657 German volunteers did their service abroad, of whom 170 volunteers did a voluntary service of 6 months, 83 volunteers from 6 to 9 month and 404 volunteers from 9 to 12 months. In 2002, out of the 910 selected EVS placements, 330 foreign volunteers did a service in Germany and 580 German volunteers did voluntary service abroad²⁰⁷.

At present a total capacity of about 23.000 placements is available to accommodate the growing interest of young people for medium and long-term voluntary work. This capacity includes all the above mentioned national and international (4.600) voluntary work placements. This total capacity relates to 9,5 million young people who are in the age groups from 15 to under 25²⁰⁸.

²⁰² Source: Bundesamt für den Zivildienst (Federal Office for the Compulsory Non-Military Service – Civil Service), Statistik der ZDP. Young conscientious objectors in service. (2004, May 15).

²⁰³ Source: Bundesamt für den Zivildienst (BAZ), Referate I 1. (Federal Office for the Compulsory Non-Military Service – Civil Service).

²⁰⁴ The Bundesamt für den Zivildienst (Federal Office for the Compulsory Non-Military Service – Civil Service) has allocated an amount of 15,5, Million € for 3000 placements in 2004.

²⁰⁵ Jugendhaus Düsseldorf, Aktionsgemeinschaft Dienst für den Frieden, Arbeitsgemeinschaft der Ev. Jugend, Fid, ICE, ICYA, Missionare auf Zeit etc.

²⁰⁶ Volunteer placements with private contracts, not including alternatives to military service, not including the voluntary years of social and ecological services.

²⁰⁷ Source: Youth for Europe, German Agency Youth.

²⁰⁸ Source: Bundesamt für Statistik (Federal Statistical Office). 10. (2003).

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The 'Federal Office for the Compulsory Non-Military Service - Civilian Service' (Bundesamt für den Zivildienst)	http://www.zivildienst.de/index2.htm
Federal working group of the voluntary social year' (Bundesarbeitskreis Freiwilliges Soziales Jahr)	http://pro-fsj.de/index.htm
Federal working group of the ecological voluntary year (Bundesarbeitskreis Freiwilliges Ökologisches Jahr)	http://www.foej.de/index.html
Federal Office for Non-Military National Service (Bundesamt für Zivildienst), List of organisations providing an alternative service abroad (§14 b)	http://www.zivildienst.de/index1.htm
Society 'Learning and Helping Overseas' (Arbeitskreis Lernen und Helfen in Übersee)	http://www.entwicklungsdienst.de/fix/englisch/index.html
Conference of International Youth and Voluntary Services	http://www.traegerkonferenz.de/index.html
European Voluntary Service (EVS) German National Agency	www.webforum-jugend.de/
Federal working group of catholic associations (Bundesarbeitsgemeinschaft mittelfristiger internationaler sozialer Dienste)	www.voluntaryservice-international.org
Freiwilliges Soziales Jahr in katholischer Trägerschaft	http://www.freiwilliges-jahr.de/index1.htm
Robert Bosch Foundation	http://www.bosch-stiftung.de/
Missionare auf Zeit (MaZ) Deutscher Missionsrat	www.orden.de
Aktionsgemeinschaft Dienst für den Frieden	www.friedensdienst.de
Freiwilligenzentren, Deutscher Caritasverband	www.caritas.org
New models of voluntary service	freiwilligendienste@diakonie-wuerttemberg
Forum Forum Ziviler Friedensdienst	http://www.friedenbrauchtFachleute.de
International Year of Volunteering	International Year of Volunteering
Plattform Zivile Konfliktbearbeitung	www.konfliktbearbeitung.net

6. Annexes: Case Studies

Introduction

The case studies address the involvement of selected national organizations and public institutions dealing with international voluntary service placements in Germany and abroad. They illustrate the perceptions, opinions, experiences and approaches developed by the selected stakeholders to implement international voluntary service opportunities and also how the legal framework and policies relate to practice. They illustrate some of the major obstacles and emerging trends as well as the perspectives for the development of international volunteer exchange opportunities for young people..

The German researcher carried out structured and detailed interviews with the following selected organisations:

- ‚Initiative Christen für Europa‘ (ICE) active in European exchanges in voluntary service (EVS and non EVS),
- ‚Verein für internationalen und interkulturellen Austausch‘, (VIA) an NGO not being represented in any of the umbrella organisations,
- ‚Bund der Deutschen Katholischen Jugend (BDKJ)‘, member of the ‚Bundesarbeitskreis FSJ‘, a catholic working group of all catholic youth organisations responsible for voluntary social year programmes. They are a member of the federal working group, the national umbrella of all national level organisations which are responsible for the implementation of the voluntary social year. The interview was done with a representative of the department of voluntary service and youth policies.

All three NGOs are legally permitted to be host and sending organisations for a voluntary social year in Germany and abroad. All of them participate in the European Voluntary Service Programme (EVS).

- With one representative from a state administration on the regional level, the department responsible for the voluntary social year in the Ministry for Social Affairs of Saxony.

Due to the limited time frame and changes of persons responsible within the federal Ministry during the research, an interview with a representative from the government administration at the national level could not be carried out. The main results of the interviews have been summarised in these case studies.

The organisations and their programmes and objectives

1. Bund der Deutschen Katkolischen Jugend (BDKJ)²⁰⁹

The Bund der Deutschen Katkolischen Jugend (Association of German Catholic Youth) is an umbrella association of independent catholic youth groups having its own democratic structures and rules. The BDKJ is recognised by the Catholic Church. Unpaid volunteers perform most of the work in this youth association.

The BDKJ and its ‚department for voluntary services and youth policies‘ is one of the two catholic bodies at the national level who are legally responsible to the government for controlling the Catholic church organisations‘ participation in the voluntary social year. The other is the social welfare federation, the Deutsche Caritasverband. The BDKJ and the ‚Deutsche Caritasverband‘ are part of a wider catholic network on voluntary service, the ‚Bundesarbeitskreis FSJ‘. This working group has additional members

²⁰⁹ Interview with Uwe Slüter, responsible for voluntary service and youth policy.

representing different regional and other nation-wide catholic institutions and groups, implementing the voluntary social year in Germany and abroad.

The common catholic working group considers itself as a focal point for the co-ordination and development the voluntary social year. The group gives advice on important funding or quality-development issues. It also co-ordinates the contacts and information policies with the parliament, the government and the general public.

In addition, the BDKJ is an important member of the national NGO umbrella of all similar central bodies, legally acknowledged to co-ordinate hosting and sending organisations of the voluntary year of social service in Germany and abroad, the 'Bundesarbeitskreis Freiwilliges Soziales Jahr'.

As an objective of its international work, the BDKJ hopes to encourage understanding and acceptance among young people from different countries. This includes the recognition of differences, the discovery of common factors and dialogue going beyond linguistic and cultural disparities. In such a way the Catholic youth associations contribute to a harmonious coexistence with foreign citizens in their own country thus encouraging peace all over the world.

2. Initiative Christen für Europa²¹⁰(ICE)

The 'Initiative Christen für Europa' (Initiative Christians for Europe), an NGO with its headquarters located near Dresden in the eastern part of Germany, focuses its activities on international voluntary service and cross border co-operation.

An east-west network, the 'European Working Group for Voluntary Services and Social Projects', has been set up to implement a common voluntary work project: 'Building bridges in Europe – voluntary sharing and serving'.

This network at present involves partners from Belgium, Germany, France, Italy, Poland, Slovakia, Czech Republic, Romania, the Russian Federation, Ukraine and Hungary.

'Building Bridges in Europe' is an educational programme that combines volunteering, learning, serving and responsibility for the community.

The programme has three main objectives:

- Engagement for human dignity and human rights
- Engagement for civil society, serving for the common welfare and well-being of people in Europe
- Affirmation of a Christian way of living in respect and solidarity with all people, supporting those in need.

3. Verein für internationalen und interkulturellen Austausch' (VIA)²¹¹

The 'Verein für internationalen und interkulturellen Austausch' (Association for International and Intercultural Exchange) is a registered NGO. The main objectives of VIA are the development of international contacts between people, the promotion of international and intercultural exchanges, of understanding and tolerance between different cultures. VIA organises longer-term stays abroad for young people enabling them to make active contacts with local people, opening an intensive view from inside a different culture and way of living and providing an inside view of the working environment of other countries as well.

In addition to their specific objectives, all three NGOs, BDKJ, VIA and ICE recognise international voluntary services as an active way of intercultural learning and exchanging of common experiences among young people worldwide. They agree that International voluntary service offers new intercultural learning experiences within the framework of a growing Europe and enhance international relationships in a way that is fundamental to building open and tolerant societies within Europe.

²¹⁰ Interview with Gerhard Ruess, responsible for pedagogy.

²¹¹ Interview with Peter Rauckes, Secretary general.

Evaluations done by all three NGOs of their volunteers show that international voluntary service with a strong focus on personal development has a significant positive impact on the young people participating with regards to raising their inter-cultural awareness and stimulating intercultural learning. Involvement in international voluntary service builds new capacities for personal initiative and creativity. Upon their return, the volunteers communicate their inter-cultural experience to other young people and encourage them to get involved in other international activities.

According to the experiences and evaluations of all three NGOs, voluntary services are social learning processes of great importance for the personal development of young people, which open up opportunities for new experiences by gaining social and other skills. They enhance employability and have an important impact on the professional careers of the volunteers. Personal commitments and active participation promote the feeling of being a part of society and of active citizenship.

4. State Ministry for Social Affairs of Saxony²¹²

The Ministry for Social Affairs is the responsible body for child and youth policies in Saxony. Saxony is one of the five “new” federal states in the eastern part of Germany with a population of 4.4 million people. Like all new federal states in the eastern part, Saxony faces a massive structural transformation of its industry and has a high unemployment rate (19,5%)²¹³. The unemployment rate of young people in Saxony is 12,4 %²¹⁴.

In accordance with the principle of subsidiarity, youth associations, specialised organisations for youth work and voluntary service organisations implement youth policies. Since 1992, the Ministry financially supports voluntary work, including young people from Saxony who take part in the voluntary social year. The voluntary social year is regarded as a specific instrument of social, non-formal education for young people, with the aim to promote the commitment of young people towards others and towards society and to develop their understanding for social problems and people in need.

The Ministry is also responsible for the authorisation of host/sending organisations of the voluntary social year in Saxony and abroad. Only organisations and institutions from Saxony or structures of national organisations resident in Saxony can receive the authorisation. About 35 have been recognised, among them also youth offices and personnel departments of several cities. The ‘state youth office’ examines and decides about the application for authorisation with the approval of the ministry. A set of guidelines for the implementation of the voluntary social year has been worked out by the Ministry and came into force in 2003.²¹⁵ These guidelines are valid for all authorised organisations and institutions who receive funds from the ministry. In addition, the state Youth Service Committee adopted and published a manual as a guidance for the implementation of the voluntary social year.²¹⁶

In 2003, about 1.100 placements for the voluntary social year have been funded by the Ministry in Saxony. The total amount of funding in 2004 was reduced to 1.8 million Euro because of budget constraints. This amount only allows for funding 900 placements (an average of 2000€/volunteer). EVS placements are not funded from this budget. Both, the voluntary social year and the EVS are independent programmes and funding from both programmes cannot be combined.

Applications for international voluntary service placements are funded by the Ministry. International voluntary service is getting more and more attractive and smaller NGOs who are not sure about their capacities and resources want to test whether they can develop their activities in this new field. The Ministry is open to give support and assistance to them.

²¹² Interview with Mr. Friedemann Beyer.

²¹³ Statistisches Landesamt des Freistaates Sachsen, Arbeitslosenquote Juli 2004.

²¹⁴ Arbeitslose Jugendliche in Sachsen, Staatsministerium für Wirtschaft und Arbeit, Referat 22, August 2004.

²¹⁵ Richtlinie des Sächsischen Staatsministeriums für Soziales zur Durchführung und Förderung eines freiwilligen sozialen Jahres im Freistaat Sachsen (FSJ-Richtlinie), 5. April 2003, SächsABl. Nr. 18 S. 438.

²¹⁶ Orientierungshilfe des Landesjugendhilfeausschusses zur Durchführung des freiwilligen sozialen Jahres.

Programmes and funding

The main activities of the ‚Verein für internationalen und interkulturellen Austausch‘ (VIA) are longer term stays in host families, school programmes abroad, au pair programmes, international workshops, study tours, cultural events, internship programmes to gain practical work experiences in different professions such as social work and teaching.

VIA also got involved in organising international voluntary services in Germany, Europe and outside of Europe at the time when the European voluntary Service (EVS) was established. Funding through the EVS did help the organisation to start long-term voluntary service activities on a solid basis. Before this, organisations like VIA had more difficulties to find sufficient financial resources in this area. VIA is not participating in any European voluntary service network. The EVS offered them new opportunities to find new partnerships for international voluntary service.

In the course of 2004, about 80 acknowledged conscientious objectors (§14 b Compulsory Non-Military National Service Act – alternative service) who were supported by their own support groups with regard to funding, participated in voluntary service activities abroad. In addition, 120 acknowledged conscientious objectors took part within the framework of the voluntary social year. In total more than two hundred volunteers were sent abroad. Through the EVS programme, about 50 volunteers were received in Germany, half of them from Eastern Europe. VIA also supports voluntary projects in less-developed countries. In addition, VIA facilitates training of trainers programmes. Information about other countries and cultures and intercultural learning are important elements of all programmes organised by VIA.

The main programmes implemented by Initiative Christen für Europa‘ (ICE) are:

1. International voluntary services in Germany and abroad which are not covered by the regulations of the ‘voluntary year schemes’ and organised based on their own financial resources (‘solidarity fund’ of volunteers and resources from the projects).
2. In addition, the organisation has decided to participate in the voluntary social year in Germany and abroad because of the more comprehensive social security regulations (140 German volunteers abroad in 14 countries and 70 volunteers from abroad in Germany).
3. Voluntary service for recognised conscientious objectors (45 participants) within the framework of the voluntary social year (§14 c Federal Law on the Promotion of a Voluntary Year of Social Service, May 27, 2002, Act on Compulsory Non-military National Service, Third Law to amend administrative provisions, August 21, 2002).
4. EVS Programme (German volunteers abroad in 10 hosting projects and foreign volunteers in 10 German hosting projects, mainly from Eastern Europe). For ICE as well, the EVS Programme represented an opportunity to increase its international volunteer placements.

The voluntary social year organised by the Bund der Deutschen Katholischen Jugend (BDKJ) and the members of the Catholic working group organise about 2000 placements of young people each year. Most of the placements take place in Germany. Less than 10% of these volunteers in Germany come from abroad or have an immigrant or resident alien background.

The BDKJ itself made bigger efforts to increase the number of volunteers sent abroad. In 2002 about 140 volunteers were placed abroad under different programmes, most of them using the opportunities of the voluntary social year, including recognised conscientious objectors (§ 14 c, 30 participants) and a small number taking part in the European Voluntary service programme (EVS).

All three organisations mainly receive their public funding from the same sources:

The budget provided by the federal Ministry for Family, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth for the voluntary social year or by the EVS programme. ICE and VIA also raise funds through their volunteers. Potential participants are asked if they are willing to support a ‘solidarity fund’ for volunteer service

projects through their own initiatives, e.g. by setting up circles of supporters among friends or family from their own communities.

The increase of incoming volunteers from Central and Eastern Europe serving in Germany is a common trend. For all three organisations the EVS programme was or is a relevant source for organising international voluntary services but the EVS is not a stable long-term source of funding because with the total EVS funds limited and an EVS priority being supporting new groups many new organisations apply and receive support and more established organisations receive steadily less.

International voluntary services meet with a growing interest among young people. The demand for international volunteer services has seen a steady increase over the last few years. The NGOs who have been interviewed have estimated the number of requests from young people wanting to participate in international voluntary service to be three to four times higher than the placements available.

Sending volunteers abroad, however, is limited even when the organisations have enough capacities, partners and projects. One of the main reasons for limiting placements abroad is the lack of sufficient funding. Another is the status of the volunteers as employees and the related costs for social security coverage which has to be paid by the sending organisation in Germany when they are sent under the voluntary social or ecological year. More stable and sufficient funding, an adequate framework and a recognised volunteer status would help double the actual number of volunteers sent abroad within a short time.

Profiles of volunteers and recruitment

Main target groups are young people between the ages of 18 to 26. The majority of participants are between 19 to 20, at the time of transition from school to employment or university.

In all three organisations the majority of volunteers (up to 70 %) who service abroad are women aged of 19 to 20 who finished higher secondary education. The number of young men is increasing because of the new possibilities for young conscientious objectors (§14c) to participate with public funding in the voluntary social year abroad.

Via tries to inform and to attract more volunteers from vocational training and lower secondary education background but their participation is still low. Many volunteers come from more rural areas and smaller cities. The decision to volunteer for social service abroad is based on a number of reasons, such as the desire to help others, to improve language skills, to get insight into foreign cultures etc.

1/3 of ICE's volunteers are without confession: not attached to a church. 20 % of them are actively involved in a parish. The organisation is targeting those open for intercultural differences; those who want to improve their own abilities, those with strong social motivation to serve the community.

ICE does not organise its own information campaigns. Information is conveyed by former volunteers or through information provided on ICE's own web site. VIA and BDKJ also have their own web site but do additional campaigns. Former volunteers are also their best ways for spreading information. Ex-volunteers also are their best resource for the preparation and training of new volunteers.

ICE and VIA profit from the general information and information campaigns implemented by the EVS-Programme. As a result of EVS publicity, information about possibilities for international voluntary work is now better known by the target group.

The relationship between the programmes and the European dimension

All three NGOs agree that the EVS also gave new opportunities for small local organisations to get involved in European voluntary service activities and that the EVS-Programme did increase their awareness and knowledge about international volunteering and youth-related issues in a European context at different levels. It is more difficult to measure the direct impact of the EVS on national legislation and policies, whether it improved the compatibility and the international dimension of national voluntary services and whether it increased the proportion of international voluntary work placements within national voluntary work programmes.

The laws on the voluntary year for social and ecological service are furthermore not compatible to the European Voluntary Service. The recommendation of mobility from the European Union which requests all member states to reduce obstacles of mobility and award volunteers the status of non-employees has not yet been implemented. The EVS impact on national legislation seems relatively low up to now. Recent dialogues on the future of voluntary services are concentrating more on national issues, e.g., the possible termination of compulsory military and civil service. Within the national dialogue, international voluntary service is not high on the agenda.

The development of international voluntary services for young people

According to the majority of NGOs interviewed, the changes of the Federal Law on the Promotion of a Voluntary Social Year, the Federal Law on the Promotion of a Voluntary Ecological Year, May 2002, and of the Act on Compulsory Non-Military Civil Service, August 2002, are steps in the right direction. The necessary increase of international voluntary services, to meet the increasing requests from young people are, however, not possible within the framework of this law.

The main obstacles are:

- Social security regulations based on those for employees. Due to this fact, services abroad under the programmes of the voluntary year of social and ecological services are limited to 12 months and preparatory trainings generally have to take place in Germany. For many international voluntary service organisations and their partners it is therefore difficult to offer a voluntary social year or an ecological voluntary year abroad.
- During the recent dialogues on the future of voluntary services, the commission “Impulses for civil society – future perspectives for volunteer and civilian services in Germany” clearly points out the important value for the society and the individual benefit of voluntary services also with regard to „life-long learning“. It is, however, a problem that those advantages are also being applied to the compulsory civil service of conscientious objectors without any distinction and also that the compulsory civil service of conscientious objectors service is often regarded as being equal to voluntary service. By doing so, the report of the commission does not consider that the compulsory civil service of conscientious objectors is a mandatory service controlled and monitored by the state even if it serves the requests of society and promotes individual development. In contrast to that, voluntary service is based on self-obligation and is carried out under the responsibility of non-governmental organisations.

In order to increase their international voluntary services, the interviewed organisations together with other international voluntary service organisations request:-

- A law which considers the interest of international voluntary services and the recommendation of the European Union and makes it possible to increase voluntary service as a possibility of social and intercultural learning.
- The elimination of social insurance contributions for retirement and unemployment or at least a subsidy from the government for social security expenses for all volunteers serving abroad so

that those organizations offering international voluntary services are in the position to finance themselves.

- Steps to forcefully put the idea of voluntary engagement into practice by further developing voluntary service and not just by transforming the compulsory civil service for conscientious objectors. A significant improvement of voluntary service is required so that the society will realize them as an independent service.

The Ministry for Social Affairs in Saxony is aware that social security regulations based on those for employees are a burden for many NGO who send volunteers abroad. But, on the other hand, in times of high unemployment these regulations are regarded as more supportive and protective for the volunteers and these standards should be kept and not be reduced. Therefore, EVS regulations are not considered as a model for the voluntary social year abroad. There is also the danger that volunteer placements in Germany and abroad with low social security standards can be misused as cheap labour. In addition, if future programmes will be extended for all generations, the differences to mini jobs will be small. The Ministry therefore is in favour of improving the educational and pedagogical standards for voluntary services instead.

YOUTH CIVIC AND VOLUNTARY SERVICE IN THE CZECH REPUBLIC²¹⁷

1. Introduction

Voluntary service in the Czech Republic must be analysed in the context of general development of civil society and the third sector. Section 2 therefore describes the evolution of civil society and volunteerism since the political changes in 1989.

Section 3 presents the recently adopted Czech act on voluntary service, which recognises the volunteers as well as the organisations involving them in their activities. The law allows voluntary service at national and international level and defines also the framework for international voluntary service programmes (for Czechs going abroad as well as foreign volunteers hosted in the Czech Republic). As national and international programmes are developed separately, Section 4 and 5 presents the situation of both levels. In the case of national voluntary service, the study looks at policy areas related to young people (youth policy, civilian service development) affected by the development of programmes as well as realities of young people in the country. Concerning international voluntary service, the study presents the evolution of EVS and other international programmes involving young people.

2. Tradition of civil society and policy context

The situation of the Czech Republic (10.256.760 inhabitants) is still characterised by the huge transformation process in all fields of society after the fall of communism in 1989. A democratic society was set up with a mixed economy establishing a strong private profit sector alongside the receding state and a newly formed non-profit sector. In 1992, the country separated from Slovakia. From 1995-1999, Czech society was confronted with a period of negative growth and a rise of unemployment due to major transformations in the industrial sector²¹⁸. Along with the economic reform and the resulting irregular distribution of wealth, a new phenomenon of social exclusion appeared with unequal access to education and employment. While the economic situation has recently improved, strong regional disparities exist in the country. In order to tackle social exclusion, the government intends to mainly change the existing social system, stimulating beneficiaries to seek employment as the main means for their integration in society.

The political changes in the late 1980s were strongly influenced by the ideology and activity of people who voluntarily engaged themselves in civil (dissident) initiatives like Charter 77. In opposition to the socialist system, they requested parliamentary democracy with a pluralist system and people's freedom of association. After 1989, the impact of this engagement enabled later the non profit sector to develop²¹⁹.

After the changes in 1989, a new civil code allowed the setting up of civil associations. A lot of non-profit organisations were created during the initial period of enthusiasm. They sprung up in the context of the political discussions at the highest level on the concepts of 'civil society' and 'non-profit organisations'. While the first president, V. Havel²²⁰ stressed the importance of civil society (a variety of citizens' activities independent from the state) as a counterpart to the state administration and centralism, the

²¹⁷ The report analyses the situation in the Czech Republic until August 2004.

²¹⁸ Frič, P. Goulli, R. Vyskočilová, O. (2004). Small Development within the Bureaucracy Interests: The non-profit Sector in the Czech Republic. In: Zimmer, Priller (Ed.). *Future of Civil Society* (p. 613).

²¹⁹ Before WWII and directly after 1945 a relatively strong non profit sector played an important social role until the installation of the socialist regime in 1948. See website of the national volunteer centre Hestia: <http://www.volunteer.cz>.

²²⁰ 1989-2003.

former Prime Minister Klaus²²¹ pointed out the danger of non-profit organisations for democracy questioning collective ideology principals. In spite of the public discussion, the non-profit sector remained unknown to the large public. The sector is still searching for a common terminology and uses different terms in the discussion: "nongovernmental-sector", "voluntary sector", "civil sector", "nonstate-nonprofit sector"²²².

A special act was created for each type of non profit organisations: associations, foundations, funds, public benefit organisations, churches. The non profit sector plays an important position in Czech economy and society. In 1995, it employed 3, 4% of the working force in the service sector²²³. The following areas boast the largest number of members:

1. Trade unions and professional associations;
2. Culture, sports& leisure;
3. Community development and housing;
4. Churches & religious organisations;
5. Environment.

As of March 14, 2003, 55,178 non-governmental non-profit organizations were registered in the Czech Republic²²⁴. The large majority of them (87.4%), or 48,689, are civic associations, although most of them are apparently inactive. These organizations are involved in a wide spectrum of services in the areas of social inclusion, cultural and natural heritage, leisure activities for young people, tourism, and support in using information technology. Healthcare and education are still within the domain of the state, but non stated providers are slowly emerging. Czech NGOs are also active in humanitarian efforts at home and abroad. NGOs are mainly concentrated in Prague and other large cities as well as in Central Bohemia, Brno and Moravian-Silesian areas.

The state relies on NGOs to provide services that cannot be funded by the state budget. The states support is limited to 70% of the project total costs and the remaining 30% must be covered by other resources like foreign or domestic foundations or donors²²⁵, local municipalities or governments.

The general situation of Czech NGOs is characterised by ambivalent legislation and negative government attitudes. One recent example is the conflict concerning the place of the church-affiliated organisations that set up various activities after church territories and buildings had been returned.²²⁶

The 1991 law on freedom of religion and the status of churches was replaced by a new law in March 2002 that required all current religious organisations to re-register as public-benefit organisations or civic associations. This law limits the role of the churches to run charities. Charities founded by the churches encountered problems in running their activities in the social field because of serious cuts in state subsidies until recently.

Tradition of volunteerism

²²¹ 1992, 1996-1997.

²²² Frič, P. Goulli, R. Vyskočilová, O. (2004). Small Development within the Bureaucracy Interests: The non-profit Sector in the Czech Republic. In: Zimmer, Priller (Ed.). *Future of Civil Society* (p.602).

²²³ Frič, P. Goulli, R. Vyskočilová, O. (2004). Small Development within the Bureaucracy Interests: The non-profit Sector in the Czech Republic. In: Zimmer, Priller (Ed.). *Future of Civil Society* (p. 608).

²²⁴ National Volunteer Centre Hestia (2003). Voluntary activities in the Czech Republic – review for the European Commission (p. 5).

²²⁵ USAID, Bureau of Europe& Eurasia, Office of Democracy, Governance & Social Transition, 2002 NGO Sustainability Index, Czech Republic (p. 66). Retrieved February 15, 2004, from http://www.usaid.gov/locations/europe_eurasia/dem_gov/ngoindex/2002/czech.pdf.

²²⁶ USAID, Bureau of Europe& Eurasia, Office of Democracy, Governance & Social Transition (2002) NGO Sustainability Index, Czech Republic (p. 63). Retrieved February 15, 2004, from http://www.usaid.gov/locations/europe_eurasia/dem_gov/ngoindex/2002/czech.pdf.

Historically, volunteering emerged as an activity outside professional work in order to support an increasing number of people living in poverty in the period of rapid industrialization²²⁷. Associations with a focus on philanthropy and education developed at the beginning of the 20th century. Many of these volunteering associations were created for the purpose of reinforcing patriotism, as well as the cultural²²⁸ and national identity. Organisations with a secular orientation emerged, and the Roman Catholic Church lost its influence. With the establishment of the socialist regime in 1948, all individual organisations were either abolished or 'unified' under the umbrella of 'social voluntary organisations of the National Front'. Volunteering became a tool for socialist propaganda. In the so called 'brigades', groups of 'voluntary' workers obliged themselves to do more than their duty to meet the five-year plans or other emerging needs.

Attitudes towards volunteering

After the changes in 1989, only half of the people formerly involved in 'voluntary' work continued to be active without pressure from the regime. Six percent of the people without former involvement became involved in civil associations. In total, 8% of the population were volunteers in 1999²²⁹, similar to likewise low percentages in other CEE countries. The image of volunteerism is still connected to former experiences with non-authentic voluntary activities. Negative attitudes of the Czech people towards volunteering are also linked to the experience of state paternalism under the socialist regime with the consequence that volunteering is perceived as a substitute for failed state interventions. Eighty-nine per cent of all NGOs work with volunteers. They are mainly active in leisure time, sports, social services and culture organisations that were transformed after the political changes. The large number of people becoming volunteers and their substantial contribution during the catastrophic flooding in 1997 and 2002 improved the image of volunteer work in the Czech society significantly. Many people became volunteers although they had not had any experience with these activities before and a lot of people donated money to NGOs. While this level of donations decreased after the events, Czech inhabitants continued their financial support for NGOs on a higher level than before.

According to the Czech Youth Ministry, two groups of non-governmental non-profit organizations are linked to voluntary activities of young people²³⁰:

- Civic associations of children and youth, and associations working with young people. Most nation-wide organizations are affiliated with one of the two national youth councils. - Ceska rada deti a mladeze (The Czech Council of Children and Youth) (85 associations with more than 191,000 individual members²³¹) and Kruh sdruzeni deti mladeze (Circle of Children and Youth Associations) (45 associations with more than 30,000 individual members)²³². The councils are currently discussing the possibility of merging.
- Volunteer centres. These aim to support the development of professionally managed volunteer activities in specific regions, to develop specific volunteer programmes, and to promote volunteerism to interested individuals and organizations. These centres also provide information about volunteer organizations and update the database of volunteers and hosting organisations. Since 1993 Hestia - the National Volunteering Centre - plays an important role for the development of volunteer programmes in the country (see section 5 for detailed presentation).

²²⁷ Retrieved February 15, 2004, from http://www.volunteer.cz/gen_hist.shtml.

²²⁸ German or Czech culture.

²²⁹ Frič, P. Goulli, R. Vyskočilová, O. (2004). Small Development within the Bureaucracy Interests: The non-profit Sector in the Czech Republic. In: Zimmer, Priller (Ed.). *Future of Civil Society* (p. 626).

²³⁰ National Volunteer Centre Hestia (2003). Voluntary activities in the Czech Republic – review for the European Commission (p. 6).

²³¹ see <http://www.crdm.cz>

²³² National Volunteer Centre Hestia (2003). Voluntary activities in the Czech Republic – review for the European Commission (p. 6).

3. Legal framework for volunteering and voluntary service

Changing Terminology

The Volunteer centres in the Czech Republic as well as the NGOs use the term “dobrovolníci” (volunteers) which is different from the terminology, used under the socialist regime: “akce Z” (Z=zadarmo, for free, voluntarily action) or “brigáda socialistické práce” (temporary work for socialism). They promote volunteerism opportunities as a possibility for individual development gaining professional experience, etc. In spite of the new terms, negative images persist, particularly with representatives of the older generation.

According to the Czech act, the term ‘volunteer’ is defined as a physical person who is over 15 years of age (in the Czech Republic) or over 18 years old (in the case of service performed abroad) ‘who has freely decided to render volunteer services on the basis of his/her skills, knowledge and qualities’.²³³ There is no distinction between a part-time activity and a full time activity. Both terms are used for both forms of voluntary activity. Most programmes run in the Czech Republic are part-time programmes that individuals combine with studies or work. In case of unemployed people, volunteering can take up to 80% of work time. Some actors use the term ‘voluntary service’ to specifically define voluntary work abroad for a defined period of their time. This type of volunteerism emerged only after 1989 with the arrival of many volunteers mostly from the U.S.A. (UN Volunteers) and Western European countries.

Czech act on Volunteer Services

The Czech act on volunteer services and the European Voluntary Service (Action 2 of the EU Youth programme - see section V.1. are the two main frameworks for voluntary service.

Act on Volunteer Services

The act was inspired by the government, some Members of Parliament and some NGOs that had involved volunteers without a legal basis. The objective was to overcome problems of the lack of status, to clarify organisations responsibilities and to protect the volunteers. The act recognises three main areas for the development of voluntary service: in activities against social exclusion, support against natural and humanitarian catastrophes as well as at international level in activities for development aid. The law initiative was set up in the context of the international volunteer year of the United Nations in 2001.

The Czech Act on Volunteer Services (zákon o dobrovolnické službě) is unique among the countries of Central and Eastern Europe. The Act on Volunteer Services became effective on 1st January 2003²³⁴. It introduced new terms (volunteer, voluntary services, sending organizations, receiving organizations) which had no historical roots into the Czech legal system. The aim of this act is to precisely define the basic needs of voluntary services. The law does not regulate the entire volunteer service in the Czech Republic and it is not conceived as framework law for volunteerism. It defines some of the forms of voluntary activities and the specific conditions for state support in the case of the accreditation of organisations. Other forms of voluntary activity may take place outside the law.

- Definition of “Volunteer”, “Sending” and “Hosting Organisation”

The Act on Volunteer Services defines the volunteer dispatched by an accredited sending organization as “having a legal and social position”. Besides the minimum age, three other restrictions exist: a volunteer cannot be member of the sending organisation and cannot have any legal relation to

²³³ Article 3, section (1).

²³⁴ Act No 198 on volunteer services amending certain regulations (volunteer services act) (April 24, 2002). Retrieved January 22, 2004, from <http://www.volunteer.cz/clanky/zakon.doc>.

it, even if he/she performs a service for another hosting organisation. A volunteer service cannot be performed by military conscripts or persons doing an alternative military service.

A 'delegating' (sending) organisation is defined as "a legal entity located in the Czech Republic, which selects, registers and prepares volunteers for rendering volunteer services"²³⁵. Accredited sending organisations have to conclude contracts with the volunteers. A receiving (hosting) organisation is a "person for the benefit of whom the volunteer service is to be performed, capable of concluding a volunteer service contract with the sending organisation and shall be capable to meet its obligations under such contract".²³⁶

- Responsibilities of Organisations

The law requires written contracts between the volunteers and the sending organisations. Specific requirements are compulsory for long-term service or short-term service abroad: nature, location and duration of service, an appropriate preparatory training provided by the sending organisation with information on health risks, specification of food and accommodation conditions for the volunteer, agreement to reimburse costs advanced by the volunteer connected to preparation, international and local transport costs, payment of pocket money, working tools and personal protection tools, specification of conditions to leave prematurely the service including penalty fees for volunteers.

The accredited sending organization must contract insurance policies for the volunteers covering liability for damage to property and health caused by the volunteer or suffered during the volunteer service. The volunteers are only responsible for deliberately caused damage. Contracts may stipulate provisions for pension insurance of the volunteer paid by the sending organisations at the minimal basis, if the service exceeds 20 hours per week. Volunteers are obliged to present a recent police and medical certificate, as well as a clean criminal record.

Voluntary service is performed in accordance with civil, health, social insurance and tax regulations, and in specific cases, in compliance with regulations governing employment contracts. The act necessitated changes to legislation on employment, income tax, inheritance tax, gift tax, property sales, public health insurance and pension insurance.

- Government Support

The government contributes to health insurance for accredited organisations, if the volunteer provides service at least 20 hours a week and for more than 3 months in the Czech Republic. In the case of volunteer service abroad, an accredited sending organisation will pay contributions for the volunteer and the Ministry of Interior will provide a subsidy to cover the insurance as well as support to pension contributions²³⁷. A volunteer performing service is exempt from income tax for the period in which the service was performed. This tax exemption is not applicable to the accredited sending organization and the receiving organization²³⁸. In specific cases (some foreign foundations, grants from the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs as of 2004, etc.), volunteer services at accredited organizations expressed in financial terms can be reported as an organization's financial contribution to a project and be exempt of tax.

The budget of the State for the voluntary services field was 15 million CZK in 2003 and the same amount exists for 2004²³⁹. Support by the Ministry of Interior is available for accredited sending non-governmental non-profit organisations. The budget can be used for covering insurance needed by the

²³⁵ Article 5, section (1).

²³⁶ Article 5, section (2).

²³⁷ Some organisations stated that in practice a lot depends on the budget available to cover all requests of accredited organisations.

²³⁸ National Volunteer Centre Hestia (2003). Voluntary activities in the Czech Republic – review for the European Commission (p.8). Czech Non profit organisations are in general treated as companies. They have to pay taxes on any income received.

²³⁹ National Volunteer Centre Hestia (2003). Voluntary activities in the Czech Republic – review for the European Commission (p. 4).

Act (covering liability for damage to property and health caused by the volunteer or suffered during the volunteer service, health insurance for volunteering abroad, pension insurance). Then the budget can be used for covering evidence, learning and assortment of volunteers and for providing volunteer service.

- Local or regional grants

Other types of volunteer activities rely on grants from local and regional governments. The Czech answer to the EU questionnaire indicates that subsidies to non-governmental non-profit organisations account for about 2% of their annual budget, although amounts may vary substantially. Other ministries support NGO activities for young people connected to their specific area (Education, Youth and Sports, Labour and Social Affairs; Ministry of the Environment; Ministry of Health, etc).

- Voluntary Service in non-accredited organisations

In all other cases when volunteer work is performed outside accredited organisations or in the frame of EVS, it depends on the organisation and the volunteer to set up an agreement with all the potential risks that this entails²⁴⁰. In addition, volunteers receiving subsistence support may be considered as “employees” and their allowances may be subject to taxation. Host organisations may be regarded as employers, and therefore be bound to pay social insurance contributions on the value of pocket-money, board and lodging given to the volunteers. Czech volunteers may lose their social welfare benefits if they volunteer in establishments other than accredited organisations (e.g. child allowance, orphan’s pension- at home as well as going abroad). In the case of volunteering abroad, they must continue paying their contribution on a voluntary basis in order to retain their entitlements to pension insurance. Unemployment benefits are suspended for the period spent abroad, if the volunteers inform their local employment centre in advance. Upon their return, they will continue to receive unemployment benefits. An additional problem exists for non-accredited organisations, which host volunteers, as there is no legal category that covers ‘volunteers’. Therefore, they cannot receive residence permits or be exempt from obtaining work permits.

- Accreditation

The act applies only to accredited organisations. The Ministry of Interior accredits an organisation for a three-year period based on the recommendation of the Accreditation Committee for Voluntary Service, an advisory body. The accreditation process is governed by the Administrative Procedure Act.

Impact of the law for organisations and volunteers

The law has been in existence for a year and a half now, and it is far too early to be able to evaluate the depth of its impact on organisations and volunteers. Only the initial experiences with the accreditations and the points of view of the actors who have been interviewed can be reported upon. The first applications for accreditation were submitted in the summer of 2003. Fifty-one projects coming from 34 organisations were accredited till 10th August 2004²⁴¹. The majority of the recognised project activities are in the field of social services: inclusion of disadvantaged youth, hospitals and centres for disabled persons, integration of ethnic minorities. The social services organisation of the Lutheran Church in Silesia²⁴² is

²⁴⁰ AVSO & CEV (2003). Legal position of volunteers in the Czech Republic (p.7). Retrieved April 20, 2004 from <http://www.avso.org/>.

²⁴¹ The list on accredited organisations is available on the website of the Ministry of Interior: http://www/mcv.cz/Akreditované_dobrovolnické_organizace.htm.

²⁴² Sleská Diakonie.

accredited with 6 programmes in this area. While one project targets unemployed people, several others involve this group in voluntary activities. Most projects request from volunteers a commitment longer than three months. Six projects of four organisations focus on international voluntary service.

So far, the law has not enjoyed strong media interest²⁴³. Many organisations are still assessing the benefits and disadvantages of the new legislation. The law demands 'professional' management capacities of the organisations. Main advantage for organisations is the financial support for the sector; other positive effects are increased public recognition and trust in NGOs on part of the state. Disadvantages have been identified in bureaucratic procedures and the request of the ministry to detail expenditure and income for the next three years. Until now, organisations with high professional standards and secure income have been accredited; while it seems to be more difficult for the newly established organisations. Another problem is the higher insurance fee per volunteer to be paid by organisations waiting for specific packages of insurance companies connected to the requirements of the law. One actor pointed out the limitation of the law in excluding NGOs that involve their own members as volunteers. The law is therefore questioned as a tool for developing civil society in general, as only a certain type of professional exchange of volunteers is recognised. The critique approves the requirements as appropriate for international voluntary service programmes, but those cannot stimulate volunteering at a local level.

From the actors who have been interviewed, the national volunteer centre Hestia had been registered for 2 projects at the moment when it was contacted²⁴⁴. Another, INEX SDA, has been registered for 3 projects. Two others, Servitus and Tandem, needed more information before they could take a decision. Hestia announced that it would evaluate the experience of the new law through a national survey of the accredited organisations in 2005, in order to be able to make recommendations for eventual improvements to the law.

4. National policy changes affecting voluntary service

Alternative military service

Currently Czech males aged between 19-28 years are obliged to complete a 12 month military service based on the Law for Military Service of 14th March 1990. Generally, the service is performed after the school or university studies. Students may shorten their military service to 6 months, if they take part in military preparations during their studies.

If young men refuse to go to the army, they can carry out an 18 month alternative military service. The legal base for this service is laid down in the Law on Military Service of 14th March 1990 and the Law on Civilian Service of 1992 (amended in 1993)²⁴⁵. The responsible administration is a military commission in the Ministry of Defence and for alternative military service the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs. Recognised reasons for rejection of military service are religious motifs and family (economic) reasons.

Before 1989, only a few men rejected military service. A strong movement of conscientious objectors emerged after the political changes. In 1991, already 38000 young men were refused to do their military service²⁴⁶. Consequentially in the autumn of 1993, the government passed a law, limiting alternative military service. Alternative military service is common in the country in spite of its unattractive conditions and low qualified tasks. Approximately 48500 men performed civilian service in 2002/3 according to the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs. Conscientious objectors are placed mostly in public institutions like hospitals, but they also carry out tasks for the local authorities, or the

²⁴³ Kuthonova, L. (2004). Das tschechische Gesetz über den Freiwilligendienst: erste Auswirkungen, Maecenta Aktuell Nr. 45, Maecenta Institut (p. 69).

²⁴⁴ All organisations were contacted in February 2004.

²⁴⁵ Dr. Tannert, Ch. (1998). Das Menschenrecht Kriegsdienstverweigerung und das Europäische Parlament. Fraktion der Sozialistischen Partei Europas: Berlin (pp. 28-29).

²⁴⁶ Dr. Tannert, Ch. (1998). Das Menschenrecht Kriegsdienstverweigerung und das Europäische Parlament. Fraktion der Sozialistischen Partei Europas: Berlin (pp. 28-29).

administrations like e.g. street cleaning. They receive approximately one third of the country's minimum salary.

The Czech army is under transformation in a move towards a professional army. The end of military service and of alternative military service is 31st December 2004. All the interviewed actors thought that the end of alternative military service would oblige the public institutions to look for alternatives. All stated that organisations would need to change their attitude (change of working tasks and conditions) in order to have a chance to attract potential volunteers. The end of alternative military service may strongly influence the development of full-time voluntary service in the country in the coming years.

National youth policy

The percentage of the unemployed young people in the Czech Republic had dramatically increased in the second half of the 1990s with 22% in September 1999. However, the situation improved in January 2003 registering 16,1% of unemployment rate for the young under 25 years of age. The major focus on youth is still linked to problems to find a job after graduation as condition for full participation in society. Youth affairs fall under the responsibility of the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport, in cooperation with other ministries regarding legislation for young people in the fields of health, socio-economy as well as leisure activities.

An administrative reform was undertaken in 2000 for the purpose of creating new local government structures for the 14 administrative units. The division of tasks between the central and local governments regarding decentralisation still needs to be finalised. No legislative framework related to a national youth policy has been adopted so far due to the complete restructuring of the Czech legislative system. A Law on Youth has been drafted and the approval is foreseen for 2005. The current basis for action is the "Governmental Policy Concept on Children and Youth through to 2007", adopted by the Czech government on April 7, 2003 with resolution No. 343. The Concept refers to the European Commission's White Book on Youth of November 2001 and adapts them to the Czech context. The implementation of the concept depends on the adoption of legislation at regional level, defining the competencies of the regional authorities in youth-related matters.

Youth policy and voluntary service

The Ministry aims to introduce over the period of 2004 and 2006 a new system of support for non-profit organizations working with young people. The program shall consist of support for core activities and for developing innovative areas of youth activities. Volunteering is mentioned as example for activities to develop²⁴⁷.

The law on volunteer service is perceived as an important government initiative. The two most significant objectives for the ministry regarding voluntary service are to support the development of the activities of the non-governmental and non-profit organisations and to allow young people to serve the community with the advantage of acquiring working experience. The gain of professional skills shall facilitate their integration in the labour market (page 15). A future step may be the integration of the young disadvantaged people as a target group for volunteering in the draft law on youth²⁴⁸.

According to one of the interviewed actors, a common vision on young people does not exist among the different ministries (Youth, Social Affairs, and Environment) as the ministries were transformed differently after the socialist era and have varying political interests regarding youth.

²⁴⁷ Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports (2003). Governmental Policy Concept on Children and Youth through to 2007 (p.39).

²⁴⁸ Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports (2003). Governmental Policy Concept on Children and Youth through to 2007 (p.40).

The EU Youth programmes have played an important role in the development of new youth organisations and infrastructure since the 90's. Since 1997, the two German-Czech youth coordination offices of "Tandem" in Regensburg and Plsen have given additional support for youth activities on a smaller scale in order to develop school and youth exchanges.

The governmental strategy on youth recognises the existence of obstacles to transnational mobility of young Czech²⁴⁹. Young people have difficulties in obtaining visas if they want to go abroad as volunteers. The government intends to evaluate the mobility programmes. In the future, the main emphasis will be placed on eliminating the obstacles that prevent young people from participating in these programs. An information system will be established for youth covering the working and study conditions in EU countries²⁵⁰.

Voluntary service programmes at national level

The Crime Prevention Department of the Ministry of Interior carries the overall responsibility for the implementation of the national and international programmes in the frame of the Voluntary Service Act without organising its own volunteers programmes. The three areas of voluntary service programmes - "social inclusion", "environment" and "development aid" as defined in the Czech law - are under the responsibility of the respective ministries.

No official statistics are available on the number of young volunteers in the country, as the Czech Ministry of Interior does not register the age of the volunteers. Programmes at national level are run mainly in the social field tackling social exclusion but also in the area of environment and cultural heritage. These part-time programmes often work for a long-term period with the disabled, the senior citizens, members of ethnic minorities²⁵¹ and unemployed people. Young Czechs are mostly part-time volunteers, volunteering being parallel to their school or university studies. But the possibility exists for volunteering for up to 20 hours/week or 80% of the time for a certain period.

According to Hestia, three programmes successfully involve young Czech as volunteers for long duration periods:

1. "One-to-one" projects (peer programs) - one volunteer is in regular contact with one client supporting him/her individually (integration in school, local neighbourhood, health care etc). The Pět P (Five P- the Czech name of the American Big Brothers Big Sisters programmes) operates in 14 regions of the Czech Republic with hundreds of children and volunteers (80% of volunteers are aged 18-25 years) since 1995. The programme requires long-term engagement and an investment from the volunteers regarding additional training and supervision. According to Hestia, most of the volunteers are students in the field of social sciences, gaining practical experience and qualification with professional training and supervision. The impact of the involvement is strong. According to Hestia, 60 % of the volunteers in the programme find a job afterwards, while others change their professional interests towards the area of education, training, and qualifications.

2. "Volunteers in Hospitals" was set up by Hestia in 2000. Young people represent approximately half of all the volunteers supporting elderly and ill people in homes, hospitals and hospices.

²⁴⁹ Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports (2003). Governmental Policy Concept on Children and Youth through to 2007 (p.31).

²⁵⁰ Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports (2003). Governmental Policy Concept on Children and Youth through to 2007 (p.40).

²⁵¹ A specific group confronted with social exclusion are the Roma. Non-governmental organisations working for the Roma community did not exist before 1989. A lot of activities have been set up in the last few years. A major change can be witnessed in the intensity of Roma's involvement themselves in these organisations. In 2000, the Ministry of Interior registered 296 organisations run by Romas.

3. “Volunteer services for unemployed people”. This programme is described in the next section in more detail as the only programme at national level that involves young people as volunteers for up to 80% of their time.

Voluntary service for unemployed people

The Volunteering of Unemployed People programme was set up by Hestia - the National Volunteer Centre, in co-operation with its regional partners. It is based on Dutch experience and involves young unemployed people for 4 days/week in an NGO who continue to receive unemployment benefits for up to 6 months. One day per week, the young people are trained. The programme allows for gaining of practical and professional experience while supporting NGOs at the same time. The focus of the programme is less on the development of civil society than to find a job in the labour market. It was established with support of the Open Society Fund and the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs. After its first year of existence, the programme was extended for participation to all young unemployed people (like women on maternity leave):

Year	Number of regions	Number of unemployed	Hours served	Number of organizations*	Number of people who gained employment**
2000	5	53	2,504.5	20	20
2001	7	110	6,451	37	22

* Organizations, where unemployed people worked as volunteers.

** Unemployed people participating in the programme who found employment by 31 December 2001.

Source: Hestia

The International Volunteers Year in 2001 was helpful to promote the ideas of voluntary services at a general level and to increase the number of participants. Several Employment Centres also started to cooperate with the programme in its second year. The objectives of the programme are to maintain the social and working habits of unemployed people; to help them to gain new knowledge, skills and experience in order to find a job afterwards, to prevent gradual social exclusion and assist their re-integration into active life.

According to the interviewed actors, no other programme at national level involves young people as full-time volunteers except the “voluntariat” programme of the Roman Catholic Church based on experience from abroad. Young people with strong religious motivation give one year to the church and share the work and life of the priest in a parish. The Roman Catholic Church is involved in other national volunteer programmes in the social field via the Czech Caritas. The programme ‘Volunteering in Hospitals’ is run in Catholic homes for the elderly, hospices and hospitals.

5. International voluntary service

As mentioned above, international voluntary service programmes for young people did not exist before 1989. Initially, Czech organisations cooperated with UN volunteers in supporting the political and social transformation of the country. In parallel, NGOs from other EU countries searched for placements for foreign volunteers. At later stage, Czech organisations set up exchange programmes in order to respond to the demands of young Czechs to go abroad. These organisations have developed short-term voluntary service opportunities for young people participating in international "work camps" in the country as well as abroad, and several long-term programmes in humanitarian or environmental organizations. These places are mostly occupied by students in the framework of their studies.

The most common programme for international voluntary service is Action 2 of the EU YOUTH programme: EVS. The Czech Republic has been hosting and send volunteers within the EVS framework

since 2000. The Czech National Youth Agency, Ceska narodni agentura "Mladez" (CNA), was set up in 2000 in order to promote and implement the EU Youth Programme in the country.

European Voluntary Service

The European Voluntary Service with its system of approved sending and hosting organisation projects similar to the Czech law, has strongly influenced the design of the act. However, EVS is beyond the scope of the act because of differing requirements: age limits to 18-25 years, other conditions for insurance, social security contributions, a different accreditation agency (National Agency instead of the ministry), and obligatory participation in several trainings. As the European Voluntary Service is recognised as an educational activity aimed at professional training, the pocket money is tax exempt. The amount does not exceed the minimum subsistence level in the Czech Republic. Applications submitted by the sending and hosting organizations for EVS project subsidies are also tax exempt.

Social security and EVS

Social security contributions are not mandatory. If the government is the payer as in the case of Czech students extending their study programme for two years, the payments continue and nothing changes for the volunteer. If the government is not covering this, the volunteer may make the minimum contribution while abroad. Another option is not to pay social insurance contributions, as a result of which the period of time in question will not be taken into consideration when the volunteer makes a pension claim in the future.

Impact of European Voluntary Service

While the EVS programme started on a small scale in 2000 with 8 volunteers, the programme grew in the following two years in sending and hosting volunteers. The programme is not balanced, it sends many more volunteers than the ones that it hosts. The strong majority in both directions are women.

	2000 Czech / Foreigners		2001 Czech / Foreigners		2002 Czech / Foreigners		2003 Czech / Foreigners	
Total	5	3	37	20	46	28	60	29
Male/female	3/2	0/3	16/23	6/14	10/36	9/19	11/49	11/19
Not approved	1		7	8	16	12	27	8

Source: Czech National Agency

While the first volunteers in 2000 came from France and Germany, the first Czech went to Germany and Ireland.

In 2001 and 2002, most Czech volunteers went to Germany²⁵², and then to France²⁵³ and the UK²⁵⁴. Most volunteers from abroad are from Germany²⁵⁵ and France²⁵⁶.

Volunteer projects exist in a variety of fields: environmental protection, art and cultural heritage, various social fields, working with and providing information to young people, leisure time and sports. The recent

²⁵² 11 in 2001, 12 in 2002, Czech NA October 2003.

²⁵³ In both years seven volunteers each, Czech NA October 2003.

²⁵⁴ Six volunteers in 2001, 7 in 2002, Czech NA October 2003.

²⁵⁵ Four volunteers in 2001, 12 in 2002, Czech NA October 2003.

²⁵⁶ Four volunteers in 2001 and five in 2002, Czech NA October 2003.

creation of an association of former EVS volunteers is supported by the NA with the aim of spreading information about the programme among young people. The government budget for EVS increased considerably from 697,837 CZK in 2000 to 5,559,744 CZK in 2003. This increase corresponds to the increase of EU funds earmarked for EVS.

- Impact for organisations

EVS influenced practices in the hosting and sending organisations. Most host organisation projects were enriched with new ideas and work methods. The presence of the foreign volunteers in a local community increased people's interest and knowledge about the EU. Another important aspect was the setting up of exchanges between organisations that are in touch with volunteers. Czech host organizations perceived positively the interests of foreign volunteers in the Czech language and culture. Many more volunteers than expected began to study Czech. Some sending organisations benefited from new international experience of volunteers who had returned.

- Impact for volunteers

According to the NA, EVS generally motivates young people to stay involved in an organisation with a lot of new ideas and enthusiasm. Being useful was a strong experience for volunteers. Acquired qualities for the labour market are language skills, increased self confidence and general knowledge. Other important aspects are knowledge of foreign culture and the breakdown of culture stereotypes. The first few projects of Future Capital²⁵⁷ were launched in the Czech Republic by former EVS volunteers after a relatively short period of time.

- Problems

According to the NA Youth, the Youth Ministry and Hestia, several problems exist for EVS volunteers connected to the lack of legal status, especially for foreign volunteers hosted in the Czech Republic. The difficulties are related to work and residence permits if the organisations are not accredited according to the new law. Long-term permits for foreigners are linked to them having an employee status. Obtaining a visa is connected to similar problems. If the organisations are not accredited, volunteers risk losing their insurance, their social security payments or unemployment benefits when going abroad.

Another obstacle for the development of the programme is the lack of hosting placements. The main problems centre around language, because staff in NGOs does not speak foreign languages and accommodation or other infrastructure for international volunteers is not readily available. Another problematic aspect is the out-of-date database through which the match between the volunteer and the host organisation abroad is made (in terms of project availability and realistic project presentations).

Significant limitations exist at the level of funding. The budget of EVS in a relatively small country is limited and does not fund the structural costs necessary to maintain the project activities. EVS requires a lot of time and administrative skills that organisations cannot afford. Organisations are also reluctant to stay involved in the programme which continuously confronts them with changed programme rules.

²⁵⁷ Future Capital is part of Action 3 of the YOUTH programme. It provides a funding possibility aiming at assisting and supporting ex-EVS volunteers in using and enhancing the value of the experience acquired during their voluntary service.

Priorities for further development

The NA aims to increase the number of hosting projects as well as the projects for short-term EVS in both strands of the programme (sending/ hosting). Further quality and quantity increase is expected for EVS projects in the next 1-3 years. In the longer term development, the NA hopes to improve the regional balance of EVS projects and to increase the quantity and quality of voluntary projects in general. An important development is the full participation in the EU programme from 2004 on with the possibility of developing new partnerships with other countries of Central and Eastern Europe, as well as with other parts of the world. The new generation of programmes should allow older applicants of up to 28 years of age to go abroad as EVS volunteer.

Regarding the future development of EVS, the Czech ministry is currently focusing on the programme's component for non-formal education of young people, which does not exclude cooperation with humanitarian organisations like the Red Cross. Cooperation with AmeriCorps and Peacecorps is more perceived as a follow up experience for some ex-volunteers. EVS and the humanitarian aid corps can be linked but the original goals and methods of the "Youth" programme need to be ensured. Some humanitarian projects should be developed. Sending organizations involved in humanitarian aid should be certified. They should prepare the volunteers more carefully and develop projects in close cooperation with the national agencies. The participation in these projects is perceived as more suitable for older candidates.

EVS in the Czech Republic, the experience of the National Volunteer Centre Hestia ²⁵⁸

At international level, the National Volunteer Centre Hestia is only working with EVS. The main activities of the centre are research, training and educational programmes. It acts as an umbrella organisation to the regional volunteer centres and promotes national and international volunteering programmes in the website in Czech and English languages. In addition, Hestia implements a lot of programmes at national level in the social field, as well as culture and youth. Hestia has well developed international contacts (CEV, Volunteurope), allowing for exchanges of voluntary activity experiences in other political contexts.

The organisation started to work as a sending organisation in 2001. It also gives advice to hosting projects on an occasional basis. Hestia is a recognised provider of pre-departure trainings for the NAs for outgoing volunteers. Together with some other organisations (e.g. INEX SDA, YMCA) it has set up a special group called "coalition of EVS sending & hosting organisations". The aim of this 'platform' is to create standards of service in the Czech Republic and to develop exchanges between hosting and sending organisations. Not all organisations involved in EVS are members of the group due to lack of capacities and a feeling of competition.

Hestia expressed the importance of EVS for the hosting organisations since the volunteer is available full-time. The financial support is also considerable. Young people are very interested in the programme since few possibilities exist to go abroad except in the frame of specific student exchanges. Most volunteers return after the service lacking opportunities to extend their stay abroad. They experience restricted freedom of movement to other EU countries²⁵⁹.

Hestia mentions the administrative difficulties of the programme linked to the delayed approval of projects and combined with a lot of insecurity for the young people and the organisations. Moreover, a lot of people over 25 years of age would be interested to participate in the programme. Hestia experienced

²⁵⁸ Phone interview with Voitech Tutr, EVS coordinator in Hestia on February 3, 2004.

²⁵⁹ Even with the enlargement at 1st May 2004, the freedom of movement will still be restricted. Conditions have been agreed upon bilateral agreements of the new members with each EU Member State in order to organise up to 7 years 'transition periods' and avoid a high number of economic immigrants.

difficulties in integrating young people from socially disadvantaged backgrounds in EVS. These young people are less active but they do have capacities to manage problems in the hosting project.

Hestia identified several obstacles for the further development of voluntary service programmes: the concept of voluntary service still needs to be explained and young people prioritise employment opportunities, if available. Organisations need new funding sources in order to develop volunteer programmes. Hestia expects a public campaign from the government in order to reach a higher number of interested people and organisations needed for the further development of volunteer programmes.

International youth voluntary service programmes

The Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports has elaborated a list of non-profit organisations that provide international voluntary service programmes. While some organisations are present in all regions (Hestia, YMCA and the Roman Catholic Church), two others are based in East Bohemia (INEX SDA, Villa Nova Uhrinov) and a third one in Moravia-Brno (Nadace Partnerstvi). Associations, foundations, church-based organisations and international networks also provide programmes. For the purposes of the research, three NGOs were chosen to illustrate their experiences from involvement in different programmes of international voluntary services. All of them work with EVS, but not exclusively as Hestia does.

Programme experiences of interviewed actors

The experiences described below are not representative due to the lack of time for developing a more in-depth survey. The idea was to present a variety of profiles, partnerships and orientations: INEX SDA, Tandem, and Servitus.

▪ **INEX SDA**

INEX SDA represents the organisation with the largest number of international voluntary service activities for young people in the Czech Republic - mainly through short-term work camps in the Broumov region. (Renovation of historical buildings in the region, integration of disadvantaged youth mixing 'classical' volunteers with volunteers with special needs). INEX SDA organised 43 international voluntary projects in 2003. They sent around 800 young Czechs abroad in 2002 and received 400 volunteers from other countries.

- Programme experiences

INEX SDA works with the EVS programme since 2001 as a sending and hosting organisation. It works with Hestia and other organisations within the "coalition of EVS sending and hosting organisations". It sends and hosts volunteers from socially disadvantaged backgrounds through its participation in a centralised EVS short term project²⁶⁰. These young people receive specific attention provided by specially trained supervisors. Their registration forms contain more details in order to allow the receiving organization to gain maximum information on the volunteer concerned. The programme has higher demands on the mutual communication between the hosting and the delegating organisation. Since 2001, they have sent 23 long term and 5 short term volunteers within the framework of EVS; 7 volunteers have been hosted since 2001. Outside the EVS programme they have hosted 5 other mid-term and long-term volunteers in 2002/3. At the moment of the interview, INEX SDA had applied to send 2 short-term volunteers and 7 long-term volunteers within the EVS programme in 2004²⁶¹.

²⁶⁰ organised by the Alliance, YAP and SCI.

²⁶¹ Following information from Jitka Martisova (EVS/LTV and MTV coordinator) by phone on February 11, 2004 and Pter Kulisek (chairman) from INEX SDA by phone on February 12, 2004.

INEX SDA started off with mid-term and long term voluntary service in response to young people demands wishing to go abroad as well as to the request of some partners for long-term placements (SCI, Kurve Wustrow etc). Volunteers are being hosted in offices as well as in projects active in the social field. INEX SDA mentioned the problem of finding hosting organisations with knowledge on how to apply for and how to host volunteers.

- Motivation for volunteering

Young people's main motivation for volunteering is to acquire experience immediately and learn other languages, especially English. Young people apply either interrupting their studies or after having just completed them. Some link their motivation to individual professional development, but others are seeking for something different. The organisation questions the philosophy of EVS as too narrow. Young people perceive it as a different kind of internship because they receive money in exchange. Their motivation is different from that of people whose aim is to contribute to the development of civil society. Preferable countries are UK, Germany, Spain and Italy. With regard to job applications, Czech volunteers highlight in their CV the "international" experience of the programme. The EVS certificates are not recognised and arrive 1-2 years after the service.

- Impact of the law

INEX SDA has been accredited for 3 projects according to the law and prepares accreditation for another 2 ones. The law is perceived as a useful means for some organisations to obtain financial support with regard to insurance and preparation costs, as well to set up standard for international voluntary service programmes. It sees value for the organisations that send people in the frame of development aid as these organisations are not supported by EVS. It questions the restrictive focus of the law for programmes in the Czech Republic recognising only certain forms of voluntary service, while excluding organisations based on the volunteer activities of their members.²⁶² The law is in favour of a certain type of professional NGOs with capacities for preparation and training. Occasional volunteering has no recognition in this framework. INEX SDA doubts that the law will stimulate voluntary service at local level. INEX SDA estimated that organisations used to working with conscientious objectors will apply for accreditation according to the law. These organisations need to develop more attractive conditions as well as management capacities in order to be able to successfully recruit volunteers.

▪ **Servitus**²⁶³

Servitus was founded as a NGO by appointed representatives of Protestant Churches, Caritas and Jewish communities with the support of the Ecumenical Diaconical Year Network (EDYN) and the German NGO Aktion Sühnezeichen Friedensdienste (ASF) in May 2003. Both organisations wished to have a Czech partner for the coordination of their volunteer placements as well as to send Czech volunteers to Germany and other countries. Current costs are covered by the Protestant Churches of Hessen Nassau and Baden (two German regions), renovabis, the Diaconical Organisation of the German Protestant Churches and the German-Czech Future Fund.

Servitus hosted 9 volunteers from Germany in 2003 and tried to send a Czech volunteer to Germany. They work with placements in organisations in the social field related to both churches or to the Jewish community – mainly with elderly people and survivors of the holocaust. The organisation aims to develop their activities relative to funding. Servitus promotes several programmes for Czech youth wishing to work as volunteers in Germany: three programmes in the social field (Diaconical Year, the voluntary social year, the protestant youth voluntary service) and projects in memorial sites of ASF in Germany. Servitus mentioned the lack of funding of hosting projects to cover the costs for the volunteers. Some projects may offer e.g. accommodation and food in a home for the elderly, but items like pocket money

²⁶² INEX SDA saw the reason in the intention of the government to avoid abuse of people pretending to volunteer with the aim to receive insurance and pension ship payments from the state.

²⁶³ Information from Jan Sibrt, coordinator from Servitus by phone on February 5, 2004.

or insurance can not be covered. Other problems are posed by the differences between the expectation of the volunteers and the organisations. The latter were used to working with conscientious objectors who executed the required tasks. Experience with voluntary service is new. The major objective of the hosting organisations is to prepare themselves for the ending of civilian service in December 2004. Some of the organisations recognise the stronger benefit from working with the different motivation of volunteers. Servitus hopes that ex-volunteers will stay involved in order to develop the programme in Czech Republic.

The coordinator described as problematic the relationship between the state and the church-related organisations. The state questions the need for support because of the churches own funds. Servitus is not yet registered under the new Czech law. The organisation highlighted the need to increase the state contribution for insurance. It relies on other programmes like the Robert Bosch Foundation and EVS, as each programme supported 2 volunteers last year. It criticises the narrow focus of EVS with its preference for youth organisation and less support for the social field. The NA rejected applications in the past due to limited funding and the background of the organisations.

▪ **Tandem**²⁶⁴

Similar to the experiences in France and Poland, the German-Czech youth office “Tandem” with offices in Regensburg (Germany) and Plsen (Czech Republic) aims to develop bilateral and trilateral school and youth exchanges. The organisation promotes voluntary service bilaterally as possibility to discover the other culture of the partner country. It organised seminars on aspects related to voluntary service in both countries in the last few years. Each office hosts one volunteer from the other country for 12 months. Two EVS volunteers from Germany have been hosted so far in Plsen since 2002. Tandem receives around 100 requests per year from young people who wishes to go to Germany as volunteers. While the Czech office in Plsen is recognised as EVS host organisation, the office in Germany was rejected by the German NA. An exchange of young people can take place thanks to the accreditation of the German Youth Ministry in the framework of the Voluntary Social Year.

- Impact

Both offices developed their information and dissemination activities with the volunteers’ support. The volunteers in both offices are contact persons for other young people and inform them about transnational programmes. They have also set up the bilingual internet portal for young people “ahoi”. Future projects are to develop virtual chat-rooms for ex-volunteers who transfer their experience to the new candidates. They will also maintain closer contacts with schools in order to inform more young people about exchange programmes.

Seventeen young Czechs were volunteers in the framework of the Volunteer Social Year to Germany with the support of Tandem. Most of them were students who had either finished their studies or had taken a one year break. According to Tandem, the law is not yet well known by the Czech organisations. But the ending of the alternative military service will accelerate the implementation of the law because of the organisations new needs.

Tandem experienced difficulties with the police for the residence permit of an EVS volunteer because the project has not accredited according to the Czech law. Tandem wishes to become accredited in the future.

Conclusion

The EVS programme has had a considerable impact on the design of the Czech Act on Volunteer Services with a tripartite partnership between the sending and the hosting organisation and the volunteer, and the criteria for accreditation. In spite of this, the EVS was not integrated in the law. The act foresees a central place for voluntary service in the field of social inclusion. It is mentioned as an important

²⁶⁴ information from Jan Lotschar, responsible for voluntary service in Tandem Plsen, by phone on February 4, 2004.

government initiative in the JIM (Joint Memoranda on Social Inclusion) and as a tool for mobilising all the actors in society.

6. Perspectives

In spite of the achieved progress, society's recognition of volunteers and volunteer service is still problematic. While some individuals stress the need for volunteer activities, others argue that such services should be carried out by the government. Awareness is still lacking of volunteer work and its impact on the development of a stable civic society. Some actors observed slowly increasing motivation to join NGOs. Within the NGOs, the benefits of voluntary service are also unknown, but the understanding of voluntary service has progressed. Volunteer work is better accepted by some NGOs as a non-monetary performance, yet one that is assessable in terms of money. This may open discussions over the added value of volunteerism. On the government's side, volunteer service is increasingly recognized and used by government institutions (ministries, labour offices, communities, allowance organizations) thanks to the application of the legislation (authorities have the status of a receiving organization).

It is still too early to say, what impact the new law will have on the future development of voluntary service in the Czech Republic. Most projects are accredited in the social sector within the frame of the two national programmes "Volunteer in Hospitals" and "Five P" (Big Brother, Big Sister). Organisations are motivated to become accredited if they can engage a certain number of volunteers (between 20 and over 200). That would make it worthwhile to go through the procedures and to advance the higher costs for volunteers' insurance than before.

All interviewed actors confirmed that the end of alternative military service in December 2004 will have an impact due to the need for organisations to devise alternative solutions. It is not yet clear if the changes will lead to a growth of full-time voluntary service projects in the country, as this form does not exist except for the volunteer programme for the unemployed. This programme as such is not (yet) accredited in the legal framework, but unemployed people are volunteering in accredited programmes in the social field.

The law limits its recognition to several specific forms of voluntary service and favours organisations with professional capacities for the training and supervision of the volunteers. It also requires financial security from the organisations. Smaller organisations at local level that lack training capacities, as well as organisations that have not yet involved volunteers will experience difficulties in getting recognition. NGOs working with volunteers as members also remain unrecognised by the law.

INEX SDA stated positively that the law serves as a tool to raise the awareness of municipalities of NGO activities. Cooperation between the state and the NGOs needs to be improved. According to the Czech Ministry of Interior, the participation of young volunteers is the most effective, but other age groups like the middle aged and the senior citizens, need to be encouraged more.

Perspective of international youth voluntary service

The number of accreditations for international youth voluntary service is increasing. Four organisations for six programmes are currently registered. Two of them are youth organisations, one of them is a catholic organisation and the fourth is accredited as the Czech focal point of UNV volunteers in the framework of development aid. A lot of organisations that deal with international youth voluntary service in the EU work with the EVS programme or exchange volunteers in the context of other networks.

Perspectives at European level

The development of the EVS in the Czech Republic is limited due to the size of its budget. Organisations encountered rejected applications because of budget limitations. In addition, the hosting programme needs more time to develop. Quite a high percentage of applications (28% of the applications in 2001 and 30% in 2002) for hosting were rejected by the selection committee of the Youth Programme in the Czech Republic. One actor questioned the preference of the NA for youth projects, reluctant towards accepting projects in the social field. All interviewed actors have mentioned the highly complicated administrative procedures of the programme and the impossibility to plan with it. One actor recommended investing in the structural networking of organisations thus allowing for programme evaluations between partners (definitions, possibilities and limits of the programme) in the context of different cultural and political realities. The NA wished to involve young people older than 25 years in the programme as well as a higher percentage of young people from socially disadvantaged backgrounds. Another priority will be development of the programme with countries from Central and Eastern Europe. INEX SDA and Servitus questioned the global philosophy of EVS as focusing too much on the personal development of the young volunteer and not enough on the needs of the projects / local communities. The “serving“ dimension of the programme is lacking as young people perceive the programme as a different kind of stage/internship.

Several expectations for action exist at European level with regard to the harmonization of voluntary service legislation across Europe so that volunteers may provide services under similar conditions in all countries. One of the most important aspects is the development of a visa category for “volunteers” making it easier for volunteers to obtain a visa and later a residence permit for performing volunteer service abroad. For the sake of the significant development of international volunteer programmes, the EU is expected to support the cooperation between the EU, non-governmental non-profit organisations, government institutions and local authorities.

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Telephone Interviews with Czech Organisations

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Jan Sibrt, coordinator from Servitus on February 5, 2004.

Jan Lotschar, responsible for voluntary service in Tandem Plsen, on February 4, 2004.

Jitka Martisova (EVS/LTV and MTV coordinator) on February 11, 2004.

Pter Kulisek (chairman) from INEX SDA by phone on February 12, 2004.

Jan Sibrt, coordinator from Servitus on February 5, 2004.

Questionnaire

Questionnaire on voluntary service programmes and policy development in the Czech Republic answered by Nataša Diatková, Ministry of Interior on February 13, 2004.

Questionnaire on voluntary service programmes and policy development in the Czech Republic answered by Diana Grösslová, Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport, Jolana Langrová, Magda Svobodová, Czech National Agency Youth and Voitech Tutr, Hestia on February 19, 2004.

YOUTH CIVIC AND VOLUNTARY SERVICE IN POLAND²⁶⁵

1. Introduction

Voluntary service in Poland must be analysed in the context of the overall development of civil society and the third sector. Section 2 therefore sets the scene, by briefly describing the growth of civil society²⁶⁶ and volunteerism since fall of the communist regime.

Section 2 focuses on the recently approved law on public benefit and voluntary service which gives legal recognition to the third sector and volunteerism. The law focuses not only at national level but it also takes account of international voluntary service (both Poles going abroad or foreign volunteers hosted in Poland).

Nonetheless, national and international voluntary service programmes are developing independently of one another and therefore are dealt with separately in Sections 4 and 5 respectively. In the case of national voluntary service, the study looks at the development of civilian service and youth policy in Poland in order to understand the realities of young people in the current context. Concerning international voluntary service programmes, the study explores the development of the European Voluntary Service (EVS) and other international programmes.

2. Tradition of civil society and policy context

Poland has undergone dramatic political and economic changes over the last 15 years. The government continues to liberalise its trade, foreign exchange and investment policies. Poland has also undertaken widespread administrative and social reforms, including healthcare, social security and the pension system in anticipation of joining the European Union in May 2004.

The years 2001 and 2002 were particularly difficult for Poland, with a rising unemployment rate (19.9% in 2002 or 3.5 million of people aged 15-64; the increase represents 6.7% compared to 2001)²⁶⁷ and a stagnation of economic growth (1% in 2001 and 1.3% in 2002)²⁶⁸. Furthermore Poland is faced with the end of foreign transition aid, which gave substantial support to the economy and to the third sector.

According to Juros et al. (2004), the organisational infrastructure of civil society in Poland is still five times smaller than the average of the EU-15²⁶⁹. As in other Central and Eastern European countries, this situation is the legacy of the communist system which abolished almost all independent organisations that

²⁶⁵ The report analyses the situation in Poland until April 2004.

²⁶⁶ Civil society refers to the arena of uncoerced collective action around shared interests, purposes and values. In theory, its institutional forms are distinct from those of the state, family and market, though in practice, the boundaries between state, civil society, family and market are often complex, blurred and negotiated. Civil society commonly embraces a diversity of spaces, actors and institutional forms, varying in their degree of formality, autonomy and power. Civil societies are often populated by organisations such as registered charities, development non-governmental organisations, community groups, women's organisations, faith-based organisations, professional associations, trades unions, self-help groups, social movements, business associations, coalitions and advocacy group. Retrieved January 10, 2004 from the centre for civil society in the UK http://www.lse.ac.uk/collections/CCS/what_is_civil_society.htm.

²⁶⁷ Joint Memorandum on Social Inclusion of Poland (December, 2003, pp. 6 – 7).

²⁶⁸ Joint Memorandum on Social Inclusion of Poland (December, 2003, p. 5).

²⁶⁹ A. Juros, E. Leś, L. Nalecz, I., Rybka, M. Rymysz, J.J. Wygnański (2004). From Solidarity to Subsidiarity: The Non-profit sector in Poland. In: Zimmer, A., Priller, E. (Ed). *Future of Civil Society, Making Central European Non-profit –Organizations work*. Wiesbaden: Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften (p. 558).

existed before 1948. The Catholic Church was the only institution in Poland to remain independent, running charitable and educational activities.

The first expression of civic engagement began under the communist regime in the mid 70s. For example, the trade union movement 'Solidarność' led the civil resistance to the Communist system in the 80s, and played a major role in the transformation to democratic rule.

More than 23,000 associations and 2900 foundations²⁷⁰ were founded in Poland from 1989-1992 following the associations' law passed in 1989. In the ten years that followed (1992-2002) 26,121 new associations were registered and 2977 new foundations²⁷¹. The period from 1989-1995 was marked by a high level of NGO activity and comparatively informal procedures for operation and for soliciting funds. Most NGOs focused on member interests as a reaction to unmet social needs and limited competition between service providers. They tended to act independently of the public sector or other NGOs.

The period between 1996-8 saw the consolidation of the non-profit sector, with the coming together of different organisations working in the same region or field of activity. Facing increasing financial pressure, several NGOs sought to take over tasks of the public sector in return for payment. The third sector infrastructure and capacities were built up through increased training, consulting, and access to information.

Over the last five years, the number of partnerships both within the sector and between non-profits and the private sector has increased. Today, around 30% of NGOs are less than three years old and 91% were established since 1989²⁷². Almost 60% are involved in sports activities, with education, health and social assistance, and cultures and the arts the next most popular fields of activity (48%, 33% and 27% respectively, with many NGOs being active in several activities)²⁷³.

More than half of all NGOs (55%) do not employ full-time paid personnel and 47% work with volunteers²⁷⁴. There are estimated to be around 1.6 Million volunteers in total, who invest on average 18 hours per month. The majority of volunteers are employed (61%), school pupils (42%) or students (40%)²⁷⁵. The creation of regional volunteer centres in all 15 voivodships of Poland has made an important contribution to the development of volunteerism. These centres promote volunteering on a variety of issues, and for varying lengths of time. The volunteer centre in Warsaw²⁷⁶, initiated in 1993, was the first volunteer centre of its kind to be established in Eastern Europe. It has supported the creation of volunteer centres in 10 other Eastern Europe countries.

The Polish constitution of 1997 established a legal basis for cooperation between the public sector and social organisations, emphasising social dialogue and the principle of subsidiarity. A provision outlines the duty of local governments to cooperate with NGOs. Despite this, cooperation between the third sector (associations and foundations) and the local authorities has until recently depended on the interest of the parties concerned, due to a lack of regulations on procedures to deal with NGOs.

²⁷⁰ Foundations could register from 1984, see Juros et al. (2004, p.566).

²⁷¹ Juros et al. (2004, p.566).

²⁷² Klon/Jawor Association (2002).NGOs in Poland 2002 research results (p.3).

²⁷³ Klon/Jawor Association (2002).NGOs in Poland 2002 research results (p.3).

²⁷⁴ The Klon/Jawor Association survey of 2002 defines volunteers are persons active in organisations without being member.

²⁷⁵ Klon/Jawor Association (2002). NGOs in Poland 2002 research results (p.3).

²⁷⁶ Started out as a pilot project of BORIS in 1993, becoming an independent nonprofit association in 1996. the volunteer centre is funded by foreign foundations and PHARE, see <http://www.wolontariat.org.pl/region.asp?id=1>.

3. Legal framework for volunteering and voluntary service

Changing terminology

NGOs and volunteers have faced several challenges since 1989. Firstly, NGOs suffered from a negative image in the early 90s, when media reported the involvement of several organisations in financial scandals. Today, the public image of NGOs had improved and volunteering activities are regularly presented in the media. Large organisations specialised in agriculture or education have started to involve volunteers in some of their projects, thus mainstreaming the promotion of voluntary activity. Secondly, the volunteer centres and NGOs have worked hard to overcome the negative connotation of “compulsory volunteerism”²⁷⁷ under the communist regime and to introduce a “new” volunteer culture. Nonetheless the state-mandated “volunteerism” of the past continues to taint the image of volunteerism today, particularly among the older generation who remember the experiences of their youth. NGOs as well as the volunteer centres use the term “wolontariat” instead of “praca ochotnicza” to shake off these negative legacies. They promote volunteering as an opportunity for personal development and professional experiences.

The term “volunteer” was firstly used for people who carried out humanitarian aid in third countries after 1989. The term “wolontariat” defines broadly all types of voluntary engagement without remuneration. There is no distinction between “volunteering” (with a focus on part-time activity) and “voluntary service” (full time activity), both terms are used for both forms of voluntary activity.

Law on public benefit and volunteering

The final adoption of the Law on Public Benefit Activity and Volunteerism in April 2003²⁷⁸ followed some six years of discussion and preparation of drafts by NGOs and different governments. The International Year of Volunteers in 2001 served to highlight the need for political recognition of volunteers and its social importance. The Minister for Labour submitted the draft law to the government on December 5, 2001 (International Volunteer Day). After a series of amendments this law came into force on June 29, 2003.

The new law does not change existing laws on associations and foundations. Nonetheless it is very important for the future development of the third sector as it defines the criteria for public benefit status of Polish NGOs. The law provides a definition of NGOs²⁷⁹ and the procedural framework for cooperation between local governments and NGOs. It also establishes the conditions for subsidiarity with the creation of a system of contracting and subsidising NGOs to provide public tasks. In addition, the law establishes an NGO council as advisory body to decision makers.

In the third section of the law a “volunteer” is defined with four basic provisions. In Article 2 a volunteer is defined as “a person who voluntarily and with no remuneration provides services based on regulations specified in the law”.

²⁷⁷ The official enrolment in Scouts was two million, because of the obligation for many young people to sign up. During the 1980’s, several hundred thousand young people performed community service every year, see Harrill, R. (2000). Country Report Poland (p.10).

²⁷⁸ English translation of the Polish law on Public Benefit Activity and Volunteerism (April 24, 2003). Retrieved February 2, 2004 from <http://www.icnl.org/library/cee/laws/polpubbenvolunt%5Beng%5D.htm>

²⁷⁹ “Non governmental organizations are legal entities or entities with no legal personality created on the basis of provisions of laws, including foundations and associations, taking into consideration part 4. Non governmental bodies are not bodies of the sector of public finances in the understanding of regulations governing public finances and operate on a non-profit basis” Section I, Art 3, Point 2. of the Law on Public Benefit Activity and Volunteerism (2003).

Within the framework of this law, voluntary activities can be carried out for the following organisations:-

- Non-governmental organisations
- Organisations acting on the basis of regulations between the state and (a) the Catholic Church, (b) other churches or, (c) religious unions provided their statutory goals include the performing of public benefit activities
- public authorities (excluding those performing economic activities);
- Organisations controlled or supervised by public authorities.

Article 44 requires a written volunteer agreement, if the services provided by the volunteer exceed the period of 30 days. For shorter periods, the volunteer can request a written agreement and written confirmation of the services provided.

A number of rights and obligations are specified in Sections II, Articles 45-50 regulating the relationship between beneficiaries and the volunteers. Organisations hosting volunteers have to:-

- ensure safe and hygienic work conditions and comprehensive information on potential risks and risk protection;
- cover travel and other costs incurred by the volunteer in connection with their service;
- provide a 'per diem' for subsistence costs (these are based on the rules governing employees);
- cover training costs if they are provided in the frame of the volunteer agreement.

Despite this compulsory framework, the law allows that a volunteer can exempt the organisations entirely or partially from these obligations by a written statement. A volunteer carrying out a service in the framework of this law is automatically covered by the general national healthcare insurance. In case of accident while performing a volunteer activity, the individual is entitled to compensation. The organisation is obliged to provide accident insurance in case of a voluntary activity of less than 30 days.

The application of this law is very wide and foresees volunteer activities in all areas of public benefit. The law lists 24 fields of work (e.g. social care, protection of consumer rights) and includes a separate provision for the further extension of these tasks. The promotion and organisation of volunteerism as such is listed as one of the fields of action, as well as activities for the sake of European integration and the development of relations and cooperation among nations.

Two articles cover provisions for international voluntary services programmes. While Article 42 foresees voluntary service in Poland by foreign volunteers in the frame of international organisations, Article 48 defines the possibility for Polish organisations to send volunteers to another country. In these cases, the volunteer is entitled to benefits and reimbursements of cost 'generally acknowledged for the situation' (for example board and lodging) unless the international agreement states otherwise²⁸⁰.

Government support

Most NGOs in Poland face a very difficult financial situation. They have to permanently look for funding and lack any structural support for the long-term. The sector's overall income in 2001 came from the following sources: public sector funds (local and regional government) - 19.6%; public sector funds (central government) - 13.5%; donations from individuals and firms - 16.5%; income from economic activity - 10.4%. Funds from foreign donor funding, such as that of the European Union, amounted to 5.7% of the sector's income. In 2001, 68% of the organisations stated that unclear and unstable legal regulations regarding the NGO sector are a serious problem²⁸¹.

The new law on public benefit and volunteer service will change the situation to a certain extent. The delegation of public tasks to accredited third sector organisations may develop new sources of financial

²⁸⁰AVSO & CEV (2003). Legal position of Volunteers: Country Report Poland. Retrieved April 20, 2004 from http://www.avso.org/en/Documents/countryreports/poland_final.pdf.

²⁸¹ Klon/Jawor Association(2002). NGOs in Poland 2002 research results (p. 13).

state support. The on-going decentralisation will strengthen the role of local authorities to support NGOs. Some voluntary service organisations have already reported positive changes. While the law does not define any financial support for organisations dealing with volunteers, it is up to the organisations to convince local, regional or national level authorities of the need for financial support of their programmes.

Impact of the law on NGOs

The approval of the law received considerable media attention. According to the KLON/JAWOR Association survey²⁸², more than half of the NGOs (57%) felt that the law would improve the situation of NGOs. A further 62% expressed a desire to gain recognition as a public benefit organisation, while 54% considered that they already fulfilled the requirements. Several of the interviewed NGO representatives²⁸³ highlight the fact that the law gives legal recognition to NGOs in the public sector and permits public institutions to work with volunteers e.g. in hospitals or residential homes for elderly. In the past these institutions involved many volunteers without a legal basis.

It is too early to assess the impact of the law regarding volunteering, as the law lacks still corresponding regulations regarding the rights and obligations of volunteers and organisations. The situation of organisations hosting volunteers therefore remains unchanged. The usual practice has been that pocket money is not taxable, but the matter is solved on a case-by-case basis with tax offices. Concerning social protection, Polish nationals are entitled to receive unemployment benefits even while volunteering, so long as they demonstrate they are looking for a job and available to start²⁸⁴.

Some NGOs have reported difficulties in becoming an accredited public benefit association. It requires NGOs to modify their statutes and therefore accreditation has so far only been achieved by organisations who could afford professional legal advice. Furthermore, the statutes and the criteria for accreditation are interpreted differently by district courts of the National Court Register. NGOs are currently exchanging ideas and information about how to achieve this public benefit status²⁸⁵. Several organisations are not allowed to work with volunteers like political parties, trade unions, professional self-governments, state foundations and organisations pursuing commercial activities²⁸⁶.

The Unit for voluntary service in the Department of Public Benefit in the Ministry of Economy, Labour and Social Policy is responsible for implementation of the law and volunteering activities. Tasks include the “preparation of the legal documents, realisation of the governmental programmes, interpretation of legal regulations, conforming of Polish regulations to EU directives, implementation of EU regulations to Polish conditions²⁸⁷”.

The law foresees the creation of a Council for Public Benefit Activities as an advisory body for the Minister of Social Security. This Council shall express opinions regarding the application of the law, quality control and conflict management between local authorities and public benefit organisations. Members of the Council are appointed for three years by the Ministry (5 from public administration, 5 from local governments, and 10 representatives of NGOs, umbrella organisations or church affiliated organisations)²⁸⁸.

²⁸² Klon/ Jawor Association (2002., NGOs in Poland 2002 research results (p. 3).

²⁸³ like representatives from OWA, Borussia, ASF-Poland.

²⁸⁴ Interview with B. Mielecki, NA Poland on April 7, 2004.

²⁸⁵ Most Polish NGO needs to change their statutes and activities according to the law and need therefore to re-register. They experienced different procedural requirements varying from district court to district court concerning accreditation.

²⁸⁶ Law on Public Benefit and Volunteerism (2003). Chapter 1, Article 3, Section 4 (p. 2).

²⁸⁷ Answer to the research questionnaire from K. Kolodziej, Senior specialist, Ministry of Economy, Labour and Social Policy.

²⁸⁸ Law on Public Benefit and Volunteerism (2003). Chapter 5, Article 35 (p. 16).

Impact of the law for volunteers

The law represents an important change for volunteers working in Poland with accredited organisations. It ensures their protection regarding health and social security and clarifies the responsibilities of organisations. Volunteers are entitled to receive reimbursement of expenditure for costs like travel and training as well as a daily allowance exempted from taxes.

The provisions of the law are not sufficient for young people leaving the country for 3 months or longer as a volunteer²⁸⁹.

Young people with an unemployed or student status may lose their health insurance, if they go abroad for a longer period. If a young unemployed chooses to volunteer abroad, he/she loses access to benefits and needs to register after his/her return.

According to the Country report of AVSO & CEV (2003) family allowances may be lost for volunteers going abroad longer than three months: "To re-start the payment, a new application must be submitted to a parent's employer when the volunteer has returned"²⁹⁰.

Young people, whose parents are divorced, are entitled to a special allowance until they have finished studying. In case of volunteering abroad, they lose the allowance. Young people entitled to receive orphans pension until the start of their studies also lose the benefits if they go abroad as a volunteer for three months or more. Basic criteria for the end of payments is the fact that volunteerism is not recognised on the same level as school or university and that the young people leave the country. The implementation of the law will be evaluated by the ministry in 2005.

4. National policy changes affecting voluntary service

Compulsory military service and conscientious objection

Poland is in the process of adapting its military structures and accelerating the professionalisation of its army to meet the membership requirements of NATO and the EU. In the context of structural and financial reorganisation of the army, proposals to abolish compulsory military service have emerged. The end of 2006-2008 have been suggested as possible dates to end conscription²⁹¹.

Until now, a military service of 12 months is obligatory for every Polish male between 18- 28 years according to article 92 of the Polish constitution and the law on collective obligation for defence from the year 1967²⁹². Currently 40% of the army are conscripts. Despite low motivation among young men to do a military service, engagement in the army enjoys certain attractiveness due to the high youth unemployment rates in Poland.

Poland was the first country of the Warsaw Pact that recognised in 1988 the right of conscientious objection as result of alternative student movements in the 80s and 90's. Before 1980, very few young

²⁸⁹ Interview by phone with Mielecki, B. , NA Poland on April 7, 2004.

²⁹⁰ AVSO & CEV (2003). Legal position of Volunteers: Country Report Poland. Retrieved April 20, 2004 from http://www.avso.org/en/Documents/countryreports/poland_final.pdf (p. 4).

²⁹¹ retrieved January 10, 2004 from <http://www.freitag.de/2002/43/024306t1.htm> and <http://www.masterpage.com.pl/outlook/nato.html>.

²⁹² Dr. Tannert, Ch. (1998). Das Menschenrecht Kriegsdienstverweigerung und das Europäische Parlament. Fraktion der Sozialistischen Partei Europas: Berlin (p. 20).

men objected to military service and mostly for religious reasons (Jehovah Witnesses etc). No provision for alternative service existed and the young men were sent to jail. In parallel to the increasing opposition towards the communist regime and the development of the *Solidarność* movement, a small pacifist movement emerged in Poland at the end of the 70s objecting military service. In 1988, the Polish government allowed conscientious objectors to perform alternative military service in case of religious and moral motives. As the Polish Catholic Church did not support conscientious objectors, the recognition of motives remained limited.

Two laws provide the legal basis for civilian service: firstly, the law on collective obligation for defence from the year 1967, with 19 additions²⁹³ and secondly, the law on civilian service of 21st November 1992. In 1999 the latter law was amended, which reduced the duration of military service from 18 months to 12 months and civilian service from 24 to 21 months²⁹⁴.

The Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs developed in conjunction with the Ministry of Defence an alternative military service programme for conscientious objectors. Under Article 189 of the Civil Service Legislation, public institutions as well as foundations could apply to offer a position that is “equal to” military service²⁹⁵. While the programme was not well publicised in the 90’s, today information is available through several websites and the programme is more widely known. However, due to the longer duration of the service and to the fact that students who have completed university can either reduce their military service to a couple of months while living at home or be exempted, the number of conscientious objectors remain small. Unfortunately, no quantitative figures are available.

Conscientious objectors are mainly hosted by organisations and public institutions in the field of health care (hospitals), environment and administration. The organisations are required to pay about one third of a minimum wage as minimum fee²⁹⁶. The state covers the social insurance²⁹⁷.

One provision of the new law for public benefit and volunteer service concerns alternative civil service. According to Chapter 3, Article 25 of the law “Conscripts dispatched for substitute military service shall have the right to work for a public benefit organisation”. This allows also accredited associations to work with conscientious objectors.

None of the interviewed actors could imagine that the end of military and alternative military service will have an impact on the development of full-time voluntary service programmes in Poland.

National youth policy

There are almost 6.5 million young people between the ages of 15 and 24 in Poland, representing 16.8 % of the total population. The situation of young people in the labour market has become increasingly difficult over recent years. In 1998 the unemployment rate for the 15-24 age group stood at 25.6% in 1999, rising to 29.9%, in 2000, 41.1% in 2001 and 45.5% at end of the first quarter in 2002.²⁹⁸

Youth issues fall under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Education and Sport and are monitored by the Office for Youth. The fact that youth issues are not a government priority is reflected in the funding available. Youth organisations receive some funding from local authorities but mostly from the private sector (sponsors, companies, foreign organisations). One of the major concerns of the Ministry is the

²⁹³ Dr. Tannert, Ch. (1998). *Das Menschenrecht Kriegsdienstverweigerung und das Europäische Parlament*. Fraktion der Sozialistischen Partei Europas: Berlin (p. 20).

²⁹⁴ Amnesty International (1999). Poland: Draft law concerning alternative service is at variance with internationally recognized principles on conscientious objection to military service. Retrieved February 10, 2004 from <http://web.amnesty.org/library/Index/ENGEUR370041999?open&of=ENG-POL>.

²⁹⁵ Harrill, R. (2000). Country Report Poland (pp. 12-13).

²⁹⁶ 120 US Dollar in 2000, see Harrill, R. (2000). Country Report Poland (pp. 12-13).

²⁹⁷ Harrill, R. (2000). Country Report Poland, (pp. 12-13).

²⁹⁸ Data retrieved January 10, 2004 from the Polish Official Statistics (Główny Urząd Statystyczny, GUS) see International Labour Office: http://www.logos-net.net/ilo/150_base/en/init/pol_2.htm.

reform of the education system not yet adapted to the new realities and growing needs of young Polish people.

It has therefore been left primarily to NGOs to develop initiatives in the youth field. Poland is characterised by two main types of youth organisations: those established under the communist regime and now in the process of transformation and those new organisations created after '89. Cooperation between both types of organisations is quite weak. A representative youth council at national or local level is expected to be established in 2004²⁹⁹.

According to the NA in Poland³⁰⁰, new concepts of youth work, based on active participation of young people, were introduced after the political changes as well as the profession of youth worker. Transformation of the sector has been supported by the bilateral German-Polish youth office and the EU Youth Programme.

Structural development of youth infrastructure relied on bilateral youth work and exchanges through the bilateral German-Polish youth office founded in 1991. Financed by both youth ministries, the office supports language courses, study visits, bilateral and trilateral school and youth exchanges. The overall aim is to work for reconciliation between German and Poles, whose relations are still affected by the experience of WWII and the Cold War. While voluntary service is not a funding category as such, the organisation support language courses for volunteers and both offices host a long-term volunteer from the other country.

Secondly, the European Youth programme has played a strong role, financed by the EU and the Polish Ministry of Education. Poland has participated in European youth exchanges as a hosting country since 1990, and since 2000 it has its own National Agency and has been able to send young Poles to EU Member States in the frame of the different actions of the Youth programme. Beside exchanges, the Youth programme enables young Polish community leaders to perform services and run local NGOs. A lot of youth organisations were created through the youth programme and youth work became a new professional orientation. Recognition of non-formal education has improved and several private schools have started to teach youth work, attractive for young people with interests in cultural studies and with less commercial orientation.

While these international programmes allowed a certain number of young people to travel, transnational youth mobility is still very low. Only 7% of Poles aged 15-24 years have been abroad during the last two years (2002).

The Ministry of Education and Sport approved a Polish youth strategy for the years 2003-2012 in August 2003³⁰¹, to adapt to changes in the legal framework as well as to coordinate better the activities of multiple players (state, self government institutions, NGOs). The strategy responded to recommendations of the Council of Europe and the EU regarding youth policy development in Poland. Young people are defined aged between 15-25 years. The overall aim of the strategy is to combat social exclusion by giving equal opportunities to all young people and making best use of funds from the EU. The strategy targets five key areas:-

- youth education;
- employment;
- youth participation in public life;
- leisure, culture, sport and tourism;
- Health and prevention.

Youth policy and voluntary service

²⁹⁹ Ministry of National Education and Sport (2003). Polish Youth Strategy for the Years 2003-2012 (p. 14).

³⁰⁰ telephone interview of Magdalena Jakubowska on April 6, 2004.

³⁰¹ Ministry of National Education and Sport (2003). Polish Youth Strategy for the Years 2003-2012, Warsaw.

While the strategy focuses on the adaptation of the educational system to new needs and measures to combat youth unemployment, the second of six strategic objectives “**creating chances for the development of own activities**” mentions an action programme to support education towards a civil society as well as the development of youth voluntary service³⁰². While international forms of youth voluntary service were promoted since 2003 together with the Polish-German youth office and the NA Poland, the Ministry of Education and Sports intends to set up a database on Polish and international youth voluntary service in 2004³⁰³.

As some actors reported, competences of the ministries with regard to voluntary service are not clearly defined. While the Ministry of Economic, Labour and Social Policy is responsible for voluntary service and the implementation of the law as well as for programmes combating youth unemployment (like the “First Job programme”), the Ministry for National Education and Sports is interested to develop voluntary activities for young people in the field of education. They wish to consult NGOs for the development of models and prefer to grant projects than to conduct projects themselves. Apart from the adoption of the law, there is no specific political initiative at national level to promote voluntary activities in Poland.

Voluntary service programmes at national level

According to the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy, voluntary service during a period of 6 months exists in Poland at national and regional level³⁰⁴. Programmes are provided by various actors: the Ministry of Economy, Labour and Social Policy and the Ministry of Education and Sport as well as by associations, foundations, by church affiliated organisations and others like the Polish Red Cross. The Ministry gave examples of organisations providing programmes in Poland³⁰⁵.

While the possibility exists, no official programmes specifically promotes full-time voluntary service in Poland. As mentioned earlier, the term “voluntary service” is used also for part –time volunteers. Most organisations work with part-time volunteers, who are active in a wide range of fields: youth unemployment, social inclusion, civil society development, and lifelong learning. Most Poles do have not the financial means to be involved in a voluntary activity on a full-time basis.

According to the interviewed Polish organisations, most of the young Polish volunteers are school pupils or students. They are active on a regular basis for some hours a week or more intensively during the holidays (work or holiday camps). The motivation of students is partly linked to their studies - perceiving their engagement as a kind of internship. But other young people become a volunteer in the organisations to meet other people and to do something useful at local level.

First Job programme

In order to address the problem of youth unemployment, the government launched a national programme in June 2002³⁰⁶. Inspired by the EVS programme design but with a different focus, the 'First Job' (Pierwsza praca) targets young graduates entering the labour market in order to acquire their first work experience during 6 months. The programme promotes five different types of experiences including voluntary work. Volunteering for young people is perceived as a different kind of training programme for professional development. Other values/objectives like community development or engagement in civil society are less important.

³⁰² Ministry of National Education and Sport (2003) (p.15).

³⁰³ Ministry of National Education and Sport (2003) (p.15).

³⁰⁴ Answer to the research questionnaire from K. Kolodziej, Senior specialist, Ministry of Economy, Labor and Social Policy (2004).

³⁰⁵ such as KLON/JAWOR association, Centrum Wolontariatu, Siec Wspierania Organizacji Pozarządowych SPLOT, Porozumienie bez Barier, Markot, Polska Akcja Humanitarna, Caritas, Polski Czerwony Krzyż.

³⁰⁶ for information on the 'First Job programme in English, Retrieved March 10, 2004 from International Labor Office: http://www.logos-net.net/ilo/150_base/en/init/pol_2.htm.

While the other types of experiences are presented as concrete programmes with financial incentives for employers, the website for voluntary service³⁰⁷ just lists possible organisations:

- Volunteering in Polish administrations and NGOs (social, educational, cultural, environmental field),
- Volunteering in Europe (different programmes as EVS (NA Youth), Voluntary Social Year in Germany (through Initiative Christen für Europa), France (via Robert Schumann Foundation) and worldwide the communities of the Jean Vanier Arches movement (communities for disabled people).
- Service Civil International (Mid term and long term voluntary service)
- United Nations volunteers.

5. International voluntary service

According to the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy, three types of organisations provide international voluntary service programmes: government, NGOs and church related organisations³⁰⁸.

The following analyses describes in a first section the implementation of the European voluntary service (Action 2 of the EU YOUTH programme) in Poland as the largest programme supporting voluntary service. The example of Semper Avanti is presented as Polish youth organisation having involved a larger number of volunteers exclusively through EVS.

This is followed by a presentation of several examples of international voluntary service programmes. As no database on full-time voluntary service organisations is available for an exhaustive overview, several criteria were used to select the sample: large numbers of volunteers both sent and hosted as well as experience with EVS and other types of voluntary service programmes. All examples are part of international networks with different thematic foci, and involve young volunteers as part of their activities.

European Voluntary Service

As already mentioned, the European Voluntary Service programme represents the largest programme for young people so far. Poland was able to host volunteers since the programme started in 1996, but young Poles can only participate as volunteers abroad since 2000.

EVS has neither a proper legal status in Poland nor is it integrated in the recently approved law on public benefit and voluntary service. Volunteers who carry out an EVS receive pocket money, board and lodging, supported by a grant from the European Commission. This is not normally subject to taxation. The EVS programme provides each volunteer with a private insurance plan through the sending organisation.

The EVS programme encountered several problems from its beginning. Participants in regional training seminar on voluntary service in January 2002 identified several key challenges³⁰⁹.

While there is a strong interest among organisations to send young Poles as volunteers, most lacked the experience and appropriate training to send or host volunteers. They missed international contacts and reliable partners and were confronted with a lack of legislation on volunteering. For the sending part, they lacked funds to ensure preparation and international travel costs of volunteers. They also questioned the programme's administrative procedures and the lack of flexibility of the NA (deadlines, procedures). On the hosting side, they reported late transfers of grants from the NA. The NA reported difficulties in

³⁰⁷ Retrieved March 10, 2004 from http://www.1praca.gov.pl/wolontariat.php?id_doc=1031.

³⁰⁸ such as Centrum Wolontariatu, The Great Orchestra of Christmas Charity, Caritas, International Youth Exchange Foundation.

³⁰⁹ see AVSO & Eastlinks (2003). Promoting Long term Voluntary Service in Central & Eastern Europe, Report of Regional EVS Capacity Building Seminar in Poland January 14-18, 2002 (pp. 5-6).

implementing a programme in a country with no legal reference on volunteering. They experienced too high expectations from the organisations and limited human and financial resources to support the organisations individually.

Despite these difficulties, EVS has developed quite rapidly in Poland. While 49 projects were realised in 2000 and 159 in 2001, the number doubled nearly in 2002 (286 projects). 185 Polish volunteers went abroad (mainly to Germany, UK, Italy, Spain and Greece) while 101 volunteers came to Poland (mainly from Germany, UK, France and Spain). As indicated by the NA, 273 volunteers were sent and 102 hosted in 2003.

Figures of EVS in Poland 2002

Hosting Country	Polish Volunteers abroad 2002	Sending Country	Foreign volunteers in Poland 2002
Germany	57	Germany	29
UK	28	UK	17
Italy	21	France	17
Spain	19	Spain	11
Greece	14	Austria	5
France	11	Belgium	5
Austria	10	Finland	5
Belgium	6	Greece	4
Denmark	5	Italy	3
Portugal	4	Portugal	2
Sweden	4	Ireland	1
Ireland	3	Denmark	1
Finland	1	The Netherlands	1
The Netherlands	1		
Luxembourg	1		
Total	185	Total	101

Source: National Agency Poland, September 2003

More than two thirds of all EVS volunteers (sending and hosting) in 2002 were women. Activities of international volunteers had a particularly strong positive influence on small communities and in rural areas. Especially in areas with high local youth unemployment, international youth exchanges or long-term voluntary service generated more interest in social issues of young people and stronger active participation. The participants also felt 'more European'. Furthermore, the experience caused participants to reflect on the possibilities of self-employment. Many new organisations specialised in the environment or in serving local needs became involved in the programme.

While information is well disseminated at national level, young people and organisations still encounter a lack of awareness of the volunteer concept and the EVS programme within local authorities, especially when dealing with social security issues. The NA hopes that the Ministry for Social Affairs will establish specific provisions for the social security issues faced by international volunteers as a follow up of the law, as the current provisions are too general to facilitate further development. The lack of a legal status for volunteers makes it difficult for outgoing volunteers to obtain a visa and incoming volunteers to obtain a residency permit. Freedom of movement within the EU member is still limited for new members, subject to bilateral agreements between each of the EU-15 countries for the transition period (up to 2007)³¹⁰.

Since 1st January 2004, Poland has participated in the EU Youth programme at the same level as all other old and new Member States. The budget has been more than tripled compared to previous years allowing several new programme developments³¹¹. One of the main priorities has been to set up East –East

³¹⁰ see Information Note of the European Commission on free movement of workers (March 6, 2001) retrieved May 5, 2004 from <http://www.eubusiness.com/guides/enlargement-free-movement>.

³¹¹ according to M. Jakubowska, NA Poland.

exchanges particularly with the CIS states, Belarus, Ukraine and several contact making seminars have been organised. The NA also expressed the hope that the different realities of the Eastern countries will also stimulate young people with other motivations to volunteer. As only western European countries could offer possible placements, the majority of young people went for personal or professional reasons, and less for solidarity with marginalised people or communities.

Another key priority is to increase the number of hosting organisations in Poland, particularly small organisations at local level³¹². The EVS programme in Poland is still unbalanced between sending and hosting. Major problems are language barriers and practical problems like accommodation for the volunteers. Most organisations can only give in kind contributions (e.g. room to host a volunteer or food) as they have no budget for volunteer. Other problems are the lack of management skills to supervise volunteers and to match local and international volunteers. The NA wishes to set up different trainings for tutors of hosting organisations and 'friends of the project' to improve the overall quality.

According to the NA, the integration of international volunteers in organisations working with local volunteers was often difficult, as they lack the management skills to deal with different needs of foreign volunteers. Institutions in the social field working with local volunteers are rarely open to host foreign volunteers. The match worked best in youth NGOs involving peers on a voluntarily basis for social integration.

The example of Semper Avanti

Semper Avanti, founded in the 1990s, represents the new type of local youth organisations in Poland focussing on international work including "youth exchanges, volunteer services and youth initiatives"³¹³. The organisation's overall objectives are to promote international cooperation among young people from different cultures and to provide young people with international experience for personal and professional development. Semper Avanti is one of the coordination organisations in Poland working with a large number of EVS volunteers (sending and hosting)³¹⁴. Having started to work with EVS in 2001, they sent about 70 Poles abroad (mainly to France, Germany, UK) and hosted about 30 foreign volunteers in Poland. They were the first Polish organisation to work in third country cooperation of the Youth programme³¹⁵ and submitted 4 of 10 granted projects for the 2000-2 period³¹⁶.

Semper Avanti submits around 4-5 applications for young people to go abroad through EVS every deadline (there are 5 deadlines per year). The main motivation of young people to participate in EVS is the opportunity to travel and live abroad. Most applicants have finished their studies but have yet to find a job or they wish to make a break in the studies. Young people with no foreign language skills are more afraid to go abroad.

Semper Avanti can not satisfy all demands through their partner organisations. Young people have to find a recognised EVS hosting organisation independently or with the help of the EVS database before the application is sent to the NA. This search for a project is difficult, because the database is not up-to-date and many organisations do not reply to e-mails. Most applicants have sent around 100 e-mails to different projects, others search by phone, but have difficulties to obtain an answer. Semper Avanti tries to inform young people on possible placements but has no own capacity to help with the matchmaking. The partner organisations receive a lot of applications from various sending organisations or individual volunteers.

Semper Avanti still has to explain the volunteer concept to young people. Many young people initially think that they can earn some money. Volunteering is still a new emerging phenomenon in Poland.

³¹² according to M. Jakubowska, NA Poland.

³¹³ <http://www.irbis.home.pl/avanti/>.

³¹⁴ following information from Dorota Dengler, EVS coordinator in Semper Avanti by phone on February 5, 2004.

³¹⁵ Third country cooperation allows exchanges with several priority regions defined by the EU Youth programme e.g. Latin America, CEI, Mediterranean area.

³¹⁶ European Commission (2003). Interim Evaluation of the Third Country Cooperation of the Youth Programme 200-2002. Final report, Poland (p. 45).

Some of the ex-volunteers stay involved with the sending organisation after their return. Often the volunteer experience is life-changing, as it helps the young person get in touch with their own ideas and professional orientations. Very often they want to go abroad again, because they can't find a job in Poland. A lot of them want to study another language; others become involved in organisations with similar activities as their hosting projects.

Semper Avanti is recognised by the NA as coordinating organisation for hosting placements. They have set up 5-6 local projects in local organisations (local museum, work with disadvantaged and disabled youth). In these projects local part-time volunteers have the chance to meet international volunteers, and this may inspire them to apply for an EVS themselves. Semper Avanti ensures that there is an English speaking contact person in every hosting organisations to provide support for the volunteer.

For most organisations the experience of cooperating with foreign partners and host young people from other countries has been extremely positive. Organisations that work with children and young people have found the experience particularly rewarding. It enables them to develop a model to show how it is possible to live and to work with foreign people in Poland.

According to D. Dengler from Semper Avanti, EVS is not yet recognised as qualification for employers, but they do recognise good language skills. Few ex-volunteers have followed-up their experience with a "Future Capital" project.

The Polish law has had limited impact on Semper Avanti's activities so far. Local municipalities understand the law as a tool to engage organisations to specific local activities such as a concert or an event. The term 'volunteering' is not used to define helping others in the community.

International youth voluntary service programmes

According to the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy, international volunteers are hosted in all 13 provinces of Poland. They are active in a wide range of fields: social area, environment, reconciliation, international understanding, women issues, minorities, as well as in the cultural, political and religious field.

The following examples of international voluntary service programmes existed either already before the start of the EVS programme or were recently developed for different reasons. While the focus of the EVS programme is on the individual development of the young volunteer, the other programmes focus more on international cooperation to tackle peace, international understanding and solidarity. Voluntary service is perceived as an opportunity for everybody to become involved in community needs. These organisations are all part of one or several international networks with different thematic orientations, a proper structure for the exchanges and a strong organisational identity. Most of them are involved in EVS, but see the development of the programme from a different position.

▪ **Voluntary Service Promotion Association (SPPO)³¹⁷**

SPPO is the Polish NGO dealing with the largest numbers of mainly short and long-term volunteers (6-12 months) per year. The self-financed NGO places, for a fee, several hundreds of Polish volunteers abroad every year and brings in the same number of foreign youth to perform community service projects in Poland. The director Waldemar Korycki has been active in the youth volunteer service movement since 1978. Before the political changes in 1989, he directed the government agency called Volunteer Worker that organised youth exchanges abroad with other Eastern European countries. SPPO cooperate currently with several other international exchange programmes such as the Alliance for European Voluntary Service Organisations, Volunteers for Peace, and the Council on International Educational Exchanges (CIEE) based in the US.

³¹⁷ Harrill, R. (2002). Country Report Poland (p.27).

- **One World Association (OWA)**³¹⁸

OWA is a non-governmental organisation, established in 1992, and registered officially in 1994. "One World" Association acts as a part of the international organisation Service Civil International (SCI). OWA organises mainly short-term voluntary service activities in Poland in the form of work camps (13 in 2003) and offers also several mid-term (3-6 months) or long-term voluntary (6-12 months) service placements. The organisation focuses on social inclusion offering several workcamps for young people from disadvantaged backgrounds. In 2003, 3-4 volunteers were hosted as long-term volunteers and about 10 volunteers were sent out. Long-term voluntary service placements are partly supported through EVS (since 1996). The hosting organisations support the volunteer mainly with in-kind contribution (accommodation from the community, provision of food, some partners can pay small amounts of pocket money, contribution from Western volunteers).

OWA is recognised by the Polish National Agency as regional organisation for promotion of the EU youth programme as well as a training organisation for volunteers and organisations. OWA and the SCI network are presented as one voluntary service opportunity in the frame of the 'First Job' programme.

- **Aktion Sühnezeichen Friedensdienste (ASF)**³¹⁹

The German organisation ASF has sent short-term and long-term volunteers from Germany to Poland since 1986. The programme involves the volunteers in issues of reconciliation (through support to Holocaust survivors, memorial sites) as well as of social inclusion (support of marginalised groups and minorities). In 1994 ASF set up a Polish office that has sent young Poles to Germany since 1997. While ASF-Poland received 11 volunteers from Germany in 2003, 2 Polish volunteers went to Germany and 7 others to the UK.

Programmes are financed from different sources: by EVS (currently 6 volunteers), Robert Bosch Foundation, and German Zukunftsfonds, the hosting organisations, ASF and volunteer contributions.

In 2002, ASF received EVS support for the Polish volunteers in the UK unilaterally – in principle not allowed within the programme. While the Polish NA rejected the applications of the volunteers for the sending part (and therefore preparation costs and travel costs of the volunteers), the British NA granted the hosting organisations for working with the volunteers (pocket money, pedagogical support).

The Polish hosting organisations still encounter difficulties to contribute to hosting costs of the volunteers. The memorial sites have a tight budget for running costs and the pedagogical programmes. In the social field, the NGOs (e.g. work with former prisoners of the concentration camps) function only on support from part-time volunteers. They only have money for medicines, food and clothes of the clients. No state support is available for the organisations, neither on the national, regional or local level.

According to ASF, when they first started sending volunteers abroad, most young people were mainly motivated by the opportunity to earn money abroad. Now this is changing, as other opportunities for mobility emerge (e.g. Leonardo – an EU programme for professional training opportunities). Young Poles understand better that voluntary service programmes have different objectives and they are only able to cover the costs.

- **An example of German-Polish Partnership: Kurve Wustrow -ZAKRET Wroclaw/ Polish rural youth**³²⁰

³¹⁸ OWA website retrieved on April 10, 2004 <http://www.jedenswiat.org.pl/>. Information received in the interview with Milosz Czerniejewski, One World Association(OWA)/ SCI Poland on March 4, 2004.

³¹⁹ information from Urszula Scieniczak, ASF- coordinator in Poland by phone on February 6, 2004.

³²⁰ personal communication from Verena Mosen, volunteer coordinator of Kurve Wustrow, April 15-19,2004.

ZAKRET Wrocław was the branch of the German organisation Kurve Wustrow from 1999-2003. They carried out trainings for non-violent conflict resolution at local and international level and organised a similar youth voluntary service programme to Kurve Wustrow in Germany. ZAKRET recruited volunteers in Poland and sent them to Germany for 6-12 months in the field of peace education and civil engagement. After dissolution of ZAKRET the Polish Association of Rural Youth overtook the tasks of ZAKRET as coordinator organisation for hosting placements in Poland focusing on human rights. Since 2000, 21 German volunteers have been sent to Poland, 5 to Czech Republic and 10 Polish volunteers went to Germany for periods of 6-12 months.

Three current Polish volunteers in Kurve Wustrow aim to develop an exchange programme at local level between the Polish rural youth and German partners. Kurve Wustrow and the Polish Association for Rural Youth both rely on former volunteers to prepare new volunteers, or to work as trainees in the frame of their studies. Former volunteers from both countries are active in the Polish-German association Horizont e.V. One former German volunteer is now working professionally in the German-Polish Youth Office. The volunteer exchange programme is supported by EVS and the Robert Bosch Foundation.

▪ **European Federation for Voluntary Service and Social Projects**³²¹

The Federation was created in 1999 by the German organisation *Initiative Christen für Europa (ICE)* in cooperation with partners in West, Central and Eastern Europe. They send long-term volunteers (12 months) from 18 to 26 years from European countries in Catholic organisations active in the social field. 200 volunteers were sent in 2003/4 in Europe. Situated in East Germany near the Polish border, ICE is involved in cross-border cooperation between Poland and Germany (20 volunteers to Poland, 20 Poles to Germany and 20 Poles to France in 2003). The voluntary service programme is partly supported by the Catholic Church, Robert Schumann Foundation and the Robert Bosch Foundation.

The Polish partner association Wspólnota Kulturowa Borussia³²² organises cultural activities at regional level since the beginning of the 90s, always with the help of German volunteers. The Polish law is a first important step to allow NGOs to work with volunteers. The coordinator indicated that volunteers encountered difficulties to receive a stay permit due to the lack of status (and the requirement of a work permit). The new law clarifies that a work permit for volunteers is not necessary³²³.

Other programmes are shortly presented because they are promoted on the website of the “First Job programme” for young unemployed graduates:

▪ **Robert Schumann Foundation**³²⁴

The Polish Robert Schumann Foundation was set up in 1991. The foundation supports all political and social initiatives taken with a view to advancing democracy in Poland and its preparation to the membership in common Europe. International voluntary service is among several opportunities for young Poles to go abroad. The foundation informs about several international programmes (e.g. German voluntary social year, EVS, Bridge-Building in Europe carried by the German organization of Christian Initiative for Europe) and has set up a cooperation with the Albert Schweitzer Centre in France.

▪ **Arche**³²⁵

The international Arche movement of the Jean Vanier Communities was founded in 1964 in France and has established 118 communities in 29 countries worldwide. One community exists in Poland. They provide alternative “homes” for people with mental disabilities sharing the daily life with non-disabled

³²¹ <http://www.freiwilligendienst.de/content/allgemein.php> and phone contact with Gebhard Ruess, volunteer coordinator, ICE, on April 10, 2004.

³²² <http://free.ngo.pl/borussia/>.

³²³ information by phone from K. Kourowska, volunteer coordinator of Borussia on April 10, 2004.

³²⁴ <http://www.schuman.org.pl/>.

³²⁵ http://www.larche.org/front/content.php?section_id=8&ss_section_id=65.

persons. A lot of them are international volunteers, joining the community for a certain period (6-24 months).

- **United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), Volunteer Programme**³²⁶

The UNDP Volunteer Programme has sent more than 171 Poles abroad in humanitarian assistance projects in more than 40 countries since 1984. Poles have worked as doctors, engineers, computer experts, animal husbandry experts and election observers. The volunteers are mostly mid-career types (30-40 years old) with university degrees and language skills, though a few have been in their twenties. The duration of the service is often just a few weeks to a few months.

Conclusion

As already said, EVS and the EU Youth programme has had a strong impact on the development of a new approach towards youth work and the setting up of youth NGOs. The Polish White Paper for Youth was a direct result of the EU consultation for the White Paper on Youth policy in 2001. Recommendations of the Council of Europe and from the EU were taken into account to set up the new youth policy strategy and to establish a Polish Youth Council.

However, neither the Ministry of Economy, Labour and Social affairs nor the NA Poland knew about the EU questionnaire on voluntary activity (see chapter on EU analysis) and therefore they were not able to make the answers available for this study. Neither institution was informed of the European Convention on the Promotion of Transnational Long-term Voluntary Service for Young People of the Council of Europe.

Future perspectives

Participants to the voluntary service training seminar in January 2002 highlighted the major obstacles to the development of voluntary service programmes in Poland: negative connotations from the past, no proper tradition and culture of the voluntary community work, lack of legislation and lack of experience and training in the field.

Two years later, several aspects have improved while a certain number of items remain difficult.

Opportunities

With the successful implementation of the EVS programme, international youth voluntary service has become visible to a broader group of young people and organisations. EVS looks set to further develop because of the increased budget of the Youth programme as consequence of the EU enlargement. It is clear that without the financial support of EVS many organisations would not get involved in voluntary service.

The establishment of a new SALTO training centre focussing on East-East exchanges in the frame of the YOUTH programme in the Polish NA is considered an important opportunity for the future development of international youth work. It gives them the perspective to disseminate their expertise to organisations from Eastern countries and to develop new partnerships, no longer restricted to the old EU Member States.

³²⁶<http://www.undp.org.pl/>.

Young people find it more and more attractive to become a volunteer, the motivation is often linked to their desire to get professional experience and to improve their skills, but they also look for forms of engagement that are socially useful.

According to some of the actors³²⁷ there is a growing interest among young people and organisations to develop full-time voluntary programmes in Poland. Such a programme would rely on support from national government, regional grants from public authorities or private foundations as the economic realities of young people does not allow them to volunteer full-time, nor do the organisations have the means to finance these activities.

Challenges

A major problem for further development of voluntary service is the lack of cooperation between Polish associations in order to tackle common issues. Several umbrellas exist for specific purposes: the national “Centrum wolontariat” in Warsaw is acting as coordination and lobby organisation for a network of the 16 regional centres. Some organisations act as umbrella for NGOs like Forum of NGOs at national level. Organisations working with EVS may exchange experiences through meetings organised by the NA Poland. The idea of a common platform for youth and voluntary organisations for voluntary service is not discussed. The new advisory council for the application of the law composed of NGOs and local and national authorities may play this role, but it is more likely to focus on the accreditation of public benefit organisations than on the setting up of voluntary service programmes.

EVS and international voluntary service are not connected to national programmes of part-time volunteering. The only exception is the link on the website of the First Job programme to suggest several voluntary service programmes as opportunity for young unemployed. Financial support for full-time voluntary service for organisations is only available in the frame of international cooperation (EU Youth programme, German-Polish youth office, private foundations).

While the situation has improved compared to 2002, there is still a problem to find hosting organisations for international volunteers. Organisations are reluctant lacking foreign language skills and management competences to work with and to supervise volunteers during their service. The concept of a volunteer needs still to be explained. The lack of financial support is another barrier for associations to start working with volunteers.

While the public is more favourable towards NGOs and volunteering adopts a more positive image, many people still don't understand the concept or the values behind it. They have not been in touch with volunteers and their overall focus is on education and finding a secure job. A more general discussion on the values of volunteering –, initiative, solidarity, mutual help, support for the community and individual responsibility - is necessary to not only focus on the personal development of volunteers for their professional career in the light of high youth unemployment. The danger is that voluntary service is only perceived as a sort of training for work with a weaker focus on responsibilities.

EVS has no legal status and is not integrated in the Polish system and several issues regarding social security payments needs still to be solved on a case-to case basis.

Recommendations

The interviewed actors pointed out several recommendations to improve the situation of voluntary service in Poland:

Legal status

- More “volunteer- friendly” legislation for access to benefits system e.g;

³²⁷ representatives of ASF- Poland, Borussia, OWA.

- To ensure that young people are not penalised by the benefit system by engaging in volunteering
- Set up a legal category to allow individuals to earn small amounts monthly without being taxed as practiced in Germany

Government promotion and support of voluntary service

- Increased government support for voluntary service, not only financial
- To provide long-term structural funding for organisations to enable organisations focus on the content of their work rather than on financial survival.

Overall economic development will give more the option of volunteering; now they have to work for economic survival

EVS improvements

- Promote a broader vision of EVS which would allow a combination of “volunteer identities” (EVS and voluntary service organisation)
- Simplify the application procedure for EVS, as it currently takes-up a lot of time that could be used for preparation and content development of voluntary service programmes
- Develop a system that would give more secure funding for EVS projects to facilitate long-term planning
- Reinforce consultation between NAs to establish common national priorities, content of application forms,
- Develop voluntary service programmes as an alternative to EVS

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Questionnaire

Questionnaire on voluntary service programmes and policy development in Poland answered by Katarzyna Kolodziej, Senior specialist, Ministry of Economy, Labour and Social Policy on February 20, 2004.

Questionnaire on voluntary service programmes and policy development in Poland answered by Magdalena Jakubowska, Action 2 Assistant, National Agency of the Youth Programme Poland on April 6, 2004.

Websites with information on voluntary service in Poland:

Semper Avanti: <http://www.irbis.home.pl/avanti/>

Initiative Christen für Europa: <http://www.freiwilligendienst.de/content/allgemein.php>

OWA –SCI Poland : <http://www.jedenswiat.org.pl/>

Robert Schuman Foundation: <http://www.schuman.org.pl/>

Arche: http://www.larche.org/front/content.php?section_id=8&ss_section_id=65

National volunteer centre: <http://www.wolontariat.org.pl/region.asp?id=1>

First Job webpage: <http://www.1praca.gov.pl/>

Information on First Job Programme: http://www.logos-net.net/ilo/150_base/en/init/pol_2.htm;

Poland as host country: <http://youth.cec.eu.int/movingeu/en/host/EN.poland.htm>

SALTO EECA supports cooperation between Programme Countries and countries from Eastern Europe & Caucasus based in the NA Poland: <http://www.salto-youth.net/eeca/>

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1. Dorota Dengler, EVS coordinator, Semper Avanti, February 5, 2004.
2. Urszula Scienczak, volunteer coordinator, ASF-Poland, February 7, 2004.
3. K. Kourowska, volunteer coordinator, Borussia, April 5, 2004.
4. Gebhard Ruess, volunteer coordinator, Initiative Christen für Europa, April 5, 2004.
4. Magdalena Jakubowska, Action 2 Assistant, National Agency of the Youth programme Poland, Monday, April 6, 2004.
5. Bartosz Mielecki, Action 2 Officer, National Agency of the Youth programme Poland, April 7, 2004.

Face to face - interview

6. Milosz Czerniejewski, One World Association (OWA)/SCI Poland, March 4, 2004, Brussels.

Personal communication

Verena Mosen, volunteer coordinator, Kurve Wustrow, April 14-19, 2004.

VOLUNTARY SERVICES AT EUROPEAN AND INTERNATIONAL LEVEL³²⁸

1. Introduction

The following analysis aims to present the development of youth participation in society and the role of full-time voluntary service at European and international level. International programmes for long-term and full-time voluntary service has existed since the 1970's, but remained on a small level due to two main reasons:

- the existence of legal obstacles to full-time voluntary service in several European countries for volunteers and organisations;
- the lack of public funding or recognition resulting in a reliance on private sponsors.

While there has been increasing recognition at European level of voluntary service in the field of youth policy in the last ten years, legislative measures such as laws, directives or decisions to overcome legal obstacles to full-time volunteering are not part of the mandate of the EU under the treaties. Respecting the principle of subsidiarity and the responsibility of the Member States on youth policy, several instruments have been developed at the European level in order to:

- strengthen cooperation between the European institutions and the Member States;
- develop a common understanding by defining objectives, areas and programmes for action while also respecting cultural differences and traditions, and subsidiarity;
- develop a comparative framework for analysing problems and evaluating action at national level;
- increase the sensitivity of national authorities of the need for changes and an overview of the wider picture.

This chapter is divided into three sections:-

1. a general description of the role of voluntary service in European youth policy including the political background, and the policies, programmes, legislative instruments and their impact;
2. the inclusion of youth issues and voluntary service in other policy areas;
3. other instruments at international level

2. Youth Policy in the European Union (EU)

The following section focuses on the role of voluntary service in the development of youth policy in the European Union. The wider picture of youth policy and voluntary service on the European and international level (Council of Europe, UNV) will be looked under point I.3.

No common youth policy existed at the beginning of the European Community. Young people became a target group within social policy because they represented a group of high unemployment. The first measures at European level were initiated in the mid 80s, focusing on the occupational integration of young people. In 1986, the first programmes were set up to develop mobility and professional skills, language and exchange. The first 'Youth for Europe' programme was established in 1988 focussing on transnational mobility and the promotion of European citizenship. Some Member States (e.g. Germany and the UK) resisted a European approach towards young people, while other governments facing high

³²⁸ The report analyses the situation at European and international level in until April 2004.

youth unemployment rates were more in favour. Legal challenges against programmes like ERASMUS and COMETT II to the European Court of Justice illustrate the resistance against more EC-level competence in the field of general education. The Court of Justice confirmed the national sovereignty of the Member States, but allowed the EC to undertake legal initiatives in the field of vocational training. The resistance of some Member States was politically motivated. Those national governments see general education and youth policy as key elements of national identity of young people.

Although any harmonisation of a general youth or education policy was still explicitly excluded, the Articles 126 (EC contribution, objectives) and 127 (vocational training) of the TEC³²⁹ gave to the EU new competences in the frame of vocational training and youth policy, followed up with the approval of the third generation of LEONARDO, SOCRATES and YOUTH for EUROPE programmes in 1994 and 1995, focussing on the promotion of transnational mobility, language learning and youth exchanges in the field of non formal education. In June 1994 the Council of Ministers institutionalised a Council of Youth who agreed in the meeting of 30th November 1994 to establish a voluntary service for young people. The increase in competences was also illustrated by changes of administration and political responsibility inside the European Commission. On the 1st February 1995, responsibility was transmitted from DG V (Social Policy) to a specific Directorate General (DG) XXII, covering Education, Training and Youth. Youth policy is currently the responsibility of the Commissioner for Culture, Education and Youth and the EU spend in 2002 only 0.07 % of its annual budget on youth policy³³⁰. The European Parliament asked in its resolution of 22nd September 1995 the creation of a budget line for voluntary service. The setting up of the European Voluntary Service in 1996/97 (25.91 Mill EUR and 2217 young people) was seen as an innovative opportunity to develop a feeling of European citizenship for young people. It was established in the same moment, when the EC launched its strategy to combat unemployment, in which education and training are core-elements. In Youth for Europe III (1998-1999) EVS became a new pillar at the same level as Youth Exchanges with a budget of 45.24 Mill EUR for programme countries and 2.83 EUR for third countries (4915 participants)³³¹. The EVS programme was enlarged of two strands: firstly, the introduction of a short term services (3 weeks-3 months) targeting especially young people from social disadvantaged backgrounds as well as the set up of “future capital”, giving ex-volunteers the possibility to follow up their experience combining personal development and engagement at local level.

In the current Youth programme (2000-2006) with the budget of 520 Million EUR for 6 years, EVS became the Action 2 pillar following the youth exchanges (Action 1).

The EU programmes (Youth for Europe, EVS and currently YOUTH) managed to develop possibilities for young people to become mobile throughout Europe. In parallel, stronger co-operation between the Commission and the Member States has been developed in order to define common objectives and understanding and exchange good practice. Therefore the European institutions have been active in drawing up several resolutions regarding participation of young people³³², social inclusion of youth³³³ or their sense of initiative³³⁴.

³²⁹ Treaty of the European Community (as amended by Treaty of the European Union). They are now laid down in Articles 149,150 and 151 of the Treaty Establishing the European Community.

³³⁰ European Commission. Retrieved February 10, 2004 from http://europa.int/comm./budget/abb/abb_2002/apb/eac_en.htm and section III: Commission 2002 Budget by policy area.

³³¹ European Commission, SEC(2001)1621 (October 9, 2001). Evaluation report for the period of 1996-1999.

³³² Official Journal C 42, (February 17, 1999). Resolution of the Council and Ministers of Youth meeting within the Council of 8 February 1999 on youth participation.

³³³ Official Journal C 374, (December 28, 2000). Resolution of the Council and of the representatives of the governments of the Member States, meeting within the Council, of December 14, 2000 on the social inclusion of young people.

³³⁴ Official Journal C 196 (July 12, 2001). Resolution of the Council and of the representatives of the Governments of the Member States meeting within the Council (June 28, 2001) on promoting young people's initiative, enterprise and creativity: from exclusion to empowerment.

White Paper on Youth Policy and voluntary activity

In order to set up a genuine co-operation policy with a long term perspective in the field of youth in the European Union, the *White Paper on Youth Policy*³³⁵ of November 2001, adopted by the European Commission, and implemented by the Council of Ministers through the Resolution on further cooperation, created a new framework of youth policy on the European level.

It represents a declaration of intention in which the Commission defines key priorities and actions. Based on a wide consultation at national and European levels, the White Paper aims to develop active citizenship for the 75 million young people in the enlarged EU. The young generation needs to cope with profound economic and social transformation processes in all countries (globalisation, enlargement, demographics, immigration etc). In that perspective the White Paper recognises the value of voluntary service for young people as relevant instrument for social participation, educational experience, employability and integration. These outcomes are important for the development of active citizenship.

The White Paper lists the following aims regarding the development of voluntary activity in the future:

- Significant extension of voluntary service at national and local level;
- Examination of legal and social protection of young volunteers and the removal of obstacles to mobility;
- Recognition of voluntary service as an education experience and as period of non-formal learning at European level;
- Extension of EVS in partnership with worldwide bodies which organise and support voluntary action.
- Member States should take immediate action to remove obstacles to mobility for young volunteers.

The White Paper proposes a new framework for cooperation, consisting of two strategies:--

- increasing cooperation between Member States e.g. through the Open Method of Coordination (see below) and the appointment of national coordinators as Commission representative for youth-related issues.
- taking greater account of the youth factor in other sectoral policies.

The White Paper has been widely disseminated and translated into 19 languages. 135 events were organised in the EU in order to reach organisations at the local level.

The impact of the White Paper needs to be linked to:-

- the outcomes of the four thematic priorities selected for the Open Method of Coordination;
- the cooperation between the Commission and the contact persons in the Member States;
- awareness of youth issues in other policy areas of the EU.

Close to the launch of the White Paper and in the context of the United Nations initiative of the International Year of Volunteers 2001, the Council adopted on 14 February 2002 a resolution addressed to the Member States on the added value of voluntary activity for young people³³⁶. This resolution aims to facilitate opportunities for young people to find voluntary work in order to develop their sense of responsibility and active citizenship and their active participation in society. Public authorities, businesses and civil society are called on to recognise the value of voluntary work so as to improve young people's opportunities on the labour market. A few months later the Council agreed on a resolution regarding the framework of the European cooperation in the youth field as outlined in the White Paper (27 June 2002, Official Journal C 168 of 13.07.2002). This resolution addressed to the Member States common objectives regarding the facilitation of voluntary commitment by young people, the promotion of networks and voluntary activities as well as the recognition by public authorities, business sector and civil society.

³³⁵ Com (2001) 681 final (November 21,2001). A new impetus for European youth, European Commission White Paper.

³³⁶ Official Journal C 50 (February 23, 2002).

Open Method of Coordination and ‘voluntary activity’

Following up the White Paper, four priorities were selected for the priorities for the Open Method of Coordination. The Open Method of Coordination was introduced by the Lisbon European Council 2000 in order to develop a European Union action plan for combating poverty and social exclusion. It offers a means of benchmarking national initiatives, in order to develop a coherent EU approach while respecting the principle of subsidiarity. The four priorities are participation, information, voluntary activity and greater understanding of youth. Two first consultations regarding youth participation and information took place in 2002 and spring 2003. A joint report was elaborated by the Commission and common objectives circulated to the Council³³⁷. ‘Voluntary activity’ is being treated as the third priority in the second half of 2003. The Commission addressed a questionnaire to the Youth Ministries of each Member State and the answers are expected by the end of October 2003. They should be based on consultation with young people and the youth sector, a national youth council or similar organisations. For the first time also all 10 accession countries received the questionnaire and are invited to participate on a voluntarily basis as well as Romania, Turkey and Bulgaria. The results of the survey will be used to elaborate a Joint Report and to define common objectives in April 2004 to be adopted by the Council. Member States are called on to implement appropriate measures in order to achieve the adopted common objectives.

The questionnaire refers to voluntary activity in general, defined as open to all, unpaid, based on free will, and offering an educational and non-formal experience with an added social value. Voluntary service is considered as a form of voluntary activities, but given a specific definition: volunteering within a fixed period of time, requiring clear objectives, tasks, structure and framework, as well as support, and legal and social protection for the volunteer. Forms of service carried out as an alternative to obligatory military service are not considered voluntary service. The questionnaire is divided in 4 sections on the following areas:

- Basic information such as facts & figures, the legal basis for both forms regarding especially young people;
- Policy issues regarding recognition and promotion of both forms such as enhancing citizenship, obstacles, links to employability;
- Expectations towards the EU;
- Consultation of young people regarding the questionnaire.

The Ministries are invited to describe the situation and to present good models of practice. The answers will be of particular interest because the youth ministries are asked to report on their support for national youth voluntary service programmes. Two questions are related to the long-term development of the EVS programme: the first asked about cooperation with the United Nations Volunteers programme, the second asked for potential interest connecting EVS with the European Voluntary Humanitarian Aid Corps (see below).

Impact of EU Youth programme and voluntary service

There are a small number of privately funded programmes in Europe, such as the Robert Bosch Foundation programme which since 1999 has supported the exchange of around 250 volunteers between Germany and countries of Central and Eastern Europe. Several international voluntary service

³³⁷ Com (2003) 184 final (April 11, 2003). See http://europa.eu.int/comm/youth/whitepaper/download/com_2003_184_en.pdf.

organisations also offer volunteer placements abroad funded through personal sponsorship or private fundraising³³⁸.

The European Voluntary Service Programme (EVS)

The European Voluntary Service programme (EVS) is the only EU-programme supporting voluntary service for young people. The objective of Edith Cresson, former Commissioner in 1996/97 was to involve 100-200,000 young people in the programme. This contrasts sharply with the reality of nearly 3500 young people per year, who have the opportunity to perform a voluntary service in a European country other than their own, for periods of between 3-12 months. However, the EVS has had a very positive impact developing on the visibility and practical experiences of voluntary service in all European Countries, where mostly this concept was unknown or ignored. EVS has presented a legal and administrative challenge to Member States with different existing frameworks for voluntary service or without legal recognition of the volunteer status.

The EVS programme is open to all young people between the age of 18 and 25 with legal residence in one of the programme countries³³⁹ or in an eligible third country. Voluntary service activities can take place in the field of environment protection, arts and culture, activities with children, young or elderly people, conservation of heritages, or sports and leisure. Volunteers participate in activities that are non-profit-making and unpaid, and thus presenting an added value to the local community. An EVS project is based on a partnership between the volunteer, a sending and a host organisation, from another EU member state or from a third country outside the EU. The volunteer should have an active role in the design of the project and make a direct contribution to society. Personal support is provided for volunteers to socialise and integrate into the local community. In case of problems, the volunteer can contact a mentor. The host organisation is responsible for arranging language-learning opportunities. Training is provided at all project stages (pre-departure, on-arrival training, mid-term evaluation meetings).

The European Commission covers the international travel costs of the volunteers as well as the insurance. In addition, the grant of the European Commission contributes to food, accommodation as well as costs for pedagogical support measures and local travel (300 Euro per month and a lump sum of 600 Euro) and pays an allowance to the volunteer (between 140 and 220 EUR/ month depending on the countries). Volunteers have insurance coverage against illness, accident, death, permanent disability and repatriation in case of serious illness or accident and personal liability. The insurance complements the protection provided by national social security systems. Volunteers who have completed their voluntary service are entitled to a certificate signed by the Member of the European Commission responsible for the 'YOUTH' programmed, distributed by the National Agencies.

A common European framework (recognition of sending and hosting organisations, preparation, training, and support for volunteers and organisations) aims to ensure that quality standards are maintained within EVS projects. Community co-financing is awarded to selected projects³⁴⁰, the average costs per volunteer (21,9 Mio EUR and 3432 volunteers in 2002) has been 6381.12 EUR not taken into account the structural costs of the NAs. The average grant was 3353 EUR per sending or hosting project in 2002. In the case of disadvantaged volunteers, approved 'special needs' can be supported up to 100%. The remaining costs have to be provided by the organisations or by donors. The volunteers participate without paying any fees

10International Cultural Youth Exchange, Service Civil International, European Diaconical Year Network, Action Reconciliation/ Service for Peace, Youth Action for Peace – all have their own volunteer exchange programmes which may be funded through different means.

³³⁹Programme countries are EU members including the new Member States, EFTA-states and EU associated countries, including Turkey. Programmes in third countries are supported in Euro-Med countries, Eastern Europe, Caucasus, South-East Europe and Latin America.

³⁴⁰ Eligible are costs with regard to the volunteer: travel expenses, insurance, preparation, a monthly allowance and pedagogical support.

in the programme in order to ensure open access to all young people. EVS cannot be used by conscientious objectors to substitute civil or alternative service.

Impact of the EVS programme

The YOUTH Programme activity review 2002 elaborated by the Commission analyses the current situation of the Youth programme and the EVS. 115,993 young people participated in the YOUTH programme in 2002³⁴¹ and 3432 young people were EVS volunteers. Compared to 2001, the number of participants remained constant³⁴², while the number of submitted projects increased (21%)³⁴³ as well as the number of granted projects (+13%)³⁴⁴, 21.9 Mio EUR (24.38% of the YOUTH programme budget) was spent in the EVS programme in 2002. Given the limited funding of EVS in the current YOUTH programme (approximately 25 mill EUR per year until 2006) there is little prospect of any significant increase in participant numbers in the next three years.

According to the review of the Commission, the participation of ‘young people with less opportunities’ decided in 2001 as the priority target group of the Youth Programme (‘Strategy for inclusion in the Youth Programme’³⁴⁵), remained low (8% in EVS in 2002). Most young people from disadvantaged backgrounds became EVS volunteers through three multilateral networks specifically targeting these young people, or the joint short-term work-camp programme of the Alliance of Voluntary Service Organisations, Youth Action for Peace (YAP) and Service Civil International (SCI).

2002 was significant to develop a concept of collective voluntary service allowing larger number of volunteers on the occasion of major events e.g. in the area of sports. A mid term evaluation of all training programmes (Leonardo, Socrates and Youth) for the period 2000-2003 was carried out by the EC in summer 2003 in order to define good practices of the different actions as well as to elaborate improvements for the second half of the programmes.

The Youth Programme evaluation³⁴⁶ pointed out for EVS increased awareness in national administrations in some countries and certain legislative adaptations. In countries with regionalised administration of the Youth programme, regional bodies were created to assist in monitoring, information and advisory tasks and sometimes selection procedures. It “remains to be seen to what extent effective implementation and common criteria of the programme are ensured in these cases” (European Commission, 2004, p. 20). The evaluation stated many problems in the countries linked to the legal, fiscal and social protection of volunteers, visa-related questions as well as lack of systematic recognition of skills gained in non formal education (EVS certificate). Some countries questioned the imbalance between relatively high costs related to EVS and rather low numbers of EVS volunteers per year as well as the limited impact and visibility because of the individual nature of the programme. Regarding these issues, EVS lacks strong impact on policy, legislation and institutions.

The evaluation recommends several issues to improve the EVS programme: lighter and faster administrative procedures and formal requirements, additional support for preparation and follow up and systematic involvement of other partners, increasing flexibility of funding rules and procedures to strengthen inclusion of young people from disadvantaged backgrounds, set up of alternatives of shared funding³⁴⁷ as well as quantitative increase of the number of volunteers. The Commission responded that most recommendations will be either tackled further by a working group for the second half of the

³⁴¹ CJ/03/2003-EN, YOUTH Programme activity review 2002 (p.3).

³⁴² in 2000: 2798 volunteers, in 2001: 3430 volunteers.

³⁴³ increase of 15% of submitted projects from 2000 to 2001.

³⁴⁴ 2000: 5423 projects, 2001: 5754 projects, 2002: 6526 projects.

³⁴⁵ Strategy for inclusion in the Youth Programme, EAC/C1/CW(2001).

³⁴⁶ COM(2004) 158 final (March 8, 2004).

³⁴⁷ The funding of EVS projects depends currently on two National Agencies (hosting and sending country); both have to agree in order to grant the projects; due to a lack of concertation between the agencies, in several cases one national agency approved and the other rejected - due to different national priorities- or one answered and the other needed much more time. Several projects meeting all necessary requirements could therefore not happen.

programmes while the last point will be taken into account for the future programme. The Commission mentioned the possibility of a labelling system to recognise as EVS voluntary service projects funded under national or regional programmes (European Commission, 2004, p. 47).

In parallel, the European Commission carried out an open consultation before February 2003 regarding the long-term development of the Youth programme and EVS in this frame beyond 2006. In this frame, AVSO proposed an innovative approach for all training programmes with the set up of a transnational mobility voucher system at EU level³⁴⁸. The concept foresees to change the current procedures strongly entitling every young person from 18-25 years and with a permanent residence in the EU to go abroad for at least 3 months (as volunteer, student, trainee, etc.) The new system allows raising significantly the number of young people with transnational experiences for stronger political impact at national and European level. The system bases on minimum procedures, smaller average grants and an effective cooperation between national and European authorities.

In light of pending decisions of the financial budget for the period 2007-2013³⁴⁹, the Commission published in March 2004 two communications outlining general ideas for the future training programmes. While the first communication presents the opinion of the EC regarding the new generation for community education and training programmes after 2006 in the field of formal education, the second communication outline four different programmes with the aim of 'making citizenship work'. All four programmes (Youth, Culture, Audiovisual and Civic Participation) intend to foster European culture and diversity. EVS will be part of the future Youth Programme. Major changes of the Youth Programme foresee the extension of the target group (13-30 years) as well as the simplification and strong decentralisation of the programme. EVS is targeted at 10,000 volunteers per year - compared to 3500 currently - and 70,000 for the whole period.

The further development of the EVS programme is linked to stronger involvement of the volunteers in the Unions 'solidarity actions' in two directions: developing new activities in humanitarian aid programmes and setting up new cooperation with national voluntary civil programmes.

The Commission asks currently for feedback on these outlines while preparing for June 2004 the proposals with financial outlines. In the frame of the co-decision procedure, the proposal will be discussed by the European Parliament and the Council in a first reading (autumn 2004). Taking into accounts the amendments the Commission will prepare a modified proposal that needs to be finally approved by the European Parliament and the Council (Spring 2005).

Legislative instruments in EU youth policy

As already introduced, legislative measures to overcome legal obstacles to full time volunteering is not part of the mandate of the EU under the treaties.

The study of the Steering Group of Voluntary Service Organisations (later AVSO) identified in 1994 for the first time specific problems due to the lack of status in the different countries³⁵⁰ (treatment as workers regarding residence permits, social security, taxes, and work permit). However, the hope of overcoming the obstacles by introducing of a legal status at European level was unrealistic because of the limited power of the European Institutions in the field of education and youth. The treaties give no mandate to "impose" a harmonised and unique definition of full-time volunteers in the Member States. National lobbying of the organisations started to make authorities sensitive to the need for international opportunities of programmes, and to become aware about the necessity of compatibility in this field. Several instruments have been developed at the European level to make national authorities sensitive to

³⁴⁸ AVSO, Proposals to the next generation of EU training programmes (April, 2003).

³⁴⁹ European Commission, COM (2004) 101 (February 10, 2004). Building our common Future : Policy Challenges and Budgetary Means of the Enlarged Union 2007-2013.

³⁵⁰ Frey, U., Ribustini, M., Stringham, J. (1994). Potential development of voluntary service activities, Steering Group of Voluntary Service Organisations, Brussels.

the need for change. The *Green Paper* of 1996³⁵¹ on obstacles to mobility identified several problems for international volunteers (e.g. loss of benefits, social security) for the first time.

In order to create a European space of education and training, mobility was proclaimed as a priority at the Lisbon extraordinary meeting of the European Council in 2000. During the French presidency the EU-*Recommendation on Mobility* of July 2001³⁵² was approved in order to remove obstacles to freedom of movement allowing educational and vocational training programmes with a European dimension. While the discussions focussed on students, trainers, teachers and researchers, voluntary activity was also mentioned in the recommendation with regard to the Youth programme. Measures proposed by the Recommendation which specifically concern young volunteers are:

- To ensure that the specific nature of voluntary activity is taken into account in national legal and administrative measures;
- To promote the introduction of a certificate of participation for persons who have taken part in voluntary activity projects, with a view to bringing about a common European format for *curricula vitae*;
- To ensure that volunteers on international mobility schemes are not discriminated against in terms of entitlement to social protection measures.

But volunteers are not mentioned regarding the recognition of vocational qualifications and experience acquired in the host Member State. Nor does the Recommendation call on Member states to harmonise the status of volunteers with regards to right of residence, employment law, social security and taxation, effective elimination of double taxation.

The EC is expected to set up an expert group to exchange experience concerning the implementation of the Recommendation and the National Action Plans for Mobility. These plans were established through a resolution to develop 'a genuine European area of knowledge', founded on knowledge, openness to foreign cultures and the ability to educate oneself and work in a multilingual environment.

A summary of the national reports is expected to be submitted in January 2004 (thereafter every two years). In addition, the EC study the procedures to introduce a Europass for pupils, students, trainees and volunteers, giving holders entitlement to various concessions during their period of mobility, and to draw up proposals regarding to exchange of information on opportunities for studying, performing voluntary work or teaching in other Member States.

All EU-Member States are expected to elaborate every two years an evaluation report for the EC reporting about problems at national level and adopting measures in their Action Plan for Mobility. The Recommendation gives an orientation about a consensus and the common orientation for cooperation without legal or financial consequences for the Member States. Results of the Open Method of Coordination survey as well as from this report will give orientation of the issues at stake at national level and the possibility for European actions.

The role of the EU Presidency and voluntary service

The role of the Presidency of the European Council for the development of voluntary service in Europe emerged in the second half of 2003.

The Italian government launched its presidency from July- December 2003 with an official speech of the Italian President Ciampi of 1st June 2003. The speech makes reference to a Europe of shared values and experiences, where young people need to prepare themselves with language knowledge, travel, working

³⁵¹ European Commission (1996), Green Paper on the obstacles to transnational mobility, COM(96)462.

³⁵² Recommendation of the European Parliament and the Council (July 10, 2001) on mobility within the Community for students, persons undergoing training, young volunteers, teachers and trainers. Official Journal L 215 (August 9, 2001).

with other young Europeans: “for example, why don't we think of an integrated European civilian service in which young people can serve the public good and experience the diversity of the European States?”³⁵³ The Italian EU-Presidency intended to raise this issue as a priority for youth policy in the upcoming months. In this perspective, the website of the Presidency provided information about the Italian programme of national civil service. The possibility of an integrated European youth service is supported by the cabinet of Romani Prodi, Head of the European Commission, which has approached the European Youth Forum for information about the idea of such a service.

The first intergovernmental conference on Civic Service and Youth was held on 28-29th November 2003 in Rome attended by national officials in charge of youth policy, civilian service or defence matters as well as some NGO representatives from 21 current and future member states. The Italian EU-Presidency published the conclusions of the conference highlighting the need of a systematic and regular exchange of information and good practices and a strengthened cooperation between civic services and youth policy as well as enhanced co-operation among the Member States, acceding countries and the European Commission in the field of civic services for young people. A joint meeting of all National Agencies with all national civic service bodies was proposed for spring of 2004. De Almeida from DG Education of the EC welcomed the initiative of the Italian government to host a second conference in spring 2004 and pointed out the need for an observatory for the sector to track the developments in member states and at European level.

There is a strong need to establish a structured dialogue between national governments and European institutions for the efficient development of voluntary service in Europe. Recently two other Member States outlined independently initiatives for voluntary service at national level. While the UK announced to sponsor a GAP year of community service in 2004 as a national priority for young people from disadvantaged backgrounds³⁵⁴, the Dutch government (EU presidency in autumn 2004) asked for research for the development of youth service in the Netherlands. A European conference on voluntary activities (policies, partnerships and participation) will be prepared in June in Dublin in the frame of the Irish EU-Presidency and take place during the Dutch EU-Presidency from 7-9th November 2004 in Maastricht³⁵⁵ in order to develop and exchange forums in the sector.

3. Incorporating the youth factor into sectoral policies

Aside from the described initiatives implemented within the frame of EU youth policy, the White Paper wishes to give the ‘youth’ dimension greater priority in other policies and programmes. On the European level, the Council agreed to add the priority areas stated in the White Paper in the areas of education and life-long learning³⁵⁶, mobility³⁵⁷, employment and social integration, combating racism and xenophobia. The particular value of youth voluntary service is currently raised in two other policy fields:

- European Social Policy
- Cooperation with third countries regarding humanitarian aid.

Social Policy in the European Union

³⁵³ Ad esempio, perché non pensare ad un sistema di servizio civile integrato tra i Paesi dell'Unione, che consenta ai giovani di servire la "res publica" nelle diversificate realtà degli Stati Europei? Si possono ipotizzare altre iniziative: l'importante è suscitare una consuetudine di vita comune tra i popoli e tra i cittadini. Alla costruzione giuridica, alla Costituzione europea, devono corrispondere le esperienze dei singoli, soprattutto dei giovani. Retrieved July 4, 2003 from <http://www.quirinale.it/Comunicati/Comunicato.asp?id=22424>.

³⁵⁴ based on the experiences of a pilot programme of 60 young people started in September 2004 in England in the frame of the Youth Challenge Programme . Retrieved April 12, 2004 from http://www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/budget/budget_04/bud_bud04_ch5_257.pdf.

³⁵⁵ see: www.eurofestation.com/en.

³⁵⁶ Communication from the European Commission (November 21, 2001). Making a European area of lifelong learning a reality, [COM\(2001\) 678 final](#).

³⁵⁷ Communication from the Commission to the Council, the European Parliament, the Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions (February 13, 2002). Commission's Action Plan for skills and mobility, [COM\(2002\) 72 final](#).

In the field of social affairs in the European Union, voluntary service emerged recently as a new tool in the fight against social exclusion.

Social policy has been previously seen as being entirely within the domain of the Member States. The Amsterdam Treaty introduced for the first time the possibility for European measures to tackle poverty and social exclusion. Article 137³⁵⁸ refers to measures of cooperation and information exchange, while Article 13 of the Amsterdam Treaty gave new provisions to combat discrimination based on gender, racial or ethnic origin, religion or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation.

Subsequent landmarks in the European Social Agenda include the European Council meetings of March 2000 and the Nice treaty of 2001. The Member States agreed to draw up every two years a National Action Plan against poverty and social exclusion (NAPincl) on the basis of a common framework. The Member States agreed four common objectives³⁵⁹ in Nice. The process of comparing policies and measures of progress is intended to stimulate mutual learning between Member States and to develop sharing of best practice. It also allows the collection of data against a set of common indicators.

After a first elaboration of National Action Plans for the period 2001-2003, Member States are currently submitting NAPincl for 2003-2005³⁶⁰. Voluntary service as tool to combat social exclusion was briefly mentioned in 2001 in the reports of France (programme of the French voluntary civic service of social cohesion and solidarity as engagement of young people against social exclusion, NAPincl France, 2001, p. 43) and Italy (civic voluntary service as a possibility for young people to combat actively social exclusion). The new French NAPincl does not refer to the programme of social cohesion and solidarity because it is not yet implemented. The Italian report outlines the importance of voluntary service as major trend for the development of the third sector and social cooperation. (NAPincl France, 2003, p. 10). The new German NAPincl present the voluntary social training year as new programme to facilitate professional and social integration (NAPincl Germany, 2003, p. 16). It was set up in 2000 as a special scheme of the voluntary social year in order to help disadvantaged youth develop a professional and personal perspective. While the NAPincl stresses the success of the programme with 34.4% of the participants having entered in education or found a job after the programme, and 54.7% who can be considered as social integrated (NAPincl Germany, 2003, p.16), the voluntary service sector in Germany questioned the value of the programme using the terminology of “volunteers” but focussing mainly on professional integration of young people.

In the frame the future European social policy taking into account the situation of the new members, all accession countries signed in December 2003 a Joint Inclusion Memorandum (JIM) with the European Commission. The reports outline principal challenges to tackle social exclusion and poverty in the countries and present major policy measures. The objective is to prepare the countries for full participation in the open Method of coordination on social inclusion and the elaboration of first NAPincl in 2004 after accession.

The reports of Poland and Czech Republic both mention voluntary service as tool for social inclusion. The Czech JIM presents the important role of NGOs to tackle social exclusion and poverty lacking systematic support and initiative from the state. The new act on volunteer services is considered as instrument to develop voluntary activities mainly in the social field (Czech Jim, 2003, p. 42)³⁶¹. The Polish report presents the new Act on activities of public utility and on voluntary service as tool to mobilise

³⁵⁸ Article 137 states: “Measures designed to encourage cooperation between Member States through initiatives aimed at improving knowledge, developing exchanges of information and best practices, promoting innovative approaches and evaluating experiences in order to combat social exclusion.”

³⁵⁹ (A) Participation in employment, access to resources, rights, goods and services; (B) To prevent the risks of exclusion - lack of access to information technologies, family, school, housing; (C) To help the most vulnerable - disabled, drug, alcohol abusers, mentally ill, ex offenders, prostitutes, children in poverty; (D) To mobilise all relevant actors.

³⁶⁰ all National Action Plans available at:

http://europa.eu.int/comm/employment_social/news/2001/jun/napsincl2001_en.html.

³⁶¹ Czech JIM (2003). Retrieved April 14, 2004 from http://europa.eu.int/comm/employment_social/soc-prot/soc-incl/cz_jim_en.pdf.

resources and to encourage stronger involvement of NGOs in the development of policies and delivery of services (Polish JIM, 2003, p. 42)³⁶².

Third country relations and humanitarian aid

The approved draft treaty establishing a constitution for Europe from 18th July 2003³⁶³ mentions in section III³⁶⁴ youth issues together with education, vocational training and sport. Article 88-182 enable European action for ‘encouraging the development of youth exchanges and of exchanges of socio-educational instructors and encouraging the participation of young people in democratic life in Europe’. More specific tasks are defined regarding a complementary vocational training policy especially for young people (mobility). Under cooperation with third countries and humanitarian aid³⁶⁵, article III-218, declares to set up a European Voluntary Humanitarian Aid Corps “*in order to establish a framework for joint contributions from young Europeans to the humanitarian actions of the Union...European law determining the rules and operation of the Corps.*”

Directorate General (DG) of Education, Culture and Youth of the European Commission together with DG External Relations are currently discussing how the EVS programme could be linked to a voluntary humanitarian aid corps. They are developing cooperation with United Nation Volunteers to support the engagement of young people as non-specialised UNV volunteers in the Balkans as part of a move in this direction. The United Nations Volunteers (UNV) programme involves annually around 5000 experienced and qualified men and women from 160 nationalities as UN Volunteers in developing countries. Today 15 per cent of UN volunteers are active in projects to develop civil society in Central and Eastern Europe. Until now the UNV programme is not a youth programme. Until 2000, the minimum age for “specialist” recruitment has been 25 and requirements include higher education or technical diplomas as well as a minimum of five years of professional experience. In spite of that, UNV created in the 90s a new category of volunteer, UNV field workers, who can apply as of age 21. However they currently only represent about 4% of all United Nations volunteers. The perspective of a new EU Youth programme with the enlarged age group up to 30 years may allow UNV to move in the field of youth service or develop specific EVS activities in the field of humanitarian aid as all other NGOs working in these fields. The question remains about the distinction between EVS in this field and the existing volunteer programmes requiring professional skills, previous experience, maturity etc.

In the debate prior to the approval of the new Convention, several NGOs as well as national representatives and Member of the European Parliament have published amendments to the Draft Convention in which they propose to delete this paragraph. They point out that humanitarian aid should be delivered by experienced and trained professionals such as NGOs and international organisations: “*While the idea of bringing young Europeans in touch with third-countries realities is interesting, a Voluntary Corps might be more appropriate in the context of long-term development cooperation, where a wide variety of constructive projects are carried out by the EU. Nonetheless, a Voluntary Corps can be established through many other mechanisms, and does not need to be mentioned within the Constitutional Treaty*”³⁶⁶. As the discussion on the future Constitution is still open, it is not yet confirmed that this section will be part of the treaty.

Perspectives at European level

Bridging social capitals

³⁶² Polish JIM(2003). Retrieved April 14, 2004 from http://europa.eu.int/comm/employment_social/soc-prot/soc-incl/pl_jim_en.pdf.

³⁶³ Conv 840/03. Retrieved July 2nd, 2003 from <http://register.consilium.eu.int/pdf/en/00/st13/13649en0.pdf>.

³⁶⁴ “policies and functioning” under title III “Policies in specific areas”, chapter IV, section 3.

³⁶⁵ title V “unions external action”, chapter IV.

³⁶⁶ Position paper retrieved October 10, 2003 from <http://european-convention.eu.int/Docs/Treaty/pdf/870/Art%20III%20218-5%20Thorning-Schmidt%20EN.pdf>.

The Lisbon conference in 2000 declared the intention that Europe should become the most competitive and dynamic, socially cohesive knowledge economy by 2010. In this context emerged a discussion on new policy implications for the development of human and social capital in the current knowledge society (e.g. with key strategies to develop long life learning, mobility, social inclusion). Human and social capital - social networks and relationships operating at individual, at local community and at national level – represent together a key resource for sustainable development and capacities to cope with rapid economic and societal changes. Well-trained elites are not enough in this process; everybody needs to be equipped with skills to participate actively in society. The challenge is to ensure that the knowledge society is open and accessible to everybody with regard to training and education. But policy interventions need to deal take into account the complex balance between bridging and bonding social capitals- the links between different groups crossing various lines of social cleavage in contrast to the links within the groups similar in a group ‘identity’ linked to ethnicity, age, social class, etc. Research has identified volunteering as one means for greater social capital and positive outcomes for society if supported by policy (e.g. Millennium Volunteers in the UK). International voluntary service programmes have not been yet assessed for their potential to bridge social capitals in the enlarged European Union. However it implies that the impacts of volunteering for volunteers as well as their organisations are ‘measurable’. While research is in progress in this direction, the limited focus of governments on economic benefits of social capital represent still a barrier to develop integrated social and human capital policies into the broader sustainable development framework.

Policy interventions and social capital formation are interdependent. Roles and responsibilities as well as relationships between state, market and the third sector/ civil society need to be redefined and clarified.

Civic participation

The EC is currently in the process to develop a structured dialogue with the third sector. The EC defines this broad organisations spectrum of democratic societies as “organised civil society”. As outlined in the Commissions White paper “European Governance” (2001), organised civil society is very important for the further development of democracy and the well being of citizens for two reasons: firstly to express in public their opinions and to provide goods and services to those citizens that are marginalised or excluded in society. In the past years, the EC emphasised the development of organised civil society in the CEE countries in preparation of enlargement of the EU.

In particular, the EC underlined three important dimensions of civic engagement and active citizenship of people: -

- Allowing integration and full participation of the individual in society necessary for real and strong democracy;
- Meeting needs of people that neither the market nor the state is able or willing to serve
- buffering societal shocks in period of political, economic and societal transition and modernisation (Economic and Social Committee, 1999).

As no specific mandate for the development of civil society exists for the European Commission yet, all actions in this area need to be approved in the last years in unanimity by the Council. The recognition of voluntary activity in the frame of organised civil society is still at stake at national and European level.

The European Centre for Volunteering (CEV), an umbrella of 26 national and regional volunteer centres in Europe, launched in June 2003 a “manifesto for volunteering in Europe” in order to raise awareness of the European institutions for the sector, and to secure increased support for its development: at a social, legislative and financial level (with a Volunteer Centre Development Fund). It addresses several proposals like the development of an adequate legal framework for volunteers and the commission of a “White Paper on Volunteering and Citizen Engagement in Europe” to review its scale and importance and recommend action to ensure its continued success.

The EC launched at the moment of enlargement a new community action programme to promote active European citizenship for the period 2004-2006, based on the article 308 (Treaty of Amsterdam)³⁶⁷. This programme foresees the promotion of the values and the objectives of the EU. The programme wishes to bring citizens closer to the EU and its institutions and to develop a dialogue with its institutions. Other aims are to involve citizens more closely in reflection and discussion on the future Europe as well as to reinforce between citizens from different Member States. The programme outlines three fields of actions: annual grants to recognised European umbrella organisations³⁶⁸ and organisations (associations, federations, cross-industry trade unions, local community organisations) of European interest as well as to give project grants for activities in the field of active European citizenship (e.g. town twinning).

The EC expects to have a stronger mandate in the future with the approval of the EC constitution Treaty. Article 46 of the draft constitutional treaty on participatory democracy defines provisions for Union citizens and associations for structured consultations with EU institutions in all areas of actions at European level. The participation of young people in democratic life in Europe will also be part of the Union mandate. Waiting for the outcome of the European constitutional debate, no follow up programme beyond 2006 has been communicated yet. A draft programme is expected to be published in early 2005.

European citizenship

European citizenship was a programme goal in the frame of enlargement 2000-2006. As enlargement now happens, the question is how citizenship can be developed on the basis of various cultural background, social realities and demographic changes. European Citizenship is explicitly defined as complementary, giving an added value without replacing national citizenship. As low participation percentages in European elections and falling support for EU membership in recent opinion polls show, a European identity with the feeling of belonging to the Union and sharing values of solidarity and tolerance has not been yet achieved. With fostering the mobility of citizens, the EC aims that citizens discover new opportunities of a rich and diverse cultural heritage, but also identify common elements in their new developing European identity. These elements remain to be defined. In this context, national and international voluntary service may emerge as innovative and important new tool of social inclusion and active citizenship for young people in the rite de passage process from childhood to adulthood. The service programmes bring together people from different social realities, ages and cultures replacing the traditional institutions for social inclusion at national level - school and army – that both have changed significantly. In several countries like in France, military service was perceived as means for social integration and the apprentice of citizenship obligation. Will this be a new direction for youth voluntary service at European level?

4. Instruments at international level

While existing legal instruments at EU level regarding voluntary service for young people have no binding character, treaties on the international level such as in the case of the Council of Europe only bind those Member States, which have agreed to sign the document. Intergovernmental bodies such as the United Nations or UNESCO with a global agenda use the broader definition of voluntary activity including voluntary service as one specific form. In spite of the different definitions, both intergovernmental bodies, with their global agendas, have an important role in spreading information, exchanging good practice, developing public awareness, and encouraging legal and political recognition of voluntary service.

³⁶⁷ Article 308 says: If action by the Community should prove necessary to attain, in the course of the operation of the common market, one of the objectives of the Community and this Treaty has not provided the necessary powers, the Council shall, acting unanimously on a proposal from the Commission and after consulting the European Parliament, take the appropriate measures.

³⁶⁸ like: Our Europe Association, Jean Monet House, Robert Schumann House, Platform of EU social NGOs, European Council on Refugees + Exiles Association.

Council of Europe

The Council of Europe is an intergovernmental organisation focusing on human rights, the development of pluralist democracy and the rule of law. The Council of Europe helps to consolidate democratic stability in Europe with a focus on political, legislative and constitutional reforms. 45 member states belong to the Council of Europe, including all 15 states of the EU. All major issues other than defence are tackled. In this context the Council of Europe has developed youth policy in the frame of civil society development, active citizenship of young people and with a focus on the CEE countries.

The European Steering Committee for Youth (CDEJ) brings together representatives of ministries or bodies responsible for youth matters from the 48 States Parties to the European Cultural Convention. The CDEJ provides a framework for comparing national youth policies, exchanging best practice and drafting standard-setting texts, e.g. the Convention on Transnational Voluntary Service for Young People.

The CDEJ has considered since the end of the 80's voluntary service as an important tool for young people to become mobile and to become engaged in society. Several reports were elaborated to define legal obstacles to mobility for young people in the frame of voluntary service³⁶⁹. In this context the Recommendation No. R (94) 4 on the promotion of voluntary service aimed to prepare a draft convention on voluntary service of young people defining the rights and obligations of the volunteers and the institutions responsible for implementing voluntary service projects.

A stronger legal co-operation between Member States may be developed through European Conventions and Agreements decided by the relevant intergovernmental committee of Ministers. Each approved treaty is open for signature for Member States of the Council. But neither Conventions nor Agreements are statutory acts of the Organisation. A signature expresses the intention of the Member State to implement the treaty in its legislation.

Once a "Convention" or an "Agreement" is concluded, they have the same legal effect. Regarding voluntary service the *European Convention on the Promotion of a Transnational Long-Term Voluntary Service for Young People* ³⁷⁰ from 11th May 2000 prepares the ground for a proper legal status for volunteer in Europe. It includes two annexes:

- 1) a model of agreement for minimum standards to be signed by voluntary workers and the organisations (rights and responsibilities, information and training, social insurance cover, accommodation, leave and pocket money)
- 2) a model for certification of the voluntary service.

Both annexes are not compulsory parts of the treaty. The treaty needs five ratifications; including four Member States in order to enter into force. Only three EU member states (France, Luxembourg and the UK) have signed the treaty so far, as well as Turkey, Azerbaijan, Romania, and San Marino. The Convention defines the framework for long-term transnational voluntary service slightly differently to the EVS programme. No minimum or maximum periods of service are outlined and personal contribution of the volunteers or the families are admitted.

United Nations

In November 1997, the United Nations General Assembly declared 2001 as the International Year of Volunteers. Prior to this year the Millennium Summit with 189 Member States of the United Nations adopted in 2000 a declaration defining global challenges related to education, health, gender and poverty. The Millennium Declaration encourages different sectors of society to realize the Millennium

³⁶⁹ CDEJ(1988). Barriers to Youth Mobility (Dannemann Report), Strasbourg as well as CDEJ (1990). Summary report. Finally CDEJ(1993). Report of ad-hoc committee of experts on voluntary service of the CDEJ.

³⁷⁰ European Treaty Series - No. 175 of May 11,2000.

Development Goals (MDGs)³⁷¹. Voluntary engagement of local people through traditional systems of mutual aid and self-help is perceived as key tool as well as modern forms of service volunteering and activism.

United Nations Volunteers (UNV) became the international coordinator of the International Year of Volunteers (IYV). The main results of the year have been increased recognition, facilitation, networking and promotion of volunteering activity (defined as all voluntary engagement based on a free will without remuneration including part-time and informal forms (mutual help etc.).

On the European level, all EU Member states established national committees as well as the CEE countries Czech Republic, Hungary, Lithuania, Poland, Moldova, Romania and the Russian Federation. The IYV had considerable impact in several CEE countries, raising the political profile of volunteering and its contribution to the development of civil society. In the field of policy and legislation, the Czech law on voluntary service was adopted as well as a stronger infrastructure at national or regional level. (volunteer centres in Hungary and Poland). The UN General Assembly adopted a resolution as follow up of the IYV³⁷² asking stakeholders to support volunteerism as a strategic tool for economic and social development through a series of proposals. The Secretary General will report in 2005 to the General Assembly about the implementation of this Resolution.

UNESCO

UNESCO represents the 189 Member States particularly in the fields of global peace and security by international cooperation through education, science, culture and communication. Since its creation, UNESCO has promoted and supported youth volunteering in the form of *youth (service) camps* or *work camps*. The NGO *Coordinating Committee for Work Camps* (later on renamed *Coordinating Committee for International Voluntary Service* (CCIVS)) was created in 1948 under the auspices of UNESCO. The set up of a UNESCO Volunteer Corps and programme failed and the Volunteering Unit was dissolved in 1997. UNESCO aims to mobilise governments and other partners in favour of voluntary service for young people so that more programmes, projects, funding and other support will be available. Volunteering is perceived as opportunity for young people to become responsible actors in their society. On the basis of a Study on Youth Voluntary Service Worldwide³⁷³, UNESCO proposed to its Member States in November 2000 a revised approach. This specifies the recognition of the specificity of youth, the development of volunteering in new domains of action (environment, arts and culture, mediation, peace-building, human rights, projects for youth and marginalized groups), the integration of learning and training as essential dimensions of youth voluntary service programmes, and the focus on intercultural learning through volunteer exchanges. UNESCO aims to support youth voluntary service as an integral part of national youth policies, and to assist Member States in the elaboration of guidelines on the definition of the status of young volunteers, for example the introduction of a national 'youth volunteer card' which would provide similar advantages to a student card.

³⁷¹ The eight goals to achieve in the year 2015 are: Halve extreme poverty and hunger, Achieve universal primary education, Promote gender equality and empower women, Reduce under-five mortality by two-thirds, Reduce maternal mortality by three-quarters, Reverse the spread of HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases, Ensure environmental sustainability, Develop a global partnership for development, with targets for aid, trade and debt relief.

³⁷² A/RES/57/106 adopted November 26, 2002.

³⁷³ Trellu-Kane, M. (September 2000). Enquête sur le service volontaire des jeunes dans le monde, Unité Coordination de Jeunesse, Paris.

EU-Strategy	Instrument	Member states	Action/ Time
<i>Policy framework for further cooperation</i>	White Paper Open Method of Coordination	Youth Ministries: national coordinator for EU Youth Youth Ministries: Survey on voluntary activity	1) Member States: National reports 10/2003 2) EC: Common objectives 4/2004
<i>Programmes</i>	YOUTH/EVS New generation of Programmes	EC/National Agencies Youth Ministries/National Agencies: Consultation	2000-2006 EC: Draft Programme 7/2004 > Europ. Parliament
<i>Legis. instrument:</i> <i>Resolution</i> <i>Recommendation</i>	On added value of voluntary activity (14/2/2002) On mobility (7/2001)	National Action Plan Mobility	1)Member States: National reports 7/2003 2)EC: Synthesis 1/2004
<i>Incorporation into sectoral policies</i> DG Social Affairs	Social Policy	Volunteering/ youth voluntary service to combat social exclusion	1) Member States: NAP incl 2003-2005 in 7/2003 2) EC: Joint report in 10/2003
DG External Relations	Third Countries: UN volunteers/ Humanitarian volunteer Aid Corps	EVS in third countries for humanitarian aid	Member States: Approval of EU constitution
EU Presidency	Integrated civic service on EU level	Intergovernmental conference on Civic Service and Youth Conference on Voluntary activity	November 28-29, 2003 November 2004
XXXXXXXXXXXX	XXXXXXXXXXXX	XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX	XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX
Council of Europe	European Convention on transnational voluntary service 11/5/ 2000	Signature /ratification, so far France, UK, Luxembourg as EU Member States	Come into force with signatures of at least 5 Member tates
United Nations(UN)	Resolution for follow up of IYV	UNV programme for young people?	Report in 2005
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PART 3:

COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS

COMPARISON OF YOUTH CIVIC AND VOLUNTARY SERVICE IN EUROPE

The comparative analysis is based on the findings of the national reports of the five countries, the analysis of policy and programmes related to youth voluntary service at European level as well as the experiences expressed by stakeholders in the interviews in Italy, France and Germany. The comparison of five national civic service policies does not deal with a subject where there is a common understanding of civic service. So the comparison has to start by summarising the very different traditions and historical developments and then comparing practices in the countries.

The situation in Germany is characterised by well-established legal framework for national youth voluntary service programmes. Since 1964 more than 300,000 young people have been involved in such programmes³⁷⁴. The legal frameworks and national programme developments in regard to voluntary service in the four other countries are in comparison very recent. France and Italy have had volunteers under a national voluntary system since 2001 and Poland and the Czech Republic since 2003. Comparing results and impact of the schemes is therefore premature. Quantitative data is not available from some countries and the data categories do not always match. The quantitative data that is available for comparison relates mostly to compulsory national service schemes that either have been or are in the process of being phased out.

Looking at compulsory service/conscientious objection was beyond the scope of the initial study, but in the course of the national research it became necessary to look at compulsory civilian service programmes to understand the voluntary service policies that were/are replacing compulsory service as well as the strong differences between the countries.

The national reports provide detailed information on the current system describing full time voluntary service programmes in each country. In all countries, international voluntary service (with the exception of development aid) is a subcategory of voluntary civic service policy and can only be understood when the differences in the national voluntary service schemes are clear. Therefore, the differences between the policies and systems in regard to national voluntary service are compared first and then how these differences affect the international dimension.

The comparative analysis has two parts.

The first sub-section focuses on the different understandings of voluntary service, their history and the political motives behind the development of youth voluntary service in each of the countries concerned.

The second sub-section focuses on the differences in practical implementation of the programmes in each of the countries.

1. Understandings and purposes of voluntary service policy

Historical background and current situations of civic service

Although in the current public debate, the development of youth voluntary service policy in France, Italy and Germany (and to a lesser extent in the Czech Republic) is inextricably linked to the suspension of compulsory military service in these countries, the historical background behind each development is

³⁷⁴ Pressemitteilung Nr. 213/2004 of the Bundesministerium für Familie, Senioren, Frauen, und Jugend (German Federal Ministry of Families, Seniors, Women and Youth) on July 2nd, 2004.

different. Poland is the only country where the discussion on voluntary service runs largely independent from the discussion on military service as the number of conscientious objectors is small.

In Germany, a youth voluntary service was given a legal framework in the Voluntary Social Year law of 1964. Church welfare and then other organisations initiated youth voluntary service for young women 10 years before the law because of a lack of personal in the social sector. This was before the set up of compulsory military service (1955) and the civilian service alternative (1961). The legal framework of 1964 designed the youth voluntary social year as a programme combining social service with personal development and professional orientation through service with a non-formal education element. It was a *Bildungsjahr*. The participants in the programme were predominantly women. The figures (15,100 in 2003) remained low compared to the high number of conscientious objectors in the social sector (92,000 in 2003)³⁷⁵. While the main actors in the third sector reject a compulsory service for young people at the end of military conscription, the debates in Germany³⁷⁶ point out the uncertainty of participation of young men in voluntary social service programmes without obligation. International voluntary service in Germany goes back even further and has strong ideological connections to peace (see section following).

In Italy the development of a national voluntary service was strongly influenced by the expansion of conscientious objection/alternative service in the 1980s. A law established the possibility for conscientious objectors to do an alternative service in 1972. In 1985 the constitutional court decided that conscientious objectors could not be asked to serve longer than military conscripts (in all other four countries, conscientious objectors have/had to serve longer). In 1998 a new law decreed civic service to be a right for conscientious objectors. As a result of these decisions, the numbers of conscientious objectors increased strongly (from 7430 in 1985 to 44,342 in 2001³⁷⁷).

In contrast to Germany, where most of the volunteers work in social care institutions, in Italy they also work in local organisations, associations and local government-related projects. As military conscription exists until the end of 2004, the participation of women in Italy started only with the new voluntary service. Participation of men in the new service is still limited, as military conscription exists until the end of 2004. Thanks to generous government funding, the number of participants in the Italian national programme is higher in 2003 (22,390³⁷⁸) than the numbers of volunteers in the German programmes (17,640)³⁷⁹.

In France, the national service tradition is the oldest – dating back to the creation of a citizen's army imbued with revolutionary principles in 1793. Although conscientious objection was reluctantly recognised in 1963, in comparison with Germany and Italy, the number of conscientious objectors was always rather low (10, 218 or 3.96% of conscripts in 1995). This was in part because France developed several civil forms of national service in the field of international co-operation (1965), technical aid in overseas territories (1965), service in other public ministries (1976), in the national police (1985) and in civil protection (1992). Many of these were in public service. Thus there were other non-violent alternatives to service as a conscientious objector in the social sector. The understanding of service abroad included not only development aid but also promoting French economic and cultural interests through services in embassies, cultural centres and enterprises. In 1995, 22,626 young men participated in civil forms of national service compared to the 10,218 who objected to national service on grounds of conscience.

³⁷⁵ see Schur, W. (2004) .

³⁷⁶ see pages 16-17 of the report elaborated by the German Commission "Impetus on civil society" on perspectives of voluntary and civilian service in Germany. The report has been published by Bundesministerium für Familie, Senioren, Frauen, und Jugend (2004).

³⁷⁷ see Consorti, P.& Palazzini, L. (2004).

³⁷⁸ statistics of Ufficio Nazionale Servizio Civile (2004). *Volunteer in service 2003*.

³⁷⁹ 15,440 volunteers and 3200 conscientious objectors in the period 2003/2004 see Pressemitteilung Nr. 213/2004 of the Bundesministerium für Familie, Senioren, Frauen, und Jugend (German Federal Ministry of Families, Seniors, Women and Youth) on July 2nd, 2004 (p.2).

Because of the smaller numbers, the impact of conscientious objectors in the third sector was less than in Germany and Italy. And the few voluntary service programmes³⁸⁰ that existed never amounted to more than a few hundred full-time volunteers/year. Few third sector institutions in France had experience of youth service, whether compulsory or voluntary.

In Poland and the Czech Republic, the memory of “voluntary” service through the communist youth organisations is still vivid enough to influence discussions. Both countries use new terms to distinguish post-communist from pre-communist voluntary service. However, the two countries differ markedly in the number and role of conscientious objectors. In Poland the numbers are negligible; in the Czech Republic, alternative military service is very popular (48,500 young men³⁸¹ in 2002). In contrast to Italy and Germany, most of the Czech young men serve in public institutions such as hospitals and local authorities – tasks include building maintenance and street cleaning. While the Czech Republic will end compulsory service at the end of 2004, no decision on suspending/abolishing conscription has been taken in Poland.

France and Italy both only suspended military conscription. Both countries maintain the right of the state to expect citizens to defend the country by reinstating compulsory service at any time. In France, the new one-day training on defence matters, compulsory for all young French citizens³⁸², ritualises the right of the state to expect its citizens to defend the country. The building of citizenship is a main objective in the new Italian civic voluntary programme. It is not yet clear how Germany will decide on this aspect of transition from compulsory service/conscientious objection.

Conscientious objectors and volunteers in the different countries

	France	Germany	Italy	Czech Republic	Poland
Percentage of young aged 15-24 in the total population 2002	13%	11.4%	11.4%	14.6%	16.9%
Number of 19 years old young people in 2002 ³⁸³	772,600	939,500	660,200	149,600	654,000
Number of Conscientious objectors/ civil forms of mil'y service	26,332 (1999)	10,200 (2003)	85,000 (2003)	48,500 (2002)	No figures, but few in number
Number of volunteers in state-regulated programmes	3601 (2002)	17,800 (2003)	15,000(2003)	0	0
Percentage of young people/year involved in civic service ³⁸⁴	3.8%	12.8%	15.14%	32.4%	Negligible

The comparison of percentages of young people involved in civic service, voluntary and compulsory, shows dramatic differences between the five countries. Very few young people are involved in these services in Poland and France. While the percentage of young Italians is slightly higher than that of young Germans, both countries score at a similar level. Nearly a third of all young people do an alternative military service in the Czech Republic - noting that these figures take into account only young men! Young Germans and Italians are four times as likely to do civic service as young French. Young Czechs are more than 2 times more likely to do civic service than young German and Italians. Since the

³⁸⁰ such as Année Diaconale, Compagnons Bâtisseurs, Solidarité Jeunesse, Unis-Cité, ATD Quart Monde etc..

³⁸¹ Figure indicated by the Czech Ministry of Interior in the questionnaire on youth voluntary service in the Czech Republic.

³⁸² Rendez-vous Citoyen.

³⁸³ The figures are virtual. The lack of actual figures for one year was solved by dividing the EUROSTAT figures of young people aged 15-24 years in 2002 by 10 to come to an average number/year.

³⁸⁴ To get this percentage numbers of young people doing civic service and voluntary service were added up and divided by the number of 19 year olds (given in the first row). The real percentages may deviate by 2 or 3 per cent for the years in question, but these results remain valid for the comparison.

procedure for recognition as a conscientious objector was simplified in the 1980/90s in Italy, Germany and in the Czech Republic the decision for young men to do an alternative service is grounded less and less on ideological reasons (such as pacifism, religion). The situation in France and Poland is more complex. In Poland and France different ways existed for young men to complete their obligation to serve the nation. But the reasons for the different attitudes of young people to serve the nation in both countries deserve further research³⁸⁵.

Conscientious objection and costs of social service

With the end of military/civil service in Italy, Germany and the Czech Republic, there is a real concern about the loss of 'manpower' for local authorities and the third sector and the financial consequences for the delivery of social services.. In France, since there were fewer young men doing national service in the social sector, this is less of an issue and in Poland it is a non-issue.

The political emphasis in France in regard to the phasing out of compulsory service was on continuing the other forms of 'national service', including representing French interests abroad. An illustration of the order of priorities is that at the end of conscription, regulations for voluntary service in the military, international cooperation and humanitarian aid and civil defence, security and prevention had been published in time (December 2000, January 2001) to allow an uninterrupted transition to voluntary service schemes. The regulation to make the option of 'solidarity and social cohesion' operational was only published in July 2003.

In Germany state programmes for conscientious objectors and 'real' volunteers have co-existed for decades, with objectors and volunteers often working in the same placements. The recent amendments (2002) to the voluntary social year and alternative service laws allowing conscientious objectors to join the voluntary social and ecological year programmes are intended to build an administrative bridge between the two services in anticipation of an eventual phasing out of compulsory service. The connection is also seen as a means of staking a claim in advance on the funds currently spent on conscientious objectors for expanding voluntary civic service should there be a transition from compulsory military service to a fully professional volunteer army.

In Italy, the transition law on voluntary service is an attempt to do the same thing - to build a voluntary service infrastructure so that when conscription ends early in 2005, public authorities and the voluntary sector will be able to attract large numbers of young volunteers. The Italian government has been much more generous in funding the transition however, paying an allowance to some 22,390 young women and young men of 433 Euro/month in the new voluntary service in 2004. In Germany, the government only pays for the young men who perform their conscientious objection in the form of a Voluntary Social Year – and this is nothing other than the allowance they pay conscientious objectors normally.

Although the Czech Republic is phasing out compulsory military service and Poland is considering it, their recent laws on voluntary service are not an attempt to replace the activities of conscientious objectors. The laws are more closely linked to the development of civil society (see below).

The new laws or amendments to existing laws in the Czech Republic, Italy and Germany give strong emphasis to the 'voluntary' nature of service. They highlight support for non-formal education measures and personal formation of the volunteers during their service, a wider range of activities and a strong involvement of Third Sector organisations.

³⁸⁵ Polish students can shorten military service to 6 months. The procedure to reject military service in France was very simple but information was not disseminated to the public. It is also believed that a lot of young French men find ways to be exempted from military service, but there is a lack of detailed information.

Voluntary service and provision of social welfare services

As mentioned above, those countries with large numbers of conscientious objectors (Italy, Germany and to a lesser extent the Czech Republic) are faced with significant loss of manpower in the social welfare sector when military service is no longer obligatory. The promotion of youth voluntary service in these countries is therefore partly motivated by the need to engage young people in the social welfare sector.

Even where the involvement of conscientious objectors in the social welfare system has been less important, in the face of growing economic pressure and demographic changes voluntary service is increasingly seen as a means of improving quality in delivery of services. There is a trend in all countries towards giving greater flexibility and autonomy to NGOs in the delivery of social welfare services, and supporting the increased involvement of volunteers. This vision of voluntary service is a strong motivating factor behind the new laws in Poland and Czech Republic where the legal framework offers a means of facilitating greater cooperation between government and NGOs.

Voluntary service and youth unemployment

Voluntary service can contribute to providing youth with professional experience and training in the social or non-profit sector. It can also provide practical work experience that is useful in looking for a job. In these ways, voluntary service may increase employability of young people. Governments have been increasingly interested in voluntary service for this reason, although voluntary service organisations have been reluctant in all the countries researched to have voluntary service primarily defined as a means to combat youth unemployment.

Youth Unemployment

	France	Germany	Italy ³⁸⁶	Czech Republic	Poland	EU-15 prior to enlargement
Numbers in thousands/ (percentage of young people 15-24 years in population in 2002)	7,726 (13.0%)	9,395 (11.4%)	6,602 (11.4%)	1,496 (14.6%)	6,540 (16.9%)	46,821 (12.4%)
Total unemployment rate 1/ 2003	9.0%	8.6%	8.9%	6.8%	20.2%	7.9%
Unemployment rate young people under 25 years 1/2003	20.6%	9.5%	26.8%	16.1%	41.4%	15.3%

Data source: Eurostat News Release 35/2003- 20003, March 20

The unemployment rate among young people is more than double the national average in all the five countries except Germany. In Poland, over 41% of young people under 25 are without work. And regardless of the percentages, governments in all five countries consider the integration of young people into the labour market as a major political priority.

In all countries except France, voluntary service is being looked at as one way of doing this. In France, the former government combated youth unemployment by subsidising the creation of new jobs for young people in the public sector with the programme "Work for Young People"(Emploi-Jeunes). This strategy may partly explain the delay to set up the French voluntary civic service programme of social cohesion and solidarity. The exceptions in France are the voluntary civic service programmes for

³⁸⁶ October, 2002.

international economic and cultural cooperation abroad – previously existing as compulsory service alternative programmes. These have always been officially promoted as means of work qualification.

The „Voluntary Social Year“ in Germany was defined right from the beginning as a „Bildungsjahr“, a year of life education. Though the emphasis was on personal formation, this included professional orientation, especially in regard to a career in the field of social services. In 2001, the German government launched the ‘voluntary social training year’ as a new form of the voluntary social year because it felt not enough young people with less education and therefore at risk of becoming unemployed were participating in the existing voluntary social year programme. The Social Training Year is targeted at young people from disadvantaged backgrounds with a neighbourhood-based co-ordination and support system.

Poland has initiated a “First Job” programme in which voluntary engagement is one of several options for young unemployed. The Czech government supports a specific programme for young unemployed people to work four days/week as volunteers in an NGO or public authority and receive training on the fifth day.

It may be that Italy’s programme, by combining a monthly stipend of 443 € with a requirement of 25 hours a week minimum service (i.e. a volunteer could also study) may attract young people from lower income families especially in southern regions with higher youth unemployment. The fact that local municipalities know that they can provide national government-funded placements for volunteers may encourage this development.

The main motivation behind each of these initiatives is increasing the employability of young people at risk. The criticism of voluntary sector organisations is that what are essentially training or make-work programmes are being referred to as ‘volunteering’ simply because they focus on work in fields that are within the non-profit sector.

Voluntary service and social inclusion

If youth civic service is administered according to the same general guidelines as youth work in a country, then the national frameworks for youth voluntary service have to be open legally and practically to all young people legally resident in a country. France and Italy by restricting the national voluntary service to citizens, exclude young people from third countries legally residing in the country, persons with refugee status, etc. In Germany, in addition to the voluntary social training year programme already mentioned, the law was amended in 2002 to lower the minimum age. This was to enable a higher participation of young people with lower secondary education qualifications who generally leave school at age 16. New activities were also introduced (such as the voluntary social years in culture, sports and the preservation of historic buildings) to encourage their participation. In addition, there are several federal or regional funded programmes to attract participation from young people from immigrant families, refugees and “Aussiedler” (persons of German ethnic origin who have come to Germany from Eastern Europe under the law of return). None of the national programmes require the young person to make a financial contribution, in part to avoid excluding young people on economic grounds.

However, in all countries better-educated youth tend to be over-represented in the national as well as in the international programmes. They have better access to information (internet, newspapers), are less afraid to leave friends, families and their neighbourhood for a temporary stay in another place or country and are in general more confident e.g. with regards to language skills. Also their families are more likely to see the voluntary service as contributing to a curriculum vitae and finding a job than is the case with low-income parents. Friends and families also tend to be more understanding of their motivation to ‘volunteer’.

The European Voluntary Service has an explicit inclusion policy with regard to young people from disadvantaged backgrounds. However, the percentage of these young people in the programme remains low, in spite of several multi-lateral pilot programmes from 1997-2003. The French National Agency launched in 2002 a pilot programme with additional national funding to involve a higher number of such

young people in short term EVS³⁸⁷. But it is questionable whether a European level programme that currently has funds for only 3,500 people/year (not only for less advantaged) can have any real impact on this issue³⁸⁸.

Interest of young people in international voluntary service

International voluntary service is an attractive option for many young people because it combines individual development (language, international and professional experience) with the feeling of ‘making a contribution’.

Demand for EVS placements has increased steadily since the launch of the YOUTH programme in 2000. National Agencies in most countries now have to reject many applications. Demand is also high for international placements inside the frame of the German voluntary social year and ecological year. Many candidates are rejected. Even those programmes outside these state frameworks, which normally require a participation fee and in which volunteers and their families cannot claim the financial benefits of the state programmes (e.g. continuation of family allowance) are heavily oversubscribed. Both French international programmes, especially the ‘volunteers in enterprises’, have a high number of well-qualified candidates applying³⁸⁹ (15,000 since 1st of January and 130 on average every day). While the programme is increasing (2001: 984 volunteers, 2002: 1790 including 194 extensions), places available cannot meet the demands. Organisations in Poland and Czech Republic are still in the phase to become accredited and the focus of implementation is in the country. No reliable information is therefore available. Four Czech organisations have so far been accredited. Two of them are youth organisations, one of them is a catholic organisation and the forth is accredited as the Czech focal point of UNV volunteers within the framework of development aid. While demand among Italian organisations and volunteer candidates to develop civic service abroad increases, participation is limited so far because of delays in payment of volunteer allowances. 640 volunteers were sent abroad in 2003.

Voluntary service and international solidarity

Comparisons between the five countries with regard to international voluntary service policy necessitate distinguishing between different kinds of international voluntary service.

Volunteers for development aid

The governments of all five countries support programmes that send professionally trained and skilled volunteers to work in less-developed countries. In the past, the Czech Republic, Poland and other Central and Eastern European countries sent aid volunteers, both through socialist bloc and their own programmes and through the United Nations Volunteers. They are developing such services again today. In France, Italy and Germany this form of volunteering could/can also be done as a form of national service when national service was/is compulsory.

These programmes and others like them in Europe (Voluntary Services Overseas –UK, the Netherlands Volunteers) or the United Nations Volunteers focus on sending persons to fill needs that cannot be met in that region or country from qualified nationals. The placements are often for two years and more. Most

³⁸⁷ The pilot project was co-funded by the DIV (Délégation Interministerielle de la Ville) in 2002/3 in order to give supplement funding for pedagogical support to young people from disadvantaged backgrounds going abroad for short term services in the frame of EVS. 15 French organisations were approved to send and receive volunteers (for details: see Becquet, V. (2004). Youth Civic and Voluntary Service in France).

³⁸⁸ Complex administrative procedures at national level, delay of approvals, lack of knowledge of sending and hosting organisations on how to deal with these young people and insufficient financial support of organisations for preparation, supervision and follow up, see: Schröer, R.(2003). Voluntary Service: Opening doors to the future, AVSO, Brussels, and AVSO, EIP, Envol and Creative Cooperations (2003). Recommendations to work with young people from disadvantaged backgrounds, AVSO, Brussels.

³⁸⁹ 56 % have spent five years or more in higher education, 28% have 3 or 4 years, 10% have 2 years and 6% have no 18+ education (see Becquet, V. (2004).

of the programmes do not have an upper age limit. The number of people applying to them each year far exceeds the number of placements available.

When politicians and the general public think of International Voluntary Service it is usually this type that is mentioned. But this kind of international voluntary service is not something broadly accessible to young people 18 and up who want to serve because of its professional nature and the limited number of places available.

The form of international voluntary service that this study deals with is voluntary service that can be accessible to young people on the same basis as national service. Therefore, it has not studied the development aid volunteering policies of the countries in detail. All the countries studied have legislative frameworks for such voluntary service, generally as separate laws. In addition they had/have provisions in their national service laws for young people to be development aid volunteers.

Looking at one aspect of these policies, minimum and maximum age, highlights this ambiguity. Although all the countries studied set the minimum age of participation in international voluntary service at 18 years (except Poland which has no minimum or maximum age), in regard to development aid volunteering, there are few 18 to 23 year olds who are actually sent because they are unlikely to have the professional skills and experience looked for in development aid. Data from the French programme for international solidarity shows that 45% of participants are aged 25-29 years (45% in 2002)³⁹⁰. Only a small proportion (5%) is aged between 20 to 24 years.

The Czech Republic law, because it is a law on voluntary service in general (not only youth voluntary service) sets no maximum age for participants, while France and Italy's youth voluntary service laws set it at 28 years in their youth service legislation, and Germany at 27 years. In the laws on development cooperation of these countries no maximum age is mentioned. And the EVS programme restricts participation to young people between 18 and 25 years³⁹¹.

Volunteers for international understanding and solidarity

International voluntary service to further international understanding predates the development of national civic service schemes. The earliest form – work-camps for international reconciliation -, were first held in 1919 in France. This tradition of international service through short-term projects done by a group of volunteers from several countries has continued until the present day. It came wholly from the third sector and was focused on breaking down cultural barriers, reconciliation of peoples who had been at war, and promoting an ethic of peace and non-violence. Though the form was taken over for a time in the 1930's by various governments, especially fascist ones, for national voluntary and compulsory work programmes, the work-camp movement re-emerged after World War II. The international networking that has developed through the work-camp movement has played and continues to play a role in defining perceptions of international voluntary service in many countries. This is particularly true in France, Germany, and Italy. In the Czech Republic and Poland the short-term work camp is relatively well known, both by young people and by local communities who are usually the hosts because in the 1970s and 1980s international work camps were one of the few forms of international exchange where Poles and Czechs could meet young people from Germany, Italy, France and other countries.

Full-time longer-term voluntary service was developed in particular by German peace service organisations in the 60s and 70s in order to achieve reconciliation and international solidarity. A further development of international voluntary service for international understanding are individual placements for 6 months or longer that give equal weight to the learning experience of the volunteer and the service of international understanding. He/she should do something useful, but they don't have to be

³⁹⁰ See FONJEP statistics in: Becquet, V. (2004).

³⁹¹ The proposal for the new YOUTH programme proposes the extension of the age group up to 30 years. One argument to extend the programme to young people of this age is the idea to connect EVS stronger to solidarity actions of EU programmes linked to humanitarian aid and development work. This scenario takes into account the position of NGOs for development work being opposed to the idea to involve unskilled and inexperienced persons in these areas.

professionals nor are they expected to provide expertise not available locally. The definition provided in the EU-legislation setting up the European Voluntary Service includes as objectives: help young Europeans become more mobile, and hence more active European citizens, provide them with a formative experience in several areas of activity, encourage them to make an active contribution to building Europe and to co-operation between the Community and non-member countries by taking part in international activities of benefit to local communities³⁹².

It is this form of voluntary service that this research analyses in detail. All the countries provide frameworks for young people to go abroad to serve in programmes of international solidarity, though, as indicated above, the French legislation seems to have been written with development volunteers in mind. The Czech Republic and Italy also provide substantial funds for these activities, Germany less so, and France and Poland not at all. The Czech Republic's law also takes seriously young people coming to the country to serve, providing detailed consideration of various legal issues and requiring organisations to prove their capacity to support and guide foreign volunteers. The French law provides that French citizens and citizens of a „member state of the European Union or the European Economic Area“ may participate in the new voluntary civic service in France, but it appears to have been more of a gesture to a European equal access principle than a serious international solidarity policy. Especially, the exclusion of anyone not a citizen of an EU/EEA country suggests this. Germany doesn't mention foreign volunteers in the law, but has a visa regulation allowing for anyone from any country to apply to do a voluntary social year/voluntary ecological year on the same basis as German volunteers. Based on information from organisations hosting volunteers, this universality is being practiced. Poland also foresees foreigners volunteering in Poland within international organisations.

National voluntary service and European integration

All of the countries are members of the EU-YOUTH programme of which the European Voluntary Service is a part (Action 2). Although all have designated organisations to function as national agencies and have young people going and coming within the EVS, it is striking that with the exception of France none of the five countries has integrated the European Voluntary Service into their national volunteer frameworks. Only France mentions EVS as a compatible form for doing national voluntary service in the law. It also appears that the EVS programme in France could be integrated into the national voluntary service under the category social cohesion and solidarity since activities and projects are similar. But differences exist between the France law and the EVS frame conditions in details like age, length of service, levels of allowance to be received, etc. and compatibility may be harder to realise in practice (see section 5.2.).

In Germany, the national agency decided that no EVS- applications would be accepted either for hosting or sending if they were also recognised for the Voluntary Social/Ecological Year. Reasons given were varied, ranging from double funding because the government puts some funds into both programmes (The voluntary social/ecological year placements do get some government funding for pedagogical support, between 71-100 €/month - much less than under EVS.) to lower pedagogical standards in the Voluntary Years (the pedagogical standards in FSJ were not considered up to those of the EVS in regard to intercultural training, etc.). But financial reasons of another sort surely played a role as well as the number of applications for EVS funding was far higher than the budget available.

When government officials in Italy responsible for EVS and the National Voluntary Service were asked about the compatibility of the two programmes the answers were both negative, albeit for different reasons. The Director of the EU-Youth Programme in the Ministry of Labour, responsible for the EVS in Italy said “there is no connection between EVS and international voluntary service.” Further, and interesting since it is this ministry that represents the Italian government in strategy sessions in Brussels, “EVS can be a tool to develop European engagement but this is not our goal.” The General Director of

³⁹² see for further information in the annexe the outlines of the European Voluntary Service for Young People Programme 1998-2000.

the National Voluntary Service office also confirmed, that “there is no connection between EVS, international voluntary service and civic service.” He perceived EVS as “not a communitarian activity, but a cultural exchange programme.” He suggests building on the experience of the Italian civic service in order to establish a new broad-based European civic service. There appear to be very different opinions of the further development of EVS in these two branches of the Italian government dealing with international voluntary service.

Although there was an agreement between the French and German governments in 1999 on the mutual recognition of their youth voluntary services³⁹³, this has not resulted in any exchanges actually taking place. The reason for the delay may well lie in the different national understandings from which the services come mentioned in above.

2. Implementation of voluntary service schemes

Statutory Frameworks

France, Germany and Italy have specific statutes for different forms of voluntary service, including laws on youth voluntary service, rather than a general law integrating all forms of voluntary service/activity. There have been initiatives in Germany and France to create a more general framework but these have failed so far. Poland and the Czech Republic have more general laws that do not set a maximum age limit, and are therefore frameworks for voluntary service policy in general, not just youth voluntary service.

Government administrative responsibility

Different Ministries are responsible for youth voluntary service in each country: the Ministry of Social Affairs in Poland; the Youth Ministry in Germany; the Ministry of Interior in the Czech Republic; the Office for National Service in Italy. In France responsibility for each of the four different forms of civic voluntary service is divided according to which Ministry is responsible for which sector. The result is responsibility shared among at least 15 ministries. For:

- “Civil Defence, Security and Prevention” it is the Ministry of Interior-,
- For “Economic Cooperation”, the Ministry of Economy, Finance and Industry-,
- For “Cultural and Social Cooperation”, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs-,
- And for “Social Cohesion and Solidarity”, the Ministry of Social Affairs.

As activities under “Social Cohesion and Solidarity” are possible in various fields, 12 ministries are concerned with its further implementation.

Further, the Ministry of Defence, in addition to responsibility for those wanting to volunteer in the military, is responsible for the defence preparation day, participation in which and registration for which is a prerequisite for applying to do a national voluntary service. This day is supposed to inform young people about all the forms of national service open to them. The Youth Department of the Ministry of Education and Research is involved only as one of the 12 ministries who are concerned with implementation of the social cohesion and solidarity form of service.

Ministerial responsibility for national voluntary service programmes and the EU-YOUTH programme including EVS is separated in most of the countries. EVS and national programmes are managed by separate administrations and rarely communicate or cooperate. The example of Italy has already been quoted. Even in Germany, where the Ministry for Family, Seniors, Women and Youth is in charge of both, responsibility is divided between a department responsible for civic engagement under which the

³⁹³ ‘Declaration sur le volontariat civil’ during the summit in Vittel, France on November 10, 2001, between the governments of France and Germany.

Voluntary Social Year falls and the international youth exchanges department for the programme EU-YOUTH.

As the French voluntary civic programme of social cohesion and solidarity is only operational since January 2004, it will be interesting to see if the number of French-German voluntary service exchanges will develop as foreseen in the declaration on mutual recognition of youth voluntary service between both countries.

Programme management: relationship between the state and civil society

In Italy, the contract is signed between the National Office (the state) and the volunteer. In France, the contract is signed between the volunteer, the state and the associations.³⁹⁴ This involves the Italian and the French state more actively in the organisation and supervision of the programmes than in the three other countries where volunteer agreements are based on private contracts signed between the volunteer and the organisation. The French and Italian requirements reflect the understanding that the new legislation has universalised national service, now including women as well as men but that national service has been continued, not replaced.

In all countries the state accredits organisations either for sending and/or hosting according to specific requirements. (see below on accreditation of organisations).

The countries have different approaches to relations between the state and civil society organisations. In Germany, the six umbrella structures at the federal level that represent the programmes of the Catholic and Protestant churches, the Red Cross, Workers' Welfare, International Social Work federation and independent welfare organisations make up the Federal Working Group on the Voluntary Social Year (Bundesarbeitskreis Freiwilliges Soziales Jahr – BAKFSJ). This body is the official negotiating partner with the federal government. A similar body has been set up for the Voluntary Ecological Year but with a much broader membership because the ecological sector does not have the same kind of sector federations. Proposals for any new legislation are discussed with these groups.

For international voluntary service in Germany (except for development aid)³⁹⁵ there is no one umbrella structure with a comparable role. On the other hand, with the increasing number of foreign volunteers being hosted within the voluntary social/ecological year programmes and the increase in the number of young Germans doing an international voluntary service as a voluntary social/ecological year, the BAKFSJ will de facto play this role to some extent in the future.

In Italy, the National Conference of Institutions for Civic Service (Conferenza Nazionale degli Enti di Servizio Civile – CNESC), founded in 1986 to negotiate with the state on conscientious objectors, is acknowledged by the National Office on Civic Service as “our institutional movement of cooperation with all non profit organisations”³⁹⁶. As in Germany, the major welfare federations are all members of the CNESC.

In France, there is no one structure comparable to those in Germany and Italy. The government was instrumental in creating COTRAVAUX; the umbrella organisation for international work-camp organisations (1959), but the new national voluntary civic service is something that few of its member organisations deal with. As in Germany and Italy, the development aid organisations founded an umbrella organisation Liaison Committee of Volunteer Sending Organisations (Comité de Liaison d'Organisations Non-Gouvernementales de Volontariat –CLONG-Volontariat) in 1979 and it deals with the government relative to aid workers. There is also the Committee for national and international relations of youth and

³⁹⁴ If young people from abroad combine the French service with EVS, the European Commission signs the contract with the associations.

³⁹⁵ The representative platform for development aid is in Germany “Learn & Help Overseas” (Lernen und Helfen in Übersee e.V.).

³⁹⁶ M. Palombi, Head of the National Office for Civic Service in the interview with Prof. Consorti, fsee Case studies of the National Report Italy .

popular education associations (CNAJEP- Comité pour les Relations Nationales et Internationales des Associations de la Jeunesse et de l'Éducation Populaire), a structure representing 74 associations and federations in the field of national and international youth policy. The Comité de Coordination pour le Service Civil (CCSC) represented the interests of organisations hosting conscientious objectors. The politically most influential group to represent French civil society in the debate on national voluntary service is the National Council of Associations (Conseil National de la Vie Associative - CNVA), but it is not comparable in membership or function to structures in Germany and Italy..

In Poland and the Czech Republic, formal structures acting as advisors to the government with regard to the implementation of the laws have recently been established. The Polish Ministry has appointed representatives of public administrations, local governments and NGOs to a Council of Public Benefit Activities. The Accreditation Committee in the Czech Republic, composed of representatives of nine different ministries as well as the Government Council of Non-State Non-Profit organisations recommends accreditation of sending organisations in the country and acts as an advisory body. The National Volunteer Centre (Hestia) in particular has been active in making representations in regard to international voluntary service, in part because it itself acts as a sending organisation under EVS.

The relatively strong structures for national voluntary service in Italy and Germany may also reflect the degree of subsidiarity practiced by the governments there in regard to contracting out or transferring monies to the third sector to do welfare activities. Voluntary service infrastructures may come into being more easily there because of the experience of lobbying together on other third sector issues.

Uniquely, in France the economic cooperation programme defines placements in French companies abroad as volunteer placements. In the French programme for social and cultural cooperation, diplomatic missions, consular posts, school and cultural establishments as well as international and national NGOs abroad can also benefit from youth voluntary civic service. Most of the other countries surveyed would consider these programmes to be internships or other kinds of international traineeships. While the other four countries and EVS restrict placements for volunteers to the non-profit or public sector, the French understanding of national service sees the for-profit sector as a cooperation partner for the development of international youth voluntary service.

Activity areas of voluntary service

Because Poland's law deals with volunteering in general (Law on public benefit and volunteerism), it is the most inclusive, listing 24 areas where volunteers can serve, including activities to encourage European integration and the development of relations and cooperation among nations.

The German law on the Voluntary Year has been steadily expanded in the last 10 years so that in addition to the original areas of social welfare; children and youth services, education and health care, environment, preservation of historical buildings and monuments, culture and sport have been added. Not all of these fields have been open to conscientious objectors in the past, for example education.

The Italian law names three sectors with a longer list of permitted activities in each one: public aid with care and rehabilitation, social reintegration, prevention; environment and civil protection; and culture and education. All of these can be done in Italy or abroad.

The Czech law recognises three main areas for voluntary service: activities against social exclusion, natural catastrophe relief and humanitarian aid and development aid.

In France the legislation provides for volunteering in three main areas: defence, security and prevention; international cooperation and humanitarian aid; and social cohesion and integration. There is a list of 16 specific activities under the last category including everything mentioned in the German, Italian and Czech laws and other activities, for example mediation and conciliation, and activities against rural depopulation.

Italy and France also mention also civil protection as an area of voluntary service, including auxiliary police and fire fighting. Civil protection in Germany is allowed as a form of civilian service but not under the voluntary year legislation. The German government has not yet indicated what it will do with the civil defence area if compulsory military service is abolished.

In regard to international service, it is striking that all countries mention catastrophe relief, development and humanitarian aid, but have little or nothing to say about the forms of service for international understanding. Poland alone mentions activities for the sake of European integration and development of relations and cooperation among nations³⁹⁷. The French programme of international volunteers in enterprises identifies other tasks for young people: research for and prospecting of new international markets, technical or commercial reinforcement of local business teams, the search for partners, agents or distributors and the creation or set up of local structures. It is not yet clear if the other forms of international service were thought of in France under the category of social cohesion and integration. The Czech law refers to activities against social exclusion for domestic and international volunteering.

Duration of service

The duration of recognised international service varies. All countries allow services between 6 and 12 months abroad. The Czech Republic's legislation recognises 0-3 months as short term and more than 3 months as long-term service. Germany sets the duration at 6-18 months, Italy at 5-12 months and France 6-24 months with a provision allowing for one extension of service. Poland and Czech Republic both don't fix a maximum length of service³⁹⁸.

Accreditation of organisations

The process of accreditation of sending and/or hosting organisations has two dimensions what level of public administration is responsible and what kind of organisation is to be accredited.

In regard to **level of administration**, in the Czech Republic the Ministry of the Interior is responsible for administering the law. Organisations in Germany apply to the federal state (Bundesland) ministry in charge of voluntary social year (welfare) or of voluntary ecological year (environment) for approval of their activities in that state. Each state has the power to enact its own laws regarding accreditation. Although they have generally followed the provisions of the federal law on Voluntary Service passed in 1964, they are not bound to do so, sine the voluntary year (as an Educational year) is in the arena of education and within the competences of the states.

In Italy, for the transition phase 2002-2005, the central office/institution deals with the applications. The role of the Italian regions and the self-governing provinces will strongly increase in the process after January 2005. The regions and provinces will then have stronger decision-making powers on the legal and financial aspects of the national voluntary civic service.

In France, some French organisations may be accredited as coordinating organisations at the national level by the Ministry of Social Affairs for the new programme of civil voluntary service of social cohesion and solidarity. However, the majority of organisations in France will have to deal with the regional administrations for each placement and volunteer they wish to host. Polish organisations need to apply at the national court register to be accredited as organisations of public benefit under the national law, a precondition to work with volunteers in the frame of the national law.

³⁹⁷ Poland defines in the law 24 areas of public tasks, where volunteers can work. No distinction exists between domestic and international volunteering.

³⁹⁸ Both countries deal in the law simultaneously with part time voluntary work that may be unlimited in duration.

The administration model established for EVS is one in which an expression of interest to be a hosting placement has to be approved by the national agency in the country and reviewed by a committee of the European Commission in Brussels. For a volunteer to be sent to an approved placement, parallel applications from the sending and hosting organisation have to be made to the national agencies in their respective countries. Only if both approve the application will the exchange take place. The lack of communication/consultation between national agencies regarding the establishment of specific national priorities³⁹⁹, delays in approval and limited funding increasingly result in projects being approved on one side and rejected on the other. International management becomes particularly confusing, if projects with the same volunteer task profile of organisations with offices more members in different countries are treated differently by different National Agencies⁴⁰⁰. The Youth Unit of the EC has recognised this problem recently and has proposed changing the current management of the programme⁴⁰¹. For a programme with 3,500 volunteers per year, public administration costs are too high procedures are too complex and there is no security of when approval on both sides will be given to enable time planning for the sending and host organisations of an exchange.

In regard to what kind of organisation is to be accredited, in the Czech Republic, Germany, Italy and Poland, it is a coordinating organisation placing volunteers, in France and the EVS it is the placement and the specific activity in the placement. In the EVS, co-ordinating organisations are approved separately and in addition to their placements.

Pedagogical support

All programmes require preparation and training for the volunteers. The German Voluntary Year legislation requires a 25 day compulsory non-formal education component for both inland and abroad. The days are spread out across the year. There must be three “seminars” – group events of at least 5 days each as part of this. For sending volunteers abroad a preparation and evaluation is necessary, where at least 15 days of this must take place in Germany.

The EVS has more detailed conditions of pedagogical support. There must be a project tutor/mentor, a compulsory on- arrival and mid-tem seminar in the host country. It also encourages pre-departure and re-entry training events in the sending country, though these are not compulsory. The content must include information about volunteers’ rights in EVS, intercultural learning, and a European dimension. Depending on the decision of the national agency responsible, the training will either be performed by trainers appointed by the national agency or the co-ordinating organisation will be allowed to do it. There are no common approaches to this issue across the EVS system among the national agencies. At the moment it is virtually impossible for a volunteer to participate in an integrated training programme of an international network that would begin prior to departure, continue through her/his service and end with her/his re-entry. It is blocked by the local autonomy of the national agencies.

The Italian legislation currently in force requires a minimum of 25 hours of training in a year. The training has to include a section relating to the national service and a section relating to the specific project. However the state will only contribute to training costs if at least 25 hours during a year of service are offered. The decree of 2002, due to take effect in January 1, 2005, requires at least 100 hours of training for a year of service. The French, Czech and Polish legislation only mention the obligation of the organisations to prepare and train the volunteer appropriately but do not go into more detail. Italy, Germany and EVS offer financial support for the training dimension through lumps sums per volunteer/month of service.

³⁹⁹ see national priorities for Germany in 2004: www.jugendfuereuropa.de/programm/europfrew/foerderprioritaeten

⁴⁰⁰ as in the case of the Czech-German Youth office with two offices in both countries; Both applied for EVS to host a volunteer from the other country. One application succeeded, the other failed. Luckily the project was accredited by the German youth ministry in the frame of Voluntary Social Year Programme.

⁴⁰¹ The proposal is that only one National Agency will decide on the application.

Legal status of volunteers

The national frameworks of all five countries define the situation for volunteers and organisations in-country and, to a lesser extent, abroad. None of the legal frameworks give a legal status to EVS volunteers that is compatible with the national systems. While adequate social protection is desirable for volunteers during their service, this becomes particularly complex and difficult if the provisions for international volunteers (volunteers sent abroad/hosted from abroad) with regard to social security differ from country to country. The following table – although incomplete- presents the different situation for volunteers in national regulated services with regard to the aspects of unemployment, pensions, child and family allowances, orphan's pension etc.

International volunteers with regard to social security & welfare allowances in state – authorised programmes

	France	Germany (voluntary years)	Italy	Czech Republic	Poland
Social security (health, accident benefits and fees paid into state systems)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social security payments for: (health, accident, professional indemnity,) to be provided by hosting organisations • May be partly refunded by the state (for health) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social security (health, pension, accident, nursing care, unemployment) must be provided by German organisation (whether host or sending. • (fee is currently 41% of value of living allowance, accommodation and food) • In case of voluntary ecological year fee may be paid by the state government responsible 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social security (health, accident, third party liability) provided by National Office for Civil Service and from hosting organisations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Civil liability insurance • Health insurance abroad provided by sending organisation, refunded partly by the state 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Polish & foreign volunteers covered under National health scheme, if no other international agreement • Accident insurance for service periods of not more than 30 days paid by hosting organisation
Living Allowance / pocket money	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 570.86 EUR/month provided by host organisation, may be higher for placements abroad • specific allowances for clothes, food accommodation, can be part of the agreement • No government subsidy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pocket money up to set maximum , work clothes, food, accommodation must be provided by host organisation • No federal, but sometimes some state subsidies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allowance: 433 EUR/month (600 EUR in case of service abroad) provided by National Office for Civic service • For abroad, also 2x travel to and from place of service paid by government 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Volunteers are not entitled to remuneration 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organisation must reimburse travel costs and other costs related to service and training, • Volunteer can agree to exempt the hosting organisation from travel costs and per diem payments
Child/Family allowance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continues for disadvantaged youth only 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Child allowance will be paid (also for EVS) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not expected 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • continued 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Family allowances suspended if the volunteer goes abroad for more than three months

	France	Germany (voluntary years)	Italy	Czech Republic	Poland
Resumption of unemployment benefits after service	No			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Unemployed volunteers in CR can receive unemployment benefits, if abroad - payments are suspended until return 	Suspended
Payments into unemployment funds	No	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> must be paid by hosting organisation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Unemployment insurance paid by Ministry of Labour 		
Payments into state pension funds	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Counts for pension entitlement. Payment will be covered by the state 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pensions paid by hosting organisation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Counts for pension entitlement. Payment covered by the state 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> if service exceeding 20 hours/week: sending organisation pays pension contribution at 1 minimum basis, refunded by the state 	No
Income tax/ payroll tax deduction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Exemption from taxes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Parents can claim tax reduction Must make tax declaration but generally remains under taxable threshold 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Must make tax declaration but generally remains under threshold 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Payments received above are exempt from income tax 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Payments mentioned above are exempt from income tax

All countries have requirements for insurance coverage against illness, accident and civil liability, except Poland where accident and civil liability are not required.

Allowance (stipend, pocket money) - in France fixed allowance of 570.86 EUR is to be paid by the host organisation. The monthly allowances for volunteers in EVS range from 140- 220 EUR depending on the country, paid by the European Commission through the responsible national agency. In Italy the allowance is 450 EUR for service in Italy and 600 EUR abroad paid by the National Office for Civil service. In Germany each organisation can set its own monthly allowance to a maximum of approximately 270 EUR⁴⁰². There is no minimum that must be paid. The current average across all organisations is 153 EUR. In France, Germany, and Poland the organisations and/or the volunteers must fund the allowances. The law of the Czech Republic does not entitle the volunteer to any remuneration, but to the reimbursement of costs for accommodation and food and travel, if they arise in connection with the voluntary activity. Poland treats the reimbursement of expenditures in the same way, but allows payment of a per diem amount as well. The amount is not specified.

While France, Poland and the Czech Republic declare that the payments are exempt from **taxation**, Germany and Italy ask that volunteers declare the allowances on their tax returns. But practically, unless the volunteer has received income from other sources (e.g. investments, paid work in the same taxation year), in both countries the total income will remain under the taxable threshold.

For **child or family allowances**, Germany and the Czech Republic allow them to continue, France only in the case of disadvantaged youth, and Poland for up to three months.

Unemployment benefits are maintained in the Czech Republic while in the other countries they are suspended or lost if young people go abroad⁴⁰³. There are similar differences if young people participate in the EVS programme. For young people and/or their families with limited financial means, the loss of state benefits or the entitlement to them is often a major disincentive to participating in voluntary service.

The situation regarding **contributions to pensions and unemployment insurance** highlights the differences in volunteer status. In Germany the volunteers are treated the same way as workers and vocational trainees and the organisation responsible for them in Germany has to make contributions for them to all the funds in the German social security system (unemployment, pension, care). In Italy and France, the state allows voluntary service to be counted for the state pension scheme with the state covering the cost of the contributions, but volunteers are not considered as workers or trainees and therefore no unemployment contributions are requested from the organisations. The Czech state requires pension contributions but reimburses the pension fund contribution partly for volunteers working more than 20 hours/week. While the Act does not require hosting organisations to pay an unemployment contribution, unemployed people involved in accredited volunteer programmes can themselves continue to pay in to the system and thus maintain their right to unemployment benefits. Also, volunteers who are unemployed maintain their social status as unemployed because the state considers the recognised voluntary activity similar to job seeking.

There is an inconsistency in governments requiring organisations sending and receiving volunteers to pay the same social contributions for them as is the case in Germany, but in the absence of bilateral agreements between national administrations recognising voluntary service this is the situation.

⁴⁰² Legislation considers a sum of pocket money appropriate if it does not exceed 6 per cent of the contribution assessment limit valid for the Workers' and Employees' Pension Insurance (§ 159 of the Sixth Book of the Social Code). The contribution limits were fixed in 2002 at a monthly rate of 4,500 (in the Western part of Germany) and 3,750 (in the Eastern part of Germany). The amount paid to the volunteers by the host organisation/project should not exceed this amount and is generally lower see Schur, W. (2004).

⁴⁰³ While the situation is particular difficult for young volunteers abroad, the problematic is more general: the suspension or loss of benefits occur also for volunteers in domestic programmes that remain outside the law. In some countries organisation are obliged to remain outside the law because they are not able to pay the high social security premiums like in Germany or can't apply like Czech associations basing activities on their members as volunteers.

Validation/recognition of experiences

The voluntary service programmes in France, Germany and Italy are promoted to some extent as means of getting professional experience. France facilitates the access to civil service employment by pushing age requirements back for those who do national service. Italy gives volunteers credit points for public employment exams and provides some places for ex-national volunteers as state foresters and in the national Fire fighting force.. The National Civic Service office is co-ordinating an agreement with the Ministry of Education and the Association of University rectors to improve the recognition of national voluntary service academically. Only a few universities give credit points for academic studies to ex-volunteers at the moment. In Germany, voluntary service completed under the two laws may count as waiting time for university as well as for required pre- or in-study internships for certain studies e.g. in the social work or health fields. The Czech Republic and Poland have not yet specified any recognition.

The national service certificates as well as the European certificate issued within the frame of the EVS are not sufficiently recognised. Partly the problem is due to the lack of visibility of international volunteers. Employers and institutions don't consider non-formal education experiences such as intercultural learning in international voluntary service programmes to have the same value as a formal education though this may be changing.⁴⁰⁴

Financial support for voluntary service

While politicians in all the countries recognised the value of voluntary service for society, the degree of state support varies greatly. These variations raise questions about the real priority of voluntary service in some of the countries and therefore about the practicality of obtaining the changes needed to enable exchanges between the countries.

The French state reimburses the cost of social insurance and counts the time of service for an individual pension entitlement. Social insurance costs are in most countries covered or reimbursed by the state, except in Poland and in Germany. The German government paradoxically finances social security costs for conscientious objectors but not for "real volunteers" in the social or ecological year and these payments, plus health insurance premiums are about one third of the total cost of a volunteer placement. Germany, the Czech Republic and Italy support some of the costs for non-formal education and training, but only the EVS provides enough money to cover these substantially. Italy is also the only country to finance a monthly living allowance for the volunteer as well as the international travel costs, as does the EVS programme. The Czech Republic does this indirectly for unemployed by recognising voluntary service with an accredited organisation as an equivalent activity to job seeking for the service period, thus allowing the volunteer to continue to receive unemployment benefits. Public funding or lump sums to be used for living allowances, accommodation, food and training (EVS model from 1998 until 2000) represent a significant support for voluntary service.

The current EVS funding (travel, pocket money and lump sum) usually accounts for 50% or less of the total cost of a volunteer, depending on the distribution policy of the national agency in a country. The Italian state funding appears to amount to around 80% of funding for a national placement and 76% for one internationally. In both schemes, demand for places is exceeding supply. The rapid growth in demand for EVS and for the Italian voluntary service indicates that there is a critical minimum amount of government funding needed for voluntary service to "take off" as an option for young people.

State support is important to stimulate programme development as well as to guarantee quality standards. But projects will always need to look for additional funding resources from private sources - from business, from volunteers and their families and from the general public. The Robert Bosch Foundation provided substantial support for the development of voluntary service through partnerships between

⁴⁰⁴ see increasing recognition of employers in the Staufenbiel Institute Survey of 1999, footnote 5.

organisations in Germany and ones in Central and Eastern Europe from 1999 until 2004. Since funding in the third sector is most often a mix of public and other sources, policy frameworks need to allow space for this to happen; for example to allow private contributions to not for profit organisations offering voluntary service to be tax deductible or not to prohibit the volunteer her/himself contributing financially if they are financially able and willing to do so. The current EVS programme forbids asking the volunteer to pay a fee. NGOs in the Czech republic pay tax on all income received. The legislation in Poland gives a volunteer the right to demand reimbursement of costs and a per diem, though he/she can waive this right. Such restrictions make the development of integrated and multi-sourced funding strategies more difficult.

Information and publicity campaigns

The greatest success of the EVS has been the publicity campaign that has accompanied it. It has reached young people, organisations and government officials who had not heard of voluntary service. The discussions on voluntary service in the new and prospective member states of the EU were stimulated by the knowledge that the EVS existed. EVS-funded contact-making seminars and training events provide opportunities for more organisations to become aware of the programme. That demand greatly exceeds funds available in most EVS programme countries is a sign that this campaign has been effective.

To launch the National Voluntary Civic Service, the Italian government initiated a huge public media campaign with newspaper articles, posters, flyers and television and radio advertisements. The aim was to establish an image of the new programme among young people and organisations at large. The numbers applying for the programme started slowly, but have steadily increased. The majority of young people responding to the first calls represented women from the south of Italy with good education and without employment. Also a number of organisations and local authorities from the south became involved as a result of the campaign.

No public campaign has been launched for the new French programme of volunteers for social cohesion and solidarity. French NGOs have to promote this voluntary service opportunity themselves. They are not invited to the one-day meetings compulsory for all young French and organised by the Ministry of Defence where the new national service is presented. This contrasts sharply to several media initiatives of the government with regard to the volunteer in enterprises programme (press release, articles and meetings with enterprises and ex-volunteers) and the financial support of the state for the national office for the economic and cultural cooperation programmes.

In Germany, the Ministry developed a detailed information brochure that was translated into English, French and Turkish to reach new groups of young people (young people from abroad and young people with migrant background in Germany), but in general the public awareness of voluntary service has not changed substantially. After 40 years of existence about 18% of German youth don't know that the voluntary social/ecological year opportunity exists⁴⁰⁵.

⁴⁰⁵ Shell Study 2002, see Schur, W. (2004).

PART 4:
RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Best practice in regard to developing voluntary service for international understanding

The previous section compared the countries studied and European level policy in regard to service within the countries as well as the provisions made in each country for international service.

For this section only those aspects relating to international voluntary service will be considered. The method used here is to identify the best practice and to point out the weaknesses. The stand point from which these judgements of effectiveness are made is the assumptions mentioned in Part 1, Research Aims and Objectives.

Understandings of Voluntary Service for international understanding - the best policy context is that contained in the EVS enabling legislation⁴⁰⁶. The national policies studied give little or no context for international voluntary service. The exception is when their legislation deals development aid voluntary service and this is probably because of the foreign policy aspects of development aid. In the case of France, the legislation also deals with the context for volunteering in enterprises in other countries, but in the opinion of this research team, this kind of service should not be included in a definition of voluntary

⁴⁰⁶ **European Voluntary Service Programme for Young People 1998-2000:** Action Programme

OBJECTIVE

To help young Europeans become more mobile, hence more active citizens, provide them with a formative experience in several areas of activity and encourage them to make an active contribution to building Europe and to co-operation between the Community and non-member countries by taking part in transnational activities of benefit to the community.

CONTENT

The Community action programme "European Voluntary Service for Young People" has been adopted for the period from 1 January 1998 to 31 December 1999.

The programme comes under the general aims of co-operation policy on youth as laid down in the Youth for Europe programme. It is intended to foster solidarity and mobility among young Europeans, and hence help them become more active citizens, and provide them with a formative experience, for which a certificate is issued.

The specific aims of the programme are as follows:

to step up participation of young people legally residing in a Member State in long- or short-term transnational activities for the common good within the Community or in non-member countries; these activities should not be a substitute for potential or existing remunerated jobs;

to encourage recognition of the value of an informal formative experience for which there is a validation system at European level;

to encourage the spirit of initiative, creativity and solidarity amongst young people in order to promote their integration into society and to help them contribute to achieving the programme's aims;

To this end, action is being taken primarily to:

support transnational activities for the common good within the Community and in non-member countries;

support activities designed to promote partnership in the framework of the voluntary European service and pioneering networking measures;

support projects for following up of the young volunteers and capitalising on the experience gained by them;

support and develop the preparation - especially in respect of language and culture - and supervision of young volunteers;

upgrade the quality of the programme's activities as a whole, develop the European dimension and contribute to cooperation in the field of youth policy.

A special effort will be made to ensure that the programme's activities are accessible to all young people on a non-discriminatory basis.

A particular effort must be made to help young people who, for cultural, social, physical, economic or geographical reasons find it most difficult to participate in the existing action programmes.

service for international understanding.⁴⁰⁷ There is no movement in France to remove it, however, because, as this research comparison has shown, the French law defines national defence to include the promotion of French interests abroad and the civic society connotations of the word „voluntary“ stated as assumptions in section 1, are not part of the general understanding of national service in France.

Access - The assumption in part 1 is that International Voluntary Service is something that should be open to all and indeed needs to allow many more to participate in it. There are formal and practical barriers to open access. A good policy deals with both.

Formal - citizenship - nationals & non-nationals - Best practice – Germany allows German citizens, foreigners with resident status and refugees allowed to stay in Germany to participate in the programme, as well as nationals of all other countries who come for the purpose of doing a voluntary social/ecological year - for whom there is a special visa regulation. This is the most comprehensive framework of the countries studied. Having a visa status for participation in the voluntary year greatly simplifies the process for all concerned.

Practical - minorities, less-educated, lower income, physically disabled, unemployed - Best practice – The EVS policy of allowing organisations to apply for additional funds for young people with fewer advantages is the only programme where additional support is explicit. It is weakened by needing two national agencies to agree each year. This and the “each person is a project” micromanagement approach don’t allow international organisations and partnerships to develop longer-term strategies for reaching large numbers of young people. Research conducted on projects trying to get larger numbers of less-advantaged to participate in EVS⁴⁰⁸, shows that facilitating close co-operation between youth workers of both sending and hosting organisations and allowing networks of sending and hosting organisations to develop expertise through working with larger numbers of less-advantaged youth is necessary for success with these groups.

Where governments express the wish to have broad participation and provide monies to enable it then it does happen. Reducing the minimum age for the Voluntary Social Year in Germany sent a clear signal to the co-ordinating organisations to make efforts to reach young people leaving school earlier. The percentage of volunteers from this group has increased as a result. The Voluntary Social Training Year has also reached youth at risk. However, neither of these has been applied to international placements yet. In Italy, the decision to provide a generous monthly stipend and other benefits, provided funding can be provided to meet demand, may make the programme attractive to youth from regions of high unemployment. These measures are producing results for service within the country. The effect on applications from less-advantaged youth for international service, aren’t known yet. However, given the experience in EVS of the need for extra support to enable them even to consider international service, it is reasonable to assume that for the five countries’ policies of international service to be inclusive, extra support will be necessary.

Implementation

Legal framework - The best general legal framework for voluntary service for international understanding at the moment appears to be that of the Czech government. It explicitly covers both Czechs serving in their own country and abroad, and foreigners coming to the Czech Republic. It does not set an upper age limit, and so deals with issues such as taxation, etc. that are not age-specific and allows for the development of intergenerational programmes.

Government administrative responsibility - Best practice is to have a lead ministry responsible for all framework legislation relating to voluntary service, both national and international. Then, for the promotion of voluntary service to a particular age group or in a particular area of engagement, the

⁴⁰⁷ Becquet, V. (2004).

⁴⁰⁸ Schröer, R.(2003). Voluntary Service: Opening doors to the future, AVSO, Brussels.

appropriate ministries can be responsible. Best practice here is in the Czech Republic where the Ministry of Interior is responsible for all accreditation issues, with an advisory body from other ministries and ministries can develop promotion policies in their respective areas. The EVS does not fall within the act or the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Interior however. In Poland, the Ministry for Economy, Labour and Social Affairs is also clearly the lead ministry. In the other countries, responsibility is more blurred and especially in France and Italy, where the relevant framework is national service for youth as part of national defence and the ministries of defence are still involved, the confusion is likely to continue.

Duration of voluntary service - The Czech and Polish legislation set no minimum and maximum periods. This approach allows different forms of international service to be covered within one frame which is helpful for organisations offering international service opportunities of different lengths and types. It may also enable more coherent approaches to residency and visa issues.

Activity areas - The Polish legislation and the French under social cohesion and integration are the broadest. They include social and cultural activities. Although the activity areas were perhaps not defined with international service specifically in mind, such definitions allow for the maximum diversity and flexibility in finding placements for foreign volunteers and in sending volunteers. The Italian legislation is almost as inclusive and specifically allows service abroad to be done in all of the categories mentioned. The Italian, French and Czech frameworks specifically allow service with local authorities as well as with non-profit organisations.

Accreditation of organisations - At what level of administration should the accreditation take place? Best practice appears to be the Czech Republic. The Czech legislation provides a clear and detailed process for accreditation at the national level, including an advisory body that includes third sector representation to make recommendations. Choosing a best practice here is complicated by the tension between central and regional government control over activities in the voluntary sector. In the other four countries studied, responsibility for accreditation is at a regional level. A similar tension is created at the European level by the decentralisation of decision-making to the national agencies in the EVS. In regard to regionalisation, in Germany the federal states (Bundesländer) have the jurisdiction to pass laws on the conditions organisations need to fulfil to be accredited including those wishing to send/host volunteers internationally. Most of the states are using the pre-existing federal legislation as a guide.

What kind of organisation should be accredited? A key value for good administration anywhere and especially for a policy with a high value on accessibility must be simplicity and quickness in processing applications and placements. It seems logical to conclude that systems that try to control each volunteer and each placement directly cannot be cost efficient, simple or quick. Where they try to do so without employing more staff, increasing delays and arbitrary decisions are the result. Of the systems reviewed, the European Voluntary Service and the French attempt such intensive micromanagement. The EVS has received increasing criticism as a result. Best practice - the German and Italian approaches focus on accrediting co-ordinating organisations (Träger in German) with the possibility of spot checks on placements the organisations co-ordinate. A similar approach is being started in the Czech Republic. Provided the system allows for new co-ordinating organisations to be created, there should be no reason to worry that a small local project would not be able to find a source of volunteers (one of the reasons given for the EVS micromanagement model).

Non-formal education and pedagogical support – best practice - the German voluntary year legislation sets broad objectives and controls these predominantly through prescribing the number of days volunteers must be in training as a group. The EVS also indicates core themes to be dealt with and requires an on-arrival and mid-term seminar be held. A combination of the two approaches would seem to be the most appropriate. However, rigidity about form, as in Germany, can exclude forms of voluntary service where the volunteers serve as a group and the learning and doing are mixed on a daily basis. And in the EVS, the absolute power that each national agency has to decide who will do a training prevents international organisations or networks of national organisations from working together to develop and deliver their own training. Another approach, used by the EVS national agency in Germany, is to allow organisations to do their own training subject to them meeting minimum criteria in terms of numbers of volunteers and countries represented and submission of a training concept. This will be one of the more

difficult areas for the reconciliation of national standards, yet if encouraging the development of new networks of international and European co-operation of civic society organisations or perhaps municipal networks (partner cities) is desirable, it will need to be dealt with.

Legal status - There is no one country that has the best practice here in all categories. Generally, there seems to be a consensus that voluntary service is not work and therefore that payments into unemployment funds should not have to be made, but that someone who is receiving unemployment payments at the start of her/his service should have them suspending during but be entitled to receive them again upon termination of the service. Further family and other allowances should continue on the same basis as if the person were a student or family dependent.

Validation and recognition - Recognition of voluntary service is most established in Germany but only in terms of internships in certain fields. The Italian national office's efforts to have voluntary service recognised for university credits through the Ministry of Education and the University rectors seems a good way forward. Recognition of service for public sector jobs is done in Italy and France. Recognition in business and in other professions is a challenge in all countries.

Financial Support - it is hard to determine if there is an optimal level of state funding. Obviously, a part of the interest in the Italian national voluntary service and the EVS is the amount of funding provided per volunteer. However, if the demand greatly exceeds the funding available in the two schemes (and this is definitely now the case in regard to EVS), the principle of access for all will have to be changed to a more and more exclusive selection process (or even a lottery).

Information and Publicity – Best practice - both EVS and the Italian National Civic Service show that a constant multimedia campaign carried out over several years can establish a programme image in the public eye. But without careful management of funds so that demand is met, public support can be lost if the value of “open to all who want to serve” becomes contradicted by the numbers refused because of lack of money. What is promoted must be deliverable.

Developing a European Policy on Civic Service - The analysis shows the necessity to extend the exchange of practice and understanding between EU member and European institutions. A common approach would be helped by clarification of terms and values for youth voluntary service. The first intergovernmental conference in November 2003 in Rome showed how understandings of youth civic voluntary service still differ. A first step to clarification and transparency could be the publication of the answers to the EU questionnaire on voluntary activity on the websites of the national youth ministries with an English translation. This has been done in the Czech Republic⁴⁰⁹.

Governments need to think of how there could be common national and European recognition/certification of voluntary service experiences. For example, international voluntary service with certain common standards for the non-formal education elements could be certified as a period of intercultural education for academic credit. Incompatibilities in legal status and the treatment of volunteers in regard to social insurance issues need to be identified and solutions found. The development of common standards and procedures could be helped by European level training events of civil servants from the national ministries/administrations.

The creation of an independent European observatory on civic service

- composed of independent experts on national and international voluntary service, the observatory would follow trends in different countries, identify incompatibilities and to report on implementation and impact of programmes. Statistical data could be collected under conditions of anonymity from individual volunteers, persons served and organisations.

⁴⁰⁹ The answers to the questionnaire can be consulted on the website of Hestia, the Czech national volunteer centre see www.volunteer.cz.

- The observatory might also initiate research on long-term impact of voluntary service on volunteers, on persons served, on host communities. Long-term impact research could be done on the personal and professional development of volunteers after their service, the level of ex-volunteers' participation in civic society, the effect on communities who hosted foreign volunteers, etc.

Validation of existing European instruments and implementation in the national context

Several international agreements exist at the European level that could support the development of voluntary service, but implementation at national level has not taken place. The instruments are either unknown, their value is ignored or they have not taken into account.

The European Convention on the promotion of a Trans National Voluntary Service for young people⁴¹⁰ sets out the parameters of a legal status for volunteers in Europe. Promulgated by the Council of Europe in 2000, the treaty needs one more signature from an EU member to begin the ratification process and to come into force for the countries that have signed. Of the five countries studied, only France has signed the convention. Another instrument is the EU-Recommendation for Transnational Mobility to remove obstacles to freedom of movement for educational and vocational training programmes with a European dimension. It makes suggestions about how EU member states could harmonise the status of volunteers with regards to right of residence, employment law, social security and taxation, including the effective elimination of double taxation.

2. Further research

A multipurpose data gathering and analysis system to assess the role of youth voluntary service as an instrument of: youth policy, welfare policy, citizenship, job skills acquirement, etc. The analysis showed that the development of youth voluntary service is being linked to needs in various areas: transformation of welfare states, citizenship education social integration, skills training for unemployed, etc. While research has been carried out to look for assessments by volunteers and to a smaller extent by organisations of voluntary service, studies assessing the long-term impact of voluntary service (after 5-10 years) on all stakeholders are lacking. A common system to collect base line data from the beginning to enable researchers to track long-term effects would be very useful. Further research will be needed to define criteria for data gathering to measure these developments.

The role of international voluntary service in the promotion of European/global civil society

Voluntary service is in all countries connected to the development of the third sector. A European civil society with active people and infrastructure that is more than the sum of member states' civil societies is developing. The assumption of the organisations engaged in promoting international voluntary service is that young people who have volunteered internationally contribute to this process by being aware of cultural differences, being able to speak foreign languages, having developed friendships with people in other countries, etc. They are bridging social capital.- The thesis is plausible, but there is no research dealing with large enough numbers of participants and with control groups to be reliable.

Forms of voluntary service

What are the relative values of the various forms of voluntary service in reaching specific goals? For example, in terms of developing intercultural sensitivity and a sense of solidarity, what is the impact of a young person's participation in a 3 week group work-camp experience as opposed to the experience of a 6-12 month individual volunteer placement in another country? How do these compare with the experience of someone who studies at a foreign university or who works abroad for a year? How much difference does serving away from home (whether in one's own country or abroad) make in the maturing process of a young person? Are there any substantial differences?

⁴¹⁰ European treaty series- No. 175 of May 11, 2000.

Non-formal education

How does the experience of someone who takes part in a voluntary service programme with an organised non-formal education process involving periodic group reflection differ from the experience of someone who is more or less on her/his own in a placement (with supervision in the placement) for a year? Does the second alternative result in the development of more independence, more self-confidence? If there is a difference, how great is it?

Social inclusion, bridging social capital

To what extent do international voluntary service programmes contribute to these goals? To what extent does a voluntary service involving working with other ethnic and social groups inside one's own country produce similar results?

Cost effectiveness

A comparative analysis of financial costs of the different voluntary service programmes surveyed was not possible because the information was not available or could not be gathered and analysed in the time available. A follow up of gathering basic information comparing costs for pocket money, food and accommodation, social protection etc. could be to evaluate the costs of non-formal education (support before, during and after the service, supervision of projects) in comparison to the added value to the quality and outcomes of the service for the volunteer.

An international lexicon

- of the key notions about volunteering should be established to clarify terminology and concepts.

Further national research and international comparisons

Other countries (e.g. the UK, the Netherlands) are also setting up voluntary service initiatives in their countries. The development & comparison of voluntary service approaches being developed in new member states of the EU is of particular interest.

Effect of initiatives to create new civic service programmes

New initiatives to develop voluntary service programmes are being undertaken in Lithuania and Romania. To see how such policies develop in particular societies research could be started in the Balkans, in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Montenegro and FYR Macedonia where there are also some initiatives

Citizenship

Since developing a sense of citizenship is central to discussions most of the countries studied, research is needed to assess the relationship between voluntary service and citizenship -evaluating the service's impact on the volunteers' understanding of the individual's relation to the state, civic society and her/his responsibility for dealing with social needs of their community directly. Do the results match the expectations?

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PART 5:

ANNEXES

Executive Summary

Abstract

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

I. OBJECTIVES

The study aims to understand the legal, financial and administrative framework of youth voluntary and civic service that is being developed in France, Germany, Italy, Poland and the Czech Republic. Through comparison of the national developments and programmes, the study identifies the major incompatibilities for international youth voluntary service and pinpoints to what extent these can be overcome through policy developments adopting good practice and through measures at the European level.

II. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

There was no research hypothesis as such, but a set of research questions:

- 1. How can national frameworks develop legal, administrative and funding compatibility in order to expand significantly international voluntary service opportunities for young people?*
- 2. What policy developments in the Member States are necessary in the mid and long-term future for generating international voluntary service opportunities?*
- 3. To what extent do EU political or legislative instruments facilitate the development of international voluntary service for young people in the countries studied?*

III. METHODOLOGY

The methodological approach was developed and continually reviewed by the research team, comprising practitioners from the voluntary service sector and academics from the social and political sciences. The Association of Voluntary Service Organisations (AVSO) coordinated the study.

Italy, France and Germany were selected because they have either recently ended their compulsory military service for young men or discussions are underway to do so. Each country has established new frameworks or has amended existing ones for national voluntary service for young people. The national research partner (and member of the research team) carried out the research in each of three countries.

In view of EU enlargement, the team expanded the scope of the study to Poland and the Czech Republic. Both countries adopted legal frameworks to promote volunteerism in 2003.

The study consists of five elements: -

1. Country reports on Italy, France, Germany, the Czech Republic and Poland

- Tradition and policy context for youth voluntary/civic service as an element of civil society development.
- Description of the current system.
- Impact of voluntary/civic service.
- Analysis of the quantitative data.
- Links to EU Policy/programmes (EVS).

2. Interviews with stakeholders in Italy, France and Germany on their perspectives.

3. Analysis of the EU legislation, policy and programming relative to international volunteer exchanges.

4. Comparative analysis of the five countries (section V of this summary).

5. Recommendations based on best practice (section VI of this summary).

IV. LIMITATIONS

Limited financial resources and a short time frame for the research from May 2003 to August 2004 restricted the team from exploring all the issues that affect the development of youth service in the five countries. A complete picture of the different forms of voluntary service developed by all non-profit organisations in each country could not be provided. The research on Poland and the Czech Republic relied wholly on English and German documents and on interviews conducted in those languages. The impact of the recent legal changes regarding youth voluntary service is examined only until April 2004⁴¹¹. There have been further developments since then.

V. RESULTS

The level of public debate in the five countries is quite different. While voluntary and civic service have a clear place on the political agenda in Germany and Italy, seven years elapsed in France between the presidential announcement of the creation of new forms of civic voluntary service and the activation of the regulations in the framework of social cohesion and solidarity. The situations in Poland and the Czech Republic are strongly influenced by the negative experience of 'voluntary' work that was imposed on the population under the communist regime. The impetus to establish youth voluntary service in the latter two countries comes mainly from the need to establish co-operation between the government and the growing non-governmental sector in the social field.

In all countries, international voluntary service (with the exception of development aid) is a subcategory of voluntary service policy. Therefore it can only be examined once the differences in the national voluntary service schemes are understood. The comparative analysis focuses on the different **understandings** of voluntary service, their history and the political motives behind the development of youth voluntary service in each of the countries concerned, as well as on the differences in **implementation** of the programmes.

V.1. Understandings and purposes of voluntary service

Historical background of voluntary service

The development of a youth voluntary service policy in France, Italy and Germany (and to a lesser extent in the Czech Republic) is inextricably linked to the suspension of compulsory military service. However, each one manifests a particular historical background. Poland is the only country where the discussion on voluntary service runs independently of the discussion on military service, as the number of conscientious objectors is small and there are no immediate plans to suspend compulsory service.

Youth voluntary service for young women was initiated in **Germany** beginning in 1954, first by Church and then other welfare organisations at a time when personnel in the social care sector were lacking. It began before the set up of compulsory military service (1955) and civilian service (1961). The first legislation, on voluntary service, in 1964 and amendments in the decades following, designed the youth voluntary social year as a programme combining social service with personal development and professional orientation through a guided non-formal education process on a group basis. Made up predominately of young women, the figures of (15,100 in 2003) remained low compared to the high number of conscientious objectors in the social sector (92,000 in 2003). While the main actors in the third sector reject a compulsory service for young people after the end of military conscription, there is uncertainty about the participation of young men in voluntary social service programmes when they are not obliged to do so.

⁴¹¹ The Italian report covers developments until July 2004, the report on the Czech Republic presents the situation until August 2004.

In **Italy** the development of a national voluntary service was strongly influenced by the expansion of conscientious objection/alternative service in the 1980s after the right for conscientious objectors to do an alternative service was first established in 1972. In 1985 the constitutional court decided that conscientious objectors could not be asked to serve longer than military conscripts (in all other four countries, conscientious objectors have/had to serve longer) which made the alternative more attractive. In 1998, a new law considered civic service as a right for conscientious objectors. The numbers of conscientious objectors increased strongly (from 7430 in 1985 to 44,342 in 2001).

In contrast to Germany, where most of the volunteers work in the field of social care, in Italy they work also in local organisations, associations and local government-related projects.

In 2001, a law creating a National Civic Service for youth was passed. The participation of women in Italy started only with this new voluntary service. Since military conscription will exist until the end of 2004, participation of men is limited to those not drafted for medical or other reasons. Thanks to the generous government funding, the number of participants in the Italian national voluntary civic service programme is higher in 2003 (22,390) than the numbers of volunteers in the German programmes (17,640).

Particular to the evolution of national civic service in Italy is its relation to understandings of articles of the Italian constitution referring to concepts of equality, solidarity and personal fulfilment through working for the common good. Not only legislation but also decisions of the constitutional court on the subject of civic service and voluntarism have played a role in shaping the current service. As recently as July 18th, 2004, the constitutional court declared that civic service was a legitimate way to defend the homeland – formerly understood as only possible by bearing arms.

In **France**, the national service tradition is the oldest – dating back 1793 and the creation of a citizen's army imbued with revolutionary principles. Although conscientious objection was reluctantly recognised in 1963, the number of conscientious objectors was, in comparison with Germany and Italy, always rather low (10, 218 or 3.96% of conscripts in 1995). In contrast, within the compulsory service, France developed several civil forms of service - in international co-operation and technical aid in overseas territories (1965), service in other public ministries (1976), in the national police (1985) and in civil protection (1992). This alternative developed more than conscientious objection possibilities in the social sector and other third sector activities. The understanding of service abroad included not only development aid but also promoting French economic and cultural interests through services in embassies, cultural centres and business enterprises. As a result, in 1995, 22,626 young men participated in civil forms of national service compared to 10,218 who objected to national service on grounds of conscience and served in the social sector.

Because of the smaller numbers, the impact of conscientious objectors in the third sector was less than in Germany and Italy. And the few non-governmental voluntary service programmes that existed (for both women and men) never amounted to more than a few hundred full-time volunteers/year. Therefore fewer third sector institutions in France have had experience of youth service, whether compulsory or voluntary, than in Germany or Italy.

In **Poland** and the **Czech Republic**, the memory of “voluntary” service through the communist youth organisations is still vivid enough to influence discussions. Both countries had to find new terms to distinguish post-communist from pre-communist voluntary service. However, the number and role of conscientious objectors differ markedly in both countries. In Poland the numbers are negligible; in the Czech Republic, alternative military service is very popular (48,500 young men in 2002). In contrast to Italy and Germany, most of the Czech young men serve public sector institutions such as hospitals and local authorities. Their tasks include building maintenance and street cleaning. While the Czech Republic will end compulsory service at the end of 2004, no decision on suspension/abolishing conscription has been taken in Poland.

Involvement of young people in civic service

A comparison of the percentages of young people involved in voluntary/civic service shows dramatic differences between the five countries. Very few young people are involved in these services in Poland and France. While the percentage of young Italians is slightly higher (15%) than of young Germans (13%), both countries show a similar level of participation. Nearly a third of all young people do an

alternative military service in the Czech Republic and these figures take into account young men only. In Italy, Germany and in the Czech Republic, the decisions young men take to do an alternative service are based less on ideological reasons (pacifism, religion) than before, since the procedures for recognition as conscientious objectors were simplified in the 1980s/1990s. The situation in France and Poland is more complex. In Poland and France, as mentioned above, different ways existed for young men to complete their obligation to serve the nation.

Conscientious objection and costs of social service

In Italy, Germany and the Czech Republic, there is a real concern about the loss of 'manpower' for the third sector through the end of compulsory military or civilian service and the financial consequences for delivery of social services. In France, since there were fewer young men doing national service in the social sector, this is less of an issue and in Poland it is a non-issue.

While the political emphasis in France with regard to the phasing out of compulsory service was on continuing the other forms of 'national service' including the one representing French interests abroad, the recent amendment in Germany and the transition law on voluntary service in Italy anticipate/ prepare the phasing out of compulsory service, in Italy by January 1, 2005, in Germany at a date not yet decided. In Germany, funds currently spent on conscientious objectors can now be used to allow the expansion of voluntary service (but only for young men) while Italy is building up a voluntary civic service public image and infrastructure so that when conscription ends in 2005, public authorities and the voluntary sector will be able to attract large numbers of young volunteers. The Italian government funds the transition generously, paying an allowance to some 22,390 young women and men of 433 Euro/month in the new voluntary service. The German government pays the monthly stipend, social insurance and other expenses only for the young men who perform their conscientious objection in the form of a Voluntary Social Year – representing the amount of the allowance they normally pay conscientious objectors. For young women the government funds none of these costs. It does make a contribution of about 70-90 Euro/month/volunteer for the non-formal education part of the programme.

Although the Czech Republic is phasing out compulsory military service and Poland is considering it, their recent laws on voluntary service are not an attempt to replace the activities of conscientious objectors. The laws are more closely linked to the development of civic society. The new laws or amendments to existing ones in the Czech Republic, Italy and Germany strongly emphasize the 'voluntary' nature of any service. They highlight non-formal education and personal support to the volunteers and their personal training. All of the countries allow a wider range of activities and a stronger involvement of not-for profit third sector organisations than was the case with conscientious objection.

Voluntary service and provision of social welfare services

The promotion of youth voluntary service in Italy, Germany and to a lesser extent in the Czech Republic is partly motivated by the need to recruit young people in the social welfare and care sectors. Even where the involvement of conscientious objectors in the social welfare system has been less important, voluntary service is increasingly seen as a means of improving delivery of services in the face of growing economic pressure and demographic changes. There is a trend in all countries towards giving greater flexibility and autonomy to NGOs in the delivery of social welfare services and supporting the increased involvement of volunteers through them. This vision of voluntary service is a strong motivating factor behind the new laws in Poland and Czech Republic where the legal framework offers a means of facilitating greater cooperation between government and NGOs.

Voluntary service and youth unemployment

The unemployment rate among young people is more than double the national average in all the five countries except Germany. In Poland, over 41% of young people under 25 years of age are without work. And regardless of the percentages, governments in all five countries consider the integration of young people into the labour market as a major political priority. In all countries except France, voluntary service is being looked at as one way of doing this. A strong motivation behind each of these initiatives is

increasing the employability of young people at risk. The criticism of voluntary sector organisations to this motive is that what are essentially training or make-work programmes will be referred to as 'volunteering' simply because they focus on work in fields that are within the non-profit sector and that the motive of civic participation will be lost.

Voluntary service for international understanding

All countries provide frameworks for young people to go abroad under programmes of international solidarity. All countries mention catastrophe relief, development and humanitarian aid as activities for international service. In contrast, volunteer programmes for international understanding - the focus of this research study - are less well known by politicians and the general public, though the concept of this kind of international voluntary service predates that of national voluntary service. (The earliest international voluntary service programmes of this type began shortly after World War I). They are accessible to young people on the same basis as national service. Two forms are predominant: international work camps for groups of people living and working together for 2-3 weeks and individual placements for 6 – 12 months (sometimes longer). Both give equal weight to the learning experience of the volunteer and the service for international understanding.

The duration of recognized international service varies. All the countries studied allow for service abroad from 6 to 12 months and all programmes require some preparation and training of the volunteers. Beyond this, however, standards vary considerably.

Access to programmes

None of the national programmes require financial contributions from the young person, partly so as not to exclude people on economic grounds. France and Italy however have restricted their national voluntary service to citizens only, thus excluding young people from third countries legally residing in the country, persons with refugee status, etc. In all countries better-educated youth tend to be over-represented in both national and international programmes due to their greater access to information, better language skills, higher self-confidence, and stronger support from family and friends. In spite of the explicit inclusion policy towards young people with less opportunities in the European Voluntary Service, the percentage of these young people in that programme remains low.

High interest of young people

International voluntary service is a very attractive option for many young people because it combines individual development (language, international and professional experience) with the feeling of 'making a contribution'. Due to the limited funding allocated for such placements in the government-funded voluntary civic service programmes, many applications are rejected.

V.2. Implementation of voluntary service programmes

Lack of legal status for volunteers

The national frameworks of all five countries define the volunteers' status and organisations in the country and, to a lesser extent, abroad. None of the existing national legislative frameworks give EVS volunteers a similar legal status, since EVS is not compatible with their national systems in all respects, though there are references to intentions of making them compatible.

While adequate social protection is desirable for volunteers during their service, it becomes particularly difficult if the provisions for international volunteers (volunteers sent abroad/hosted from abroad) with regard to social security - unemployment, pensions, child and family allowances, orphan's pension etc. - differ from country to country.

Recognition

National certificates as well as the Certificate issued after European Voluntary Service participation service lack recognition. There are few formal requirements for employers and academic institutions to recognise international voluntary service experience. Some employers do take it into consideration however, and governments in Italy and France will give preference for certain public sector jobs to those who have done national service including internationally.

Roles and responsibilities of the state and civic society organisations

Different ministries are responsible for youth voluntary service in each country. Ministerial responsibility for national voluntary service programmes and for the EU-YOUTH programme which includes the EVS is separated in most of the countries studied. EVS and national programmes are managed by separate administrations and rarely communicate or cooperate with one another. Relations between the state and civic society organisations differ with regard to framing of policy and the delivery of voluntary and civic service programmes. The Italian and French states are more actively involved in organising and supervising the programmes than the other three. Volunteers sign their contracts with the French and Italian governments while in the other three countries volunteers make private agreements with the organisations. The relatively strong third sector structures of national voluntary service in Italy and Germany may also reflect the degree of subsidiarity practiced by governments there in contracting or transferring monies to the third sector to perform welfare activities. In Poland and the Czech Republic, formal advisory bodies to the government have been established recently with regard to the implementation of the laws.

Accreditation of organisations

The process of accreditation of sending and/or hosting organisations is different in each country in regard to what level of public administration is responsible and in regard to what kind of organisation is to be accredited.

In regard to level of administration, in the Czech Republic the Ministry of the Interior is responsible for administering the law. Organisations in Germany apply to the federal state (Bundesland) ministry in charge of the voluntary social year (welfare, sport, culture) or the voluntary ecological year (environment). Each state has the power to enact its own laws regarding accreditation. Previous accreditations at the national level remain in force. In Italy, for the transition phase 2002-2005, the central office/institution deals with the applications. The role of the Italian regions and the self-governing provinces will increase in the process after January 2005. They will be able to decide on some frame conditions of the national voluntary service. In France, some French organisations may be accredited as co-ordinating organisations at the national level by the Ministry of Social Affairs for the new programme of civic voluntary service of social cohesion and solidarity. However, the majority of organisations in France will have to deal with the regional administrations, the préfécures of the departments for each volunteer they wish to host. Polish organisations need to apply to the national court register to be accredited as organisations of public benefit, a precondition to work with volunteers in the frame of the national law.

The administration model established for EVS is one in which an expression of interest to be a hosting placement has to be approved by the national agency in the country and reviewed by a committee of the European Commission in Brussels. For a volunteer to be sent to an approved placement parallel and co-ordinated applications have to be made by the sending and hosting organisations involved to the national agencies in their respective countries. Only if both agencies approve the application will the exchange take place. It happens frequently that agencies have different priorities for the kinds of projects they wish to promote so that one rejects and the other approves it. (Under the EU understanding of subsidiarity in the youth sector, each country can set its own priorities). The lack of communication/consultation between national agencies regarding their specific national priorities, result in projects being approved on one side and rejected on the other. Due to funding being much less than demand, the incidence of such lack of agreement has been growing steadily. In regard to what kind of organisation is to be accredited, in the Czech Republic, Germany, Italy and Poland, it is a co-ordinating organisation placing volunteers in various institutions and projects, in France and the EVS it is the local institution or association in which the volunteer will serve ("each person is a project"). Co-ordinating organisations may be involved their accreditation is in addition to the local placements.

Financial support

Whilst all countries recognise the value of voluntary service for society, state financial support varies greatly. In Italy and in the EVS, there are funds for volunteer stipends, training, travel and some other costs – amounting to between 5000 and 7000 Euro/volunteer for 12 months of service. In the Czech Republic, the state will make grants to authorised organisations for training and administration. In Germany, funds are available for the non-formal education component only – about 850 Euro/volunteer/year, unless they are conscientious objectors doing the voluntary social year when stipend, social security, etc. are subsidized so that the sum is more like 6000 Euro/volunteer/year. In France, the costs of social insurance may be covered by the state (it is not yet clear); all other costs must be borne by the organisations. Indirectly, there are subsidies for publicity, recruitment and management for the international volunteers promoting French interests abroad through the government subsidy of the co-ordinating quasi governmental body (UBIFRance). In Poland, there are no subsidies at present.

N.B. in all countries, state monies are available for volunteers in international development and co-operation.

These variations raise questions about the priority attributed to voluntary service in the different countries and to the practicality of the exchanges between the countries involved. State support is important in stimulating programme development and guaranteeing quality standards. Since none of the countries cover all the costs of volunteer projects, additional, private funding sources are always sought (hosting institution, foundations, companies, volunteer families, donations).

VI. RECOMMENDATIONS

Only those aspects relating to international voluntary service are considered. Best practices are identified to deal with the obstacles for significant development of international and transnational programmes. Suggestions are also made for European – level co-operation.

VI.1. Understanding of voluntary service

Voluntary Service for international understanding - the best policy context is that contained in the EVS enabling legislation. The national policies studied give little or no context for international voluntary service. The exception is when their legislation deals development aid voluntary service, usually within the foreign policy aspects of foreign aid. In the case of France, the legislation also deals with the context for volunteering in enterprises in other countries (defending and promoting French interests), but in the opinion of the researchers, this kind of service should not be included in a definition of voluntary service for international understanding.

Access International Voluntary Service is a concept that should be open to all and indeed needs to allow many more to participate in it. There are formal and practical barriers to open access. A good policy deals with both.

Formal - Citizenship - nationals & non-nationals - Best practise – Germany allows German citizens, foreigners with resident status and refugees allowed to stay in Germany to participate in the programme, as well as nationals of all other countries who come for the purpose of doing a voluntary social or ecological year. This is the most comprehensive framework of the countries studied. Having such a visa status for the voluntary social/ecological year greatly simplifies the process for all concerned. Similarly there are no limits on what countries to which a German volunteer may go within the voluntary social/ecological year. They can serve in an OECD country or a less-developed one.

Practical - Minorities, less-educated, lower income, physically disabled, unemployed - Best practice – The EVS policy of allowing organisations to apply for additional funds for young people with

fewer advantages is the only programme which acknowledges explicitly that getting youth who are marginalised to participate in international voluntary service will require additional resources.. It suffers however from two national agencies needing to agree and from the uncertainty engendered by the “each person is a project” micromanagement approach. The approach doesn’t allow organisations to develop strategies for reaching large numbers of such young people. This is especially difficult because research conducted on less-advantaged in EVS shows that close co-operation between youth workers of both sending and hosting organisations and allowing networks of sending and hosting organisations to develop expertise through working with numbers of less-advantaged youth are keys to success.

Where governments express the wish to have a broad participation in civic service and provide monies to enable it to happen, then it does happen. In Germany, the reduction of the minimum age for the Voluntary Social Year and the creation of the Voluntary Social Training Year have resulted in less-advantaged youth and youth at risk participating. However, neither of these approaches has been expanded to international placements. In Italy, the decision to provide a generous monthly stipend and other benefits make the programme attractive to youth from regions of high unemployment. These measures are producing results for service within the country. The effect on applications from less-advantaged youth for international service, aren’t known yet. However, given the experience in EVS of the need for extra support to enable youth with less opportunities even to consider international service, special measures will be necessary for the five national policies for their international service dimensions to be inclusive too.

VI.2. Implementation

Legal framework - The best general legal framework for voluntary service for international understanding at the moment appears to be that of the Czech government. It explicitly covers both Czechs serving in their own country and abroad, and foreigners coming to the Czech Republic. It does not set an upper age limit, and so deals with issues such as taxation, etc. that are not age-specific.

Further, since state subsidies never cover all costs and organisations must look for additional funding, public policy frameworks must allow for this and exempt such contributions from private individuals and business from taxation. This dimension is not often considered within voluntary service policy.

Government administrative responsibility - Best practice is to have a lead ministry responsible for all framework legislation relating to voluntary service, both national and international. Best practice here appears to be in the Czech Republic where the Ministry of Interior is responsible for all accreditation issues, with an advisory body from other ministries and NGOs. Ministries can develop promotion policies to encourage volunteering projects in their respective areas. The EVS does not fall within the act or the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Interior however. In most other countries, responsibility is more blurred with several ministries and/or regional entities responsible. In France and to a lesser extent Italy, where the relevant framework for national civic service is still national defence and the Ministry of Defence still has a leading role, the confusion is likely to continue. But given the clear profile and relatively autonomous status of the National Office on Civic Service in Italy, the problem there is not so great.

Duration of voluntary service - The Czech and Polish legislation set no minimum and maximum periods. This allows different forms of international service to be covered within one frame. This is helpful for organisations offering international service of different lengths and types. It may also enable more coherent approaches to residency and visa issues.

Activity areas - The Polish legislation and the French under social cohesion and integration are the broadest including a broad variety of social, cultural and environmental activities. Although the activity areas were perhaps not defined with international service specifically in mind, such definitions allow for the maximum diversity and flexibility in finding placements for foreign volunteers and in sending volunteers abroad.

Accreditation of organisations - Best practice appears to be the Czech Republic, providing a clear and detailed process for accreditation at the national level, including an advisory body with third sector representation to make recommendations. In the other four countries studied, responsibility for accreditation is or will be at a regional level to some extent.. At the European level, decision-making has

been decentralised to the national agencies in the EVS. In regard to regionalisation, the question is unanswered whether an organisation working in more than one region will have to be accredited in all the regions where it places volunteers or only in the region where it has its headquarters.

A key value for good administration anywhere and especially for a policy that sets a high value on accessibility must be simplicity and quickness in processing applications and placements. Systems that try to control each volunteer and each placement directly cannot be cost efficient (European Voluntary Service, France). The German and Italian approaches focus on accrediting co-ordinating organisations with the possibility of spot checks on placements the organisations co-ordinate. A similar approach is being started in the Czech Republic.

Non-formal education and pedagogical support - The German voluntary year legislation sets broad objectives and controls these predominantly through prescribing the number of days volunteers must be in training as a group. The EVS also indicates core themes to be dealt with. A combination of the two would seem to be the most appropriate. However, rigidity about form as in Germany can exclude the development of different approaches to non-formal education and ways of doing projects. The absolute power of national agencies of EVS to decide who will do a training event (some allow the organisations to do their own, others insist on all training being done by trainers they appoint), prevent international networks developing their own concepts and delivering their own training. It also prevents the development of new networks of national or regional organisations that could do the same. A more conciliatory and effective approach is that of the EVS national agency in Germany. It allows organisations to do their own training subject to them meeting minimum criteria in terms of numbers of volunteers and countries represented, subjects covered, etc.

Legal status - There is no one country that has the best practice here. There seems to be a consensus that voluntary service is not work, therefore unemployment contributions should not have to be made, and that someone who is receiving unemployment payments at the start of her/his service should have them suspended during the service but be entitled to receive them again upon termination of the service. Another point of consensus seems to be that family and other allowances should continue on the same basis as if the person were a student or family dependent. But taxation and other laws are still often applied as though the volunteers were salaried workers.

Validation and recognition - Recognition of voluntary service is most established in Germany but only in terms of internships in certain fields. The Italian national office's efforts to have voluntary service recognised for university credits through the Ministry of Education and the University rectors seems a good way forward. Recognition of service for public sector jobs is done in Italy and France. Recognition in business and in other professions is a challenge in all the countries.

Financial Support - It is hard to determine an optimal level of state funding. Obviously, a part of the success of the Italian national voluntary civic service and the EVS is the amount of funding provided per volunteer. However, if the demand greatly exceeds the funding available in the scheme (as in EVS at present), the principle of access for all changes to a more and more exclusive project and volunteer selection. A practical solution used in Germany in regard to distributing limited youth plan funding for training for international voluntary service was to divide the money available on an equal basis among all the accredited applicants for that year. No organisation received 100% of what it had requested, but the equitable treatment provided enough security for most of the organisations to exert themselves to find other funding to continue their programmes.

Information and Publicity - Both EVS and the Italian National Civic Service show that a constant multimedia campaign carried out over several years can establish a programme image in the public eye. But without careful management of funds so that demand is more or less met, public support can be lost if the principle of open to all who want to serve becomes contradicted by the numbers refused because of lack of money. What is promoted must be deliverable.

Developing a European Policy on Civic Services - The analysis shows the necessity to have an exchange of practice and understanding between EU member states and European institutions. Governments need to think of how there could be common national and European recognition/certification of voluntary service experiences. For example, international voluntary service could be certified as a period of intercultural education. Incompatibilities in legal status and the treatment of volunteers going from one European country to another in regard to social insurance and benefits

issues need to be identified and solutions found. The development of common standards and procedures could be helped by European level training events of civil servants from the national ministries/administrations. A common approach would also include clarification of terms and values for youth voluntary service. Programmes using the term “voluntary service” for training placements in the for-profit sector should be renamed as internships or traineeships in order that similar approaches can be effectively compared.

The creation of an independent European observatory on civic service

A network of experts on national and international voluntary service is needed to track the developments in different countries, identify incompatibilities and report on implementation and impact of programmes. Data about and from volunteers should be collected under conditions of anonymity of both individual volunteers and organisations.

An observatory might also initiate systematic research on long-term impact on volunteers, hosting placements (clients, local communities) and co-ordinating organisations. Aspects could be the impact on the personal and professional career development of volunteers, the level of volunteers’ participation in civic society after their service, the effect on residents’ attitudes in communities that host foreign volunteers, etc.

Validation of existing European instruments and implementation in the national context

Several measures on recognition of voluntary service, legal status, etc. have been created at the European level, but their appropriation and implementation at the national level has not taken place. The instruments are either unknown or their value is ignored. Even in recent national legislation they have not been taken into account. For example the EVS was not considered in the 2003 amendment of the German voluntary social/ecological year law.

The Council of Europe’s European Convention on the promotion of a Trans National Voluntary Service for young people prepares a proper legal status for volunteers in Europe. Except for France, none of the five countries studied has signed it. Another example of a tool not used is the EU-Recommendation for transnational mobility aimed at removing legal obstacles to freedom of movement within educational and vocational training programmes with a European dimension.

VII. FURTHER RESEARCH

A multipurpose data gathering and analysis system as a foundation for research to assess youth voluntary service as an instrument of youth and welfare policy, citizenship, job skills acquisition, etc. The analysis showed that the development of youth voluntary service is being linked to needs in various areas. But studies assessing the long-term impact of voluntary service (after 5-10 years) in regard to such needs are lacking. A common system to collect base line data from the beginning of volunteers’ engagement is needed. Further research will be needed to define measurement criteria to allow comparisons of effects of different national policy approaches and instruments.

The role of international voluntary service in the promotion of European/global civic society

In most countries, voluntary service is connected to the development of the third sector. A European civic society with active people and infrastructure needs to be established. The assumption of the organisations engaged in promoting international voluntary service is that young people who have volunteered internationally can and do contribute to this process. They become the bridging social capital of such an enlarged community. Research needs to deal with large enough numbers of participants and

with control groups for the verification or rebuttal of this assumption.

Impact of voluntary service

What are the relative values of the various forms of voluntary service in reaching specific goals? In regard to developing intercultural sensitivity, when a young person participates in a 3 week group work-camp is the impact different from the experience of a 6-12 month individual volunteer placement in another country? If so, how and how much? How does this compare with someone who studies in a foreign university or who works abroad for a year? How much difference does serving away from home (whether in one's own country or abroad) make in the maturing process of a young person?

Non-formal education

How does the experience of someone who takes part in a programme with an organised non-formal education process through periodic group reflection during the year differ from the experience of someone who is more or less on her/his own in a placement (with local supervision) for a year? Does the second alternative result in the development of more independence? If there is a difference, how great is it?

Social inclusion, bridging social capital

To what extent do international voluntary service programmes contribute to social inclusion and the development of bridging social capital? To what extent does a service encounter with other ethnic and social groups inside one's own country produce similar results?

Cost effectiveness

A detailed comparative analysis of financial costs of the different voluntary civic service programmes surveyed would be useful, including the costs of the public administrative structures needed. A follow up to gathering and comparing basic information about costs for pocket money, food and accommodation, social protection etc. would be to document the costs of non-formal education programmes within voluntary service (training and support before, during and after the service, supervision in placements) as well as the costs of certification and to evaluate comparatively the added value to the quality and outcomes of the programmes of such measures.

An international lexicon

of the key notions about volunteering should be prepared to clarify terminology and concepts.

Further cross-national comparisons

Countries like the UK and the Netherlands have set up or are thinking about setting up similar voluntary service initiatives in their countries. The development & comparison of voluntary service developments in new EU member states is of particular interest for the common development in the enlarged EU.

Effect of initiatives to create new civic service programmes

New initiatives are being undertaken in Lithuania and Romania. In the Balkans, comparative research could be started in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Montenegro and FYR Macedonia where there are also some initiatives to see how such policies develop.

Citizenship

An analysis assessing the relationship between voluntary service and citizenship: evaluating the impact on understanding of the individual's relation to the state, civil society and her/his responsibility for dealing with social needs of their community directly.

ABSTRACT

Despite public declarations of intentions to develop international volunteer exchange programmes especially within Europe, the different frameworks for civic voluntary service present many practical and administrative obstacles to their realisation. This study identifies these obstacles and shows how sharing existing good practice could significantly increase the number of international voluntary civic service opportunities for young people in Europe.

The study looks at the legal, financial and administrative frameworks for youth voluntary and civic service in France, Germany, Italy, Poland and the Czech Republic.

The development of programmes and policies at European level is also explored, especially, the special status of the European Voluntary Service Programme (EVS) of the European Union in these countries and its impact on their national youth civic service policies.