

## PROFESSIONAL VOLUNTEERING COUNTRY REPORT - POLAND

### 1. ROLE AND SITUATION OF VOLUNTEERING IN POLAND

#### a. *The legislation on volunteering activities in Poland*

*The Act of 24 April 2003 on Public Benefit and Volunteer Work (Dz.U. No 96, item 873, as amended). The aim of the Act is to ensure balance between protection of basic entitlements of volunteers and flexibility of the legal relationship. Pursuant to the statutory definition – a volunteer is a natural person who provides services voluntarily and without remuneration, under the provisions specified in the Act (Article 2 point 3), where also a member of association may be a volunteer (Article 42 paragraph 3).*

*What is important, the regulations concerning volunteer work (with several exceptions) are independent of the Labour Law regulations. This is reflected, among others, in the provision stating that to agreements concluded between the beneficiary and the volunteer, within the scope not regulated by the Act on Public Benefit and Volunteer Work, the provisions of the Civil Code shall apply (Article 44 paragraph 5). This constitutes an important guideline for interpretation, which makes such relationships (within the scope not regulated by the Act) subject to the civil law principle of freedom of contract and not to the complex regulations of the Labour Law which serve other purposes. Moreover, provision of services by volunteers is not an obstacle for acquiring the unemployed status (Article 2 paragraph 2 point 1 of the Act on promotion of employment and labour market institutions).*

*In order to enhance security of rights of both parties, the scope, manner and time of provision of services by volunteers should be specified in an agreement concluded with the beneficiary, which has to provide the possibilities of its termination. Should a volunteer provide services for a period exceeding 30 days, the said agreement shall be made in writing, if for a shorter period, the beneficiary, at the volunteer's request, shall confirm the agreement's contents in writing.*

*The non-negotiable entitlements of a volunteer include:*

- *right to information on health and safety risks connected with the provided services and on the rules of protection against hazards as well as about rights volunteers are entitled to and obligations they are responsible for,*
- *safe and hygienic conditions of services provision, including appropriate personal safety measures determined by the type of services provided and the related hazard under separate legal provisions applicable to employees,*
- *casualty insurance (if services provision lasts for a period of less than 30 days, such insurance is guaranteed by the beneficiary and if volunteer work is provided for a longer period of time, a volunteer is entitled to such insurance pursuant to the Act of 30 October 2002 on provision on account of accidents or occupational diseases resulting from specific circumstances)*
- *if a volunteer is delegated to provide services in the territory of another state, where an armed conflict, a natural disaster or a natural calamity occurs – the volunteer is entitled to casualty and expatriate medical insurance, should their costs not be covered otherwise, in particular under the coordination provisions set out in the Act of 27 August 2004 on health care services financed from public funds.*

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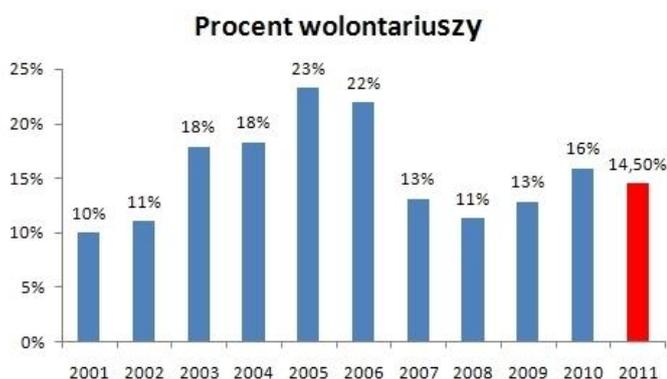
### b. Mature people volunteering 50+

*The concept of “mature people volunteering” 50+ (relates to the group consisting of persons being more than 50 years old, irrespectively if they are still active on the labour market or already on their retirement or obtaining other kind of pension, i.e. disability payment is rooted in Polish law, especially the Law on employment promotion and labour market institutions ( Dz. U. of 2004, No 99, pos. 1001, with further amendments).*

*From evaluation of the statistical data on the level of Poles 50+ involvement in volunteering and other kinds of activities beneficial to the society we may observe that in comparison to the rest of Europe, elderly/mature people in Poland stay less active. Moreover, they are not willing to cooperate with other people on resolving common problems. We may also distinguish the main models of elderly/mature Poles involvement in volunteering. These can be divided of such activities (whether these are their peers groups, own local societies or other social groups like youth and children) and thematic spheres of volunteers’ activity (i.e. education, culture, local tradition, self-assistance, advocacy, free-time leisure organisation and so on). The most frequently met within mature Poles – such as:*

- *third age universities,*
- *seniors’ clubs,*
- *combatants’ organisations,*
- *village housewives circles,*
- *self-assistance activities,*
- *intergenerational volunteering,*
- *assistance to neighbours*
- *volunteering in hospices.*

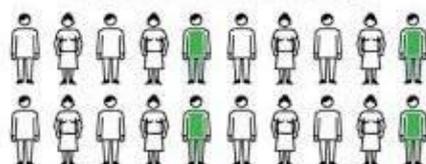
### c. Statistics & Trends



*Trends in the percentage of the voluntary engaged people (2001-2011)*

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### Ilu jest wolontariuszy?



niemal co piąty Polak i Polka (18%)

Trends (2012-2014): 18% - almost every fifth person is a volunteer



**Senior volunteering (60+)** – study case: Mazovia Region (covers an area of 35.6 thousand km<sup>2</sup>, what makes it the largest region in Poland. Population: 5 178 480): The half of the number of the organizations in Mazovia Region cooperates with volunteers. The 31% of the volunteers are in age of 60+ (83% of the group are female)

#### d. Financing opportunities in the field of volunteering:

- UE, EOG, Switzerland – operating grants
- Central and local government units
- Grant-giving organisations (e.g. Batory Foundation, Polish-American Freedom Foundation)
- Intermediary organisations (within „Act Locally“ Programme)
- Local funds ([www.fll.org.pl](http://www.fll.org.pl))
- Corporate Foundations



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### 2. NATIONAL OVERVIEW OF EXISTING TRAINING PROGRAMMES FOR IMPROVING PROFESSIONALISM IN VOLUNTEERING

a) The existing training programmes offered by Polish Robert Schuman Foundation:

- **European Voluntary Service:**

The Foundation has been actively involved in the EVS programme as a hosting, coordinating and sending organization since 2000. Every year we send about 20 young people to volunteer abroad. As a coordinating organization we annually support 12 people in 5 different host organizations. Additionally we host 2 volunteers each year in the Foundation's office.

The main tasks of the volunteers hosted in Poland are connected with promotion of European integration process (as a political as well as a social process) in Poland and motivation of young people to become more active citizens.

The main areas, where we plan to involve volunteers in are:

- Cooperation with European School Clubs (ESC) - informal unions between the students and teachers in different type of schools.
- EVS Info Point - as part of regular tasks, volunteers are available to young people interested in voluntary service.
- Help in managing Foundation's website and social networks accounts - help in the preparation of information for the website, writing short descriptions of their visits in European Clubs, describing their EVS experience (life and work in the Foundation and Poland), researching and sharing their view of current events in Europe, Poland or their own countries, etc.
- The volunteers could help by organizing conferences, seminars, discussions, simulation games, thematic evenings, campaigns, trainings, etc. Recognizing their potential we also invite volunteers to help us establish new contacts in their home countries or regions with whom the Foundation or, for example, European Clubs could develop future initiatives.

During the EVS period each volunteer is having a supervisor, responsible for planning volunteers' tasks and support them, help integrate in the organization and monitor the development of the volunteer. Each volunteer has also a mentor, who is helping the volunteer in different issues not directly related to working tasks (personal issues). **Mentor** is a person not directly related to the Foundation – they can join the programme by an open call and the Foundation is organising meetings on that issue on regular base. We also work on integration and organize so called "**Schuman volunteers'**" meetings.

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b) The existing training programmes/opportunities provided by other organizations or public institutions in Poland:

- **Polish Aid – the Ministry of Foreign Affairs**  
Since 2008, the MFA has been implementing the **Polish Aid Volunteering Programme**, aimed at supporting the direct involvement of Polish citizens to help citizens of developing countries. Grants issued by the MFA cover the travel, accommodation and insurance costs of volunteers taking part in the programme, as well as trainings and courses adapted to the specifics of the given task and conducted by the MFA and organizations involved in the project. On the ground, volunteers are taken care of by the receiving organization; their work lasts a minimum of 3 months. Financial support also covers educational initiatives undertaken by the volunteer after returning to Poland.
- **European Voluntary Service** projects funded through Erasmus+ program and coordinated by National Agency in Poland (ref. To the Program countries) : the Foundation for the Development of the Education System (FRSE).
- **The Polish Network of Volunteer Centers** coordinated by Volunteer Centre Association. The Volunteer Centre serves as a unique support hub for non-governmental organisations and public institutions in the scope of: organising programs with the participation of volunteers, conducting training sessions for volunteer coordinators, providing legal consultations, developing and implementing volunteer work development strategies in local communities.
  - The Longterm Voluntary Programme
  - The program of *Corporate Volunteering* gives professionally active people a chance to get involved in aid providing activities to the benefit of selected social groups and, what is essential, with the cooperation and assistance of the parent company supporting the activities
- **PROJECTOR – Student Volunteers** supported by Polish-American Freedom Foundation (); managed by the Foundation for the Development of Voluntary Service.

This program is aimed at equalizing educational opportunities for children and youth living in rural areas and small towns. Within the program groups of student volunteers (2 to 3 persons) implement educational projects they have prepared to develop the knowledge, skills and interests of children and youth. The projects are implemented in free time during the school year as well as during summer vacations and winter breaks. The projects involve a specific field of knowledge, a subject or a selected area of activity, and consist of activities such as classes in fine arts, sports, information technology, theater, linguistics, and many other activities.

- **The Great Orchestra of Christmas Charity**  
([http://en.wosp.org.pl/how\\_to\\_become\\_a\\_volunteer\\_for\\_the\\_great\\_finale](http://en.wosp.org.pl/how_to_become_a_volunteer_for_the_great_finale))



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The Foundation works in the field of health protection by saving patients' and especially young patients' life and supporting their treatment as well promotes health and medical prevention. Every year the Foundation is organizing the Great Finale money collections and one of Europe's biggest open music festival called *Przystanek Woodstock*. Within those activities the Foundation is cooperating with almost 120 thousand volunteers in the whole country.

### SOURCES/ RESEARCH RELEVANT IN THE FIELD

- GUIDELINE FOR ORGANIZATIONS INTERESTED IN COOPERATION WITH VOLUNTEERS:  
<http://poradnik.ngo.pl/x/501405>
- DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC BENEFIT (THE MINISTRY OF ECONOMY, LABOUR AND SOCIAL POLICY)  
<HTTP://WWW.POZYTEK.GOV.PL/VOLUNTEERING,IN,POLAND,577.HTML>
- THE POLISH AID VOLUNTEERING PROGRAMME, ;  
<https://www.polskapomoc.gov.pl/Volunteering,Programme>
- THE LONGTERM VOLUNTARY POGRAMME :  
<http://wolontariat.net.pl/>
- THE PROGRAM OF CORPORATE VOLUNTEERING  
<HTTP://WOLONTARIATPRACOWNICZY.ORG.PL/>
- STUDENT VOLUNTEERING:  
<WWW.PROJEKTOR.ORG.PL>
- REPORT ON VOLUNTEERING 50 +  
<http://bibliotekawolontariatu.pl/biblioteka/e-book/49/>
- PUBLICATION OF CENTRAL STATISTICAL OFFICE on VOLUNTEERING THROUGH ORGANIZATIONS AND OTHER TYPES OF UNPAID WORK OUTSIDE OWN HOUSEHOLD – 2011  
[http://stat.gov.pl/cps/rde/xbcr/gus/GS\\_wolontariat\\_i\\_inne\\_formy\\_pracy\\_niezarobk\\_2011.pdf](http://stat.gov.pl/cps/rde/xbcr/gus/GS_wolontariat_i_inne_formy_pracy_niezarobk_2011.pdf)