



**92 MILLION ADULTS ARE INVOLVED  
IN VOLUNTEERING ACROSS EUROPE**

In Europe the sports organization grounded in culture and practice of the voluntary action represent the social backbone of the sports system at large. Organised sport is the largest sector of volunteer engagement.



# I VOLUNTEER! I MAKE A DIFFERENCE!

**“IF WE WANT TO SUSTAIN THE  
EUROPEAN MODEL OF GRASS  
ROOT SPORT PARTICIPATION,  
WE NEED TO FIND WAYS  
TO UPHOLD, NOURISH AND  
REWARD THE WILLPOWER OF  
SPORT VOLUNTEERS!”**

*Sakis Pappous – University of Kent, UK*

**VOLUNTEERS IN SPORT DEDICATE  
4-5 VOLUNTEERING HOURS PER WEEK TO  
THEIR ORGANIZATIONS**

This represents a significant social and economic contribution to the wealth of European societies. The proportion of paid staff and volunteers varies widely among European member states: in Portugal 10% of paid staff and 90% of volunteers, in Netherlands 13% of paid staff and 87% of volunteers, in France 20% of paid staff and 80% of volunteers, in Ireland 42% of paid staff and 58% of volunteers.

**35 MILLION EUROPEAN CITIZENS  
VOLUNTEER IN SPORT**

In most European countries the sport sector relies heavily on volunteers.





### **VOLUNTEERS ARE MULTI-BILLION DONORS AND GREAT EDUCATORS**

Based on the number of volunteers and the number of hours dedicated, we can estimate that volunteers create an annual financial value of €10 billion in France, €7 billion in Germany, €5.3 billion in the Netherlands. Volunteering is strongly related to non-formal and informal learning, as it contributes to personal development, learning skills and competences, thus enhancing employability. Non-formal education and lifelong learning are important elements in the EU 2020 strategy towards smart, sustainable and inclusive growth. The sport sector is the most widespread civil society movement, furthering learning processes both on and off the pitch.

### **NON-FORMAL LEARNING ON A MASSIVE SCALE**

Millions of Europeans join trainings and non-formal education offers in sport organizations, be it as trainers or leaders. We call it Education for life!

**” VOLUNTEERING COMES FROM LATIN FROM “VOLUNTAS” - WILL, CHOICE. AN OLD PROVERB SAYS THAT “WHERE THERE’S A WILL, THERE’S A WAY”.**



## **OPPORTUNITIES & CHALLENGES IN VOLUNTEERING**

### **DEFINITION OF VOLUNTEERING**

There is no universally accepted definition of volunteering for the sport sector. A majority of countries in Europe either apply the same definition as used for volunteering in general, or vaguely refer to volunteers as ‘people that donate their time to sport organisations, carrying out activities in a field they are passionate about’. (this is the case in Austria, Bulgaria, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Finland, Hungary, Lithuania, Malta and Poland).

The sport movement shall work towards a common definition of volunteering, and energetically lobby for recognition and valorisation of volunteering in sport, emphasising the dependence of sport organisations on volunteer inputs.

### **EDUCATION AND RECOGNITION OF VOLUNTEERING**

Today, one of the most outstanding aspects of volunteering is its educational value and impact. The recognition and valorisation of the time that citizens invest in volunteering is essential as a motivational factor, in particular among the younger generations as a bridge between voluntary work, education and the labour market.

Therefore, special attention must be paid to the recognition of skills and competences developed through non-formal and informal learning experiences. The role of volunteering needs to be fully recognised and supported in national and European lifelong learning strategies and activities.

## A LEGAL FRAMEWORK FOR VOLUNTEERING

Inconsistent and inadequate legal frameworks for volunteers create obstacles associated to taxation, social insurance, unemployment benefits, health insurance and the labour market.

European member states need to remove these barriers for voluntary work and provide volunteers with the right to operate within a clear and adapted legal framework!

## THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL VALUE OF VOLUNTEERING

The social and economic value of volunteering in sport is increasingly being recognised by EU member states, as both household spending on sporting goods and invested volunteering hours represent a multi-billion € economy. Volunteers are an impressive bank of social capital, and we need to nourish their investments to increase the economic value of the volunteering.

## VOLUNTEERING MANAGEMENT

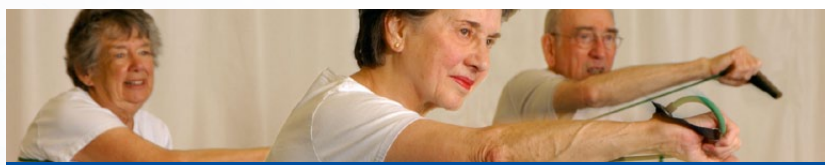
Volunteers contribute tremendously to the development of society, and today this requires more than ever specific skills and knowledge. Volunteering is serious business. Voluntary organizations need to market themselves in an attractive fashion in order to enlist new volunteers. Thus, NGOs need efficient and targeted oriented volunteer management systems leveraging the recruitment, training and retention of young volunteers.

## NEW WAYS OF FUNDING

There is an increased focus on assessing and redesigning ways of funding for the sport sector. Governments are adopting new forms of tax reliefs, whereas organizations increasingly discover alternative sources of income. However, today the main source of income for grassroots sport is the citizen himself and the concerned local authorities.

European member states should promote equitable and sustainable funding mechanisms supporting the sound development of voluntary organizations.

National sport organizations and public authorities should support grassroots sport associations by protecting their income, through enhanced guidance on funding streams and income generating activities.



# THE EUROVOLNET PROJECT

**EUROVOLNET** is a transnational project that fosters the exchange of best practices regarding legal, organizational and financial aspects of volunteering in sport. Project partners form a network of experienced actors involved in the management and running of sport associations.

This multilateral cooperation project addresses the priorities set-out in the European Commission's White Paper on Sport as the basis of its action. Project partners contribute diverse experiences in engaging, managing and retaining volunteers at all levels in their organizations. EuroVolNet enables networking and sharing of best practices in a structured setting.

Best practices furthered by EuroVoNet deal with the following dimensions:

- Definition of volunteering
- Education and recognition of volunteering
- Legal framework of volunteering
- The socio-economic value of volunteering
- Volunteering management
- New ways of funding

## OVERALL, EUROVOLNET WILL ESTABLISH A NETWORK THAT DEVELOPS VOLUNTARY COMPETENCES IN SPORT BY:

- 1 promoting volunteerism with a starting point in sport organizations;
- 2 engaging national and regional sport organizations from across Europe in networking and exchanging best practices, aiming at qualifying existing and developing new initiatives;
- 3 collecting, documenting and valorising examples of innovative volunteer engagement, management and retention;
- 4 identifying and disseminating best practices in innovative volunteer engagement, management and retention;
- 5 preparing future actions promoting volunteering in sport and society at large.

## MAIN EUROVOLNET ACTIVITIES

### Kick-off meeting

**EuroVolNet Seminar 1** on legal, fiscal and managerial aspects of volunteering based organisations.

**EuroVolNet Seminar 2** on educational and political needs, threats and opportunities for voluntary organisations.

**EuroVolNet Workshop** on management of action for improving existing or developing new Voluntary Services.

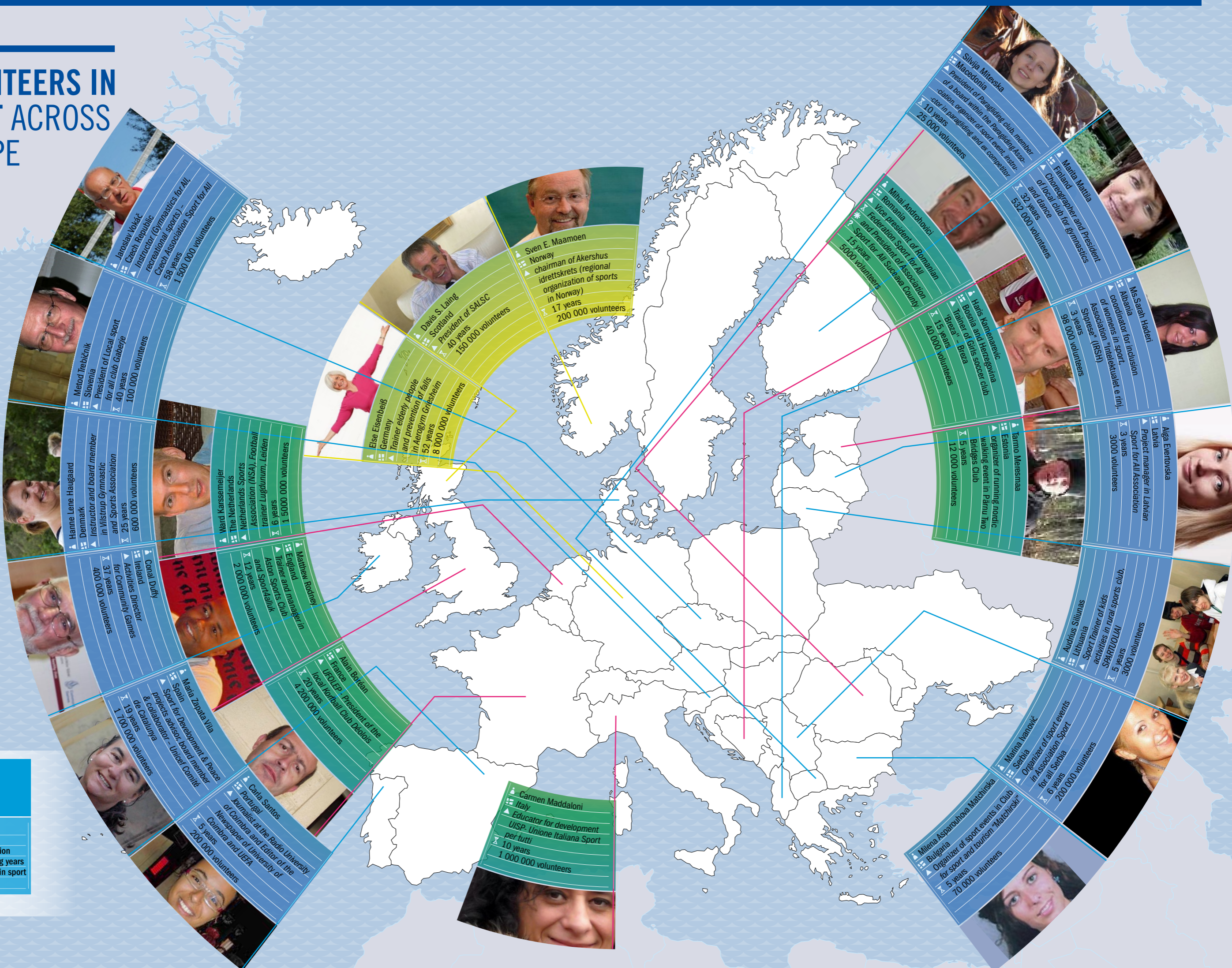
**Online Voluntary Services Tutorial** featuring leading resources and collected good practices.

**Consultations** between ISCA and project partners fostering the development and dissemination of voluntary services and promoting bilateral match-making with other relevant organisations.

**Closing Conference** promoting volunteering in sports in cooperation with the Danish Ministry of Culture during the Danish Presidency of the European Union.

# VOLUNTEERS IN SPORT ACROSS EUROPE

Name
Country
Position and organization
Number of volunteering years
Number of Volunteers in sport in the country





## THE EUROVOLNET PROJECT

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### PROJECT FACTS

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### PROJECT PARTNERS

- Latvian Sport for All Association, LTSA
- Deutscher Turner Bund, DTB
- Sport et Citoyenneté
- NIF (The Norwegian Olympic and Paralympic Committee and Confederation of Sport)
- University of Kent, UK
- Community Games, Ireland
- Italian Sport for All Association, UISP
- Estonian Sports Association, JOUD
- Czech Sokol Organization, SOKOL
- Union Française des Oeuvres Laïques d'Education Physique, UFOLEP
- Scottish Associations of Local Sports Councils, SALSC
- Danish Gymnastic Association, DGI
- Czech Association Sport for All, CASPV
- Sports Union of Slovenia, SUS
- Special Olympics Europe/Eurasia
- Netherlands Sports Alliance, NSA
- Romanian Federation Sport for
- Bulgarian Young People Foundation

