

**EuroVolNet kick-off meeting
Brussels, 24. – 25.1.2011**

Minutes of the meeting

Participants:

First name:	Surname:	E-mail address:	Organisation:	Country:
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Rado	Cvetek	rado.cvetek@sportna-unija.si	SUS (Sports Union of Slovenia)	Slovenia
Sabine	Menke	smenke@specialolympics.org	Special Olympics Europe/Eurasia	Germany
Conal	Duffy	conalduffy@eircom.net	Community Games	Ireland
Bjoern	Koehler	bkoehler@specialolympics.org	Special Olympics Europe/Eurasia	Belgium

EuroVolNet partners not participated at the meeting:

NSA (Netherlands Sports Alliance), Leonie Hallers, l.hallers@sportalliantie.nl

UISP (Italian Sport for All Association), Daniela Conti, Francesca D'Ercole, Carlo Balestri, Salvatore Farina, d.conti@uisp.it, internazionale@uisp.it, f.dercole@uisp.it

We discussed the project's vision and objectives.
We built the project together.
We developed project plan.
We shared knowledge and experiences.
We felt the EuroVolNet spirit: "Volunteer! Make a difference!"

Kick-off meeting Agenda

24.1.2011

14.00 – 15.00

Welcome and getting started

Meeting purpose, expected goals and deliverables

Introduction of the participants and briefly discuss the role of each

"The next generation of volunteers", regards from Sabine Menke, Senior Manager Youth Education & Unified Sports, Special Olympics Europe/Eurasia

15.15 - 17.00

Presentation of the project objectives

Discussion based on expectations, initiatives and doubts

Presentation of Events/activities and define the action plan

Team work

17.30 – 19.00

Presentation of project materials/products

Project dimensions and challenges

Definition of Volunteering

Education and recognition of volunteers

Legal Framework of Volunteering

(Economic, social) Value of Volunteering

Volunteering management

New ways of funding

25.1.2011

9.00 – 10.00

"Trends, opportunities and challenges for volunteering in Europe", regards from Mogens Kirkeby, ISCA President

"What is sport (for all) contribution to greater clarity for the volunteering?"

Team discussion

10.30 – 12.00

Key success factors – good examples from the national, regional and local level

Kick off meeting was our chance to show what we are doing within organisations. EuroVolNet project partners presented their activities and associations. All presentations can be found on ISCA website:

12.00 – 13.00

Project plan

Activities

Calendar

Online Voluntary Services Tutorial

Questions and answers session, Summarizing

A **Kick-off meeting** in Brussels officially launched EuroVolNet project, where project partners together discussed the project's vision and objectives and agreed upon a specific action plan.



EuroVolNet team, 25.1.2011

1. ISCA Secretary General Jacob Schouenborg welcomed all participants in Brussels, by expressing gratitude to all project partners for the participation and support in the preparatory period. ISCA Project manager Saska Benedicic Tomat welcomed all participants and gave an overview of the actions that took place in the EuroVolNet project so far. Meeting purpose, expected goals, deliverables were presented. Participants expectations, initiatives and "doubts" were presented at the beginning of the meeting.

2. Plenary presentation **"The next generation of volunteers"**, was given by Sabine Menke, Senior Manager Youth Education & Unified Sports, Special Olympics Europe/Eurasia.

Sabine presented :

- Background Special Olympics
- Levels of volunteering
- Background & assignments of volunteers
- Challenges (volunteer management, recognition, legal framework)
- Economic and social value
- Reflection on « new generation of volunteers

SOE/E volunteers are a critical component of Special Olympics' work. They are key figures in an athlete's life, providing the sports skills and spirit that define a true athlete. They serve as role models and character builders, giving Special Olympics athletes awareness of their worth, ability, courage and capacity to grow and improve. Special Olympics coaches and volunteers also have a direct impact on athletes' lives by helping them acquire skills that can influence their abilities to obtain employment, succeed in school and achieve personal goals. This is the value, important also for EuroVolNet project and project partners.

Sabine and Bjoern expressed their gratitude to be invited to the EuroVolNet project. SO E/E sees in the project great opportunity for their development in the volunteering area.

3. Presentation of the project objectives, by Jacob Schouenborg

Jacob went through the project's key objectives and activities, explaining them in the project's pragmatic context:

1. Promote volunteerism with a starting point in sport organizations.
2. Engage national and regional sport organizations from Europe in networking and best practice exchange with a view to qualifying existing and developing new initiatives.
3. Collect, document and valorize examples of innovative volunteer engagement, management and retention.
4. Identify and disseminate best practices of collected and documented examples of innovative volunteer engagement, management and retention.

5. Preparation of future actions in promotion of volunteerism.

EuroVolNet will have a lasting impact on promoting volunteerism in Europe by facilitating new initiatives and gaining commitments of partner organizations and beyond for future development and actions promoting volunteerism.

EuroVolNet will provide all European sport organizations (both project partners and extended activity beneficiaries) with learning opportunities and a valuable tool: the online voluntary services tutorial. The collection and documentation of innovative volunteer engagement, management and retention examples via project activities will provide content for and form the knowledge basis of the online tutorial.

EuroVolNet outreach will be on European, National and Local levels. On European level, the project will facilitate dialogue between stakeholders in volunteer promotion to enable stronger cooperation for future voluntary service offers, and a stronger external voice towards EU and political stakeholders for volunteerism in the grassroots sport sector.

On national and local levels, the project takes a starting point in national sport associations and targets their political leaders and organizational managers and volunteer managers, with a view to enhance learning, action and networking and cooperation on international level as well as with other sectors.

Jacob underlined the importance of partners inputs to all elements of the project, including giving specific »body« to the objectives and making them valuable for project partners.

4. Presentation of Events/activities and define the action plan, by Saska Benedicic Tomat

Saska gave the general overview on EuroVolNet activities.

Seminar 1

This seminar will have three core focus areas: legal, fiscal and managerial aspects of voluntary based organizations. Extended topics will include legal risks and considerations, staffing analysis, policies, procedures, job descriptions, recruitment, screening, hiring, rewards and recognition. For inspirational, motivational and collaborative purposes, expert interventions will include presentations from outside the traditional sport sector.

Seminar 2

This seminar will have two core focus areas: educational and political needs, threats and opportunities for voluntary organizations. Extended topics will include orientation and training of new volunteers, continuing education, quality marks of volunteer training programs, financial basis of voluntary sport activities, and fundraising by, through and with volunteers. For inspirational, motivational and collaborative purposes, expert intervention will include presentations from outside the traditional sport sector.

Workshop

The workshop will provide a time, space and facilitation for participant-led development of their own plans of action for improving existing or developing new Voluntary Services. The progressive content of the seminars in combination with professional workshop facilitation will provide the pre-conditions for participants to develop their own actions as well as to establish a sustained international network and international cooperation.

After the presentation participants worked in groups and defined 3 main project activities. Here are results:

Time/Month	Activity	Objectives	Target group
April 2011	Seminar 1 Main title and topic: »Why volunteer?« Subtopics: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Value of volunteering • Recognition of volunteering • Management of volunteering • Financial /admin system Meeting of EuroVolNet project team	Objectives 1, 2, 3, 4	Leaders, managers and advisors of European sport organisations and project partners
September 2011	Seminar 2 Main title and topic: Volunteering, an education for life Subtopics: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Education for managers Education for volunteer trainers Recognition of non-formal education Meeting of EuroVolNet project team	Objectives 1, 2, 3, 4	Managers of European sport organisations and project partners
November 2011	Workshop: Developing an inception-to-culmination volunteer services package. Main title and topic: How to develop action plan in Organizations working with volunteers? Sub-topics: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Motivation • How to keep volunteers for a long term? • Working structure • Communication • How to implement strategy into our associations? Meeting of EuroVolNet project team	Objectives 4, 5	Managers and leaders of partner organizations

Practical details for 3 main activities:

- Seminar 1 and Seminar 2 will be organized during the weekends as both activities will be organized and prioritized for volunteers from EuroVolNet partners and invited organizations.
- Workshop will be organized for EuroVolNet project partners and their managers.
- EuroVolNet project will cover (travel and accommodation) costs for 2 participants from EuroVolNet partner associations and for 1 participants from invited organizations.
- Program for 3 main project activities will be developed by ISCA, project partners and host Associations.
- Host Associations (suggestions):
Seminar 1: University of Kent, UK (or LTSA from Lithuania)
Seminar 2: SOKOL and CASPV from Czech Republic or SALSC from Scotland
Workshop: DTB from Germany
- Invitation, promotion material and procedure will be prepared by ISCA at least one month before each event.

5. Project dimensions and challenges were discussed, based on the preliminary conversation with project partners.

EuroVolNet project dimensions are:

Definition of Volunteering
Education and recognition of volunteers
Legal Framework of Volunteering
(Economic, social) Value of Volunteering
Volunteering management
New ways of funding

All 6 dimensions were presented and discussed during the meeting.

5.1. Definition of Volunteering

Overall, **no definition of volunteering has been drawn specifically for the sport sector in EU countries.** The majority of countries either apply the same definition used for volunteering in general, where such definition exists, or use a non-official definition which generally defines volunteers as 'people who donate their time to sport organizations to carry 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).

Despite the lack of a specific definition, a number of Association have appear to **make a distinction between different types of volunteers:**

- Regular' volunteers – long-term volunteers
- Occasional' volunteers – short-term (event) volunteers

EuroVolNet project partners agreed that we need definition of "volunteer" and definition of "volunteering". We will work on this topic during the project.

Example from UFOLEP: « Person who by its own choice engages himself in an non-professional and non-paid activity during his free time in order to help others."

5.2. Education and recognition of volunteers

Sport Association and public sector must ensure that volunteers' training is consistently done on a structured and regular basis. As volunteering is getting more popular, volunteers' demands are increasing in terms of experience, training and support. Sport Associations as organizers of the non-formal education should pay close attention to the way they meet these expectations.

DTB example of non-formal education for volunteers (Plus Point Volunteering):

Non formal program - 4 seminars for getting a certificate, to be a member of the community PPE, to get special information via newsletter and to get special offers as VIP.

EuroVolNet project will collect all good examples in this topic during the project period. EuroVolNet Seminar 2 will cover this topic with the main title: "Volunteering, an education for life" and with sub-topics: Education for managers, Education for volunteer trainers, Recognition of non-formal education.

5.3. Legal Framework of Volunteering

In the majority of the EU countries there is no specific legal framework covering volunteering in sport. Volunteers in sport and sport organizations working with volunteers tend to be subject to the same legislation as volunteering in general, if such legislation exists. Some project partners (Community Games, UFOLEP based on »Civic Service in France») have their own "unofficial" organizational framework, which can be good base for the EuroVolNet project and for development of legal framework of volunteering in sport in EU.

We do not expect to change the legal framework on volunteering on EU or national levels during a 18 month project, but we hope to provide some evidence, examples and arguments that can be used in the important lobby work to this end. This topic will be further developed and discussed during the project period.

5.4. (Economic, social) Value of Volunteering

It is stressed that for **economic value of Volunteering** the availability of concrete and comparable data is poor. This suggests research in this area. It is also highlighted that the estimations included in this section, for example as to the level of public funding and the value of volunteering inputs, cannot be considered reliable.

It was stressed by all participants that it is hard to track the € value with numerous different currencies, rating systems etc. This will be one task for 2011 and onwards to get better track of € value in sport associations.

Many benefits of volunteering can be shown as "capital":

- Physical capital – the output gained by the recipient eg the number of clubs run, number of volunteer hours given to the community.
- Human capital – how a person, a group or a community has developed eg through the skills, a more diverse staff.
- Economic capital – the financial and economic effects eg the financial 'value' of volunteering, the increased wealth gained by people in later life (and the wider community) who have been advised on the appropriate benefits to claim.
- Social capital – the bonds and trusts created between individuals, groups of people or communities eg volunteers more active in other community schemes.
- Culture Capital – the shared sense of cultural or religious identity eg greater understanding and appreciation of other cultures.

Good example: Norwegian Olympic Committee and Confederation of Sports, Norway

Few social values stressed by partners:

- The most common factor for motivating volunteers to donate their time to the sport sector is a personal interest in a particular club.
- Personal interest in the sport itself: volunteering in the sport sector enables people to spend more time in a leisurely
- For volunteers is important to feel useful while relaxing and enjoying themselves. It is also possibility for individuals to get the opportunity to interact with people sharing the same interests.
- It is important to build new relationships with 'co-workers, trainers, leaders' that share the same passion and, in some cases, the same attitude towards life.
- To feel social responsibility: for many people, volunteering in their community sport club is an opportunity to contribute to keeping the sport club open and offering children the possibility of practicing sport.
- To get new skills and experiences
- To get an opportunity to participate in big events. The chance of being part of an important sport event (e.g. Olympic Games, Special Olympic Games) and possibly of meeting famous sportsmen and women was indicated as a motivational factor for volunteers in these events.

5.5. Volunteering management

Every organization that involves volunteers also manages them to some degree, even if it is not always acknowledged as volunteer management. Traditionally, however, managing those volunteers was done on an ad hoc basis with little regard given to whether managing volunteers was different to managing paid staff.

Effective volunteering that meets the pressures and responsibilities placed upon volunteers and organisations requires effective management and a recognition that volunteer management is a specific role that requires a specific set of skills and knowledge.

Voluntary organizations should set up volunteer policies to provide a more favourable environment for volunteers. Professionalization of human resource management practices is needed for improving the recruitment, training and retention of volunteers. In particular, the specific needs of the various groups involved (elderly, young people, etc.) must be better taken into account.

There are three specific elements of the rationale:

1. Understanding and evidencing the impact of volunteering.
2. Understanding and evidencing the impact effective volunteer management has on volunteering.
3. Sourcing funding that will fund volunteer management.

Volunteers need to be managed strategically by a professional volunteer manager who can ensure that the volunteers' needs are being met, and that the role they are fulfilling is of use to staff and beneficiaries.

There is no one-size-fits-all approach to volunteer management. The size of the organization, the number of volunteers and the type and complexity of roles being offered will all impact on the model most appropriate.

Whichever model is chosen it should be one that:

- enables the development of effective volunteering that meets the organization's needs;
- empowers volunteers to fulfil their potential and meet their own needs; and
- enables volunteer managers to access appropriate support.

EuroVolNet will collect good examples (models) of volunteer management.

5.6. (New) Ways of funding

One source of funding is your own organization's core funds particularly if it is so reliant on volunteers that it could not meet its aims and objectives without them. Obviously the organization's budget will have many competing priorities which is why it is necessary to make the business argument as to why volunteer management should be prioritized.

Project funding is typically the first place an organization will look to for funding. The advantage of project funding is that it provides an excellent opportunity to measure the impact effective volunteer management has and as this will normally be part of the funder's evaluation process it won't necessarily require extra work.

Good examples from NIF:

- All voluntary clubs, including sports clubs, and voluntary organizations paid in the past 25% for products and services, but from 01.01.2010 they all receive tax (amount) back.
- Tax reduction on sports facilities (not estimated in %)
- Funding (national lotteries) from Government: politicians at NIF managed to change key of funding from Government. In the past 33% culture, 33% research and 33% sports. Now sports and culture are sharing 50% - 50% the total budget

Example from Slovenia (SUS): more details is needed to get from SUS.

It is important to understand and demonstrate the wider impacts of volunteering, for example, improved health, community cohesion, citizenship and employability. This way new way of funding can be developed

as the wider benefits of volunteering are increasingly being recognized by policymakers and funders, and as voluntary organizations are being encouraged to bid for public sector.

6. "Trends, opportunities and challenges for volunteering in Europe", regards from Mogens Kirkeby, ISCA President

VIP – Very Important Project

The volunteers in sport are delivering a huge amount of Human and Social Capital to societies, but there is a growing gap between the societal expectations to the volunteers and the volunteers own wishes. This gap has to be bridged to ensure that European societies also in the future can benefit from the volunteers commitments and contributions.

Voluntary work is considered the most important resource of the grassroots sport sector, and a large part of the sport sector would not exist without volunteers.

Seven percent of the Europeans or 35 million citizens are volunteering in sport, according to a Commission initiated study (2010). However, in nine European countries twice as many as average (14 % or more) are doing volunteer work in sport. More than 17 million Europeans are investing more than six hours per month in voluntary work in sport.

Volunteers are multipliers – both financially and activity wise.

Volunteers are a committed and inexpensive resource for societies. Besides giving one's time and personal resources to other citizens by volunteering, the volunteers themselves also develop their knowledge and skills through practice and personal non-formal and informal education processes – this is indeed European Life Long Learning in massive scale.

What would we do if they did not show up on Monday ?

You should not worry. I can promise they will show up already tomorrow. They will show up next week. They will show up next month. But there is a risk that some of them will not show up in 2015 or 2020. Because the volunteers as Human Resource are challenged.

Today we need long-term committed volunteers, but more and more volunteers prefers limited and short-term engagements. We need volunteers with specialized qualifications – but more and more volunteers want to come "from the street to action". Long-term committed volunteers allows for time to education and training but short-term volunteers have to be recruited with the needed skills.

How can we balance the motivation versus the barriers for volunteers?

The challenge is to create more motivation and societies with fewer barriers for volunteers.

We need to identify and remove the top 10 barriers for volunteers !

We need to identify the top 50 motivation factors for European volunteers !

We need to identify best practice of Recognition, Validation, Education, "Human Resource management" and how to create benefits for volunteers.

With Article 165 in place this is a possible political action and it would be a natural follow up on the "Aarhus Declaration on Voluntary Work in Sport" made by the EU Sport Ministers in November 2003.

The European Year of volunteering has a chance to be a starting point for supporting volunteers in sport.

However, also the risk that even though the sport sector deliver more than 30 % of all volunteers in Europe, will be neglected and not visible as much as the huge amount of volunteers should justify. So far I am not so confident on behalf of volunteering in sport in the European Year of Volunteering – I see very few planned activities with focus on the sport sector. However, some good initiatives has been taken with support from the European Commission DG EAC - Sport Unit preparatory actions.

We should remember what is on stake: 35 million volunteers in sport – who might not show up in 2020 !
And honestly - it would not be a good example of the EU 2020 strategy on smart, sustainable and inclusive growth!!

Projects such as the EuroVolNet will provide best practices of motivation factors and identify the barriers, but we need visionary political decisions to remove the formal and legislative barriers for the volunteers.

It is time for including the sport and the voluntary sector in the EU 2020 Strategy.
We have what is needed in the Treaty – we just need political decisions, which can connect the European level with the local level– where the millions of volunteers day by day are producing quality of life - AND as it is stated original constitution of the European Union – namely - supporting the wellbeing of the citizens.

7. Key success factors – good examples from the national, regional and local level

Kick off meeting was our chance to show what we are doing within organizations. EuroVolNet project partners presented their activities and associations.

All collected power point presentations from the meeting can be found on ISCA website: www.isca-web.org

More details about each associations and activities on the national level will be collected and published on ISCA website (on EuroVolNet website in March).

8. Project plan, Activities, Calendar

Time/month	Activitiy	Objective	Target group
January 2011	EuroVolNet kick off meeting	Objectives 1, 2	Project Partners representatives, partner politicians, external stakeholders, invited guests
February 2011	EuroVolNet Project matrix completed Collection of good examples starts Presentation at the Eu Sport Forum		
March 2011	EuroVolNet Newsletter EuroVolNet website		
April 2011	EuroVolNet Seminar 1 »Why volunteer?« Subtopics: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Value of volunteering Recognition of volunteering Management of volunteering Financial /admin system Meeting of EuroVolNet project team	Objectives 1, 2, 3, 4	Leaders, managers and advisors of European sport organisations and project partners
April - June	EuroVolNet Newsletter Collection of good examples continues		
June 2011 – February 2012	Development and dissemination of Voluntary Services Action Plans, origin of best practices, and promoters and beneficiaries of the Voluntary Services Tutorial.	Objectives 1, 2, 3, 4, 5	Project Partners representatives, partner politicians, external stakeholders, invited guests
September 2011	EuroVolNet Seminar 2 Topic: Volunteering, an education for life Subtopics: Education for managers Education for volunteer trainers Recognition of non-formal education Meeting of EuroVolNet project team	Objectives 1, 2, 3, 4	Managers of European sport organisations and project partners

Time/month	Activitiy	Objective	Target group
October 2011	MOVE2011 Congress in Paris Meeting of EuroVolNet project team		
November 2011	Workshop: Developing an inception-to-culmination volunteer services package. Topic: How to develop action plan in Organizations working with volunteers? Sub-topics: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Motivation • How to keep volunteers for a long term? • Working structure • Communication • How to implement strategy into our associations? Meeting of EuroVolNet project team	Objectives 4, 5	Managers and leaders of partner organizations
May 2012	Project Closure and Launch of Voluntary Services Tutorial	Objectives 1, 4, 5	Managers and leaders of European sport and physical activity related organisations, Project partner professional representatives, partner politicians, external stakeholders, invited guests

EuroVolNet project team statements:

- "We all have different background, different history and national identity, but we all speak the same language – the language of sport for all and voluntarism". (Pia Pauly, DTB, Germany)
- "Volunteers sind das Herz von Special Olympics. Ohne Volunteers wären wir nicht in der Lage ganzjährige Angebote für unsere Athleten zur Verfügung zu stellen". (Bjoern Koehler, SOEE, Germany)
- "Dear VIP`s, I wish you good luck with EuroVolNet project" (Mogens Kirkeby, ISCA, Denmark)
- "EuroVolNet seems from this meeting a project where sharing then communicate are one of the answer to overcome barriers we find in volunteering." (Laetitia Zappella, UFOLEP, France)
- " Let volunteering be your education for life" (Jim Conn, SALSC, Scotland)



Minutes of the meeting
prepared by
Saska Benedicic Tomat
Jacob Schouenborg

Copenhagen, 20.2.2011