



# efc briefing

## volunteering

14 January 2010 - Ref: befc1005 - Email: eu@efc.be

### EFC gets ready for the 2011 European Year on volunteering. Do you want to get involved?

#### Outline

---

The proposal to devote 2011 to volunteering was formally approved by the European Council at the end of 2009<sup>1</sup>. Designated as the “European Year of Voluntary Activities Promoting Active Citizenship (2011)”, the Year will offer a wide range of possibilities for foundations interested active in this area to advance their mission by providing an excellent framework for promotion, networking, knowledge-sharing and partnerships both with public and private stakeholders.

The EFC is analysing opportunities for EFC members and partners’ involvement in the European Year and considering the development of a number of initiatives to raise awareness and promote foundations’ action in the area of volunteering. We would be pleased to hear from you if:

- **You are already undertaking and/or planning to undertake activities in the area of volunteering/active citizenship and/or in relation to the European Year.** They could be featured and promoted in the information and communication tools that the EFC is developing in relation to the Year as well as in the events organised by the EFC and other stakeholders in the run-up to and throughout the European Year. In particular, a workshop on the European Year will be organised in the context of the EFC Foundation Week, in which foundations will have the opportunity to review the opportunities offered by the European Year with the European Commission representative in charge of the initiative.
- **You would like to provide input and ideas on activities** the EFC could undertake in the context of the Year to raise awareness and promote foundations’ action in the fields covered by the Year.
- **You are interested to be informed about the developments related to the European Year and/or be involved in the activities** to be organised by the EFC, EU institutions and other stakeholders. Organisations interested in obtaining further information on how to get involved at national level are also invited to contact the EFC secretariat.

For further information, please contact the EFC secretariat at [mhernandez@efc.be](mailto:mhernandez@efc.be)

#### About the European Year

Designated as the “European Year of Voluntary Activities Promoting Active Citizenship (2011)”, the overall purpose of the European Year shall be to encourage and support — notably through the exchange of experience and good practices — the efforts of the Community, the Member States, local and regional authorities to create the conditions for civil society conducive to volunteering in the European Union and to increase the visibility of voluntary activities in the EU.

The objectives of the European Year shall be as follows:

- To work towards an enabling environment for volunteering in the EU in order to anchor volunteering as part of promoting civic participation and people-to-people activities in an EU context and address existing obstacles to voluntary activities, where appropriate and necessary;

---

1

[http://register.consilium.europa.eu/servlet/driver?page=Result&lang=EN&typ=Advanced&cmsid=639&ff\\_COTE\\_DOCUMENT=15658%2F09&ff\\_COTE\\_DOSSIER\\_INST=&ff\\_TITRE=&ff\\_FT\\_TEXT=&ff\\_SOUS\\_COTE\\_MATIERE=&dd\\_DATE\\_DOCUMENT=&dd\\_DATE\\_REUNION=&dd\\_FT\\_DATE=&fc=ALLLANG&srm=25&md=100&ssf=DATE\\_DOCUMENT+DESC](http://register.consilium.europa.eu/servlet/driver?page=Result&lang=EN&typ=Advanced&cmsid=639&ff_COTE_DOCUMENT=15658%2F09&ff_COTE_DOSSIER_INST=&ff_TITRE=&ff_FT_TEXT=&ff_SOUS_COTE_MATIERE=&dd_DATE_DOCUMENT=&dd_DATE_REUNION=&dd_FT_DATE=&fc=ALLLANG&srm=25&md=100&ssf=DATE_DOCUMENT+DESC)

---

European Foundation Centre, AISBL

78, avenue de la Toison d'Or | 1060 Brussels, Belgium | t +32.2.512.8938 | f +32.2.512.3265 | [efc@efc.be](mailto:efc@efc.be) | [www.efc.be](http://www.efc.be)

- To empower organisers of voluntary activities to improve the quality of voluntary activities in order to facilitate voluntary activities and help organisers to implement new types of voluntary activities and to encourage networking, mobility, cooperation and synergies within civil society and between civil society and other sectors in an EU context;
- To recognise voluntary activities in order to encourage appropriate incentives for individuals, companies and volunteer-development organisations and gain recognition for volunteering at EU level and in the Member States by policymakers, civil society organisations, public institutions, the formal and non-formal education sector and employers for skills and competences developed through volunteering; and
- To raise awareness of the value and importance of volunteering in order to raise general awareness of the importance of volunteering as an expression of civic participation which contributes to issues which are of common concern of all Member States, such as a harmonious societal development and social cohesion.

Taking into account the particularities of the situation in each Member State and all forms of volunteering, for the purpose of the Year the term "voluntary activities" refers to all types of voluntary activity, **whether formal, non-formal or informal which are undertaken of a person's own free will, choice and motivation, and is without concern for financial gain.**

As in previous European Years, actions will be undertaken both at national and European level. They will include exchange of experience and good practices, studies and research, conferences and events, and information and promotion campaigns to disseminate key messages.

For further details, please visit the European Commission's website [http://ec.europa.eu/citizenship/news/news820\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/citizenship/news/news820_en.htm) or contact the EFC secretariat at [mhernandez@efc.be](mailto:mhernandez@efc.be).