

## ***Foundation Facts & Figures Across the EU – Associating Private Wealth for Public Benefit***

***An initiative of the European Foundation Centre Research Task Force  
with the support of the King Baudouin Foundation***

### ***Foundations in Europe***

Across Europe, foundations are receiving increased attention and are taking up a more central role in policy discussions on the future of economic, social, and environmental issues as well as research and innovation, among others. Foundations work to improve the living conditions and quality of life of the general public and specific disadvantaged individuals, and they promote civic initiatives and active citizenship. Foundations in Europe are not a new phenomenon. Private giving can be traced back to the Middle Ages in countries as far apart as Portugal and Finland. Today we can see a new momentum for the foundation sector, which has grown rapidly over the last decade.

### ***Defining Foundations***

Foundations are an important part of the independent funding community, representing a valuable source of income for associations, and/or they operate key programmes and services to benefit the public in a variety of fields. The European Foundation Centre has established – through the guidance and input of its membership – the following general concept of what a foundation actually is.

Foundations:

- Are separately-constituted non-profit bodies with their own reliable source of income, usually but not exclusively from an endowment or capital
- Have their own governing board
- Use their financial resources for educational, health-related, social, research-oriented, cultural, or other public benefit purposes either by making grants to third parties or operating their own programmes and projects

Although foundations may have specific national characteristics arising from both cultural and legal developments and the different uses of terminology for this area, the above concept covers the majority of the foundations in Europe today, and distinguishes them from sources of non-independent funding as well as from associations.

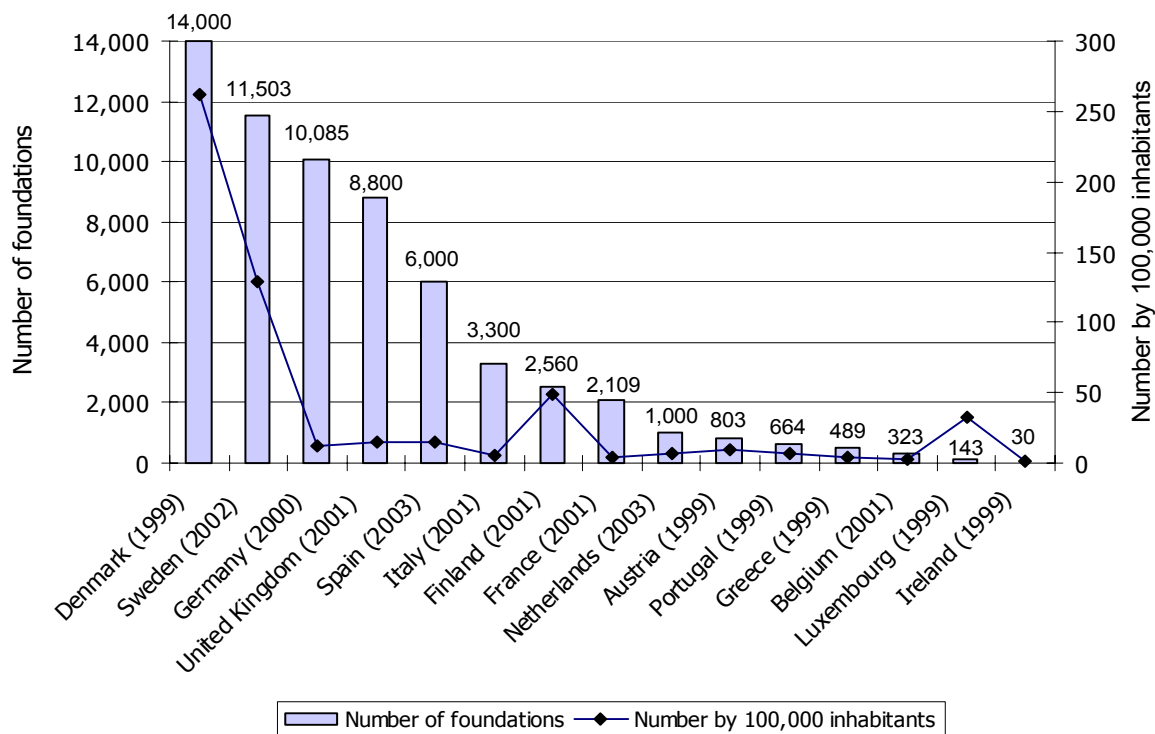
### ***Foundation Types***

Foundations can be grouped into the following broad categories:

- Independent foundations, which form the largest part of the sector
- Corporate foundations
- Governmentally-supported foundations
- Community foundations with a local/community focus and other fundraising foundations

### Number of Foundations in the European Union

A broad sweep of country surveys gives an approximate total of 200,000 organisations that are labelled or call themselves foundations in the European Union. However, a closer look shows that the actual estimated number of foundations in the old 15 Member States amounts to some 62,000 at the turn of the century, an average of more than 16 foundations per 100,000 inhabitants. The following shows the number of foundations in each of the pre-2004 Enlargement countries.



### Foundations' fields of activity at a glance

Foundations active in Europe concentrate their activities (activity) and the bulk of their resources (expenditure) in the following key fields (in addition to fields such as the environment, civil rights, non-profit infrastructure, sports, animal welfare etc.):

<b>Belgium (expenditure)</b>	Arts and culture	Social science	Education*		
<b>Finland (expenditure)</b>	Education	Community development and housing	Health		
<b>France (expenditure)</b>	Health	Social services	Science		
<b>Germany (activity)</b>	Social services	Science	Education		
<b>Italy** (expenditure)</b>	Arts and culture	Social science	Education		
<b>Netherlands (activity)</b>	Social services	Education	Science	Health	Culture
<b>Spain (activity)</b>	Social services	Arts and culture	Education		
<b>Sweden (expenditure)</b>	Science	Social science	Social services		
<b>United Kingdom*** (expenditure)</b>	Social services	Health	Education		

\*Education includes vocational training; \*\*Italy: covers expenditure of Italian foundations of banking origin

\*\*\* United Kingdom: covers expenditure of the top 500 Trusts

## Foundations' Expenditure

Foundations use their resources to give grants, in some cases to offer loans or guaranties, and/or to operate their own programmes. The EFC Research Task Force survey illustrates that out of the 62,000 foundations identified in the old EU Member States, some 26,000 foundations in 9 EU countries reported a total expenditure of over 51 billion euros – an average of almost 2 million euros per foundation.

Country	Total expenditure of foundations surveyed (euros)	Year
Belgium	150,000,000	2001
Finland	387,727,000	2001
France	3,139,000,000	2001
Germany	35,000,000,000	1999
Italy	4,848,597,000	1999
Netherlands	2,672,180,000	2003
Spain	925,971,000	2003
Sweden	656,000,000	2001/02
United Kingdom	3,231,100,000	2001/02
<b>Total</b>	<b>51,010,575,000</b>	

## Foundations' Assets

Analysing foundations' assets helps us to better grasp the specificity of the foundation community within the wider third sector, and give us a better idea of their scope. Out of the 62,000 foundations in the old EU Member States, 27,000 foundations surveyed across 8 countries reported combined assets of some 174 billion euros, an average of over 6 million euros per foundation.

Country	Total assets of foundations surveyed (euros)	Year
Belgium	555,000,000	2001
Finland	5,141,818,000	2001
France	8,012,400,000	2001
Germany	50,000,000,000	1999
Italy	45,500,000,000	2002
Netherlands*	1,445,282,000	2002
Sweden	17,049,000,000	2002
United Kingdom**	46,597,360,000	2001/02
<b>Total</b>	<b>174,300,860,000</b>	

\*Netherlands: includes 400 foundations collecting funds; data is not available for 600 endowed grantmaking foundations

\*\*United Kingdom: includes top 500 Trusts

## Foundations – employment and volunteering

In 7 EU countries – Belgium, Finland, France, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, and Spain – over 10,500 foundations surveyed were found to employ some 185,700 people, which equals an average of 18 persons per foundation. Many foundations do give grants or can provide capital support to employment, creating and sustaining initiatives in the different fields in which they operate. Their contribution to employment creation should therefore also be interpreted in this context.

Volunteering is an important feature of the foundation sector. Over 10,000 foundations surveyed in 6 EU countries involved some 144,500 volunteers in their work, for an average of 14 persons per foundation.

### **About the EFC Research Task Force**

A key objective of the Centre's work is to improve knowledge of foundations and to better document their public and social utility across the EU by presenting up-to-date figures. This work is carried out through the EFC EU Committee's *Research Task Force* and its members, who have undertaken a survey of the Dimensions of the Foundation Sector in Europe, from which this data comes. This initiative receives special support from the King Baudouin Foundation.

### **For more information...**

Further details on the *Foundation Facts & Figures Across the EU* are available from the EFC website at: [www.efc.be/projects/eu/research/facts.htm](http://www.efc.be/projects/eu/research/facts.htm)

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### **About the EFC**

The European Foundation Centre (EFC) is an independent international association that promotes and underpins the work of foundations and corporate funders active in and with Europe. Established in 1989 by seven of Europe's leading foundations, the EFC today serves a core membership of more than 200 members, associates and subscribers; 350 community philanthropy initiatives; as well as a further 50,000 organisations linked through a network of 58 information and support centres worldwide. The EFC hosts WINGS (Worldwide Initiatives for Grantmaker Support), a global network of some 100 grantmaker associations and support organisations.

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