

2011 European Year on Volunteering How can EAPN members engage with it

2011 has been designated by the European Union as the European Year on Volunteering. In parallel to this, the UN has decided to celebrate in 2011 one decade since the International Year on Volunteers (IYV+10).

EAPN has joined the NGO Alliance for the European Year on Volunteering (EYV 2011) in November 2010 in order to help members engage with the year and to ensure that poverty is mainstreamed in the results of the year. Since then, we have circulated the Alliance newsletter highlighting activities and opportunities for NGOs to engage with the Year. This paper will explain in more detail the possibilities to engage with the EYV 2011 at EU and national levels and is structured in three parts:

1. The EYV 2011 Year
2. The EYV 2011 Alliance
3. How can EAPN and members engage with it

1. The European Year on Volunteering 2011

Objectives of the year are:

- to recognise and raise awareness on the value of volunteering,
- celebrate volunteer efforts,
- empower people and volunteer organisations, and
- work towards the creation of an enabling environment for volunteering, including a volunteering infrastructure in the EU.

The management and funding of the year: The EU budget for the year is about 8 million and some additional resources were allocated for the preparation of the year in the 2010 budget. However, member states have put in additional resources for the year and the contribution amounts vary from country to country.

Main activities planned for the year are, as specified on the European Commission website:

EYV2011 Tour: Volunteers will tour EU countries over a one-year period, showcasing their work and engaging with policy makers and the public at each step of the tour. The Tour is to be held in cities across the member states.

EYV Relay: 27 “Relay” volunteer reporters will follow the work of 54 volunteering organisations and produce audio, video and written reports to be broadcast by the media. At the end of the year, the combined reports will be compiled to form a broadcast-quality documentary about the European Year and its tour.

Four thematic conferences will be organized in 2011 to highlight key issues related to volunteering:

8 January in Budapest: Recognition of Volunteering;

May/June: Celebrating volunteers and their valuable contribution;
October: Empowering volunteering organizations;
December: Closing conference on future challenges.

There is a strong focus on highlighting positive examples of individual volunteering, i.e. “extraordinary stories from ordinary people”. For more information on the EYV Year 2011 official activities, please visit the European Commission website: <http://europa.eu/volunteering/en/home2>.

2. The EYV 2011 Alliance

European networks working on volunteering that have lobbied for the EU Year on Volunteering had created the *EYV 2011 Alliance* in 2007 as an informal group of organizations. European Volunteer Centre (CEV) is hosting the *Alliance*. *The EYV 2011 Alliance* is the main NGO partner of the European Commission, facilitating NGO and individual engagement with the year. It aims to contribute to celebrating and recognizing volunteering and to developing a post 2011 agenda. Currently there are 35 European Network members of *EYV Alliance 2011*. EAPN is a member since November 2010.

The alliance has set up 6 working groups that will develop policy recommendations on volunteering throughout the year. The results will be handed to the decision-makers at the Closing Conference on future challenges.

The six working groups have a defined composition, mandate and objectives, including:

Group 1: Quality volunteering

Group 2: Legal framework of volunteering

Group 3: Towards an enabling volunteering infrastructure in Europe

Group 4: Tools of recognition

Group 5: The value of volunteering

Group 6: Employee volunteering.

Since EAPN joined the Alliance only in November 2010 and it has not made financial contribution to the establishment of the Alliance, it cannot be part of any working groups. However, it can submit proposals to the groups or be invited to meetings for its expertise.

Other Alliance tools include:

The newsletter: EYV Flow: A monthly online publication widely disseminated. EAPN has been profiled in the December issue along with other new members of the Alliance. The newsletter includes positions and activities of the members of the Alliance with regards to volunteering and provides useful updates on the institutional partners initiatives and the activities on the year. For monitoring and evaluation purposes, the Alliance encourages people to sign up to the newsletter

individually as it is technically difficult to copy parts of the newsletter into other ones. However, EAPN highlights the link to the newsletter in the *Flash*.

Question of the month: is a section where members can ask questions related to volunteering and website visitors can vote or answer it.

The Online Marketplace: <http://www.eyv2011.eu/online-marketplace> The EYV 2011 Alliance Online Marketplace feature enables those who work alongside volunteers to find partners for common projects in the framework of the Year. It also enables organisations to offer volunteering opportunities and for people to search for suitable volunteering experiences.

The Resource Library: Gathers research, reports and positions on volunteering related to the topics of the six working groups.

Volunteer commitment, the press kit, funding opportunities are other tools available on the website of the EYV Alliance 2011: <http://www.eyv2011.eu/>

3. How can EAPN and its members engage with the Year

EAPN and the Belgian Network (BAPN) have participated in the *first EYV2011 Tour* and the conference of European Volunteer Centre on December 6-8 2010. The conference bridged the two EU years. CEV launched the **Brussels Declaration on volunteering as a means of empowerment and social inclusion**, highlighting the value of volunteering and proposing the policy agenda to improve the volunteering infrastructure. The paper identifies the state of play and proposes four objectives to stimulate action among stakeholders, including:

- 1) *Boosting the contribution of volunteers and volunteer organisations to promoting empowerment and social inclusion: Volunteering “with” people experiencing poverty and social exclusion*
- 2) *Enhance the inclusiveness of volunteering and its potential to be a means of empowerment; social inclusion and active citizenship – Promoting volunteering “of” people experiencing poverty and social exclusion*
- 3) *Ensure that volunteering is a right for all: providing and encouraging an enabling legal environment for the active participation of people experiencing poverty and social exclusion*
- 4) *Recognise and boost the potential of volunteering as a way to acquire skills and to enhance employability.*

EAPN has contributed to the drafting of the declaration, which you can find here: http://www.cev.be/data/File/CEV_Brussels_Declaration.pdf.

EAPN will develop a **position paper on volunteering** and poverty. *EAPN Spain* will lead on drafting the position and will finalize it with the input from the Social Inclusion Working Group.

The first **Anti-poverty Mag** in 2011 will also be dedicated to volunteering. The magazine will include EAPN’s position and will highlight member engagement with

the year, aiming to stimulate debate about the links between poverty and volunteering.

EAPN will follow the work of the EYV 2011 Alliance working groups and will make an input, when possible and relevant.

Getting involved at national level:

In some countries, National Networks are cooperating with the National Coordinating Bodies for the EU Year 2011 on planning and carrying out activities during the year. For networks that haven't had a chance to get involved, your starting point is to get in touch with the National Coordinating Bodies and learn about the actions planned in your country: http://ec.europa.eu/citizenship/annexes-citizenship/doc1069_en.htm.

The EYV2011 Tour has already taken place in Brussels (in December), Vienna (25-27 January). Lisbon and Luxembourg are to follow soon. **Check the Calendar** on the European Commission's website to see when it is happening in your country and how you can engage with it.

As members of EAPN and part of the EYV Alliance, **you can propose** articles for the EYV newsletter or share your press-releases related to volunteering. You can also register on the online Marketplace or share examples on the "Stories" section, hosted by the European Commission website. On the same website, there is one calendar of events happening throughout the EU member states. If you have planned events related to the year, you can have them included in that website.

Finally, at the end of the year, a **Yearbook** of what has happened throughout the year will be published. The yearbook will include everything from stories to events, reports and useful documents. If you would like to be in the Yearbook, make your contributions to the EYV2011 Alliance during the year.

These are some of the key events planned and spaces for engaging with the EYV2011 at European and national level. Anti-poverty organizations have a lot to say in the debate on volunteering and some of EAPN's members have been very active at EU or national level. Let's get our messages out!

If you would like to contribute to the *EYV2011 Alliance* website, or if you have questions about the Year or the *Alliance*, please contact tanya.basarab@eapn.eu.