

## **2.2 Administration and governance of youth volunteering**

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## **Governance**

Volunteering in the German-speaking Community is only regulated in general. There are no specific programmes or measures on youth volunteering.

According to a survey done in the German-speaking Community in 2011, 41% of the population in the German-speaking Community are active volunteers, particularly in the social, educative, sports, cultural and youth sector. In addition, there are many initiatives in other sectors, e.g. development cooperation, mutual aid and rural development.

Based on consultations with volunteers and recent network meetings, concrete approaches were formulated and implemented to promote volunteering in the German-speaking Community. This includes free insurance for volunteers, offered by the German-speaking Community for small non-profit organisations, the establishment of a "support point for voluntary work" located in the Ministry of the German-speaking Community, an information portal about volunteering, training for volunteers, various exchange projects, regular information sessions (e.g. "Ich hab da mal ne Frage") and the implementation of an annual information market on volunteering in the German-speaking Community.

In 2011, the German-speaking Community took part in the European Year of volunteering whereby the Member states agreed to continue their good cooperation for the future. This had also an impact on the collaboration between the three belgian communities, which intensified. In cooperation with the High Council for Volunteers, the German-speaking Community wants to improve the conditions for volunteering in Belgium. The German-speaking Community is involved in European projects to catch up on "good examples" and discuss voluntary initiatives, e.g. the Grundtvig program.

### **Main actors**

#### **On federal level:**

The [Federal Public Service for Social Security](#) is responsible for all regulations on the legal status of volunteers. The Federal Public Service supports the High Council of Volunteers, which is also a federal level body.

The [High Council of Volunteers](#) is the main public institution dealing with volunteering. It has been established at the end of 2002 by the Ministry of Social Affairs and is based in Brussels. This permanent advisory body was formed to advise and inform the Federal Government on issues related to volunteering and to ensure attention to specific problems concerning volunteers and volunteering in different areas such as: social security, tax law, the relation between volunteering and the labour market, etc. The Council is composed by 25 members nominated by the king and whose mandate can be renovated after four years:

- 10 French speaking members;
- 10 Dutch speaking members;
- 1 German speaking member;
- 2 Francophone members appointed on the basis of their scientific expertise on volunteering and volunteers;
- 2 Dutch members appointed on the basis of their scientific expertise on volunteering and volunteers

The composition of the Council mirrors the diversity within the volunteering sector. In fact, its members come from 10 main sectors such as:

- Training and education,
- youth,
- health care,
- social and judicial assistance,
- sports,
- culture (arts, cultural heritage, science),
- humanitarian action and international solidarity,
- religion, philosophy and politics,
- environment, nature, protection of animals, ecology,
- tourism, leisure and other.

The High Council for Volunteers collects, systemises and analyses information on volunteers and voluntary work, undertakes research into specific problems which volunteers and voluntary work may face as well as gives advice with regard to volunteers and voluntary work. The High Council for Volunteers is charged with handling questions and proposals related to the development of volunteering in Belgium. The first question tackled by the High Council was the creation of a legal status for volunteers detailing the rights and responsibilities of individual

volunteers as well as of the organisations engaging volunteers. Nowadays, the Council also has an advising role on legal proposals related to adaptations, modifications or specifications concerning the Law on Volunteering.

[The King Baudouin Foundation](#) has a number of publications on volunteer work and lends financial support to 1000 voluntary projects.

### **Decentralised bodies**

The Government of the German-speaking Community ([Regierung der Deutschsprachigen Gemeinschaft](#)) is the volunteering main funding source in the German-speaking Community. The Department for Culture and Youth of the Ministry of the German-speaking Community ([Fachbereich für Kultur und Jugend des Ministeriums der Deutschsprachigen Gemeinschaft](#)) helps create youth volunteer work opportunities through the recognition and funding of youth (work) initiatives.

The [support point for voluntary work](#) located in the Ministry of the German-speaking Community provides support to voluntary activities and initiatives launched by people in the German-speaking Community. Their support consists of advice, information and training. In addition they promote volunteer work by the annual "Volunteer's Market".

### **Cross-sectoral cooperation**