

## **2.8 Current debates and reforms**

After approving the renewed law on volunteering, the Minister of Work, the Minister of Social Matters and the Minister of Finances proposed to raise the maximum height of reimbursements for sport volunteers, night- and day caretakers and non-urgent medical transport. The underlying idea is that the contemporary rather limited reimbursement constrains volunteers in the exercise of their voluntary work.

On the basis of Article 12 of the Volunteer Act, it may be decided to raise the annual ceiling for certain categories of volunteers. The Council of Ministers recently approved a draft royal decree which significantly raises the ceiling for the sports sector, non-emergency patient transport and for night and day care attendants. This almost doubles the flat-rate reimbursement from EUR 1 364 to EUR 2 500.

In the past, however, the High Council for Volunteers, among others, has always expressed a negative opinion with regard to an increase in the maximum amounts of lump-sum payments per day and per year provided for by law. For example, the advice drawn up on the occasion of the tenth anniversary of the Volunteer Act states that commitment and free of charge are the essence of, and characteristic of, volunteering. The Supreme Court also states that the allowances for volunteering serve to cover the costs incurred by the volunteer, but that they may not serve to compensate for the time spent on volunteering. In addition, an increase in the maximum amounts could also lead to more discrimination between organizations that can afford to pay allowances and those that cannot.

### **References:**

<https://www.defederatie.org/vrijwilligers/verhoging-kostenvergoeding-hol...>

<https://www.deverenigdeverenigingen.be/images/Debat20vrijwilligerswerk20...>

### **A coordinated policy on volunteering**

On 8 July 2016, the Flemish Government approved a coordinated policy plan on voluntary work. After the consultation of different advisory councils, the Flemish Government definitely approved the Action Plan 'Flemish Coordinated Policy on Voluntary Work' on 18 November 2016 ( [Actieplan gecoördineerd Vlaams Vrijwilligersbeleid](#)). This plan aims to install an improved and well-coordinated policy on volunteering across different sectors, including the youth sector. The focus is on three major issues:

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- the administrative burden for (young) volunteers and voluntary (youth) organisations

- provision of information
- common rules applicable to volunteers

There will be measures on Flemish, federal and local level.