

EUROPEAN VOLUNTEERING FORUM

Maribor, Slovenia
10-14 october



REPORT

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Background of the European Volunteering Forum

For more than a hundred years transnational voluntary service has been contributing to the world becoming a better place. Without being pathetic one could say that transnational volunteering is one of the most consistent contributions to world peace. Since its very beginnings in the early Twenties of the 20th century international volunteers have helped to heal the wounds of the disastrous wars, to rebuild homes and reconnect nations who were at different sides of the front line.

In its long history transnational volunteering has often managed to cross the lines of division created by political or economic divide – bringing together East and West much earlier than the fall of the Berlin wall and connecting the developed North with the less developed South of our planet. Over the years different transnational volunteering programmes have offered an opportunity to millions of (young) people to express their solidarity, raise their global awareness and take meaningful actions for both the beneficiaries and themselves.

In 1996 the European Union decided to create the European Voluntary Service (EVS), a programme that was focusing on young people with fewer opportunities; providing a unique opportunity of transnational volunteering for all young people regardless of their background, level of education or financial income. Another specificity of this programme was that it had been designed as a ‘learning service’ – a volunteering opportunity with a stronger non-formal learning dimension than the majority of other transnational volunteering schemes. Of course, this does not mean that young people were not learning in other volunteering programmes, but in EVS the learning has been approached more consciously, intentionally helping young people to reflect on their learning and to recognise the competences gained through their voluntary service. Since 2007 these achievements of EVS volunteers have been made even more visible through the implementation of Youthpass.

In 2016 EVS is celebrating its 20th birthday and can proudly share that 100.000 young people have taken up this life-changing opportunity to contribute actively to more social justice, respect for human diversity and inter-connectedness in Europe and beyond.

Using the occasion of the 20th anniversary of EVS, the European Volunteering Forum in Maribor was a great opportunity to reflect on the past, explore the present and sense the future of transnational volunteering.

European Volunteering Forum: facts and figures

3 DAYS OF SHARING AND JOINT REFLECTION

60 PARTICIPANTS

28 COUNTRIES



+ **3** NEIGHBOURING PARTNER REGIONS



YOUTH WORKERS



CURRENT VOLUNTEERS

10 TRANSNATIONAL VOLUNTEERING PROGRAMMES PRESENT

3 FACILITATORS

5 NATIONAL AGENCIES FOR ERASMUS+ YOUTH IN ACTION

3 SALTO-YOUTH RESOURCE CENTRES

Flow of the Forum

Day 1

After a welcome by the Deputy Mayor of the City of Maribor on the eve of the Forum, the European Volunteering Forum was officially opened in the plenary by Sonja Mitter (SALTO SEE RC) as a representative of the organising institutions. In her welcoming address Sonja underlined the purpose of the Forum as a moment to celebrate 20 years of EVS but also a place for reflection about the impact of transnational volunteering in the past, exploration of current challenges and pointing out future directions. She emphasised that the Forum managed to reach a geographically wide outreach, covering not only EU countries but also the four neighbouring regions: Western Balkans, Eastern Europe and Caucasus, Russia as well as South Mediterranean countries.

In the following session, Janez Škulj provided an inspiring overview of the history of transnational volunteering over the last 100 years.

The day continued with a sharing of participants' experiences from their projects and reflection about trends in transnational volunteering. The programme ended with a panel discussion hosted by the City Council of Maribor on the topic on benefits and challenges of (transnational) volunteering.



Day 2

The next day's morning focused on exploring the variety of transnational volunteering programmes and schemes, presented by "living books" coming from different volunteering organisations during a market place of programmes and a talk show, which enabled the participants to deepen their knowledge about: European Voluntary Service (EVS), Alliance of European Voluntary Service Organisations, Coordinating Committee for International Voluntary Service (CCIVS), Association of Service Civil International (SCI), United Nations Volunteers (UNV), Global Education Network of Young Europeans (GLEN), as well as some local volunteering programmes done by: Voluntariat Institute (Slovenia), Youth Association DRONI (Georgia), Wings of hope, (Bosnia and Herzegovina) and Chabibeh Sporting Club (Lebanon).

The day continued with a summary of the participants' reflections on the identified challenges and trends, and participants were invited to reflect on the (emerging) future of transnational volunteering and formulate their findings in the form of messages to be presented the following day.



Day 3

The last day of the Forum started with a presentation of the messages for the future of transnational volunteering, followed by other participants' and the organisers' feedback.

The last part of the Forum was used to stimulate networking amongst the participants in form of an 'open agenda' with topics and sessions proposed and led by the participants themselves.

The outcomes of the Forum may be found in the following pages, the detailed programme of the Forum is included in the Annexes of this report.



Reflecting on the Past – Lessons Learnt

In an inspiring input about the history of transnational volunteering, **Janez Skulj** ‘walked’ the Forum participants through 100 years of key developments in this field. He stressed that transnational volunteering was rooted in a moment of ‘huge changes’ and ‘new thinking’, expressed in the pacifist movement after the WWI. He pictured how the main driving force for transnational volunteering has been changing over time: from a more peace and reconciliation-driven effort and aspiration, followed by humanitarian support and development work to youth mobility and learning.

Janez also pointed out that international volunteering was at the forefront of bridging the ‘politically divided’ sides, playing an important role in cooling down the Cold War when groups of young volunteers had opportunities to meet their peers on the other side of the Iron Curtain.

In his reflection about transnational volunteering he pointed out that the concept of “volunteering” was often politically misused in situations of deep economic crises and high unemployment (e.g. national-socialism in Germany in the 1930’s), as well as by the totalitarian regimes in Eastern Bloc countries or former Yugoslavia when young people’s labour was used to build countries’ economies.

Finally, he also reminded the audience of how European Voluntary Service started in 1996, initially as a very *political* initiative in the context of the Maastricht Treaty with the aim of supporting the development of European identity through an enhanced mobility of young people, which is very different from today’s focus on the employability of young people.

Following Janez’ input a number of points were raised:

- There is a need to be clear on terminology that is used: Are we talking about voluntary ‘service’ or voluntary ‘work’; the use of different concepts might lead to narrowing the nature of volunteering and a potential misuse as job replacement.
- The challenge with many resolutions and strategies on volunteering is that they often set higher standards and demands, without sufficient funding to follow those demands.
- For years there has been a trend to associate volunteering in Europe more with youth work and youth policies. Today there is a tendency to place volunteering in different and wider policy frames, where often conflicting concepts about ideas

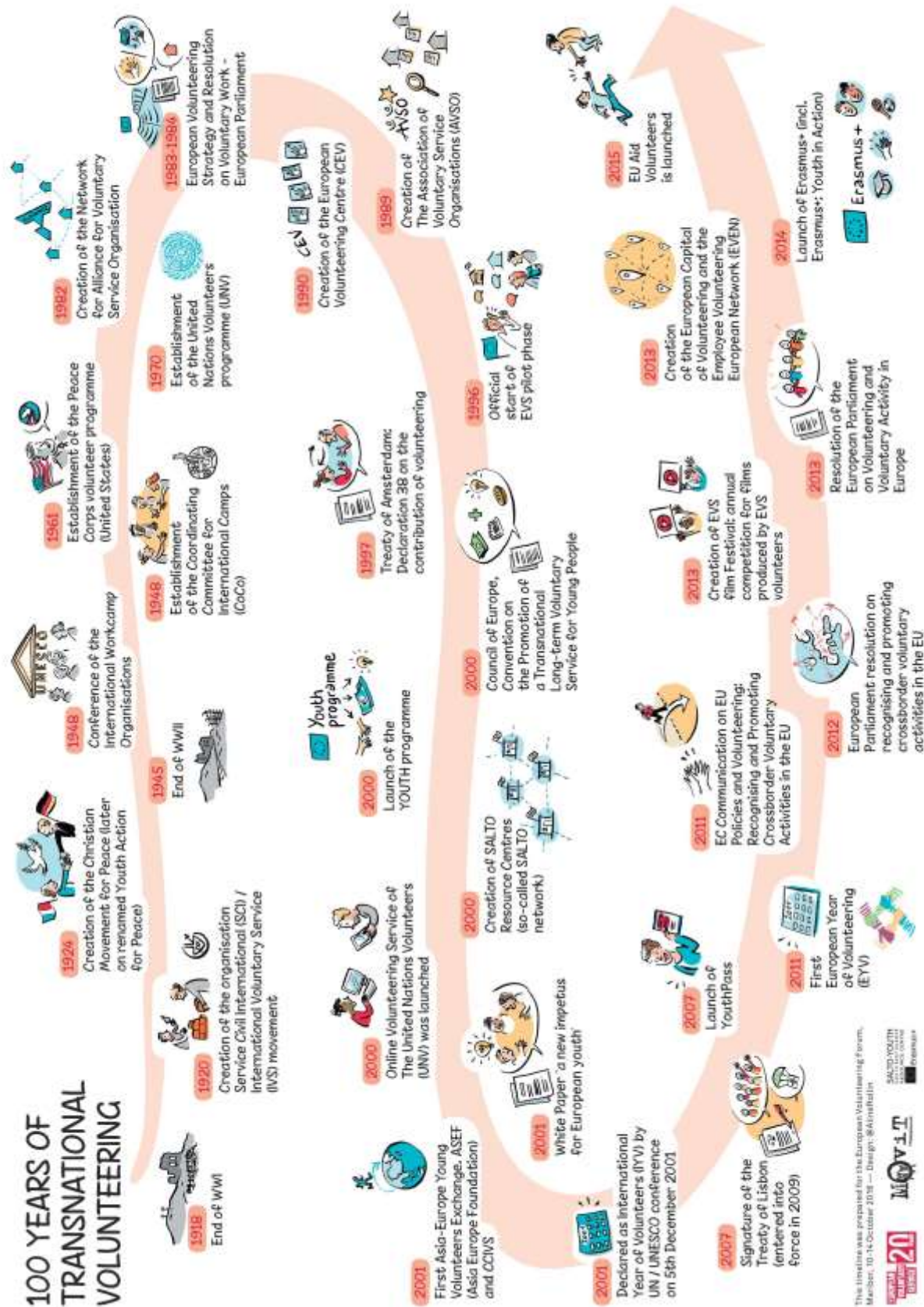
about volunteering come together (e.g. is it more about learning or more about work?).

- Does volunteering have a crisis of identity? What is considered volunteering? And what is not? What is the minimum to be ensured for something to be called volunteering?
- What happened with the political dimension of volunteering? Are there any political terms still to be used in EVS, for example?

The complete transcript of Janez' input can be found in the Annex of this report.



100 YEARS OF TRANSNATIONAL VOLUNTEERING



This timeline was prepared for the European Volunteering Forum, Member, 10-14 October 2018 — Design: @Almshoflin

20 EUROPEAN VOLUNTEERING FORUM

MOVET MOVEMENT FOR VOLUNTEERING

ERASMUS+ ERASMUS+ YOUTH IN ACTION

Exploring the Present – Trends and Challenges

Following reflections based on their own transnational volunteering projects, and taking into account the lessons learnt from the panel debate in the City Council of Maribor, the Forum participants pictured current trends and challenges in transnational volunteering.

- **Reducing the added value of volunteering to ‘work experience’**

Volunteering in general and transnational volunteering are still considered something positive and having an ‘added value’ in terms of contributing locally to societies and communities, or more globally dealing with the difficult situations in the world, as well on the personal level as a chance to do something meaningful in life. However, there is a trend to reduce the volunteering experience only to – work experience. Speaking about volunteering only in terms of ‘work experience’ tends to limit it the overall purpose of volunteering to work and employability. But there is so much more of an added value in transnational volunteering: *“It changes the way young people perceive others and other countries, it takes you out of the comfort zone, sometimes saving your life (in terms of taking you out of dangerous situations that you may have found yourself in), and there is also the impact on the local community in terms of what you bring back to your local context”* (participant).

- **Internship vs. volunteering**

There is a trend to use voluntary service schemes as internships or traineeships, often leading to job substitution. This is an obvious challenge. However, the boundary between the two is often blurry and hard to make. The proposal from the participants of the Forum was to search for the starting point in terms of needs:

- If it is the need of the local community that comes first (and in addition to that the volunteer can learn something during the service), then we speak about volunteering.
- If it is about the young person gaining new skills as the starting point, then we talk more about internships or traineeships.

- **Value-based volunteering and depoliticised volunteering?**

It was the feeling of the Forum participants that volunteering today is more often detached from the strong value-base that used to be present in the past. It seems that there is less motivation based on strong pro-social values and positive political beliefs, but rather a more individualistic and pragmatic approach focused on personal career development. It seems

that transnational volunteering has become largely depoliticised. Volunteering today is often an act of individual mobility without deeper reflection on the social or global purpose or the question of ‘what can I bring back to my own community after this experience?’

- **Lack of information and administrative barriers**

Even though we are living in the ‘information age’, many transnational volunteering programmes and schemes are not well-known to the wider population of young people. In other cases, even if there is information and the readiness to organise transnational volunteering schemes, there are strong administrative obstacles for international mobility, e.g. in terms of gaining visa for volunteers. There is an obvious need to work more on recognition of (transnational) volunteering, volunteering strategies and laws to overcome these obstacles.

- **Funding, quality and quantity**

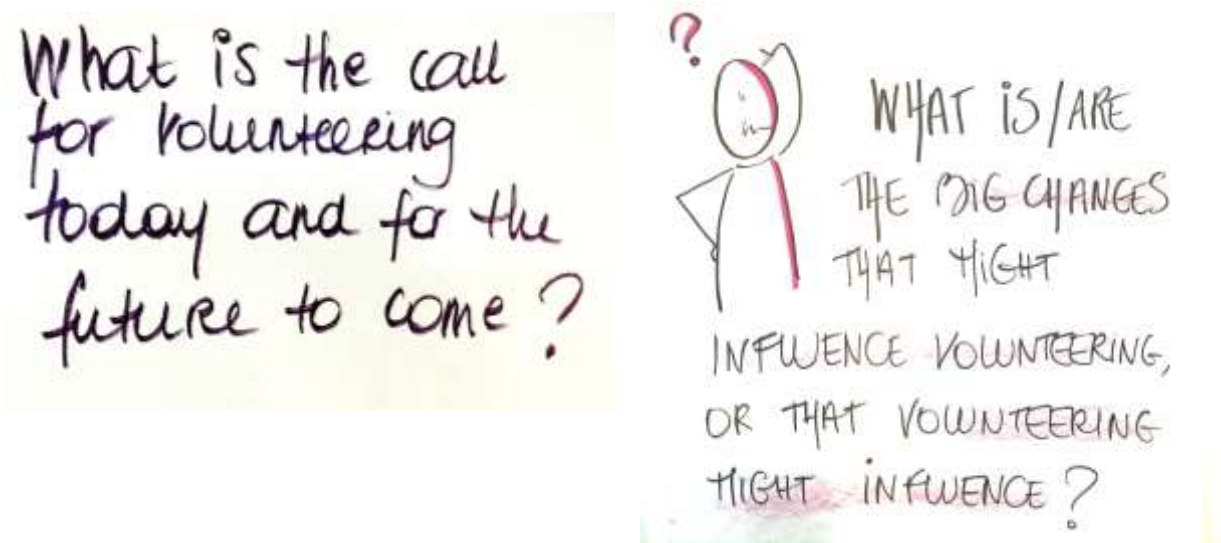
Often there is not enough funding for transnational volunteering schemes or for implementing existing volunteering strategies and policies. On the other hand, in some cases the funding might increase but there is not enough capacity in the civil society to absorb it.

In principle, the Forum participants agreed that the focus should be on the quality of transnational volunteering rather than the quantity. There is a need to invest more public money in the volunteering structures and organisations. *“Transnational volunteering should happen only in a thriving community of local volunteering”* (quote participant).

This investment should also be made in terms of capacity building as well as reflecting the organisations’ position within the local and global political landscape. Volunteering organisations should be aware of the pitfalls of governmental responsibilities and services being outsourced to them for free (e.g. dealing with the refugee crisis) and be capable of advocating for the improvement of the position of the voluntary sector in their communication with policy makers.



Sensing the Future – Messages from the Forum



- **A new response to global vulnerability**

It is clear that more than ever we are living in times of *'global vulnerability'*, with countries often responding with more self-protection, more barriers and division. At the same time, this is also a *chance to raise awareness about the global inter-connectedness*.

Transnational volunteering can empower people to express their global solidarity (meant as "I act because we are all connected"). We should abandon the paradigm of the powerful helping the powerless; *we need to change the paradigm of volunteering from one of 'service provider' to one of 'exchange and mutual learning/support among equals'*. We need to make people from different backgrounds volunteer and learn together: Like this, we can build a feeling of connection in diversity.

This change must happen in the way volunteering systems are organized (and consequently in how volunteering is communicated and promoted) = not just receiving (this is an internship!), not just giving (this is charity!). Among NGOs, build a culture of interdependence, connection and purpose! There should be more flexible networks that allow NGOs to coordinate horizontally and react in a more human and quick way to situations happening in the world.

- **Volunteering as a mutual learning situation**

In future volunteering, the learning aspect should be *transformed from a one-way and individualistic learning (often focused on the volunteer's learning and skills development) into a more systemic and holistic approach to learning*, where everyone involved has a chance to learn and contribute to the learning of others. In this context, the organisations

hosting international volunteers should also be open for learning from the volunteers, not only acting as learning providers.

- **Global solidarity**

There is a need to be *less Euro-centric and focus on global solidarity in transnational volunteering schemes* like the European Voluntary Service. There is a need to provide a chance for more young people to understand issues from a more global perspective and understand the needs of people living in other parts of the world, thus building more sensitivity and readiness to get involved together in decision making processes.

- **Participation and community engagement**

There must be stronger links between volunteering and community engagement. Volunteering should be seen as an opportunity for young people to take part in positive changes in their local communities. NGOs should work together with local governments and volunteers to create a culture of participation and community engagement. Cross-sectoral cooperation should be encouraged. Currently there are many obstacles and barriers to youth participation and engagement, but if channelled well, these obstacles could be used as incentives for activation of young people and empowerment through volunteering.

- **Time to get political again!**

There is a need to re-think and strengthen the political dimension in (transnational) volunteering and become clearer about the values and aims of the volunteering programmes. This reflection should happen on several levels, including the volunteers, organisations and decision makers.

- **Cultural exchange**

Transnational volunteering has a long tradition of cultural exchange that in the past often served to create stronger connections and better understanding amongst countries and nations. It seems that this is still very much needed today and in the future.

- **Employability and entrepreneurship**

It is clear that through transnational volunteering people develop competences that could be useful in their future professional work. This has been proven through several international studies. However, it is also clear that volunteering itself does not create jobs, nor is it the solution for high youth unemployment. At the same time, transnational volunteering can provide valuable learning for future entrepreneurs with better social, political and economic commitment and awareness. However, we should be aware of all the downsides of promoting volunteering for employability reasons.

- **Visibility and Recognition**

There is a need to enhance advocacy work showing the value and positive impact of transnational volunteering to policy makers in order to ensure that (more) public money is invested in volunteering programmes. Therefore there is a need to develop tools and mechanisms to show the impact that volunteers make in the community. There is also a need to develop tools to reflect on the volunteer's learning and build up recognition of the value of such experience. However, such recognition must not be limited to 'work experience'; the impact of volunteering is much more holistic and valuable than just gaining job-related skills.



Annex 1 – Programme of the Forum

PROGRAMME

European Volunteering Forum
Maribor, Slovenia 10-14 october

MONDAY, 10 OCTOBER

Arrivals



16:30 – 18:00

Optional: 'Maribor through the eyes of EVS volunteers' tour



TUESDAY, 11 OCTOBER

9:00 Opening of the Forum



10:00 Exploring who is here, why are we here, and who does what?



11:00 Break



11:30 The History of volunteering



13:00 Lunch



14:30 Experiences and trends Part 1
Exploring our practices



16:00

Official welcome by the City of Maribor



Panel 'Benefits and Challenges of (transnational) Volunteering'



20:00

Dinner in town



WEDNESDAY, 12 OCTOBER

09:00 Stories that inspire...



09:15 'When programmes meet'
Talk show on intersections and commonalities, on models and structures



Break

11:00 The 'Volunteering Library'
Different volunteering programmes and schemes



13:00 Lunch

14:30 'What now?'

Exploring the current situation of volunteering in Europe



16:00 Break

16:30 Experiences and trends
Part 2: What needs to be changed to achieve better volunteering programmes, schemes and projects



Elaboration of the 'Present messages to the future'



19:00 Dinner

From 20:00 onward

Activities organised by EVS volunteers / screening of EVS film festival Winner films



THURSDAY, 13 OCTOBER

9:00 Presentations of the messages



Feedback from the group of participants



11:00 Break

11:30 Open agenda
Focus on issues proposed by participants



13:00 Lunch

14:30 Feedback on the messages by the organisers / partners



Next steps

16:00 Break

16:30 Evaluation & Closing



19:00 Dinner

Evening: Let's celebrate 20 years of EVS!



FRIDAY, 14 OCTOBER

10:30 – 12:00

Optional: 'Maribor through the eyes of EVS volunteers' tour



Departures



Annex 2

Reflections about 100 years of transnational volunteering,

by Janez Skulj, MOVIT

Born out of Pacifism

World War I dramatically changed the social, political but also economic landscape of Europe in almost every understanding. The War ended with a “new security” architecture of Europe, produced during the one-year-long Peace Conference in Versailles, France. But the war ended also with a strong impetus for different pacifistic movements, built on high expectations towards a world without wars. And, at least for some people, practical action was needed to stress the need for “more solidarity and better understanding” among people and nations as a solid tool to prevent future wars.

This was the idea behind the first international “workcamp” in Verdun, ground of one the bloodiest battles of WW I., which is today usually referred to as the “beginning of transnational voluntarism”. Swiss engineer Pierre Cérésolle, of course not alone but with similarly minded colleagues from other European countries, organised this first »work camp«. A small group of people of mostly younger generations from several nations took part in cleaning the rubbish and rebuilding the village of Esnes-en-Argonne. The fact that the group included some French and German volunteers gave this camp a symbolic dimension of reconciliation.

The experience of Verdun was the basis for the beginning of what is today known as Service Civil International or, in English speaking countries, International Voluntary Service, originally even known as International Voluntary Service for Peace. This today world-wide international organisation started really as a bottom-up project, more like a movement, with local groups and quite often loose ties at national levels. The international structure of SCI was set up only after WW II in 1948.

A similar organisation, also born out of a strive for “no more wars”, was the Christian Movement for Peace, today known as the Youth Action for Peace. It started as an initiative by the mayor of the German town Datteln and one of the officers of the French Army which controlled the Ruhr region in the early Twenties, aiming to set up an instrument of trust building between the French and the Germans.

In the years to follow, SCI would move from reconciliation work to emergency aid and all the way to social commitment. The area of emergency aid was introduced already by the second SCI work camp in Les Ormonts (Switzerland), which helped to clear rubble after an avalanche. The second such effort gathered over 700 people from 28 countries and was dedicated to the removal of damages caused by the flooding of the river Rhine. The development aid line of volunteering through SCI was maybe most obvious in the workcamps that were organised in Bihar, India, between 1934 and 1936.

Following its strong pacifistic ideas, SCI remained committed to promoting voluntary involvement in such projects also as a replacement for military service for those who refused it for moral reasons (conscientious objectors).

At the beginning of the 1930s, the big economic recession after the crisis in 1929 made national governments play with the idea of big youth service programmes as a remedy for (youth) unemployment. One of them was the Freiwilliger Arbeitsdienst (Voluntary Work Service) in Germany. Introduced in 1931, the programme allowed young unemployed people under 25 to do voluntary service for up to 20 weeks. When the National Socialist Party came into power, they introduced the compulsory Reichsarbeitsdienst (Reich Work Service) for all young people. The nature of the work often changed according to the specific needs resulting from the war.

Rebirth after World War II

The volume of destructions visible at the end of WW II was much bigger than after WW I. In opposition to WW I, when war destructions had been in most cases limited to the areas around the front lines, WW II was a so called “total war”, far away from limiting military operations to direct battle grounds and nearby neighbourhoods.

Efforts to mobilise masses of people to voluntarily join the cleaning of ruins were quite spread, often promoted by local authorities but also various civil society organisations. And these efforts were definitely more than just cleaning of ruins and preparing grounds for new constructions sites.

Devastated Europe was also faced with all kinds of challenges that had never been seen before. Huge numbers of refugees, displaced persons, and returnees from concentration camps were on the move. Helping and supporting those people was also greatly covered by voluntary work, not only by Europeans but also by volunteers coming from abroad. One such organisation bringing US volunteers to Western Europe was the American Field Service. Today, one organisation coming out of the spread of AFS in Europe is known by the name European Federation for Intercultural Learning.

An exercise similar to the SCI work camp in Verdun was repeated after WW II during the rebuilding of Coventry, where a group of young Germans from parts of Germany controlled by Great Britain also took part alongside some British young people. Only that their arrival to Coventry was not anymore a “civil society initiative” but organised by the British occupational authority as a part of the “denazification programme” in Germany.

At the global level, the large numbers and wide range of volunteering initiatives and “exchanges” of volunteers across state borders created the need for a common space for different national voluntary work organisations as well as schemes to discuss and agree, if not on anything else, on technical aspects related to the mobility of volunteers. And this can be seen as a growing need to recognize volunteering as an important and beneficial aspect of social life, benefiting individuals and communities as well as the volunteers themselves.

In the second half of the 1940s, discussions started within UNESCO about ways to coordinate and encourage the different volunteering efforts. In April 1948 the International Workcamp Organisations Conference took place and the Coordinating Committee for International Camps was set up under the patronage of UNESCO, but as an “independent body” governed by its own general Assembly, and today known as CCIVS. It should also be mentioned that CCIVS was created mostly by “Western” organisations. First contacts across the Iron Curtain would become significant only in the Sixties, but then CCIVS provided valuable neutral space for contacts and dialogue between organisations from a divided world.

Split along the Iron Curtain

The immediate years after WW II brought along a split between the “philosophies” of what would become “West” and what would become “East”. In the countries where socialism was about to become a state and social framework, voluntary work of young people was seen from other perspectives than just “rebuilding” the country or reconciliation.

In most of the countries east of the Iron Curtain, efforts to rebuild the country from the ruins of the war were replaced by efforts to support the development of socialist economies. An important feature was linked to ideological education, (e.g. birth of a new, socialist, mankind) and, when related to transnational activities, the important feature of “socialist solidarity and unity”.

In the territories of Former Yugoslavia, the history of Youth Work Brigades can be divided into several periods, and at least the first one between 1946 and the early 50’s would not always represent just voluntary participation of the young generation. From those who were there one can hear that any refusal to participate would entail serious consequences, ranging from denial to enrol into studies for the next year to being an opponent to the new “people’s democracy” and becoming suspect of inciting “counter-revolution”.

At the end, in last period of the Eighties, interest to participate in Youth Work Brigades went down rapidly, especially among students. And the “popularity” of participation was stimulated by measures of extra paid leave for employed young people.

The exchange of groups of young people through “voluntary” Youth Work Brigades was a part of life between socialist countries not only in Europe but worldwide. For example, brigades organised by the FDJ (Free German Youth) in the German Democratic Republic, the former East-German state, were involved in solidarity work in Cuba. In the case of Yugoslavia these types of exchanges with socialist countries were intensive between 1946 and 1948, but due to the break up with Stalin they stopped for many years.

This collective approach in forms of brigades instead of an individual approach was one of the main characteristic differences between East and West.

Participation in such activities outside one’s own country therefore existed, but taking into account the huge overall numbers of participants in such brigades, it remained a relatively small window of opportunity for a few people. Nevertheless, it represented a possibility to travel and to see other places and even to be able to get into contact with people from other countries. This possibility for contacts should not be ignored in the context of relatively closed borders and restricted possibilities of movement of people even within the socialist bloc. Therefore, one could even speak of “volunteering tourism”.

East-West Relations

The Cold War, lasting basically from the end of WW II onwards, froze many relations across the Iron Curtain. However, there were a few places of contacts, one of them being World Youth and Students Festivals. The WYSF organised in 1955 in Warsaw opened the door for SCI to get in direct contact with regime-sponsored youth movements. The participation of SCI volunteers from the West in work camps in Poland (1995) as a part of the organisation of WYSF was the first example. It was followed

by work camps with the participation of SCI volunteers in the German Democratic Republic (1956) and the Soviet Union (1958). In 1972, SCI set up an East-West commission in order to facilitate volunteer exchanges and improve cooperation with partner organisations in socialist countries.

A huge step forward in terms of East-West relations was achieved with the Helsinki Accord in 1975. The Helsinki Accord explicitly dealt with co-operation in the field of youth. East-West cooperation in the field of volunteer exchanges now became much more than just efforts of very committed individuals. And such exchanges across the Iron Curtain received quite some attention. On the one side, those still limited exchanges provided opportunities to visit and be in contact with “locals” from other countries, but on the other side, these contacts were closely monitored.

Boom of Short-term Volunteering in the Seventies

In the Seventies, especially in their second half, one could witness a boom of short-term volunteering e.g. participation in work camps in the West. In fact, this development could be linked with the beginning of mass tourism in the West at the end of Sixties, when an increasing number of people travelled abroad for holidays. Moreover, it fit into “cults” of the “flower power generation”, e.g. living and working together in communes.

Participation in various work camps became not only a possibility of volunteering in another country but also a way to discover and explore cultures far away from home. There can be no doubt that the new feature of geographical mobility, the introduction of the Interrail card in 1972, helped a lot and provided an effective means for mobility on the railway tracks throughout Western Europe and parts beyond the “Iron Curtain”.

More and More Cooperation

For many years, the space for transnational volunteering was dominated by big international organisations, like SCI or MCP (Mouvement Chrétien pour la Paix) that were able to ensure sustainable co-operation among their national branches. However, the boom of the Seventies also produced or strengthened many national volunteering organisations that organised exchanges among themselves without being a part of a common structure with a shared ideology and philosophy.

In 1982, the Alliance of Western European Voluntary Service Organisations (AVSO) was founded by organisations¹ in Denmark, France, Germany, Netherlands, Spain, and the United Kingdom.

A New Impetus by Conscientious Objectors

The recognition of the right to reject military service on the ground of personal conscience and to serve the country without arms represents a new impetus for transnational volunteering in the Eighties and Nineties.

¹ MS Denmark, Concordia France, IJGD Germany, SIW Netherlands, SVI Spain, QISP United Kingdom, UNA Exchange United Kingdom

The recognition of this particular right led to the need for state administrations to create adequate possibilities for young men to serve their country without arms. This was the reason for the birth and establishment of schemes allowing civil service instead of a military service.

With the end of conscription, these schemes were not abolished. At the end of the day, many public institutions and services, especially in the fields of social care, health, or elderly people care, simply could not afford to lose the contributions from “volunteers” to their daily operations.

This new development did not find its way into the world of “volunteering” immediately, due to understandable differences with the more classical volunteering traditions in terms of overall concepts but also reasons of individuals to join such schemes. Their recognition as a voluntary work has come only with the abolishment of general conscription.

And it did not come without strong discussions: In fact, many people see the “volunteering opportunities” within such state schemes also as a way to replace paid work with voluntary work.

Today, many of those schemes do not only support volunteering within one’s own country but also opportunities of “serving” abroad. Having said this, opportunities for transnational volunteering within those schemes is usually not so much the result of cooperation between different schemes but more of the effort of an individual person. Furthermore, cooperation and exchanges between schemes existing in different countries are still today regarded as an uncharted territory of future expansion of transnational volunteering.

One initiative to stimulate this within EU programmes in the field of youth was the initiative AMICUS in 2008. AMICUS was originally planned as a financial support for the objective to bring those schemes from different countries together, to establish co-operation and agree on standards for the purpose of reciprocity between them.

As such schemes are set up and implemented in accordance with national legislation, at least a minimal level of joint standards would have to be ensured in order to enable any systematic exchange of volunteers between them. For instance, such a standard would need to include some agreement on how to deal with the social security of volunteers.

In the end, the idea was not supported by member states because such schemes existed only in a few member states, most notably Italy, France and Germany.

European Voluntary Service (EVS)

In 1996 the decision was taken to establish EVS, which started as independent three-year pilot programme in 1997 as a parallel programme to the already existing Youth for Europe programme. In 2000, EVS was merged with Youth for Europe in the YOUTH programme.

Just a few words about Youth for Europe: Beginning in 1989, it was a pilot programme for two years. But it was also a programme aiming to support the political process towards the Maastricht Treaty and to win support among young Europeans for deeper European integration. Youth for Europe was mainly about short-term mobility of young people, mainly through youth exchanges. EVS introduced a new option for long-term mobility.

The introduction of EVS brought into existence several new dimensions. First of all, it was the first supranational scheme of multilateral cross-border volunteering. And it represents the first legal framework where all member states agreed upon several issues and standards in order to create one framework for all member states of EU.

Important Development in the Council of Europe

In March 2000 the Council of Europe passed the European Convention on the Promotion of a Transnational Long-term Voluntary Service for Young People, stating minimum quality standards in the field. This Convention could be used as an instrument to reach necessary agreements about “common standards” also for different civic services and through this, also increase the exchangeability among national schemes.

European Year of Volunteering

The European Year of Volunteering 2011 was carried out by EYV Alliance, the ad hoc alliance of a very broad range of voluntary but also civil service organisations. It led to huge political recognition of volunteering but it also created new dimensions in understanding volunteering in society.

One of them certainly affected the link between young people and volunteering. Before the EYV, and at least within the European institutions, volunteering was very much linked with young people, youth work and youth policies. After the EYV, volunteering is seen to affect much more than just the youth field.

The EYV also recognized that there are different concepts of volunteering. A strong emphasis on the educational role and opportunities of volunteering, as it is promoted in EVS, is one of them.

New Horizons

In September 2016, President of the European Commission Jean-Claude Juncker proposed “to set up a European solidarity corps. Young people across the EU should be able to volunteer to help where it is needed most, to respond to crisis situations like the refugee crisis or the recent earthquake in Italy. These young people will be able to develop their skills and get not only work but also gain an invaluable human experience.”

Annex 3 – List of participants in the Forum



First name	Last name	Country of Residence	Organisation
Ambra	Zylfollari	Albania	AIESEC Albania NGO
Artak	Ordyan	Armenia	World Vision Armenia
Hovhannes	Stepanyan	Armenia	U.S. Peace Corps in Armenia
Vugar	Rustamli	Azerbaijan	AFFA - Association of Football Federations of Azerbaijan
Olga	Kuznetsova	Belarus	Belarusian Youth Public Union “New Faces”
Gabriella	Civico	Belgium	European Volunteer Centre
Emina	Hasanagic	Bosnia and Herzegovina	Fondacija Krila nade/Wings of hope, Bosnia and Herzegovina
Dino	Sinanovic	Bosnia and Herzegovina	LDA Zavidovići
Adina	Halilovic	Bosnia and Herzegovina	Proni centar za omladinski razvoj Brčko distrikt / Proni centre for youth development Brcko distrikt
Anastasios	Angelides	Cyprus	YEU Cyprus
Mahmoud	Abdelrahman	Egypt	(FEDA) Friends of Environment & Development Association
Mikko	Lipsanen	Finland	Maailmanvaihto / ICYE Finland
Mauro	Carta	France	CCIVS
Giorgi	Kikalishvili	Georgia	Youth Association DRONI
Steffi	Koch	Germany	SCI
Giovanna	Pignatti Morano	Greece	Alliance of European Voluntary Service Organisations
Dora	Lajos	Hungary	Útilapu Hálózat
Andras	Martoni	Hungary	GLEN
Giovanni	Bianco	Italy	international youth mobility department city of Torino
Veronica	Guida	Italy	Associazione Solidarietà Caritas Onlus
Evzi	Hani	Kosovo* UN Resolution	Center for Economic and Social Development (CESD)
Lama	Zeinoun Tabet	Lebanon	Chabibeh Sporting Club
Justine	Abi Saad	Lebanon	GIZ- ZFD
Renee	Aoun	Lebanon	Makhzoumi Foundation
Alina	Besleaga	Moldova	The Republican Center for Children and Youth “Artico”
Adib	Lrhoul	Morocco	The Mediterranean Forum for Youth (FOMEJE)

Rita	Leote	Portugal	Portuguese Confederation for Volunteering
Valeria	Evsenkina	Russian Federation	Informational and Educational center "Sodruzhestvo"
Jelena	Glamočanin	Serbia	Centre Jules Verne
Tatiana	Mrugova	Slovak Republic	Mladiinfo Slovensko
Ondrej	Mäsiar	Slovak Republic	Mladiinfo Slovensko
Stefan	Simoncic	Slovenia	Združenje EPEKA, so.p.
Sara	Širnik	Slovenia	Združenje EPEKA, so.p.
Janez	Škulj	Slovenia	MOVIT
Iban	Ortega	Spain	Embassy of the Structured Dialogue in Canary Islands
Ignacio	Gonzalez	Spain	De Amicitia
Joaquín	Martín de Saavedra Rojas	Spain	Erasmus Student Network Universidad de Extremadura / CJEx (Youth Council of Extremadura, Spain)
Hamza	Çinar	Turkey	Dokuz Eylul University
Şebnem	Koç	Turkey	GEGED Gaziantep eğitim ve gelişim derneği
Ayşe	Kavas	Turkey	Turkish Ex-EVS Volunteers' Association (TRES)
Mehmet	Altunbas	Turkey	International Labour Association (ILA)
Monica	Prisacariu	Turkey	UNDP (UNV) Turkey
Susanna	Ketsmur	Ukraine	THE VOLUNTEER SCHOOL project, NGO "Youth Resource Center "Discover Yourself"
Emirhan	Aslan	Turkey	Turkish National Agency
Roberta	Cotar	Slovenia	Slovenian National Agency
Marina	Makarenko	Poland	SALTO EECA
Federica	Demicheli	Italy	SALTO EuroMed
Pauline	Giroudet	France	SALTO EuroMed
Andrej	Troha	Slovenia	SALTO SEE
Sonja	Mitter Škulj	Slovenia	SALTO SEE
Amr	Arafa	Egypt	facilitator
Anna	Yeghoyan	Armenia	facilitator
Gisele	Evard	Serbia	facilitator
Darko	Markovic	Serbia	rappporteur

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