

The Volunteers' Tour around EU

In giving the European Year 2011 to Volunteering (EYV), the European Union is acknowledging the importance of volunteering in creating a more democratic, caring and responsible society. The European Year will raise awareness about the contributions of, and the challenges faced by, millions of volunteers across the EU, whose efforts help to create a more democratic, caring and responsible society. It's time to help the helpers!

Goals of EYV 2011

Volunteering is a core expression of civic participation and democracy, which is why it should be acknowledged, recognized, promoted and supported. EU citizens should be aware of how rewarding volunteering can be. The European Year will also help connect the tens of thousands of organisations involving volunteers (OIVs) in all member states. The Year also aims at raising key policy issues for the future of volunteering such as legislation and quality of volunteering. The Year will therefore be addressing policy makers at EU, national, regional and local levels, businesses, volunteering organisations, the volunteers themselves, and the general public. Volunteer, and make a difference!

The EYV 2011 tour

A good way to bring the European Year closer to the public is through the interactive EYV 2011 'Tour'. The Tour will travel throughout 2011 to visit the capital city of every member state for a period of up to 14 days. Outdoor and indoor venues are planned. The Tour will provide volunteers and OIVs with an opportunity to:

- exhibit their achievements
- meet one another
- share their concerns with citizens and convey their energy and enthusiasm
- discuss key issues for the future of volunteers

Citizens and volunteers will also be able to find out about aspects of volunteering in other member states and learn about the European dimension of volunteering. The Tour will provide a platform for understanding the world of volunteering and it will also add visibility to the communication initiatives taken at the national, regional and local levels, thus attracting the media and public attention to the campaign.

The European Tour of Volunteering 2011 will feature:

- an EU Corner, highlighting the European dimensions of volunteering
- stories showcasing the experiences of volunteers
- debates with policy-makers, volunteers and citizens
- meetings with volunteers
- entertainment with family activities and intergenerational dialogue

The route will start on 3 December 2010 in Brussels and then travel through all 27 EU Member States according to the timetable below.

Tour dates 2010 / 2011	City	Country
3-6-19 December 2010	Brussels	Belgium
10-16 January	Budapest	Hungary
21-27 January	Vienna	Austria
3-9 February	Lisbon	Portugal
16-22 February	Luxembourg	Luxembourg
28 February-13 March	Madrid	Spain
17 March-23 March	Athens	Greece
29 March-4 April	Nicosia	Cyprus
11-24 April	Paris	France
30 April-6 May	Tallinn	Estonia
9-15 May	Bucharest	Romania
20-26 May	Ljubljana	Slovenia
1-14 June	London	United Kingdom
20-26 June	Vilnius	Lithuania
1-14 July	Rome	Italy
28 July-3 August	Copenhagen	Denmark
8-14 August	Stockholm	Sweden
22-28 August	Dublin	Ireland
1-14 September	Warsaw	Poland
15-21 September	Helsinki	Finland
26 September-2 October	Riga	Latvia
7-20 October	Berlin	Germany
21-27 October	Amsterdam	Netherlands
2-8 November	Prague	Czech Republic
14-20 November	Bratislava	Slovakia
21-27 November	Sofia	Bulgaria
28 November-4 December	Valletta	Malta

The EYV Relay

The EYV Tour will be accompanied by the EYV 'Relay'. The EYV Relay team is composed of 27 volunteer reporters, whose job will be to report the extraordinary stories of volunteers across the EU. The Relay reporters, each coming from a different EU country, will depart their home country to report for two weeks on the volunteers in another EU country. They will capture their experiences in film, sound and written articles.

THE EYV EU-level thematic conferences

In order to push forward policy debate on volunteering issues at the EU level, the European Commission will be organising a series of EU-level thematic conferences during 2011. Four conferences have been planned, each of them focusing on a different theme and target group, such as policy makers, volunteering organisations or the volunteers themselves. The conferences will promote a rich exchange and debate on important issues in volunteering between policy makers, businesses, OIVs and volunteers, while attracting media interest.

Information about the Tour, the Relay and the EYV campaign in general will be provided on the official EYV 2011 website: www.europa.eu/volunteering. Materials about every step of the campaign will be uploaded. It will contain various sections giving information about the campaign and regular updates of its progress in the course of the year.

To find out more about the European Year of Volunteering why not download our information sheet “What is EYV 2011” from the web site of your local Volunteer Centre or from Volunteer Centres Ireland: www.volunteer.ie