

CEV



European Volunteer Centre

Volunteers In Solidarity COVID-19

#VISCovid19

**Citizens all across Europe are
volunteering to support
vulnerable people and each
other during this crisis period.**

April 2020

Forward: LEJLA SEHIC RELIC CEV PRESIDENT



Since the first day of the COVID19 pandemic crisis, citizens have responded and launched numerous volunteer initiatives demonstrating the importance of a vibrant and responsive civil society in reaffirming the spirit of a resilient and caring community. The greatest contribution that civil society and volunteers are giving to all of us is a reminder of the importance of our common good and widening the space of opportunities to revive awareness and engagement to appreciate it more.

Until now, much of volunteering has relied on live contact, which is actually one of the key benefits of civil society and volunteering, the value of real social networks and eye to-eye relationships. In the times of health risks and social distancing civil society and volunteers, once again have found courage and methods to reach and help the most vulnerable among us. Despite the importance of physical distance, which can mean health these days, volunteering has shown different, beautiful, and in many aspects, new colours of social connection and solidarity.

This small virus reminded us of our fragility and interdependence, as well as how important it is, and I mean of life's importance in these situations, for everyone to have equal opportunities. The crisis has made our existing problems more visible. Poverty, limited access to health care, attitudes towards the marginalized, stigmatization of the sick, fragile democracies, populism and fake news are just some of the phenomena that can make life more difficult for some. That is why it is important for civil society organizations to act and engage volunteers to promote the values of solidarity and social equality, warn about inequality, marginalization and discrimination, seeking transparency and respect for human rights, sharing their expertise with others, helping them reach out and help people in need and share good and positive stories. This is, at the moment, the most valuable contribution to the health, vitality and resilience of society.

There seems to be an increased awareness in society that this situation affects all of us and that we should all act. Indeed, this situation has clearly shown us the importance of our common ground, personal responsibility, and the quality of interpersonal relationships. This pandemic has created a completely unknown world that has stopped to protect and save the most vulnerable among us. We live in a moment where there is so much we do not know, but one thing is for sure, solidarity and people who care can literally mean life. I hope we will take that insight into the future.

#HASHTAG COORDINATION

DE:

#NACHBARSCHAFTSCHALLENGE (NEIGHBORHOOD CHALLENGE)

An initiative from social media users who are calling on people to help shop or do other tasks for elderly or people with serious health problems nearby.

BE: **#VLAANDERENHELPT (FLANDERS IS HELPING)**

The government launched a new hashtag. It believes that people with good ideas are numerous and that can inspire each other and that by sharing such ideas people will be keeping spirits up and ensuring Flanders shows its warmest side.

BG: **#ЗАДОБРОТО (FOR THE GOOD)**

This campaign is made to tackle the urgent needs created by the COVID-19 pandemic. The campaign is raising funds and spending them immediately in urgent manner for covering urgent needs of the hospital in Sofia and in the country.

ES:

#JOAJUDEALZIRA (I'M HELPING ALZIRA)

A local initiative that connects citizens, businesses and associations to voluntarily help people buying groceries, encouraging them with a message, supporting local businesses or just suggesting new ways to help.

NL: **VERSPREID #SOLIDARITIID., GEEN VIRUS!**

Organised by social media users to coordinate and inform about solidarity and volunteering initiatives to help people in need of assistance.

CITIZEN-LED INITIATIVES

BG: BE A GOOD NEIGHBOUR

Initiative which encourages people who want to help their elderly neighbors by buying food and medicine, taking out the trash or speaking with them on the phone, to print out posters, fill them in with their contacts and put them inside the buildings they live in.

BE: SOLIDAIR BRUSSELS

This platform was developed by citizens in order to provide information, activities, assistance and solidarity projects for every person affected by the virus.

BE: SOLIDARITY MASKS

A group of women and undocumented migrant mothers that opened a small sewing workshop 4 years ago started to sew facemasks for their communities. In only 24 hours, they managed to do more than 100 facemasks.

HR: PEOPLE FOR PEOPLE

Citizens are helping their neighbours who are in vulnerable situations, shopping for them and making sure everyone receives the help they need.

DK: WINDOW CONCERTS FOR NURSING HOME RESIDENTS

Aarhus musicians, bands and associations volunteer to play window concerts outside the city's nursing homes to cheer up their residents isolated from family and friends.

IT: SOLIDARIETÀ ATTIVA PALERMO

A group of youngsters in Palermo city organised themselves to deliver essential products to those in need.

BE: SPREAD SOLIDARITY - NOT THE VIRUS!

A group of Brussels-based citizens have created a facebook page where they share, comment and discuss the different aspects of the pandemic. Whether it's to share volunteering initiatives with the rest of the community, offer their services, share information or even just have some fun with funny posts. It is a group made by a community for the community. In times of need, solidarity is the answer.

HR: SPORTS CLUB VOLUNTEERS

Volunteers from sport clubs unable to do their regular volunteering are helping hospitals to move patients and medical equipment from one facility to another.

CITIZEN-LED INITIATIVES

IT: ONE METER FROM YOU

Sicilian Medicine course students voluntarily take part in basic hospital screening activities to help the medical team to better focus on the critical cases reaching the hospitals. These tasks are carried out under the maximum safety for both students and those accessing the hospitals.

BE: RIDE FOR CORONA

A group of young volunteer youth leaders unable to do their regular volunteering, and passionate about cycling, before the current social distancing restrictions, started a bike relay around the Bois de la Cambre to raise money for the Institut Pasteur to help develop a vaccine for COVID19.

RO: WE HELP YOU FROM...

Alba, Braşov, Cluj, Sibiu, Suceava, Timișoara, and in other cities in Romania, groups of volunteers in the local community coordinate online to help with food and supplies delivery, information updates, psychological and emotional support for the ones in need.

DE: KRISENKULTUR.DE

Created in just a few days implemented a neighborhood help hotline, a corona job placement portal, and an information page on online education opportunities. Also supports volunteers in COVID19 initiatives with know-how and technical resources.

HR: STOPCORINA APP

Volunteer web developers made a phone application to report daily health status and create a predictive heatmap of disease hotspots. This data, adhering to all GDPR, will provide health authorities with a real-time insight into potential outbreaks & made available only to local health authorities & the WHO, completely free of charge.

ES: SOLIDARITY LETTERS

Volunteers are sending cards of hope and support to the people that are hospitalised and lonely due to the virus. More than 30 000 cards for patients in much need of kind words. Words make a difference.

UK: MUTUAL AID UK

A group of volunteers supporting local community groups organising mutual aid. They focus on providing resources and connecting people to their nearest local groups, willing volunteers and those in need.

ONLINE MATCHING

EE: KOGUKONDAITAB

A few people from various start-ups came together for a whole weekend hackathon to think about a new way to help those in need throughout the COVID19 pandemic. The platform connects people in search of help and those that can provide it, from a friendly chat on the phone with someone that feels lonely to a young person helping the elderly with the shopping and delivering it to their doorstep.

BE: IMPACTDAYS.BE

The Université Libre de Bruxelles (ULB) and its partner "Give a Day" have created this web platform to facilitate the carrying out of solidarity actions by the university community. On this page, you will discover solidarity actions to support those most vulnerable to the pandemic.

NL: CORONAHHELPERS.NL

This platform is for all those that wish to offer their help in order to fight the pandemic and for those that wish to receive medical help under all its forms.

ES: TODOSALDRABIEN.ORG

The goal is to gather all the needs of the citizens during the pandemic and at the same time offer a space where the citizens themselves are the solutions to the problems. If for example a student needs help with maths, they can find a maths teacher that can help online.

**DK: VOLUNTEERING
NETWORK FOR
STRANDED DANES**

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Denmark established an online network between Danish NGOs and stranded Danish travellers outside the country who risk being expelled from hotels, to provide them with practical assistance by finding them temporary accommodation, or giving them advice.

**UK: CORONA-
HELPERS.CO.UK**

They're working with local groups and organisations to coordinate offers of support. This will help make sure everyone receives the help they need.

ORGANISATIONS ADAPTING

FR: VOISINS SOLIDAIRES

The main aim is to create and reinforce bonds among the neighbours. During this COVID-19 crisis, they have created an initiative to mobilise people to help their elderly or handicapped neighbours. They made a free kit in order to help neighbours groups to better organise themselves.

IT: PADOVA WE ARE HERE

Three different organisations have come together to coordinate all social support actions aiming to enhance, support and fortify existing associations and volunteer commitments by ensuring that everyone can continue to operate safely and in view to protect everyone's health.

BG: BULGARIAN RED CROSS

Volunteers in Plovdiv delivered food and medicines to more than 200 elderly people daily and have opened a hotline for psychological help served by volunteer psychologists.

HR: ONE FOR EACH OTHER- OSIJEK

Citizens of Osijek in Croatia and various associations teamed up to help the most vulnerable groups and the people in need due to the COVID19 outbreak.

IT: L'ANGELO DEGLI ULTIMI

Respecting the norms and guidelines of safety, continues its activities towards those without a home in this period of crisis.

IT: HUMAN RIGHTS YOUTH ORGANISATION

Organises food delivery for those that cannot leave their houses.

IT: #EQUODACASA

Volunteer run fairtrade shops across the country can collect orders for grocery delivery of fairtrade products (from food to cleaning products).

ORGANISATIONS ADAPTING

PT: VOLUNTEER GROUPS HELP VULNERABLE PEOPLE

Different associations of Guimarães and its region are creating volunteer groups to help more vulnerable people with the important tasks like going to the supermarket or to the pharmacy to buy medicines, in order to avoid them to leave from home.

BG: PLOVDIV 112

This Voluntary firefighters association is recruiting and training new volunteers.

HR: ONE FOR EACH OTHER-ZAGREB

Citizens of Zagreb together with Volunteer Centre Zagreb and other various associations teamed up to help the most vulnerable groups and the people in need due to the COVID19 outbreak.

ES: TELECARE STUDENTS

Idea Alzira created an initiative of volunteer telephone support for elderly people, thanks to "Idea Alzira" 'telecare' course students.

BG: HEALTH EDUCATION

Volunteer mediators are educating people in the Roma minorities on COVID-19.

HR: RED CROSS

Volunteers are involved in the procurement of the necessary food, hygiene and medical products that they provide to many families in accordance with safety and health guidelines and instructions. Also, an SOS line for psycho-social support for citizens was established.

RO: CODE FOR ROMANIA

Volunteers are tackling misinformation and providing real, complete and truthful information regarding COVID19 to the citizens. Information is key to tackle any crisis.

ORGANISATIONS ADAPTING

HR: CROATIAN PSYCHOLOGICAL CHAMBER

Volunteers from the Chambers of Croatian psychologists are providing help over the phone to citizens.

HR: CROATIAN STUDENT UNION

Volunteering students from Split made 3D protective visors and medical equipment for medical workers. They are asking for more volunteers to join them.

DK: PHONE VOLUNTEERS

"Ældre sagen" association has created an "Elder Phone" for volunteers who want to call and start a conversation with elderly people who are trapped at home alone, avoiding them feeling lonely.

IT: ITALIAN RED CROSS

Training new volunteers for tasks such as: delivery of grocery & pharmaceutical products; check of passengers at the airports; info & support at the Red Cross info desks, etc.

HR: PROTECTIVE MASKS

Red Cross volunteers from Novi Vinodolski are sewing protective masks and distributing them to the local hospitals.

DK: ACTIVITIES IN TIME OF CONFINEMENT

"Børn Voksenvenner" volunteer mentors have made a list of activities which can be done online in order to let children and young people to socialize and communicate with others during this confinement time.

CROSS SECTOR COLLABORATION

BE: FREE VOLUNTEER INSURANCE

The Flemish Government & the Flemish Volunteer Centre have collaborated to provide free volunteer insurance to anyone who is helping others during this crisis, including on a non-formal basis.

IT: I STAY AT HOME, CAN YOU HELP ME WITH THE GROCERY?

Municipality of Camponogara, in the Venice province, with the voluntary support of citizens develops the project collecting list of grocery, buying and delivering it at home for those in need.

GR: DON'T BE AFRAID, I'M HERE

The Greek Government launches a call for skilled volunteers aimed at anyone who can offer their services such as: doctors, nurses, paramedics, psychologists, students, & retired health scientists. Also, who can offer administrative, technical or support to the health system regardless of their specialisation.

BG: CRISIS HEADQUARTERS PLOVDIV

Recruits both medical and non-medical volunteers.

FR: CITY OF PARIS

Together with NGOs, Parishes and different companies developed several initiatives to deal with this crisis situation, such as the opening of new places of shelter and specialised accommodation centres, the reinforcement of health structures, food aid, and the launch of a call for volunteers to assist with delivery.

HR: ONE STOP SHOP

The Croatian Ministry of Demography, Family, Youth and Social Policy are directing all willing volunteers to the regional volunteer centres, members Croatian Volunteer Development Centre in order to ensure the best possible coordination and efficient use of precious resources at this challenging time.

ES: FORGOOD.ES

A virtual meeting space to provide mutual support between actors from different sectors. Companies, academic institutions and public bodies can voluntarily or on pro bono basis offer their initiatives, products, services and knowledge to each other.

ADVICE AND SUPPORT

IE: VOLUNTEER IRELAND

Prioritising recruitment, support and promotion of volunteer roles related to the COVID-19 response; Communicating with local volunteers and organisations; Providing advice and guidance on volunteering safely when dealing with vulnerable members of the public; Sharing stories of those volunteering and raising awareness of the positive impact of volunteers.

EE: ESTONIAN VILLAGE MOVEMENT

New website providing summary information on volunteering, how to call for help from volunteers and how to offer help as a volunteer.

DE: GEGEN DAS VIRUS

Digital aids that bridge the gap between the digital help offers and the mostly analogue needy. This project is part of "KrisenKultur.de".

HR: CROATIAN VOLUNTEER DEVELOPMENT CENTRE

Recommendations for volunteering during the COVID19 crisis, media articles to promote and highlight the importance of solidarity in times of crisis, publishing positive stories and encouraging examples of civic engagement.

IT: MUNICIPALITY OF MIRA (VE)

Sharing & explaining information concerning the new emergency legislation and the municipality actions, involvement of citizens, local shops & NGOs in volunteering activities and by promoting online activities to keep the community active.

DE: ESSEN VIRAL

Volunteers in Essen created this webpage to provide local people with up to date and reliable information and advice about different aspects of daily life including volunteering or requesting volunteer help.

"The European Parliament Volunteering Interest Group Co-Chairs would like to express their heartfelt gratitude and appreciation to the countless volunteers across Europe putting European values into practice and showing the importance of solidarity, especially in times of crisis. This unprecedented situation has shown us more than ever just how critical volunteers are to our society and the importance of co-ordinated volunteering policies supporting a functioning volunteering infrastructure based on cross-sector collaboration. We send a special thank you to all the ESC volunteers and trainees putting others before themselves at this difficult time and playing their part in supporting vulnerable people."

Message from the EP Volunteering Interest Group Co-Chairs April 2020
Michaela Sojdrova (EPP), Domenec Ruiz Devesa (S&D), Irena Joveva (Renew Europe)

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