



Citizen Service in Europe

**A comparison of the six autonomous
national programmes of:
Germany, France, Italy, the Netherlands,
Belgium and Luxembourg**

Study undertaken by Alban van der Straten
Under the direction of François Ronveaux





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November 2020

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Proofreading: Gerrit Spriet
Graphic design: Purebrand

@ 2020 Les éditions du CVB
D/2020/7.509/10 - ISBN 978-2-9601799-9-6



«Men are not born fit for citizenship,
but must be made so»

Baruch Spinoza (1632-1677)

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seeU This Week

Mon /

Tue /

Wed 16:00 / SEE U (FESTIVAL)
22:00 / FOCUS MUSIC BOX

Thu 16:00 / SEE U (FESTIVAL)
22:00 / BIO MARKET - MARCHÉ CREATIF - DJ

Fri 16:00 / SEE U (FESTIVAL)
22:00 / MEET YOUR LOCAL - RADIO SEE U

Sat 16:00 / SEE U (FESTIVAL)
22:00 / ZERO TRAVEL

Sun 12:00 / SEE U (FESTIVAL)
20:00 / BODY & SOUL - YOGA - DANCE
19:30 / DANSE FOLKLORE



Acknowledgements

This work could not have taken place without the collaboration of our European partners who welcomed us with such kindness and professionalism at their premises in Cologne, Paris, Rome, The Hague and Luxembourg to answer our questions. In each of our interlocutors, we felt the commitment that is characteristic of the spirit of Citizen Service. The energy of our young people is indeed communicative and catching. They also all took time to answer our many phone calls and to reread and correct the final version of this document for the part that concerns them.

We would wish to mention here in particular Mr Karl Boudjema (OFAJ, Director), Mr Christoph Steegmans (BMFFSJ, Leiter Unterabteilung « Engagementpolitik »), Mr Rolf Hartmann (BAFzA, Abteilungsleiter Freiwilligendienste), Ms Sabina Gröber (BAFzA, Referat Bundesfreiwilligendienst), Pascal-Victor Petersam (BAFzA, Referat Bundesfreiwilligendienst), Mr Yannick Blanc (Agence du Service Civique, ex-Président), Mr Ludovic Abiven (Agence du Service Civique, ex-Directeur général), Ms Emmanuelle Antonioli (Agence du Service Civique, ex-Responsable du pôle Développement et Ingénierie), Ms Immacolata Postiglione (Dipartimento per le Politiche Giovanili e il Servizio Civile Universale, Coordinatore Ufficio), Mr Luigi Bobba (ex-Sottosegretario de Stato delle Politiche sociali), Ms Paola Tambuscio (Dipartimento per le Politiche Giovanili e il Servizio Civile Universale, Assistenza Tecnica FSE), Mr Licio Palazzini (Archi Servizio Civile, Presidente), Mr Georges Metz (Service national de la Jeunesse, Directeur), Ms Nathalie Schirtz (Service national de la Jeunesse, Responsable de l'Unité Transitions), Ms Fiona de Haan (Ministerie van Sociale Zaken en Werkgelegenheid, Coordinatrice Maatschappelijke Diensttijd), Ms Dajana Perkic (Ministerie van Volksgezondheid, Welzijn en Sport, Beleidsmedewerkster Maatschappelijke Diensttijd) and Ms Gabrielle Zwinkels (ZonMw Actieprogramma Maatschappelijke Diensttijd, Programmamanager).

To them we express our deep gratitude. It goes without saying that any remaining error is solely our responsibility.

Introduction

1. DEFINITION

By **Citizen Service**, we mean an institutional program offering the opportunity, usually for young adults, to engage full-time and for a long period in projects of public interest, while benefiting from citizen training, status and allowances.

2. THE STATE OF PLAY

Citizen Service programmes are currently enjoying a fair wind in Europe. At the dawn of the century they were still only a handful, with limited resources. Twenty years on they are no less than twelve, with a combined budget well in excess of one billion euros and involving almost 300,000 young people per year.

Among these twelve national programmes, six stand out: these are the so-called «autonomous» programmes, that is to say that they do not constitute a civilian alternative to military service but are projects «in themselves and for themselves», each with its own approach and objectives. Surprisingly, these six programmes are precisely those of the six founding members of the European Union: Germany, France, Italy, the Netherlands, Belgium and Luxembourg.

The impact of these programmes, both on young people themselves and on social cohesion, is confirmed by numerous independent studies. They are increasingly emerging as a key avenue for enabling young people to acquire skills, in particular

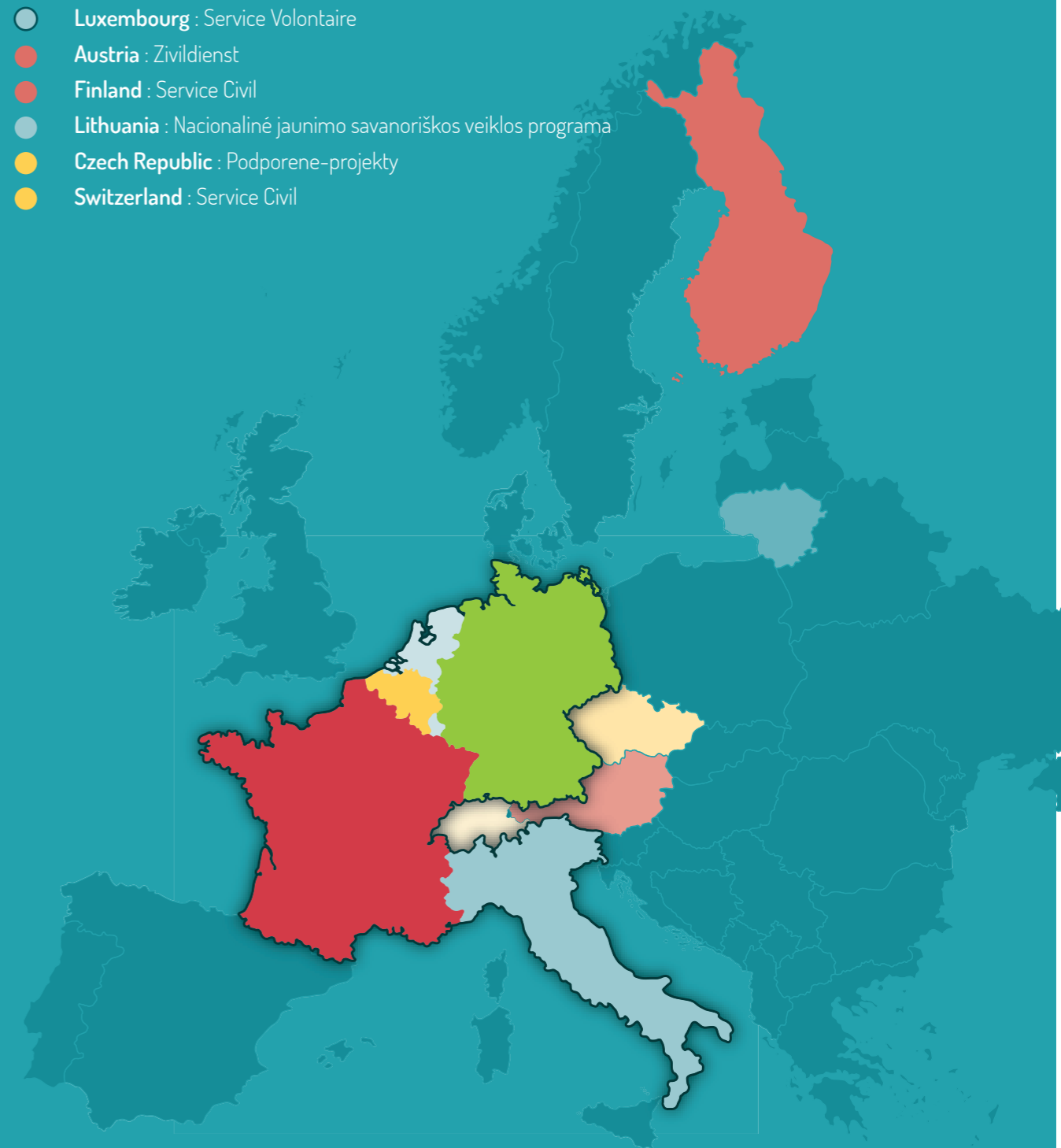
especially social skills (“soft / human skills”), to gain self-confidence and to find directions for their future paths in life. They also promote socio-cultural mixing, participatory citizenship, inclusion and long-term commitment. As an effect and not the direct object of these programmes, their impact on socio-professional integration is remarkable. Several research studies have demonstrated the overall societal benefit of these programmes. A recent French study, for example, shows that every euro invested in the Citizen Service brings two euros in return to the community – not counting the positive externalities.¹

At the European Union level, in 2016 President of the European Commission Jean-Claude Juncker launched an ambitious programme to take over from the too timid and rigid European voluntary service: the European Solidarity Corps. This programme, which has a lot of a Citizen Service on a continental scale, has three years later an annual budget of € 142,274,568 and a «pool» of 168,000 young people who have registered on its portal, of whom 22,000 have been deployed. The 2021-2027 budget provides 1.26 billion euros for 350,000 young people.

* Definition inspired by the International Association for National Youth Services (IANYS). From there on, despite the nuances : Service Citoyen / Service Civique / Service Volontaire / Samenlevingsdienst / Bürgerdienst / Maatschappelijke Diensttijd / Jugendfreiwilligendienst / Bürgerdienst / Zivildienst / Youth Service / Servizio Civile constitute the same category of programme.

The 11 programmes of Citizen Service in Europe*

- **Germany** : Bundesfreiwilligendienst / Freiwilliges Soziales Jahr / Freiwilliges Ökologisches Jahr
- **France** : Service Civique
- **Italy** : Servizio Civile
- **The Netherlands** : Maatschappelijke Diensttijd (MDT)
- **Belgium** : Service Citoyen / Samenlevingsdienst
- **Luxembourg** : Service Volontaire
- **Austria** : Zivildienst
- **Finland** : Service Civil
- **Lithuania** : Nacionalinė jaunimo savanoriškos veiklos programa
- **Czech Republic** : Podporene-projekty
- **Switzerland** : Service Civil



* The six countries with autonomous Citizen Service programmes are delimited by a black line

3. ISSUE AT STAKE

The fact remains that these programmes, both at national and European level, today remain far below what they could be. Numerous administrative, institutional and information barriers persist which hinder their development. Thus, in some countries, the legal framework is inadequate, while in others the pedagogical approach or the accompaniment available to the young people should be reformed. The collaboration between the various national programmes and their interoperability with the European Solidarity Corps would also be worth deepening.

To face these challenges, quality information is necessary. Certainly, the different national agencies, in particular that of the six “autonomous” programmes, maintain regular contacts, sometimes share good practices and exchange young people. However, to our knowledge, no systematic review of the various programmes has been carried out since the work of the Association of Voluntary Service Organisations in 2005.² However, the context, the frameworks and the programmes have changed in fifteen years. It is therefore time to take stock.

It is to meet this need for information that we have undertaken this study. The aim has been to pose a series of predefined questions to the six autonomous Citizen Service programmes, so as to compare them as objectively as possible.

4. OBJECTIVE AND METHOD

We have opted to focus on the six “autonomous” national programmes because these not only appear to us to possess shared features, but also to be the largest in quantitative terms.

In order to compare them, we proceeded systematically, submitting to each Citizen Service national agency (or to the institution which came closest to this concept), a series of 21 “tags” with which to describe their programmes, in particular the objectives, target public, recruitment, inclusivity measures, training, legal framework, organisational framework, allowances etc. (The complete list of tags can be found in the appendix at the end of this study.) We then went to visit Cologne, Paris, Rome, Luxembourg and The Hague to clarify the answers. Finally, the agencies each re-read and endorsed the results of the analysis concerning them.

We hope that this systematic comparison will provide benchmarks and a reliable source of inspiration both for existing Citizen Service programmes and for the emergence of new national programmes, which we very much hope to see. We also trust that our work will encourage communication and the exchange of good practices between these programmes, either directly between them, or in the framework of the European Solidarity Corps, in order to break down the legal, administrative and logistical barriers to their large-scale deployment. Finally, we hope that it will facilitate the cooperation of national programmes within the framework of the European Solidarity Corps and therefore the mobility of young people in Citizen Service at European level.

5. LIST OF THE ELEMENTS COMPARED IN EACH CITIZEN SERVICE PROGRAMME

1. Name
2. Historical background
3. Objectives
4. Target public (admission criteria)
 - a. Age
 - b. Nationality
 - c. Language
 - d. Other
5. Host organisations
 - a. Area(s) of activity
 - b. Types of host organisations (non-profit organisations / public / private)
 - c. Types of assignment
 - d. Approval and control
5. Duration and intensity
 - a. Duration (number of months)
 - b. Intensity (hours/week)
7. Mandatory or voluntary
 - a. Degree of mandatoriness:
 - b. Sanctions
8. Social mixing and inclusion
 - a. Recruitment (positive/negative discrimination?)
 - b. Collective dimension
9. Personal accompaniment
 - a. Mentoring (and if so what training?)
 - b. Other (educators, individual psychosocial assistance)
10. Training (for the young people)
 - a. How many days?
 - b. By whom?
 - c. Themes
11. National mobility
12. International mobility
13. Assessment
14. Certification
15. Pre- and post-partners (logic of the journey)
16. Communication
17. Number of participants
18. Legal framework
 - a. Status
 - b. Social security and insurance
19. Institutional architecture
 - a. Central Agency
 - b. Main operators
20. Allowances
 - a. For the participants
 - b. For the host organisations
21. Financing
 - a. Total budget
 - b. Financial backers

NOTES :

1. L'impact économique du Service Civique, Etude du cabinet de conseil Goodwill Management, February 2019. A similar study has been made in Belgium in the framework of a Masters thesis in Management : Julien Guignon, Analyse coûts-bénéfices et modélisation économique du Service Citoyen en Belgique, ULiège, 2019-2020
2. Association of Voluntary Service Organisations (ed.), Youth Civic Service in Europe, Policies and programmes : France, Germany, Italy, the Czech Republic and at European level, Edizioni plus, Pisa University Press, 2005

I. / GERMANY

1. NAME

The generic term used in reference to the German voluntary service is **Freiwilligendienst**. It is not a programme as such, but a complex system made up of two major types of programmes and several distinct projects in each of them.

a. First of all, there are the **Jugendfreiwilligendienste**, civil society youth volunteer services run by the German Länder. The two major German programmes are the **Freiwilliges Soziales Jahr (FSJ)**

which involves working as a volunteer for one year in the social sector, and the **Freiwilliges Ökologisches Jahr (FÖJ)**, its counterpart in the environmental sector.

b. Then there is the Federal Volunteer Service, the **Bundesfreiwilligendienst (BFD)**, the successor to the former **Zivildienst**, the service for conscientious objectors run by the federal government at the time of general conscription.

2. HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Taking a year out to do voluntary service is a well-established and widespread practice in Germany. One can thus speak of a true tradition or **culture of voluntary service**. While having certain similarities, the two models, (1) the **youth voluntary services (FSJ / FÖJ)** and the **federal voluntary service (BFD)**, are nevertheless structurally distinct from each other.



1. The youth voluntary services (FSJ / FÖJ) appeared on the scene in 1954 when the Protestant Church called on young people to take a “diaconal year”, i.e. a year out doing voluntary work. The Catholic Church and the social security institutions soon followed suit. Originally intended as a way of supporting Second World War orphans, these programmes mainly targeted young women not subject to conscription. This origin explains why confessional organisations continue to play a major role.

These initial voluntary services soon became institutionalised, with the law promoting voluntary social service (FSJ)³ being adopted in **1964**. This provided a legal framework for young people to do a year’s voluntary service and for them to receive a certain, albeit small, remuneration (“pocket money”), without however providing for allowances directly payable by the federal government. This set-up continues to apply. Following the same model, i.e. emanating from pre-existing citizen initiatives, the law promoting voluntary environmental service (FÖJ)⁴ was adopted in **1991**.

To harmonise their functioning and help compensate for the suspension of male conscription in Germany, the two laws were unified in **2008** within the “**law promoting youth voluntary services**”⁵. Youth voluntary services have since experienced rapid growth, with 35% of eligible men now taking part.⁶

Within these programmes, the volunteers sign a tripartite agreement with the umbrella institutions and host organisations – without direct contact with the State.

2. Turning to the **Federal Volunteer Service (BFD)**, this goes back to the former **Zivildienst**, the service taken up by conscripts opting out of military service



for men (before its suspension in 2011). Its supervisory body, the “Bundesamt für den Zivildienst” was established in 1961. Over the 50 years of its existence, some 2.7 million young men did Zivildienst, working mainly in the fields of health and education. In the best years (1996-2002) 120,000 – 130,000 young men took part. In 2010, the last year for which we have figures, 78,387 young men participated.

With the suspension of conscription in 2011, the **question of how to replace this large “complementary» workforce”**⁷ in the sectors concerned became urgent, with the Ministry of Defence suggesting a Federal Volunteer Service. At that time, as several times previously, thoughts revolved around merging all programmes into a single federal programme. However, hopes were dashed by the Länder which wanted to maintain control over such services. As a compromise, the problem was resolved by strengthening the youth voluntary services

(FSJ and FÖJ), while at the same time creating a new federal programme, the Bundesfreiwilligendienst (BFD). The latter drew its inspiration from both the youth voluntary services and the Zivildienst, while keeping the latter's organisation and funding. Just five months later, the “**Law on the Federal Volunteer Service**”⁹ was passed.

In contrast to the FSJ/FÖJ, the BFD remunerates its volunteers, who can also be older than 27. BFD volunteers are similarly found working in public institutions and associations. The BFD is open to men and women and is well-established not only in its traditional Zivildienst sectors but also in the social and environmental sectors.

BFD volunteers sign a bilateral agreement with the **Bundesamt für Familie und zivilgesellschaftliche Aufgaben** (BAFzA)⁹, the federal agency for family and civil society affairs.

These are thus two different models, each with their own roots, institutions and legislation, though both guided by the common policy of compensating for the loss of the Zivildienst. The two programmes rub shoulders both in their objectives and in certain organisational principles, and in the BAFzA, the federal agency which plays a key role in the financial control of the host organisations for all programmes.

The golden rule in the organisation of German voluntary services is **subsidiarity**. The federal legislation is fairly open, giving the various stakeholders (umbrella institutions, Zentralstellen or central offices, the Länder, etc.) significant decision-making leeway, especially in the case of the FSJ/FÖJ. As a result, the whole system is highly decentralised, with many different local features.



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3. OBJECTIVES

The 2008 law defines the overall objective of the FSJ/FÖJ as follows:

“Youth voluntary services promote the **educability** (Bildungsfähigkeit) of young people and are a specific form of **civic commitment** (bürgerschaftlichen Engagements).”¹⁰

“The Voluntary Social/Environmental Year is carried out on a full-time basis in a predominantly **hands-on** auxiliary activity which is **geared to learning goals** and is carried out in **common good-oriented facilities** ...”¹¹

The 2011 law assigns the BFD the following mission:

“The BFD enables men and women to work for the **common good** (Allgemeinwohl), in particular in the social, environmental and cultural fields, but also in sports, integration and civil defence. The BFD promotes **life-long learning** (lebenslanges Lernen).”¹²

“BFD recruits work on a full-time basis in a predominantly **hands-on activity** in a **public interest organisation** ...”¹³

According to Dr Christoph Steegmans, the official in charge of civic engagement policy at the BMFSFJ, these objectives are united in **two basic principles** applicable to both the FSJ/FÖJ and the BFD:

- **education**: both formal and non-formal but always focused on hands-on work and enabling the acquisition of new competences (social, intercultural and citizen-oriented, but also technical)

- **orientation**: clarification of a person’s educational and/or professional career; personal development.

As one can see, the objective is not to “re-socialise” young people¹⁴. Similarly, the objective is not political. The focus is not put on the benefit for society, but on young people, their education and orientation. Voluntary service is thus a Bildungs- und Orientierungsjahr, a year devoted to personal development and orientation.¹⁵ These objectives are important and the subject of much attention, with regard to both the certification and supervision of the host organisations and to the many **training courses** (see item 10).

4. TARGET PUBLIC (ADMISSION CRITERIA)

a. Age

The two programmes differ in their age requirements.

- FSJ/FÖJ: 16 (end of compulsory schooling) – 27¹⁶
- BFD: 16 (end of compulsory schooling) upwards (no age limit).¹⁷

28% of BFD volunteers are older than 27.¹⁸

b. Nationality

For Germans and EU citizens, no particular authorisation is needed. For everyone else, a valid residence permit is required.

c. Language

Language is not a criterion set forth in the law. However, many host organisations require volunteers to have sufficient command of German.

d. Other

There are no other formal admission criteria apart from the motivation of the young people and the availability of places of assignment. It should however be noted that, as the majority of programmes do not offer sufficient remuneration to survive on¹⁹ (in particular programmes abroad which are more expensive), many young volunteers find themselves forced to raise funds from their families and friends. It is common practice for young people to organise events in this respect before starting their year of voluntary service. As a result, both the FSJ/FÖJ and, though perhaps to a lesser degree, the BFD are programmes traditionally taken up by young **middle-class** people rather than their more disadvantaged counterparts.

5. HOST ORGANISATIONS

a. Area(s) of activity

The list of fields covered by the two laws is very long, with the two programmes having in common that their missions all contribute to the common good. The main fields are **care** (helping the elderly and the handicapped; hospitals and emergency services; crèches and other support services for youngsters; support for migrants, etc.) and the **environment** (nature protection; forest and countryside management, the protection of rivers and lakes; environmental education, Information and communication, etc.), but also **cultural, sports** and other fields. **New fields** may be suggested by the umbrella institutions insofar as they can prove sufficient experience in the field. One recent example

was the creation of a new “central office” dedicated to food-banks.

b. Types of host organisations (non-profit organisations / public / private)

Both FSJ/FÖJ and BFD voluntary work can be done in **non-profit organisations** and **cooperatives** or in **public organisations**. In practice, the majority of assignments take place in the third sector or the public sector.

As regards cooperatives and the question of the relationship between voluntary service and the private sector, the main factor is not a host organisation’s legal status but its **neutrality vis-à-vis the labour market**. Young people may thus contribute to a business activity as long as their employment does not supplant that of a regular employee or prevent the creation of a new job.

c. Types of assignment

There are several criteria governing the assignments. These must:

- be oriented towards the **common good**
- contribute to the overall objectives of voluntary service, i.e. **education and orientation**.
- be **neutral** in relation to the labour market, as stated above. This point is particularly important. The rule here is never to create an assignment which could supplant an existing or potential job. The volunteer never plays a front-line role and never performs an assignment belonging to his or her organisation’s core business (i.e. just support tasks).
- the work should be mainly **hands-on** (überwiegend praktische Hilfstätigkeit²⁰)
- the work should be **full-time** (except for BFD)

volunteers older than 27 who may do their voluntary service in a part-time capacity).

There are no other constraints, meaning that assignments can differ greatly.

d. Approval and control

For both the FSJ/FÖJ and the BFD, the system of certifying and supervising the host organisations involves two main players: (1) the **central offices (Zentralstellen)** and (2) the **BAFzA**.

1. Each host organisation must first establish a link to a **Zentralstelle**. These central offices are networks of umbrella institutions (including the Länder in the case of the FSJ/FÖJ) and host organisations and are financed on a pro-rata basis (number of volunteers). Somewhat complex but very valued instances of the German system, they have several powers, including the certification and supervision of the host organisations.

The Zentralstellen certify their members according to their own criteria, whereby the common good criterion is always paramount. Public organisations are presupposed to work for the common good, while private-sector organisations have to furnish proof. The host organisations may choose how many volunteers they request, though the number granted will depend on available places.

As for **supervision**, this is done mainly via a **participatory self-assessment process** involving all stakeholders (see item 13). The aim of this method is to prevent an organisation operating in an all too independent manner (for example the Churches). There are also further ways of checking what is happening on the ground:

- The certification forms provide information on headcounts, finance, etc.
- On-site inspections take place
- Denunciations by competitors or host organisation employees who feel they have been harmed by unfair competition. Each of these complaints is investigated and sanctions can go as far as certification being withdrawn.

2. Once certified by a Zentralstelle, the candidate organisation must also obtain federal-level certification, this time from the **BAFzA** (see items 2 and 19) whose sole task is to check the financial side. The two supervision systems complement each other, ensuring permanent quality management.

While being quite effective, this system does not deal with the question of employment supplanting. In item 2 we mentioned the labour crisis affecting the institutions that used to benefit from the Zivildienst (up till 2011) and which quickly led to the establishment of the BFD. If at that time the young people had really only been used for support tasks, calls for a replacement system would not have been so strong. The situation has not fundamentally changed since then.

However, for the sake of completeness, it should be added that the majority of volunteers are in favour of the programme in that it allows them to “improve their employment chances” (67%: fully; 20% partially) and to “increase their chances of entering university” which is selective in Germany (70%: fully; 16%: partially)²¹.

6. DURATION AND INTENSITY

a. Duration (number of months)

Average duration of assignments is **12 months full-time**. An assignment must be at least 6 months long and not longer than 24 months. There is one

exception to this in the BFD programme: three-month assignments are possible on specific pedagogical grounds.

b. Intensity (hours/week)

Both FSJ/FÖJ and BFD missions are a priori **full-time**, i.e. a maximum of **40 hours a week**. However, an exception may be made for BFD volunteers older than 27 who are allowed to sign up part-time, for a minimum of 20 hours a week.

7. MANDATORY OR VOLUNTARY

a. Degree of mandatoriness:

Mandatory service disappeared with the suspension of conscription in 2011 and service is now completely **voluntary**. There is no debate in Germany about making the scheme mandatory in any way.

b. Sanctions

No sanctions are foreseen. Individual service is governed by the agreement concluded between the volunteer, the host organisation and the umbrella institution (FSJ/FÖJ) / BAFzA (BFD). It can be terminated at any time, for example if the volunteer wants to enter training or has found a job. Contract termination obviously leads to payment of the pocket money being stopped.

8. SOCIAL MIXING AND INCLUSION

a. Recruitment (positive/negative discrimination?)

A **strong tradition of voluntary service** exists in

Germany and the system operates at full capacity. Recruitment concerns do not exist, and budgets exist to start new missions in the coming years. Host organisations receive on average **two applications for each available place**²².

Recruitment takes place in a **decentralised** manner. In concrete terms, this involves candidate volunteers contacting the BAFzA, the umbrella institutions or the host organisations. Some candidates have been urged and/or supported to do so by counsellors or social workers, while others apply on their own accord. For the FSJ/FÖJ, a **tripartite agreement** is concluded between the volunteer, the host organisation and the umbrella institution. For the BFD, a **bilateral agreement** is concluded between the volunteer and the BAFzA.

As mentioned above, voluntary service in Germany is mainly done by young middle-class people. This is especially the case with the FSJ/FÖJ, but perhaps a little less with the BFD²³. The young people concerned are generally already quite independent. **No legal provisions exist to try and attract deprived candidates**. There is however a working group looking at the subject of “inclusion” (disaffiliated young people, disabled people, refugees, etc.). There are also a few pilot projects, but any such initiative is complicated by the fact that it is very expensive, with the cost having to be shouldered by the host organisations. As a result, not many organisations participate. Less than 1% of volunteers are handicapped²⁴.

We are however seeing two demographic trends: more and more older people are doing voluntary service in the former GDR, a region with higher unemployment; while more and more young people are seeking practical work experience before starting their studies²⁵.

b. Collective dimension

No account is taken of the collective dynamics of peer groups – as practised for example by Unis-Cité in France or the Luxembourg volunteer service – in the various laws governing voluntary service in Germany and it is not a priority of the German programmes.

However, each volunteer receives 25 days of mandatory training which takes place for the most part in 5-day residential seminars (at least for the introduction course). These seminars often cover dozens of participants, with the same groups often coming together again. Obviously, this leads to personal relationships, one of the main attractions of voluntary service for participants²⁶. For the seminar on politics, the law encourages the participation of a mix of young people doing voluntary service and those doing military service. However, these groups vary in composition and there is no focus on group dynamics.

The Zentralstellen sometimes also organise meetings bringing volunteers together. There are also other local initiatives. The keyword is, as in so many other things in Germany, **subsidiarity**, with the umbrella institutions enjoying great leeway in how they conduct their programmes.

9. PERSONAL ACCOMPANIMENT

Each FSJ/FÖJ/BFD volunteer receives **non-formal** (guidance) and **formal** support (training courses).

a. Mentoring (and if so what training?)

The FSJ/FÖJ and BFD laws are quite vague on the subject of mentoring. The 2008 FSJ/FÖJ law solely states that the umbrella institution and the host organisation are both involved in supporting

volunteers, while the 2011 BFD law states that the volunteer must be “regularly and personally supervised and supported by qualified staff” in his or her host organisation²⁷. No more details are provided.

Apart from that, it is the Zentralstellen and umbrella institutions which are responsible for quality and therefore for formalising and supervising mentoring. Taking this role seriously, they have set up a whole system of specific courses for the host organisations (for example on how to recognise psychological problems, on risk management, etc.) and perform quality control.

This means in practice that all volunteers are supported by a mentor in their host organisation, responsible for instructing and guiding their projects. These mentors receive training and supervision within a participatory quality control process.

b. Other (educators, individual psychosocial assistance)

Here again, the golden rule is **subsidiarity**: each umbrella institution has its own ways of doing things. A mentor can play a further-reaching role, there may be a second mentor, pedagogical support may be provided by another certified organisation, there may be a pastor, etc. Great differences exist.

10. TRAINING (FOR THE YOUNG PEOPLE)

Each young volunteer receives **pedagogical support**, a goal defined in an identical manner in the 2008 FSJ/FÖJ law and the 2011 BFD law:

“The FSJ/FÖJ/BFD volunteer shall receive pedagogical support. This support is to be provided by an organisation approved by a Zentralstelle

and is aimed at **enhancing the volunteer’s social, cultural and inter-cultural skills and at strengthening his/her feeling of responsibility for the common good.**”²⁸

a. How many days?

The number of days varies according to a volunteer’s age:

- each volunteer **younger than 27** must receive **25 days of training a year**, spread out over five 5-day courses. At least two days of training per month must be provided.
- each (BFD) volunteer **older than 27** must receive **12 days of training a year**, in this case 2 6-day courses.

Participation in these courses varies a lot: attendance can be between 5 and 50 people. Though not necessarily the case, courses are often attended by the same groups.

In addition, the volunteers take part in numerous **qualifying courses** associated with their work.

b. By whom?

The courses may be offered either by one of the **17 state training centres**²⁹ or by any other training centre. Government funding is based on a ratio of **one trainer for 40 volunteers**.

The only case where the host organisations are required to turn to a state training centre is for the introduction course / political training week³⁰. Otherwise, pedagogical support is totally decentralised. It is a market. The host organisations may make use of either the state training centres or those of the umbrella institutions.

As regards courses qualifying volunteers for their work, these are paid for by the host organisation.

c. Themes

The training programme includes at least a **1-week political education seminar** in a state training centre. In the case of the FSJ/FÖJ, it also includes a **mid-term week and a wrap-up week**³¹.

The political training seminar discusses political issues without conveying any particular opinions. The law encourages this training to be offered to mixed groups made up of FSJ/FÖJ and BFD volunteers together with young people doing military service. A remnant of the Zivildienst, this constitutes a major bone of contention with the third sector. Nevertheless, the German state insists on maintaining it in order to be able to guarantee neutrality.

Examples of the questions debated include:

- What is the relation between my day-to-day decisions and the people around me and the rest of the world?
- A political context is often quite complex. How can I manage to assess political issues for myself?
- How can I help shape society and take on responsibility?³²

The topics handled in the other courses vary greatly, going from the lack of equal opportunities, via migration to political debates, the new media and inter-cultural competences. Ministerial guidelines³³ exist for this pedagogical support for BFD volunteers, focusing specifically on the content of the seminars and the training of the trainers. One of the tasks of the BAFzA is to further develop this course offering.

As regards the **courses qualifying volunteers for their work**, examples include certification as

a lifeguard, the learning of sign language, a forklift driving licence, a first-aid course, a chainsaw licence, an instructor licence, etc.

11. NATIONAL MOBILITY

National mobility is **not a goal** of the various German programmes. Although there are no statistics on this subject, it would seem that the majority of young volunteers do their service in their place of origin / residence. It is mainly students who do their service in another city.

12. INTERNATIONAL MOBILITY

As regards **international mobility**, various “competing” programmes are offered by different ministries/agencies: **Weltwärts**, the **Internationaler Jugendfreiwilligendienst (IJFD)**, **Kulturweit**, **Europäischer Freiwilligendienst (EFD)**, **Freiwilliges Soziales / Ökologisches Jahr im Ausland**, **Anderer Dienst im Ausland (ADiA)**. A number of these also offer the possibility of mixed programmes, i.e. programmes partially in Germany and partially abroad. Weltwärts and IJFD are by far the most important ones (each with 2500 - 3000 participants), followed by Kulturweit and EFD (each with several hundred young people); and finally the FSJ/FÖJ with just 23 young volunteers a year (2014 figure).

13. ASSESSMENT

(Self-) assessment is an important aspect of German voluntary service. This involves a **decentralised participatory process** run by the **Zentralstellen** (see items 5 and 19). The BAFzA has no role to play here apart from paying for any associated expenses. In concrete terms, the Zentralstellen involve the various stakeholders on the ground (umbrella

institutions and host organisations) in a process of exchanging experience and providing pedagogical assistance. Each does its own self-assessment, while also assessing other organisations, with a view to constantly improving the quality of the programme. The process is based on partnership and not on any hierarchy, thereby preventing excesses and ensuring close collaboration between all stakeholders. The process is one of the key assets of the German system.

14. CERTIFICATION

Each volunteer in each of the three programmes receives a **personal certificate**³⁴ at the end of the assignment. Issued by the host organisation, this document details what the volunteer has learnt and how he or she has contributed to the organisation's work on the basis of the various (self-) assessments. Though each organisation does this in its own way, the certificates are recognised and valued in the labour market.

BFD work may be recognised as an internship in certain study programmes, though such recognition is dependent on the individual policy of each higher education institution. However, the German voluntary programmes have taken over the provisions applying previously to national service with regard to priority access to university for people with the same qualifications. There is also the possibility for volunteer assignments to qualify as “waiting semesters”, an incentive for voluntary service in a system where university entry is selective.

15. PRE- AND POST-PARTNERS (LOGIC OF THE JOURNEY)

Here as elsewhere, partnerships with schools, employment schemes, etc. before and after doing



INTERNATIONAL VOLUNTEERING FROM GERMANY

	Weltwärts	Internationaler Jugendfreiwilligendienst IJFD	Europäischer Freiwilligendienst (EFD)	Kulturweit
Who?	Ministry of Cooperation and Int'l Development (BMZ)	Ministère de la famille, séniors, des femmes et de la jeunesse (BMFSFJ)	Union Européenne Erasmus +	Commission allemande de l'UNESCO (DUK) et Ministère des affaires extérieures allemand (AA)
Applications and accompaniment	Sending structure	Sending structure	Sending structure	Kulturweit
Content	Development (education, health, environment)	Social area and ecology	Social area and ecology	Cultural and educational policy
Region	Developing countries, Africa, Latin America, Asia and Eastern Europe	World	Europe and associated countries	Developing countries, Africa, Latin America, Asia and Eastern Europe
Volunteers 2014/2015	3.366 volunteers	2.674 volunteers	= 800 volunteers	= 400 volunteers
Duration	6 /24 months (Ø 11-12)	6 /18 months (Ø 12)	2-12 months (in certain cases shorter)	6 ou 12 months
Age	18 / 28 years	16 / 26 years	17 / 30 years	18 / 26 years
Volunteers receive	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transport costs • Accommodation + food • Seminars + related transport • € 100/month allowance • Insurance • Vaccination costs <p>= € 7,000 from BMZ for 12 months</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transport costs • Accommodation + food • Seminars + related transport • € 100/month allowance • Insurance • Vaccination costs <p>= max € 4,200 from BMFSFJ for 12 months</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transport costs (~ 90%) • Accommodation + food • Seminars + expenses • Monthly allowance • Insurance • Local travel • Language courses • Vaccination and visa costs where applicable 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transport costs • € 200 per month for accommodation + food • Seminars • € 150/month allowance • Insurance • Max € 300 for 30 h language courses in host country <p>= € 5,000 to 6,000 from DUK for 12 months</p>
Volunteer participation	Volunteer participation generally 25% of total costs (av. € 1,800 to 2,000 for a year (a donor circle is required) Cost of visa	Volunteer participation variable as a function of overall costs (av. € 2,400 to 3,000 for a year Cost of visa	Volunteer participation is low. In certain cases participation in transport costs	Volunteer participation varies as a function of transport, accommodation and food costs. Cost of visa
Internet page	www.weltwaerts.de	www.bmfsfj.de	www.go4europe.de	www.kulturweit.de

voluntary service are not regulated at federal level but at the level of the Zentralstellen which set up the partnerships they consider necessary.

16. COMMUNICATION

Communication is also decentralised, though there is not much need for such work as the culture of volunteering is well-rooted in German society and demand is high. The various programmes therefore do not need much promotion.

17. NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS

The total number of (young) participants is relatively stable: around **100,000 each year**, of whom some **60,000 opt for the FSJ/FÖJ and 40,000 for the BFD**. All vacancies get taken up and there are on average two applications for each vacancy.

While these figures are impressive, demand is even more impressive. Take-up is dependent to a large extent on the budget and the "pocket money" granted. The host organisations submit requests for 100,000 young BFD recruits each year (against a background of 800,000 school-leavers a year).

A few statistics³⁶:

FSJ:

- Men: 37 %
- Women: 63 %
- < 18: 23 %
- > 18: 77 %
- Without a school-leaving certificate < 1 %
- Lower secondary: 8 %
- Upper secondary 30 %
- Higher education 58 %
- No data: 4 %

- «With a migration background»: 8 %

BFD:

- Men : 45 %
- Women : 55%
- < 27 years : 74 %
- 27-50 years : 16 %
- 51-65 years : 10 %
- > 65 years : < 1%

Two aspects are noteworthy here: a) FSJ volunteers tend to be educated better than average; and b) the high number of older (27+) BFD volunteers.

18. LEGAL FRAMEWORK

a. Status

The legal framework is defined by the 2008 "Law promoting youth voluntary service" for the FSJ/FÖJ and the 2011 "Law on the Federal Volunteers Service" for the BFD. Participants gain the status of "volunteers" (Freiwillige), with each participant receiving a volunteer card.

However, problems sometimes arise in connection with this status not being known. For instance, certain public transport companies do not recognise it and deny certain benefits. There is a need for more up-to-date information.

b. Social security and insurance

All volunteers benefit from social security (paid holidays, health insurance, state pension contributions, accident insurance, third-party liability insurance, etc.) paid for by the umbrella institutions or the host organisations³⁷. In the case of the BFD, these expenses are covered by the BAFzA up to 250 € for volunteers younger than 25 and up to 350 € for those older³⁸.

NUMBERS OF FSJ, FÖJ, IJFD AND BFD VOLUNTEERS PER YEAR³⁵

Year	FSJ	FÖJ	IJFD	BFD	TOTAL
2012	47 918	2 688	2 673	34 346	87 625
2013	51 523	2 777	3 090	40 334	97 724
2014	53 226	2 800	3 397	42 752	102 175
2015	54 758	2 686	3 188	37 430	98 062
2016	56 347	2 926	2 969	41 212	103 454
2017	54 919	2 995	2 755	41 912	102 581
2018	54 917	2 949	2 799	41 190	101 855

19. INSTITUTIONAL ARCHITECTURE

a. Central Agency

The German voluntary service system is **complex**. It is governed by the principle of **subsidiarity**, i.e. each task is performed at the most appropriate level of governance. This implies a high degree of decentralisation, not just because various programmes exist, but also within the programmes. For both the FSJ/FÖJ and the BFD, management tasks are spread out over a wide range of players, all of whom enjoy a high degree of decision-making autonomy and who take on part of the tasks which could be delegated to an "agency" in the true sense of the term.

That said, there are two federal bodies working closely together as regulatory bodies in the coordination of the German voluntary service system: the **Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth (BMFSFJ)**³⁹ and its department, the **Federal Office for Family and Civil Society Affairs (BAFzA)**⁴⁰.

1. Located in Berlin, the **BMFSFJ** oversees the legal and political framework for both the FSJ/FÖJ and the BFD (however, certain international programmes belong to other ministries). The BMFSFJ is responsible for the budgets assigned to the various voluntary services, deciding how they are divided up. As for the BFD, an **advisory committee** exists within the BMFSFJ chaired by a Ministry representative and made up of representatives from among the volunteers (up to 7), from the Zentralstellen (up to 7), the Protestant Church (1), the Catholic Church (1), the unions (1), the employer federations (1), the Länder (4) and associations of local bodies (1).

2. As for the **BAFzA**, this is a large administration located in Cologne with some 330 - 350 employees, 60 of whom work on the ground. It has numerous links to civil society, with voluntary service just one of them. Its main role in this context is to hand out and monitor the usage of the funding assigned to voluntary service. In addition, it has an advisory and information-providing role. BFD volunteers conclude their agreements with the BAFzA.

b. Main operators

Over and above the BMFSFJ and BAFzA, the main stakeholders are the following. They are responsible for many of the tasks normally assigned to a central agency, including the payment of allowances (FSJ/FÖJ), certification, quality control, training and public relations.

- The **Länder** are involved in the FSJ/FÖJ. They are responsible for accrediting the umbrella institutions and sometimes contribute to volunteers' pocket money. Their participation varies from one Land to the next.
- The **Zentralstellen** (central offices)⁴¹ are networks of umbrella institutions and host organisations. They play a key role in the various voluntary service programmes, assuming responsibility for accrediting and supervising host organisations, for the continuous improvement of quality, for circulating information between the partners and for handing out funding. They are the main points of contact for the BAFzA and play a pivotal role in the programme. Zentralstellen may be one of three types: (1) large pre-existing organisations (e.g. the : Red Cross); (2) large pre-existing networks (e.g. the Federation of Protestant Youth Organisations); (3) organisations established ad hoc by the BAFzA to focus on specific topics (e.g.: sports, the environment, food banks). The BAFzA does not impose any geographical requirements. There are currently 23 Zentralstellen for the BFD and 12 for the FSJ. As regards the FÖJ, everything is done through the BAFzA. There are five for the IJFD (international). The same organisations can assume this role for the different programmes (FSJ, FÖJ, BFD and international programmes), though these responsibilities remain separate from a structural point of view.

- **The umbrella institutions** (Träger) are a feature specific to the FSJ/FÖJ and play a role mainly within the Zentralstellen of these programmes. The BFD has tried to streamline its operations by eliminating this feature from its system. This has happened in theory but not always in practice. Whatever the case, these are the main players on the ground. They are often organisations of public interest, including the Churches and the Länder, tasked with managing the supply and demand of voluntary service assignments as well as providing the mandatory training courses and supervising the programme's quality. They are the ones in charge of concluding the tripartite FSJ/FÖJ agreements with the volunteers and their host organisations.
- For their part, the **host organisations** (Einsatzstellen) host and support the volunteers throughout their service. They also provide training, with a focus on the skills needed for the work. In addition, they are affiliated to a Zentralstelle and participate in its (self-) assessment processes. As for the BFD, the BAFzA maintains direct links with the host organisations, as opposed to the FSJ/FÖJ where everything is done via the intermediary of the Zentralstellen.

20. ALLOWANCES

a. For the participants

The young volunteers are not paid a wage or compensation, though receive **pocket money** (Taschengeld). This issue is of great importance in Germany as voluntary service is designed specifically as a free service (volunteering). On its inception, the BFD had to toe the line in this respect, doing what the FSJ/FÖJ did.

The question of **how much "pocket money"** should be paid is a political issue. When too much is paid, criticism arises regarding the very nature of volunteering and of it supplanting paid jobs, while when it is too low, criticism arises about it neglecting the full-time commitment of the volunteers. The amount of pocket money actually paid varies a lot, dependent on the programmes. As it comes from various sources, it is quite difficult to gain a clear idea of everything.

The rule is that the volunteers may receive **max. € 390⁴² a month in cash, plus benefits in kind**. Amounts are calculated differently in the two programmes:

- **BFD: € 250 - 350 (dependent on the volunteer's age) paid by the host organisation and refunded by the State + a possible contribution from the host organisation**
- **FSJ/FÖJ: contributions from the Land and the host organisation, whereby the latter is responsible for the actual payment⁴³.**

Insofar as the statutory requirements are met, this "pocket money" is paid **on top of the family allowance** (though without being able to exceed the € 390 ceiling).

Volunteers may also profit from **other benefits** such as accommodation, meals and workwear as well as discounts for public transport, museums, cinemas and sports equipment. These are negotiated on a case-by-case basis. All too often, these amounts and benefits are far from covering all of a volunteer's basic needs. At the end of the day, volunteers receive **on average the equivalent of € 200 - 500 a month** in pocket money and other benefits⁴⁴.

In the case of voluntary service being done abroad, the pocket money is state-funded in several programmes

(IJFD, Weltwärts, EFD, Kulturweit). Generally speaking, it is not as high as with the BFD (€ 100 - 150 a month), though air travel, accommodation, food, insurance and vaccination costs may also be covered (see item 12). The majority of the costs are self-financed in the other programmes.

For instance, the federal state only covers part of the expenditure on volunteers and for more than half of them (FSJ and FÖJ volunteers) nothing at all, with all being covered by the umbrella institutions, the host organisations, the Länder - and the volunteers themselves. The compensation is seen as a "bonus" in relation to the spirit of volunteering. The federal state solely provides the organisations with a framework, supporting them financially to a certain degree but otherwise giving them a free hand to recruit volunteers in line with their capacities and budgets, and for varying periods of time.

b. For the host organisations

On the one hand, the host organisations contribute financially to the engagement of their volunteers,

- in many cases paying them pocket money (up to € 390 a month)
- paying their social security contributions (for the FSJ/FÖJ; for the BFD, these are reimbursed by the state)
- paying € 580 a year to the umbrella organisation for each volunteer

They also contribute in kind for training (in particular the courses offering training for the job) as well as sometimes accommodation, meals and workwear. In return, they can naturally count on the volunteer's commitment.

On the other hand, certain umbrella institutions are supported by the state. In the case of the BFD, the

state reimburses the pocket money and the social security contributions⁴⁵ up to a certain amount (see the previous item).

With regard to the **mandatory courses**, the situation is somewhat more complex. All is dependent on the volunteer's age and programme duration. Volunteers younger than 27 have to participate in 25 days of training a year, including a 5-day politics course in a BAFzA centre (see item 10). The host organisations do not have to pay for this seminar. For the 20 other days of training, the host organisations may receive reimbursement of up to € 100 a month. This amount is reduced when the host organisation books more training in a BAFzA centre. When the volunteer receives all of his or her 25 days training in BAFzA centres, the host organisation does not receive any reimbursement, instead having to pay € 400.

BFD volunteers older than 27 must take part in 12 days of mandatory training per year, but not the the political education seminar. As with their younger volunteers, the host organisations receive reimbursement from the BAFzA up to € 100 a month.

If the BFD assignment lasts longer than 12 months, the host organisation receives € 50 a month per volunteer (whatever his or her age).

This amount may be supplemented by **€ 100 a month** for each volunteer with **special needs** (less than 1% of all volunteers).

In addition, the state also supports the umbrella institutions to the tune of € 115 a month for operating/ coordination expenses.

At the end of the day, the host organisations often spend several hundred euros a month for each volunteer, above all in the FSJ/FÖJ model.

21. FINANCING

a. Total budget

The annual budget is set once every three years, providing a certain degree of stability. While there is no 100% guarantee that the plan is respected, in most cases this is the case. In 2018, the federal government financed voluntary services under the following budget lines:

FEDERAL BUDGET FOR VOLUNTEER SERVICES IN GERMANY IN 2018 ⁴⁶	
BFD	€ 167,202,000 (all in all)
FSJ	€ 75,781,000
FÖJ	€ 7,800,000
International	€ 12,100,000
Total	€ 262,883,000

The funding provided by the Länder, the European Union and the host organisations comes on top of this. Due to the system's decentralisation, it is difficult to exactly estimate the total budget.

According to a 2012 article in Der Spiegel⁴⁷, the federal government spent 631 million euros on the Zivildienst in 2010, the year before its suspension. It has therefore significantly reduced its funding.

b. Financial backers

Here again, with the German system organised under the principle of subsidiarity, many local disparities exist. Nevertheless, we can attempt to break down the costs as follows:

The German federal government basically covers the following items:

- Solely for the BFD: volunteers' pocket money to the tune of € 250 - 350 a month per full-time volunteer, as well as social security contributions and the admin costs of the host organisations
- For all programmes:
 - the operating and training expenses of the umbrella institutions to the tune of € 120 a month per volunteer, paid to the umbrella institutions
 - the operating costs of the host organisations to the tune of € 100 a month per volunteer, paid to the host organisations (on a sliding scale depending on the number of training days booked in BAFzA training centres)
 - for so-called disadvantaged participants, this amount is increased by € 100 a month.

Furthermore, the federal government offers benefits in kind, such as discounts for public transport and for cultural and sports institutions.

The Länder sometimes contribute to the pocket money of FSJ and FÖJ volunteers.

The host organisations pay € 580 a year per volunteer to the umbrella institutions and sometimes cover (part of) the pocket money paid to the young people (max € 390 a month).

The volunteers themselves are expected to cover (part of) the costs for their basic needs, and in the case of international travel, sometimes even their transport costs.

NOTES :

3. Gesetz zur Förderung eines freiwilligen sozialen Jahres vom 17 August 1964
4. Gesetz zur Förderung eines freiwilligen ökologischen Jahres vom 17 Dezember 1993
5. Gesetz zur Förderung von Jugendfreiwilligendiensten vom 16 Mai 2008
6. Visit to the BAFzA in Cologne, 28 February 2018
7. See item 20 for the issue of volunteers supplanting regular employees.
8. Gesetz über den Bundesfreiwilligendienst vom 28 April 2011
9. Bundesamt für Familie und zivilgesellschaftliche Aufgaben
10. Gesetz zur Förderung von Jugendfreiwilligendiensten vom 16 Mai 2008, §1
11. Gesetz zur Förderung von Jugendfreiwilligendiensten vom 16 Mai 2008, §3-4
12. Gesetz über den Bundesfreiwilligendienst vom 28 April 2011, §1
13. Gesetz über den Bundesfreiwilligendienst vom 28 April 2011, §3
14. Visit to the BAFzA in Cologne, 28 February 2018
15. Visit to the BAFzA in Cologne, 28 February 2018
16. Gesetz zur Förderung von Jugendfreiwilligendiensten vom 16 Mai 2008, §2.1.4
17. Gesetz über den Bundesfreiwilligendienst vom 28 April 2011, §2.2. Several differences exist between BFD volunteers younger than 27 and those older. The main ones are that the latter can do their service part-time and that they have less mandatory training (see items 6 & 10).
18. Figure of April 2018. BAFzA communication of 17 May 2018.
19. See item 20.

20. Cf. Gesetz zur Förderung von Jugendfreiwilligendiensten vom 16 Mai 2008, §3 and 4
21. BMFSFJ, Abschlussbericht der gemeinsamen Evaluation des Gesetzes über den Bundesfreiwilligendienst (BFDG) und des Gesetzes zur Förderung von Jugendfreiwilligendiensten (JFDG), Nov. 2015, pp. 161-165
22. Visit to the BAFzA in Cologne, 28 February 2018
23. This was at least the feeling of Karl Boudjema from the OFAJ. Due to the decentralised aspect of the German programmes, there are no general demographic statistics on the various programmes.
24. Visit to the BAFzA in Cologne, 28 February 2018
25. Visit to the BAFzA in Cologne, 28 February 2018
26. 97% of volunteers stated having got to know new people during their voluntary service, while 89% of them stated having had an experience of togetherness. Cf. BMFSFJ, Abschlussbericht der gemeinsamen Evaluation des Gesetzes über den Bundesfreiwilligendienst (BFDG) und des Gesetzes zur Förderung von Jugendfreiwilligendiensten (JFDG), Nov. 2015, pp. 161-165
27. Gesetz über den Bundesfreiwilligendienst vom 28 April 2011, §6
28. Gesetz zur Förderung von Jugendfreiwilligendiensten vom 16 Mai 2008, §3-4; Gesetz über den Bundesfreiwilligendienst vom 28 April 2011, §4
29. Spread out across the country, each has c. 10 trainers. Cf. Bundesamt für Familie und zivilgesellschaftliche Aufgaben, Die Bildungszentren des Bundes : Demokratieförderung und Extremismusprävention im Bundesfreiwilligendienst
30. Gesetz über den Bundesfreiwilligendienst vom 28 April 2011, §4
31. Gesetz zur Förderung von Jugendfreiwilligendiensten vom 16 Mai 2008, §5
32. The French National Assembly, Report submitted by the Commission of European Affairs on the draft law on equality and citizenship, presented by Mme Sandrine Doucet, Députée, Doc. n° 3826, 8 June 2016, p. 11
33. BMFSFJ, Rahmenrichtlinie für die pädagogische Begleitung im Bundesfreiwilligendienst (BFD) unter besonderer Berücksichtigung der Seminararbeit und des dabei eingesetzten pädagogischen Personals, 24.07.2013
34. Gesetz über den Bundesfreiwilligendienst vom 28 April 2011, §11
35. For the FSJ and FÖJ, this is the number of young people doing voluntary service on 1st December of any given year. For the BFD, this is the annual average of young people doing voluntary service at any one time. The number of annual contracts is very close to these figures. These totals do not include volunteers taking part in international programmes (some 6,000 a year). Cf. Staff communication of the BAFzA of 6 December 2019
36. Visit to the BAFzA in Cologne, 28 February 2018
37. Gesetz über den Bundesfreiwilligendienst vom 28 April 2011, §17.2.2
38. Gesetz über den Bundesfreiwilligendienst vom 28 April 2011, §17.3
39. Bundesministerium für Familie, Senioren, Frauen und Jugend
40. Bundesamt für Familie und zivilgesellschaftliche Aufgaben
41. See items 5 and 10.
42. Equivalent to 6% of the income ceiling for social security contributions (the Beitragsbemessungsgrenze), (above which no contributions have to be made. This figure applies to 2018. It increases somewhat every year.
43. Thus no federal contribution.
44. Presentation given by Dr Christof Steegmans (Deputy Director-General for Civic Engagement Policy at the Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth) at the Citizen Service symposium in the Belgian Senate, 15 May 2017.
45. Gesetz über den Bundesfreiwilligendienst vom 28 April 2011, §17
46. Staff communication of the BAFzA, 6 December 2019
47. Article in Der Spiegel of 3 September 2012 <http://www.spiegel.de/schulspiegel/abi/bundesfreiwilligendienst-taat-knausert-bei-bufdis-a-851953.html>



II. / FRANCE

1. NAME

The French Citizen Service programme goes under the name of **Service Civique (SC)** (civic service).

This can take several forms: civic service volunteering, civic service engagement and other types of volunteering such as international volunteering in government administration, international vo-

lunteering in business companies and international solidarity volunteering. As **civic service engagement** is by far the most important in terms of numbers, we shall focus on it in this study.

2. HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The history of civic service in France is rooted in **civilian service** as an alternative to compulsory (male) military service for conscientious objectors. However, unlike the German and Italian programmes, where the end of conscription was followed immediately by citizen service in its own right, there was a 13-year hiatus in France from one to the other.



In 1997, Jacques Chirac's decision to suspend military service⁴⁸ also resulted in the simultaneous suspension of civilian service. A first version of a voluntary civil service is put into place but it suffers setbacks due to the complexity of the operational challenges as well as to political difficulties. A range of volunteering programmes appears in the following years (mainly civic volunteering for social cohesion and solidarity ends, volunteering in non-profit organisations and international solidarity volunteering), but with no unified and ambitious programme.

In the meantime, however, citizen initiatives emerge proposing a renewed form of civic engagement for young people, the most important of which is the **association Unis-Cité**, founded in 1995 by four students, Lisbeth Shepherd, Marie Trelu Kane, Julie Chenot and Anne-Claire Pache. Seeking inspiration in the American City-year programme, this independent and secular non-profit organisation offers young French persons or foreigners residing in France the possibility to sign up for one year for general interest

missions involving young people from all walks of life and taking place close to their homes. Over the years, this programme grew significantly and influenced the political process that would lead to civic service. Unis-Cité is still one of the most important civic service operators (9,938 young people taken on in 2019⁴⁹) and remains a major voice in the debates in this field.

It was the wave of riots by young people in the "quartiers" (big city neighbourhoods) in 2005 that provided the trigger for a new political dynamic. In the wake of the commotion caused by this event, the weekly magazine «La Vie», led by its director Max Armanet, launched a **«Call for compulsory civic service» (2006)** which quickly gathered signatures from numerous political and society figures. The theme found its way into the programmes of all the main candidates for the 2007 presidential election, nuanced by Bernard Kouchner's proposal to start it with an experimental phase of civic service, that would be at once voluntary but «mandatorily proposed». The ensuing dynamic led to the institutionalization of civic service as we know it today.

The first step in this process was the enactment of the Voluntary Civic Service Law (2006), which failed to achieve its objectives. This was followed by the publication of the report "Pour un service civique" (2008) by Luc Ferry, Chairman of the Conseil d'analyse de la société, followed by intensive consultations led by Martin Hirsch, High Commissioner for Active Solidarity, and former director of Emmaüs (2009). His personal commitment and his desire to advance this subject were key factors in gaining the support of public opinion and the third sector, enabling it to cut across partisan lines. In 2010, the French national Assembly voted almost unanimous in favour of the **Law on the Organisation of Civic Service (2010)**⁵⁰ (an event which has been called «the small republican miracle»). This law, which is not part of the labour code but of the national service code, effectively established

civic service by creating a status for civic service volunteers as well as a «**Civic Service Agency**» (ASC) to coordinate the implementation of the programme.

Established under Sarkozy (Les Républicains) and strongly developed under Hollande (Parti Socialiste) and Macron (La République en Marche), civic service has today overcome its initial competition with the voluntary sector and has conquered its own place and budget in the French voluntary association and public landscape. It enjoys broad support, though tempered by recurrent criticism for competing with paid employment. After the 2015 attacks, it experienced a significant increase in its budget and the number of volunteers. Since 2018, **140,000 young people** engage annually in civic service. In his discours of 14 July 2020, in the wake of the Covid-19 crisis, president Macron announced his plan to create 100,000 supplementary civic service assignments.

3. OBJECTIVES

The main objective of SC is summarized as follows in the law of 2010:

«The purpose of civic service is to strengthen **national cohesion** and **social mixing**. It offers any volunteer the opportunity to serve the **values of the Republic** and to **commit to a collective project** by carrying out a **mission of general interest** with an **approved legal person**.»⁵¹

These initial objectives have been translated by the ASC into eight fundamental principles:

- 1. General interest** (national cohesion and solidarity)
- 2. Citizenship** (via the mission, the host environment, the training; experience of opening up to the world)

3. Mixing (through the persons encountered, among volunteers and via the mission environment)

4. Accessibility (a mission that is accessible whatever the profile, situation, origin, training or experience of the young person; the selection being based on motivation)

5. Complementarity (does not replace, but complements, salaried employees, volunteer workers or interns; is not essential for the proper functioning of the organisation; «socially innovative» activities)

6. Initiative (the mission makes it possible to test new projects and new methods; allows volunteers to show initiative)

7. Caring accompaniment (transmission between volunteer and tutor; time for reflection and maturation)

8. Respect for the SC status (recognised and respected by all within the host organisation)

The first thing that appears is the **central place of the major themes of «national cohesion» and «values of the Republic»**. It is this cross-cutting ambition that gives civic service its singularity and justifies its centralized anchoring in the French state apparatus. In contrast, an equally blatant absence is the **lack of any allusion to the training of young people**. Attention seems to be focused first on the benefit to society. The benefit for the young persons appears to be taken for granted. This is also what emerges from the objective of civic service as developed in the «Mission framework» (Référentiel de missions):

«The objective of the Civic Service engagement is both to mobilize young people in the face of the magnitude of our social and environmental challenges, and to offer young people a new framework of engagement,

in which they can mature, gain self-confidence and skills, and take time to think about their own futures, both as citizens and professionally. It also seeks to be a stage in life during which young people of all social and cultural origins can mix and become aware of the diversity of our society. Far from internships centred on the acquisition of professional skills, Civic Service is above all a stage of life, of civic education through action, and must be accessible to all young people, whatever their previous training or difficulties.»⁵²

These characteristics, which set the French system apart from other European programmes, bear the mark of the traumatic events which determined the emergence and the rise of civic service, respectively the riots of 2005 and the attacks of 2015. For the French State, civic service is above all a political response to a diagnosis of social fracture⁵³. The primary idea is to bring youth and society back together again.

This approach has implications on the ground. On the positive side, the French programme aims to be accessible to all, opens a large number of missions and offers respectable allowances, which makes it an attractive opportunity for the greatest number. The downside is that this quantitative approach has a cost in terms of personalized support, collective dimension and training.

4. TARGET PUBLIC (ADMISSION CRITERIA)

a. Age

“Civic service is... open to people between the ages of **sixteen and twenty-five**.”⁵⁴

Civic service has no prerequisites in terms of diploma or experience. With respect to the minimum age of 16, the only additional requirements for minors

are parental authorization and the assurance that the missions carried out correspond to the age of the young person in question. With respect to the maximum age of 25, there is a possible derogation for people with disabilities up to age 30. This means that civic service is focused on the **lower section of the age group** compared to the other European programmes studied (on average, young people in SC engagement are 21 years old).

b. Nationality

Civic service is open to **Europeans as well as to youth from all nationalities**, provided that they have a valid residence permit of at least one year (except for students and refugees)⁵⁵. 96% of young people are of French nationality but there are more than 130 different nationalities represented.

c. Language

Language is not a legal prerequisite, however it is naturally very often one at the operational level.

d. Other

There are no other prerequisites, except a mandatory **medical visit**⁵⁶ prior to signing the contract.

5. HOST ORGANISATIONS

a. Area(s) of activity

The fields of activity offered by civic service are very diverse, covering most of the voluntary sector landscape and major public policies. The only areas excluded are those of a religious and political nature:

«The **missions of general interest** that can be accomplished within the framework of civic service are those of a **philanthropic, educational,**

environmental, scientific, social, humanitarian, sporting, family or cultural nature, or which contribute to defence, civil security or prevention missions, the promotion of Francophonie and the French language or awareness of French and European citizenship.»⁵⁷

PROPORTION OF ASSIGNMENTS PER FIELD OF ACTIVITY (2019) ⁵⁸	
32 %	Education for all
28 %	Solidarity
14 %	Sport
12 %	Culture et leisure
6 %	Environment
3 %	Memory and citizenship
3 %	Health
1 %	Emergency response
1 %	International development and humanitarian action

b. Types of host organisations (non-profit organisations / public / private)

The law of 2010 is very clear as to the types of organisations, further specifying that their financial base must be **sound**:

“The approved legal person is a **non-profit organisation under French law** or a **legal person under public law**. A religious or political association, a congregation, a corporate foundation or a works council cannot be approved for organising civic service.»⁵⁹

The 2017 Equality and Citizenship Law has extended this framework to the following categories⁶⁰:

- **low-cost housing («HLM») organisations**
- **mixed economy companies**
- **local public companies**
- **companies wholly owned by the State or by the Banque de France**
- **companies** holding the label relating to freedom of **creation, architecture and heritage**
- **international organisations** headquartered in France,
- **de jure solidarity-based social utility companies.**

This enlargement makes it possible to include companies with a profit-making aspect and thus to enlarge the base of host organisations. It also involves an additional level of complexity which is not always easy for the ASC to manage⁶¹.

c. Types of assignment

Civic service is not an internship, training, or job, but a specific type of engagement. The «Référentiel des missions» (Mission framework) defines five main headings⁶² of civic service missions:

1. A voluntary commitment serving the general interest⁶³

- a. A civic service mission must be as useful to the young person as it is to the host organisation and to society in general
- b. The missions must meet the needs of the population and the territories
- c. The host organisation's task is to design a real project for hosting young people
- d. Requirement of neutrality and secularism ('laïcité')

2. A mission cannot replace but must be complementary to the work of employees, public officials, interns and non-contractual volunteers*.⁶⁴

- a. The volunteer cannot be essential to the functioning of the organisation
- b. The volunteer must not carry out administrative and logistical tasks related to the ongoing functioning of the structure nor be in charge of communication or the running of social networks (community manager)
- c. The missions entrusted to the volunteer must not have been previously carried out by an employee or a public agent of the host structure and volunteers cannot carry out their civic service in a structure of which they are an employee or public agent or within which they hold a non-contractual volunteer leader's mandate.
- d. The missions entrusted to the volunteer may not fall within a regulated profession
- e. No relationship of subordination but collaboration

3. A mission accessible to all young people

- a. Civic service missions cannot a priori exclude young people without a diploma or qualification
- b. It is know-how and motivation that must prevail
- c. Particular attention to hosting young volunteers with disabilities

4. A mission making it possible to live an experience of social mixing

5. A mission that can take place abroad

These detailed markers are intended to enable the CSA to ensure that the missions proposed comply with the principles set out in the law. However, while it tries to work upstream of the definition of the missions, the CSA does not have the means to control much downstream. This generates a certain number of abuses.

*We use this term to translate the word 'bénévoles', normally translated also as 'volunteers', and denoting anyone working on an unpaid voluntary basis (translator's note)

d. Approval and control

Each body offering civic service missions must first be approved by the State (by the ASC for national organisations, by the ASC territorial delegates at departmental or regional level for local organisations). In 2019, there were **about 10,500 approved organisations**⁶⁵.

The **approval procedure** includes the following steps:

1. Initial contact: thanks to the public relations work by the ASC or to the canvassing work carried out by the development unit and the SC's reference persons throughout France in decentralized government services, as well as in high places through its chairperson, interested organisations or institutions get in touch with the CSA or its territorial delegates⁶⁶. They may participate in an information meeting (1 hour of info + individual meetings) and learn about civic service and the different tools available to become a host organisation (Mission Guidelines, Support Instructions, etc.)

2. Defining the host project: using these tools, the host organisation defines its hosting project for the next three years. This covers the areas of intervention, the volunteers' missions and the hosting and support facilities. Ideally, this project is built with all stakeholders, so as to create internal awareness of what civic service is all about.

3. Approval procedure: on the basis of this hosting project, the organisation files an approval request with the ASC, which assesses it according to the 8 fundamental principles of civic service (see item 3). The ASC offers an advisory service, so that very often the project becomes a co-construction with the host organisation. The investigation lasts a maximum of three months for voluntary associations and maximum of two months for public institutions.



4. Three-year approval and annual allocation of positions: when the applicant organisation and the Agency reach agreement, the latter grants a licence (valid for three years) and assigns a number of positions for one year, from 1 January to 31 December with the ability to schedule missions in the first quarter of year n+1. This approval decision mentions the missions, the calendar, and the secondary organisations that can receive volunteers within the framework of collective approvals. It can eventually be modified by amendment for the following years.

5. Dissemination of the mission order: the mission offers can then be published by the organisations on the Agency's website. The selection of volunteers can begin. It takes the organisation an average of 25 days to find its young people⁶⁷.

The Agency emphasizes the importance of the first phase. It is essential to prepare good **practical and complete tools to help host organisations** set up their projects. For this the CSA has produced a detailed «Référentiel de Missions» (Assignments Framework) with a long series of possible missions. The most difficult thing is to put across clearly the philosophy of the project so as to prevent both administrative complications and the risks of competing with paid employment. «Take care of the upstream!» they advise.

Federations or unions (such as Unis-Cité, the Ligue de l'Enseignement, local authorities, etc.) can obtain a **collective approval** applying to their entire network. They are then responsible for steering their networks and distributing the volunteers within them. The advantage of this system lies in the administrative facility for the ASC and for the structures in which young people are made available. The disadvantage is that these risk being less well supervised and being less personally committed to the project.

We must note the significant **political pressure** to which the CSA is subjected to increase the number of civic service positions. Consequently, it is forced to work quickly and to be constantly searching for new partners, who are in short supply. This is why, since 2015, government services have been strongly solicited to make positions available, a situation that concords moreover with the initial vision of civic service. From just 1.6% of volunteers in 2014, they counted for 35 % in 2019⁶⁸.

Control is affected. With most of the Agency's energy going into the rapid increase in the number of approvals, it does not have the means to monitor each of these projects closely. As a result, the **risk of substitution/competition for employment** is high. Numerous individual cases reported in the press⁶⁹ have highlighted this problem. A study⁷⁰ by Injep highlights the correlation between Civic Service and youth unemployment. The Economic, Social and Environmental Council underlines this problem in a report published in 2017: «The wording of some Civic Service mission offers is sometimes close to that of a job offer, both in terms of the content of the mission and the skills required». Local authorities and State services, in their eagerness to open missions, «have been able to assimilate Civic Service to a subsidized contract»⁷¹. The authors regret that no independent authority is in charge of controlling any drift or substitution of employment. Yannick Blanc, the former president of the CSA, replied that he did not want to 'bureaucratise the system' and that he did not have the means "of an army of controllers"⁷².

In 2018, the number of controls increased, passing the 1,000 mark per year⁷³. The Agency audited 50 nationally accredited organisations, resulting in 6 partial withdrawals of approvals and one total withdrawal. It also carried out 986 inspections of local approvals, resulting in 11 withdrawals of approval.

Finally, it carried out numerous checks on European projects, involving 747 checks on final reports, 101 in-depth checks («desk checks») and four field visits.

Will this be enough to control the 100 000 new additional Civic Service missions that President Macron plans to open in 2020-2021?

6. DURATION AND INTENSITY

a. Duration (number of months)

«Civic service is a voluntary engagement with a continuous duration of six to twelve months ...»⁷⁴

The effective **average duration** of the missions fell from eight months in 2011 to **just under seven months** since 2016. This trend can be explained in particular by the implementation of budgetary guidance by the Agency which approves the organisations for missions of eight months on average⁷⁵.

Entries also have a strongly **seasonal aspect**. There is a significant drop in volunteers between June and September. This seasonality is probably due to the concordance of the missions with the school and university calendars, both for young people and for host organisations.

b. Intensity (hours/week)

«... The accomplishment of the missions relating to the civic service contract represents, over the duration of the contract, **at least twenty-four hours a week ...[and] may not exceed forty-eight hours**, spread over a maximum of six days. For minors aged sixteen to eighteen, the weekly duration of the civic service contract may not

exceed thirty-five hours, spread over a maximum of five days.»⁷⁶

Half of the engagements provide for a commitment of 24 hours a week, the other half for longer weekly durations, which can indeed go up to 48 hours. **On average, young people in SC work 28 hours per week**, which allows them to have a job or pursue studies alongside their SC mission⁷⁷.

7. MANDATORY OR VOLUNTARY

a. Degree of mandatoryness:

Civic service is **entirely voluntary**. The only obligations incumbent on the volunteer are those of the rules which apply in the host organisation⁷⁸.

However, certain **compulsory procedures “upstream” of the Civic Service** exist, notably (1) the «citizenship path» and (2) the new «universal national service».

1. Introduced when the national service was abolished in 1997, the **«citizenship trajectory»** (parcours citoyen) comprises three stages in which every French teenager must participate:

- a. A course in the third class (14-15 years) as part of the moral and civic education course and in the first class (16-17 years) as part of the civic education course
- b. the census in the town hall from the age of 16;
- c. the Defence Appeal and Preparation Day, now Defence and Citizenship Day (DCD), between the ages of 17 and 25. The aim is to «strengthen the spirit of defence and to help affirm the sense of belonging to the national community, as well as

to maintain the link between the army and young people»⁷⁹.

2. Moreover, since February 2018, President Macron has added a fourth stage to this process by gradually introducing a mandatory **universal national service** lasting one month for 16-18 year olds. After a pilot project with 2,000 young people in 2019, Secretary of State Gabriel Attal forecasts 30,000 conscripts in 2020, 150,000 in 2021, 400,000 in 2022 to reach the entire age group, i.e. 800,000 young people, in 2024 – provided that the constitutional impediments to the programme are resolved. The corresponding cost will be between 1 and 1.5 billion euros per year, i.e. 1.5% of the youth budget.

b. Sanctions

There are **no sanctions** provided, except the early termination of the civic service contract and the payment of allowances. This termination may take place at the request of either party, immediately in the event of gross negligence or the signing of an employment contract of at least six months, and subject to one month's notice in any other case⁸⁰.

8. SOCIAL MIXING AND INCLUSION

a. Recruitment (positive/negative discrimination?)

Thanks mainly to the «citizenship trajectory» well as the ASC's communication efforts, more than 90% of 16-25 year olds are familiar with civic service and 90% of French people have a positive image of it⁸¹. It follows that there is no recruitment problem, quite the contrary: in 2016 the ratio was **3.5 responses for each mission offer**⁸². This gap is tending to narrow.

Practically, all candidates have to do is to go through the mission offers on the Agency's **website** and apply. It is very easy: one fills in a small «motivation» box and attaches one's CV. After that everything takes place directly between the host organisation and the candidate.

The Agency has no control over selection; this is not its role. Officially, young people are chosen solely on the basis of their motivation but in practice, it is inevitably the most qualified who are hired (even if 40% of the volunteers have only a 'bac' and 17% are school dropouts). As Jean-François Serres and Julien Blanchet observed in their study mentioned in item 5d⁸³, some civic service mission offers look remarkably like job offers. A certain form of **discrimination** therefore takes place on the ground. The Agency also testifies to the fact that the specificity of civic service engagement has to be constantly explained to host organisations⁸⁴.

However, the Agency has launched two major **affirmative action** programmes⁸⁵:

- **Volont'R**: The aim of this major programme, launched in 2018, is to offer 1,500 young people the opportunity to become involved in missions to welcome and integrate refugees, and 500 young refugees the opportunity to become mutually involved in Civic Service missions within French society. To date, nearly 300 refugees have committed themselves to dedicated missions. And for young people committed to the refugee and migrant public, the objective has been largely exceeded with more than 3,500 volunteers.
- **“Cap sur l'engagement”** (Aiming for Commitment): Held in Loire Atlantique between July 2018 and December 2019, this project aimed to develop the reception of volunteers with disabilities.

An organisation like Unis-Cité selects even more drastically, but then according to a logic of positive discrimination. As a pioneer of civic service, Unis-Cité has set up an additional fundraising system that allows it to offer a more comprehensive programme and supervision, which attracts many young people. These are selected not on the basis of their skills but rather on their **motivation** and their **ability to enrich the diversity of the groups**.

Concretely, selection at Unis-Cité works as follows: (1) information session / collective interview; (2) a written dossier; (3) a short individual interview. Completing the entire process is already proof of motivation in itself.

b. Collective dimension

In the standard civic service programme, the collective dimension is **very weak**. There is practically no training or mandatory group accompaniment time. The agency does recommend that host organisations hire at least two volunteers together, but this is optional⁸⁶. The targeted social mixing therefore takes place mainly through the volunteers' relationships with the host organisation teams as well as with the target publics, but not necessarily between the volunteers themselves.

This intermingling of young people among themselves depends entirely on the host organisations. It does form an essential component of the programme of **Unis-Cité**, which works with **groups of around 8 young people** from all socio-cultural backgrounds (sometimes reduced to 6 or 2). These groups are «welded» during accompaniment activities throughout the programme. In addition, the young people are distributed in small groups in the field. This collective dynamic is essential to achieving the desired personal and civic development.

The Unis-Cité managers also regret the failure to incorporate into the law even a monthly meeting bringing together all the young people of a territory as a step that would guarantee social mixing⁸⁷.



9. PERSONAL ACCOMPANIMENT

a. Mentoring (and if so what training?)

As mentioned above, personal accompaniment in the generic civic service formula depends entirely on the host organisation and consists mainly of **mentoring**, that is an employee or non-contractual volunteer of the organisation being designated to prepare and support the volunteers in carrying out their missions as well as accompanying them in their reflection on what they want to do in life⁸⁸. Mentoring can be shared between several people: daily support in undertaking the mission, administrative support (contract, rights and duties, etc.), support in defining what they want to do in life. As shown in the 2019 post-civic service survey, the follow-up given by the mentors is a determining factor in the young person's sense of satisfaction (see item 13).

There is **mentor training** for all host organizations, for which a contract has been signed with Unis-Cité and La Ligue de l'enseignement for its implementation. They offer training modules throughout the country⁸⁹. These courses take the form of interactive workshops using popular education and collective intelligence methods. In 2019, nearly 11,500 mentors and persons in charge of the Civic Service in the host organizations took part in them. In addition to face-to-face training, the support offer has been strengthened and diversified with a monthly web-conference to raise awareness of the Civic Service framework among mentors and also among people further away from the volunteer's support who would like to learn more about the Civic Service⁹⁰.

b. Other (educators, individual psychosocial assistance)

There is **no other support** provided systematically within the civic service system.

However, some organisations find additional private funding to provide more in-depth accompaniment. For example (and once again) by **Unis-Cité** which offers specialized support throughout the programme at the rate of **one educator per 20 young people**. This support consists of:

1. **A personalized selection procedure** (see item 8)
2. **Two weeks' integration** (by territorial unit => group of 16 to 100 participants)
3. **A weekly individual review session**
4. **Seven days' training**, including first aid (provided by the ASC and compulsory for all)
5. **Three collective and individual step-back times**
6. **A "springboard" jury** at the end of civic service (well-intentioned jury with mayor, president of the association, advisers, etc.)
7. **A closing ceremony**

10. TRAINING (FOR THE YOUNG PEOPLE)

The law obliges host organisations to provide civic and citizenship training to their volunteers. This training has two aspects:

- **A «theoretical» component** comprising one or more modules designed and organised by the host organisation, with the aim of raising awareness among volunteers of the challenges of citizenship
- **A «practical» component** in the form of level 1 first aid training (PSCI)

a. How many days?

With each component lasting one day, there should be **at least two days of training**⁹¹. The theoretical component can also take the form of several successive modules. It is difficult to know whether this component is really taught, since one can rely only on the declaration on honour provided by the host organisations. As for the practical component, the figures from providers show that a majority of young people do not participate (despite the obligation)⁹².

This figure of minimum two days of training should be compared to the minima in other European programmes:

- Germany 25 days (over 12 months)
- Italy 13 days (average of 17.2 days)
- Luxembourg +/- 15 days

That said, the German system has a professional integration intention that the French system does not have. The missions carried out in Germany, in particular in the medico-social field, are considered in France, by professionals, as substituting paid employment.

b. By whom?

The theoretical component is a priori given **by the host organisation itself**, which has certain documents issued by the Agency to help it: a memorandum⁹³, a reference list of topics⁹⁴ and a practical data sheet⁹⁵.

However, the host organisation can also bring in external organisations to organise the modules.

The practical component is a priori given by one of the **22 civil protection organisations approved** for this purpose by the Ministry of the Interior, including six large networks particularly sensitive to the question of volunteer training (Red Cross, White Cross, Fire services, Order of Malta...). The agency reimburses host organisations a flat € 60 per young person receiving first aid training.

c. Themes

For the theoretical component, the host organisations can choose from among the themes listed in the reference list:

- **Republican values**
 - o **Freedom**: freedom, rights and duties of citizens, justice, human rights, individual and collective freedom, social commitment
 - o **Equality**: equal rights, equal opportunities, equality between men and women, social exclusion, discrimination
 - o **Fraternity**: solidarity, living together; conflict management, combating violence, inter-generationality, social commitment
 - o **Secularism**: meaning of secularism (laïcité), the place of religions, religious fundamentalism, communitarianism
- **Organization of the society**:
 - o **The functioning of life in society**: democracy, role of politics, major legislation, workplace relations, access to employment, civil society, town and country planning, social mixing, defence of the nation, civil security

o **The main social issues:** sustainable development, health, media, science and technological developments, consumer society

- **Openness to international issues**
 - o Europe, globalization, major international organisations, NGOs, French interests in the world, the French-speaking world, international cooperation and solidarity, international crises

11. NATIONAL MOBILITY

National mobility is not a declared objective of civic service and we have not found any figures concerning it.

12. INTERNATIONAL MOBILITY

There are two major options for performing a Civic Service type engagement abroad: (1) a Civic Service in the strict sense, called international voluntary service and (2) a mission within the framework of the European Solidarity Corps.

1. Civic Service can be carried out abroad in the following forms:

- a. International Voluntary Service in administration
- b. international corporate volunteering
- c. international solidarity volunteering.

These international missions are relatively few in number, although they have increased in recent years to **1,741 missions per year for all types of volunteer work**⁹⁶. They receive many applications (about 10 applications per post). Some young people respond to several dozen mission offers.

These missions must be proposed by organisations approved in France and concern the same fields as the missions in France. The international programme is coordinated with the help of the **Association France volontaires**. There is a mentor trained for the international in the sending organization and an accompanying person in the host organization; there is a preparation for departure and a session on return. In spite of this, the support is often less extensive than in France due to the distance etc.

Financially: the compensation is equivalent (slightly higher due to the absence of social charges). Transport and accommodation are not paid in advance. These costs can be covered by the approved organisation in France, the host organisation abroad, by the volunteer or be shared between these different actors. Co-financing may be requested by the organisation, in particular from local authorities or by the volunteer (scholarships, etc.).

2. Outside the framework of Civic Service in the strict sense, the Agency is also responsible for the Youth strand of the European **Erasmus+** programme and the **European Solidarity Corps** launched operationally in 2018. A total of 595 European projects have been subsidised with a budget of 28 million euro and 25 179 young people involved.

As regards international exchanges under the European Solidarity Corps, 287 ESC projects were funded involving **2 051 youth exchanges**, 50.3% of which were for young people with fewer opportunities. In France, 122 organisations are labelled for the coordination and/or support of voluntary or employment/internship projects. In 2019, the five main partner countries of French organisations were Spain, Germany, Italy, Greece and Morocco⁹⁷.

13. ASSESSMENT

According to the Ifop 2019 «barometer»⁹⁸:

For the general public:

- the civic service is **identified by more than 9 out of 10 French people (93%) and 87% say they have a good image of it**. It is perceived through the prism of both civic engagement and employability.
- However, a **large majority of them feel that the civic service is not sufficiently recognized** by the education system (73%), by their entourage (74%), by companies (82%) and by society in general (85%).
- The **traditional media** remain the first channel of information on the civic service for 2/3 of the French. Word-of-mouth remains a significant source of information, whether through personal contacts (17%) or professional contacts (10%). The Internet (15%) and public and associative structures (11%) also contribute to the awareness of the system.

For young people :

- the civic service is **identified by more than 9 out of 10 young people aged between 16 and 25 (92%) and 88% of those who know it have a good image of it**.
- **13% of young people aged 16 to 25 say they have already done a civic service**, the same proportion as in 2017 and 2016. Overall, more than a third of young people have carried out or sought to take part in the scheme in 2019 (36%).
- **Most of them also believe that civic service is not sufficiently recognised** by companies and the professional world (78%), society in general

(78%), the education system (68%), or even their entourage (61%).

- **word-of-mouth is a major contributor to the awareness of civic service among young people**, whether through their personal circle (36%) or their professional circle (23%). Defence and Citizenship Day is also an important vector of awareness (31%). Logically enough, the Internet (websites, social networks, etc.) also contributes to the awareness of the system (28%) and appears to be the fourth source of information.

For human resources managers :

- **92% of recruiters say they have already heard of it** and more than 9 out of 10 recruiters say they have a good image of it, but nearly one out of two say they do not see exactly what it is all about (43%).
- A third of the recruiters **consider that the Civic Service is above all a means for young people to acquire experience** that could be useful to them in their career. Teamwork and individual responsibility are at the top of the list of skills recognised by recruiters following a Civic Service.
- Recruiters **agree by more than two-thirds that Civic Service can be an asset to which they pay attention in a young person's CV** (but only 11% have already done so).

In 2019, the CSA and INJEP designed a survey⁹⁹ on the paths of volunteers upstream and downstream of the Civic Service up to 6 months after mission exit in order to evaluate the effects of the Civic Service on the paths of young people. The first results of the survey were published in autumn 2019:

- **At the end of the Civic Service, 44% of former volunteers believe that the scheme has had a**

positive influence on their desire to volunteer further. Prior to the mission, slightly more Civic Service volunteers were volunteering their time than 18–25 year olds. Volunteers who give time every week are over-represented among volunteers (20% compared to 15% for 18–25 year olds).

- Moreover, **Civic Service is experienced as a socially mixed experience for three quarters of volunteers.** Strikingly, it is especially among the beneficiaries of the missions that young volunteers report living this experience of social mixing (for 68% of the young people concerned).
- The responses to the post-Civic Service survey highlight the link between the quality of support and the volunteers' satisfaction with their mission. Thus, **the proportion of satisfied volunteers, among the respondents to this survey, increases sharply with the number of meetings organised with the tutor:** when they only meet their tutor once a month or less, 75% of them say they are satisfied or very satisfied with the mission. On the other hand, if they meet with their tutor every day, the proportion of satisfied and very satisfied people rises to 92%. Similarly, 97% of those who were accompanied by their reception structure in defining their future plans are satisfied, compared to 75% of those who were not accompanied in this area

In addition, **86% of the young people are satisfied with their assignment** and 94% would recommend it to their family and friends¹⁰⁰. For them, Civic Service is above all:

1. A means of acquiring professional experience
2. A time of discovery and encounters
3. An opportunity to take stock of one's life

4. The opportunity to discover a sector of activity
5. A way to feel useful

Finally, in 2019, the Agency has launched a **participatory evaluation procedure**¹⁰¹. It brought together more than 50 representatives of organizations during a day of discussion that made it possible to improve the questionnaire sent to volunteers at the end of their mission, to prefigure a self-evaluation tool and to build with the organizations the data warehouse project that will facilitate their management of the Civic Service. A working group has been set up with volunteer organizations to continue these projects.

14. CERTIFICATION

Each volunteer receives a **certificate of civic service** at the end of their civic service, which many then make use of on the job market (see item 13).

«The State delivers to the voluntary person, at the end of his or her mission, a **certificate of civic service** and a document which describes the activities carried out and assesses the aptitudes, knowledge and skills acquired during the civic service. This assessment is made in particular with reference to the terms of execution of the civic service contract ... It is done jointly with the tutor... the approved legal person and the volunteer...»¹⁰²

The law also contains other provisions aimed at enhancing the recognition of civic service in school and university programmes as a validation of acquired experience, in both academic and professional sectors¹⁰³.

Since March 2018, a **«Club de valorisation du Service Civique»** made up of several major federations and companies has been carrying out actions to mobilize companies and to identify, value and promote the skills



acquired by volunteers during a Civic Service mission, and to make commitment a learning path for young people. With this in mind, the Agency is experimenting with new tools, such as the reference framework of transversal competences proposed by the European project RECTEC. The objective is to enable volunteers to evaluate some transversal competences acquired during the mission, to be able to explain them on the basis of the activities and situations encountered and to position themselves on the map of competences. For the tutors, the objective is to provide an adapted skills assessment tool that contributes to the support offered as part of the preparation for the project of the future but also to the support of the volunteer throughout his or her mission.

Finally, since 2012, the **Institut de l'Engagement** (Institute of Commitment) enables volunteers who have revealed their potential during their Civic Service to access a future worthy of it. Every year, the Institut de l'Engagement advises nearly 3,000 young people in structuring their future projects. Among them, it supports 700 of them (the «Institute's laureates») and enables them to resume their studies, find a job or create their own business, with a success rate of 90%, year after year. It organizes Universities of Commitment for them, consisting of meetings, workshops, visits and conferences to give its laureates strength in their project and familiarize them with the major issues of the contemporary world.

15. PRE- AND POST-PARTNERS (LOGIC OF THE JOURNEY)

In terms of upstream, civic service is in a way “at the start” of the **citizenship path** provided for by the national service code (see item 7), which has made

it possible to set up a structural partnership with the country's **school** and **defence** systems. This partnership gives civic service very high visibility: more than 90% of young French people know it¹⁰⁴. These are the best possible vectors for recruitment, resulting in approximately 3.5 candidates per mission offer¹⁰⁵.

Downstream, it is the role of the **Civic Service Agency's chairman** to seek ways to extend this logic beyond civic service and to interweave it with the world of training and the job market. This «bridgehead» role, placing civic service on the agenda and forging these structural partnerships with ministries, administrations, federations and grandes écoles, is essential for the development and success of the programme.

Through this work, civic service is today increasingly recognized. Certain of these partnerships, in particular the **projects in the public services**, have grown considerably in recent years. Others seem more promising, such as **major thematic actions** defined in concert with other ministries and dealing with themes such as domestic violence, loneliness of the elderly, etc., or **initiatives with grandes écoles** so that civic service becomes a stage of the curriculum, an «experience year» between the 2nd and 3rd years¹⁰⁶...

The vision is to **decompartmentalize** the overly restrictive training and socio-professional integration sectors of yesteryear and to invest in a positive dynamic for young people, giving them the opportunity to construct their own paths, with civic service as a step for acquiring social skills, developing networks and (re-)defining personal life and career paths¹⁰⁷.

16. COMMUNICATION

The Agency has a four-person communication team, plus five persons responsible for information systems. The strategy is established in concert with a public affairs firm (first Publicis, now Agence Insign) and developed with a rich and evolving media plan. The strategy has three main objectives:

1. **Building an image**
2. **Recruiting young people**
3. **Supporting the strategy of expanding the mission offering**

The strategy of expanding the mission offering is defined by the development and engineering unit (8 persons) and implemented by this unit for national partnerships and by reference persons throughout France (200 agents) at local level. The reference persons are coordinated by the Control and Territorial Operations unit made up of 5 agents.

Some elements of this plan¹⁰⁸:

- **Website:** Initially this was no more than a supply/demand interface. Today it offers much richer content. To attract young people, the main tool is the Google keyword purchase system (SEA) which allows re-targeting by banner etc. This system takes up 30% of the budget and is responsible for 60% of responses to mission offers.
- **Social media:** Social media management is now centralized and professionalized. A specific strategy exists for each network (Facebook, Twitter and Instagram). The publications are varied with the aim of engaging and converting:

video testimonials, inspiring quotes, highlighting areas for action, live educational Instagram stories and competitions¹⁰⁹.

- **TV spots:** While the visibility of civic service is high among young people, it is less so in the voluntary association sector and even less among the general public. Hence the need to work on this point to increase knowledge/recognition of civic service. This is reflected in particular by TV spots (“Faites le saut!» [Jump!] and “le pouvoir d'être utile” [The power to be useful!] campaigns).
- **July 14 parade:** Another important media operation is the participation of young people in the 14 July parade. Each participant is then featured in the press.
- **Other:** bimonthly newsletter, special flashes, partnerships with radios, special events, actions on the site, postering etc.

In terms of information systems, the site consists of the following elements:

1. The general access **portal**
2. A “**connected space**” for young people and host organisations, consisting of two software programmes made to measure by external service providers and linked in real time:
 - a. «Oscar», for approvals
 - b. «Elisa», for following up the young people
3. An “**admin area**” for the Agency (“Back office”)

The big challenge today is not to attract more people but to manage the **large volume of traffic** and ensure the **quality** of all mission offers.

17. NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS

The number of volunteers can be calculated either as the number of contracts signed in the year («flow») or as the total number of young people on mission in the year, including those who started it the previous year («stock»).

As mentioned in item 2, this **significant increase** in the number of young people after 2015 was desired

and prompted by the government, which allocated the financial means to reach 110,000 volunteers in 2016 (goal achieved 84%). For this, it has relied on the network of voluntary associations, but also on major ministerial programmes¹¹¹. In total, in ten years (2010-2019), nearly **435,000 young** people have engaged to date¹¹². The trend is not about to be reversed since, on 14 July 2020, President Macron announced the opening of 100,000 additional Civic Service assignments in 2020-2021.

NUMBER OF VOLUNTEERS IN CIVIC SERVICE ¹¹⁰										
	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Number of contracts signed during the year	6 008	13 403	19 481	19 945	21 925	38 139	63 010	79 080	89 928	81 062
Young persons still on mission on 1 January of the year		5 730	10 402	13 778	12 912	14 202	28 727	44 093	56 361	59 018
Volunteers on mission during the year (stock)	6 008	19 133	29 883	33 723	34 837	52 341	91 737	123 173	140 289	140 080

PROFILE OF THE YOUNG PEOPLE IN CIVIC SERVICE (2019)¹¹³

21 years	AVERAGE AGE
	BREAKDOWN BY GENDER
61 %	Women
39 %	Men
	EDUCATION LEVEL OF VOLUNTEERS ON ENTERING CIVIC SERVICE¹¹⁴ :
33 %	BAC +
43 %	BAC
24 %	CAP/BEP and without diploma
	EMPLOYMENT STATUS OF VOLUNTEERS ON ENTERING CIVIC SERVICE :
40 %	Job seeker
32 %	Student
24 %	Inactive
4 %	Employee
13 %	COMING FROM PRIORITY NEIGHBOURHOODS
2 %	INTERNATIONAL ASSIGNMENTS
1.5 %	YOUNG PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES
23 %	CONTRACTS TERMINATED EARLY:
40 %	Hired or resuming studies
31 %	Common agreement (to be clarified in 2020)
20 %	Drop-out

18. LEGAL FRAMEWORK

The fundamental specificity of the legal framework for civic service is that it falls under the **national service code** and not the labour code. This contains the provisions relating to the “citizenship trajectory”, civic service (law of 2010), other forms of volunteering as well as other forms of national service: military service, service in the national police, civil security service, technical aid service and cooperation service, etc. Civic service is the most developed form of national service.

a. Status

The status of volunteers in civic service defined in the National Service Code is formulated as follows:

«The civic service contract, concluded in writing, organises a collaboration **without any link of subordination** between one of the organisations or the approved legal persons mentioned... and the volunteer.»¹¹⁵

This means that the volunteer is neither an employee, nor a non-contractual volunteer (‘bénévole’) nor a public official. He or she is tied to the host organisation, not by a link of subordination but a **link of collaboration**¹¹⁶.

In addition, **cumulation with another activity** is possible. The volunteer can undertake his or her civic service mission while being an employee or a student, subject to being able to combine the different timetables. The volunteer cannot be an employee of the host organisation.

Payment of any unemployment benefits is suspended for the duration of the civic service mission and resumed at the end of the mission. Civic service does not create entitlement to unemployment benefits.¹¹⁷

b. Social security and insurance

In addition to the volunteer allowance, **the State covers the entire cost of the volunteer’s social protection** for the various risks: **illness, maternity, accident at work, occupational disease, family, old age**¹¹⁸. In addition, the entire period of service is validated for the purpose of retirement rights. Finally, for organisations sending volunteers abroad, the State pays an additional allocation of € 108.28 under the heading of social protection. This is because it is up to organisations to finance social protection for missions outside of France.

19. INSTITUTIONAL ARCHITECTURE

a. Central Agency

The 2010 law created a “**Civic Service Agency**” (Agence pour le service civique) to coordinate the programme. Its missions are:

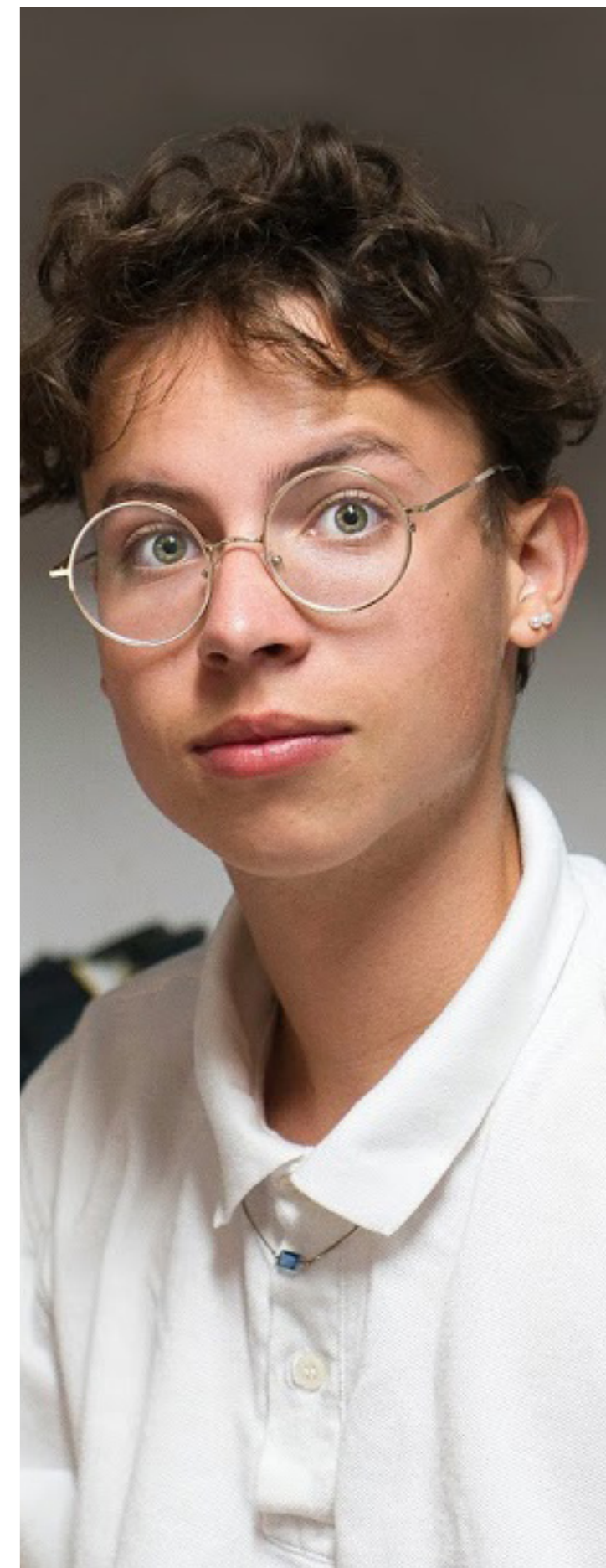
1. To define the **strategic orientations** and the priority missions of the civic service mentioned in article L. 120-1;
2. To **manage the approvals and the financial support** provided by the State for hosting civic service volunteers;
3. To **promote and enhance the standing** of civic service, particularly among the publics concerned, youth hosting and guidance organisations, educational establishments and professional branches;
4. To **ensure equal access** for citizens to civic service;
5. To **encourage contact** between persons interested in civic service and approved legal persons offering civic service contracts;

6. To **monitor and assess** the implementation of civic service;
7. To set up and monitor conditions to ensure the **social mixing** of civic service beneficiaries;
8. To **coordinate the network of present** and of former civic service volunteers;
9. To **define the content** of civic and citizen **training** ...¹¹⁹
10. Concretely, the Agency:

- has the legal form of a **public interest grouping (GIP)**¹²⁰
- is mandated for an **unlimited period**
- has **legal personality and financial autonomy**
- gives rise neither to the realization nor to the sharing of profits
- is administered by a **board of directors** composed of representatives of its constituent members as well as qualified personalities
- may recruit, by decision of its board of directors, **contractual public law agents**
- has around 85 FTEs, of whom the majority are assigned to the Erasmus+ programme. Civic service proper involves approximately **35 FTEs**

The Agency’s board of directors is assisted by a **strategic committee** of civic service partners: representatives of local authorities, ministries and above all host organisations (around fifty) and volunteers (around ten), as well as two deputies and two senators. This strategic committee proposes the orientations submitted to the board of directors and discusses any question relating to the development of civic service. It acts as a kind of «think-tank».

For the exercise of its activity, the Agency relies on a **network of government representatives in the regions and departments** as well as on the network of foreign correspondents of the France Volontaires association. This “decentralized” management



involves **12 regional directors**. These are the Agency's privileged interlocutors and serve as a "transmission belt" with around **200 (FTE) reference persons**, that is, say public officials in the decentralized government departments assigned to the management of civic service. In this way the regional directors and reference persons do not depend directly on the Agency's budget but work for it. The Agency's national/central unit manages around 60% of the positions, the local outlets the remaining 40%¹²¹.

Payments are made by an external structure: **ASP (Agence de services et de paiement)**. This is shared («mutualisée») accounting agency based in Limoges

which has its own IT system and manages all the administrative and accounting aspects of civic service. The Court of Auditors (Cours de Comptes) judges the agency's structure to be «agile» and «efficient»¹²².

b. Main operators

The Agency has more than 10,500 approved host organisations, which are theoretically all on an equal footing. However, their participation is very different: some of them care for thousands of young people, others only one or two. Below is the "Top 10" ranking of the most active organisations¹²³:

NAME OF THE STRUCTURE	Approved posts in 2018	Contracts validated in 2017 (by 3.4.18)
Ministère de l'éducation nationale	19 900	13 153
Unis Cité	4 300	4 260
Pôle Emploi	3 783	3 871
La ligue de l'enseignement	4 009	3 659
Union nationale des missions locales et PAIO	2 707	2 467
Ministère de l'Intérieur	2 130	1 276
Fédération Française de Handball	1 020	848
Association de la Fondation Étudiante pour la ville	910	797
Ministère des Finances et des Comptes Publics	550	575
Fédération Française de Basket ball	600	567

20. ALLOWANCES

a. For the participants

The volunteer receives, depending on his or her situation, **between € 580 and € 688 a month**, broken down as follows¹²⁴:

- **€ 473.04** allowance paid directly by the State
- **€ 107.58** paid by the host organisation - in kind (restaurant tickets, transport ticket , etc.) or in cash
- **€ 107.68** bursary in certain cases - condition: to be in receipt of RSA (revenu de solidarité actif - a type of unemployment benefit), living with one's parents on RSA or having a higher education bursary. (8 % of young people benefit from the increase in the allowance on social criteria.¹²⁵)

The civic service allowance is the same for volunteers who carry out their mission abroad as for those who carry out their mission in France. However, some host organisations abroad may offer additional benefits (payment of accommodation, slight increase in the allowance, etc.).

b. For the host organisations

If the host organisations are required to participate, to a limited extent, in the allowances paid to the volunteers, the State, on the other hand, pays them:

- € 100 per volunteer for civic and citizen training
- € 60 per volunteer for first aid training
- € 100 per month per volunteer for tutoring (except for public law organisations)

Thus, from a purely pecuniary point of view, taking a young person into service is a roughly neutral operation for the host organisation.

21. FINANCING

a. Total budget

Agency's budgets for the past years correspond to the following amounts¹²⁶:

BUDGET ASC	
2015	210 million euros
2016	300 million euros
2017	360 million euros
2018	521 million euros
2019	539 million euros ¹²⁷

This represents spectacular growth, and one of the only public budgets to be increased. **98% of these expenses consist of the allowances of civic service volunteers and host organisations as well as social charges**¹²⁸. To this must be added the contribution of the host organisations to the allowances and salaries of the 200 State representatives in the regions and departments.

b. Financial backers

Almost the entire budget is paid by the State (and the EU Commission for international exchanges). In 2019, the other members of the public interest grouping contributed 3.7% of the budget¹²⁹.

NOTES :

48. Law no. 97 1019 on the reform of national service
49. Association Unis-Cité, Rapport d'activité 2019
50. Loi n° 2010-241 du 10 mars 2010 relative au service civique. This law was revised and extended in 2017 by the Loi n° 2017-86 du 27 janvier 2017 relative à l'Égalité et à la Citoyenneté.
51. Loi n° 2010-241, Art.L. 120-1.- du code du service national
52. Agence du service civique, Référentiel de missions 2016, p. 35
53. See interview with Ludovic Abiven, director general of the Agence service civique, 4 October 2017 in Paris
54. Loi n° 2010-241, Art.L. 120-1.-II du code du service national
55. Loi n° 2010-241, Art.L. 120-4 du code du service national
56. Loi n° 2010-241, Art.L. 120-4 du code du service national
57. Loi n° 2010-241, Art.L. 120-1.-I du code du service national
58. Agence du Service Civique, Rapport d'activités 2019, p. 8
59. Loi n° 2010-241, Art.L. 120-1.-I du code du service national
60. Cf. Visit to the Agence du service civique in Paris on 4 October 2017
61. Cf. Visit to the Agence du service civique in Paris on 4 October 2017
62. Agence du service civique, Référentiel de missions 2016, pp.9-12
63. Cf. Loi n° 2010-241, Art.L. 120-1
64. Loi n° 2010-241, Art.L. 120-9
65. Agence du Service Civique, Rapport d'activités 2019, p. 8
66. In the Departmental Directorate for Social Cohesion (DDCS) or in the Regional Directorate for Youth, Sport and Social Cohesion (DRJSCS)
67. Agence du service civique, Rapport d'activités 2016, p. 38
68. Agence du Service Civique, Rapport annuel 2019, p. 44
69. Par ex. : Le Service civique, un substitut à l'emploi ?, 28 décembre 2017 ; Le service civique, « choix contraint » de jeunes diplômés, Le Monde, 27 juillet 2013, Service civique et emplois déguisés, Le Figaro, 1er décembre 2011.
70. Institut national de la jeunesse et de l'éducation populaire (Injep), Le Service Civique au défi de son expansion, Injep analyses et synthèses, Statistique publique, n° 7, Novembre 2017
71. Jean-François Serres et Julien Blanchet, Service civique, quel bilan ? quelles perspectives ?, Les études du conseil économique, social et environnemental, mai 2017
72. Le service civique, un substitut à l'emploi?, Le Monde, 28 décembre 2017
73. Agence du Service Civique, Rapport annuel 2019, pp. 52-53
74. Loi n° 2010-241, Art.L. 120-1.-II du code du service national
75. Institut national de la jeunesse et de l'éducation populaire (Injep), Le Service Civique au défi de son expansion, Injep analyses et synthèses, Statistique publique, n° 7, November 2017, p. 1-2
76. Loi n° 2010-241, Art.L. 120-9 du code du service national
77. Visit to the Agence du service civique, 4 October 2017
78. Loi n° 2010-241, Art.L. 120-15 du code du service national
79. Loi n° 2010-241, Art.L. 111-2 du code du service national
80. Loi n° 2010-241, Art.L. 120-16
81. Agence du service civique, Rapport d'activités 2016, p. 4
82. Agence du service civique, Rapport d'activités 2016, p. 52
83. Jean-François Serres et Julien Blanchet, Service civique, quel bilan ? quelles perspectives ?, Les études du conseil économique, social et environnemental, mai 2017
84. Visit to the Agence du service civique, 4 October 2017
85. Agence du Service Civique, Rapport d'activités 2019, p. 49
86. Visit to the Agence du service civique, 4 October 2017
87. Interview with Mr Etienne Maier, National Director of the Association Unis-Cité, in charge of the project and of development, Paris, 3 October 2017
88. Loi n° 2010-241, Art.L. 120-14
89. <https://www.service-civique.gouv.fr/uploads/content/files/cabaa0f7faldf5cc7349149ab44feb7e581f0371.pdf>
90. Agence du service civique, Rapport d'activités 2019, p. 50
91. These two training courses are specifically funded by the ASC (see item 20).
92. Visit to the Agence du service civique, 4 October 2017
93. Agence du service civique, Note relative au décret n° 2012-310 du 6 mars 2012 relatif à l'aide versée aux organismes d'accueil de jeunes en service civique pour l'organisation de la formation civique et citoyenne
94. Agence du service civique, Référentiel des thèmes de la formation civique et citoyenne, Oct. 2014
95. Agence du service civique, Fiche Pratique : Formation Civique et Citoyenne – volet théorique, septembre 2015
96. Agence du Service Civique, Rapport d'activités 2019, p. 26
97. Agence du Service Civique, Rapport d'activités 2019, p. 9 et 23
98. Ifop pour l'ASC, Baromètre Connaissance, représentations et potentiel d'attractivité du Service Civique – Grands enseignements – Synthèse Globale, juin 2019
99. Agence du service civique, Rapport d'activités 2019, p. 35
100. Agence du service civique, Rapport d'activités 2019, p. 9
101. Agence du service civique, Rapport d'activités 2019, p. 35
102. Loi n° 2010-241, Art.L. 120-1.-III du code du service national
103. Loi n° 2010-241, Art.L. 120-1.-III du code du service national
104. Agence du service civique, Rapport d'activités 2016, p. 4
105. Agence du service civique, Rapport d'activités 2016, p. 52
106. Statement by Yannick Blanc, Chairman of the Civic Service Agency, Paris, 4 October 2017
107. Statement by Yannick Blanc, Chairman of the Civic Service Agency, Paris, 4 October 2017
108. Visit to the Agence du service civique, 4 October 2017
109. Agence du service civique, Rapport d'activités 2019, p. 32
110. Agence du service civique, Rapport d'activités 2019, p. 20
111. Agence du service civique, Rapport d'activités 2016, p. 39
112. Agence du service civique, Rapport d'activités 2019, p. 8
113. Agence du service civique, Rapport d'activités 2019, p. 9
114. For comparison, the education levels in the general population of young people are as follows: BAC +: 42%; BAC: 28% ; CAP/BEP : 14%; Without diploma: 16%. 2015 figures received during the visit to the Civic Service Agency, 4 October 2017
115. Loi n° 2010-241, Art.L. 120-7
116. Agence du service civique, Référentiel de missions 2016, p. 11 – article L. 120-7 du code du service national
117. Visit to the Agence du service civique, 4 October 2017
118. Loi n° 2010-241, Art.L. 120-25 du code du service national
119. Loi n° 2010-241, Art.L. 120-2 du code du service national
120. This GIP consists of the State, the National Agency for Social Cohesion and Equal Opportunities, the National Institute for Youth and Popular Education and the France Volontaires association. Other legal persons may, under conditions laid down in the founding agreement, become constituent members of the grouping.
121. Visit to the Agence du service civique, 4 October 2017
122. Visit to the Agence du service civique, 4 October 2017
123. Visit to the Agence du service civique, 4 October 2017
124. Visit to the Agence du service civique, 4 October 2017 Cf. Loi n° 2010-241, Art.L. 120-11
125. Agence du service civique, Rapport d'activités 2019, p. 9
126. Visit to the Agence du service civique, 4 October 2017
127. Agence du service civique, Rapport d'activités 2019, p. 62
128. Agence du service civique, Rapport d'activités 2019, p. 60
129. Agence du service civique, Rapport d'activités 2019, p. 56

III. / ITALY

1. NAME

Italy's national Citizen Service programme goes under the name of **Servizio Civile Universale (SCU)**.

2. HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The Servizio Civile Universale dates back to the engagement of **conscientious objectors** in the days of compulsory male military service.

The first actions in this direction date back to the 1960s, leading in **1972** to the **first official recognition of the right to conscientious objection**¹³⁰ and of civic service as an alternative to compulsory military service. However, the organisation of SC remained informal and depended on a tribunal, which never functioned. In addition, SC lasted 18 months while military service lasted 12. It was only gradually, in the course of the judgments by the constitutional court, that the legal contours of SC were clarified and relaxed.



An important step in the institutionalization of SC was the constitutional court judgment of 1989 which made the **duration of SC equivalent to that of military service**¹³¹. This judgment led to a significant increase in the demand to take part in SC by civil society, universities, municipalities and healthcare institutions. In 1998, the year of the federalisation of the Italian State, law 230¹³² went further, establishing an **administration independent** of the Ministry of Defence to manage SC: the Ufficio per il servizio civile nazionale, which in 2012 was integrated into the Dipartimento della Gioventù e del Servizio Civile Nazionale (which later became the Dipartimento per le Politiche Giovanili e il Servizio Civile Universale, i.e. the

Department of Youth and Universal Civilian Service – referred to below as the Dipartimento).

The effective birth of the Servizio Civile as an independent and voluntary programme took place in two stages. First in **2001** with the law¹³³ creating the **Servizio civile nazionale**. SC operated for four years alongside compulsory military service with both conscientious objectors (men) and volunteers (mainly women). Then in **2006**, following the abolition of compulsory military service, voluntary Servizio civile for all¹³⁴ was instituted with great pomp by President of the Republic Giorgio Napolitano.

In 2008 the financial crisis meant significant budget cuts for SC but since 2013 the budget has increased and the project enjoys great popular and political support across political dividing lines. Following this success, an important reform has been in the works since 2014 aimed at instituting a more inclusive, ambitious and unified programme: the Servizio civile Universale.

In **2017**, the law on **Servizio civile universale**¹³⁵ was passed, which provides for a more important planning and programming role for the central government. The main lines of this reform are:

- Three-year plans consistent with government policy established at central level (in consultation with the regions)
- A centralised database managed by the Dipartimento (the «Albo»)
- The enrolment of all young people who apply (the number of applications is then three times higher than the number of places available – see point 17)
- The inclusion of more disaffiliated young people and foreigners (with residence permits)
- More flexibility in the duration and intensity of the programme
- A tutorship system aimed at socio-professional integration

- SCU certification in order to valorize it for studies and on the labour market
- A programme of quarterly stays abroad

Since then, a corrective decree¹³⁶ has been issued and specific provisions have been implemented to bring the reform to a successful conclusion. In November 2019, the first centralised three-year plan was passed, which definitively establishes the transition from the Servizio Civile Nazionale to the Servizio Civile Universale.

3. OBJECTIVES

The first objective of the Italian SC, both in the 2001 law (which establishes the Servizio Civile Nazionale) and in the 2017 reform (which sets out the main lines of the reform of the Servizio Civile Universale), is to contribute to:

«Defence of the Fatherland through non-military activities / unarmed defence of the Fatherland.»¹³⁷

This wording refers to Article 52 of the Italian constitution which stipulates that «the defence of the Fatherland is the sacred duty of the citizen». **SC is therefore based on an interpretation of this constitutional principle.** This stems from the history of SC as an alternative to compulsory military service and it is for this reason that SC is legally anchored in the central state rather than in the regions. On the basis of this constitutional foundation, the SC law lists a series of objectives for SC, namely:

«promoting **solidarity** and cooperation, at national and international level, particularly with regard to the **protection of social rights, personal services and education for peace between peoples.**»



“participating in the **safeguarding and the protection of the heritage** of the Nation, in particular in the **environmental** sector, thus under the aspects of **agriculture in mountain areas, forestry, historical-artistic** and **cultural** and **civil protection** activities,

“contributing to the **civic, social, cultural and professional training of young people**, also through activities carried out in voluntary associations and [public] administrations abroad.»¹³⁸

We see that SC is envisaged from the outset from a double perspective:

- as a means of reaching those population groups which have most need of it, contributing to social, cultural, environmental and economic well-being **for society**
- as a formative and civic path for **young people**.

As regards young people, their specific objectives are as follows¹³⁹:

- A first step into the job market
- Professional development
- Personal development
- Taking responsibility
- Coming to grips with new cultures
- Sharing life experiences
- A way to promote peace and integration
- A way to protect the weakest
- An act of love and solidarity

4. TARGET PUBLIC (ADMISSION CRITERIA)

a. Age

The 2002 decree defines the age of volunteers, who must be **between 18 and 28 years** including at the time of applying¹⁴⁰. There are no exceptions.

b. Nationality

Although, according to the provisions of the 2002 decree, only Italian citizens can participate, a 2014 Constitutional Court judgment **opened the programme to foreigners of any nationality (provided they have valid residence permits)** and that is now the norm. The SCU reform confirms this provision.

c. Language

Nowhere is it specified that volunteers must have a command of Italian, but they are interviewed in Italian and in the field it is of course very often an essential prerequisite. De facto, a **sufficient command of Italian** is necessary.

d. Other

There are a few other limitations:

- Excluded from SC from the outset is anyone who has been **sentenced** to a term of imprisonment of more than one year for a civil law offence as well as anyone who has been sentenced to a lower term of imprisonment for an offence against the person or relating to trafficking or the use of weapons or explosives, as well as for an offence linked to membership of extremist, terrorist or organised crime groups. Each volunteer must provide an **sworn statement** on this¹⁴¹.

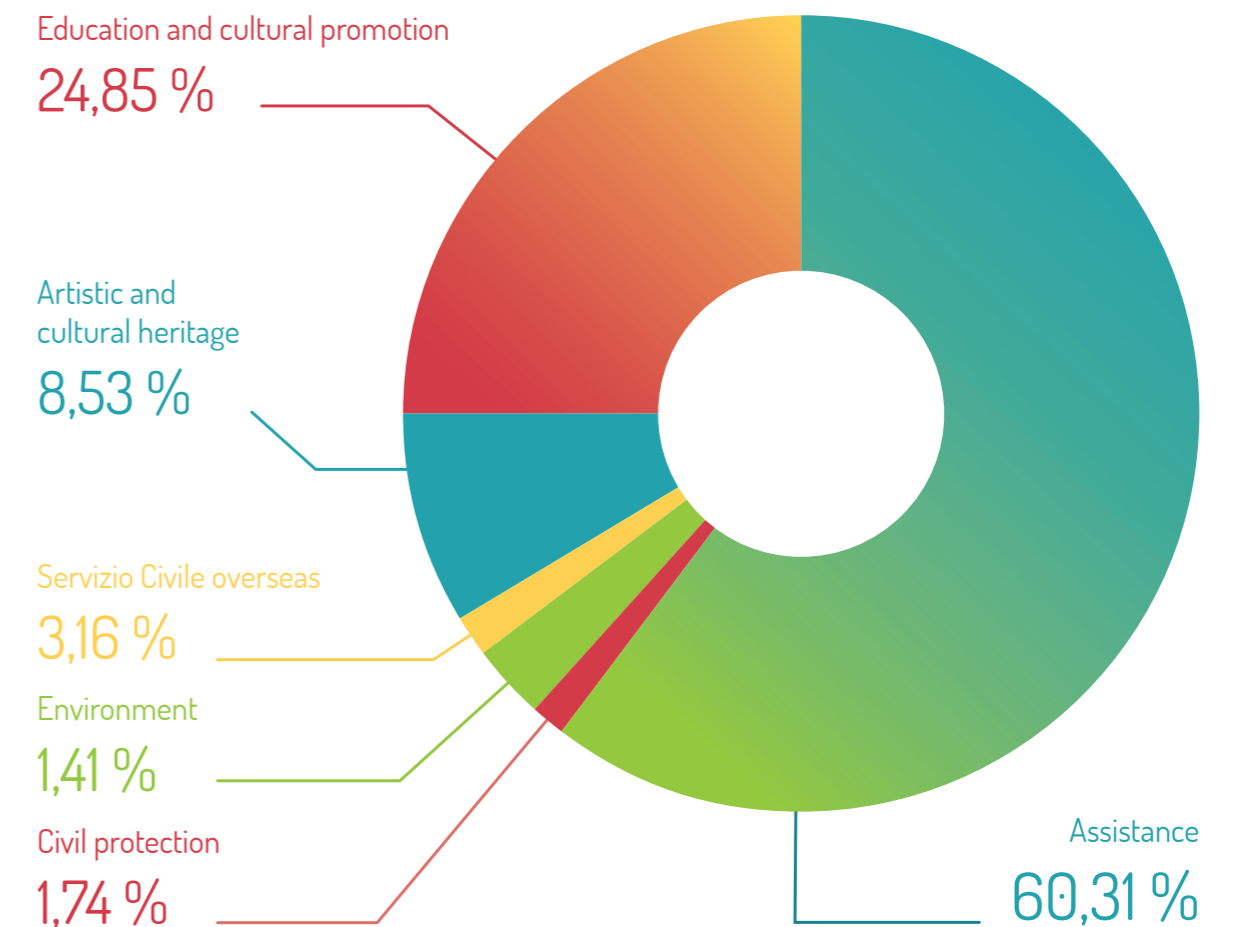
5. HOST ORGANISATIONS

a. Area(s) of activity

Organizations participating in SC can operate in a wide range of areas, from people care to environmental protection and humanitarian assistance. (Cf. item 3: Objectives.) The SCU reform added a number of supplementary sectors, such as «cultural, landscape, environmental, sport, social & sustainable tourism education and promotion» as well as «mountain agriculture, social agriculture and biodiversity»¹⁴⁵.

In 2017, the volunteers were dispatched as follows¹⁴⁶:

- Also excluded are members of the **military** and the **police**¹⁴².
- Certain «dangerous, tiring or unhealthy» tasks may not be performed by women¹⁴³.
- Some missions also call for physical abilities and certain specific skills¹⁴⁴.



As the Italian system is supply-based and demand is so strong that it fills almost all available positions anyway, it is difficult to determine exactly where demand is strongest. The most striking gap is in the area of «assistance» (services to people). Demand is relatively low in this sector, while more than half of the positions are open. This is perhaps not unrelated to the higher drop-out rate¹⁴⁷.

For missions abroad, there are other areas of intervention, namely international cooperation, humanitarian aid, peacekeeping, assistance to Italians abroad, post-conflict reconstruction or post-natural disaster, combating poverty and cultural integration. For further details, see item 12.

b. Types of host organisations (non-profit organisations / public / private)

The 2001 law defines the type of organisations that can participate in SC as follows:

“Organizations... wanting to present projects within the framework of voluntary SC must meet the following prerequisites:

- **Not for profit;**
- **Organizational capacity** and activities related to the voluntary SC;
- Correspondence between its own **institutional purposes** and the aims [of SC];
- **At least three years'** continuous activity.»¹⁴⁸

In other words, private undertakings are not excluded a priori. The non-profit-making provision, however, excludes them in practice. The only exceptions to this rule are «**social cooperatives for people with fewer opportunities**».

By “organisational capacity”, the Dipartimento means, in addition to the existence of the necessary infrastructure, the presence within the organisation of:

- **An “SCU manager”** capable of drafting projects (and, for the main operators, of producing an annual report)
- **One or more “selectors”**. The selectors are the people responsible for interviewing and selecting candidates.
- **One or more “local project operator(s)” (OLP)**. The OLPs correspond to the mentors in the other programmes. As such they play a key role; they are the ones who supervise and accompany the volunteers within their host organisations (see item 9).
- **One or more trainer(s)** to provide the mandatory training sessions. The trainers can be the OLPs(s) or other team members.
- For organisations planning to hire more than 30 people per province, a **local manager** is also needed
- One «monitoring» manager, whose role, drafted in the SCU reform, will be precised in the months to come

These main lines are intended to guarantee the quality of the SC.

c. Types of assignment

The missions must meet the prerequisites set out in the previous item (5b) and in particular the third which stipulates that their **objectives must correspond to those of the general programme** (solidarity, cooperation, training, etc.). In this context, the missions can be of **very different types**, ranging from manual to social to intellectual.

However, particular attention is paid to ensuring that **no mission replaces an existing paid job**. On the contrary, the engagement of SC volunteers must be supported by the employees of the host organisation. There can be inspection missions in the field to verify this (see next item).

d. Approval and control

The SCU reform has centralised and modernised the approval and control process of SC projects. Today, the State establishes the objectives in a more top-down manner. All the organisations had to be re-approved.

The main stages of the process are:

1. Accreditation: operators and host organisations have to register at national level, in a centralized register managed by the Dipartimento: the «Albo»¹⁴⁹.

2. Call for projects (one per year): The Dipartimento then launches an annual call for projects. The organisations introduce their project(s). All must specify in detail: location, field of activity, number of volunteers desired, activities, additional prerequisites, general and specific training content.

3. Selection of projects and allocation of resources. Unfortunately, for budgetary reasons, not all eligible projects can be funded and many receive negative responses. One of the objectives of the SNU reform is to be able to finance all eligible projects.

When it comes to **control**, there exists a inspection service, conducting «desk» and «on-site» verifications. However, its capacities are limited and there is a margin of improvement. In 2017, it carried out 334 inspection visits (312 programmed and 22 on indication)¹⁵⁰.

When it comes to **administrative sanctions**, the 2001 law still applies. This law reminds firstly that

«host organisations are required to cooperate in the effective management of SC and in the correct implementation of projects...»¹⁵¹. Those who violate these commitments, in particular with regard to the selection procedure or volunteers' terms of service, are subject to the following sanctions:

- «A written warning, consisting of a formal request to comply [with regulations];
- «Revocation of the accreditation of the project, with a ban on continuing activities;
- «A temporary ban on presenting other civilian service projects for one year;
- «Deletion from the register of SC host organisations.»¹⁵²

Out of the 334 inspections in 2017, 21 resulted in administrative sanctions, 16 of which were multiple. 7 host organisations received a warning, 11 had their project revoked, 5 were banned from accreditation for one year and 2 were permanently removed from the register¹⁵³.

6. DURATION AND INTENSITY

a. Duration (number of months)

While the SC duration was uniformly 12 months in the SCN, the SCU reform has made it more flexible and it is now **8 to 12 months**.

b. Intensity (hours/week)

The rule is full-time involvement. Under the SCN regime, it was 30h / week, under the SCU it is now **25h / week**.

7. MANDATORY OR VOLUNTARY

a. Degree of mandatoriness:

The law is very clear regarding the issue of the obligation: “SCs carried out **exclusively on a voluntary basis**.”¹⁵⁴ Nevertheless, debate about a compulsory SC resurfaces from time to time¹⁵⁵.

b. Sanctions

The volunteers selected by the host organisations and whose names have therefore been communicated to the Dipartimento receive from the latter a **contract** detailing the date of entry into service, the “economic and legal treatment” (allowances and status) as well as the «Standards of Behaviour» and possible sanctions¹⁵⁶. The latter are rare. In 2016, with 35,532 volunteers, 38 disciplinary procedures were brought. 14 procedures were dismissed, 8 led to a reduction in benefits (min. 1 day - max. 10 days), 14 led to exclusion from the SC, 2 were considered too general and were not taken further¹⁵⁷.

8. SOCIAL MIXING AND INCLUSION

a. Recruitment (positive/negative discrimination?)

Today there are **more than two times more applicants than places available** (see item 17).

The SC selection procedure is focused on human qualities, motivation, skills, etc. It is **quite competitive**. Consequently, the profiles selected are often quite strong and can deliver contributions that are put to good use by their host organisations. The other side of the coin is that the current system is not very inclusive

for profiles with lower social, cultural and economic capital, even if efforts are being made in this direction, with more places available today for young people with fewer opportunities. This all depends on the number of places offered annually.

The recruitment procedure is as follows:

1. Annual call for volunteers. This call is launched following the selection of projects by the Dipartimento or by the regions (see item 5d).

2. Candidates apply to organisations, meeting common deadlines. Since 2019, these applications are submitted online, through the means of the centralised platform of the SCU.

3. Organisations select applicants after interviews assessing their knowledge of the project, their motivation, their language skills (for projects abroad), etc.

4. The Dipartimento sends each young person a contract with the State, establishing their rights and duties (see item 7b), which the latter are required to sign and return.

There exists, however, one major programme focused on including a greater number of more disaffiliated young people in the SC system. This is the one funded by the European Commission’s **Youth Guarantee**, in the framework of «National Operational Programme – Youth Employment Initiative» of the European Social Fund¹⁵⁸. In this context, 13,759 SC places are reserved exclusively for NEETS (“Not in Education, Employment, or Training”) for the 2014-2019 period¹⁵⁹. In this case, we can speak of positive discrimination. The recruitment/selection procedures are left to the organisations but the young people must produce documents from the employment assistance service proving their situation. This system is being refined

and has a specific centralized database. The Youth Guarantee programme will be renewed in 2020.

Another initiative worth mentioning is that of the Ministry of the Interior: a pilot project for 200 young migrants funded through the **Fondo Asilo, Migrazione e Integrazione (FAMI 2014-2020)**. The project carried out by the Dipartimento is a peer-to-peer initiative that aims at the integration of young holders of international protection in the Italian socio-economic context through the Servizio Civile. The evaluation of this project is ongoing.

b. Collective dimension

Although it is not developed in the law of 2001, nor in the implementing decree of 2002 and hardly in the «Guidelines for the general training of young people in SCN»¹⁶⁰, a certain amount of attention is paid to the collective aspect in Servizio Civile. The main measure in this direction is the requirement of a **minimum of 4 volunteers per project**. And there can be many more. These volunteers may have different training, but the fact that they are together in the field on a daily basis adds a lot to their experience in terms of social mixing, maturation, impact and living together. However the importance of the collective dimension depends very much on the size of the project and, where demand is high, there are **few resources** for moving forward in this area¹⁶¹.

9. PERSONAL ACCOMPANIMENT

The vision of the SC is to allow young people to «oppose a sense of **self-esteem** to a sense of inadequacy»¹⁶². Unlike the intense competition that young people face on the job market, SC wants to offer «an assertive environment which strengthens young people’s skills and allows them to improve their decision-making

abilities»¹⁶³. This takes place through accompaniment by “a network of actors and a learning structure combining bottom-up and traditional approaches”¹⁶⁴.

a. Mentoring (and if so what training?)

The central figure in this support system is the person in charge of the volunteer within his or her host organisation, whom in other countries we call the mentor and who in Italy is called the **Local Project Operator (OLP)**. The OLP is described in the accreditation circular as “the master of the volunteers as well as the coordinator and person responsible, in the broad sense, for the project; he or she plays a central role of great strategic importance within the framework of the SC”¹⁶⁵, takes care of a maximum of 4 (people care) to 6 (environment and culture) volunteers. **On average, there are 3.8 volunteers per OLP**¹⁶⁶. For SCs abroad, the OLP is the volunteer’s referent in its sending organisation in Italy and there is yet another referent in the country of destination.

These OLPs must, a priori, all have previous experience with SC. If not, they must undergo training. This training is given either by the Dipartimento itself, or by «class I organisations»¹⁶⁷, that is to say the main SCN operators, recognized specifically by the Dipartimento for this task or, in the case of the SCRs, by the regions. The training is based on a “**didactic kit**” which details the quality standards of the OLP role as well as modules on “SC as a means and instrument for the unarmed defence of the homeland, the basic elements of interpersonal communication and non-violent conflict management”. This training is intended to awaken OLPs to their roles as teachers/educators of volunteers. These training courses are constantly monitored by the Dipartimento in order to improve their quality and suitability to needs in the field. In 2016, 758 OLPs received training¹⁶⁸.

The reform of the SCU has institutionalised an additional coach, alongside the PLO: the **tutor** – which corresponds approximately to the «promotion officer» in the Belgian model or the «referent» in the Luxembourg model. This tutor accompanies the volunteer throughout his or her journey, paying particular attention to educational and professional integration issues.

b. Other (educators, individual psychosocial assistance)

In addition to the OLP(s), host organisations must provide **several other roles: selectors, trainers, etc.** (see item 5b). However, it is the OLP who carries the greatest workload in the field.

10. TRAINING (FOR THE YOUNG PEOPLE)

In addition to educational support, SC volunteers also receive a certain number of more traditional mandatory training courses to prepare them for SC. Understood as «an important contribution to the formation of the country's human capital»¹⁶⁹, the objective of these courses is to «make young people aware of the meaning of the choice and experience of SC with a view to active participation in the life of society»¹⁷⁰.

a. How many days?

The training has a **total duration of at least 80 hours** and consists of a general SC training phase and a specific training phase in the host or destination organisation.

The **general training**¹⁷¹ phase involves participation in preparation courses which constitute a period of

civic training and civil protection and lasts **at least 30 hours**.

The **specific training**, of **at least 50 hours**, is established according to the duration and the type of mission and must be carried out at the start of it¹⁷².

Thus, if we count 6h days (6 x 5 = 30h/week), volunteers receive **at least 13 days of training** during their 12 months of service, given by specialised trainers.

However, many organisations provide much more training. Thus, for example, at ASC, there are 42 hours of general training and a minimum of 70 hours of specific training. Taking the averages of training sessions actually provided in 2016¹⁷³, we arrive at a higher result:

- 1,408,344 hours of general training provided in total for 30,176 volunteers (33,532-3,356 drop-outs pre-SC), giving an average of 46.7 hours, or 7.7 days per volunteer
- 1,730,000 hours of specific training provided in total for 30,176 volunteers (33,532-3,356 drop-outs pre-SC), giving an average of 57.3 hours, or 9.5 days per volunteer

=> **Average: 17.2 days' training per volunteer**

b. By whom?

General training is provided by **bodies recognized** by the Dipartimento having certain specific competences. There is a common computer system («Unico»).

Specific training, on the other hand, is necessarily provided by trainers within the **host organisations**.

c. Themes

The subjects of general training are defined by the Dipartimento in consultation with the State-Regions Conference (permanent conference between the central State and the regions) and Consulta, the SC consultation body of young people and the main operators (see item 19). This consists mainly of a phase of **civic education** about the Italian constitutional system in general and that of SC in particular, including the principles and the history of conscientious objection, defence (non-army) of the Fatherland as a constitutional right/duty, human rights, elements of civil protection as well as the various forms of active participation in the life of civil society and in public administration organisations¹⁷⁴.

The subjects of the specific training sessions **depend entirely on the field of action** of the host organisation (see item 5a) and can range from social training to more technical or professional training.

11. NATIONAL MOBILITY

There is **little national mobility**¹⁷⁵. Most young people carry out their missions near their places of residence. The main category of volunteers who perform their SC further from home are students. However, national mobility is perceived positively for its impact on volunteers' subsequent employability. As such, it is encouraged and – a leftover from compulsory military service – the volunteer's first and last journey are potentially reimbursed by the State.

12. INTERNATIONAL MOBILITY

International projects are supervised by the Dipartimento in consultation with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, namely for the decision concerning admissible countries¹⁷⁶.

They are undertaken by an organisation in Italy in cooperation with a host organisation in a foreign country. For the list of possible areas of activity, see item 5a. Volunteers spend at least 7 months abroad. In 2016, 772 young people completed their SC abroad, representing 0.2% of the total. They were active on all continents:

SC VOLUNTEERS ABROAD 2017 ¹⁷⁷		
Continents	Volunteers	%
Africa	215	27,85 %
Americas	285	36,92 %
Asia	76	9,84 %
Europe	192	24,87 %
Oceania	4	0,52 %
Total	772	100 %

There are several differences between the national programme and the international programme. The main one is the higher number of training days. It should also be noted that volunteers going abroad are on average older (87,43% are between 24 and 28 years old), better trained (56,09 % have an MA diploma and 16,69 % a BA diploma) and cost over three times more than a volunteer in Italy.

The SCU is now proposing to every young person engaged in a SC to spend **3 months in another European country**, in order to promote his emancipation and strengthen his sense of European citizenship.

13. ASSESSMENT

The issue of youth assessment is a sensitive issue because it is a **regional competence** and there exist regional registers of competences. Strictly speaking, there is no evaluation system, only local initiatives on which it is difficult to have a vision. In the specific framework of the European Youth Guarantee programme, however, there is a questionnaire submitted to volunteers by an inspector. Furthermore, the SCU reform plans a centralised evaluation system focussed on impact and results, which will be organised by the Dipartimento. This system will be put in place in the coming months and years.

14. CERTIFICATION

Although the evaluation system is relatively underdeveloped, each volunteer «who has performed his or her SC without demerit» should receive a standard attestation / a specific attestation / a certificate confirming the experience gained, «recognising and valorising the competences acquired in link with the knowledge of an intervention domain of the SCU, a better understanding of the territory, social and civic competences and the capacity to manage one's own agenda».

While the attestations are usually given, the certificate, being subject to regional legislation, is a more complicated matter. There is a problem of harmonization¹⁷⁸. In the specific framework of the SCU reform, organisations who provide youngsters with a certification of competences get supplementary points in the selection process.

15. PRE- AND POST-PARTNERS (LOGIC OF THE JOURNEY)

As we saw in item 8a, the routing of volunteers to the programme is not a problem. There are two times as many applicants as there are places available, so there is no need to establish specific partnerships for this – although this could be a strategy for recruiting more disaffiliated young people.

As for the accompaniment of young people into “after-SC”, there are two potential vectors of partnerships: (1) the pilot project of «tutors» who guide volunteers on the path to employment (see item 9b) and (2) the first attempts at certification mentioned in the previous item (item 14). These two elements are (still) little developed.

The vision of the Dipartimento remains that SC is a first class tool for enabling young people to acquire skills valuable for the job market. It believes that SC has a triple impact:

- **Increasing employability:** increased chances of finding a job compared to those young persons who have not done SC
- **Increased “professional growth”** thanks to the SC, i.e. widening of the spectrum of skills and clarification of personal professional plans
- **Geographic expansion**, thanks to increased mobility (both physical and virtual)

Furthermore, (1) the sectors in which these volunteers are employed are supposed to be those which will be the most dynamic in terms of employment in the next 20 years and (2) SC must allow young people to acquire «soft skills» that are so valued in the job market, such as active listening, teamwork and problem solving¹⁷⁹.

16. COMMUNICATION

Despite its success, the SC still undertakes a **sizeable communication activity**¹⁸⁰. This is centralized in the **Dipartimento's Communication Department**. This department has a large number of tasks:

- **Coordination** of the Dipartimento communication activities
- **Promotion** of youth and SCU policies
- Management of the **Public Relations Office** (Ufficio per le Relazioni con il Pubblico, URP): 16 116 emails and over 15 000 organisational telephone calls per year; national calls for different projects etc.
- Managing the **website** and **social media**. Some figures for 2017:
 - 16 000 000 visits to the main website, by a total of 1 300 000 individual visitors
 - The institutional campaign spot has reached 239 760 youth and the video has been watched 67 448 times. Other important campaigns have taken place.
 - Facebook likes have grown from 11 768 (2015) to 16 493 (2016) and 25 616 (2017) and continue to do so
 - 15 albums and 200 photos have been posted on Flickr
 - The videos posted on Youtube have been watched more than 5000 times
 - ...
- Relations with **public administrations** and public bodies in communication matters

- **Press and media** relations
- Organizing **information campaigns** (annual competition for the production of a TV spot by the young people themselves)
- Organizing **promotion days** (including 12 major fairs in the main cities of Italy), **conferences and other events** (such as the visit of around 200 volunteers to the President of the Republic, that of around 7000 volunteers to Pope Francis as well as the participation of 47 volunteers in the national parade)
- Creation and distribution of **promotional material** and controlling the use of the SCN logo.

According to a survey carried out at job fairs in 2017, **75 % of young Italians are aware of SCU**. Of these, 28,16% learned of it through school, 15% through family, 14% through friends, 14% through the TV spot, 7% through Facebook, 2% through the website and 5% through a host organisation and 32% by «university orientation».

The same survey indicates that, in terms of how young people prefer to be contacted, 55% choose the website while 24% choose Facebook. The rest is divided between the newsletter (14%) and an app (7%).

17. NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS

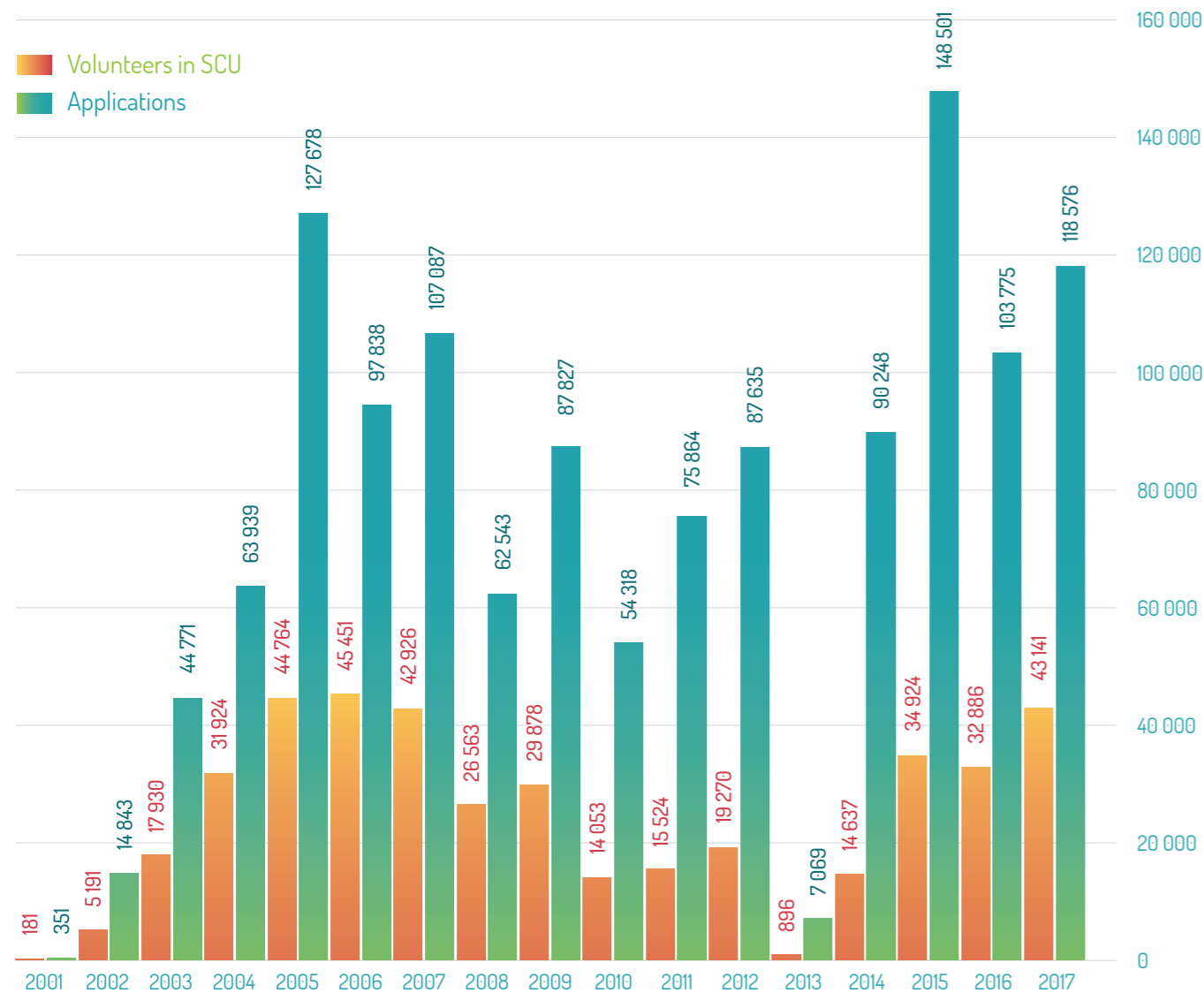
The number of open SC positions varies each year depending on the resources available. The graph below shows the evolution of the number of applications and volunteers taken on from 2001 to 2017.

We note a peak in the years following the abolition of military service (more than 40,000 young people per year from 2004 to 2006), a decline following the 2008 financial crisis, a deep trough in 2013 and finally a recovery in applications in 2015. In 2019, **42 050 volunteers** were taken on in SC, i.e. **a bit less than one in two applications**. This is progress, since in 2016, it was one in three applications, in 2015 one in four, in 2014 one in six and in 2013 one in eight!

Some statistics relating to this figure of 33,532 volunteers for 2017 (the last complete statistics):

- **Filling rate of the positions offered:** 91,12%¹⁸²
- **Drop-out rate:** 21%, or 8 996 volunteers, including 5 175 before even starting (12%) and 3 018 en route (9%)¹⁸³. 71,68% of them drop out in the first six months, 28,32% in the last six. We can therefore consider that the number of young people actually engaged in CS of one form or another in 2017 is actually 34 145.

RATIO OF VOLUNTEERS ENGAGED IN SCU TO APPLICATIONS FROM 2001 TO 2017 ¹⁸¹



- **Gender:** 64% are women (the proportion of men increases each year)¹⁸⁴
- **Age:** 18-20 years (14.77%); 21-23 years (28.87%); 24-26 years (33.22%); 27-28 years (23.14%)¹⁸⁵
- **Diploma:** primary school (0.16%); lower secondary (11.21%); upper secondary (59.95%); bachelor (11.72%); master (16.96%)¹⁸⁶

We note that the proportion of women, the age and the level of education are relatively high compared to other SCs in Europe.

The objective of the SC Universale is to open 100,000 positions, in order to be able to offer a position to all candidates.

18. LEGAL FRAMEWORK

The 2001 law defines a specific legal framework for volunteers. This framework, while relatively simple on paper, is complex on the ground because marked by the difficult history of conscientious objection and the tension between the central State and the regions. One of the main objectives of the SCU reform is to create a simpler and more transparent framework.

a. Status

The status established by the 2001 law via Legislative Decree No. 77 of 2002 is clear in principle:

«The activity carried out within the framework of SC projects **does not imply the establishment of an employment relationship** and does not involve the suspension or removal from the job lists [i.e. job seeker status] or mobility lists [in the public administration].»¹⁸⁷

The decree goes on to give a series of operational details with regard to allowances, social security and insurance. The authors of the SCU reform seem to

consider that this status is not precise enough and ask the government in the 2016 law to clarify the status of the volunteers in terms of rights and duties, as well as the specific nature of the relation induced by the SC. It has to:

«[define] the legal status of young people admitted to the SCU, providing for the establishment, between these same young people and the State, of a SC relationship which cannot be assimilated to an employment relationship and which is not taxable.»¹⁸⁸

b. Social security and insurance

«[The Dipartimento] takes care to establish the general insurance conditions for the risks linked to the undertaking of the SC.»¹⁸⁹

The insurance is taken out by the Dipartimento for each volunteer and for the entire duration of the SC contract.

19. INSTITUTIONAL ARCHITECTURE

a. Central Agency

The role of «central agency» is assumed by the **Dipartimento della Gioventù e del Servizio Civile Universale**, which reports directly to the Presidency of the Council of Ministers. This point is interesting because it testifies to the transversality of the system and its anchoring at the very heart of the powers of the State. The main functions of the Dipartimento are:

«The organisation, the implementation and the progress of SC as well as the programming, orientation and control, the development of the directives and the identification of SC objectives at national level.¹⁹⁰»

In practice this involves:

- Approving host organisations
- Evaluating and selecting the projects presented by them
- Annual calls for the various SCU programmes
- Contracts with volunteers, insurance, social security and payment of allowances
- The training of certain volunteers, actors (OLPs, trainers, etc.) in host organisations and OLP trainers, the delegation of certain of these tasks to approved bodies, as well as the development and updating of the training sessions and the didactic kit
- Monitoring and evaluation of SC projects
- Managing of the website, including a large database, and the SCN's communication
- Organizing the elections of the representatives of the volunteers

To do this, the Dipartimento has about ten staff members of its own as well as a hundred or so FTEs coming from other central administrations, which is way insufficient for the needs.

The Dipartimento is assisted by an advisory body: the **Consulta** (instituted in 1998). The Consulta is made up of the main SC stakeholders. Since the recent ministerial decree from August 2020, these are: 9 representatives of host organisations, 3 representatives from the State-Region permanent conference, 3 representatives of the local entities, 3 representatives of the national association of volunteers and 4 representatives of the coordination between the different entities, i.e. 24 members in total¹⁹¹.

The Consulta has gained in importance along the years and is today a crucial element of the SCU system. It is more than a simple consultative body but is nevertheless not endowed with the competence to design SCU policy. Since July 29th 2020, it is presided for the first time by a young woman representing the

volunteers – an event which had a huge symbolical value.

The aim of the **SCU reform** is to offer as many places as there are candidates, to be more inclusive as well as to make this system simpler, more transparent and more centralized. This involves gathering all databases into a single centralized database as well as a centralized three-year planning in consultation with the regions and which stands in line with governmental objectives¹⁹².

b. Main operators

In addition to the actors mentioned above, the Dipartimento, Consulta and regions, the main operators are the host organisations. These break down into host (or sending) organisations properly speaking (enti) and the local branches (sedi) of these organisations. There are on average 13 branches per host organisation, some national organisations counting many more while others consist of only one branch. In 2017, a lot of new organisations have been accredited, bringing their **total number to 4163**, or 56 930 local branches¹⁹³.

Host organisations have a total of 23,722 staff members accredited for handling SC, including 713 SCN managers, 4,028 selectors, 7,853 OLPs and 11,128 trainers¹⁹⁴.

In the 2001 system, these organisations are divided into four «classes», depending on their size and involvement. With the SCU reform, they are on an equal footing, from the largest to the smallest. The largest of these, at least in terms of state funding allocated to SC, are those listed in the table below. They are also the privileged interlocutors of the Dipartimento and the organisations most involved in the Consulta.

20. ALLOWANCES

The amount of allowances is clear and unchanging, except for volunteers abroad.

a. For the participants

The allowances are paid directly by the Dipartimento to the volunteers. Each SC volunteer in Italy receives an identical allowance of **€ 439.05 per month**, or €

3512 for 8 months and € 5268 for 12 months. If we add the € 90 per volunteer for training and administrative costs, we arrive at an **average cost of around € 5358 per volunteer**.

SC volunteers abroad (see item 12) receive an additional € 15 per day as well as € 20 per day for food, accommodation, travel etc. It follows that they cost three times more to the State, with an average cost of around € 18,000 per volunteer.

MAIN APPROVED ORGANISATIONS (ACCORDING TO 2017 FUNDING) ¹⁹⁵		SUBSIDY
01	ARCI Servizio Civile	€ 179,820
02	FOCSIV - Volontari nel Mondo	€ 125,730
03	UNPLI Unione Nazionale Pro Loco d'Italia	€ 105,480
04	CARISTAS ITALIANA	€ 88,470
05	ANPAS Associazione Nazionale Pubbliche Assistenze	€ 86,850
06	Federazione SCS / CNOS Salesiani	€ 84,600
07	A.N.C.I. Lombardia	€ 77,400
08	Associazione A.M.E.S.C.I.	€ 60,120
09	U.N.I.T.A.L.S.I.Un. Naz. It. Trasporto Ammalati Lourdes	€ 39,780
10	AISM Associazione Italiana Sclerosi Multipla	€ 36,090
11	AVIS NAZIONALE Associazione Nazionale Volontari Sangue	€ 29,880
12	AGORA' Agenzia di promozione e sviluppo sociale	€ 24,660
13	Associazione ARESS FABIOLA ONLUSS	€ 19,620
14	Beneficiari di importi inferiori a 15.000,00 €	€ 747,814
GENERAL TOTAL		€ 1,706,314

Some more ambitious programmes, which provide more in-depth coordination, support and training, cost approximately twice as much.

b. For the host organisations

Host organisations receive **€ 90 per month** per volunteer working in Italy, to cover training costs.

Organizations sending young people abroad receive **€ 180 per month** per volunteer to cover training costs.

Next to the general training, the host organisations offer a specific training, in link with the project.

- The total operating costs of the Dipartimento (incl. database) correspond to approximately 1.85% of the budget.
- The share of the budget allocated to the Servizio civile regionale is approximately 37.67% (0.23% for the operating costs of the regional offices and 37.44% for the allowances of SCR volunteers).
- Youth training counts for 1.09% of the budget

b. Financial bakers

Most of the budget of the SCN and the SCRs is paid by the central State (90% in 2016). European co-financing via the Youth Guarantee is, however, not negligible and will grow in the years to come.

21. FINANCING

a. Total budget

The annual budget of the “National Fund for SC” is fixed on the basis of a proposal from the Dipartimento in consultation with the other ministries and the State-Regions Conference. It depends on available resources and government priorities. As can be seen in the table below, it is constantly increasing except in 2014. However, there is no guarantee that this development will continue. The SCU reform gives a little more perspective since this operates on a three-year plan basis.

FINANCING FOR 2012 - 2017 ¹⁹⁶	
Year	Financing founding of SCN
2012	€ 69,990,000
2013	€ 124,082,000
2014	€ 101,650,183
2015	€ 133,914,074
2016	€ 208,820,787
2017	€ 302,500,000

The budgets have since then been reduced. The actual numbers are difficult to establish but the budget proposed for 2019 was 204 million euros, to which one must add the 53 million euros of the ESF Youth Guarantee for 2020-2022.

The following points should be noted:

- About **96% of the budget is spent on volunteer allowances**



NOTES :

- 130.** Legge 15 dicembre 1972, n. 772, Norme per il riconoscimento dell'obiezione di coscienza
- 131.** Corte costituzionale, Sentenza 19, 31 July 1989, no 470
- 132.** Legge 8 luglio 1998 n. 230, Nuove norme in materia di obiezione di coscienza
- 133.** Legge 6 marzo 2001, n° 64: Istituzione del servizio civile nazionale, complétée en 2002 by the Decreto legislativo 5 aprile 2002, n° 77: Disciplina del Servizio civile nazionale
- 134.** Alongside, there are also Servizi Civili Regionali, with different objectives, budgets and rules.
- 135.** Legge 6 giugno 2016, n° 106, Delega al Governo per la riforma del Terzo settore, dell'impresa sociale e per la disciplina del servizio civile universale, and above all the Decreto legislativo 6 marzo 2017, n° 40 : Istituzione e disciplina del servizio civile universale (and successive modifications: D.lgs 43/2018).
- 136.** Decreto legislativo 13 aprile 2018, n° 43: Disposizioni integrative e correttive al Decreto legislativo 6 marzo 2017, n. 40.
- 137.** Legge 6 marzo 2001, n° 64, art. 1, §1a / LRTS, art. 8, §1a
- 138.** Legge 6 marzo 2001, n° 64, art. 1, §1c, d et e. These objectives are also rooted in the constitution, namely in Articles 2 (solidarity), 3 (substantive equality), 4 (contributing to the material and spiritual progress of society) and 9 (promoting cultural development and protecting the environment as well as the nation's historical and artistic heritage). However, it is the "unarmed defence of the Fatherland" (art. 52), linked to compulsory military service, which constitutes the constitutional anchor of the SC.
- 139.** Visit to the Dipartimento, 5 Dec. 2017
- 140.** Legge 6 marzo 2001, n° 64, art. 5, 4a et Decreto legislativo 5 aprile 2002, n° 77, art. 3.2
- 141.** Decreto legislativo 5 aprile 2002, n° 77, art. 3.3
- 142.** Decreto legislativo 5 aprile 2002, n° 77, art. 3.5
- 143.** Decreto legislativo 5 aprile 2002, n° 77, art. 3.6
- 144.** Decreto legislativo 5 aprile 2002, n° 77, art. 6.3
- 145.** Cf. personal communication of the Dipartimento, Aug. 4th, 2020
- 146.** Dipartimento della Gioventù e del servizio civile nazionale, Relazione... 2017, p. 16
- 147.** Dipartimento della Gioventù e del servizio civile nazionale, Relazione... 2017, p. 65
- 148.** Legge 6 marzo 2001, n° 64, art. 3
- 149.** Cf. Circolare 18 mai 2018, Testo coordinato e integrato della circolare 3 agosto 2017 "Albo degli enti di servizio civile universale Norme e requisiti per l'iscrizione" e della circolare 12 dicembre 2017 "Integrazione alla circolare 3 agosto 2017"
- 150.** Dipartimento della Gioventù e del servizio civile nazionale, Relazione... 2017, p. 74
- 151.** Legge 6 marzo 2001, n° 64, art. 3
- 152.** Legge 6 marzo 2001, n° 64, art. 3 The fourth sanction applies only in cases of special gravity and involves deletion from the register for five years.
- 153.** Dipartimento della Gioventù e del servizio civile nazionale, Relazione... 2017, p. 77
- 154.** Legge 6 marzo 2001, n° 64, art. 2
- 155.** Personal communication from the Dipartimento, August 2020.
- 156.** Decreto legislativo 5 aprile 2002, n° 77, art. 8
- 157.** Dipartimento della Gioventù e del servizio civile nazionale, Relazione... 2016, p. 65
- 158.** The ANPAL (Agenzia Nazionale Politiche Attive del Lavoro), responsible for the programme, delegated the management of the "Servizio Civile" & "Servizio Civile nell'Unione Europea" measures to the Dipartimento, thanks to regional financial resources.
- 159.** Visit to the Dipartimento, 5 Dec. 2017
- 160.** Decreto n° 160/2013, Linea guida per la formazione generale dei giovani in servizio civile nazionale, p. 14
- 161.** Visit to ARCI Servizio Civile (ASC), 5 Dec. 2017
- 162.** Visit to the Dipartimento, 5 Dec. 2017
- 163.** Ibid.
- 164.** Ibid.
- 165.** Dipartimento della Gioventù e del servizio civile nazionale, op. cit., p. 69
- 166.** That is: 30,176 volunteers actually engaged divided by 7,853 OLPs (see Dipartimento della Gioventù e del servizio civile nazionale, op. cit., p. 11). 2016 figures
- 167.** See item 19b.
- 168.** Dipartimento della Gioventù e del servizio civile nazionale, op. cit., p. 70
- 169.** Dipartimento della Gioventù e del servizio civile nazionale, op. cit., p. 67
- 170.** Ibid.
- 171.** For more details on general training, see Decree No. 160/2013 Linee Guida per la Formazione Generale dei giovani in servizio civile nazionale
- 172.** Decreto legislativo 5 aprile 2002, n° 77, art. 11.1, 2 et 4
- 173.** Dipartimento della Gioventù e del servizio civile nazionale, op. cit., p. 69
- 174.** Dipartimento della Gioventù e del servizio civile nazionale, op. cit., p. 67
- 175.** Visits to the Dipartimento and to ARCI Servizio Civile (ASC), 5 Dec. 2017
- 176.** Decreto legislativo 5 aprile 2002, n° 77, art. 12
- 177.** Dipartimento della Gioventù e del servizio civile nazionale, op. cit., p. 38
- 178.** Visit to ARCI Servizio Civile (ASC), 5 Dec. 2017
- 179.** Visit to the Dipartimento, 5 Dec. 2017
- 180.** Dipartimento della Gioventù e del servizio civile nazionale.. 2017., pp. 134-148
- 181.** Dipartimento della Gioventù e del servizio civile nazionale...2017, p. 28
- 182.** Ibid, p. 31
- 183.** Ibid., p. 60
- 184.** Ibid., p. 53
- 185.** Ibid., p. 55
- 186.** Ibid., p. 58
- 187.** Decreto legislativo 5 aprile 2002, n° 77, art. 9.1
- 188.** Legge 6 marzo 2016, n° 106, art. 8.1.c
- 189.** Decreto legislativo 5 aprile 2002, n° 77, art. 9.3
- 190.** Decreto legislativo 5 aprile 2002, n° 77, art. 2.1
- 191.** Cf. <https://www.serviziocivile.gov.it/menusx/servizio-civile-nazionale/consulta.aspx> (consulted on Aug. 28th, 2020)
- 192.** Visits to the Dipartimento and ARCI Servizio Civile (ASC), Dec. 5 2017, as well as Law of 2016 and Decree of 2017
- 193.** Cf. <https://www.serviziocivile.gov.it/menusx/servizio-civile-nazionale/sc-in-cifre/enti.aspx> (consulted on Aug. 28th 2020)
- 194.** Dipartimento della Gioventù e del servizio civile nazionale, Relazione... 2016, p. 11
- 195.** Dipartimento della Gioventù e del servizio civile nazionale, Relazione... 2017, p. 125
- 196.** Dipartimento della Gioventù e del servizio civile nazionale, Relazione... 2017, p. 113 + visit top the Dipartimento, 5 Dec. 2017.

IV. / THE NETHERLANDS

1. NAME

The name of the Dutch Citizen Service (SC) programme is “Maatschappelijke Diensttijd”.

However, as this name lacks appeal with the youth, it is soon to be replaced by its acronym: MDT.

Take care: as we will see, the MDT is a vast programme encompassing a wide variety of possibilities, from short projects to intensive long-term ones. Strictly speaking, only the latter are actual « Citizen Service » projects.

2. HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The MDT was formally initiated in October 2017 by the Rutte III government agreement to answer to the call of the Christian parties CDA en ChristenUnie to organise a programme allowing youth to contribute to society.

The main political lines of the project are the following :

- Open to all youth
- Voluntary
- Maximum 6 months
- Development in cooperation with third sector organisations and municipalities (bottom-up approach)



In order to develop and expand the project progressively, the governmental core-team, which heads the project, has tasked the health platform ZonMw to lead an “action programme” in three phases:

- **Phase I:** Design MDT (from September 2018)
- **Phase II:** Official start MDT (from March 2020)
- **Phase III:** Sustainable institutionalisation (from 2021)

In Phase I, it was decided to work bottom-up with pilot-projects (proeftuinen) in order to conceive a

strong design for the MDT. **These pilot-projects come in two different configurations: either led by third sector organisations or by municipalities – this second configuration being designed on the model of the Belgian Citizen Service.** In September 2018, the first 41 third sector-led pilot-projects were launched. 34 new pilot-projects covering new territories and sectors were launched some months later, with a focus to reach out to youth with lesser opportunities. In September 2019, 11 municipality-led pilot-projects joined in involving 30 municipalities (=> total: 86 pilot-projects).

In **Phase II**, the aim is upscaling, expanding equally across the country and reaching a wide diversity of youth and participating organisations. Attention is also devoted to the sustainability of the programme and its governance. A new (fourth) call has thus been launched in April 2020 with the aim to fill in the « blind spots » on the map of the Netherlands and to build synergies between the various projects so as to converge into networks, each with its own specialty: recruitment, support, host organisations etc. The 27 networks which are thus brought to life constitute the basis of an upcoming national network.

In **Phase III**, the MDT will initiate an « alliance » allowing for further development, accreditation and central support. The aim is that the stakeholders of this alliance take ownership of the project and that it reflects their own perspectives.

3. OBJECTIVES

The general objective is to give youth the opportunity to have a societal impact and to reinforce social cohesion.

This general objective can be broken down into three specific objectives for the youth:

- **To do something for others and for society**
- **To develop one's own talents**
- **To meet other youth and other people**

These objectives should help youth to access « the best version of themselves », move forward in their lives, gain in self-confidence, expand their networks as well as forge ties with other generations.

4. TARGET PUBLIC (ADMISSION CRITERIA)

The MDT is open to « all » youth, but there are three major target groups :

- **Youth who need a helping hand**
- **Youth who want to boost their CV**
- **Youth who want to make a meaningful impact**

The aim of the MDT is to get as close as possible to their target groups, both geographically and thematically. It is currently conducting a poll in order to get a better view into the aspirations and needs of its target groups.

a. Age

To participate to the MDT, youth must be aged between 14 and 27.

b. Nationality

At this stage, the MDT is open only for Dutch nationals or people with a valid residence permit in the Netherlands, thus including recognised refugees but excluding asylum-seekers.

c. Language

There's no formal language requirement to participate in the MDT, however everything happens in Dutch so a basic knowledge of it is highly desirable. Some MDT projects might require fluency or native level.

5. HOST ORGANISATIONS

a. Area(s) of activity

There are 12 sectors in which the projects can take place :

- Nature and animals
- Sustainability
- Technical and ICT
- Politics and administration
- School and education
- Proximity and neighbourhood
- Media and culture
- Sport
- Care and well-being
- Security
- Professional services
- Horeca

b. Types of host organisations (non-profit organisations / public / private)

Today, the MDT takes place predominantly in the non-profit and the public sectors.

However, as the traditional **non-profit sector** is ageing, dynamic young social entrepreneurs are playing an increasingly important role in societal matters in general and in the MDT in particular. Their purpose-built « social organisations » (similar to foundations) are very active in the MDT.

As to the private sector, the MDT can take place in it as long as it does not contribute the profits of the

company. It does also contribute by giving trainings. Going a step further, the MDT core team would like that private organisations become even more an integral part of the MDT network. A reflexion is ongoing about how to organise this. The municipalities could be key in the process of involving local companies.

All projects are evaluated in order to be compliant with EU law about government support.

c. Types of assignment

Firstly, MDT missions / projects must be in line with the interests, wishes and possibilities of young people. This requires customization. In order to deliver tailor-made solutions, attention is paid to the following points:

- MDT matches the motivation of the young person
- MDT takes place at an appropriate time
- The activity matches the talent of the young person
- The activity offers the frameworks or the freedom that the young person needs.
- The activity takes place in the sector appropriate to the young person's field of interest.

Second, the missions / projects must be relevant with regards a set of « relevance criteria ». These are organised in three main categories:

- To contribute to the objectives of the MDT, including the overall objective (social impact and added-value) and the specific objectives of the MDT (to do something for others and for society, to develop one's own talents, to meet other youth and other people)
- To answer to the interests of youth and offer a learning experience (providing youth with a clear framework but offer room for input by the youth inside that framework)

- To establish cooperation and expertise partnerships (networking and sustainable synergies between the participating organisations)

Third, activities are distinguished by the nature of the work. Broadly speaking, the following activities can be seen in the pilot-projects:

- **Social** : Activities in which young people do something in direct contact with another (often potentially vulnerable) target group. Think of buddy work, support with activities in a care home or homework support.
- **Getting started « hands-on »** : Activities in which young people are practical and creative. Think of refurbishing a neighbourhood, building a festival or making films and theatre.
- **Advice & research** : Activities in which young people (if necessary) collect data and can provide their own input on a specific issue. Think of giving advice in the field of communication, youth participation or experience expertise.
- **Setting up one's own initiative** : Activities in which young people have the opportunity to come up with their own initiative, start up and carry it out. Think of a campaign, cultural event or your own company.

Finally, for all MDTs, the following applies: missions / projects must not be at the expense of existing jobs, internships or volunteer positions. To prevent the displacement of paid work, regular work may not be part of the activities of the MDT. If there is an internship in the context of MDT, the learning aspect and talent development must be paramount and the rules surrounding internships must be complied with.

Projects are selected, monitored and evaluated according to this framework.

d. Approval and control

At this stage, agreement and control are vested in the call for proposals procedure. The quality of the projects is evaluated according to four main criteria :

- Strategic plan
- Feasibility
- Monitoring, evaluation, assurance
- Budget

However, this is not yet a formal accreditation procedure of MDT host organisations. Such an accreditation procedure should see light in due time.

6. DURATION AND INTENSITY

Duration and intensity vary a lot. It goes from minimum two weeks at 40 hours per week (i.e. 80 hours in total) to a maximum of 6 months at 24 hours per week.

The actual duration and intensity of a given project depends on the strand of the programme, either the general MDT or the municipality-led program (i.e. the actual « Citizen Service »)⁹⁷.

a. Duration (number of months)

In the **general MDT programme**, duration varies a lot, depending both on the offer of activities by the participating organisations and the different demands of the youth. Thus it goes **from 2 weeks to 6 months**.

In the **municipality-led MDT programme**, the duration is the same for every youth : **6 months**.

b. Intensity (hours/week)

In the general MDT programme, intensity varies a lot too as every youth can choose to engage in the MDT either as a side-activity, next to his work or studies, or as his principal occupation. It is really « tailor-made ».

In the municipality-led MDT programme, it is the same for every youth : full-time (i.e. 20-24 hours a week).

7. MANDATORY OR VOLUNTARY

a. Degree of mandatoriness:

In its political design in the 2017 Governmental agreement, the MDT is a **voluntary program**. And indeed, to this day, it remains a choice to participate or not.

However, the Christian party who was at the initiative of the MDT initially eyed on a mandatory program and it continues to push for more pressure on youth to participate. In this perspective, the Secretary of State competent for MDT announced in September 2019 that he is investigating the possibility of making MDT mandatory for some youth, namely for youth without any qualifications or as a way of « paying back » for social allowances. Some projects are now experimenting with this mandatory form of MDT.

This being said, school and work always prevail on an MDT project.

b. Sanctions

There are no sanctions as such, but for some youth the alternative is to show up regularly to the social and employment services, which is a burden.

8. SOCIAL MIXING AND INCLUSION

a. Recruitment (positive/negative discrimination?)

Each project has its own specific target group, with an appropriate strategy to reach it. However, as a general rule, it is difficult to attract « privileged » youth, i.e. youth with a high social, cultural and financial capital.

b. Collective dimension

In the general MDT programme, the collective dimension **varies a lot**. More often than not, it is an integral part of the projects, but it takes many different forms.

In the municipality-led programme, following the Belgian model, the projects systematically involves groups of 15 to 20 youth. These groups come together intensively at the start of the programme and later one day per week, for trainings (see below). The rest of the time (2-3 days a week) they spend individually in their host organisations.

9. PERSONAL ACCOMPANIMENT

Here again, things are different for the general MDT programme and for the municipality-led programme. Standards are still experimental and stricter norms will be imposed in the coming months and years.

a. Mentoring (and if so what training?)

In the general MDT, mentorship and other support varies a lot from pilot-project to pilot-project. In any case, there must always be a professional on-site to answer the questions of the youth. Soon a minimum will be imposed, in order to ensure certain standards

of quality.

In the municipality-led programme, each youth has one « mentor » in his host organisation – i.e. a « referent » which supervizes his activity in that organization and ensures everything goes smoothly.

b. Other (educators, individual psychosocial assistance)

The youth are followed-up by professional educators. These try to accompany the youth by supervising their trajectories. These educators :

- have the responsibility to connect with other educators in other areas of the young person's life.
- make sure there is a warm guidance transfer if there are transfer moments from one educator to another during the trajectory.
- Safety is important. Young people need a place where they can be honest and make mistakes. For this, a relationship of trust with the supervisor is very important.
- connect with the level of interaction of young people and their environment. Young people need an accessible and personal way of communication.
- Frequent contact is important. Young people do not stick to working days and times. Therefore, educators need to be flexible and reachable. Fixed moments on e.g. evenings or weekends at a fixed accommodation can also help.

Furthermore, peer-support is experimented with. It works well as long as the the senior peer is himself followed-up and supported by a professional educator.

Typically, each group of 20 youth in the municipality-led programme is supported by two professional educators.

10. TRAINING (FOR THE YOUNG PEOPLE)

At this stage, training requirements are not fixed yet and they vary a lot. The core tenet is talent development.

a. How many days?

Training programmes vary according to the target groups of the various pilot-projects. However, as these projects are particularly focussed on developing one's own talents, as a rule training is quite important. There might come a minimum in the near future.

Even in the stricter municipality-led MDT, training programmes take different forms. Sometimes, youth start with a one-week collective training, sometimes they spend the first 10 weeks together to prepare themselves. Later in the project, following the Belgian model, youth have one training day per week, typically on Mondays.

b. By whom?

Trainings are organised by the project coordinators and can be given by different actors (« network trainings »). Partnerships and synergies are encouraged in order for the trainings to be given by expert trainers in their field.

c. Themes

The range of trainings is very large, as it encompasses both societal themes and themes such as IT and Horeca. First aid is a recurrent one.



11. NATIONAL MOBILITY

Having youth moving from one part of the country to another is no specific objective of the MDT. The municipality-led MDT, in particular, has a strong local focus.

Nevertheless, the ongoing integration of the various MDT networks into one national MDT network means all the territory is progressively being covered, the opportunities become clearer to all and enlisting in one or another project becomes easier.

12. INTERNATIONAL MOBILITY

Concerning the EU, the MDT is in touch with the European Solidarity Corps but there's no structural cooperation yet. This European aspect might be developed in the future.

13. ASSESSMENT

All projects are centrally monitored and evaluated by the MDT core team and ZonMw and **involves all stakeholders**: youth, host organisations and partners.

This overarching evaluation is designed as a **learning process**. The central question is : what lessons can be learned from the projects and how can these be translated into the further development of MDT and government policy. Thus, youth, host organisations and partners are required to share knowledge and tools, provide data and participate in research activities and project leader meetings with other MDT organisations, MDT networks and the MDT core team.

Specifically, the MDT expects the following:

- The project leader fills in the periodically sent out

questionnaire;

- All young people who participate in an MDT complete a questionnaire at the start and upon completion;
- Project leaders and any other invitees (e.g. communication staff or participating young people) take part in thematic dialogue meetings with selected MDT organisations;
- Finally, each host organisation gets an « account holder » at the MDT core team, which will remain in contact with them throughout the project. The purpose of the account holders is to adjust where necessary and, where possible, to actively contribute to the safeguarding of quality. In addition, the account holder contributes to stimulating a learning network between the MDT organisations. Finally, the account holder feeds the accompanying research.

ZonMw asks to be kept informed of the progress of MDT projects and monitors the progress of projects at various times. A progress report is requested at least at 6 and 12 months, in which project coordinators report on the progress and interim results of a project.

ZonMw may visit specific projects. Working visits are conducted by a delegation of the programme team and the employee with financial responsibility. Working visits are always planned in consultation. The aim is to get an impression of the quality of the content and the financial management of the projects and to get acquainted with possible implementation problems and thus be able to contribute in a timely manner to a solution strategy.

If the progress reports show that, in accordance with the project planning, the project will not achieve the

intended recruitment, quality or goals, ZonMw may decide to terminate the project prematurely. ZonMw will first discuss this with the project leader in order to find out which solution directions there are before making its decision. Discontinuation of the project has consequences for the granting of subsidies.

14. CERTIFICATION

At the start of the MDT, there was talk that the completion of the programme would allow youth to get priority to access certain governmental jobs. This hasn't been followed upon.

At this stage, there is no general certification of the programme, but some projects offer their own certification. However, the MDT is currently working on a certification involving two stages : a basic certificate of attendance developing into a final certification detailing the skills he or she acquired and which are valorised on the labour market.

15. PRE- AND POST-PARTNERS (LOGIC OF THE JOURNEY)

In their action plan, the pilot-projects must give concrete details of the journey that the young person will make, from the moment they are enthused and mobilised for a MDT until the aftercare and reflection on their MDT.

In addition, a lot of work is being done to foster an efficient role distribution leading to complementarity and synergies. Indeed, research at the current pilot-projects shows that cooperation and networking are crucial to foster successful MDT trajectories. Accordingly, three main roles are identified for organisations within MDT projects:

- There are organizations that enthuse and mobilize young people, they are often responsible for the recruitment of young people.
- Then there are organizations that take care of developmental guidance of young people and provide the matching between the young person and the MDT-place.
- Finally, there are organizations that offer a MDT-place and practical guidance to young people.

There's a maximum of ten participating organisations per project.

16. COMMUNICATION

The MDT is very active on social media, targeting a variety of profiles in order to involve all kinds of youth. It also reaches out via schools, municipalities, youth workers etc. And it is creating a tool of sensibilisation tool for NGO's.

All projects coordinators are required to use the MDT logo and to promote the country-wide communication campaigns through their own networks and communication channels.

In order to support the communication of all the participating organisations, the MDT has developed a communication Toolkit accessible online: <https://www.doemeetmdt.nl/toolkit/>.

A search functionality on the website allows for potential partners to find one another : www.doemeetmdt.nl/mdt-voor-profs/

17. NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS

By June 2020, after two years of activity, the total number of youth who have been involved in the MDT amounted to **15 000** (i.e. third sector-led MDT + municipality-led MDT).

The aim for the municipality-led MDT, based the Belgian model of Citizen Service, is to reach **2 500** youth during its first phase.

18. LEGAL FRAMEWORK

a. Status

There exists no specific legal status for youth in MDT – nor for volunteers in general.

MDT must comply with the existing laws and regulations, such as the Education and Labor Act and the Wages and Salaries Tax Act 1964. Administration and exchange of data must follow the Dutch and EU rules. The existing legal framework is the starting point.

MDT may not lead to the displacement of labour, internships or voluntary work. The deployment is voluntary (no employment relationship and appointment) and unpaid (no salary) and is not an internship.

For youth who receive social or unemployment benefits, MDT is proposed only as a third option, after a training / a job. During their MDT, they still have to look for a training / a job. They are accompanied to do so and if they find one, they have to take it.

MDT can only be offered in the Netherlands. Parties from the partnership can also pursue goals abroad, but the young people (who are Dutch residents) fulfil their MDT in the Netherlands for a Dutch social purpose. There are other arrangements for places abroad.

b. Social security and insurance

Youth in MDT are not covered by social security for health issues, pension etc. The only protection they get are the workplace accident insurance the host organisation takes for their volunteers.

19. INSTITUTIONAL ARCHITECTURE

a. Central agency

The MDT is headed by the Minister for Health, Wellbeing and Sports (Volksgezondheid, Welzijn en Sport – VWS), today represented by Secretary of State Paul Blokhuis (ChristenUnie).

It is managed by the **MDT-kernteam** (MDT core-team), a project group involving three ministerial departments + a series of important actors:

- Department of Health, Wellbeing and Sports (coordinator)
- Department of Social Affairs and Employment
- Department of Education, Culture and Science
- NOV (Vereniging Nederlandse Organisaties Vrijwilligerswerk), the platform for volunteering
- NJR (Nationale Jeugdraad), the national youth platform
- ZonMw, the Health Platform which has been tasked with supervising the development of the MDT action program

The attributions of this core-team in Phase II (2020-2021) are :

- Facilitating mutual learning between partnerships.
- Coordination and monitoring in working towards a nationwide network.
- Connecting (new) organisations and partnerships.

- Providing communication tools to support the MDT brand.
- Managing the matching platform for young people and MDT sites.
- Setting up an alliance to make MDT sustainable.
- Support organisations and partnerships (e.g. in the field of legislation and frameworks and the exchange of knowledge and tools).
- Provide a helpdesk for questions from organisations or young people about MDT.

b. Main operators

The main non-State actor of the MDT is ZonMw, the health platform tasked with the management of the subsidies.

The main State actors are the big municipalities. A city like The Hague engages about 400 youth in 2020.

20. ALLOWANCES

The MDT looks at allowances in the wider framework of gratification of the MDT experience – **financial and non-financial**.

Indeed, evaluative research of the pilot projects has shown that different types of rewards contribute to a successful completion of MDTs. Young people are strengthened in their self-confidence or discover their own talents. Recognition, visibility and celebrating efforts is an effective reward. Gratitude of the person for whom the young person has impact can be an important reward.

More specifically, the study showed that certain rewards fit in well with the various motivations:

- Young people who need a helping hand attach

great value to: appreciation and recognition (of supervisors and of the person for whom they have done something, room for experimentation in a secure environment), a sense of community (being part of a group, being connected through hats and sweaters, for example), practical skills learning, training aimed at personal development (building self-confidence through self-insighting), remuneration (often as a precondition for participation).

- Young people who want to enrich their CV attach the most value to: nice gifts or a fun joint experience (start parties, end parties, gala, lunch), certificate or reference or an internship.
- Young people who want to do meaningful work value: meetings with experts, training and work experience that provide them with knowledge and contribute to their personal development, building a valuable network, certificate or reference, internship placement, etc.

a. For the participants

As to financial rewards, young people expect at least to see their proven expenses covered, such as transport.

Additional allowances vary from project to project, but full-time MDT volunteers get maximum 170 € per month. Some projects add a final gratification. In The Hague, youth get 500 € at the end of their 6 months project.

Important point : there is no possible cumulation of MDT allowances and other social allowances.

b. For host organisations

The latest call for proposals (April 2020) proposes 40 million € for the participating networks of host

organisations. Individual projects have a budget ranging from 300 000 € to 1500 000 € for maximum 24 months.

Each project gets between 500 € and 3000 € per youth to cover all expenses (for projects ranging from 2 weeks to 6 months). The maximum for shorter or less intensive projects is 1700 € / youth but for longer (3 to 6 months) and more intensive (>20 hours /week) it can go up to 3000 € per youth. However, even 3000 € per youth is far too little for projects dealing with underprivileged youth. The estimated actual cost is twice as high.

At this stage, it is not perfectly clear yet which other expenses are to be covered by the MDT and the system is quite flexible and generous. There tends to be an agreement towards a broad financing of the MDT initiatives (coordination, staff costs, external trainings, youth allowances, follow-up, ICT, events, monitoring etc.) but rules are meant to become stricter as the programme gets its final shape.

21. FINANCING

a. Total budget

With a starting budget of 25 million € in 2018, the budget grew steadily to reach **100 million € in 2020**. This annual amount is meant to stay level from now on, at least until the end of the legislature, in march 2021. The 27 regional networks which are being set up in 2020 get a total of 35 million €.

b. Financial backers

Today, the **State covers maximum 85% of the costs** while cofinancing by the partners cover 15 %. However, a reflection is ongoing about how to structure the financing of the MDT and to involve private funding. Social impact bonds are envisaged.

NOTE :

197. This programme implemented in the municipalities is directly inspired by the Belgian Citizen Service for which the pedagogical and operational team of the Citizen Service Network provided the pedagogical materials and support.



V. / BELGIUM

1. NAME

In Belgium, the terms used to speak of Citizen Service in the different national languages are: Service Citoyen (SC) in French, Samenlevingsdienst in Dutch, and Bürgerdienst in German. The reference organisation in this area is the non-profit organisation Plateforme pour le Service Citoyen / Platform voor de Samenlevingsdienst / Plattform für einen Bürgerdienst.

2. HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The origin of CS in Belgium goes back to the days of compulsory military service with its emphasis on generalized social and cultural mixing, and above all of its civilian counterpart, the service civique (service civil) introduced in 1964 thanks to the action of the militant pacifist Jan Van Lierde, with the values of commitment and solidarity that animated conscientious objectors.

While civic service was an important societal development, it was always the poor relation of military service. Like the latter, it was aimed only at able-bodied men and not at women or disabled persons. In addition, so as to discourage as many young people as possible, it lasted as long as military service and it was prohibited to promote it. It was therefore a commitment that affected only a small part of the population, while being undervalued and even discouraged. Thus, when military service was abolished in 1994, civic service disappeared in its wake.



Pretty soon, however, politicians became aware of what was going to be lost and the idea germinated of a voluntary SC as a society project in its own right which could offer young people a framework of full-time and long-term engagement in public interest organisations. In this way, SC would not only constitute welcome support for the voluntary sector but would also contribute to the personal and civic development of young people and to their socio-professional integration. The first bill for an act of parliament dates from 1999. Since then, **no less than**

twenty texts¹⁹⁸ have been submitted by members of parliament or federal government ministers without any of these law proposals or projects having any effect. The institutional complexity of Belgium, the instability of the governments and the fact that a third of these texts have been submitted by members of the opposition explain this sad result, and this despite a large cross-party support¹⁹⁹. The project to institutionalize SC in Belgium has stalled and has still not been brought to completion.

Faced with this political impasse, civil society mobilized. In December 2007, four associations joined forces to create the **non-profit association Platform for Citizen Service** (Plateforme pour le Service Citoyen / Platform voor de Samenlevingsdienst / Plattform für einen Bürgerdienst) with the aim of institutionalizing SC in Belgium. The Platform first focused on advocacy before experimenting with an operational programme from 2011 to 2013 and then focusing on enlarging this programme to the whole of Belgium from 2014. To date, 1500 young people have been able to undertake SC in this way in the three regions of the country.

In addition to the positive impact this has had on these young people²⁰⁰, this engagement in the field has enabled the Platform to acquire considerable experience in SC. This situation remains, however, far from ideal. Developed within the framework of the law on volunteering²⁰¹, **SC currently has neither its own status (exemption from the requirement to seek employment, decent allowances, etc.), nor institutional support, nor structural funding.** As a result, it remains a little-known and quantitatively under-developed programme.

However, in recent years, as a result of the campaigning of the Citizen Service Network, the question of the institutionalization of SC has returned to the fore. The first important step was the 2015 Public Letter (Carte blanche) drawn up by the Platform, co-signed

by numerous personalities on both sides of the linguistic border and published in all the major daily newspapers in the country. The second was the result of the European survey “Generation What?” (2016), in which 63% of the more than 44,000 young Belgians questioned declared themselves in favour of the introduction of compulsory SC (alternative to the army). Little by little, this led to a real media and political “momentum” around SC during the 2014–2019 legislature, in particular in Flanders: the Bel10 programme on Radio 1 in which Flemish Youth Minister Sven Gatz (Open Vld) said he was ready to “wet his shirt for the project», a feature article in widely-read magazine Knack File, an article by members of the Friday Group shared more than 12,000 times on Twitter, TV and radio debates, questions and parliamentary hearings of the Platform, with the CD&V – the Flemish Christian Democrats – making it an official item of its party programme, etc.

To capitalize on this enthusiasm, the Platform organised an international symposium in collaboration with the Senate on 15 and 16 May 2017: «Towards a Citizen Service in Belgium: European contributions». Present were the directors of the German, French, Italian and Luxembourg programmes²⁰², a delegate from the European Commission²⁰³, a minister from each region (Didier Gosuin, Sven Gatz and Rachid Madrane), representatives from eight ministerial cabinets at different levels of power, deputies from seven parties (CD&V, cdH, PS, Open-Vld, Ecolo, Défi and MR), many members of civil society and ... young people in Citizen Service. During the plenary sessions, workshops and panels of the conference, all participants expressed their support for the project²⁰⁴.

This symposium led to a concrete result that seemed promising: the quotation for the first time of the Citizen Service in a law voted by a government in office²⁰⁵. Unfortunately, this short mention of the SC in a much broader law on «economic recovery and strengthening

social cohesion» tabled by the Federal Minister of Social Affairs, Maggie De Block (Open Vld), finally proved to be inoperative and unusable. Moreover, the law was annulled by the Constitutional Court even before it was implemented, putting a definitive end to what could be called an «ersatz» of institutionalisation.

Hopes for the creation of a legal framework for the SC in Belgium were dashed.

In March 2019, to honour its ten years of activities, the Citizen Service Network organised a major public debate in Brussels on Citizen Service, inviting all democratic parties in the country to take a stand on the issue of its institutionalisation. Political support proved to be almost generalised, going well beyond partisan and community divisions. On this occasion, a book entitled «Le Service Citoyen en Belgique, 25 jeunes témoignent»²⁰⁶ was published as well as a survey²⁰⁷ of the Belgian population on the establishment of a Citizens' Service. The survey showed, among other things, that 7 out of 10 Belgians want to set up a voluntary Citizens' Service.

This mobilisation is undoubtedly the reason why, from the start of the current legislature (2019–2024), two legislative proposals were (re)tabled by two different parties (PS and cdH), suggesting a new interest in its federal implementation.

3. OBJECTIVES

The objective of the Platform as defined in its statutes is to «promote the establishment, in Belgium, of SC for all young people aged 18 to 25 in order to promote their personal development as well as their integration in society as active, critical, united and responsible citizens».

Later, the Platform formalized its objectives as follows:

- Promoting the personal development of young persons
- Increasing social cohesion
- Encouraging the exercise of committed citizenship
- Strengthening solidarity

The key words corresponding to each of these objectives are as follows:

Personal development: emancipation, maturation, capacitation, reflexivity, redirection, transition to working life, strengthening of existing qualities, acquisition of new skills, soft skills (teamwork, communication, initiative, etc.), training, work-study...

Social cohesion: socio-cultural mixing, inclusion, diversity, integration, equal opportunities, exchanges, meetings...

Citizenship: commitment, responsibility, knowledge of rights and duties, understanding of social issues, information, critical thinking, democratic participation, dialogue...

Solidarity: usefulness, mutual aid, cooperation, social and environmental action, contribution of ideas and dynamism of young people, conviviality, strengthening of the voluntary sector...

4. TARGET PUBLIC (ADMISSION CRITERIA)

a. Age

The age range covered by the Platform is 18 to 25 years.

b. Nationality

The programme is open to young people of all

nationalities holding valid residence permits.

c. Language

The language criterion depends in principle on the region: in Flanders you have to be able to speak Dutch, in Wallonia French, in Brussels both are possible. However, these prerequisites are not rigid. Some French speakers ask to do their SC in Flanders in order to learn Dutch and vice versa. Some migrants speak only English. For all these cases the Platform tries, as far as possible, to find solutions.

d. Other

There are no other selection criteria.

5. HOST ORGANISATIONS

a. Area(s) of activity

CS can take place in four areas:

- Assistance to people (elderly, disabled, migrants, etc.)
- Education and culture (after-class homework schools, cultural centre, theatre...)
- Environment, sustainable development and fight against climate change
- Sport and education through sport

CHOSEN AREAS OF ACTIVITY (2017 FIGURES)		
	Brussels	Wallonia
Assistance to people	34 %	47 %
Education and culture	40 %	28 %
Environment	21 %	26 %
Sport	5 %	0 %

b. Types of host organisations (non-profit organisations / public / private)

The Platform works exclusively with non-for-profit organisations (NGO's, public services, foundations - not private companies).

c. Types of assignment

An SC includes two kinds of missions: a primary one and a complementary one.

The young people perform their **primary mission** (70% of their time, or +/- 75 days) in the organisation of their choice, depending on what is offered by the Platform and on availability. Importantly the young people do not perform any task for the development of the organisation so as not to replace any actual or potential paid employment. Furthermore, they can do only 20% administrative work. The young person's mission must be anchored in the operational and/or the relational sphere, it must serve the organisation, of course, but also serve the young person's personal development. The goal is win-win.

In addition, the young people are invited to carry out a **complementary mission** (10% of their time, i.e. between 8 and 15 days) in a sector other than that of the primary mission in order to discover a new sector with which they are perhaps less familiar and/or gather experience working in a group. This mission can take place at an international site, at a festival or at other temporary events.

d. Approval and control

Approval is provided by the Platform through the means of a partnership agreement setting out the commitments of each side.

Control takes place during the visits that the promotion managers of the Platform make to each mission location, but especially on a continuous basis through the close links that promotion managers maintain with the young people and their tutors. When there is a difficulty, the educators of the Platform follow a procedure prioritising their intervention according to the nature of the problem and its repetition.

6. DURATION AND INTENSITY

a. Duration (number of months)

SC lasts for **six months**. This duration is constrained by the framework of the 2005 Volunteering Act, in order to be able to guarantee a minimum of allowances. It is a minimum. Ideally, the Platform would like to be able to offer 6 to 12 month SCs.

b. Intensity (hours/week)

Young people spend **28 hours a week** on their mission. The Platform recommends spreading this schedule over four days, Monday to Thursday, since training days are systematically held on Friday.

However, in addition to these training Fridays, the Platform remains flexible and the schedule can be adapted (evenings, weekends, etc.) according to the mission and in consultation with the young person. Overtime is obviously recovered. The week's schedule is defined/confirmed or modified during the weekly meeting between the young person and the tutor.

7. MANDATORY OR VOLUNTARY

a. Degree of mandatoryness:

The SC proposed by the Platform is **entirely voluntary**. This is part of its fundamental approach (free choice of subject).

There are, however, some advocates of a mandatory SC, such as members of the Friday Group think-tank, who have published a column on the subject in Knack, which has been shared more than 12,000 times on Twitter, while cdH deputies Georges Dallemagne and Catherine Fonck again tabled a bill to this effect in July 2019.

The Platform's position is that it is first of all a question of bring SC up to speed and developing it in a voluntary format. After that, in the very long run and after evaluation, there will always be time to pose the question of obligation. While this can be of interest in terms of equality, it can be counterproductive in terms of participants' motivation.

b. Sanctions

No sanction is provided for young persons who fail to respect their commitments other than the termination of the contract. This will always be discussed in advance with the young person's tutor and promotion manager.

The same applies for host organisations that fail to fulfil their obligations. In the event of serious or repetitive fault, the Platform will end the collaboration.

8. SOCIAL MIXING AND INCLUSION

a. Recruitment (positive/negative discrimination?)

CS is open to everyone, whatever their origin, diploma or skills. The only criteria are age (18-25 years) and availability for 6 months. Otherwise there is no selection. This diversity is not only accepted, it is encouraged and established as an educational principle (see following item: collective dimension). Anyone who applies and meets these criteria receives an assignment offer. This is, however, subject to available of places at any one time. Whoever applies for a six-month period which is already full will have priority for the following one.

Concretely, the recruitment process involves the following stages:

- The interested young people contact the Platform, which invites them to an information meeting
- If a young person confirms his interest, the staff in charge of the operational project proposes him an interview in order to better identify his needs and objectives. They review the list of missions and possibly help him or her complete the application.
- The young persons submit their application file, in which they select, in order of preference, three host organisations in which they wish to carry out their mission
- The Platform contacts the host organisations and offers the candidates the mission options, if possible corresponding to their first choice.

- Young people and host organisations meet and, if there's a "matching", sign a tripartite agreement with the Platform.
- The 25 young people of a six-month group ("promotion") come together for an integration week, to set them off on their Citizen Service. This on-site week is particularly important to launch the group dynamics of their Citizen Service
- The young persons begin their missions after this integration week.

b. Collective dimension

The collective dimension is essential to the SC system. Each young person is part of a **«promotion» of 25 young people from all walks of life**. These promotions are organised to reproduce the diversity of society: each contains young higher education graduates as well as young people with very low levels of education, young people with severe physical and/or mental handicaps, young people with criminal records, migrants etc. This diversity is very important and enriches each young person. It is an active educational principle.

These promotions are «trained» during the **integration week** during which they get to know each other and a positive dynamic is launched. Then they meet approximately every week for **training, exchange, maturation and evaluation times**. Throughout their SC time, the young people are therefore part of a group and many of them testify to the importance of this dynamics for their development. It is important that the group be well supervised and nourished in a professional way for the young people to draw all the intended benefits (see items 9. Support and 10. Training).

9. PERSONAL ACCOMPANIMENT

a. Mentoring (and if so what training?)

Each young person in SC has a «tutor» within their host organisation. This person:

1. is a member of the host organisation team
2. is responsible for the smooth progress of the young person's SC mission
3. is the link between the young person and the team
4. monitors and frames the assignment.
5. is the contact person for the Platform

It should be noted that the hosting of the young person(s) remains a team project. The tutor does not have to be present alongside the young people in SC in all assignments nor is he the only person responsible for the young people's daily supervision. It is advisable to vary the contacts within the team and to rely on other resource people so as to avoid overworking the tutor.

The «good» tutor:

- has the necessary time to fulfil the supervisory role
- is familiar with the assignment and can adapt it according to the young person's progress.
- establishes a relationship of trust with the young persons and takes into account their aspirations
- establishes and monitors deadlines
- guarantees that the assignment is adhered to
- ensures that the young people are not isolated but are integrated into the team
- carries out a weekly follow-up interview with the young person.

The tutor-volunteer collaboration must be balanced, mutually agreed (both sides are comfortable with it) and formalized during the weekly meeting and the assessments (mid-term and final).

This collaboration is characterized by an absence of subordination, which ultimately means that, while there is indeed an obligation of means, there is no obligation of results. But this does not mean the absence of authority. Rules have been defined, so that sanctions can be applied.

Tutors must participate in compulsory training provided by the Platform. On this occasion, they receive a «Guide for welcoming a young person in SC» in which the fundamentals of the programme and the rights and duties of young people and tutors are detailed.

b. Other (educators, individual psychosocial assistance)

Each promotion of 25 young people is accompanied by **two «promotion managers»**, that is specialized educators from the Platform. It is they who are responsible for guiding the young people and their training from the choice of the host organisation and the integration week through to the closing ceremony, including training and other maturation times, throughout SC. They maintain personal relationships with each of the young people. True artisans of the SC programme, it is they who, through their commitment in the field and the benevolent framework they set up, ensure the success of the programme.

In addition, a **psychologist responsible for individual guidance** within the Platform team takes care of the individual support of all young people. He/she sets up an appointment with each of them after a month of SC to take stock and define the young person's project

(expectations and objectives). He/she then remains available to follow more closely any young people encountering difficulties.

10. TRAINING (FOR THE YOUNG PEOPLE)

The training times constitute a fundamental element of the SC, developing reflexivity and maturity based on the practical experiences gained, and contributing little by little to the maturation of the young persons and to the reinforcement of their citizen conscience.

a. How many days?

Training sessions are provided by the Platform on (almost all) Fridays and are compulsory. They consist of 5 modules spread over 20 days.

b. By whom?

Most of the training is given by the Platform's educators. However, some training is outsourced and entrusted to partners (e.g. the European First Aid Certificate (BEPS), entrusted to the Red Cross).

c. Themes

The five 'modules' are:

1. General training

- Integration week: 4 days residential at the start of the programme (dynamic group activities, sharing of expectations and fears, joint work, practical information session, etc.)
- Five trainings are common to all young people: Democracy & me, First Aid, environment, interculturality, non-violent and interpersonal communication.



- o Two «à la carte» training courses are chosen from a range of fifteen or so themes (disability, intergenerational, European citizenship, etc.).

2. Sharing time

- o Joint work
- o Formalized sharing times
- o Exchange of knowledge and know-how

3. Maturation time

- o Self-knowledge module and direction-setting process

4. Assessment

- o Mid-way
- o At end of contract

5. Closing ceremony

- o Delivery of certificates
- o Testimonies table

11. NATIONAL MOBILITY

Mobility, whether regional or national, is recognised as an important emancipating factor. It is therefore encouraged and facilitated to the extent possible. Whenever possible, accommodation is provided at the place of assignment. Many young people thus carry out a SC in Flanders or vice versa in Wallonia every year to improve their command of Dutch or French respectively.

12. INTERNATIONAL MOBILITY

The SC is a Belgium-centred project. However, the Platform is developing cross-border (Greater Region) and international exchange projects, in particular with the Italian Servizio Civile programme. There are also other related international mobility programmes for young people (BIJ, JINT...). The Platform is putting more and more resources in place to develop this international dimension.

13. ASSESSMENT

The evaluation of the hosting structures is an **ongoing iterative process**. It begins at the first meeting as well as during the visit by the promotion manager to each young person's mission location and it continues throughout each mission with the feedback from the young person and the relationships maintained by the promotion managers with the tutors. In this way a de facto continuous quality control system exists which prevents and corrects any deviations. In principle, collaboration improves each time round. If there are any shortcomings, the matter will be addressed and if no improvement is seen, the collaboration will be terminated.

The **(self-)assessment of the young people** is also an ongoing process, facilitated by the close relationships between promotion managers and the young people. However, it also involves a series of more formal moments such as a first reference questionnaire included in the application, the interview that each young person has with the individual monitoring manager, the mid-term evaluation time, the "Citizen synthesis" at the end of the course (two days residential) as well as a short questionnaire six months after the end of SC to see where the young persons are in terms of their socio-professional integration. The sharing and maturation times also play an important role in the auto-evaluation of the young people.

This alternation between engagement in the field and time for reflection allows young people to become aware of the skills they have acquired, to grow and to gain direction. Personal supervision and maintaining a caring and stimulating environment are key elements in this system.

14. CERTIFICATION

With regard to certification, each young person receives two documents at the end of their Citizen Service:

1. a certificate detailing the mission, the tasks performed and the skills acquired, and which can be used on the job market

2. a formal certificate given during a closing ceremony which represents more a personal and symbolic recognition.

These two documents are provided by the Platform for Citizen Service.

15. PRE- AND POST-PARTNERS (LOGIC OF THE JOURNEY)

Upstream of SC, the Platform has several partners for recruiting young people, such as Forem (Walloon employment agency), VDAB (Flemish employment agency), CPAS/OCMW (benefits offices), youth orientation centres, CAW (community help organisations), AMO (youth assistance) etc., as well as youth aid associations such as Dynamo, Groep Intro, De Wissel etc. There is not yet any structural cooperation with the educational sector which would allow each young person to systematically receive an SC offer.

Downstream, there is a guide listing all the vocational training possibilities that can be used to suggest concrete paths for young people. The individual follow-up manager remains available after the end of the SC to listen to and guide the young people in their research. The Platform has no structural partnerships with the education or vocational integration sector.

However, the statistics of «positive exits» in the six months following the SC are very high (> 80%). It should be noted that this is a consequence and not an objective.

16. COMMUNICATION

A communication team is in charge of mobilising young people and communicating on the political progress of the project through the following channels:

- A monthly newsletter, mainly focused on the field (testimonies of young people and tutors, reports on events, favourites, progress in advocacy...)
- A sustained activity on social networks, in French and Dutch: Facebook, Twitter, Instagram...
- A campaign focused on the Communes²⁰⁸ (municipalities) with both political and operational objectives (informing young people, opening up new missions and partnerships).
- Advertising campaigns in the classic media (public billboards, magazine inserts, radio spots, etc.).
- Numerous canvassing activities in schools, colleges, universities, job fairs etc.
- Occasional publications (press releases and press conferences, book of testimonials for the Platform's tenth anniversary, memorandums, etc.).
- ...

17. NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS

In 2019, 273 young people completed an SC. The number of young people is stable in Brussels (118 young people per year) and in Flanders (50 young people per

year) and increasing in Wallonia (100 young people in 2018-19, 400 young people in 2019-20).

STATISTICS 2018-2020	
Total Number	839
Gender	
Male	50 %
Female	50 %
Nationalité	
Belgian	76 %
Foreign and binational	24 %
Highest diploma	
Graduate / Bachelor / Master	15 %
Upper Secondary	51 %
Lower Secondary	19 %
Primary	6 %
No diploma	3 %
Unknown	1 %
Status during CS	
Unemployment benefits	13 %
Unemployed in instertion phase (without benefits)	47 %
Unemployed without benefits	6 %
Student	23 %
Other	11 %
Situation 6 months after the CS (Numbers for Brussels in 2018.)	
In training	63 %
Job	16 %
Volunteering	16 %
Looking for a job or training	4 %

18. LEGAL FRAMEWORK

a. Status

Currently, young people in Citizen Service (CS) do not have their own status and operate within the framework of the 2005 Volunteering Act. This is restrictive and inadequate on two major points: allowances and exemption from job search – the major difference between traditional volunteering and SC being that the latter is carried out full time and for a long duration.

As far as compensation is concerned, the law on voluntary work imposes maximums (€34.71 per day and €1388.40 per year). This ceiling does not allow the Platform to pay more than €10 per day, i.e. just over €200 per month for six months. This is well below the European average. In France, Italy and Luxembourg, these allowances vary between 480 and 660 euros per month, an order of magnitude that the Platform would like to be able to grant to young people via a new status and a new legal framework.

With regard to the job-search exemption, which is necessary to be able to carry out a SC with peace of mind, the Platform has managed to obtain, sometimes after lengthy negotiations, agreements with the three regional bodies, namely Bruxelles-Formation and Actiris for the Brussels-Capital Region, the VDAB for Flanders and Forem in Wallonia. However, these agreements are not uniform and require a heavy administrative follow-up. There is therefore no structural solution, which is all the more reason to call for its own status.

Nevertheless, the status of a volunteer allows for the possibility to cumulate his or her benefits with those of the PCSW, unemployment and family allowances, which is an advantage.

In any case, Belgium is waiting for a specific status and a legal framework establishing the programme on a large scale in the country.

b. Social security and insurance

The Platform takes out civil and individual liability insurance for each young person in Citizen Service.

In terms of social security, there are no special provisions in the law on volunteering. Here again, a status specific to the SC would allow for better protection of the young person during the period of his or her Citizen Service.

19. INSTITUTIONAL ARCHITECTURE

a. Central agency

As we have seen, the SC is not institutionalised and operates within the framework of the Volunteers Act of 2005. There is therefore no official «agency» as such.

The only reference organisation is the Platform for Citizen Service (asbl). It has been implementing a SC since 2011 and, in this context, assumes all the functions and missions of an agency, from recruiting and supporting young people to approving host organisations and paying allowances.

As the volume and recurrence of subsidies (and therefore the number of participants supported) increases, the Platform is perfecting its role as an agency.



b. Main operators

The limited size of the Belgian programme allows the Platform to have direct contact with all of its members. For this reason there is no need of intermediaries. Two founding members of the Platform are, however, developing their own variants of SC in partnership with it: Solidarité and the CVB.

Solidarité is a youth organisation operating in Brussels and Liège which offers a citizens' year bringing together young people from 16 to 25 years old from all walks of life. Grouped together in teams of eight and supervised by a manager, they embark on a dynamic project based on three axes: volunteering, citizen reflection and defining life and career projects.

The CVB (Centre Vidéo de Bruxelles) runs a collective called «d'extérieur jour». It welcomes and accompanies young citizens in audiovisual production projects. They go out with their cameras in their hands to rub shoulders with the world and its complexity. They do everything themselves: choice of subject, choice of point of view, type of treatment, logistical organisation, shooting, sound recording, narrative constructions. This production workshop by young people and for young people is partly developed within the framework of the Service Citoyen.

20. ALLOWANCES

a. For the participants

Young people receive a reimbursement of €10 per day plus a maximum of €100 per month for the reimbursement of their transport costs, which equals a maximum of **€300 per month**. These allowances are paid by the Platform. The Platform's objective is to increase these allowances, via a specific tax status, to a minimum of €500 per month.

b. For the host organisations

Host organisations do not receive any payment from the Platform. They are not required to pay anything for the young people's contributions to their project. For them, SC is a **neutral operation from a strictly pecuniary point of view**.

21. FINANCING

a. Total budget

In Brussels, the Platform receives an annual subsidy of €400,000 from the Minister of the Economy and Vocational Training. This subsidy is associated with an annual funding of 350 000 € from the European Social Fund (ESF).

In Wallonia, in 2018, the Platform signed a three-year framework agreement with the Walloon Government, which grants progressive annual funding of €600,000 for 100 young people in 2018-19, €2,960,000 for 400 young people in 2019-20, and the same amount (€2,960,000) for the same number of young people in 2020-21.

In Flanders, funding from the Flemish Government associated with the European Social Fund grants the Platform a sum of 273,000 €/year for the implementation of 50 young people annually.

b. Financial backers

See previous item.

NOTES :

198. Compilation by Edouard Cruysmans, Research department of the Citizen Service Network.
199. Official positions of all democratic parties in Belgium on the establishment of a Citizens' Service in Belgium (public debate in Brussels on 28 March 2019)
200. On this subject, see the testimonies completed by the combined views of the sociologist Abraham Fransen and the educationalist Beno Schraepen in *Le Service Citoyen en Belgique, 25 jeunes témoignent*, CVB, 2019.
201. Act of 3 July 2005 on the rights of volunteers
202. Their presence was a strong argument. In 2016, the German Bundesfreiwilligendienst and affiliated programmes counted 101,000 young people, the French service civique 95,000, the Italian servizio civile 35,000 ..., all with remarkable results. For further details, see Annex 2.
203. The European Commission is also active in the field of SC with the European Solidarity Corps project launched in 2017 with the backing of President Juncker himself.
204. See proceedings of the Symposium (not yet published), Citizen Service Network.
205. Extract from the law on economic recovery and strengthening social cohesion (law of 18 July 2018): «§ 4 If the benefits are provided as part of a reactivation pathway approved by the competent service, the condition of professional activity as defined in § 1 of this Article is not required insofar as it concerns one of the following pathways:^{1°} a reactivation pathway for a job-seeker recognised by the competent employment and vocational training service; ^{2°} a citizen service route for young people approved by the accreditation body defined by decree; The above-mentioned journeys may last a maximum of one year and are neither extendable nor renewable after this maximum period».

206. François Ronveaux & Gaétane Mangez, *Le Service Citoyen en Belgique, 25 jeunes témoignent*, préface de David Van Reybrouck et Thomas d'Ansembourg, contributions d'Abraham Franssen et Beno Schraepen, Editions du CVB, 2019.

207. Survey of the Belgian population in relation to the introduction of a citizen service in Belgium, IPSOS, 2019

208. www.macommunepourleservicecitoyen.be/

VI. / LUXEMBOURG

1. NAME

Citizen Service in Luxembourg goes under the name of **service volontaire** (voluntary service – SV). It is managed by the Service national de la Jeunesse (National Youth Department).

SV exists in four different forms:

1. **Service volontaire national (National Voluntary Service – SVN)**
2. **Service volontaire écologique en Grande Région (Voluntary ecological service in the Greater Region²⁰⁹ – SVEGR)**

3. **Service volontaire européen (European Voluntary Service – SVE)**
4. **Service volontaire de coopération au développement (Voluntary Development Cooperation Service – SVCD)**

It should be noted that Service volontaire national (SVN) results from the merger in 2017 of two separate programmes, Service volontaire d'orientation (Voluntary Orientation Service – SVO) (generally for more disaffiliated young people) and Service volontaire civique (Voluntary Civic Service – SVCi) (in general persons with «stronger» profiles).

2. HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The SV has its roots in the **Service national de la jeunesse (National Youth Service – SNJ)**. Founded in 1964 at the request of young people and voluntary associations, the SNJ was initially an internal department of the Ministry of Education made up of specialized educators. In 1984 it became a state administration with its own permanent staff. Throughout its history, the SNJ has gradually widened its field of action and diversified its offering, which goes far beyond voluntary service²¹⁰. A common element linking these various initiatives is an **educational fibre in the strong sense of the term.**



Today under the authority of the Minister in charge of Youth, the SNJ has, in addition to its general administration, four fields of activity:

1. Training courses and support for educational projects, incl. training of leaders and mediators, supporting activities and projects with young people, co-organising camps and colonies de vacances, loan of equipment, rental of chalets and camp grounds, leave for youth workers (congé jeunesse) system, various networks and projects...

2. Three educational centres: Education and Sustainable Development (Hollenfels), Sports Discovery (Lultzhausen) and Welfare and Media Education (Marienthal)

3. Developing the quality of non-formal education: Monitoring of the educational quality of parental assistants and of education and reception services and services for young people (regional «youth» agents), coordination of continuing education, publications for educational staff, support and monitoring of innovative projects

4. Supporting the transition of young people to working life: local branches for young people, alternatives to inactivity (voluntary service of different kinds and practical workshops), international mobility (voluntary service abroad, work-holiday visa, au pair reception)

SV is part of the last action area (Support for the transition of young people to working life) which employs around 40 FTEs. Of these 40 FTEs, approximately 15 FTEs are specifically assigned to SV. Thus, as can be seen, SV is anchored in a **vast policy of non-formal education**, of which it forms only a modest part.

The birth of SV proper dates from the 90s when, in the wake of European discussions on transnational voluntary service and the introduction of European voluntary service (EVS) as part of the Youth in Action programme (1996), Luxembourg promulgated its first **Voluntary Service Act (1999)**. Its objectives were:

«... to promote the **solidarity-based participation of young people in voluntary activities** within the framework of non-governmental non-profit organisations. The intention is to promote the **active engagement** of young people in society by facilitating the exercise by them of **activities of general interest** which can offer them **formative experience.**»²¹¹

The 1999 Act was revised by **the Act of 31 October 2007 on voluntary service for young people** in order to clarify the existing framework, to establish voluntary service as a transition period between studies and professional life and to extend it as means of integrating young people in difficulty. It is this act that frames SV today. The 2007 Act

- defines the **terms and conditions** under which voluntary service projects take place
- gives young people engaging in a public utility project a **specific status**: that of volunteer
- designates the **Service National de la Jeunesse (SNJ) as coordinating body**
- appoints as responsible minister the **minister responsible for youth**
- covers both **SV in Luxembourg (SVN)** and **SV abroad (SVEGR, SVE, SVCD)**

3. OBJECTIVES

The 2007 Act defines the objectives of SV as follows:

«The purpose of voluntary service is to develop **solidarity between young people**, to promote their **active citizenship**, to foster mutual understanding between them as well as to constitute a **learning and orientation experience** for them by facilitating the exercise by them of **activities of general interest** within the framework of a specific **project** or within the framework of a national or community programme called a **volunteer programme**.»²¹²

It should also be remembered that SV is managed by the SNJ “Transition to active life” unit. We can therefore consider SV to be situated within the framework of activation policy in the broad sense of the term.

4. TARGET PUBLIC (ADMISSION CRITERIA)

a. Age

The minimum age is **16** (end of compulsory education), the maximum age **30**²¹³. For certain missions abroad, candidates must have reached their legal majority.

b. Nationality

The SV is open to young people of **all nationalities** holding **valid residence permits**²¹⁴.

c. Language

There are no legal prerequisites with regard to languages. However, in practice, many associations require the mastery of at least one national language (French, German or Luxembourgish); in some cases spoken knowledge of more than one is required.

d. Other

SV is genuinely open to all young people who meet these criteria. The only additional conditions are **motivation** and **participation in the introductory week**.

For those going abroad, participation in two preparatory training courses is compulsory:

- the “Me, volunteer?” training course
- the pre-departure training

5. HOST ORGANISATIONS

a. Area(s) of activity

As in most European Citizen Service programmes, the Luxembourg SV hosting or sending organisations are active in a wide range of areas of activity aimed at the common good:

«SV projects fall into the following areas: **social and educational work, culture, tourism, sport, commitment to peace and international reconciliation, environmental protection and development cooperation**.»²¹⁵

Almost all activities of public interest can fall within this framework.

b. Types of host organisations (non-profit organisations / public / private)

According to the 2007 Act

«May be approved ... as host organisations ... or as sending organisations ... **public or private law bodies** established in Luxembourg.»²¹⁶

In this way private undertakings are not excluded a priori. Of course, the vast majority of hosting and sending organisations are voluntary associations and public services. However, certain departments of private companies may also be approved, provided that the proposed mission is in the public interest and is non-profit-making (see next item).

c. Types of assignment

As far as the framework of the proposed missions is concerned, the most important elements are those mentioned in the objectives of SV, and in particular

that SV must constitute **«a learning and orientation experience»**²¹⁷ for the young people involved (see item 3).

Following on from this, the act contains the following further details:

« SV is a **full-time, non-profit and unpaid activity, for the benefit of the community ...**»²¹⁸

«SV may **neither jeopardize or replace paid jobs**. There is **no relationship of subordination** between the volunteer and the organisation concerned.»²¹⁹

These principles are open and allow a wide variety of types of activity to be carried out in the context of SV, ranging from administrative work to manual work, including entrepreneurship.

However, they are restrictive enough to constitute effective safeguards against potential abuses (underemployment, competing with paid employment, etc.). The SNJ guarantees these both upstream by an evaluation of the host or sending organisations (accreditation) and downstream by the follow-up of volunteers throughout their SV period (control).

d. Approval and control

Any organisation wishing to host volunteers or send them abroad must submit a detailed request to the SNJ:

«Approval is granted by the Minister, upon advice of the [voluntary service support] committee, on the basis of a request from the organisation setting out the reasons justifying the use of volunteers, **the nature of the missions** to be entrusted to them and **the organisation’s capacities for taking charge** of the volunteers.»²²⁰

This organisation must also provide the judicial records of its officer(s)²²¹ as well as demonstrate that it possesses the requisite human and organisational resources and financial capacity²²².

Based on this information, the SV support committee (see item 19a) / the SNJ, contacts the host organisation and organises a **field visit** to ensure that it meets the SV requirements. In this way, each organisation receives a visit and an assessment before being finally approved for a three-year renewable period.²²³

SV APPROVED ORGANISATIONS ²²⁴		
	2016	2017
Approved organisations	215	224
Of which new requests	30	16

This is only the first step in the process, because then, when a young person comes into contact with a host organisation and the possibility of SV arises, **this young person, his or her SNJ reference person and his or her tutor** in the host organisation will discuss the terms of the proposed SV and truly **«co-create» the mission**. This **tripartite personal relationship** will be maintained throughout the SV in order to ensure that it takes place in the best conditions.

It is this direct and continuous relationship between these three players that allows **de facto control** of missions and thus avoids any risk of underemployment or competition with paid employment. In the event of violation of SV principles, the approval can be withdrawn. This happens extremely rarely as the ongoing contacts fulfil an effective preventive function.

6. DURATION AND INTENSITY

a. Duration (number of months)

The Act states that:

«SV lasts... is **between 3 and 12 months, uninterrupted and full time**. Exceptions to the duration may, however, be granted by the Minister in duly substantiated individual cases, without the duration being greater than 18 months.»²²⁵

Nathalie Schirtz, in charge of SV, estimates its **average duration at 6 to 8 months**.

Exceptions may be given, for example, to disadvantaged young people participating in SVE group programmes, which last from two weeks to two months, or to certain young people who want to extend their SV by a month or two for certain specific reasons. These exceptional cases are always assessed **in the interest of the young person**.

b. Intensity (hours/week)

As mentioned above, SV is necessarily **«uninterrupted and full time»**, i.e. **between 30 and 35 h/week**.

In general, the entire time is devoted to the main mission. However, exceptions are possible to combine the mission with an academic catch-up work or training. In this way a young person can spend, for example, 20 hrs/week on his or her mission and 15 hrs/week in evening classes => 35 hrs/week in total.²²⁶

7. MANDATORY OR VOLUNTARY

a. Degree of mandatoriness:

«The SV ... is **the expression of a free and personal decision**» by the volunteer.»²²⁷

The SNJ is very attached to the voluntary aspect of its programme, that is to say the young person's personal initiative and motivation as the main drivers of the programme. There is no talk of making it mandatory.

b. Sanctions

The only possible sanctions are the loss of allowances in the event of failure to perform the mission. Any young person can leave SV whenever they want. One month's notice is requested for non-motivated departures. When the young person leaves to (re)take up a job of more than six months, no notice is required and he or she can leave overnight²²⁸. The only requirement is to notify the departure in writing to the host organisation and to the SV support committee.

8. SOCIAL MIXING AND INCLUSION

a. Recruitment (positive/negative discrimination?)

The Voluntary Orientation Service (SVO) was specifically targeted at disaffiliated young people. In 2017, the SVO and the SVCi merged to form the SVN. This targets all young people. In the latter, there is strictly speaking no positive discrimination, i.e. no reserved places or quotas to be reached.

However, several elements make it possible to sensitize as many young people as possible to SV. First

of all, there is of course the absence of prerequisites for engaging in SV. Then there is the proximity factor: 12 local offices are distributed across Luxembourg. Finally, there is communication in schools and participation in fairs which publish the programme's existence.

With the merger, particular attention is paid to ensuring that stronger profiles do not crowd out the weaker profiles in mission locations and that each young person receives personalized support. In addition, it should be noted that Luxembourg does not have as many problematic profiles as do the large urban centres of the bordering countries.

The young persons can also visit the SNJ website to find a mission that suits them. They contact the organisation and, if this contact proves positive, they discuss together until they agree on the mission. They then sign an agreement, the terms of which are defined in Article 5 of the 2007 act. During this whole process the young person is advised/accompanied by his or her SNJ reference person. This is the famous **«mission co-creation»**.

b. Collective dimension

The SV Act mentions, right from its first article, in the definition of its objectives (see item 3 above), **«the aim of developing solidarity between young people»**, **«of promoting mutual understanding between them** as well as **«the framework of a national or community programme»²²⁹**. The way these principles are to be applied is not described in the act, but the message is clear: **the collective understood in the sense of a group of young people is an essential dimension** of the Luxembourg SV.

In practice, all young people in SV are required to take part in an **«introductory week»** as well as in training days (**«meetings»**) about once every six weeks with

the same group. Additionally they take part in certain additional training with other groups/young people (see item 10).

The collective dimension is essential, says Nathalie Schirtz, head of the Luxembourg SV programme, because it teaches the volunteers to **work in a team**, which will be essential thereafter. It also allows them to make **new acquaintances** and **not to feel alone in the procedures required** by SV. The group dimension is really a pillar of the SV.

9. PERSONAL ACCOMPANIMENT

As we have seen in the previous items, Luxembourg volunteers benefit from **tailor-made support**. Young people who need more attention also get more.

Concretely, each young volunteer can count on:

- a **tutor** in the host organisation
- a **reference person** at the SNJ who accompanies him or her throughout the volunteer journey

a. Mentoring (and if so what training?)

With respect to the accompaniment of young people in host organisations, the act requires simply that these organisations:

«[have] the requisite human and organisational resources... to take charge of the person or persons they assigns to a specific SV.»²³⁰

In practice, this means that the SNJ requires that each volunteer be accompanied in the host organisation by an employee of the structure who acts as **tutor**. This

employee's role is to instruct and guide the young person throughout the SV.

Two training courses a year are offered for tutors on subjects that interest them. These training courses are given by SNJ reference persons and are not compulsory.

b. Other (educators, individual psychosocial assistance)

For more general accompaniment of the young people, there are the **SNJ reference persons ('référénts')**. Their role is not mentioned in the act other than, implicitly, in the commitment made by the State to «organise the training of young people»²³¹. In fact, these reference persons are the cornerstone of SV. It is they who accompany the young people throughout their SV, provide guidance, training, etc. They are the face of the SNJ for young people; it is they who allow a truly tailor-made approach for each young person. The reference persons are almost all **educators specialized** in personal accompaniment. They also look after the psycho-social aspects, including referring the young person to other services if necessary. There is approximately **one reference person for 25 young people at any one time**.

There are no other support personnel, except some occasional outside trainers.

10. TRAINING (FOR THE YOUNG PEOPLE)

The Act stipulates only that «the State organises the training of young people ...» and that it «participates in the expenses ... resulting from the assumption of the costs of ... training»²³². The number of days, trainers and themes are not specified.

a. How many days?

While the act does not specify a number of training days, this is however relatively constant in practice and breaks down as follows:

a. By whom?

TRAINING DAYS
5 days of «introductory week»
1 "meeting" day every 6 weeks
+ some additional training sessions (techniques etc.)
Total: about 15 days of training by SV

The training sessions are generally given by **SNJ reference persons** (specialized educators), who know the young people well and use these collective moments as educational levers. Only a small number of sessions are given by external trainers, for example for reasons of confidentiality.

c. Themes

According to Nathalie Schirtz, head of SV, the «introductory week» as well as the «meetings» are maturation times centred on the young **person's personal development: direction-giving, communication, citizenship etc.**, and never training sessions on societal or technical topics. The injunction of the act to include «initiation into language, history and political and social structures»²³³ is therefore not really implemented. On the other hand, additional training sessions, found by the young persons themselves or suggested by their tutors or reference

persons, can be of very different types, depending on the young person's mission or interests.

11. NATIONAL MOBILITY

National mobility is not an objective of the system. The young persons choose their missions as a function of their mobility. They are given free use of public transport for this²³⁴.

12. INTERNATIONAL MOBILITY

The principle of SV outside the country is enshrined in the act²³⁵. There are three different programmes: SVEGR, SVE and SVCD. The rules for these programmes roughly correspond to those for SVN. However, they each have certain different practical aspects.

13. ASSESSMENT

With regard to **assessment of the SNJ**, there is one internal assessment per year which is discussed during an annual meeting on this theme in order to improve the programme. There is also an occasional external evaluation: the last one, in 2010, had little much impact as the programme was running well.

With regard to **assessment of the young people**, there is first of all a kind of **continuous assessment** through the ongoing relationship between the young person and his or her reference person. In addition, each young person receives a "**certificate of engagement**" at the end of their SV, which contains a final assessment (see following item).

14. CERTIFICATION

The certificate of engagement that each volunteer receives at the end of their SV is a **mixture of self-assessment and external assessment (reference person and tutor)** covering «the dates, the nature of the tasks performed and ... a description of the training received and an evaluation of the experience acquired.»²³⁶ These certificates are written to measure based on a pre-established format. They are signed by the Minister and by the head of the host organisation.

15. PRE- AND POST-PARTNERS (LOGIC OF THE JOURNEY)

Regarding the routing of young people to SV, an important item is the SNJ presence at the **Maison d'Orientation** (Orientation Centre). At this one and same address are representatives of the various services that offer vocational and/or educational guidance, such as professional integration services, SV etc. It is a kind of “one stop shop” for young people and adults. Thanks to the **Maison**, young people can easily be referred to the service that suits them best. In addition to this, the SNJ has partnerships with **Maisons de jeunes** (Youth Centres), which guide young people in its direction. And it should not be forgotten that alongside the SV, the «core business» of the SNJ is colonies de vacances (summer camps). This is another direction through which many young people find their way to SV.

With regard to the accompaniment of young people after SV, the SNJ has links with **high schools** (lycées) and **training centres**. But it is above all the tailor-made support by the SNJ reference persons which is intended to help young people to find their bearings and take concrete steps in their chosen direction.

The results in terms of professional integration are as follows:

PROFESSIONAL INTEGRATION RESULTS OF SV ²³⁷		
	2016	2017
Without information	29 (= 19%)	32 (= 13%)
Unemployed	12 (= 8%)	40 (= 16%)
Employment promotion measures	3 (= 2%)	7 (= 3%)
Labour Contract	23 (= 15%)	10 (= 3%)
Back to training	88 (= 56%)	158 (= 64%)
Completed SVs	155	247

At least **71% of SVN participants report a positive outcome**; rising to 81% if we exclude those young people for whom we have no information.

16. COMMUNICATION

For SVN, there is one information session per week, rotating round the 12 SNJ branches. For the international SVs, there is one information meeting per month on school campuses. The SNJ also participates in two major fairs per year and makes presentations on request in high schools and youth centres. Finally, there is of course the website www.volontaires.lu which lists the different mission offers. There is no Facebook communication at SNJ headquarters level but this exists at local branch level.

SERVICE VOLONTAIRE - REGISTRATIONS AND COMMITMENTS ²³⁸		
	2016	2017
Registrations		
TOTAL	1015	1055
Commitments		
Voluntary Ecological Service in the Greater Region	10 (8 hostings, 2 detachments)	4 (2 hostings, 2 detachments)
Voluntary Development Cooperation Service	31	26
National Voluntary Service	276	259
European Voluntary Service	56 (27 hostings, 29 detachments including 13 short term)	42 (19 hostings, 23 detachments including 16 short term)
TOTAL	373	331

17. NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS

There are approximately **1000 registrations** on the site per year. In total, after selection, reorientations, drop-outs (relatively infrequent), around **300 young people per year actually start SV**, or one in three.

2016 was the last year before the merger of SVO (“weaker” profiles) and SVCi (“stronger” profiles). There were 210 new registrants in the SVO and 66 new registrants in the SVCi, which gives an indication of the demography of the young people in SVN.

Counting in the young people who started their voluntary service in 2016 and who were still active in 2017, we arrive at a **total of 519 volunteers for 2017**.

18. LEGAL FRAMEWORK

a. Status

The Act of 31 October 2007 on voluntary service for young people defines the **status of “volunteer”**. The legal framework, as mentioned above (item 5), is as follows:



«SV is a **full-time, non-profit and unpaid activity**, for the benefit of the community, and is the **expression of a free and personal decision on the part of the volunteer**. SV service is incompatible with any remunerated activity, except the production of scientific, literary or artistic works as well as ancillary teaching activities.»

«SV may **neither jeopardize or replace paid jobs**. There is **no relationship of subordination** between the volunteer and the organisation concerned»

«**The provisions of the Labour Code do not apply to young people's SVs.**»²³⁹

The main points are all here: public interest, job market neutrality, exemption from the Labour Code.

It is the volunteering agreement signed by the young person and the host organisation in accordance with the provisions of the act which defines the acquisition of this status.

In this context, the State undertakes to:

«[issue] to each volunteer a **certificate attesting to the volunteer status**, conferring on him or her **the same rights granted to pupils and students** and guaranteeing free access to public transport in Luxembourg.»²⁴⁰

The State also undertakes to financially support both the volunteers and the host and sending organisations (see next item and item 21b).

b. Social security and insurance

The 2007 Act specifies on the one hand that the host or sending organisation should commit in the contract that it signs with the volunteer:

«to affiliate the volunteer with **health, pension and accident insurance** for the duration of the SV, in so far as the volunteer does not already have social protection in his or her country of origin.»

«to take out **civil liability insurance** with an insurer duly approved in Luxembourg for the benefit of the volunteer for the duration of the SV.»²⁴¹

On the other hand, the act stipulates that the State:

«participates in the expenses occasioned by the reception or the sending of the volunteer resulting from the assumption of responsibility... for **insurance** ...»

«pays the **social security contributions** of volunteers in accordance with the provisions of the Social Insurance Code.»²⁴²

Article 8 of the act sets out the provisions that modify the social insurance code to include young people in SV. Article 9 sets out the provisions concerning family allowance, which can also be maintained.

Thus, **the host organisation must systematically affiliate its volunteers with the necessary insurance and these expenses are reimbursed by the State.**

19. INSTITUTIONAL ARCHITECTURE

a. Central agency

The **SNJ**, or at least the **“Transition to working life” unit**, unequivocally constitutes the central agency of SV. Its operational role can be summarized as follows:

- assessing applications for approval / accreditation

- evaluating voluntary service projects
- promoting exchange between voluntary service organisations
- informing young people of voluntary service programmes
- offering training to volunteers
- providing accompaniment to volunteers
- financing

To guide its work, there is an **SV support committee** made up of representatives of different ministries and Luxembourg young people, to whom the act assigns the missions of:

1. «giving its opinion on the matters referred to in the present act;
2. giving its opinion on the capacity of the host or sending organisations to fulfil the obligations provided for ...;
3. making proposals relating to the training of young volunteers, to personal accompaniment and to the evaluation of projects;
4. offering, if necessary, mediation between the volunteer and the host or sending organisation.»²⁴³

b. Main operators

Given Luxembourg's small size, there is no need for any intermediary structure. The SNJ plays the role of central agency and all the host or sending organisations are in direct and ongoing contact with this body.

20. ALLOWANCES

a. For the participants

By law, the «monthly assistance» paid to the volunteers may not exceed de € 800/month²⁴⁴. In practice, it corresponds to:

ALLOWANCES, YOUNG PEOPLE IN SV, LUXEMBOURG (2017)	
Pocket money	€198.64 /month
Subsistence allowance	€262.20 /month
Financial assistance (for adults - otherwise family allowances)	€ 206.58 / month
Total	€ 664,42 / month

These allowances are the largest in Europe for this type of programme. They are paid by the SNJ.

Other advantages for the young person:

- Status
- Affiliation to social security (sickness, pension, accident insurance)
- Training
- Personal accompaniment
- Free transportation

b. Organisations hôtes

Host organisations do not receive any premium but are reimbursed just about all costs (transport, training, insurance, pocket money as well as accommodation and subsistence where applicable). Organizations sending young people abroad receive a one-off **payment of € 500** for administrative costs (telephone, transport, visa), which in many cases they pass on to the young people.

21. FINANCING

a. Total budget

Total budget: EUR 3 million (2017).

b. Financial backers

While many costs are advanced by the host or sending organisations, these are almost all covered by the State (SNJ) in the last instance (see previous item).

The SNJ has a global structural budgetary allocation, plus two variable budget lines, for (1) youth allowances, (2) support for sending organisations.

NOTES :

209. Greater Region (or Greater Luxembourg – French: Grande Région) is the area of Saarland, Lorraine, Luxembourg, Rhineland-Palatinate, Wallonia.

210. SNJ key figures for 2016: 145 employees, 450 external intervening parties (40 exempted teachers, 90 external trainers, 100 «freelance» leaders, 220 «camp and colonies de vacances leaders»); 40,000 young people took part in 1,900 activities; 3,000 participations in 200 training activities; 250 partner organisations and institutions, 25 new publications.

211. Act of 28 January 1999, Art. 1

212. Act of 31 October 2007, Art. 1

213. Act of 31 October 2007, Art. 4.1

214. Act of 31 October 2007, Art 4.5 and 5.6

215. Act of 31 October 2007, Art. 2

216. Act of 31 October 2007, Art. 3.1

217. Act of 31 October 2007, Art. 1.1

218. Act of 31 October 2007, Art. 2.3

219. Act of 31 October 2007, Art. 2.4

220. Act of 31 October 2007, Art. 3.2

221. Act of 31 October 2007, Art. 3.3

222. Act of 31 October 2007, Art. 3.4

223. Act of 31 October 2007, Art. 3.6

224. See SNJ visit, 23 November 2017

225. Act of 31 October 2007, Art. 5.2

226. See SNJ visit, 23 November 2017

227. Act of 31 October 2007, Art. 2.3

228. Act of 31 October 2007, Art. 5.8

229. Act of 31 October 2007, Art. 1.1

230. Act of 31 October 2007, Art. 3.4

231. Act of 31 October 2007, Art. 6

232. Act of 31 October 2007, Art. 6.4

233. Act of 31 October 2007, Art. 6.2

234. Act of 31 October 2007, Art. 6.2

235. Act of 31 October 2007, Art. 1.2

236. Act of 31 October 2007, Art. 5.7

237. See SNJ visit, 23 November 2017

238. See SNJ visit, 23 November 2017

239. Act of 31 October 2007, Art. 2

240. Act of 31 October 2007, Art. 6

241. Act of 31 October 2007, Art. 6

242. Act of 31 October 2007, Art. 6

243. Act of 31 October 2007, Art. 7

244. Act of 31 October 2007, art. 6.6

THE CITIZEN SERVICE IN EUROPE						
	GERMANY	FRANCE	ITALY	NETHERLANDS	BELGIUM	LUXEMBURG
NAME	Bundesfreiwilligendienst (BFD), Freiwilliges Soziales Jahr (FSJ), Freiwilliges Ökologisches Jahr (FÖJ)	Service Civique	Servizio Civile Universale	Maatschappelijke diensttijd (MDT)	Service Citoyen / Samenlevingsdienst (no law, no status)	Service volontaire national
DURATION	6 to 24 months	6 to 12 months	12 months 30 h / week	General MDT: 2 weeks to 6 months Town MDT: 6 months full time	6 months 35 h / week	3 to 12 months 35 h / week
POCKET MONEY	BFD : € 350 State = X € per host org. FSJ / FÖJ : €0 State + X € per host org. + Land	€ 580 (+ € 108 if social conditions apply) (2019)	€ 439 / month (2019)	When full-time: € 170 / month + sometimes 500 € on completion	+/- € 200 / month + max € 100 / month transport => +/- € 300 / month	€ 667 / month + advantages (2017)
TRAINING DAYS	25 days (in 12 months)	2 days : 1 theory + 1 practical (Some NGO's do 20)	Min 13 days, average 17 in 12 months	Variable. In the Town MDT: 1 day per week	20 days	15 days (+ 5 days intro week + «journée rencontres»)
HOW MANY PARTICIPANTS	101 855 (2018)	140 080 (2019)	42 050 (2019)	General MDT: 9 500 Town MDT: 2 500 (2019)	273 (2019)	420 (2019)
BUDGET	€ 263 millions + accompanying measures from the Länder (2018)	€ 539 millions (2019)	€ 302 millions (2019)	€ 100 millions (2020)	€ 2,2 millions (2019)	€ 3 millions + staff costs of the SNJ (2017)

Conclusion

This overview of the six national Citizen Service programmes in Europe has made it possible to highlight their common strengths and the specificities of each one separately. The most tangible results are summarized in the summary table above. Other elements also appear, which it is interesting to review by way of conclusion.

What emerges from the analysis of the **German system** is above all its deep roots in society. Its two main currents, the Bundesfreiwilligendienst (BFD), coordinated by the federal state, and the Freiwilliges Soziales / Ökologisches Jahr (FSJ / FÖJ), coordinated by civil society and the Länder, have a history stretching back uninterruptedly to the immediate post-war period, with a real tradition of voluntary youth engagement. On average, 100,000 young people participate each year.

The legal framework of the two programmes is different but related. Common features include the involvement of BAFzA, the federal administrative body responsible for financial control, a fairly high number of training days (25 days for 12 months), initial political training etc. The main difference is that the BFD is more centralized than the FSJ / FÖJ. The BAFzA plays a more important role there and there are federal allowances while there are none for the FSJ / FÖJ.

The fact remains that the two models are both marked by the German culture of subsidiarity and that many tasks are assumed by grass-roots operators. The most significant element of this system is the «central quality structure», that is a network of large operators and host organisations involved in the accreditation, management and (self-)evaluation of

volunteers. Each host organisation is necessarily part of this structure. This results in a remarkable quality control system.

The **French** Civic Service system is both newer and more centralized. With the abolition of national service in 1997, civic service too was discontinued. It was the riots of 2005 and then the attacks of 2015 that prompted the political world to turn resolutely to this type of programme as a political response to the problems of social cohesion. Capitalizing on the experience of certain grass-roots citizen initiatives, France then acquired a large-scale programme in just a few years (140,000 young people in 2019).

With a remarkable economy of means, the Agence pour le Service Civique coordinates this programme and its continuous development in both the voluntary association world and in the public sphere. While in Germany the conditions vary a lot from one programme to another and from one mission to the next, in France all young people enjoy the same – and sizeable – allowances, and everything is done to make civic service accessible to the greatest number. Civic Service lasts on average 8 months.

Civic Service remains, however, relatively competitive, offers little training (two days), and pays limited attention to the collective dimension, while the somewhat random monitoring has given rise to a certain number of abuses in terms of competition with paid employment. It is then up to the associations to solidify their offering accordingly, which some are doing with considerable expertise.

In the case of **Italy**, the Servizio Civile came into being gradually, as conscientious objectors fought for the

right to civic service. When military service was abolished in 2005, the Servizio Civile immediately picked up the ball with a large-scale autonomous programme. Since 2017, the Servizio Civile Nazionale has become the Servizio Civile Universale (SCU), a more centralised and inclusive system.

The SCU lasts from 8 to 12 months and includes a minimum of 13 days of training. Support for young people has been reinforced and a new measure offers the opportunity to all young people who wish to spend 3 months of their SCU in another EU member country.

The Dutch 'Maatschappelijke Diensttijd' or MDT, on the other hand, is growing rapidly. Initiated in 2018, it already has a budget of 100 million euros per year in 2020. It is divided into two main parts: (1) the general MDT, which is very flexible in terms of duration and intensity and (2) the MDT for municipalities, modelled on the Belgian model, which lasts 6 months on a full-time basis. More than 12,500 young people have already taken part, including 2,500 in the MDT for municipalities.

The Luxembourg programme, on the other hand, is much smaller, as a consequence of the size of this country. It is however interesting for the important role given to «reference persons», that is to say specialized educators who are employed directly by the State and who offer tailor-made accompaniment for each young person. This makes it possible to reach parts of the population that would otherwise be out of reach.

This qualitative approach is probably due to the fact that the Luxembourg programme does not have its roots in civic service as an alternative to compulsory military service but that, ever since its creation in 1964, civic service has been considered as an educational project in the strong sense of the term.

Civic Service lasts on average from 6 to 8 months and includes around 15 days of training.

Finally, the **Belgian Citizen Service** programme has not yet been institutionalized. As the initiative of a Platform bringing together more than 700 organisations to date, the Service Citoyen/ Samenlevingsdienst operates today within the framework of the law on volunteering, pending a dedicated legislative framework. Regional funding, more or less structural depending on the Regions and succeeding Governments, is gradually permitting its gradual and coherent extension throughout the country, but at a scale not comparable to countries where the programme is institutionalized.

Focused on 18–25 year olds, it now lasts six months and has 20 days' training. The collective dimension is structurally organised, with volunteers placed in groups (promotions) of 25 participants. While participants evolve alone at their place of mission, the group meets regularly for training, adding a real dynamic of mixing and integration to the system. The programme is supervised by the heads of promotion and persons responsible for providing individual accompaniment, tailor-made to the young people and in this way permitting the inclusion of more vulnerable groups.

The groundwork has been done and Belgium only lacks a programme institutionalised by the federal state, like other European programmes, granting a real status to the participants and organised on a large scale thanks to appropriate funding in order to satisfy the legitimate expectations of its population²⁴⁵.

NOTE :

²⁴⁵. According to a 2019 IPSOS poll, 70% of Belgians are in favour of the introduction of the Citizen Service in Belgium.

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