

Disaster Preparedness and Relief Cooperation - The Key Role of Volunteers' Teams (Polish Case)

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European Economic and Social Committee

“The European Year of Voluntary Activities Promoting Active Citizenship (2011)”



European Year of Volunteering 2011

European Council Decision of 27 November 2009



2

European Year of Volunteering Objectives

- Create an enabling environment for volunteering
- Empower volunteer organisations
- Recognise volunteering activities
- Raise awareness about value & importance of volunteering



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Volunteers in Europe

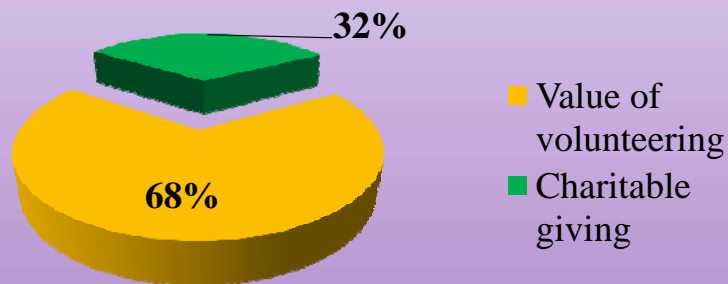
94 million people

23% of Europeans
> 15 years old



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Volunteering Input as a Share of Total Private Philanthropy (36 Countries)



Source: The Johns Hopkins Comparative Nonprofit Sector Project



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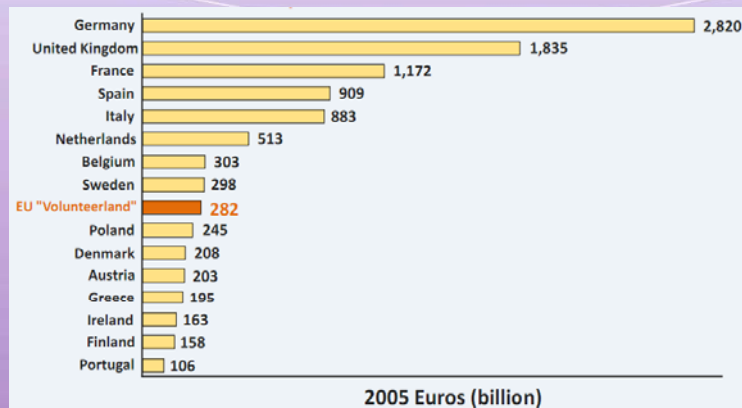
Defining Volunteering

„Unpaid **non-compulsory work**; that is, time individuals give **without pay** to activities performed either **through organizations or directly** for others **outside their own households**”



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EU Volunteering Economy vs. National Economies



Source: The Johns Hopkins Comparative Nonprofit Sector Project

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Volunteer! Make a Difference



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Volunteers' Main Fields of Activity

- sports and recreation
- social welfare and health
- culture
- education
- **accident, rescue and fire services**
- environment and animal welfare
- law and crime



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Polish Case

**The Association of Voluntary Fire
– Brigades of the Republic of
Poland is the largest volunteering
organisation in Poland**



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Some Facts about Poland (1)

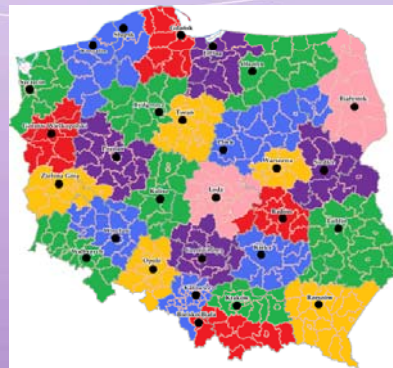
- Ethnic groups: 96.7% Poles and 3.3% others
- Area: 312,685 km²
- Population: 38,186,860, with density of 120/km²



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Some Facts about Poland (2)

- 16 provinces
- 379 countries
- 2,478 communes



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The Association of Voluntary Fire – Brigades – Some Facts (1)

- established in 1921, after the regional associations have been united
- local organizational units according to the administrative division of the country
- composed of 16,421 Voluntary Fire – Brigades



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The Association of Voluntary Fire – Brigades – Some Facts (2)

- VFBs utilize 15,913 fire stations, most often build by themselves;
- These are often multipurpose buildings serving the whole community - concentrating cultural life of towns and villages.



State Fire
Service:
508
fire stations



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Local Units - Coverage

	Country administrative units	VFB units	Coverage (in %)
Provinces	16	16	100%
Countries	379	339	89.5%
Communes	2,478	2,229	90.0%



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Main Aims

- Actions in favour of life, health and property protection against fire, natural disasters, ecological threats, or other local dangers;
- Performing tasks imposed by the public authorities in the area of fire and flooding protection, rescue service and public security;
- Education of children and youth on fire protection;
- Promotion of sport, culture, art and traditions.



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The Rescue Capacity (1)

- Over 740,000 members: active, supporting, honorary and members of Youth Fire – Brigades
- **460,000 members** taking active part in rescue operations (age 18 – 60 + health certificate + trained)



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State Fire Service:
28,000
fire fighters



The Rescue Capacity (2)

- 3,729 VFBs (21% of total) are in the Nationwide Rescue and Fire - Extinguishing System (managed by the State Fire Service)
- they can provide 18,000 crews (a fire engine with a crew) + secure additional teams for fire engines
- they perform 75% of all VFBs rescue operations
- they liquidate independently about 33% of all threats in the country





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VFBs Rescue Actions in 2010

	Total in the country	VFB	VFB share in %
	737,000	317,000	43%
	3,150,000	1,614,000	51%



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Rescue and Fire – Extinguishing Units

- 15,720 VFBs equipped and trained to take up an rescue and fire – extinguishing action
- In 2010 participated in 119,690 actions (**88% of all fire – extinguishing actions in the country**)



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Special Rescue Units – VFBs (1)



3,315 VFBs (20% of all VFBs) equipped and trained to provide medical help and rescue actions



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Special Rescue Units – VFB (2)



2,962 VFBs (18% of all VFBs) equipped and trained to provide technical and rescue actions



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Special Rescue Units – VFB (3)



1,095 VFBs (7% of all VFBs) equipped and trained to provide help during floods and perform rescue actions in and on water



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Special Rescue Units – VFB (4)



130 VFB equipped and trained to manage chemical threats



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Special Rescue Units (5)

In 2010 they participated in 230,980 actions (**65% of all special rescue actions in the country**)



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Other VFBs Activities



Over 7,200 Youth Teams operate under the auspices of VFBs . They unite over 92,000 members, including almost 28,000 girls.

VFBs support national traditions, culture and art (811 VFB brass bands, 356 ensembles, ...)



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Thank You for Your Attention



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