



The European
Year of Volunteering
2011

Volunteer Development Scotland Information Update

European Year of Volunteering 2011

Volunteer Development Scotland with its European partners has been active for 4 years in the campaign to gain recognition and approval for a special year with a volunteering theme across Europe. Pleasingly, this campaign was successful and in 2009 the European Commission, the European Parliament and the Council of the European Union announced that there will be a European Year of Volunteering in 2011. An official logo has been adopted (see above) and a slogan – ***Volunteer! Make a difference.***

Plans are still at an early stage, particularly around how EYV2011 can best be used as a vehicle to advance volunteering within Scotland. Volunteer Development Scotland seeks to provide leadership on this opportunity and so is seeking to engage with members and other interested bodies to gather ideas and other feedback in order to inform developments. More recently, we have very much welcomed the Scottish Government interest in the Year. They have asked Volunteer Development Scotland to work with them to support the Year. We want the Scottish response to reflect the interests of the range of volunteering organisations.

Following is some key information about EYV2011:

- The official title is the “European Year of Voluntary Activities Promoting Active Citizenship 2011”, with the longer title reflecting the differences in language and definition across the 27 member states, but there is official approval to commonly refer to the European Year of Volunteering 2011 (or “EYV2011”)
- The Objectives for EYV2011 are to:
 - Work towards an enabling environment for volunteering in the EU
 - Empower organisers of voluntary activities to improve the quality of voluntary activities
 - Recognise voluntary activities
 - Raise awareness of the value and importance of volunteering
- The budget is very small and in the main will be used up by high-level promotional activities. The reality is that volunteering organisations will not benefit from the Year by receiving funding. Instead, the opportunity is one of being resourceful in any approach to the Year and seeking to capitalise on the Year as a happening.
- The UK Government is coordinating responses through the Office for Civil Society. Discussions are ongoing about how England, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales will work together and separately on aspects of EYV2011. An emerging common theme is around the question, “What can I contribute to my community?”
- A communications agency has been brought in at the European level and they are charged with producing a toolbox of materials and activities such as: posters including the logo and slogan; flyers on volunteering in Europe; a website for the Year that will include showcasing volunteers’ stories; and an EYV “Tour of Europe”.

If you would like to contribute to the discussions around EYV2011, please feed your ideas and comment to Volunteer Development Scotland on vds@vds.org.uk.