

Volunteering Infrastructure in Europe

Template for Contributors – to be filled in based on the guiding questions as attached

Date:

Country: Germany

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1. Volunteering infrastructure concept definition

In Germany the form of association in which volunteering takes place is the “Verein” or “eingetragene Verein” (e.V.). Furthermore the Churches, welfare associations and public institutions such as schools, museums etc. play an important role. In a broader sense this can be called the basic infrastructure where volunteering is organised.

In the narrow sense the term “volunteering infrastructure” within the German debate contains organisations and institutions such as volunteer agencies, volunteer centres or self-help contact points that have been established over the past three decades. These facilities comply with the growing need of many volunteers for an independent advice, matching and placing.

Over the past three decades many different forms of infrastructure facilities have developed, that each have different priorities. Some for example address specific target groups such as senior volunteers (50+) or disabled persons (self-help contact points). All infrastructure facilities however have the common aim to act as information hubs and development centres for volunteering and civic engagement.

Overview and figures of existing infrastructure facilities in Germany:

- Freiwilligenagenturen/-zentren (volunteer agencies/-centres) ca. 300
- Seniorenbüros (senior centres) ca. 250
- Selbsthilfekontaktstellen (self-help contact points) 212
- Mehrgenerationenhäuser (Multi-Generation-Centres/Houses – established through the ESF-Programme “Mehrgenerationenhäuser” since 2006) 500
- Bürgerstiftungen (community foundations) 237

Further types of facilities with similar functions:

- Local contact points within the community administrations or as independent hub
- Community offices for citizens (in the frame of the ESF-Programme „Soziale Stadt“)
- Focus points in rural areas for the local and village development
- Neighbourhood-Centres (Nachbarschaftshäuser)
- Socio-Cultural Centres
- Local initiatives in the Agenda-21 context

- Parental- and Family Centres
- Care Centres

Most of these infrastructure facilities are rather small in size and capacities (1-2 professional staff-members). Some few facilities however have up to 20 employees.

The main function of the infrastructure in Germany is to act as information hubs and development centres for volunteering. On the one hand they counsel and place volunteers into local projects and groups. On the other hand they explore, develop and transfer innovative projects and new forms of volunteering. Especially mentoring projects have developed in Germany in large numbers, where senior volunteers support young persons at the gateway from school to professional life.

Besides that there is a large sector of organisations and associations following well defined purposes in specific areas that work with volunteers. The voluntary fire brigades or rescue services belong to this category. But also sport clubs and cultural initiatives such as laity chorals or amateur theatres traditionally are organised by and with volunteers since the 19th century. Furthermore there is a growing number of professionally lead institutions such as kindergartens, schools, senior residences, hospitals etc. that work with volunteers.

2. Volunteering landscape

Between 1999 and 2002 an Enquiry-Committee “Future of Civic Engagement” of the German Parliament has established a commonly accepted definition of “bürgerschaftliches Engagement” (civic engagement/volunteering) and defines it as including activities that are

- oriented towards the common good and benefit
- voluntary without an employer-employee-relationship and its legal framework
- take place in the public sphere and address groups outside the familial circle
- unpaid and not for financial gain (although in certain cases a limited payment as a form of compensation may be acceptable).

Since 1999 a national survey on volunteering (Freiwilligen survey) is compiled every five years based on 15,000-20,000 interviews. According to the latest survey of 2009, 36 percent of the German population above 14 years of age volunteer. This figure remains stable since 1999.

Further findings of the survey are:

- More men than woman are active in volunteering (40 vs. 32 percent)
- There is a considerable gap between the new federal states in the East of Germany and the West: In the East fewer people volunteer as a civil society infrastructure of independent associations was not existing before 1989 and is still developing
- Families with several children are more often engaged in volunteering than singles
- More volunteers can be found in rural areas than in urban centres (40 percent vs. 30 percent).
- Another 30 percent of the German population is seen as active in society as they are members in sport clubs or choirs.
- About one third of those who do not yet volunteer are generally willing to do so.
- The volunteering engagement of the youth has been slightly declining over the past ten years (from 37% in 1999 to 35% in 2009). Partly the growing intensity of school and university obligations and the shorter study times seem to be responsible for this development.

- The volunteering engagement of the age group above 60 has increased considerably over the past ten years (from 31 to 37 percent).

Since the International Year of Volunteers (IYV) 2001 the public awareness of the value of volunteering and civic engagement has constantly increased. This is visible e.g. through the growing number of infrastructure facilities but also through the growing number of awards and prizes for volunteers and outstanding persons. Since 2004 the annual “Woche des bürgerschaftlichen Engagement” (Week of Civic Engagement) is organized successfully as one of the main instruments for awareness raising and recognition for volunteering by the National Network for Civil Society (Bundesnetzwerk Bürgerschaftliches Engagement – BBE) and gathers each year around 1,500 projects and initiatives on local, regional and national level (www.engagement-macht-stark.de). Since 2009 a national volunteering award has been proclaimed (www.geben-gibt.de). Furthermore an increase in the media coverage on volunteering can be recognised over the past years. In 2009 the main German broadcasting network, the ARD, has designated a whole thematic week to volunteering.

3. Legal framework on volunteering and its implementation

a) Legal Provisions relating to Volunteering

Currently work has begun on a comprehensive legal foundation for voluntary services („Freiwilligendienste“). These services include the obligation to commit to at least 20 hours a week to charitable work. Voluntary services are especially attractive to teenagers and young adults who want to orientate themselves professionally. The proposed law on voluntary services is intended to regulate among other things the extent and duration of voluntary services, the possibility of training and the amount of subsidy from public funds for the volunteer placements. However, recent developments make it questionable whether or not this law will be adopted. With the announcement of the Federal Ministry of Defence to end conscription in 2011, also the debate on the future of voluntary services has intensified. Until then there have been several forms of services: The youth-services on state-level “Voluntary Social Year” and “Voluntary Ecological Year” as well as specific voluntary-service-programmes by some federal ministries with different target-groups and orientations. From July 2011 a new National Voluntary Service Programme will be available for all generations. Whether or not it will be coming up: A voluntary-service-law would apply only to a small group of people (around 80,000 placements including 35,000 placements in the voluntary social year of the states and 35,000 placements in the newly proposed federal volunteer service “Bundesfreiwilligendienst” replacing the German Civilian Service with the termination of conscription in 2011).

Apart from the regulation of the voluntary service there is no general law on volunteering. However, there is an announcement of such a law in the coalition agreement (www.cdu.de/portal2009/29145.htm) of the current federal government of 2009. In October 2010 the German government has published a National Strategy on Volunteering that was elaborated following a broad consultation process through the “National Forum for Engagement and Participation” organised by the BBE (www.b-b-e.de/index.php?id=forum). The National Strategy has been broadly criticised by civil society as it falls behind already agreed principles and contents. In the eyes of most voluntary organisations and third-sector-associations a comprehensive law for civic engagement would be helpful, but in order to achieve this, a broad public discussion would be needed. This discussion would have to be led without constraint, time pressure and with all relevant actors in this area included. The mechanisms and results of the National Forum for Engagement and Participation could be used as a starting point.

So far, the legal provisions relevant to volunteering can be found in different law texts. For instance, this includes the Sozialgesetzbücher (social codes) II and XII (volunteering by unemployed or welfare recipients), Sozialgesetzbuch VIII (open youth/street work), the Bürgerliches Gesetzbuch (Civil Code: public insurance for volunteers), the Income Tax code (definition of charitable/ non-profit status of bodies, rules for tax-free expense allowance of

Volunteers). Further on there are several regulations in the federal states, who have the main responsibility for the promotion of volunteering. These include e.g. regulations on exemption from volunteer assignments during work hours, rules for reimbursement of expenses of the volunteer fire department, etc.

Because of the lack of an overarching and comprehensive law on volunteering, also a legal regulation is missing on the distinction between civic engagement and professional activities like contract and secondary employment exercised to generate income. According to experts there is also a need for a reform regarding the definition of the charitable status of public bodies. In this case also European law is involved (e.g. services directive). Many non-profit organizations working with volunteers are at the same time market participants and under intense competitive pressure. This makes it important to consider protective mechanism against the misuse of voluntary activities in profit-oriented organisations.

It would be mainly the task of the Federal Government and the Bundestag (Federal Parliament) to create a legal basis in coordination and cooperation with the federal states (Bundesländer) and the consultation of the voluntary sector.

b) Funding Provisions in the legal context

In the federal structure of the Bundesrepublik (Federal Republic of Germany), that distinguishes between federal national level, state level and municipal level, it is primarily the local level (municipalities, cities and counties), which funds the infrastructure of volunteering permanently. The municipalities cooperate with many local independent actors such as charities and associations. Federal and state governments gave and give significant impulses regarding the construction of infrastructure through pilot projects. For example, the Federal Ministry for Family Affairs funded a large pilot programme "Mehrfamilienhäuser": 500 multigenerational houses (www.mehrgenerationenhaeuser.de) each received 40,000 Euro per year (term is five years). Also earlier programmes of this Ministry were relevant to infrastructure e.g. the in the 1990s funding of offices for elderly people (www.seniorenbueros.org) and empowerment/self-help agencies (www.seko-bayern.de).

They were the start for major infrastructure developments. At the moment the BMFSFJ (Ministry of Family Affairs) promotes the Service Centre "Initiative for Community Foundations" (www.die-deutschen-buergerstiftungen.de) to advance the nationwide establishment of community foundations. In the next years, the federal government is focussing on these two types of infrastructure (multi-generational housing, community foundations), while other infrastructures such as volunteer agencies are only sponsored utmost marginally.

Beyond that the BMFSFJ supports the national coordinating structures for the volunteer agencies (BAGFA, see [below](#)) with annual subsidies.

Other funding schemes can be found on state level: The state of Bavaria promotes the establishment of 40 voluntary agencies (www.bagfa.de) in lagging rural areas. Lower-Saxony supports one elderly citizen service office (www.ms.niedersachsen.de) in every county and every district town, which is aimed primarily at the generation 50+, to win them for civic engagement. At the moment the Hanseatic City of Hamburg (www.hamburg.de/ehrenamtliches-engagement) considers to establish up 40-50 neighbourhood offices.

In the coming years the federal and state level as well as the municipalities have declared to coordinate the promotion and funding policy for infrastructure development in a better way. In any case, all levels of government want to sustainably secure particularly the existing infrastructure and sponsor them permanently, but not to initiate any new pilot programmes. In order to reach this goal they have to revise their strong preference, as seen in the last two decades, for short-term pilot projects.

However, it is very difficult to merge the various developments, initiated in recent years by the Bund, Bundesländer and local authorities. In addition, civil society actors must be involved because they are the most notable responsible body for infrastructure facilities. One can

comment critically, that especially the federal level has to learn how actors communicate at every level with stakeholders from civil society.

4. Structure of the non-profit sector involved in volunteering

a) Volunteering infrastructure

In Germany there is no centralized national volunteer centre, but many associations which represent the types of infrastructure at the federal level. There is the "Bundesarbeitsgemeinschaft der Freiwilligenagenturen" BAGFA as the national coordinating body of the volunteer agencies. Also on state level there are some associations of volunteer centres (www.lagfa.de), for example, in North Rhine-Westphalia and Bavaria.

The NAKOS (www.nakos.de) is the national umbrella organization of self-help organisations. Again, there are relevant associations on state level. Further unions are the federal association of Senior Citizens Offices (BAS), the Federal Association of socio-cultural centres (www.soziokultur.de/bsz/) etc. The multi-generation houses do not have a form of self-organization, but they seek for it as soon the project funding expires in 2011. The Federal Association of German Foundations (www.stiftungen.org) is coordinating the initiative for community foundations. They are currently trying to find regional contacts in the federal states for community foundations.

The sponsorship of these networks, foundations and associations is organized differently. Usually they are associations, in which the individual infrastructures are in fact members. However there are also associations under the umbrella of large charities such as the Caritas network of Volunteer Centres (www.caritas.de/33767.html).

b) Networks of specific interests, Foundations and Associations

In addition to these organisations, who represent certain types of infrastructure of civic engagement on state and federal level, there are national associations aiming at a specific issues, some of which are closely linked to the infrastructure developments: That includes the Stiftung Mitarbeit (www.mitarbeit.de), the Association of Active Citizenship (www.aktive-buergerschaft.de), who supports the development of community foundations and is supported by the cooperative banks in Germany. Furthermore there are a few foundations that are particularly devoted to the promotion of civic engagement and its infrastructure, such as the Robert Bosch Foundation (www.bosch-stiftung.de), Alfred Toepfer Foundation (www.toepfer-fvs.de) or the Generali Future Fund (www.generali-zukunftsfonds.de). Eventually, there are thematic networks, such as the Centre for Corporate Citizenship Germany CCCD (www.cccd.org) or UPJ (www.upj.de) that are active in the field of corporate volunteering and CSR, as well as voluntary agencies, who serve as intermediary organizations to their members.

The largest association is the German Olympic Sports Federation (DOSB) (www.dosb.de) with 27.5 million (as of 2008) members. Almost 25% of all volunteers engage in sports. In addition there are the two main churches (Evangelical Lutheran, Roman Catholic) and associated with them the largest two charity associations: Caritas (Catholic) (<http://www.caritas-ehrenamt.de/>) and Diakonie (Protestant) (www.pflege-und-diakonie.de/ehrenamt/index.html) with tens of thousands of facilities such as elderly homes, nursery schools, social service etc, where people do volunteer work. Seven percent of the population over 14 years is involved in church and religious associations. 2.7 percent are engaged in political interest group (above all in the parties, etc.), 1.7 percent in professional interest group, especially in the unions (source: Freiwilligensurvey 1999/2004). In recent decades, these large organizations have steadily lost members. At the same time, however, many small initiatives and associations have grown and their number continues to increase.

Thus, from 1990 until 2003, the number of organisations almost doubled from 300,000 to 574,000. Between 2001 and 2003 the number grew by 30,000, but it has to be noted that growth took place primarily within the new federal states of the former GDR.

The newly, in the last three decades, created volunteering infrastructure cooperates on many levels with traditional associations and organisations in sports, culture, education and social issues. Together they develop projects and promote volunteering in their organisations. However, these contacts could be even more intense. Sometimes the traditional organisations, volunteer fire departments or charities, considers the new infrastructural facilities as competitors.

However, the new infrastructure facilities are also partly linked organisationally with the charities. Thus Caritas, the biggest German charity, started in 1996 to found and fund volunteer centres. Of the 300 voluntary agencies in Germany 53 belong to the Caritas network of Volunteer Centres (www.caritas-ehrenamt.de/53691.html#Bayern).

Despite these connections and cooperation, the main challenge of the further development of volunteering infrastructure will be to bridge the gap between voluntary agencies and the traditional German associations with their history dating back to the 19th Century. The traditional associations do have certain needs of support: They have difficulties in recruiting new voluntary trustees and board members and they face funding problems. In order to take a closer look at this phenomenon the Robert Bosch Foundation wants to start in 2011 a new research program: It is planned, that volunteer centres are going to support the traditional associations in organizational development and in the search for suitable candidates for board members.

c) Cross-cutting networks for Civic Engagement

In Germany cross-communication and cooperation structures of the different types of infrastructure are not very pronounced yet. There are some networks on state level such as the network for civic engagement in Bavaria (www.wir-für-uns.de). Members are volunteer agencies, senior offices and self-help agencies. In order to prevent overlapping fields of work as well as competition in fund-raising and in the allocation of public resources, an improvement of cross-cooperation forms is urgently needed. However on the local level there are some networks, where all local types of infrastructure are involved. These include the Network for Civic Engagement in Berlin (www.berlin.de/buergeraktiv/be/wissen/berlinerlandesnetzwerk.html), the network Aktivoli Hamburg (www.aktivoli.de), FOEBE München (www.foebe-muenchen.de) or the Round Table Civic Engagement Nürnberg.

In June 2002 the National Network for Civil Society BBE (www.bbe.de) was founded. The BBE acts as national network-structure for all organisations involved in the promotion of volunteering, linking associations from the Third Sector, business and work life and federal and community institutions. The BBE meanwhile consists of 230 member organisations including the Churches, unions, corporations, foundations and governmental institutions as well as the full scope of the German civil society associations on national level (most of them being sectoral umbrella organisations representing millions of members) as well as the infrastructure associations. Its different working groups formulate and publish statements and advisory opinions. They address topics like education and civic engagement, local engagement policy, corporate volunteering and civic engagement policies in Europe. Over the past two years the BBE has organized the consultation process to develop the National Strategy for Volunteering recently published by the German government.

5. Other stakeholders

a) Public institutions

Within the federal government the Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth (BMFSFJ) is responsible for matters of civic engagement and volunteering. There is a subdivision Civic Engagement with over 30 employees. In recent years the big model project of multigenerational homes (See item 3 g) was of major importance for the promotion of infrastructure of civic engagement important especially. Moreover the BMFSFJ promotes

large and small pilot projects and public campaigns. The most significant financial contribution is required, however, in the near future for the construction of the federal voluntary services.

The BMFSFJ also funded image campaigns for civic engagement, such as in 2009, the public campaign "Geben gibt". The Ministry also supports the "week of civic engagement" organized by the BBE that takes place every year in September.

Each federal state has offices or departments concerned with the promotion of volunteering. Usually they are attached to the prime minister's office or to specific ministries. In recent years much has been achieved: for example by improving the insurance protection for volunteers and the culture of recognition through VolunteerCards and certificates. Furthermore currently processes of good governance (civic municipality) seem to gain in importance and are funded by several states.

Local administration of medium and big-sized cities but also of counties have employed more and more paid full-time coordinators for volunteers and fundraising in recent years. The responsibilities of these coordinators are inter alia to open the different agencies and departments of public service for civic engagement. This includes offering internal training and coaching towards a citizen-oriented administration, which sees itself as a facilitator enabling civic engagement. These full-time coordinators address directly the citizenry. They organize for example participatory processes in important issues of community development. These organizational forms of citizen participation (Agenda-Commissioner) can be traced back to the proposals of the local Agenda 21 (which was introduced in the mid-1990s due to the recommendation of the Environmental Conference in Rio in 2001). Due to the development of municipal governance these forms of citizen participation have grown in recent years.

There is a special situation in the state of Baden-Württemberg (www.buergerengagement.de), where there are volunteer centres within local authorities. Therefore the volunteer managers are employees of the city or county.

b) Businesses

Also the engagement of companies has grown significantly in Germany. This tendency is based on a generally increased interest in corporate social responsibility and corporate volunteering. Some big companies like BMW or the Munich RE have their own departments regarding this topic. Many companies are also collaborating with voluntary and intermediaries agencies who get in touch with non-profit organizations that arrange Secondments or organize Caring Days. However, in Germany the organizational level that we know from the UK or the USA is by far not reached. Only a marginal part of the voluntary agency can permanently secure staff positions through incomes generated by their services for companies. The activities of corporate volunteering are in addition hardly integrated into a sustainable and comprehensive strategy in the companies themselves.

CSR however has considerably entered the political debate. The Federal Ministry for Labour and Social Affairs has created a consultative working group with representatives from large enterprises on the issue of Corporate Social Responsibility. Intermediate organisations such as the Centre for Cooperate Citizenship CCCD or UPJ link companies with third sector associations and politicians. Besides the National Strategy on Volunteering the German government has also published a national CSR-strategy in October 2010.

c) Others

The political foundations of the major parties, i.e. the Friedrich-Ebert-Foundation (Social Democrats) (www.fes.de) and Konrad-Adenauer-Foundation (Christian Democrats) (www.kas.de) have become important fora for the discourse on civic engagement. They organize conferences and publish discussion papers on a regular basis.

There is no widespread programme on service-learning, but within the coming years the schools are going to become increasingly important partners and stages for volunteering:

1. One reason lays within the rising of full-time schools in Germany. The voluntary work that traditionally took place in organized youth sports, cultural clubs, etc outside the school, now has to be integrated into the school life.

2. Secondly there are more and more voluntary mentoring arrangements relating to schools. Here, people who are in business or already have a working life behind them, are supporting pupils on their way to chose a profession.

3. Thirdly there is a lively debate on the subject and importance of informal and social learning, in which experts keep pointing to the importance for strengthen civic engagement opportunities. In addition, better opportunities for participation are required to make the school a place where democratic attitudes and a civil discussion culture are practiced. (www.wir-fuer-uns.de/landesnetzwerk/i1702.htm school).

The National engagement strategy of the Federal Government has highlighted in particular schools as an important reference point of the engagement policy. However, the responsibility of the school system lies not within the federal government, but with the states.

Some states such as Baden-Wuerttemberg initiated extensive programmes integrating civic engagement in school. Approximately 1,000 schools already have voluntary youth guides. Many other states are hesitating here. The BBE organizes every two years a large expert conference on Civic Engagement and schools. There best practise examples of local schools, who are opening up to civic engagement are presented and documented. The last conference of the BBE was held in October 2010 in Hamburg (www.freiwilligen-agentur.de/download/Bildung_Hamburg.pdf).

In recent years the number of volunteer agencies that provide service-learning programmes for public schools and day care centres for children has increased significantly. Particularly popular are voluntary reading projects to improve the language skills of children. According to the Volunteer Survey 2009, seven percent of all volunteers are active in kindergartens and schools. Similarly, infrastructures such as voluntary agencies (see above) are equally active in cooperation with companies.

6. Funding opportunities

Most of the infrastructures of civic engagement are depending on funding from public budgets. Usually the funding is not permanent, but tied to pilot programmes ending after a few years. There is no existing overview of the sum invested by the public sector (federal, states, local level) in infrastructures of volunteering. In the multi-generation houses programme (Mehrgenerationenhäuser) for example, 500 facilities are each funded with 40,000 Euros per year by the federal government. Other types of infrastructure receive far less.

The municipalities (cities and counties) are mainly responsible for the sustainable promotion of volunteer agencies and centres. Sometimes charities themselves finance volunteering agencies. Additional permanent funding opportunities exist for individual types of infrastructure like nursing centers (centers to promote volunteer work in nursing care), counseling services for family caregivers (for example, in the care of dementia sick people) and self-help contact centers (solely health self-help groups) receive money from the nursing care insurance funds.

In part, funds also flow from the urban development promotion programme (www.sozialestadt.de) or from the development of rural areas programme of the EU (ILE, LEADER) (www.landentwicklung.bayern.de, www.leaderplus.de) in infrastructure development for volunteer work. In addition to this basic funding there are resources, for example from particular services (Corporate volunteering), from foundations and donations. However, the financial crisis since 2009 already puts these resources at risk.

Furthermore, there are funds from foundations. Especially active are the Robert Bosch Foundation, the Generali Zukunftsfond, the Alfred Toepfer Foundation. They consider the civic engagement as a core task. Donations and sponsorship mainly play a role in individual

projects; they are not involved in permanent funding. The share of financing from public funds is estimated at three quarters of the total revenue of the infrastructures of civic engagement.

Many of the volunteering infrastructures hope to increase revenue from enterprises in the coming year, for example, by the organization of Caring Days. In recent years, the expenditure of public funding for civic engagement has increased continuously. Due to the financial crisis the government has to deliver austerity measures. Now it is feared that this positive trend is going to be reversed.

7 Research done regularly and systematically

Since 1999 a national survey on volunteering (Freiwilligensurvey) is compiled every five years based on 15,000-20,000 interviews. According to the latest survey of 2009 36 percent of the German population above 14 years of age volunteer. This survey is financed by the Federal ministry for Family, Seniors, Women and Youth. The national government also has declared to publish a national report on volunteering every 4-5 years. The first issue is foreseen for the second half of 2011 with the main focus on corporate volunteering and CSR.

Further research is done on the effect and impact of volunteering. By order of the Bavarian Ministry for Labour and Social Affairs the Catholic University of Munich has undertaken a use-of-potential analyses. The result was that for each Euro invested into voluntary infrastructure there would be seven Euros in return.

8 Ethics and quality standards for volunteering

There is a growing number of training and formation services for volunteer management (e.g. Akademie für Ehrenamtlichkeit e.V.) addressing central issues and standards on how to work with volunteers, culture of recognition, participation and training. BAGFA has developed a comprehensive "seal of quality" for volunteer agencies. So far 54 agencies have undergone the certification process, which will be undertaken by an independent expert group. For the multi-generation houses a comprehensive self-evaluation instrument has been developed. Each house has to undergo an intensive self-evaluation analysis on a regular basis. Future funding depends on this analysis.

9. Awareness about volunteering opportunities

Over the past years many regional and local online databases have been created, which give an overview over facilities and volunteering possibilities. Up to now however no national standard could be established, so there is no nationwide outline of the total number of available places. The first attempt for a nationwide database was funded by the BMFSFJ in 2009 but failed due to technical problems.

Since the International Year of Volunteers (IYV) 2001 the public awareness of the value of volunteering and civic engagement has constantly increased. This is visible e.g. through the growing number of infrastructure facilities but also through the growing number of awards and prizes for volunteers and outstanding persons. Since 2004 the annual "Woche des bürgerschaftlichen Engagement" (Week of Civic Engagement) is organized successfully as one of the main instruments for awareness raising and recognition for volunteering by the National Network for Civil Society (Bundesnetzwerk Bürgerschaftliches Engagement – BBE) and gathers each year around 1,500 projects and initiatives on local, regional and national level (www.engagement-macht-stark.de). Since 2009 a national volunteering award has been proclaimed (www.geben-gibt.de). Furthermore an increase in the media coverage on volunteering can be recognised over the past years. In 2009 the main German broadcasting network, the ARD, has designated a whole thematic week to volunteering.

10. Any other additional country specificities

The promotion of the welfare state traditionally plays the most important role within Third Sector funding policy. This also counts for the volunteering infrastructure. For development of the infrastructure it will be important to secure a sustainable funding through the public sector in order to achieve a broad based extension of facilities. National, state and local level will have to cooperate more closely.

In recent time a new protest movement within civil society can be noted on all political levels (train station in Stuttgart, against nuclear technologies, etc.). This growing political discontent of the citizens indicates the necessity for new governance structures and political participation on all levels.

11. Recommendations

Over the past years volunteering infrastructure has grown significantly in Germany. However, the facilities are mostly insufficiently and insecurely financed. Very rarely they have more than one or two full paid staff-members. This leads to a great diversity on the one hand and to a growing insecurity on the other hand. It will be one of the main tasks of volunteering policy in the years to come to ensure greater stability. However, the federal structure in Germany marks one problem in this direction: A profound coordination between federal and state level is needed taking into account the reality and needs of the municipalities. Despite declarations of intent however no complementary and sustainable programmes are in sight. One can doubt whether they would be realizable at all. Also the National Strategy on Volunteering, passed in October 2010 by the Federal government, does not yet include strategic solutions for the coordination and funding of the volunteering infrastructure.

The federal government should explore how a basic core funding of infrastructure facilities could be realized through the federal budget. The funding should be part of a national instrument for the promotion of civic engagement and should contain the following components:

- basic funding of infrastructure facilities
- specific programmes directed to different target groups (elderly, migrants, etc.)
- innovative schemes, transfer of good practice

For the establishment of a strategic approach to the promotion of volunteering a reliable analysis of the reality at place is necessary. In this respect an evaluation of the instruments and the quality management is needed.

The EU-level with its influential programme funding could be helpful in promoting a volunteering strategy aiming at the public welfare. Here the upcoming programme generation 2014ff could already set the course.

1. List of resources¹

Bundesministerium für Familie, Senioren, Frauen und Jugend 2006. 'Freiwilliges Engagement in Deutschland 1999 – 2004'. Available at:

¹ For quoting the resources, please use a unified format (indicating the name of the author or institution that published the resource, the year it was published and title of the resource) – EXAMPLE: **CEV, 2010. 'Volunteering Infrastructure in Europe'**. In the case of electronic resources, please provide a direct link to the resource (indicating a link where it is available and the date when it was cited from the website) – EXAMPLE: **CEV, 2010. 'Volunteering Infrastructure in Europe'**. Available at: www.cev.be [cited 11 October 2010].

www.bmfsfj.de/BMFSFJ/Service/Publikationen/publikationen.did=73430.html [cited 17 November].

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