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ENG4VOL PROJECT NEWSLETTER

Welcome

As the ENG4VOL project reaches its conclusion, we are proud to share the outcomes of two years of European cooperation dedicated to understanding, supporting, and strengthening volunteer engagement in civil protection.

Bringing together partners from France, Spain, Greece, and Hungary, ENG4VOL has explored what motivates volunteers, what challenges they face, and how organisations can better support and retain those who play a crucial role in disaster preparedness and emergency response.

About ENG4VOL

Civil protection volunteers are often the first to act when communities face emergencies, natural disasters, and humanitarian crises. Their commitment and expertise are essential components of resilient societies.

The ENG4VOL project was created to identify lessons learned and best practices in volunteer engagement and to provide practical recommendations for organisations working with volunteers in the civil protection sector. Through research, international cooperation, surveys, case studies, and stakeholder dialogue, the project developed valuable resources aimed at strengthening volunteer motivation, retention, and participation across Europe.

Project Results

Research on Volunteer Engagement

One of the project's major achievements was the development of a comprehensive State-of-the-Art Review examining volunteer engagement in civil protection across Europe.



The research included:

- Contributions from 123 volunteers across 10 European countries
- Analysis of motivations, challenges, and retention factors
- Examination of volunteer management practices
- Comparative insights from France, Spain, Greece, and Hungary
- Identification of factors that support long-term volunteer commitment



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What Motivates Volunteers?

The survey revealed that volunteers are primarily driven by:

- A desire to help their communities
- A commitment to protecting vulnerable people
- Interest in emergency response and civil protection
- Learning new skills and gaining practical experience
- A strong sense of social responsibility and solidarity

What Challenges Do They Face?

The research also highlighted several common barriers:

- Limited resources and equipment
- Work-life balance constraints
- Emotional and psychological strain
- Insufficient recognition
- Financial costs associated with volunteering



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Lessons Learnt Guide

Based on the research findings, ENG4VOL produced its key result: the **Lessons Learnt in Engagement of Civil Protection Volunteers** report and accompanying Pocket Guide.

The guide presents practical recommendations for:

Civil Society Organisations

- Developing structured volunteer pathways
- Improving training programmes
- Strengthening recognition systems
- Removing barriers to participation

Volunteer Managers

- Encouraging effective communication
- Supporting volunteer wellbeing
- Preventing burnout
- Creating opportunities for long-term development



Polymakers

- Enhancing legal recognition of volunteers
- Supporting volunteer-friendly policies
- Investing in equipment, training, and resilience-building initiatives

Volunteers

- Building resilience and self-care practices
- Supporting peers and team cohesion
- Taking advantage of learning and leadership opportunities



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ENG4VOL Multiplier Events

During the final phase of the project, multiplier events were organised in partner countries to disseminate project results and engage stakeholders.

These events brought together:

- Civil protection volunteers
- Volunteer coordinators
- Emergency response professionals
- Public authorities
- Civil society organisations
- Trainers and educators



Highlights

France

The French multiplier event gathered firefighters, rescue professionals, international experts, and citizens to discuss volunteer engagement, exchange best practices, and review project findings. Participants contributed valuable feedback to support the finalisation of project outputs.

Greece

Hosted by HRTA in Athens, the event welcomed volunteers and trainers who explored survey findings, discussed lessons learned, and examined practical ways to strengthen volunteer engagement. Participants received translated Pocket Guides and actively contributed to discussions on volunteer motivation and retention.

Spain and Hungary

Multiplier events in Spain and Hungary promoted dialogue among volunteers, organisations, and decision-makers, helping to ensure that ENG4VOL results reach those directly involved in civil protection volunteering and community resilience activities.



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Key Messages from ENG4VOL

The project identified three fundamental messages:

Volunteers are the backbone of civil protection.

Their commitment, knowledge, and willingness to help strengthen communities and improve emergency response capabilities across Europe.

Motivation alone is not enough.

Effective training, recognition, support, leadership, and access to resources are essential to maintaining long-term volunteer engagement.

Collaboration strengthens resilience.

By exchanging experiences and sharing good practices across borders, European organisations can create stronger and more sustainable volunteer systems.

Looking Ahead

The end of ENG4VOL is only the beginning of a wider conversation on volunteer engagement in civil protection.

Project partners will continue sharing the project's findings through:

- The ENG4VOL website
- Social media channels
- Professional networks
- Conferences and dissemination events

The recommendations developed through ENG4VOL provide a practical roadmap for organisations wishing to recruit, retain, train, and support volunteers more effectively.

As climate-related emergencies and complex crises continue to affect communities throughout Europe, investing in volunteers means investing in resilience, preparedness, and solidarity.

Thank You

We would like to thank all volunteers, organisations, stakeholders, and project partners who contributed to ENG4VOL. Together, we have helped build knowledge, strengthen cooperation, and create practical tools that will support the next generation of civil protection volunteers across Europe.

ENG4VOL

Empowering Volunteers. Strengthening Communities. Building Resilience Across Europe.

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