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Report

drawn up on behalf of the Committee on
Social Affairs and Employment

on voluntary work

Rapporteur: Mr D. EISMA

At its sitting of 21 January 1983, the European Parliament referred the motion for a resolution tabled by Mrs GAIOTTI DE BIASE, Mrs CASSANMAGNAGO CERRETTI, Mr MICHEL, Mrs MAIJ-WEGGEN, Mr CHANTERIE and Mr NARDUCCI on behalf of the Group of the European People's Party (CD Group) (Doc. 1-942/81) pursuant to Rule 47 of the Rules of Procedure to the Committee on Social Affairs and Employment as the committee responsible and to the Legal Affairs Committee for an opinion.

At its meeting of 18 January 1983, the Committee on Social Affairs and Employment decided to draw up a report and appointed Mr EISMA rapporteur.

The committee considered the draft report at its meeting of 22 June 1983 and on 20 September 1983 adopted the motion for a resolution and explanatory statement by nine votes to three with seven abstentions.

The following took part in the vote: Mr PETERS, vice-chairman and acting chairman; Mr EISMA, rapporteur; Mr BARBAGLI, Mr CALVEZ, Mr CHANTERIE, Mrs DURY (deputizing for Mr MOTCHANE pursuant to Rule 93 of the Rules of Procedure), Mr GHERGO, Mrs MAIJ-WEGGEN, Mr McCARTIN, Mr Van MINNEN, Mrs T. NIELSEN, Mr OUZOUNIDIS (deputizing for Mr DIDO), Mr PATTERSON, Mr PRAG, Mrs SALISCH, Mr SIMPSON, Mrs SQUARCIALUPI and Mr VERNIMMEN (deputizing for Mrs DUPORT).

The opinion of the Legal Affairs Committee will be published separately.

The report was tabled on 12 October 1983.

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A

The Committee on Social Affairs and Employment hereby submits to the European Parliament the following motion for a resolution together with explanatory statement:

MOTION FOR A RESOLUTION

on voluntary work

The European Parliament,

Having regard to:

- i. the motion for a resolution tabled by Mrs Gaiotti de Biase and others (Doc. 1-942/81)
- ii. the activities of the Council of Europe in this sphere
- iii. the report of the Committee on Social Affairs and Employment and the opinion of the Legal Affairs Committee (Doc. 1-851/83)

Whereas

- A. there is increasing interest in the importance and possibilities of voluntary work in several EEC countries,
- B. this interest is growing because of increasing awareness of the negative aspects of the present organization of professional facilities (bureaucratization, standardization and specialization) owing to the present scale of unemployment and economies in the public sector and the consequent need for services,
- C. voluntary work has at least the following characteristics: it is not obligatory and it is socially relevant, is unpaid and is carried out with some degree of organization,
- D. most voluntary work has an independent social significance that is unconnected with existing professional services, but voluntary work also includes work to supplement and assist work in professional organizations,

- E. voluntary work is to be found in all areas of society: government, recreation, services, the law, health care, care of the handicapped and the elderly, culture and education,
- F. voluntary work can be said to reflect the traditional allocation of roles between men and women in that women volunteers are somewhat over-represented in the health and social services where they mainly do practical work and men are somewhat over-represented in administration and recreation sectors,
- G. considering the growing number of people undertaking voluntary work and that it is estimated that, in most EEC Member States, 15% of the population is involved in voluntary work,
- H. the objective of voluntary work is not, however, to mask the present shortcomings in our societies (by concealing unemployment, for example),
- I. voluntary work is a collective term for a large range of activities, with traditions varying from country to country, but there are similarities as regards the situation of voluntary work,
- J. voluntary work can help give the unemployed some work experience,
- K. voluntary work must not compete with but may complement traditional employment structures,

Is of the opinion that

1. Voluntary work policy must be directed towards creating an infrastructure to enable volunteers to carry out their activities. This policy should be based on the following principles:
 - 1.1 there should be a minimum of adequate and clear rules;
 - 1.2 volunteer work should not be used to make economies in the public sector;
 - 1.3 the best possible infrastructure should be available for training volunteers but training should not be compulsory;

- 1.4 the professional qualifications of volunteers must be respected insofar as this is compatible with the needs of those who require their services;
 - 1.5 governments should never try to influence people's commitment to voluntary work by putting pressure on them (e.g. forcing young people to do community work in return for social security payments);
 - 1.6 policy on voluntary work should take policy in related sectors, such as welfare, recreation, culture and public administration, into account;
 - 1.7 relevant experience in voluntary work should be taken into consideration when selecting candidates for paid work;
2. Asks the Commission:
- 2.1 to recognize that voluntary work should be given systematic attention at European level;
 - 2.2 to draw up a 'statute for voluntary workers', defining their legal status and procedures for carrying out their activities, laying down economic provisions for the reimbursement of expenses and whatever else might prove necessary for the performance of their duties, and providing insurance cover for damage or responsibility;
 - 2.3 to ensure that a survey is carried out in cooperation with voluntary organizations operating at European level so that comparable data may be obtained about (the extent of) voluntary work in the Member States;
 - 2.4 to formulate a European policy for voluntary work (to be implemented with the help of educational and training facilities from the Social Fund) on the basis of the principles listed above;

- 2.5 to remove obstacles to the smooth running of voluntary work by making it attractive to more people and equally accessible to men and women. In this connection the Commission should support innovative and possibly experimental projects that would set an example at European level. This voluntary work policy should - in addition to fulfilling the objective set out in paragraph 2.2 - give particular attention to the possibilities of:
- 2.5.1 supporting national bodies that have the specific interests of the volunteers at heart;
 - 2.5.2 improving guidance for (potential) volunteers;
 - 2.5.3 providing greater opportunities for the unemployed to do voluntary work;
 - 2.5.4 setting aside funds for financing voluntary activities, beginning with work on behalf of elderly people;
 - 2.5.5 establishing an EEC forum for voluntary work responsible for the coordination of and research into voluntary work and an exchange of information and experience;
 - 2.5.6 incorporating voluntary work in the Community programmes to combat poverty;
 - 2.5.7 including voluntary work in the Commission's forthcoming report on the long-term unemployed;
- 2.6 to consider the possibility, on the basis of Article 118 of the EEC Treaty, of drafting a directive, to be agreed with the two sides of industry, aimed at establishing the broad criteria for a legal distinction between the nature and conditions of voluntary work and paid employment;
- 2.7 Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council and the Commission and to the Council of Europe and the governments of the Member States.

EXPLANATORY STATEMENT1. THE INTEREST IN VOLUNTARY WORK

It is beginning to be realized at both national and European level that voluntary work is a long neglected but essential social phenomenon. The motion for a resolution on voluntary work tabled on 20 January 1982 (Doc. 1-942/81; PE 76.925) by the Group of the European People's Party is an indication of the recent increase of interest in volunteers and their work and an understanding of their social importance.

This greater interest by the policy makers and efforts - also at European level - to shape a voluntary work policy can be ascribed to various social developments. For some considerable time there has been an awareness in the heavily developed welfare states that professional services also have their negative side. The need for economies in the public sector is a strong incentive to take corresponding action.

Now that the national treasuries are reaching the end of their resources and intervention in the public sector is unavoidable, some aspects of professional work will have to disappear and some advocates of voluntary work hope that volunteers can and will fill in the gaps. There is however also cause for concern about the number of people out of work in the EEC countries. For some, unemployment is a problem of filling free time, and doing voluntary work can in their eyes provide part of the answer to this problem. Nevertheless unemployment is not primarily a problem of too much (compulsory) free time. In many cases the unemployed lose opportunities for contact with other people, personal fulfilment and a sense of being of use in their society. Doing voluntary work offers many people a chance of personal fulfilment, social contact and personal development.

In short, the time is ripe for voluntary organizations. The important, often essential, role that volunteers play in almost all areas of society has encouraged the wish to strengthen their position, a wish which is now being forcefully brought to the attention of the public and politicians.

2. THE SIGNIFICANCE OF VOLUNTARY WORK

In the recent past most EEC countries have worked hard to set up a welfare state. Owing to an almost exclusive concentration on professional services, voluntary work has been pushed into the background. Only recently have people become aware of the social significance and social functions of this kind of work. Historically people have organized themselves to deal with all kinds of social problems that they have found important. They have divided their attention to the adverse consequences of industrialization such as pollution, to the lives and living conditions of sections of the population such as the elderly, the handicapped and women and to the defence of personal interests (patients' associations, for example). Here voluntary work has an independent social significance, separate from the pattern of professional services. During the period of growing economic activity much of the volunteer effort was transferred to the professional sector, sometimes with and sometimes without the volunteers' consent. Volunteers provided long-term or short-term stop-gap services in particular areas for which no provision had been made by the social institutions. Because of their independent position volunteers were able to point out needs that had to be solved by the existing institutions. In a number of cases, voluntary work provided a practical way of expressing criticism of society and professional services. Concentrating on specific sections of the population made it clear that their problems had until then received insufficient attention. This sometimes led to the setting up of facilities by the authorities.

Alongside this, volunteers in professional organizations frequently carried out a whole range of supplementary activities that were necessary but in which there was no professional interest.

The economic recession has brought a new development. A lot of voluntary work will no longer be superfluous because professional services exist: the expectation is now that the situation will be the reverse. Volunteers are thus becoming increasingly more important while on the other hand pressure on the private sector will increase.

3. VOLUNTEERS AND PROFESSIONALS

The increased interest in voluntary work is also connected with the steady flow of publications over the last few years pointing out the negative aspects of professional services.

In Northern Europe in particular welfare states were set up in the fifties and sixties with all sorts of provisions to eliminate various health and psychiatric problems and hardship. In recent years attention has repeatedly been drawn to the negative aspects of these welfare institutions: bureaucratization, the mass society and new forms of dependence. In addition to this, the gap between the system's cost and its effectiveness is often pointed out.

Much of the literature on voluntary work exaggerates the differences between volunteers and professionals.

The following are considered to be essential:

Volunteers	Professionals
1. Speak to people in everyday language	1. Speak to people in incomprehensible jargon
2. Offer what the consumer wants	2. Consumer must adapt to them
3. Play down expertise	3. Accentuate expertise
4. Have enough time	4. Always in a hurry
5. Moral authority, personal commitment	5. Legal authority
6. Expertise through experience	6. Expertise through training
7. Flexible	7. Rigid and bureaucratized
8. Personal involvement	8. Acting according to rules, concentration on certain aspects of case
9. Personal approach	9. Methodical approach
10. Identification with client	10. Detachment

The advantages of using volunteers listed in the left hand column are frequently cited to support the volunteers' case vis-à-vis the professionals.

This table can be of help in weighing up the differences but there are also disadvantages in a too cursory examination. In fact one cannot speak of the volunteer and the professional; the great variety of types found among each category means that they cannot be lumped together. If a surgeon identifies himself too closely with his patient, there is a risk that the operation will prove a failure. In this case detachment is a fundamental characteristic of the surgeon's profession. In other vocations, however, such a high degree of detachment is neither necessary nor desirable.

Detection of the differences between volunteers and professionals is not sufficient to explain those differences. In the present era of economic recession in particular, there is a tendency among certain people to ascribe the differences between professionals and volunteers to the fact that one category is paid for its work and the other is not. It is not the fact that professional work is paid but the way in which it is organized that is one of the most important causes of the negative consequences of professionalization.

One of the most significant characteristics of the professional welfare system (social services, mental and physical health care) is the high degree of specialization. Specialists are numerically predominant in all these areas. This however is not exclusively a characteristic of the welfare system but is found in practically all forms of work with social significance in the welfare state, for example parliamentary work.

In many cases over-specialization incurs the use of jargon that is incomprehensible to other people. Specialists have often undergone many years of training during which they have been overexposed to this kind of expertise. Specialists find it difficult to adapt to altered circumstances, which means that the consumer must adapt to the specialist. The wish to respect each other's areas of competence leads to a strict demarcation of spheres of activity. This functional demarcation of relatively small vocational spheres does not however correspond to the needs of patients who in many cases find it difficult to divide up their problems so easily.

This is where voluntary work policy comes into contact with welfare policy. The main aim of welfare policy is not to replace professionals by volunteers but to reinforce non-specialized general services.

It is a characteristic of these services that they can deal with a great number of different problems, can adapt to the specific requirements

of the area in which they are operating, are close to ordinary people and are relatively cheap. The general practitioner provides this kind of general service within the medical system.

It is particularly in extending and reinforcing these general services that there are opportunities to attain a qualitatively good welfare system that is moreover cheaper than the present one. Volunteers who wish to work in the professional system find it easier to associate themselves with these general services than with a system that is excessively dominated by specialists.

4. VOLUNTARY WORK AND THE WORK ETHOS

In their motion for a resolution the Christian-Democratic Group state that they attach great importance to voluntary work because recognition of the value of unpaid work can help create a new work ethos.

It is not by chance that the call for a new work ethos has coincided with a rise in the number of people out of work. Among other aspects a new work ethos would incorporate the concept that to be unemployed is not so serious because there are a sufficient number of other socially necessary activities. In such an ethos organized work would be of less central importance than it is now, although in the motion for a resolution organized work is given a central place. This concept goes so far that those who are outside the work system are also regarded as being outside society. The resolution mentions several groups which are the object of voluntary social services: the aged, the handicapped, the sick, children and drug addicts. The characteristic of this group is that they are temporarily or permanently economically dependent i.e. they cannot support themselves by means of their work. In the same resolution mention is also made of a number of groups that could carry out voluntary work. Pensioners and elderly people who are still active can remain active and show their commitment to society by doing this kind of work.

Voluntary work offers young people who are still unemployed a chance to carry out social activities that have a strong training element. It also offers women the opportunity of becoming 'involved in society' again. This resolution inadvertently tends to present a picture of voluntary work that hinders its further development - a picture of voluntary work being carried out by the economically dependent for the economically dependent.

If there were a question of a structural labour surplus - for example as the result of technological innovations - then the redistribution of labour could contribute to a new work ethic. As long as a part of the population works full time and another, ever increasing, part does not work at all, the existing work ethos will remain.

The redistribution of work could reduce the number of unemployed; it offers more equal chances to men and women and prospects for young people and allows those that are unfit for work to reintegrate themselves in the work process. A redistribution of work offers everyone a fair chance of taking part in voluntary work.

5. VOLUNTARY WORK AND PAID WORK

In the motion for a resolution tabled by the Christian-Democratic Group, the Commission of the European Communities is asked to reach an agreement with both sides of industry on the broad criteria for making a distinction between voluntary work and contractual work.

Behind this wish is the fact that the lack of such criteria can lead to voluntary work being misused to circumvent labour regulations and collective agreements.

It should be noted that this is not a question of protecting voluntary work but - equally importantly - of protecting contractual labour.

The distinction between voluntary and contractual work is also of importance because in some EEC countries the development of voluntary work is hampered by the attitude of labour tribunals that have a tendency to put voluntary work on the same footing as contractual work.

Conditions governing the carrying out of voluntary and contractual work can and should be formulated.

Compensation for expenses, for example, goes some way towards meeting the wishes of the volunteers.

But it would not be possible to lay down in these conditions what work should and what work should not be paid. The conditions would only become operative once that decision had already been taken.

There is an understandable tendency to wish to establish what work should be paid and what work should continue to be done voluntarily. This question is the subject of heated political conflicts, for instance between the trade unions and voluntary organizations. The unions and the liberation movement in particular are faced with a dilemma here. They cannot reject the work because its social importance is far too great and they themselves operate to a large extent on the basis of voluntary labour. Their objections are centred on the danger that a lot of work is doomed to become voluntary owing to the consequences of the economic recession. Their efforts to achieve the economic independence of their rank and file members means that paid work is rated very highly. They further fear that the change from professional to voluntary work will lead to an erosion of citizens' rights to make use of public services.

Historically speaking the question which work should be paid and which should not cannot be answered by considering the type of work. Power relationships, the importance of particular activities for the social system's chances of survival, economic opportunities, tradition, the time required to carry out certain activities and people's readiness to work without pay were the decisive factors.

It can be seen therefore that the same activities were carried out both voluntarily and professionally.

Examples that spring to mind are the fire service and the administration, of certain organizations. In the history of professional services it can be seen that many of these services originated owing to initiatives by volunteers. The transition to professional services indicates that the type of activity was not the most important consideration. The question of what work should be paid is thus an issue of political and ideological conflict, and because of this is continually subject to changes. There is therefore no sense in arguing the case for lists of activities that are divided up according to whether they should be paid or done by volunteers. Social developments

would receive little attention in these lists. There is in any case little point in working towards this sort of division because there is the likelihood of an area of responsibility being established just at the time that it is undergoing considerable changes.

Moreover, the authorities should not spend time on what work should be paid and what work should not but should concentrate on the conditions in which paid and unpaid work is carried out.

6. A DEFINITION OF VOLUNTARY WORK

One of the first questions to be settled when discussing voluntary policy is the definition of the term voluntary work. Voluntary organizations in the EEC countries have various definitions. In most cases it is not the work that is defined but the volunteer. Thus in Flanders (Belgium) the volunteer is described as 'The person who on the basis of his or her aptitudes and his or her personal interest works benevolently to promote the welfare of others'.

The Walloons in Belgium emphasize their definition of a volunteer rather differently, 'He or she who individually or within the group, engages him/herself, his/her aptitudes and part of his/her time in a disinterested way to social, cultural or civic tasks serving an individual, a group or a community'. The French have the following definition: 'A volunteer is someone who becomes involved, in an unselfish way and of his own free will, in an organized activity in the service of the community'.

To avoid all possible misunderstandings it is advisable to have as neutral a definition of voluntary work as possible. The following criteria are essential:

- unpaid work
- which is carried out in the context of an organization
- is socially relevant and
- is not compulsory.

Unpaid

Voluntary work is not a means of gaining a livelihood, the volunteer is not trying to earn his own living. The voluntary status is based on the

fact that the volunteers have no obligations based on a labour contract. That does not mean however that volunteers should have no obligations. The sort of obligations they are subjected to are commitment, supervision by the group and moral obligations.

Organization

There are several reasons for including this when defining voluntary work. It is not the individual but the organization for which he works that is the subject of voluntary work policy, and, under the organization principle, no activity can be considered as voluntary work if it is carried out on behalf of someone with whom the person has personal relations (family, office). In voluntary work the organization forms the link between the volunteer and those who want to make use of his services. In general it is true that volunteers can only be identified as such when they form an organization.

Socially relevant

Unless they engage in activities that are forbidden by law, volunteers themselves decide whether their activities are socially relevant. In the most general sense voluntary work consists of activities for the benefit of others (not oneself or one's family) or society.

Not compulsory

The main principle of voluntary work is that there is no compulsion to do it. Activities carried out on behalf of the community by people who are obliged to perform them in exchange for social security payments cannot be regarded as voluntary work.

7. THE TYPES OF ORGANIZATIONS EMPLOYING VOLUNTEERS

A characteristic of voluntary work is the immense range of activities and organizations in which this work is carried out. Any attempt to categorize them will of course limit this variety. However some organizations in which volunteers play a more or less active role should be mentioned

here. Most volunteers do so-called traditional voluntary work, carried out in the so-called traditional organizations. The term traditional is used here to indicate that the work has been in existence for a relatively long time. The traditional organizations mostly have a membership structure, are internationally orientated and are usually fairly large. In the work of these organizations, the Red Cross for example, there have been few major changes. These organizations are run by volunteers and the professionals' role is largely a supporting one. Activities range from: organized local help, visiting services, holiday work on behalf of the chronically sick and the old, educational activities and youth work. In professional organizations (social work, justice, old people and hospitals, etc.) volunteers' activities are chiefly supportive or supplementary.

A third category formed by these organizations has its origin in dissatisfaction with traditional and professional organizations. These are the so-called alternative organizations that are mainly directed towards helping young people. These organizations came into existence in the sixties and they were aimed against the sort of help offered by the existing organizations.

A fourth category is formed by the so-called new initiatives. These recent initiatives mostly have no direct connection with the professional system and their orientation is almost entirely local. Examples are the telephone help services and the setting up and running of play schools and kindergartens. In the past initiatives of this kind naturally developed into professional services.

A characteristic of these organizations' activities is that they offer specific services to identifiable individuals or groups for which the services are primarily intended.

Alongside these organizations there are other organizations in which volunteers are active. In self help groups fellow sufferers offer help to one another. Interest groups are dedicated to defending the interests of particular groups in society and action groups are mostly concerned with bringing to public attention what they consider to be undesirable features of society.

8. VOLUNTARY WORK IN THE EEC

Although the various voluntary work organizations in the EEC countries have data about voluntary work in their own countries, there is no systematic comparative overview of this kind of work. For a number of years Volunteurop, an organization consisting of volunteers from several countries, has been active at European level; the volunteers meet once or twice a year to study the general problems of voluntary work.

Owing to its publications we do know something about voluntary work in the EEC. Until very recently there were varying definitions of the terms volunteer and voluntary work. The use of divergent definitions can lead to a different definition and enumeration of the number of volunteers. The classification of voluntary work also differs from country to country. Some classifications are based on sectors of society such as the social, the cultural and the civic sector. Others divide the work according to problems and categories of the population, e.g. voluntary work on behalf of the old, the sick and so forth. Still others are based on the organizations in which volunteers are active dividing them into, for example, traditional, professional and alternative organizations.

Surveys in the Netherlands show that about 15% of the population is involved in voluntary work in some way. In the United Kingdom the percentage is about 14%.

One of the first things to be done in the context of a European volunteer policy is to systematize and classify survey data or - if necessary - to launch a survey to get comparable data on voluntary work.

9. A VOLUNTARY WORK POLICY REPRESENTS A SERVICE POLICY

Voluntary work can primarily be characterized as a service policy. By removing the main problems the position of voluntary work can be strengthened and this work can be made more attractive to more people. The following points are fundamental to this policy:

1. The availability of services must be associated with a minimum of rules.

An excessive number of bureaucratic rules means that voluntary organizations

have so much trouble in getting the necessary facilities that this has adverse effects on the running of the organizations.

2. Volunteers must have optimal access to services such as training but must not be compelled to use them

Volunteers (organizations) should be able to express their own requirements and must be able to get appropriate help.

3. Volunteers have a right to their voluntary work

Volunteers who do their work well should not be replaced by out-of-work professionals.

4. Volunteers must get their fair share of fund allocations

Because professional organizations are generally better organized and have more time than voluntary organizations, they have more influence on the allocation of funds. Expenditure on voluntary activities is usually covered by whatever is left over.

5. Voluntary work should not be misused to make economies in the public sector

In voluntary work the work's own value is paramount.

6. Governments should not penalize people into doing voluntary work

There is no place in a voluntary work policy for government schemes where out-of-work young people receiving unemployment benefit payments are forced to do community work.

7. Other policies should be taken into account when implementing the voluntary work policy

Voluntary work overlaps with welfare, education and culture policy. These policies should be coordinated insofar as is feasible and necessary.

8. Relevant experience as a volunteer should be taken into account in selection for paid work

In many organizations it is still common practice when recruiting to pay most attention to training and experience in paid work. Volunteers' experience is not highly rated.

The facilities to be considered are those conditions that make it easier for volunteers and/or the organizations for which they work to carry out their activities or have them carried out. The following facilities should be considered:

Expenses

The volunteer pays out of his own pocket for expenditure incurred on the job and directly connected with his or her voluntary activities (travel and accommodation, telephone (at home), postage, paper and writing materials, and meetings at home).

Expenses are usually paid by the volunteer in the first instance and sometimes reimbursed later. Expenses do not include allowances such as the volunteer's pay, holiday or attendance allowances, fees and the like. Volunteers have the right to have their expenditure reimbursed.

Occupational costs

These are the costs borne by the association, which have a direct connection with the organization or advancement of the voluntary work. They differ from reimbursable expenses in that these costs are incurred through or by the volunteers as a group, e.g. indemnity insurance, information, accommodation and administration, supervision and support.

The obligation to apply for paid work (as a qualification for unemployment benefit)

Many unemployed people who take part in voluntary work find it a handicap to have to apply for paid work. It is preferable that unemployed people who do voluntary work should be exempted from this duty if they so desire.

Guidance opportunities

The term guidance opportunities is a collective one for a number of different facilities such as: information, training, supervision, etc. whose common characteristic is that they are intended to optimize the volunteers' effort. These are facilities to raise the quality of the volunteers' work.

National level

There should be national organizations for the whole voluntary field that would deal principally with: consultations, cooperation, exchanges of information, advising the national government and lobbying, initiating training for professionals so they can work with volunteers, the development and encouragement of new projects, international contacts, accommodating independent national organizations and promoting consultations and negotiations with the unions and professional organizations.

If such an organization were set up volunteers would be united and would form a counter-balance to the organizations that defend professional interests.

Budget for voluntary work

There ought to be a separate budget for voluntary work. This would prevent the volunteers being allocated what remained after the available budget had been divided among the professionals.

tabled by Mrs GAIOTTI DE BIASE, Mrs CASSANMAGNAGO
CERRETTI, Mr MICHEL, Mrs MAIJ-WEGGEN, Mr CHANTERIE,
Mr NARDUCCI

on behalf of the Group of the European People's
Party (CD Group)

pursuant to Rule 47 of the Rules of Procedure

on voluntary work

The European Parliament,

- having regard to the growth in charitable and voluntary work in many diverse sectors, ranging from the social services (for the aged, the handicapped, the sick, children, drug addicts, fringe members of society of all sorts) to educational and cultural services, from environmental protection and restoration work to community work and the organization of daily life,
- whereas this is one of the most positive trends to emerge in our society in that it serves as:
 - (a) a sign of the generosity that exists notwithstanding all the effects of crisis among a wide range of adults and young people;
 - (b) proof of the vitality, commitment, experience and abilities put at the service of pensioners and more generally of old people who are still working;
 - (c) an opportunity for social action of major practical and educational importance for many young people who have not yet completed their studies or are waiting for employment;
 - (d) an opportunity to become involved in society for many women who chose to interrupt their career while their children were young;
- whereas the great increase in non-profitmaking voluntary and independent service organizations represents one of the possible responses to the crisis in the welfare state, which is due to the disproportion between costs and benefits, and to the dangerous effects of bureaucratization and standardization, as shown by a recent OECD study;

- whereas the social benefits of voluntary work mean that it can no longer be described as private in the strict sense of the word but might be defined as 'private social' activity.

1. Points out the important role played in community action, both within and outside the Community Member States, by non-governmental organizations, operating largely on a voluntary basis;
2. Declares that it attaches great importance to the contribution made by voluntary work to improving the quality of life and to giving work a new cultural dimension through recognition of the value of unpaid services;
3. Considers it necessary to the further expansion of voluntary services for a strict legal distinction to be made between voluntary work and paid work, in order to avoid any risk of voluntary work being exploited as a means of obviating trade union rules and agreements and widening the scale of the black economy; notes that in some Community countries difficulties are being placed in the way of the spread of voluntary work by the attitude of employment tribunals which tend to treat voluntary work in the same way as paid employment;
4. Instructs the Commission
 - (a) to undertake, on the basis of wider consultation of the international and national voluntary organizations, a study of voluntary work in the Community Member States, examining the nature and extent of its growth, its legal status and the links between voluntary organizations and the public authorities;
 - (b) to consider the feasibility, on the basis of Article 118 of the EEC Treaty, of drafting a directive, to be agreed with the two sides of industry, aimed at establishing the broad criteria for a legal distinction between the nature and conditions of voluntary work and paid employment.