

03.06.2020

Subject: On voluntarism and its development in Albania

Honorable ambassadors and representatives of donor institutions and international organizations in Albania,

Through this letter, we would like to inform you about the initiative taken in recent months by [Beyond Barriers Association](#) in cooperation and with the facilitation of the [National Resource Center for Civil Society](#), and the participation of a group of civil society organizations from various municipalities of the country, interested in the development of volunteerism in Albania and a legal and regulatory enabling environment that would contribute in this regard.

Volunteers are an important part of the human resources of civil society organizations, who make a great and very valuable contribution to various spheres and sectors of society as well as to the support and development of local communities.

Four years after the adoption of Law 45/2016 "**On Volunteerism**", which should regulate the field and voluntary activity in the country, the recognition, understanding, and implementation of the law remain problematic, by both civil society organizations and institutions responsible for its implementation. Despite the good intentions for recognizing and **regulating volunteerism, the legal framework** governing volunteerism is incomplete and not enabling for CSOs working with volunteers and volunteer programs, who encounter **difficulties and uncertainties** about involving volunteers in their projects and activities and exposing them to the risk of fines. CSOs report that they have difficulties in recognizing, understanding the law, its bylaws and thus enforcing them to their daily work.

The bylaws required to make the law applicable and enforceable, including the Code of Ethics, the Volunteer Register and the Volunteer Booklet, were approved in 2018 and 2019 and became known to the sector only at the end of 2019. In addition to the Code of Ethics, the other two acts have not been made public online yet, and as a result, organizations as volunteer organizers continue to remain uninformed about their format and content. The law itself has its shortcomings in implementation and uncertainties that need to be clarified in order for it to be understandable, well interpreted and enforceable.

In October 2019, Beyond Barriers, carried out an online survey on volunteering in civil society organizations, where 58 participating organizations from all over Albania raised a number of other issues, which as part of this initiative we have decided together with these organizations to address with the relevant institutions and work together to resolve. You can read the analysis published under the title "Volunteer infrastructure in Albania - Status quo and developments" in this [link in English](#).

The survey is also part of the regional ROUTE WB6¹ project where Beyond Barriers as a national partner for Albania, brings this discussion in the country, together with the regional

¹ https://www.rycowb.org/?page_id=7813

perspective of the development of volunteerism and models applied in the Western Balkans, as well as the challenges and lessons learned in this regard.

In the recent past months we have held **several meetings and discussions** with CSOs and networking organizations on solidarity and volunteer work, focusing on **the issues of legislation and its implementation**, as well as discussing various volunteering practices.

Some of the main problematic issues identified are related to:

- Recognition of volunteer work;
- Contracting volunteers;
- Volunteers' insurance costs (covering costs, but also the ambiguity on how they are calculated);
- The volunteers register and how their registration will work, etc.

Based on above and our interest in addressing these issues, and the willingness to contribute to the creation of an enabling environment for the development of volunteerism in the country, during the following weeks and months we will start a **dialogue with the institutions** in order to obtain clarifications and discuss all unclear issues. Based on the results of the discussions and the assessment of the situation, and the future developments on this issue, we will further facilitate the discussion with the sector for concrete proposals which can pave the way for the improvement of the legal framework, which is also in line with Priority 5, for the improvement of the law on Volunteerism as defined in the *Road Map for the Government Policy towards a More Enabling Environment for Civil Society Development 2019-2023²*, revised.

In addition to the organizations and networks listed below that has been part of the discussions so far, we remain open and will encourage the participation of other CSOs interested in contributing to this debate.

For any further communication for more information on this issue and / or to be part of the following discussions and meetings, you can contact at info@resourcecentre.al and office@beyondbarriers.org

Thank you in advance for your attention to this matter,

Respectfully,

(in alphabetical order)

ACLI - IPSIA (Albania)

“ACT for SOCIETY” Centre

Albania Peace Corps

Albanian Center for Population and Development

Albanian Volunteer Corps

ALVA - Albanian Values

² [http://www.amshc.gov.al/web/doc/Udherrefyesi-2019-rishikuar-\[EN\].pdf](http://www.amshc.gov.al/web/doc/Udherrefyesi-2019-rishikuar-[EN].pdf)

Association Internazionale Kolping
Beyond Barriers
Caritas Albania
Centre for Protection of the Natural Ecosystems in Albania (EcoAlbania)
Children Rights Observatory
CODE Partners
Ecological Club Elbasan
“Epoka e Re” Centre
European Movement Albania
Free Thought Forum
Help the Life Association
Initiative for Social Change – ARSIS
International Voluntary Projects (PNV)
Jonathan Center
National Club of Parents with Children CSA and PAK
National Youth Congress (an umbrella organization of about 100 youth entities from all over Albania that contributes in strengthening the role of young people in society)
North Green Association, Albania
Office for Boys and Men, Shkoder
Partners Albania for Change and Development
Social Assistance Center for People in Need – QSNNN, Fushë-Arrëz
“The Door” Centre
“The Pact for Shkodra Youth” Network (a local network of 17 organizations and institutions working in the youth field)
The Power of Education
Women Centre “Light Steps”
Woman in Development
Women to Women
World Vision, Albania
Y-PEER Albanian Network
“Youth Act” Centre
Youth Centre “Arka”
Youth Centre “Sebastia”
Youth Centre “Trokitje”
Youth of Ura Vajgurore
“Youth Voice” Network (a national network of 21 organizations working in different regions across the country, with and for youth)