

## To presidents and delegates of COTEC member associations

Every year the European Commission makes a proposal for a year's motto. 2011 was declared by the European Commission " **European Year of Volunteering (EYV)**" as a great number of European citizens are making altruistic efforts to make changes in our society.

The EU will use the Year 2011 to work towards four main objectives:

- 1. To create an enabling and facilitating environment for volunteering in the EU*
- 2. To empower volunteer organizations and improve the quality of volunteering as this is also a challenge as only one-quarters of the European population is volunteering*
- 3. To reward and recognize volunteering activities and to celebrate commitment of millions of people – volunteers, in Europe who work in their communities during their free time without being paid – for example in schools, hospitals, and sports clubs, protecting the environment, providing social services and helping people in need.*
- 4. To raise awareness of the value and importance of volunteering, which can make and is making a great difference in countless ways to our respective communities*

COTEC recognizes and celebrates the fact that a lot of occupational therapists are members of "volunteering communities". As occupational therapists we understand human need to help other people, as well as the importance of broadening and strengthening social network. The benefits of volunteering are diverse, from the perspective of an individual, who can get new knowledge, skills, experience and a sense of accomplishment with giving his/hers professional self to community. Society, on the other hand, is enriched with members whose life goals are solidarity, altruism and social cohesion, a few of European corner stone values.

One of COTEC's aims is "to keep contact with developments within the European Union in order to disseminate information and to develop strategies concerning relevant labor market and other professional topics to the member associations" (COTEC Action Programme 2008-2012). Therefore, in the context of this aim, we would like to inform you about this year's motto and encourage you to take initiative in promoting this idea through activities of your national associations – thus make Occupational Therapy more known and visible in your country.

For further information look at the website <http://europa.eu/volunteering/>. Here you can find information about the European Year of Volunteering 2011, upcoming events as well as the volunteering experiences. Each Member State has been asked to designate [a European Year of Volunteering 2011 - National coordinating Body](#) that will be responsible for the planning, coordination and organization of events and activities in its territory during the European Year. Also, the European Commission will work in close cooperation with the [EYV 2011 Alliance](#), informal network of major NGO European networks with a particular interest in volunteering who have committed to working together on the promotion, lobbying, organization and implementation of the EYV 2011.

COTEC is very interested in **your ideas and activities through the year 2011 and will be happy to post on our website** any information about your projects that aim to empower, raise awareness and recognize volunteering.

With kind regards

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