

Foreword

Is commitment without motivation conceivable? Motivation implies an inherent desire to act, to commit yourself to something or others. It would not be so important if it were not so bound to people's own desires to realise their potential and express their identity and values in their actions. This desire can only be turned into action, however, if there are sufficient skills and resources to act.

Civic participation in social and health matters such as, for example, addiction prevention, is achieving increasing importance and forms an important social resource in our society. Therefore, providing resources, the motivational basis and basic qualifications for volunteers is a special social challenge for the European Union.

We, the European project team, comprising nine members from seven countries, have been jointly motivated to realise a manual which, with our practice-based and scientific knowledge, is intended to foster the motivation and skills of volunteers in their commitment to helping society.

We ourselves were confronted with several of the motivational factors about which we are writing during the work on the manual. For example, we developed into a well-motivated team, enlivened long meetings with games and 'fun breaks', and learnt new aspects through the mutual sharing of experiences. This has resulted in a comprehensive collection of motivational aspects concerned with voluntary work that takes into account both the individual needs of the volunteers as well as the basic organisational conditions.

Without financial and personal support it would not have been possible to successfully achieve this work. The financial support was ensured by the European Commission and the participating project partners. In particular, we would like to thank all the volunteers and staff from the project partners who supported us in different ways and gave us feedback.

In the hope that we have provided you with fresh stimulus and practical knowledge, we wish you and all volunteers every success in implementing the contents of the manual.

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and all project partners