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PRESS RELEASE

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2011 WILL BE THE EUROPEAN YEAR OF VOLUNTEERING

Taking up a civil society initiative¹ supported by the European Civic Forum in the framework of the first “European Civic Days” September last in La Rochelle, the **European Commission** has recently accepted to **declare 2011 as a European Year of Volunteering** and intends to make a formal proposal during the first half of 2009².

The European Civic Forum warm-heartedly welcomes this engagement as celebrating a European year of volunteering might be an opportunity to **recognize the role of associations** and the contribution of their volunteers to the economic and social development and the promotion of civic values. Such a decision should be completed by concrete measures aiming to encourage the creation of a **framework** for the **participation** of associative actors in the European political construction.

In this perspective, the European Civic Forum bring together several European platforms and networks sharing the same will to make civil society organizations participate at each stage of the European policy making and implementation and organizes a **civil society actors’ day in Brussels on 14 April** in the European Economic and Social Committee.

This should be an occasion to call on the European political parties on the eve of the coming elections around a **common manifesto** “For a real European Civil Dialogue”. In addition to the claims of thematic platforms and networks, this joint and cross-sectoral initiative would empower the civil society organizations speaking with a common voice to highly impact on future candidates’ platforms.

Pour plus d’information :

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¹ A joint initiative of “European Year of Volunteering 2011 alliance”: *European Volunteer Centre (CEV), the Social Platform, the World Organisation of the Scouts Movement, the Red Cross/European Union Office, the European Youth Forum (YFJ), the older peoples platform AGE, Caritas Europa, volonteupe (CSV), Solidar, the Confederation of European Senior Expert Services (CESES), ENGAGE business network, EURAG, Johanniter International, the European Association of Voluntary Service Organisations (AVSO), the European Non-Governmental Sports Organizations (ENGSO and ENGSO Youth), Youth Action for Peace (YAP), the Euclid Network and Eurodiaconia.*

² See DG EAC : http://ec.europa.eu/citizenship/news/news736_en.htm