

Brussels, 29 September 2026

Dear Member of the Slovenian National Assembly,

The Centre for European Volunteering (CEV) is deeply concerned about the reported proposed changes to Slovenian legislation concerning the NGO and volunteering sector, namely the abolition of NGO Development Fund. If the reported proposal is correct and followed through, we understand that this would discontinue an important source of funding for the development of organised volunteering in Slovenia. This situation would undoubtedly have a negative impact on the volunteering sector and civil society as a whole.

Slovenia backed the adoption of UN General Assembly Resolution 78/127, which officially proclaimed 2026 as the International Volunteer Year. The United Nations have called for renewed recognition of the contribution of volunteers to sustainable development. The UN is encouraging Member States and other stakeholders to strengthen the integration of volunteering into development efforts. The Year is an opportunity to invest in the enabling environment in which volunteering can flourish, including adequate support, recognition, capacity-building and measures that ensure quality and safe volunteering.

Against this international backdrop, it is difficult to reconcile the potential weakening of a dedicated and established funding mechanism for the development of volunteering in Slovenia with the objectives of the International Year. Slovenia is recognised as having developed a strong and structured volunteering infrastructure, supported by legislation, public policy, national and regional networks that includes mechanisms for organisational development and professional support.

The NGO Development Fund has played an important role in making this infrastructure possible by providing financial support to the Slovenian Network of Volunteer Organisations, an umbrella network for the volunteering sector in Slovenia. Furthermore, it has enabled the financing of volunteer coordinator and mentor positions in many volunteer organisations. These roles are essential for ensuring that volunteering is organised responsibly, that volunteers receive appropriate support and training, and that organisations are able to provide safe and meaningful volunteering opportunities.

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Volunteering is not simply an activity that benefits individual organisations but rather society as a whole. Volunteers are often the first to respond to a cry for help. They are an essential part of a resilient, inclusive and democratic societies. Investment in the infrastructure that supports volunteers is an investment in communities themselves.

CEV fully recognises that governments face difficult choices concerning the allocation of public resources. However, resources for a strong volunteering infrastructure should be understood as complementary investments for a more resilient society, rather than as competing priorities. We therefore call on the Slovenian authorities to maintain the NGO Development Fund and to ensure stable, predictable and sustainable public support for the development of volunteering and the organisations that enable it.

The year of 2026 should be a year in which governments recognise the value of volunteers by strengthening the structures that make their contribution possible. We urge Slovenia to ensure that its actions match this international commitment.

Gabriella Civico

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a large, stylized 'G' followed by a horizontal line.

Director Centre for European Volunteering (CEV)