



VOLONTEUROPE CONFERENCE

GOVERNANCE FOR THE COMMON GOOD: THE ROLE OF THE ENABLING STATE

**Under the distinguished patronage of the President of the Republic
of Bulgaria, His Excellency Rosen Plevneliev**

**Central Military Club, Official Hall
Sofia, Tsar Osvoboditel Blvd 7**

Friday 8 May 2015, 09:00 - 14:30

#commongoodEU

#enablingstate

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Following extensive consultations with its members and partners, and as part of its new strategic orientation for 2014-2018 (supported by an operating grant from the Europe for Citizens Programme), [Volonteur europe](#) is implementing the campaign **Europe for the Common Good**.

In March 2015, Volonteur europe officially launched the campaign in Riga, Latvia, with a debate on [visions for the common good](#). Volonteur europe now wants to debate how the state, civil society and communities can design, implement and evaluate public services together. For us the key is to understand how the state can empower citizens and communities to tackle the challenges they face.

The concept of the **enabling state** is particularly useful as it emphasises the importance of relationships between actors from different sectors. The enabling state focuses on generating positive outcomes for society in the long term, sharing power and integrating services.

What do we mean by Europe for the Common Good?

To put it very simply, we see it as **working together towards a future that benefits every person everywhere**. Every human being matters, including those from future generations. We believe that inclusive, just and sustainable communities result from common good approaches. Therefore, **a common good approach is necessary to address the challenges facing Europe and the world**.

European civil society and governments, as well as the European Union and the Council of Europe, have an important role to play in the pursuit of the common good on a global scale. It is impossible to promote the common good for Europeans while not advocating the same for peoples elsewhere.

Inspired by the work done by the UK-based campaign [A Call to Action for the Common Good](#), which our host organisation CSV has been closely involved in, we see the common good as being underpinned by several principles, including:

- **Inclusiveness:** all sectors working together to ensure everyone, including the most vulnerable, can benefit from the opportunities, happiness and wealth available in society;
- **Collaboration:** people acting together to make a difference and achieve positive change;
- **Sustainability:** addressing urgent challenges faced by Europe and the world while being aware of the needs of future generations and the limits of natural resources;
- **Fairness:** regardless of individual choices, everyone having equal access to opportunities and participation in democratic life.

Europe for the Common Good stresses **the importance of relationships**. By relationships we mean the ways in which people relate to one other, to the state, to public institutions, to businesses and to their communities, as well as the ways in which these sectors of society interact with each other. Relationships are the asset that promotes the common good.

Volonteur europe has long **advocated for active European citizenship**, not least through its direct engagement with the European Year of Citizens 2013-14 campaign and recent co-founding of Civil Society Europe. In this **European Year of Development 2015**, we are also aware of the need to





advocate for active European citizenship in the context of **global social justice**. Without active European citizenship and global awareness our Europe for the Common Good campaign cannot function.

Why now?

The challenges we currently face are of enormous significance: rising inequalities of wealth and power; climate change and depletion of natural resources; mass displacements of people due to conflict; social unrest on the one hand and political alienation on the other caused by a global political economy that is not supporting millions of people to meet their basic needs. It is increasingly clear that business as usual is no longer an option.

Tackling these issues requires nothing less than deep reflection and a bold transformation in the way markets, politics and societies operate. It demands clarification of what development, prosperity and success mean. Do they mean economic growth and wealth accumulation or do they mean social justice and sustainability?

The campaign will strive to create **a positive narrative for change in Europe and the world**. It will promote a sense of hope and purpose in individuals, organisations and communities from across Europe to take action for change. It will also make a strong case for the vital role of volunteers and voluntary organisations in the pursuit of the common good.

The Volonteur conference in Sofia

Volonteur is looking forward to continuing the debate on the common good. The event at the Central Military Club on Friday 8 May 2015 can prompt us to think about the role of the enabling state in promoting the common good. **Can we imagine a state that empowers civil society and communities to work together for the common good? A state that invests resources in the prevention of harm, rather than remedying it? A state that challenges the current status quo and offers long-term leadership for the achievement of a more just and sustainable society?**

Volonteur sees the enabling state as focusing on:

- Generating **positive outcomes for society** rather than meeting internal performance targets
- **Sharing power** with local government, communities, civil society and citizens
- **Integrating services** to offer better value for individuals and communities
- **Preventing harm** to society, the economy and the environment
- Shaping the economy to **meet the needs of people and respect the limits of the planet**

Participants joining us on 8 May 2015 will represent a broad range of actors from the public and private sectors, civil society, the media, communities and grassroots movements. We hope that this brief introduction to our campaign will inspire you to think ahead of the conference about the following question: **How do I see the role of the enabling state in promoting the common good?**

We look forward to seeing you in Sofia. The event will take place under the distinguished patronage of the President of Bulgaria, His Excellency Rosen Plevneliev. In the meantime, you can also follow us on [Twitter](#) and [Facebook](#), as well as sign up to our [newsletter](#) to receive updates about our work.

Background reading

[A Call to Action for the Common Good](#)
[Europe for the Common Good: A Vision](#)
[A Route Map to an Enabling State](#)
[Many to Many](#)

[The Wisdom of Prevention](#)
[Going Public](#)
[The Enabling State: A Discussion Paper](#)
[For a Democratic Europe](#)





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PROGRAMME

The event will have Bulgarian/English simultaneous interpretation

09:00 – 09:30 REGISTRATION & COFFEE

09:30 – 09:45 OPENING REMARKS

- **Maria Petkova**, Director, Tulip Foundation; Bulgaria
- **Oonagh Aitken**, President, VolontEurope and Chief Executive, CSV; UK

09:45 – 10:00 KEYNOTE SPEECH

- **His Excellency Rosen Plevneliev**, President of Bulgaria

10:00 – 10:30 INTRODUCTION TO THE ENABLING STATE WITH Q&A

- **Professor Susan Deacon**, Assistant Principal Corporate Engagement, University of Edinburgh; UK

10:30 – 11:00 PANEL DISCUSSION – PART 1: What needs to change

- Moderated by **Duncan Tree**, Head of Policy and Performance, CSV; UK
- **Kalin Kamenov**, Deputy Minister for Youth and Sports; Bulgaria
- **Luben Panov**, Director, Bulgarian Center for Not-For-Profit Law; Bulgaria
- **Ronald van der Giessen**, Director, Oranje Fonds; Netherlands
- **Justyna Duriasz-Buřhak**, Board Member, Rural Development Foundation; Poland

11:00 – 11:20 Q&A

11:20 – 11:50 COFFEE BREAK – Participants share their visions of the Common Good

11:50 – 12:30 PANEL DISCUSSION – PART 2: How to achieve change

- **Same panellists as above**

12:30 – 12:50 Q&A

12:50 – 13:20 REACTIONS TO THE DISCUSSIONS WITH Q&A

- **Martin Sime**, Chief Executive, Scottish Council for Voluntary Organisations; UK

13:20 – 13:30 CLOSING REMARKS

- **Piotr Sadowski**, Secretary General, VolontEurope
- **Maria Petkova**, Director, Tulip Foundation; Bulgaria

13:30 – 14:30 LUNCH – Participants share their visions of the Common Good

For further information and to register for the event please visit volontEurope.eu

