

European Union, almost 100 million citizens of all ages invest **their** time, talents and money to make a positive contribution to their community by volunteering in civil society organisations, youth clubs, hospitals, schools, in sport clubs, etc. For the Commission, volunteering is an active expression of civic participation which strengthens common European values such as solidarity and social cohesion. Volunteering also provides important learning opportunities, because involvement in voluntary activities can provide people with new skills and competences that can even improve their employability. This is especially important at this time of economic crisis. Volunteering plays an important role in sectors as varied and diverse as education, youth, culture, sport, environment, health, social care, consumer protection, humanitarian aid, development policy, research, equal opportunities and external relations.

Objectives of the Year:

1. To create an enabling and facilitating environment for volunteering in the EU;
2. To empower volunteer organisations and improve the quality of volunteering;
3. To reward and recognise volunteering activities; and
4. To raise awareness of the value and importance of volunteering.

The Commission expects that the European Year of Volunteering will lead to an increase in volunteering and to greater awareness of its added value, and that it will highlight the link between voluntary **engagement** at local level and its significance in the wider European context.

Question 1: What does the word "**their**" in paragraph 1 refer to?

A. talents	B. organisations
C. citizens	D. schools

Question 2: According to the European Commission, which value does civic participation strengthen?

A. society's wealth and well-being	B. cultural awareness
C. solidarity and social cohesion	D. safe environment

Question 3: According to the passage, why does volunteering provide important learning opportunities?

A. Because people have opportunities to gain new skills and competences.
B. Because it helps connect people to others.
C. Because it gives people a sense of being involved in a community.
D. Because it provides people with chances to learn from the differences.

Question 4: Which of the following does NOT belong to Objectives of the Year?

A. Improving the quality of volunteering
B. Encouraging volunteering activities
C. Facilitating volunteering in the EU
D. Raising awareness of value of social relationships.

Question 5: The word "**engagement**" in the last paragraph is closest in meaning to

A. marriage	B. involvement	C. vow
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