



## News Release

**Embargoed until 1<sup>st</sup> January 2011**

### **Volunteering – A New Year. A New Journey**

#### **New Year campaign launched to see increase in volunteers in Scotland for the European Year of Volunteering.**

A new campaign asking the population of Scotland to embark on a volunteering journey in 2011 as part of their New Year's resolution has been launched in awareness of the European Year of Volunteering 2011.

The campaign launched at Edinburgh Waverly Station by Alyn Smith Scottish MEP and Neil Mitchison, European Commission Representative for Scotland aims to highlight the key benefits to individuals interested in volunteering and hopes to encourage more people in Scotland to volunteer within their community with the hope to see an 11% increase throughout the country this year.

Alyn Smith Scottish MEP commented 'As a volunteer I know that volunteering is an integral part of life, and it is high time that we recognise and mark the fantastic contribution that volunteers make in such a variety of different sectors of society. More than 100 million Europeans volunteer for all sorts of things each year, by making 2011 the European Year of Volunteering we can go just a little way to giving all of Europe's volunteers the thanks that they deserve'

George Lyon Scottish MEP added 'Every year millions of people around Europe decide to give up some of their free time to volunteer. 2011 will mark the European Year of Volunteering which will celebrate the work of these volunteers, as well as encourage others to follow in their footsteps. Whether it's an hour a week volunteering in your local community hall or spending a week volunteering in another country, every effort helps to strengthen our local society, our country and the principles of the European Union.'

Whether you are from Kracow, Coatbridge or Clydebank volunteers are making a positive contribution to our common European community by investing their free time in supporting their local communities. Why not kick off the New Year with a resolution to volunteer in your local area and make a difference.

If you have any time to donate to and would be interested you can find out more about volunteering by visiting the portal for all volunteering in Scotland [www.volunteerscotland.org.uk](http://www.volunteerscotland.org.uk) or by contacting your local Volunteer Centre.

## **Ends**

For more information:

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## **Notes to Editor**

- 31% of adults (1.27m people) in Scotland volunteer through an organisation or group (Scottish Household Survey, 2007/8).
- These volunteers give over 142m hours each year, equating to an economic value of £2.2bn.
- More than 100 million Europeans (around 30%) engage in voluntary activities (Eurobarometer, 2008).
- 60% of people feel they have never been asked to volunteer (VDS, 2004).
- An estimated 78% of young people do not associate volunteering with good citizenship (Being Young in Scotland, 2009).
- Volunteering can deliver health benefits to volunteers (Volunteering England, 2008).
- Volunteers report that their volunteering provides them with valuable skills and experience, and helps them find a job.
- Volunteering can have major positive benefits, including skills development, health improvement, mental wellbeing, building confidence and self esteem.
- The European Year of Volunteering is both a celebration and a challenge. It is a celebration of the commitment of millions of people in Europe who work in their communities during their free time without being paid – for example in schools, hospitals, and sports clubs, protecting the environment, providing social services and helping people in other countries. Their efforts and those of the many thousands of volunteering organisations make a huge difference to our lives in countless ways.
- High resolution images of Edinburgh Waverley photoshoot or campaign shots available upon request – Credit: Daren Borzynski