VOLUNTEERING IN SPORT – CZECH REPUBLIC

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1 GENERAL INFORMATION ABOUT VOLUNTEERING IN SPORT

1.1 Tradition and contextual background

The beginnings of volunteering in sport in what is now the Czech Republic are connected to the activities of associations. An Austro-Hungarian Government’s decree issued in 1860 allowed the creation of associations which had not been possible until then. Public associative activities were forbidden in the period between 1948 and 1989 in Czechoslovakia, as well as during the previous Nazi regime.

Sokol\(^1\) and the Association for Physical Education of Prague Ladies and Girls\(^2\) were among the first Czech associations. Every fifteenth citizen was a Sokol’s member and the total number of members approached a million during the First Republic (1918 – 1939).

The Workers’ Association for Physical Education\(^3\) was established in the last decade of the nineteenth century and Catholic sportsmen founded Orel\(^4\) at the beginning of the twentieth century. Orel was the second most popular sport organisation in Czechoslovakia and was approximately thirty times smaller than Sokol.

The communists forcibly united the Czechoslovakia’s sport organisations after the coup of 1948 when they came into power. Despite this, a vast number of volunteers in sport continued to volunteer under the new regime.

The Czech Sport Association\(^5\) is the biggest sport umbrella organisation today (approximately 75% of organised sports persons which amounts to over 1.75 million people). It is the successor of a similar association of the communist period but today it is democratic and membership is voluntary. The rest of organised sport is represented by more than twenty other umbrella organisations (Sokol and Orel being among them).

1.2 Definitions

In the Czech Republic it is possible to make a distinction between two kinds of volunteering depending on whether a volunteer is or is not a member of the organisation in which he or she is volunteering. The first kind is also called ‘mutually beneficial volunteering’ as opposed to the second kind which is called ‘publicly beneficial volunteering’. Organisations who meet the criteria of publicly (as opposed to mutually) beneficial activities can seek accreditation from the Ministry\(^6\) and subsequently receive funding from the State for their publicly beneficial voluntary projects.

As stated in the general report for volunteering, volunteers in accredited volunteering cannot be members of the organisations for which they volunteer and therefore, volunteers in sport mostly belong to the non-accredited group. As such, the Act on Voluntary Service does not apply to them. Therefore, most volunteers in sport have the same status as ordinary citizens.

The Czech Sport Association explains that there are two types of volunteers in sport:

\(^{1}\) Falcon
\(^{2}\) Tělocvičný spolek paní a dívek pražských
\(^{3}\) Dělnická télovýchovná jednota
\(^{4}\) Eagle
\(^{5}\) Český svaz tělesné výchovy
\(^{6}\) Ministry of the Interior
1. Volunteers that participate in one particular event. This type of volunteer is not required to hold any specific qualification. Typically, this type of volunteer is an occasional volunteer who may or may not re-engage with volunteering or the related sport in the future.

2. Volunteers that continually dedicate their time and efforts to work in sport without remuneration. This type of volunteer generally holds a certain position (he or she is typically called a voluntary functionary) within his or her club and is usually required to be qualified for their voluntary activity. He or she typically volunteers as a trainer, coach or leader. Volunteers also take on the roles of treasurers, club committee members, repairmen or maintenance people for example. These roles do not require volunteers to hold specific qualifications, though it is noted their numbers are marginal.

In the Czech Republic the second type of volunteer are the most popular and largest in volunteer numbers. Sport relies heavily on these volunteers where it is noted that neither the State nor municipalities have their own paid employees in this area.

1.3 Number and profile of volunteers in sport

Only two surveys regarding volunteering have been carried out since 1989. Pavol Frič’s survey of 366 respondents carried out in 2001 shows that 17% of respondents volunteered in sport. According to a similar survey carried out by STEM in 2004, out of 1018 respondents 27% volunteered in sport.

The Czech Sport Association states that volunteering is present in every sport. Of its 1.5 million members, the Association reports there are over 146,000 volunteers. There are a further 100,000 sport volunteers in other umbrella organisations. The most recent estimate is 240,000 volunteers in 2009. This corresponds to 20% of all volunteers in the Czech Republic volunteering in sport.

Data from the Czech Sport Association show that the number of volunteers in sport is showing a relative decrease. While the Association membership grew by 23% (people, not organisations) between 2000 and 2008, the number of its volunteers increased by 4% only. Socio-economic conditions in the Czech Republic are considered to be the cause of this decrease. Social motivation to volunteer is limited and the recent economic situation means that people have less time for volunteering.

Volume of voluntary work

According to Sevelius, volunteers in sport volunteered 1.89 million hours a week in the Czech Republic in 2003 which is 75.6 million a year (40 weeks are considered a working year). Each volunteer volunteered on average 7 hours a week and 280 hours a year.

According to Frič’s survey, the number of hours spent volunteering was 190 per volunteer a year.

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7 Czech Sport Association
8 Czech Sport Association
9 Over 1.2 million in 2007 according to the Satellite report of the Czech Statistical Office
10 Czech Sport Association
Age
2008 Data from the Czech Sport Association show the following age categories among voluntary functionaries\(^{11}\) (referees, instructors and coaches):

- 16-24 - 4%
- 25-24 - 14%
- 35-44 - 23%
- 45-54 - 25%
- 55-64 - 14%
- over 65 - 11%

When compared to earlier statistics, the evidence suggests there are more volunteers in sport in the older age groups\(^{12}\). 

Gender
Data provided by the Czech Sport Association show that just over 80% of volunteers are male.

Level of education
According to the Czech Sport Association, there are different positions that volunteers can occupy when volunteering in sport. For example, these include referees, coaches and instructors. Some volunteers come with previous qualifications such as a university degree in sport. Those without previous qualifications are required to undergo various training programmes. Volunteers without previous qualifications make up the largest number of volunteers.

Socio-professional status
There are no statistics in relation to the socio-professional status of sport volunteers. According to The Czech Sport Association, unemployed people are the least likely to volunteer in sport.

1.4 Number and types of sport organisations engaging volunteers in sport
There are approximately 150 kinds of sport that are organised within the framework of their federations and associations. The vast majority of these federations are represented by umbrella organisations such as the Czech Sport Association, Sokol, Czech Automobile Club, Czech Association of Sport for All, Light Aircraft Association, Association of Sport Federations of the Czech Republic and others.

The Czech Sport Association is the biggest umbrella organisation with 95 federations and 9,240 sport clubs.

Share of volunteers and paid staff in the sport sector
The estimated\(^{13}\) share of paid staff and volunteers is approximately 1/100. The ratio of volunteers to paid staff in the sport sector continues to evolve.

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\(^{11}\) See 1.2
\(^{12}\) Czech Sport Association
\(^{13}\) Czech Sport Association
1.5 Main volunteering activities

**Level of volunteering in different sport disciplines**

Volunteers in the Czech Republic mainly volunteer in amateur sports. As such volunteers volunteer in a wide range of different sports although concrete data on the level of volunteering in different sport disciplines is not available. The research evidence suggests there are more volunteers participating in youth sport and team sports.

**Type of activities carried out by volunteers**

Volunteers mainly engage in instructing and coaching, club functioning, organisation of sport events and sport maintenance.

2 INSTITUTIONAL AND REGULATORY FRAMEWORK

2.1 Main public organisations and other organisations involved in volunteering in sport

**Main public body responsible for volunteering in sport**

The Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports secures financial support for sport from the State budget, creates conditions for national teams, provides for the development of sport talents for the development of sport for all, and for sport activities for people with physical disabilities. It is however noted that the Ministry does not have specific responsibility for volunteering in sport. All voluntary activities take place within the framework of sport clubs and federations.

On a non-governmental level there are different sports federations. Among them include;

- **The Czech Sports Federation**, which is an organisation of sports clubs and institutions for competitive sports for all. They support integrated action of sportsmen with a disability and cooperate with many other sport organisations, e.g. Czech Paralympic Committee.

- **The Czech Sport Association (CSA)** was founded in 1990 and involves sports federations, sports clubs and their civic unions established in compliance with the Act of Citizen Associations NR. 83/1990 CL. The goal of the CSA is to advance sports, physical education, tourism and sports representation. Other goals of the organisation, is to represent and protect the rights and interests of associated organisations, to offer them useful services and to create the optimal platform for cooperation. The organisations associated with CSA maintain their full independence, property and individual activities.

- **The Czech association Sports for All** is an organisation of sports clubs, institutions and civic associations which is orientated only on a recreational level of physical activities of people of all ages, including commercial area (limited with special rules and legislation).

2.2 Policies

**National strategy for volunteering in sport**

There is no strategy for volunteering in sport. As such, the government does not monitor statistics relating to volunteering in sport, though it does collect statistical data in relation to sport club members.
2.3 Programmes

To date, there are no specific programmes under way to stimulate volunteering in sport in the Czech Republic.

3 REGULATORY FRAMEWORK FOR VOLUNTEERING IN SPORT

3.1 General legal framework

In the Czech Republic, volunteers have a specific legal status. This applies to volunteers in sport.

As stated earlier volunteers in accredited volunteering cannot be members of the organisations for which they volunteer and therefore, volunteers in sport mostly belong to the non-accredited group. As such, the Act on Voluntary Service does not apply to them. Therefore, most volunteers in sport have the same status as ordinary citizens.

3.2 Legal framework for individual volunteers in sport

In the Czech Republic, it is possible to deduct the calculated value of voluntary activities from a person’s taxable income as a donation. This applies to both general volunteering activities and volunteering in sport.

3.3 Legal framework for sport organisations engaging volunteers

With regard to sport organisations, the Act on Voluntary Service from 2002 applies to publicly beneficial projects only. The Act does not apply to sport organisations that fall under the category of mutually beneficial volunteering. The majority of sport clubs are civic associations, which is the most common form of NGOs in the Czech Republic. The Act on Voluntary Service does not apply to sport civic associations as by definition they do not have a strictly publicly beneficial character.

4 ECONOMIC DIMENSION

4.1 Public financing of volunteering in sport

An official analysis of sport funding in the Czech Republic was carried out by the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports in 2009. The findings show the structure of financial arrangements in sport as follows:

- 50% households (volunteers and their families)
- 25% regions and municipalities
- 12% State and lotteries (respectively 7% and 5%)
- 13% private sector
- 0% EU
Detailed information on the scale of funding and the share of public funding on the total income of sport organisations is not available. State policies do not provide any legal incentives for the private sector to support volunteering in sport, as the State pursues other priorities in its budget.

4.2 Private financing and support schemes

There is limited information available in relation to private support schemes for sport organisations.

4.3 Other support schemes and benefits

There is limited information available in relation to support schemes and benefits for sport organisations.

4.4 Specific issues: state aid, procurement and anti-trust

Regulations regarding these issues and their impact on volunteering are not well considered in the Czech Republic at this moment in time.

4.5 Economic value of volunteering in sport

According to Sevelius, in the Czech Republic volunteering in sport corresponded to 75.6 million hours in 2003 (40 weeks) which corresponds (at 10 euro/hour) to 756 million euro.

Importance of volunteering in sport

A report on volunteering in sport states that sport federations and clubs in the Czech Republic are relatively dependent on volunteering. In the case of smaller sport clubs, the budget is often smaller than the value of the work carried out by volunteers. Without volunteers, it is likely that the activities and services of sport associations and facilities would probably become too expensive for the majority of the Czech population. If volunteering in sport ceased it would likely have catastrophic consequences for the active engagement of the population in sport.

The Czech Republic agrees that volunteering is essential for the existence of amateur sport, and adds that there needs to be more public discussion about this issue. There is also a view that sport volunteering is not appreciated and recognised by the State. It is argued that the economic value of volunteering in sport and the potential savings of State funds are not fully appreciated.

5 SOCIAL AND CULTURAL DIMENSIONS OF VOLUNTEERING IN SPORT

5.1 Key benefits of volunteering for sport volunteers, the community and direct beneficiaries

Volunteers

It was reported that the greatest value of volunteering in sport comes from being socially active citizens. Through volunteering, it is believed individuals benefit from a sense of self-worth from a feeling of being useful and also from participating in new experiences.

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20 Czech Sport Association
21 This does not correspond to the average Czech wage level. Sevelius applies the amount to all the countries compared in his report.
22 by Tomáš Novák
23 Czech Sport Association
Direct beneficiaries
A significant benefit for those who receive the service of volunteers is that the cost of participating in sport is kept at a relatively low rate. The beneficiaries also gain access to counselling, instruction, partnership, safety supervision, and the experience of time well spent.

Wider society
Sport volunteering provides an opportunity for people from different generations to spend their time in valuable pursuits. The extended benefit to society is linked to actively engaged and contented individuals who choose to spend their time volunteering. Educational and health issues should be noted as added values of volunteering in sport.

5.2 Factors that motivate individuals to volunteer in sport
Though limited information is available in relation to factors that motivate individuals to volunteer in sport, being an active citizen, feeling useful and gaining new experiences are noted as the main factors that motivate individuals.

6 EU POLICIES AND VOLUNTEERING IN SPORT
The Czech Republic states that current EU policy in the field of sport is beneficial and that it supports the efforts of the Czech Republic to improve conditions in sport.
In 2009 the Prague Memorandum on Volunteering in Sport was prepared by the Czech Presidency. This is also considered to be indicative of existing political will to support volunteering in sport in the Czech Republic.

7 MAIN OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES FOR VOLUNTEERING IN SPORT
7.1 Main challenges
The Czech Sport Association states it is important to obtain socio-political support for volunteering in sport and to identify laws securing its support and motivation.
It is also necessary to provide liability insurance for volunteers as this does not currently exist. Volunteers are currently required to take out and pay for their own private insurance. This is considered to be a significant barrier to volunteering.
A further challenge has been identified in relation to education and training. Volunteers who are required to undergo specific training in order to participate in volunteering are required to pay for the training themselves. This is also considered as a potential barrier to volunteering.
Challenges relating to a lack of public funding and general political support through incentives have also been highlighted.

7.2 Main opportunities
One of the main opportunities for volunteering is in relation to promoting the benefits and value of volunteering. Promoting the benefits of being a socially committed citizen,

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24 Representatives of the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports, and of the Czech Sport Association
developing a sense of self-worth from a feeling of being useful are considered to be powerful messages for enhancing the image of volunteering and increasing participation. The Czech Sport Association welcomes further EU direction regarding opportunities in the field of volunteering in sport.
SOURCES

Analysis of funding of sport in the Czech Republic (Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports)

Description of the Sazka company (Sazka)


Prague Memorandum on Volunteering in Sport

Report on the state of the Czech society at the time of joining the EU based on the 2004 STEM survey (neziskovky.cz)

Satellite report on non-profit institutions (Czech Statistical Office)


Interviews

Czech Sport Association

Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports

25 Donorship and Volunteering in the Czech Republic
26 Volunteers in Sport