



Ilaria Ferraro

»Padova - European Volunteering Capital 2020«

In 2013, CEV launched the European Volunteering Capital competition to promote and develop volunteering at the local level. It is an Europe-wide open competition that aims to promote volunteering at the local level by giving recognition to municipalities that support and strengthen partnerships with volunteer centres and volunteer-involving organisations and celebrate and promote volunteering and the impact made by volunteers.

All European Municipalities can participate. The awarded municipality is chosen from the candidates by an international jury of key personalities connected with volunteering, representing civil society, the private, for-profit sector, as well as the EU institutions.

The winners from the former editions are:

- Padova - 2020 European Volunteering Capital,
- Košice - 2019 European Volunteering Capital,
- Aarhus - 2018 European Volunteering Capital,
- Sligo - 2017 European Volunteering Capital,
- London - 2016 European Volunteering Capital,
- Lisbon - 2015 European Volunteering Capital
- Barcelona - 2014 European Volunteering Capital.

2020 Padova European Volunteering Capital – The candidacy

The candidacy of Padova was promoted by the Municipality of Padova and by the local Volunteering Centre (CSV Padova).

Between 2017 and 2018 Padua was the scene of significant social ferments that almost naturally led to the city's candidacy as European Volunteer Capital 2020.

On the occasion of the administrative elections in 2017, the local organizations, coordinated by CSV Padova, begun to think about an idea for the city of the future, carrying out a series of discussion tables. The common effort was to identify critical issues and cross-cutting proposals going beyond the particularistic logics that, unfortunately, very often act also outside politics.

The priorities and visions of the future that emerged from this participatory process were useful for the candidates for Mayor of Padova and for all the actors of civil society. They are:

- work to further develop the elements of environmental innovation that are spreading in the economic and social world (smart and soft city, green economy, circular economy)
- to make urban regeneration a reality, starting with a stop to soil consumption, with the protection and development of green areas and the adoption of appropriate energy regulations
- modify the mobility model by studying alternatives to cars
- to enhance the cultural environment of the city and its monumental, historical and artistic heritage.
- to guarantee the participation of the associations, non-profit organizations and social organizations that are working on the protection of the common good
- to develop an inclusive city where inclusion is synonymous with social peace. Inclusion is a complex process that involves the context and requires collaboration and co-construction by different actors and a new long term vision.
- to spread and disseminate the values of sport. The sport activity is a fundamental tool for integration, socialization and psycho-physical well-being in every age group: from children to teenagers to adults

More than 200 associations have signed the document. In 2018 the new administration decided to divide the organizations into different thematic areas, to continue the path begun.

2018 was also the year in which the festival Solidaria born. The aim of the festival was to give a »new breath« to the city and encourage contamination between volunteering and all other social spheres.

These ferments, together with the characteristic, historically recognized, of Padova as a city-laboratory for social work, led the municipal administration and the CSV Padova to start the candidacy.

Feedback from the European Volunteering Capital 2020 Jury:

Padova shows specific and multiple examples of how the municipality supports and encourages volunteers from diverse groups and backgrounds, as well as a wide variety of volunteering organizations. It has a positive focus on how to contribute to the social inclusion and well-being of vulnerable groups through volunteering. Padova has an agreement to offer asylum seekers the chance to volunteer, which includes training, and also shows a great organizational support of the European Solidarity Corps through the Youth Project's Office. The Volunteer Centre, that they support, plays a key role in the implementation of volunteering projects, whether that be through funding, or providing space free of charge for volunteers who wish to carry out a program or project. Padova shows that supporting volunteering is

not only done through financial support; providing the physical infrastructure is also important to create a good environment in the municipality. Offering volunteering training for the employees of the municipality is a good way of showing the importance of volunteering.

Padova has measures in place across all the areas covered by the 5R policy priorities with the only major gap being the lack of recognition of volunteer time as in-kind contribution when considering co-financing of grants. There are systematic measures in terms of regulatory framework, and a clear policy for stakeholder engagement and support measures for excluded people. Having a councillor responsible for volunteering, gives the volunteers an important voice and keeps volunteering on the agenda; furthermore Padova shows that the municipality has a good focus on how to help volunteering organizations through 'the municipal regulation of associations'. Working on the quality of volunteering through a register of different organizations is interesting and a good way to create a shared focus on quality between municipality and organizations. In terms of measuring the value of volunteering, Padova displays several interesting initiatives that research the importance of volunteering.

One year as Capital, three years of work

With the year as Volunteering capital, Padova wants to take the opportunity to redefine and rewrite the characters of being together in the city and to design the future scenario involving all the social actors.

It has structured a three-year programme (2019-2021) in which it will be involved in a common vision the whole provincial territory, the entire Veneto region but also Italy and Europe.

The hope is that Padova will become a meeting place, a cultural laboratory to reflect and debate on volunteering and civil commitment, as well as a showcase of good practices at national and European level.

Padova, the European capital of volunteering, will work to leave tangible spin-offs:

- at local level through participatory projects of urban regeneration, consolidation and valorisation of cultural, artistic and social opportunities in the province;
- at regional level through the creation of a network of for-profit and non-profit organizations to collaborate for the common good;
- at national and European level through the creation of a new »idea of Country« to guide the educational, productive, welfare and governance processes inspired by the principles of social generativity while respecting the centrality of the person, the environment, culture and peoples.

The year 2020

The aim of the activities organized for the year 2020 is to reinforce in the citizens the awareness that they are not only individuals but people at the centre of a social network. We want to give birth to a new process that can awake in the citizens the desire to be

engaged for a common good and the willingness to nurture ideas for a new, equal and inclusive society, so that it can grow and develop.

In this generative perspective, Padova European Volunteering Capital represents a fantastic experience that could make our city an important example at Italian and European level of new representations of social ties and identities. A city where everyone can feel included, where everyone is able to recognize discrimination, inequalities, barriers, exploitation and everyone acts to oppose them and to create alternatives for the benefit of society as a whole.

Opening ceremony: 7th-8th-9th of February 2020 – STITCH ITALY BACK TOGETHER

The opening ceremony of the year as Capital has been an institutional moment of strong impact with the presence of the President of the Republic, other national and local authorities as well as an important representation of volunteers, Italian and foreign students, young people in civil service. Almost 5000 people took part at the event.

During the event stories, images and testimonies of volunteers and volunteering activities were presented mixed with some entertainments moment performed by important actors and musicians.

The youth orchestra of »I polli(ci)ni« and the choir »Tre Pini« performed together the Italian Anthem and the European Anthem, in a moment of great emotion and participation: everyone stood up and sang, each and everyone proud to be European citizens and to be part of the volunteering world.

But the opening ceremony was not the only event organized for the kick off of the year as EVCapital: three days of events (7th, 8th and 9th) were organized all over the city to discuss about the concept of solidarity today, the process of co-planning and to reflect upon the link between ethics, inclusion and hospitality and to begin a revision of the »Charter of values of volunteering«. All together the meetings have been attended by more than 2000 people.

For the evenings two concerts and a theatre play were organized. Saturday the Orchestra of Padova and Veneto played in the Sala dei Giganti in front of 400 people; Saturday in the beautiful Basilica del Santo, Antonella Ruggiero and Maurizio Camardi thrilled the audience of 1000 people with »Spirito mediterraneo«, a concert for peace.

On Sunday the play »Acapulco« on stage at 9 p.m. at the Barco Teatro, dedicated to the theme of aging and social relations, was sold out.

The main initiatives promoted in the framework of Padova European Volunteering Capital 2020

Padova will be the setting for 12 intense months with various initiatives dedicated to the theme of volunteering; there will be many local and national events, organized by the municipality and the Volunteering Centre but also from organizations themselves.

Padova EVCapital will be a framework in which a lot of actors will work.

At a European level, there will be exchanges and projects with:

- **Stirling**, European Volunteering Capital candidate in 2020
- **Galway**, European Capital of Culture 2020
- **Berlin**, European Volunteering Capital in 2021
- **»Stitch Italy back together«**; Opening ceremony: 7th -9th February 2020
- **20.020 hours of solidarity**: March 2020

It is an activity to promote volunteering among young people aged 14-28. The youngsters, divided into small groups, will volunteer in an organization from Saturday morning to Sunday afternoon living an immersive experience in the organization. All the hours spent by each young person in volunteering activities will be counted and there will be three weekends available to reach the amount of 20020 hours of volunteering.

To close the experience, on Sunday 29th of March, there will be a social hackathon to develop an innovative social project followed by a big closing party.

- **7 events created by 7 thematic tables**: From Spring to Autumn 2020

The working tables for Padova EVC 2020 were activated before the summer 2019 and are involving more than 350 citizens, representative of associations, companies, trade associations, trade unions, universities, schools, public authorities and media. They are coordinated by experts and have already produced the position papers on the basis of which they will realize the events and projects during 2020. With the work of the tables, new contents and practical proposals will be defined and delivered to the Country; these proposals will be related to the link between volunteering, the Third Sector, the economic background and sustainable development goals.

- **Solidaria 2020**: 3rd edition of Solidaria Festival - From 21st to 26th September

During the festival, for one entire week, the whole city will reflect on building solidarity and volunteering through meetings, exhibitions, events and concerts, built in a collective way with for profit companies and non-profit organizations. Special guest will be Stirling with its Community Bubble's project.

The first two editions of the Festival saw the involvement of over 50,000 people, with more than 100 events and the active participation of over 40 volunteers; an event in the city, for the city, with the city!

- **Fair of Volunteering**: 27 September

Annual day in which the associations of the city present themselves to the public with stands, activities and programmes for the citizens. The 2020's edition will host organizations from the entire Veneto Region.

– **Regenerate solidarity in the territories:** Autumn 2020

The event realized in synergy with Animazione Sociale will be one of the most impacting events, on a national scale, of the whole program of Padova European Volunteering Capital 2020. It will be launched by a scientific elaboration seminar in the spring, with the involvement of 30 personalities from the Italian scientific and academic world, who will draw up guidelines on the contents to be developed during the public event that will take place in autumn 2020, with guests of national and international importance. The theme will be »Regenerate solidarity in the territories« with reflections on the objectives, modalities and role of territorial actors to face the local and global challenges that await communities – from the Veneto to the European ones – in the near future.

– **The festival that connect festivals:** Autumn 2020

A great national event that will make the synthesis of 8 national festivals dealing with the promotion of the culture of civil economy and sustainable development (National Festival of Civil Economy, Festival of Sustainable Development, Festival of Generativity, Festival of Participation, ADAPT International Conference, Festival of Soft Economy, Celestial Map, Forum for the Future of the Country, Bertinoro's Days for Civil Economy). Padova, European Volunteering Capital, with its project to create »The community that will come«, seemed the ideal setting for this initiative.

– **Gattamelata Award 2020:** 5th December 2020

»Gattamelata award« it's an annual prize given to volunteers, organizations and companies for their social commitments and solidarity activities. It was established in 2006 and since 2010 it has a national impact. The prize is awarded during the ceremonies for the International day of volunteering.

– **Closing ceremony:** 3-5 December 2020

To present to our international stakeholders the beauty of our city and the richness of its volunteering sector, a study visit dedicated to the European Volunteering Capital Candidate Community will be organized.

On the 5th of December there will be the closing ceremony to celebrate all the efforts made during the year and the results achieved. During the ceremony there will also be the proclamation of the EV Capital 2022.

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