The European Parliament,

— having regard to the Commission proposal to the Council (COM(2009)0254),

— having regard to Article 308 of the EC Treaty, pursuant to which the Council consulted Parliament (C7-0054/2009),

— having regard to Rule 55 of its Rules of Procedure,

— having regard to the report of the Committee on Culture and Education and the opinions of the Committee on Budgets, the Committee on Employment and Social Affairs and the Committee on Regional Development (A7-0077/2009),

1. Approves the Commission proposal as amended:

2. Considers that the indicative amount indicated in the legislative proposal must be compatible with the ceilings of sub-heading 3b of the multiannual financial framework (MFF) 2007-2013 and points out that the annual amount will be decided by the Budgetary Authority within the annual budgetary procedure;

3. Stresses that the funding of new activities should not jeopardise existing programmes or any other initiatives;

4. Calls on the Council to notify Parliament if it intends to depart from the text approved by Parliament;

5. Asks the Council to consult Parliament again if it intends to amend the Commission proposal substantially;

6. Instructs its President to forward its position to the Council and the Commission.

Amendment 1
Proposal for a decision
Recital -1 (new)

(-1) The Treaty establishes citizenship of the Union, which complements national citizenship of the Member States and is an important element in strengthening and safeguarding the process of European integration.
Amendment 2
Proposal for a decision
Recital - 1 a (new)

(-1a) Encouraging active citizenship is a key element in strengthening cohesion and the development of democracy and Europe’s role in the world.

Amendment 3
Proposal for a decision
Recital -1 b (new)

(-1b) The ‘European Year of Voluntary Activities promoting active citizenship’ will emphasise that volunteering is a key expression of active citizenship and democracy, putting European values such as solidarity and non-discrimination into action and as such contributing to the harmonious development of European societies.

Amendment 4
Proposal for a decision
Recital 1

(1) The Community and the Member States aim to promote the development of human resources with a view to a high level of employment and combating social exclusion.

(1) The Community and the Member States aim to promote the development of human resources with a view to a high level of employment and combating social exclusion by adopting measures aimed at improving knowledge, developing exchanges of information and of best practices, promoting innovative approaches and evaluating experiences.

Amendment 5
Proposal for a decision
Recital 3

(3) Volunteering constitutes a non-formal learning experience which enables both the development of professional skills and competences as well as a major form of active civic participation. Actions carried out by volunteers of all ages are crucial to the development of democracy, one of the founding principles of the European Union, and contribute to the development of human resources and to the social cohesion.

(3) Voluntary activities constitute a rich non-formal learning experience which enable the development of professional and social skills and competences, contribute to solidarity and constitute a major form of active civic participation. Volunteering promotes and encourages partnership and active citizenship, which puts European values such as solidarity and non-discrimination into action. Actions carried out by volunteers of all ages are crucial to the development of democracy and in particular participative democracy, one of the founding principles of the European Union, and to the promotion of human rights within and outside the European Union. Voluntary activities have the potential to contribute to the personal growth and well-being of individuals and the harmonious development of European societies in terms of solidarity, social inclusion and prosperity. Volunteering and voluntary activities should not, however, be a substitute for paid work, although the expenses of volunteers should be adequately reimbursed.
Amendment 6
Proposal for a decision
Recital 3 a (new)

(3a) The term ‘voluntary activities’ refers to all forms of voluntary activity, whether formal, non-formal, informal and vocational training, which are undertaken of a person’s own free will, choice and motivation, and are without concern for financial gain. They benefit the individual volunteer, communities and society as a whole. They are also a vehicle for individuals and associations to address human, social or environmental needs and concerns, especially when they are faced with emergency situations that can involve society as a whole. Such activities are often carried out in support of a non-profit organisation or community-based initiative. Voluntary activities do not replace professional, paid employment opportunities, but add value to society by virtue of their social and cultural aims.

Amendment 7
Proposal for a decision
Recital 4

(4) In fast-changing societies there is a need to ensure effective support and to implement measures for voluntary activities to allow more people to engage in them. It is therefore important to support peer-learning and the exchange of good practices at Community level.

Amendment 8
Proposal for a decision
Recital 5

(5) The 1997 Intergovernmental Conference adopted Declaration 38 on volunteering, which was attached to the final act of the Treaty of Amsterdam and recognised the important contribution made by voluntary service activities to developing social solidarity and promoting intergenerational volunteering.
Amendment 9
Proposal for a decision
Recital 12

(12) **Volunteering** is targeted by several community programmes that focus on mobility in volunteering, such as the European Voluntary Service of the Youth in Action programme, the Life Long Learning programme and the Europe for Citizens programme.

Amendment 10
Proposal for a decision
Recital 12 a (new)

(12a) Volunteering is an essential element in fostering active citizenship, nurturing civil society and strengthening solidarity.

Amendment 11
Proposal for a decision
Recital 13

(13) There exists a large variety of voluntary activities throughout Europe which should be preserved and developed further.

Amendment 12
Proposal for a decision
Recital 13 a (new)

(13a) The European Year of Volunteering should offer an opportunity to encourage the Member States to create legal certainty for volunteers as regards their legal status.
Amendment 13
Proposal for a decision
Recital 13 b (new)

(13b) The EU has a significant role to play in promoting, developing and supporting voluntary activities throughout the Union. However, it is important to recognise and respect the diversity of volunteering within individual Member States.

Amendment 14
Proposal for a decision
Recital 14

(14) Volunteering has the potential to contribute to the harmonious development of European societies. Voluntary activities constitute a rich non-formal learning experience which enhances professional skills and competences, contributes to employability and a sense of solidarity, develops social skills, smoothes integration into society and fosters civic participation.

(14a) Every individual should be enabled to volunteer. With a view to furthering individual development and participation, asylum seekers, refugees and legally resident immigrants should be increasingly enabled to play a role in volunteering activities, particularly when they are unable to be employed.

Amendment 15
Proposal for a decision
Recital 14 a (new)

(14b) Voluntary activities constitute a rich non-formal learning experience which enhances professional skills and competences, contributes to employability by facilitating reintegration into the labour market, develops social skills and contributes to the personal growth and well-being of individuals.

Amendment 16
Proposal for a decision
Recital 14 b (new)

(14c) Volunteering can contribute to fighting poverty and to achieving social and economic development, through actions carried out within the European Union and in third countries.
Amendment 18
Proposal for a decision
Recital 14 d (new)

(14d) As part of their strategy for Corporate Social Responsibility, employers could support and encourage volunteering activities.

Amendment 19
Proposal for a decision
Recital 15

(15) Despite this, the potential of volunteering is still not fully realised. A European Year of Volunteering will provide the opportunity to demonstrate in a European context that volunteering increases civic participation. It can help foster a sense of belonging and commitment of citizens to their society at all levels — local, regional, national and European.

Amendment 20
Proposal for a decision
Recital 15 a (new)

(15a) Member States should be encouraged to minimise bureaucratic constraints which hinder volunteers in carrying out voluntary activities.

Amendment 21
Proposal for a decision
Recital 15 b (new)

(15b) The European Year of Volunteering should highlight the key role played by voluntary activities, while at the same time reminding the Member States that it should be used neither as a means of meeting basic needs normally met by social services nor as a substitute for action by public authorities.

Amendment 22
Proposal for a decision
Recital 16

(16) The Year 2011 will be the 10th Anniversary of the 2001 International Year of Volunteers of the United Nations.

(16) 5 December is International Volunteer Day and the Year 2011 will be the 10th Anniversary of the 2001 International Year of Volunteers of the United Nations.
Amendment 23
Proposal for a decision
Recital 16 a (new)

(16a) Apart from its social role, volunteering has an economic value and makes a significant contribution to the economy.

Amendment 24
Proposal for a decision
Recital 16 b (new)

(16b) Volunteering plays a major role in environmental and civil protection and its contribution must be recognised and supported in every field, especially within the new democracies of the EU.

Amendment 25
Proposal for a decision
Recital 16 c (new)

(16c) The recognition of volunteering as an appropriate activity through which to acquire competences and skills, e.g. through YOUTHPASS with a linkage to EUROPASS, will ensure that volunteering is not seen as an alternative to formal training but as a complement to it, and furthermore will facilitate the mobility of volunteers.

Amendment 26
Proposal for a decision
Recital 16 d (new)

(16d) The recognition of the contribution of volunteer time as matching funding (in-kind contributions) for European and national projects would be a tangible recognition of the value of volunteer effort and would facilitate voluntary organisations in carrying out their activities.

Amendment 27
Proposal for a decision
Article 1

The year 2011 shall be designated as the ‘European Year of Volunteering’ (hereinafter referred to as ‘the European Year’).
The overall purpose of the European Year shall be to encourage and support — notably through the exchange of experience and good practices and the promotion of innovative approaches and evaluating experience — the efforts of the Member States, local and regional authorities and civil society to create the conditions conducive to volunteering in the European Union.

1. Work towards an enabling environment for volunteering in the EU - To anchor volunteering as part of promoting civic participation, partnership and people-to-people activities in an EU context.

2. Empower volunteer organisations and improve the quality of volunteering - To facilitate volunteering and to encourage networking, mobility, cooperation and synergies between volunteer organisations and other sectors in an EU context.

2. Empower volunteer organisations with respect to their aims, priorities and autonomy and improve the quality of volunteering - To promote volunteering and volunteer organisations’ access to adequate, sustainable funding: by encouraging networking, mobility, cooperation and synergies between volunteer organisations and other not-for-profit sectors in an EU context; by encouraging initiatives in human and environmental emergency situations, both in terms of preventing and dealing with them and by properly educating volunteers to deal with and effectively face urgent cases; and by making it possible to put voluntary work on a permanent footing. The duty of care that volunteer organisations owe to their volunteers should be laid down in law and should incorporate adequate protection through insurance, health and safety measures and training.
Amendment 31
Proposal for a decision
Article 2 – paragraph 2 – point 3

3. Reward and recognise volunteering activities - To encourage appropriate incentives for individuals, companies and volunteer-development organisations and gain more systematic recognition for volunteering at EU level and in the Member States by policy makers, civil society organisations and employers for skills and competences developed through volunteering.

Amendment 32
Proposal for a decision
Article 2 – paragraph 2 – point 3 a (new)

3a. Encourage international and European solidarity by promoting peace, North-South cooperation and the protection of the environment, as well as recognition of the solidarity-based social economy through volunteering.

Amendment 33
Proposal for a decision
Article 2 – paragraph 2 – point 4

4. Raise awareness of the value and importance of volunteering - To raise general awareness of the importance of volunteering as an expression of civic participation which contributes to issues which are of common concern of all Member States, such as a harmonious societal development and economic cohesion.

Amendment 34
Proposal for a decision
Article 2 – paragraph 2 – point 4 a (new)

4a. Draw up a White Paper on Volunteering – To foster an enabling environment for volunteering in the EU.
Amendment 35
Proposal for a decision
Article 2 – paragraph 2 – point 4 b (new)

4b. Foster the recognition of volunteering success both within and between Member States in order to ensure that good practice and successful volunteering strategies can easily be spread throughout the European Union.

Amendment 36
Proposal for a decision
Article 3 – paragraph 1

1. The measures to be taken to achieve the objectives set out in Article 2 shall include the following initiatives organised at Community, national, regional or local level linked to the objectives of the European Year:

— exchange of experience and good practices;

— dissemination of results of related studies and research;

— conferences, events and initiatives to promote debate and raise awareness of the importance and value of volunteering and to celebrate the efforts of volunteers;

— information and promotion campaigns to disseminate key messages.

1. The measures to be taken to achieve the objectives set out in Article 2 shall include the following initiatives organised at Community, national, regional or local level linked to the objectives of the European Year:

— exchange of experience and good practices, in particular by means of efficient systems of cooperation and networking between volunteer organisations;

— conferences, events and initiatives to promote dialogue, innovative approaches and the evaluation of experience. Raising awareness of the importance and value of volunteering and fostering transnational networks with the purpose of active debate;

— information and promotion campaigns to disseminate key messages inter alia through the use of new media and the internet and the creation of a European portal to achieve this;

— the establishment of a European online database of the actors, organisations and stakeholders involved in a given volunteering area, including both their completed and ongoing projects and also their future initiatives, with a view to better networking and communication between them.

— the promotion of the use of volunteer time as matching funding for European projects.
Amendment 37
Proposal for a decision
Article 4 – paragraph 2

Each Member State shall ensure that the aforementioned body properly involves a wide range of stakeholders at national, regional and local level.

Amendment 38
Proposal for a decision
Article 5 – paragraph 4

The Member States, the European Parliament, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions will be associated in the activities.

Amendment 39
Proposal for a decision
Article 7 – paragraph 1

1. The budget for implementing this Decision for the period from 1 January 2011 to 31 December 2011 is EUR 6 000 000.

Amendment 40
Proposal for a decision
Article 7 – paragraph 2

2. Annual appropriations shall be authorised by the budgetary authority within the limits of the financial framework.
Amendment 41
Proposal for a decision
Article 8

For the purpose of the European Year, the Commission may cooperate with appropriate international organisations, in particular with the United Nations and the Council of Europe, taking care to ensure the visibility of the EU’s participation.

For the purpose of the European Year, the Commission may cooperate with appropriate international organisations, in particular with the United Nations and the Council of Europe, taking care to ensure the visibility of the EU’s participation, and may also take action in order to stimulate other international organisations to enhance the volunteering dimension worldwide. In cooperation with these organisations, the Commission shall promote programmes for international volunteering aiming to encourage the exchange of best practices on volunteering in third countries.

Amendment 42
Proposal for a decision
Article 9

The Commission together with the Member States shall ensure that the measures provided for in this Decision are consistent with other Community, national and regional schemes and initiatives that help attain the objectives of the European Year.

The Commission together with the Member States shall ensure that the measures provided for in this Decision are consistent with and complementary to other Community programmes and actions and national and regional schemes and initiatives that help attain the objectives of the European Year.

Amendment 43
Proposal for a decision
Annex – point A – point 1

1. Information and promotion campaigns including:

   — high visibility events and forums for exchanging experience and good practices;

   — contest with or without prizes;

   — high visibility events and forums for exchanging experience and good practices, with priority for twinning and mobility programmes, with the participation of European organisations or bodies active in the field of volunteering, representatives of employers’ associations and unions, the European Parliament, the European Economic and Social Affairs Committee and the Committee of the Regions;
— cooperation with the private sector, broadcasters and other media as partners for disseminating information on the European Year of Volunteering;

— the production of material and tools for media available throughout the Community to stimulate public interest;

— measures to publicise the results and raise the profile of Community programmes; schemes and initiatives contributing to the objectives of the European Year of Volunteering;

— the establishment of an information website on Europa, including a portal for promoters of projects on volunteering, to guide them through the various Community programmes and initiatives.

— action to make the contribution of voluntary activities to national revenue and its impact on society more visible through the inclusion of volunteering as a specific category in the statistical accounts of Eurostat and the production of 'satellite accounts' on not-for-profit organisations, in which unpaid voluntary work would be included, as well as through the celebration on 5 December each year of International Volunteering Day, as recognised by the United Nations since 1985.

Amendment 44
Proposal for a decision
Annex – point A – point 2 – indent 1

— surveys and studies at Community level to assess and report on the preparation, effectiveness, impact and long-term monitoring of the European Year of Volunteering.
Amendment 45
Proposal for a decision
Annex – point C – paragraph 1

Each National coordinator shall submit a single application for Community funding. That grant application shall describe the coordinator’s work programme or the action to be funded and promote the European Year. The grant application shall be accompanied by a detailed budget setting out the total costs of the initiatives/work programme proposed and the amount and sources of co-funding. The Community grant can cover up to 80% of the total costs.

Amendment 46
Proposal for a decision
Annex – point C – paragraph 2

The Commission shall determine the indicative amounts available for grants to each National coordinator and the final deadline for submission of the applications. The criteria should take into account the population, the cost of living and a fixed amount per Member State to guarantee a minimum level of activities.

Amendment 47
Proposal for a decision
Annex – point C – paragraph 4

The work programmes/actions shall include:

(a) Meetings and events connected with the objectives of the European Year, including national events to launch and promote the European Year, create a catalyst effect and provide open space for debate on concrete initiatives.

(b) Mutual learning seminars at national, regional and local level;

(c) Information, educational and promotional campaigns at national, regional and local level, including the organisation of awards and competitions;

(d) Cooperation with the media.