



Partnership funds in Bulgaria and Romania

JOINT PROJECTS STRENGTHENING BILATERAL RELATIONS



Partnership projects help improve people's living conditions in Bulgaria and Romania

Switzerland finances a partnership fund in Bulgaria and Romania with over CHF 12 million, providing support for around 60 projects. These projects are implemented by a Swiss organisation or institution along with a Bulgarian or Romanian counterpart respectively. The central focus is the exchange of knowledge, and thus Switzerland is strengthening institutional partnerships and bilateral relations with Bulgaria and Romania.

Bilateral partnership projects contribute to resolving specific problems in Bulgaria and Romania and improving living conditions for local people. At the heart of these projects lies the exchange of knowledge and experience with a Swiss organisation or institution which has extensive experience in the specific area. Through the exchange of visits, project partners, local political representatives and specialists are able to share experiences. They plan and implement projects together. Switzerland supports small projects in the amount of 10,000 CHF to 100,000 CHF, while larger projects can receive a subsidy of 100,000 CHF to 250,000 CHF.

Only non-profit organisations in Switzerland and the partner countries, such as foundations, associations or cultural institutions, may participate in the cooperation programme. Public bodies such as municipalities or cantonal administrative authorities may also access these funds. Among the Swiss partners are renowned institutions and educational establishments such as the Swiss Federal Institute of Technology (EPFL), Lausanne, and also smaller organisations such as the *Stiftung Lebensqualität*, a Swiss foundation for improving quality of life, which has been working with Bulgaria and Romania for a number of years.

PROJECTS ALREADY AT THE IMPLEMENTATION STAGE

In Bulgaria already 31 projects have been identified. In Romania, following a first call for projects in 2012, 14 partnership projects have been approved. A second call for projects took place in the spring of 2014.

The projects already started are showing their first results. For example, in the Romanian town of Ghimbav a workshop has been set up to help young people with limited skills find work. The workshop is the result of a partnership between the Swiss association for abandoned children in Romania and the Romanian NGO *Pentru copiii abandonati*, which is supported through the partnership fund.



Geta Bârsan is 18 years old. She grew up in a foster family and today completes her training at the new workshop in Ghimbav.



Fănică Dîrlău works for the Motivation Romania Foundation in Cornetu, Romania. The project, implemented together with the Swiss Paraplegic Foundation, helps to improve social services for wheelchair users.

MUTUAL BENEFITS OF COOPERATION

Switzerland too benefits from the mutual exchange of experience, obtaining insights into different approaches at various levels. Through the partnership projects Swiss partners are also playing an active role in reducing the economic and social inequalities prevalent in Bulgaria and Romania. New institutional partnerships are formed, while existing ones are strengthened, which in turn strengthens bilateral relations between Switzerland and the two countries.

Partnership funds in the EU-12

In addition to its funds in Bulgaria and Romania, Switzerland has also set up partnership funds in the Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, Slovakia and Slovenia. The projects in those countries were begun back in 2009 and most are now nearing completion. In all, Switzerland supports over 150 partnership projects as part of its EU enlargement contribution.

THE PROJECT IN BRIEF

OBJECTIVE

Strengthening civil society

THEME

Partnership funds

COUNTRY

Bulgaria and Romania

PARTNERS

Swiss non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and public bodies

STARTING POINT / BACKGROUND INFORMATION

For historical reasons, institutions, organisations and public bodies in the new EU member states still lack expert knowledge in many specialist fields and their organisational structures are underdeveloped.

PURPOSE

- Expand existing and foster new institutional partnerships between NGOs, research institutes and public bodies in Bulgaria and Romania and in Switzerland.
- Implement partnership projects that will actively contribute to improving people's living conditions, with the help of Swiss expertise.

ACTIVITIES

- Selecting and implementing around 60 partnership projects
- Transferring Swiss expert knowledge
- Establishing and expanding institutional partnerships
- Exchange of visits to share experiences
- Joint evaluation and drafting of reports
- Creating long-term international relationships in the project area

TARGET GROUPS

NGOs, research institutes and public bodies in Bulgaria and Romania and in Switzerland

COSTS

CHF 12.6 million
(Bulgaria: CHF 4.6 million, Romania: CHF 8 million)

RESPONSIBLE FOR PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION

Bulgarian and Romanian institutions in cooperation with Swiss partners

DURATION

2012–2018

SWISS ENLARGEMENT CONTRIBUTION

December 2014

www.swiss-contribution.admin.ch