



Promoting public safety in rural communities of Romania

## POLICE REFORMS IN ROMANIA: COMMUNITY POLICING



A resident of the Romanian municipality of Merișani asks a local policeman for help.

Switzerland has been supporting the work of the police in Romania, helping to build public trust in the police and to fight crime. Special priority was given to improving understanding between the police and disadvantaged population groups, such as the Roma community.

Switzerland's support was aimed at improving policing in Romania in 97 rural communities, building public trust in the police and reducing the crime rate. To this end, the community policing approach was used, which focuses on crime prevention and problem-solving.

The project covered three areas:

- strengthening community policing
- training police officers
- logistical and operational support for the police

### STRENGTHENING COMMUNITY POLICING

Supervised by the Romanian police, a research team carried out a study on the socio-economic situation, crime and relations between the police and the public in the 97 selected municipalities. The insights

gained from that study on comparative community policing and past experience of the Romanian police and its Swiss partners served as a basis for the project.

### TRAINING POLICE OFFICERS

A new training manual in community policing was designed with the assistance of Swiss experts. 2,500 officers from the targeted municipalities were trained in the new approach, which emphasises communication skills and mediation – both of which are essential aspects of community policing. Another 240 police officers attended courses in Roma language and culture in a new training centre set up in the police academy in Slatina, a town located about 150 km west of Bucharest. The aim is to enhance understanding and improve the relationship between the police and the Roma community.



Police officers taking courses in Roma language and culture in a newly created training centre at the police academy in Slatina.

## LOGISTICAL SUPPORT FOR THE POLICE AND LOCAL SAFETY FORUMS

An important way of ensuring effective community policing is to improve the police's mobility. Police stations in the selected municipalities have therefore been provided with vehicles and up-to-date equipment. A special fund was also created to support policing micro-projects including the renovation of local police stations, motor boats to service the protected areas of the Danube Delta, and the instalment of video surveillance devices. The 30 micro-projects were devised through consultation with local community safety forums set up by the project.

## TRIED-AND-TESTED COOPERATION WITH SWITZERLAND

Back in 2000, Switzerland began helping the Romanian government to introduce community policing in the towns and cities. This pilot scheme met with such success that the Romanian government decided to extend it to rural areas too. Here, as in the towns and cities, Swiss expertise has been instrumental in introducing community policing. The Romanian police force worked closely with the Savatan police academy in the Canton of Vaud and with the Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies in Geneva under the supervision of the Swiss NGO Coginta.

Switzerland provided almost CHF 2 million for the project under its security fund, which was used to finance 20 different security-related projects in Romania for a total amount of CHF 18 million, supporting the country in such areas as the judiciary, the implementation of Schengen and the fight against corruption, human trafficking and organised crime.

## THE PROJECT IN BRIEF

### OBJECTIVE

Improving public safety and security

### THEME

Support for policing in rural communities of Romania

### COUNTRY

Romania

### PARTNERS

Various Swiss institutions and experts

### STARTING POINT/ BACKGROUND INFORMATION

In some rural areas of Romania where crime levels are higher than the national average there is little public trust in the police.

### PURPOSE

The introduction of community policing in 97 selected municipalities is intended to bolster the public's trust in the police and lead to a reduction in crime.

### ACTIVITIES

- Introducing community policing
- Training for police officers in the Roma language and culture
- Logistical and operational support for the police
- Creation of a training manual on community policing

### TARGET GROUPS

The local population and police in 97 Romanian municipalities

### COSTS

Total project costs: CHF 2.32 million  
Swiss contribution: CHF 1.97 million

### RESPONSIBLE FOR PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION

Public Order Directorate of the Romanian Ministry of Administration and Interior

### DURATION

2012–2019

*The training helped me to better understand the habits, traditions and language of Roma people. The Roma community has increased its trust in me, which reinforces my ability to solve community issues.*

**Chief deputy sergeant Ionut Popa from the community police in Merişani village**



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