



# Switzerland's Contribution to the Enlarged EU

Context – Activities – Results  
2016 Annual Report



Schweizerische Eidgenossenschaft  
Confédération suisse  
Confederazione Svizzera  
Confederaziun svizra

**Swiss Agency for Development  
and Cooperation SDC**

**State Secretariat for  
Economic Affairs SECO**

Left-hand image: Slovakia's average youth unemployment rate is 20.4% (December 2016). Many industries in Slovakia bemoan the lack of practical relevance of Slovakia's VET system and difficulties in finding well-qualified staff. As part of its contribution to the enlarged EU, Switzerland is sharing experience gathered from its own vocational system to support a project to introduce a dual approach in Slovakia based on the Swiss model. © SDC

Right-hand image: Several social institutions and care centres have been renovated as part of Switzerland's contribution to the enlarged EU. Among these, a multipurpose sports complex in the Polish district of Świętokrzyskie is now equipped with additional infrastructure, allowing the nearby care home to offer a much wider range of rehabilitation and therapy options. © Polish Ministry of Health, photo by Marcin Zięba

Dear readers

The Vocational School of Chemistry in the Slovakian capital, Bratislava, is a hive of activity as young people busy themselves distilling and synthesising, heating and mixing liquids and other chemical substances (see cover image). 17-year-old Karin has had a passion for science since primary school. Her dream is to work in research. Dominika, 16, also sees her future in chemistry and would like to go on to study pharmaceuticals. Switzerland's contribution to the enlarged EU has helped advance the reform of vocational education and training in Slovakia based on the Swiss model. Apprenticeships are now offered in various new occupations. They give apprentices in the chemicals, construction, electronics, food and hospitality industries the chance to put their classroom knowledge to the test in the workshop, office or laboratory. And vocational school pupils like Karin and Dominika are not the only ones to benefit. The Slovakian private sector is also keen to employ well-qualified workers with in-company training.

This project in Slovakia illustrates three things. First, the contribution is well-placed to match Swiss expertise with the individual needs of partner countries. In this respect, the successful dual vocational education

and training model is a Swiss export that is in high demand. Second, the results are having a positive impact on development in partner countries. The example of Karin and Dominika is one of many gratifying results currently emerging from the ten national programmes which are now drawing to a close as we approach mid-2017. Third, the enlargement contribution encourages partnership between Switzerland and the new EU member states. Working together on projects such as the overhaul of the vocational system in Slovakia – projects which seek sustainable improvements – is creating a lasting positive impression of Switzerland in its partner countries. Raising Switzerland's profile in this way brings many political and economic advantages.

In this annual report we look back over the milestones and highlights of 2016 and take stock of the results to date. On behalf of the SDC and SECO, we wish you a pleasant read.

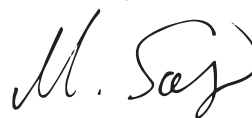
Marie-Gabrielle Ineichen-Fleisch



State Secretary  
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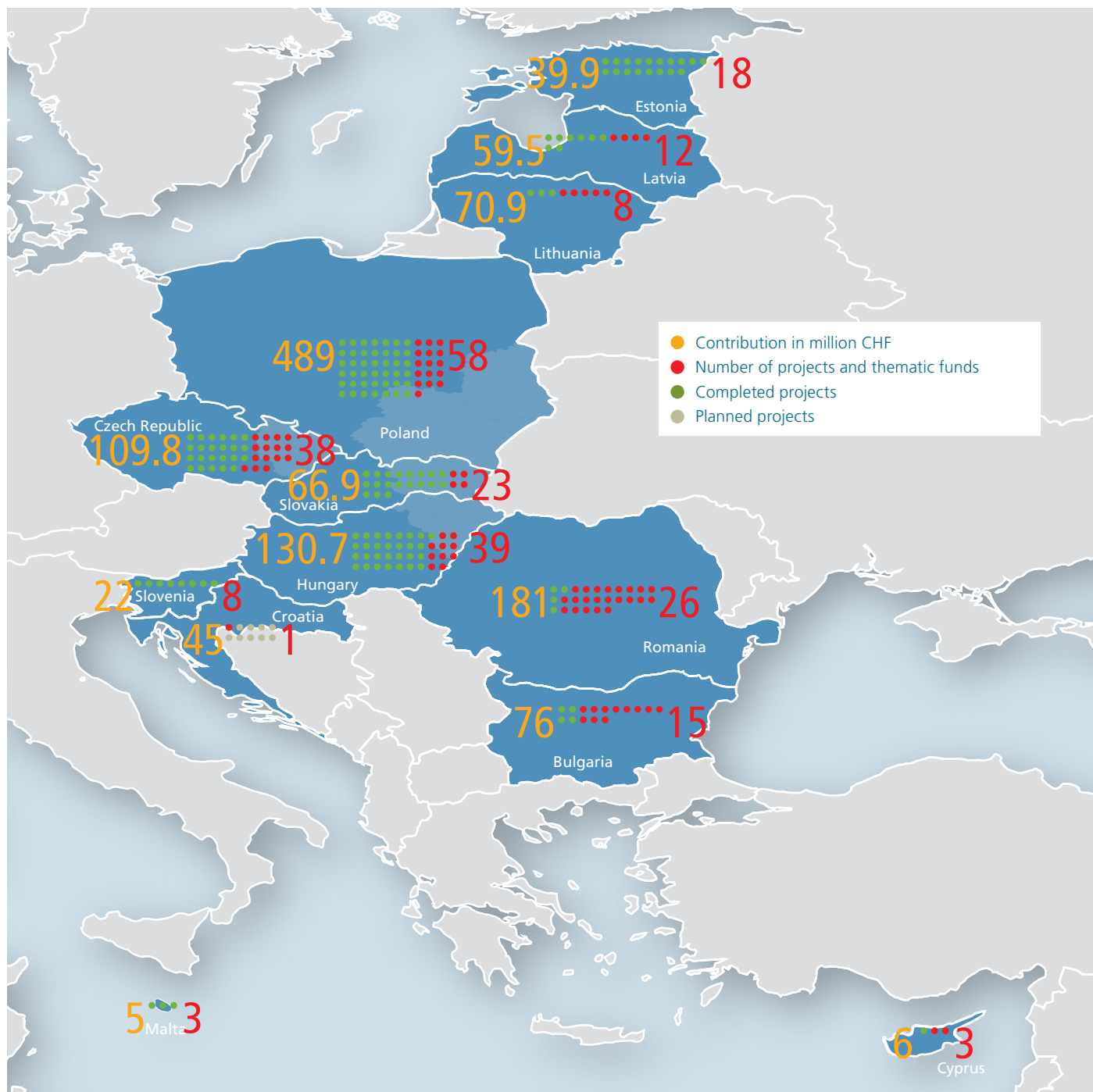
Ambassador  
Director General of the SDC



# The Swiss contribution in brief

Switzerland contributes to reducing the economic and social disparities in the enlarged European Union (EU). As well as being a gesture of solidarity and responsibility, it is also in Switzerland's own interest because the projects involved promote a number of partnerships that strengthen Switzerland's relations with the new EU member states and the EU

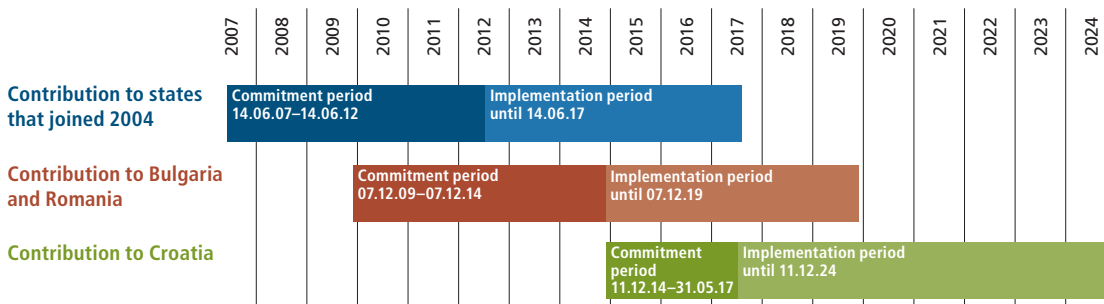
as a whole. The contribution to the enlarged EU is an important part of Switzerland's European policy and strengthens Switzerland's reputation. One of the effects is to improve the chances of bids by Swiss companies in public procurement processes within the EU.



The Swiss contribution is divided among the 13 partner states on the basis of population size and income per capita. Switzerland determines which projects it supports by agreement with the individual states, independently of the EU. The implementation of the

more than 300 projects is overseen by the SDC and SECO as well as the joint offices in Warsaw, Riga, Prague, Budapest, Bratislava, Sofia and Bucharest.

## Time frame of the enlargement contribution



All of the projects must be completed within 10 years. The projects are selected during a commitment period. This is followed by an implementation period, by the end of which all of the projects must have been completed. In 2016, the project implementation phase was under way in 12 countries and the commitment period is currently open for projects in Croatia.

Five overarching project objectives place a strategic focus on areas in which Switzerland can contribute extensive knowledge and experience to effectively reduce economic and social disparities in the EU, enabling valuable inputs from both sides. These objectives are detailed starting on page 10 alongside examples of specific projects.

### Switzerland's contribution in figures:

Some <b>300</b> projects have been approved	<b>100%</b> of the project budget for the first 12 countries has been allocated
<b>5</b> project objectives: promoting economic growth and improving working conditions; improving social security; protecting the environment; improving public safety and security; strengthening civil society	<b>13</b> partner countries: Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Croatia, Cyprus, Hungary, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, and Slovenia
CHF <b>1,302</b> billion to reduce economic and social disparities in the enlarged EU	Mandates and contributions worth CHF <b>110</b> million have been awarded to Swiss companies, universities and other institutions implementing projects in collaboration with partner countries

# Milestones in 2016

## Independent evaluation rates Switzerland's contribution highly

Every year the SDC and SECO award a total of three or four mandates to external auditors. The resulting evaluation reports assess whether the SDC and SECO are on track to implement the projects. The evaluations also ensure accountability to political institutions and the public, and they further institutional learning.

A mandate to evaluate the relevance, effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability of the enlargement contribution was awarded through a public tendering procedure to the German firm GOPA Consultants.

Their in-depth assessment found that the projects created added value and made a positive contribution towards promoting economic and social development in the targeted sectors and regions of recipient countries. Switzerland's contribution supports cooperation in various sectors between organisations

in Switzerland and in its partner states at national, regional and local level. Intensive collaboration under the enlargement agreement has helped to further enhance and strengthen the bilateral relations between Switzerland and its partner states.

Switzerland's contribution performed well in terms of the internationally recognised criteria of relevance, effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability, and its implementation has been successful. However, the evaluation also highlighted potential for greater efficiency.

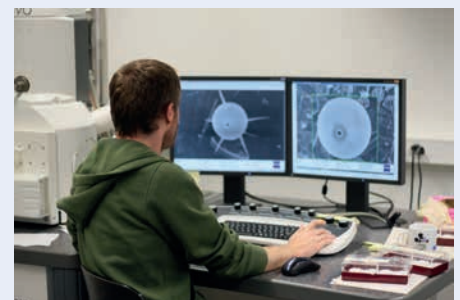
Detailed information is contained in the evaluation report on the Swiss contribution, available at [www.swiss-contribution.ch](http://www.swiss-contribution.ch).

## Polish-Swiss Research Programme

The Polish-Swiss Research Programme promotes long-term collaboration between Polish and Swiss researchers in ICT, renewable energies and nanotechnology as well as health and the environment. The research system in Poland struggles to mobilise resources and Polish research institutions are not sufficiently included in European Research Area programmes. This project is intended to internationalise Polish research to make it more appealing to young Polish researchers. The project was chosen at random for closer inspection during the evaluation.

The report assessed the relevance of the project as 'very good', and its effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability as 'good'. According to the evaluation team, the project is a meaningful addition to the EU funds and Norwegian development funding, and contributes to mutual learning

between Polish and Swiss research institutes. Furthermore, the project encourages young scientists to keep pace with the latest research developments. The large number of publications to emanate from the various sub-projects is one indicator of the project's effectiveness. In addition, the project provides Swiss institutions with important inputs for their long-term research priorities. A conference organised in the context of the project further encouraged exchange between researchers from both countries and increased visibility. Efficiency was achieved when currency exchange savings were reinvested in sub-projects to increase their impact. That the research projects are expected to continue to run after the programme ends indicates their sustainability. There are also good prospects for further cooperation between Polish and Swiss institutions as long as the institutions can secure funding.



The evaluation team selected the 'Polish-Swiss Research Programme' project for closer investigation. Swiss contribution: CHF 30,200,000; duration: 2009–2017. © SDC



## Slovenia and Estonia complete their programmes

Slovenia is the second country to have successfully completed its national programme under Switzerland's contribution. The results of the eight projects include the following:

- › Since 2016, cancer patients at the University Medical Centre Maribor in eastern Slovenia have been treated using two modern radiotherapy machines, which will increase the number of treatments annually to 1,000 by 2019.
- › Switzerland is helping to carry out energy efficiency renovations on 41 public buildings in 20 Slovenian municipalities. Initial effectiveness measurements show a reduction in harmful greenhouse gases and significant savings in annual municipal expenditure.
- › Over 20,000 Slovenian school pupils and their teachers are actively engaging with energy and sustainability issues as part of mainstream school curricula.
- › Many of the small-scale projects to support non-governmental organisations and encourage partnerships between Switzerland and Slovenia were completed some time ago. However, the effectiveness of these projects is still in evidence. Slovenia will continue to monitor the project results and work actively to sustain the projects' effectiveness in the years to come.

Estonia was the third state to complete its national programme. Examples of results from the 18 projects:

- › The installation of two high-tech AFM microscopes, training and exchanges with the Federal Institute of Technology in Zurich (ETHZ) are helping to strengthen Estonia's research and development environment. 22 young Estonian scientists received fellowships to conduct research at Swiss universities.
- › High-tech equipment from Switzerland and professional staff training have put laboratories and monitoring stations in a position to collect comprehensive, reliable environmental data on water and air quality, radioactivity and natural hazards. The data can be applied in environmental and civil protection.
- › Over 95 orphans now live together in 'family' groups in 14 newly built apartment blocks.
- › During this 10-year cooperation with Switzerland, Estonia also improved fire safety and rescue services by optimising the use of technologies in operations centres and ambulances. In addition, the Swiss contribution helped the Estonian justice system to become more efficient, cost-effective and environmentally friendly.



SKUPAJ ('Together') is a project to promote the integration of children from the Roma community. The project provides homework help and language tuition in Slovenian to prepare the children for school. © SDC



Thanks to Switzerland's support, Estonia can now rely on comprehensive, reliable environmental data on water and air quality, radioactivity and natural hazards. Estonian experts taking measurements on Lake Võrtsjärv. © SECO

# Insights into implementation

## Solid vocational skills create prospects for young people

Switzerland is supporting a project to help Slovakia improve dual vocational education and training. To ensure the vocational education they offer is practice-based and market-oriented, vocational schools are increasingly gearing their courses to the needs of employers. Pupils receive training in a company in addition to theoretical knowledge. This equips them with better qualifications and improves their job prospects.



Courses at the VET school for food processing and hotel services in Bratislava are a good foundation for apprentices entering the Slovakian job market. © SDC

## Slovakian delegation of vocational teaching staff visits Switzerland

In November 2016, a Slovakian delegation came to Switzerland to find out more about Switzerland's vocational and professional education and training system. This delegation comprised school directors and regional vocational training system representatives from the Slovakian interior and education ministries. They visited the Swiss Federal Institute for Vocational Education and Training (SFIVET) and the training centre of the Swiss Contractors' Association. Furthermore, they learned about the role of the careers service at cantonal level and the status of the project to reform the Slovakian vocational education systems.

According to statistics, youth unemployment in Slovakia is around 20%, while many sectors complain of a shortage of well-qualified workers and wish to see more practice-oriented vocational education and training. The project therefore actively promotes close contacts between vocational schools, trade associations and employer organisations. This is an area in which Switzerland performs particularly well,

and the country is using extensive experience derived from its own dual vocational system to provide vital input for the reforms under way in Slovakia.

### Encouraging results

The project, now in its final phase, has achieved a number of successes. Peter Krajnak, Slovakian State Secretary at the Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sport, has seen interest in the dual vocational education and training system grow among parents, pupils and companies. The number of pupils entering the dual system doubled between 2015 and 2016. A total of 1,121 apprenticeship contracts have been signed and 1,543 pupils attend a school offering a dual vocational education and training programme. The project supported by Switzerland as part of its contribution to the enlarged EU accounts for around one third of these.



## Interview – What are the benefits of bilateral partnerships between Switzerland and the new EU member states?

Switzerland has extensive experience in environmental protection and research and in healthcare and social welfare matters. Swiss organisations working in these areas can help partner countries which – primarily for historical reasons – lack experience in these areas, to develop their knowledge and find solutions for specific problems. One of the priorities of Switzerland's contribution is therefore to encourage bilateral partnerships between Switzerland and the new EU member states. Partnerships may only be concluded with organisations in Switzerland and its partner countries that do not make a commercial profit from the projects. Potential partners include

foundations, trade unions, associations and municipal authorities or cantonal administrative bodies. Twin towns and sister cities are a classic example of bilateral partnership. Other partnerships are based on shared concerns such as non-motorised transport, teacher training or biodiversity.

One such partnership emerged between the Swiss foundation Diakoniewerk Neumünster, which works primarily in the area of healthcare and social welfare, and the national umbrella organisation for social institutions in the Czech Republic. Werner Widmer, the foundation's director shares his experiences.

### Mr Widmer, can you describe the cooperation between your foundation and the Czech Republic in the context of Switzerland's contribution?

Werner Widmer: We have been providing support in caring for elderly people and palliative care, and on ethics and the management of social institutions, since 2009. Senior managers from the Czech Republic visit Switzerland and their Swiss counterparts visit the Czech Republic four to eight times a year. Now Swiss specialists get invited to talk at conferences in the Czech Republic, and a textbook on palliative care that we produced has been published in Czech. The book is designed for people working directly in palliative care.

Contact with other countries raises people's awareness of the high quality of services in Switzerland and the responsibilities this entails. Collaboration and cultural exchange feed debates on care for elderly people and palliative care.

### Are there differences, then, in the ways we approach common challenges in caring for elderly people and coping with death?

Werner Widmer: We are struck by the commitment and cheerful and friendly attitude of care staff in the Czech institutions as they go about their jobs – despite the difficult circumstances, for example unfavourable financial conditions. But there is a different approach to care. Unlike in Switzerland, there is an increasing focus on care in the home. Community care services are being expanded and fewer funds are going into creating extra places in care homes. The state provides assistance allowances for elderly people in need of care to use as they please. The allowance is used to help pay for individual care services. One of the ways it is used is to remunerate relatives for care they provide. We've also noticed big differences in how people approach death and accompany those who are dying. In the Czech Republic, people who are dying in a hospital or care home are not and it seems do not particularly wish to be accompanied either by their relatives or by care staff. Leave-taking rituals are little-known in the Czech Republic.

### Looking to the future, what challenges might the partnership address in coming years?

Werner Widmer: If the partnership were to continue we would focus more on supporting better quality care services for elderly people in the Czech Republic and step up our efforts to help people to stay independent in old age. This is a big priority for our partners, because independence in old age is an area which has hardly been explored and which calls for pragmatic approaches.



Residents of Harmony Home, a retirement and care home in Vsetín, Czech Republic. © Harmony Home Vsetín

# The five objectives of Swiss contribution projects

Switzerland's contribution helps to reduce economic and social disparities within the EU. Each project fulfils one of five objectives under the contribution:

## 1. Promote economic growth and improve working conditions:

Budget: CHF 333 million

## 2. Improve social security:

Budget: CHF 180 million

## 3. Protect the environment:

Budget: CHF 479 million

## 4. Improve public safety:

Budget: CHF 116 million

## 5. Strengthen civil society:

Budget: CHF 105 million

Each project is assigned a set of measurable target outcomes. The partner states bear the main responsibility for achieving the objectives. They report regularly to Switzerland on the projects' progress and

achievement of the objectives. The following pages provide a more detailed description of each project objective accompanied by illustrative examples.

## Croatia and the Swiss contribution

The Swiss contribution is also intended to achieve the five above mentioned objectives in Croatia by 2024. In the wake of negotiations to determine the framework conditions and the form the cooperation would take, in 2016 the focus was to prepare the concrete projects to be approved by the Croatian authorities and on the Swiss side by SECO and the SDC by May 2017.

The SDC's aim is extensive cooperation in dual vocational education and training and in research. A second focus is demining and the social integration of mine victims. Like in other partner countries benefiting from the Swiss contribution, bilateral partnerships between Swiss and Croatian institutions are supported by a partnership fund.

Croatia's environmental protection efforts will be supported by SECO. Various projects are in development to improve drinking water supply and collect and treat waste water in north-western Croatia. As well as improving local people's quality of life, the projects aim to improve the region's appeal and create jobs to give the local economy a lasting boost.



A representative of the Croatian demining organisation CROMAC points to parts of the Croatian municipality of Petrinja where large swathes of land have not yet been demined.  
© SDC

# 1. Promoting economic growth and improving working conditions

Switzerland provides CHF 333 million to support projects in partner countries that promote economic growth and improve working conditions. This is also in Switzerland's interest as the Swiss export industry profits from developing the Eastern European growth markets and the increasing spending power in the partner countries.

The projects are extremely varied and range from supporting structurally weak regions in South-East Poland and the implementation of a dual vocational

training system in Slovakia to scholarships for young scientists from the new EU member states. The enlargement contribution also finances small company loans and thus contributes to the creation and preservation of numerous jobs. It also strengthens companies' social responsibility and tourism in structurally weak regions. Moreover, it improves the application of international financial reporting and auditing standards, which increases investors' willingness to invest and helps to prevent financial crimes.

Secure loans awarded to SMEs have created jobs for

nearly **1,000** people in Romania

In Bulgaria, vocational education and training based

on the Swiss dual model is now offered in **6** new occupations

**88** bilateral research and development partnerships have resulted in 21 new patents

Over **1,200** SMEs NGOs and start-ups have received funding to encourage local development in Poland

**9,780** financial sector regulation specialists in Poland have undertaken further training in accountancy and auditing

Some **1,250** researchers and over 190 institutions were involved in nearly 1,000 scientific publications under the Sciex programme

## Venture capital creates innovative new jobs and gives the Hungarian economy a sustainable boost

The Hungarian venture capital fund Euroventures, to which Switzerland contributes 43%, supports innovative young companies and start-ups in central Hungary. Out of 700 applications, the local partners have selected 20 companies to date, and have contributed up to 70% of their equity. In addition to funding, the companies receive advice in operational matters. So far the project has created more than 200 jobs for highly skilled workers – an important step in the wake of the 2007/2008 financial crisis, which has made it harder for companies to secure financing. By the end of 2016, eight companies were no longer dependent on support from the project.

One company facilitates carpooling in Hungary and abroad, bringing together travellers taking the same route. Carpooling makes better use of private vehicles, which helps protect the environment – one of the objectives of Switzerland's contribution – and thus mitigate climate change. Another company has developed an 'intelligent' surgical knife which can analyse tissues including cancer cells during surgery. The iKnife helps the surgeon to remove cancerous tissue more accurately, reducing damage to healthy tissue and preventing bacterial infection. According to its developers, the iKnife makes surgery safer for the patient and lowers the cost of operations.



A company supported by Euroventures has developed sequencing software for analysis of the human genome. Here, employees analyse printed DNA sequences. © SECO

## 2. Improving social security

Around CHF 180 million is being invested in a wide range of social security measures. The focus is on old and ill people, as well as youth welfare. The projects focus on five main areas – basic health services, hospital upgrades, prevention, social services for specific

target groups and various social services such as improving medical emergency services and facilitating access to schools in rural areas. In doing this, Switzerland provided its specialist knowledge.

<p>In Poland, <b>1,143,000</b> people attended one of of 7,821 events to prevent alcohol and nicotine addiction</p>	<p><b>27</b> hospitals in Lithuania have been equipped with modern medical devices</p>
<p><b>137</b> staff members of Slovakian community centres have completed courses on how to work with children and young people from marginalised Roma communities</p>	<p>In Estonia <b>131</b> ambulances have been equipped with mobile computer stations and internet connections, and 1,350 staff have been trained to use the new system</p>
<p>In Latvia, <b>26</b> youth centres have been opened and 4,500 youth workers are benefiting from training</p>	<p>Alongside <b>27</b> cars, the project in Wallachia in the Czech Republic has provided two purpose-built vehicles, and a minibus and pick-up service to provide transport for people with a disability</p>

### Sharp drop in infant mortality in Lithuania

Thanks to Swiss support, conditions for newborns and mothers in Lithuania have improved significantly. Most strikingly, infant mortality has fallen sharply. While in 1992 an average of 16.5 in 1,000 infants died, by 2014 this figure had dropped to only 3.9. This corresponds to the Swiss infant mortality rate.

Switzerland began to provide funding for medical equipment in Lithuanian maternity wards as early as the 1990s. Switzerland's contribution is now providing the sector with funding amounting to CHF 45.6 million. Most of the projects were completed by the end of August 2016. The following results have been achieved:

- › 27 hospitals have been provided with modern medical equipment. Three remote hospitals have received special transport vehicles for newborns.
- › 24 hospitals are better insulated. Heating and water supply systems, electrical installations and ventilation systems have been replaced. Not only has the indoor temperature improved, energy consumption and maintenance costs have also been significantly reduced.
- › Over 2,337 healthcare workers have attended training. 70 sets of diagnostic and treatment guidelines have been developed.



The projects to reduce infant mortality in Lithuania will run until April 2017. By then, 17 hospitals will have been equipped with solar panels and heat pumps, two further hospitals will have been renovated to improve energy efficiency, a comprehensive patient database will have been built and additional training carried out. © Lithuanian Ministry of Health

### 3. Protecting the environment

Approximately CHF 479 million of Switzerland's contribution is invested in projects to improve environmental protection. These include infrastructure projects to improve public transport, drinking water supply and waste water treatment, energy efficiency, use of renewable energies, hazardous waste disposal and environmental monitoring. The projects also

reduce health risks, improve people's quality of life and promote economic development. In addition to these infrastructure projects, Switzerland also supports nature conservation and biodiversity projects.

<p>In Slovakia, <b>12,000</b> people now benefit from new water infrastructure</p>	<p>In Hungary, <b>30.5</b> km of asbestos-cement pipeline presenting a contamination risk to the drinking water supply has been replaced</p>
<p><b>800</b> farmers and <b>350</b> NGO representatives have gained more in-depth knowledge of biodiversity in farming via conferences, specially designed courses and workshops</p>	<p>A new <b>3</b> km-long trolleybus line in Ostrava, Czech Republic, links the city centre with a terminal connecting travellers with regional bus services</p>
<p>Over <b>34,000</b> Polish homes were cleaned of asbestos in a project which financed a new roof for more than 1,000 low-income families</p>	<p>A new system furnishes Estonia with over <b>90%</b> of the indicators it needs for effective environmental monitoring (up to 69% prior to the project)</p>

### Clean-up of Riga's industrial port protects the Baltic Sea

Swiss support has helped Latvia to rehabilitate most of the Sarkandaugava brownfield site in Riga's old industrial port. The site had been used since 1872 for the transport and storage of petroleum products, which continued to have a major impact on the environment and the health of local residents.

The water and soil quality has now been restored. Petroleum products can no longer seep into the nearby River Daugava or the Baltic Sea. The remediation firm removed over 1,600 tonnes of floating petroleum and more than 7,100 tonnes of contaminated soil, which were disposed of by a licensed contractor in accordance with Latvian and EU guidelines. A barrier wall separates nearby waterways from the site where residual contamination is due to be cleaned up in the coming years.

The impact of the project goes beyond the implementation phase and technical clean-up operation. Training and the upgraded infrastructure will make it possible to monitor the contaminated sites and undertake clean-up operations in future.



Past oil trade activity in Riga's industrial port has had a major impact on the environment and local people. © SECO

## 4. Improving public safety and security

CHF 116 million of the enlargement contribution flows into projects for improving public safety in the partner countries. These include modernising the legal system in Latvia, increasing protection along the outer border of the Schengen area in Poland, measures for handling natural disasters and emergencies

in Hungary as well as fighting corruption and organised crime in various countries. Improving public safety in the partner countries is also in Switzerland's own interest as the projects also contribute toward fighting cross-border crime.

In Estonia patients in <b>175</b> hospitals can be evacuated quickly and safely in the event of fire thanks to fire prevention	<b>79</b> staff of Slovakia's integrated rescue services have received civil protection training
<b>36</b> regional police services in Bulgaria have received training to raise their awareness of human rights compliance in policing	In Poland <b>1,085</b> people have attended one of the various courses in migration and diversity management
In Hungary, a <b>12.5</b> km-long mobile dike system designed for flood protection has been procured, including delivery, transport, storage and quality control	In Lithuania, in <b>18</b> courts and <b>13</b> prisons video-conferencing equipment has been installed

### Switzerland takes action against human trafficking in Bulgaria and Romania

As part of its contribution to the enlarged EU, Switzerland is taking a firm stance against human trafficking. The various measures to combat human trafficking are helping to improve public security in Bulgaria and Romania. The aim of all of the projects is to provide more effective protection to victims, strengthen local government institutions and expand social services. Specific measures as part of projects in Bulgaria and Romania include:

- › **Identification.** Victims rarely identify themselves as such but often display certain distinctive traits. They have signs of abuse or do not possess identification documents.
- › **Victim protection.** The victims of human trafficking have generally suffered psychological and physical abuse. They are temporarily taken in, given care and support and receive medical help and legal assistance.
- › **Repatriation and reintegration.** This involves providing advice and support on the path back to normal life without violence.
- › **Prevention.** Prevention campaigns aim to reach members of ethnic minorities, as marginalised social groups are particularly vulnerable to human trafficking.



Prevention campaign in Bulgaria against human trafficking. The campaign raises awareness of the dangers of false promises of work abroad and encourages people to examine any job offer carefully before departure. © Animus Association



## 5. Strengthening civil society

The enlargement contribution provides around CHF 105 million to finance projects for strengthening civil society. In all partner countries, with the exception of Malta, a support fund is financed for non-governmental organisations (NGO fund) which comprises around 700 small projects. The NGO fund specifically supports projects in the areas of society and the environment which enables civil societies in all

countries to successfully contribute to the economic and social development of the country. By including Swiss partners in projects, the NGOs benefit from Swiss specialist knowledge. At the same time, Swiss organisations can further develop their networks and competences thanks to partnerships with organisations in the partner countries.

At least <b>1,500,000</b> Romanian citizens were included in civil society activities	In Poland <b>336</b> projects launched by NGOs were successfully completed
NGOs initiated at least <b>55</b> improvements to Bulgarian laws	In the Czech Republic <b>26</b> healthcare sector projects were implemented by NGOs
<b>78</b> Estonian NGOs concluded cooperation agreements with various public partners	<b>4</b> projects in the social sector and in tourism, including one focusing on Roma communities have been implemented in Slovakia

### Volunteer fire brigade in Romania – a civil society effort

The Swiss contribution to the enlarged EU strengthens civil society through the Partnership Fund and the Thematic Fund for the participation of civil society. The aim of these two funds is both to support existing and new partnerships between Romanian and Swiss organisations and municipalities and to transfer Swiss expertise to Romanian institutions. They also aim to promote the active participation of civil society in Romanian society.

Romanian civil society is working to set up a volunteer fire service. More than five years ago the Romanian Parliament passed a law according to which every municipality in the country should have its own volunteer fire brigade. Unfortunately the municipalities did not have the necessary funds so that in many places the law remained dead

letter. For this reason, Romanian civil society, with the support of the Opération Villages Roumains - Suisse association and the Swiss contribution to the enlarged EU, has become involved.

The volunteer fire brigade in Romania now consists of regional emergency response centres, each covering four to five municipalities. Between 40 and 50 firefighters have so far been trained to deal with emergency situations. The volunteer fire brigade relieves the professional fire service by responding to smaller incidents or taking charge of the situation until the professional fire brigade arrives on the scene. The volunteer service is also trained to deal with other emergency situations such as floods.



The Romanian law on the voluntary fire brigade has been implemented thanks to the work of civil society. A Romanian-Swiss partnership created the basis for the volunteer fire brigade and has in this way contributed to the implementation of the law. Four new voluntary fire brigade intervention centres have been set up since the beginning of the project funded by Switzerland's enlargement contribution. © SDC

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