DOCUMENTATION

SWITZERLAND, EASTERN EUROPE AND THE CIS

ON THE SWISS GOVERNMENT'S SUPPORT PROGRAMME FOR THE STATES OF EASTERN EUROPE AND THE CIS

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> Staatssekretariat für Wirtschaft Secrétariat d'Etat à l'économie Segretariato di Stato dell'economia State Secretariat for Economic Affairs





DIREKTION FUR ENTWICKLUNG UND ZUSAMMENARBEIT DEZA DIRECTION DU DEVELOPPEMENT ET DE LA COOPERATION BDC DIREZIONE DELLO SVILUPPO E DELLA COOPERAZIONE DSC SWISS AGENCY FOR DEVELOPMENT AND COOPERATION SDC AGENCIA SUIZA PARA EL DESARROLLO Y LA COOPERACION COSUDE





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How does Switzerland support the former Eastern European communist countries—and why?

This review of the current situation is designed to give you an answer. Since March 1990, when Swiss cooperation with the States of Eastern Europe began, Switzerland has committed itself to hundreds of projects, funded out of three credit lines for Eastern Europe. By the end of 1998, a total of 1'588 million Swiss francs had been committed, ie. readied for financing specific support projects (Sfr 1'210 million) and credit guarantees (Sfr 378 million).

Our intention in the following pages is to show how this money is used for the Eastern European states and to what end.

If you would like even more information, feel free to give us a call—the appropriate 'phone numbers feature on the last page.

We wish you pleasant reading!

Berne, May 1999

Federal Department of Foreign Affairs (FDFA) Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) Division for Cooperation with Eastern Europe and the CIS (DCE) Federal Department for Economic Affairs (FDE) State Secretariat for Economic Affairs (seco) Development and Transition

SWISS COOPERATION WITH EASTERN EUROPEAN AND CIS COUNTRIES:

REASONS AND CHRONOLOGY

The Berlin Wall came down on 9 November 1989, and since then Europe has gone through a radical transformation.

May 1999: the Eastern European countries are on the difficult road to a social market economy and Western-style democracy. Estonia, Poland, Slovenia, the Czech Republic and Hungary have achieved marked improvements and obvious successes and are candidates for membership of the EU with its plans for expansion into Eastern Europe. However, in South-Eastern Europe and many countries of the former Soviet Union, there are also setbacks and unsatisfactory developments.

People in these countries placed great hopes in the market economy. They expected fast, tangible improvements in their living conditions and now find it difficult to understand that things are worse in the social market economy than under the old system. Decades of uncontrolled exploitation of the natural environment, resources and infrastructures mean that huge investments are needed to bring about improvements. Thus, for the time being, the early stages of the market economy leave little room for the "social" aspect of the social market economy in today's Eastern Europe. Many people are under tremendous pressure as the result of low incomes, unemployment and inflation.

However, most countries lack the economic strength to extricate themselves from this crisis on their own. That is why those going through the reform process require closer economic ties with the West and urgent international aid. Supporting them has therefore become a significant part of Swiss foreign and defence policy. It is *also* in Switzerland's interests to ensure the economic and political stability of the Eastern European countries in their efforts to implement reform.

THREE CREDIT LINES

AND A FEDERAL DECREE

The Swiss Government and Parliament reacted fast after the fall of the Berlin Wall. In **March 1990**, the Federal Department of Foreign Affairs (FDFA) and the Federal Department for Economic Affairs (FDE) already had:

A first credit line of 250 million Swiss francs for the Eastern European States, intended for cooperation with Poland, Hungary and what was then Czechoslovakia which had been the first to move towards reform. This was followed in January 1992 by

a second credit line of 800 million Swiss francs, extending assistance to Albania, Bulgaria, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Romania and Slovenia.

This second credit was boosted to 1'400 million francs in March 1993 to cover the CIS States. In the light of the enormous requirements and limited resources, regional concentration remains unavoidable, which is why Russia and Kyrgyzstan were designated as our initial technical cooperation partners. Cooperation on a more modest scale was then extended to Ukraine and, more recently, to Tajikistan.

From 1996, Macedonia too benefited from this support.

The **third credit line** of 900 million francs covering a minimum period of four years was approved by the Swiss Parliament in March 1999 and came into effect on 1 May 1999.

Credit lines are parliamentary declarations of intent, application of which is spread over several years. The much smaller credits authorized by Parliament in its annual budget are what count. In 1999, the credit is Sfr 133.1 million.

A total of 58.5 million Swiss francs have been earmarked for technical cooperation in 1999, while 74.6 million francs in financial assistance are planned for the same year.

On 24 March 1995, the Swiss Parliament approved a **federal decree**, valid for ten years, **on coopera-tion with the countries of Eastern Europe**, mandating the Swiss Government to take measures to support these countries "in their efforts to develop and strengthen democracy, in their transition to the market economy and in the social aspects of developing this economy."

THE COORDINATION OFFICES

Since the signing of the Dayton Agreement (15 December 1995), Switzerland has committed 54 million Swiss francs for economic and social reconstruction in Bosnia and Herzegovina alone, not counting humanitarian assistance and aid to returnees. A **Coordination Office** was opened in **Sarajevo** to coordinate all technical, financial and humanitarian aid and to ensure permanent contacts with the authorities, local NGOs and external donors. At present, Switzerland also has Eastern Europe Cooperation Coordination Offices in Moscow, Bucharest, Skopje, Sofia, Tirana, Bishkek, Tbilisi and Dushanbe.

Coordination Office staff play a vital role in intensifying direct contacts with local partners, especially when it comes to project planning, monitoring and evaluation.

OBJECTIVES OF SWISS SUPPORT

We aim to reinforce and promote rule of law and human rights in the countries we support. Our contribution consists mainly of strengthening stable political institutions and the democratic system.

We aim to promote sustained economic and social development on the basis of market economy principles.

Above all, Swiss support should foster political and economic stability, cultural opportunities, income growth and better living conditions for the population at large as well as environmental protection and the rational use of natural resources.



Berne, 12 May 1998: Annual Conference of the Swiss Cooperation with Eastern Europe, on the theme of Public Health



Federal President Flavio Cotti at the Annual Conference FOCUS Eastern Europe , Berne, 12 May 1998, on the theme of Public Health

PRINCIPLES OF COOPERATION

Confederation cooperation with the countries of Eastern Europe is **part of Swiss foreign policy** and is based on the **principle of shared responsibilities**.

Measures take account of the needs of the population and of conditions in the partner countries. In this, our actions generally support the partner countries' own efforts.

In the case of serious human rights violation and discrimination against minorities, the Swiss Government is authorized to interrupt or discontinue cooperation.

We develop projects in direct cooperation with the partner countries, together with international organizations or independently (eg credit guarantees).

Third parties (technical organizations, non-governmental organizations or private companies) may be commissioned to implement measures.

If the **initiatives of private institutions** mesh with Government principles and objectives, the Federal Council may support them, though these institutions must provide an appropriate input.

We **coordinate measures** with partners in Eastern European countries and, wherever possible, with the services of other Swiss or foreign organizations.

FORMS OF COOPERATION

We support the Eastern European countries by means of **technical and financial cooperation** (formerly called "financial assistance", which covers financial subsidies, credit guarantees, balance of payments assistance and debt reduction measures). We also support participation by Eastern European countries in international trade and direct investment by the private sector.

Our contributions take the form of grants, loans or guarantees and may be combined with the implementation of technical and financial cooperation projects. Our projects are monitored for an appropriate period.

TECHNICAL COOPERATION (TC)

Between 1990 and the end of 1998, 417 million francs were committed for technical cooperation projects

The point of departure for TC is always a problem, and one which cannot be solved merely by supplying materials. In a certain sense, TC starts with the "software" ie in people's minds, as well as with structures, tools and processes. Fruitful cooperation depends on the partners' willingness to bring about change. The focus is on promoting their independence, equipping them to tackle the challenges and to gradually conquer on their own the huge difficulties that inevitably crop up in radical changes in Eastern European countries. This approach calls for "customized", innovative solutions and not "readymade" recipes. The Division for Cooperation with Eastern Europe and the CIS (DCE), as part of the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC), is primarily responsible for this technical cooperation. The Division has three sections for South-Eastern Europe, the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) and for Special and Regional Programmes

Strategy 95 has been superseded by **Strategy 99** which is to remain in force for at least three years. It provides for the following **indicative allocation of resources**: half to South-Eastern Europe (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Macedonia and Romania), 35 percent to the European CIS countries (Russia and Ukraine) and 15 percent to Central Asia and the Caucasus.



The indoor market halls in Poznan (Poland), a joint Swiss-Polish project costing 20 million francs. Switzerland's contribution: 14 million francs's worth in cash and know-how.



The wholesale indoor market halls in Poznan: built in 1990-1992, they have since mushroomed from five to twelve buildings.

TC FOCAL POINTS

The current focal points of SDC programmes in the three Eastern European regions of Central Europe, South-Eastern Europe and the CIS are given below:

1. The programme in **Central Europe** (confined since 1998 to Poland, Slovakia and Hungary) has been largely completed. It concentrated on promoting business enterprise, vocational training, health and the environment as well as on developing cultural, legal and police institutions, local government, universities and electronic media. As part of this programme, we ensured that relations between Switzerland and Central European countries were quickly restored to normal.

2. The reform process in **South-Eastern Europe** (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Macedonia and Romania) is progressing slower than expected. Our cooperation aims to improve the standard of living in these countries and to develop a democratically structured society. Support concentrates on specific sectors, varying from country to country. Joint seco-SDC country programmes determine the medium-term thrust of our work.

In Albania, parts of the programme were reoriented, following the social implosion of 1997, but the focus is still on health, vocational training and developing mountain areas. A journalists' training scheme is creating the prerequisites for democratic opinion-forming. **Bulgaria's** people and institutions continue to face enormous challenges in sectors such as privatization, decentralization or health reforms. We are supporting specific areas such as the development of local government structures and commerce, improving health services and protecting natural resources.

For **Romania**, actions include the promotion of smalland medium-sized businesses in urban and rural areas, supporting health sector reforms, promoting community-building at local and regional level and the social integration of marginalized children. In **Macedonia**, the programme concentrates on strengthening democratic institutions, supporting educational reforms, reinforcing the private sector and environmental protection.

Bosnia and Herzegovina: When it approved the third credit line in Spring 1999, the Swiss Parliament decided on a long-term follow-up programme for Bosnia and Herzegovina, reserving a credit of Sfr 50 million for this purpose. The detailed programme for this new focal country will be decided in 1999. Major topics include: reconciliation of the various ethnic groups, economic reconstruction and transition.

3. In the **Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS)**, most of our support goes to the European part of Russia, Ukraine, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan.

The SDC's **Russia** programme stresses the support of small- and medium-sized businesses, the promotion of human rights and rule of law, the adaptation of science and education, environmental protection and improved nuclear safety. In Ukraine, we encourage vocational training, support reforms in justice, the police and prison services, work on behalf of minorities, boost nuclear security and promote cultural and scientific institutions. For **Kyrgyzstan**, the focus is on agricultural counselling, support for small- and medium-sized businesses, developing and introducing a new forestry policy, overhauling the health system and on government and democratization. In **Tajikistan**, we are stressing health, education, community development, constitutional structures and the promotion of peace.

Example: A training programme for Romanian entrepreneurs

The programme's objective is to contribute to a stronger market economy and encourage entrepreneurial initiative by promoting small- and mediumsized businesses. Project beneficiaries include entrepreneurs or people (including the unemployed) wishing to start up in business as well as employees of companies which are undergoing restructuring or privatization. Participants learn how to design and implement a business plan, obtain easier access to credits or build up contact networks through business clubs. Over the two-year project, there are plans to train between 1'600 and 2'000 would-be entrepreneurs and to found eight new business clubs. The Fundatia Romano-Elvetiana "Entrepreneurship" (FREE) and Neuchâtel University are responsible for executing the project. Under the project's previous two phases, 1'770 people attended courses, some 300 of whom have since set up their own company. The third project phase lasts from October 1998 to September 2000, and the SDC credit totals Sfr 450'000.



Their private workplace was created with Swiss support (Voronesh, Russia)



Small and medium-sized enterprises in Voronesh: the car spraying shop in Voronesh received a credit from Switzerland

FINANCIAL COOPERATION

Responsibility for **financial cooperation** with the countries of Eastern Europe and the CIS lies mainly with the State Secretariat for Economic Affairs (seco). This cooperation takes several forms: financial subsidies, credit guarantees, balance of payments assistance and debt reduction measures.

As in technical cooperation, a shift in financial cooperation is in progress—from Central Europe to the less developed transition countries of South-Eastern Europe, the Russian Federation and the other European CIS countries, as well as to the Caucasian and Central Asian Republics, particularly those which are members of Switzerland's voting groups in the Bretton Woods institutions (World Bank, IMF) and the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD).

Since 1990, 1'220 million francs have been earmarked for financial cooperation and by the end of 1998, specific project commitments to the tune of Sfr 1'171 million had been made (Sfr 689 million for subsidies and Sfr 378 million for credit guarantees).

Financial subsidies (which beneficiary countries do not have to repay) are granted for priority projects which cannot be financed commercially because of their insufficient earning power and for whose implementation the Swiss economy can provide equipment and services on competitive terms. Such subsidies mainly concern basic economic infrastructure—energy, the environment, metrology, surveying, transport and telecommunications.

Example: Tartu sewage treatment plant (Estonia)

For decades, household and industrial waste water had drained into the River Emaiodi which flows through the university town of Tartu (Estonia) with its 115'000 inhabitants. Urgent action was necessary. and thanks to Switzerland's contribution of 6'700'000 francs, the sewage treatment plant (STP) was commissioned in November 1996, with a second stage following in 1997. Now 80% of all Tartu's waste water is purified mechanically, biologically and chemically before reaching the river. The Estonian partners will take further action to process the remaining 20%. Work on building a STP in Tartu had begun in the early Eighties. It came to a halt with the declaration of Estonia's independence in Autumn 1991, and was then submitted to Switzerland with a view to obtaining a financing subsidy. The first step was to redimension the installation, modify the process and change the electromechanical equipment which had already been put in place but was inadequate. The Estonian partners undertook to finish the city sewers with their main drain and to build the concrete elements and pipes, while Switzerland was responsible for the pumping system, sewer grills and filters. Thanks to the Tartu STP, there has been a visible improvement in the River Emajögi's appearance and in just two years, the modernized plant has made energy savings equivalent to the price of the pumps supplied by Switzerland.

In future, subsidies will concentrate even further on projects aimed at protecting natural resources, promoting more efficient use of energy and protecting the environment, in particular those designed to reduce the concentration of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere.

Credit guarantees are used to finance the export of Swiss goods and services to manufacturing companies or for infrastructure projects, whose profitability allows commercial financing. Such guarantees are used in countries where the Swiss export risk guarantee (ERG) does not apply, or applies only in part. Short- and long-term credit guarantees are currently available for Macedonia, Russia, Ukraine and Azerbaijan. For Bulgaria, Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan, these guarantees cover medium- and longterm credits only as the ERG is available on a shortterm basis. Guarantees have been suspended for Belarus.

A total of 378 million francs is available for credit guarantees. At the end of 1998, guarantees to the tune of 287 million francs had been granted. The distribution by sector was as follows: engineering industry 41.4%, energy 15.5%, processing of agricultural products 11.1%, textile industry 9.2%, chemical industry 7.9%, telecommunications 6.2% and miscellaneous 8.7%.

Financial cooperation can also take the form of **balance of payments assistance or debt reduction measures**. Some Eastern European countries lack the foreign currency to pay for imports. With balance of payments assistance, which takes the form of loans at market rates, they can purchase urgently needed imports or build up their foreign currency reserves. The legal basis for granting



New electricity meters and measuring instruments for Tirana. Switzerland made it possible.



Poland: 2.5 kilometres of track a day, thanks to the automated track-laying train from Switzerland.

balance of payments assistance is the so-called "Currency Decree". Loans are granted by the Swiss National Bank on instructions from the Swiss Government and are guaranteed by the Confederation. As part of international actions and in justified cases, balance of payments assistance may be provided as a gift, in which case it is financed out of the programme credit lines for cooperation with Eastern Europe and the CIS.

In 1995 and 1996, Switzerland provided balance of payments assistance to Albania (Sfr 6 million) and Macedonia (Sfr 7 million), as well as participating in an innovative way in international debt-reduction actions for Poland and Bulgaria, whereby the beneficiaries undertook to finance environmental projects to the level of the cancelled debts. In future, however, such measures will concern only a small number of the poorest countries.

Financial cooperation with Eastern European and CIS countries is complemented by **trade and investment promotion** measures and programmes. In these fields, the FOFEA mainly bases itself on the services of international organizations, such as the World Trade Organization (WTO), the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) or the International Trade Centre (ITC), on national organizations such as the Swiss Office for Trade Promotion (OSEC) or on specialized companies such as the "Swiss Organisation for Facilitating Investments" (SOFI) or the "Swiss Development Finance Corporation" (SDFC).

These measures help to strengthen the export industry and facilitate access to world trade for these countries, encouraging an influx of direct investment, industrial know-how and technology for sustainable consolidation of their economies, especially of the private sector. In future, such action will be intensified, diversified and coordinated even more closely with other tools (preferential Customs systems, free-trade agreements, investment protection agreements, origin regulations, credit guarantees) to enhance their impact.

HUMANITARIAN AID

In addition to the funds from the three credit lines for Eastern Europe, Switzerland provides **humanitarian aid** to Eastern European countries ravaged by disasters, wars and crises. This takes the form of direct Swiss Disaster Relief (SDR) missions on the one hand and of support from humanitarian partner organizations with SDR staff, federal contributions as well as food and equipment consignments, on the other.

Because of the wars in the former Yugoslavia, there has been a massive increase in Swiss humanitarian aid to Eastern Europe since 1992. In financial terms, the Yugoslavia programme is the biggest ever conducted by the Swiss Confederation. Between 1991 and 1998, 220 missions involving 158 SDR employees were carried out in the former Yugoslavia.

SDC's Humanitarian Aid has its own worldwide credit line and operates on the basis of its own principles which are geared to local needs. Organization of Swiss humanitarian aid is combined in SDC's Humanitarian Aid Division and Swiss Disaster Relief.

For the Eastern European States, including the CIS, this humanitarian aid totalled:

- 1990: Sfr 1'100'000
- 1991: Sfr 8'200'000
- 1992: Sfr 47'600'000 (Sfr 38'600'000 of it for victims of the war in former Yugoslavia)
- 1993: Sfr 40'700'000 (Sfr 39'600'000 of it for victims of the war in former Yugoslavia)
- 1994: Sfr 39'700'000 (Sfr 27'500'000 of it for victims of the war in former Yugoslavia)
- 1995: Sfr 44'900'000 (Sfr 31'600'000 of it for victims of the war in former Yugoslavia)
- 1996: Sfr 30'100'000 (Sfr 18'900'000 of it for victims of the war in former Yugoslavia)
- 1997: Sfr 29'100'000 (Sfr 13'200'000 of it for victims of the war in former Yugoslavia)
- 1998: Sfr 27'600'000 (Sfr 14'300'000 of it for victims of the war in former Yugoslavia)

SWITZERLAND AND THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY

Switzerland participates fully in international cooperation in favour of Eastern Europe and the CIS.

It is a member of the Council of Europe, the European Free Trade Association (EFTA) and the World Trade Organization (WTO).

As a founder member of the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD), set up in 1991, Switzerland holds 2.3% of the Bank's share capital. It has one of the 23 Board seats and heads a voting group that includes Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, Turkmenistan and Azerbaijan.

Switzerland is also a member of the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the World Bank (IBRD), the G-24 Group (the group of 24 western industrial countries for coordination and cooperation with Eastern Europe) and the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD).

We coordinate our activities on behalf of the countries of the former East Bloc with all these organizations, participating in their support programmes where this is expedient, especially through co-funding.

1. The Credit Lines (CL)

The funds made available to finance co-operation with the countries of Eastern Europe and the CIS are approved in the form of credit lines in each case over a number of years.

	Date	Total Amount million Sfr.	Technical Co-operation million Sfr.	Financial Co-operation million Sfr.
CL I	13.09.90	250	54	196
CL II	28.01.92	800	200	600
CL II bis	09.03.93	600	150	450
CL III	08.03.99	900	310	590
Total		2′250	714	1′836

2. Commitments according to instruments as per end of 1998

Commitments ¹		
per end 1998	million Sfr.	%
	416.9	26.3
	1′171.1	74.7
689.1		
378.0		
13.0		
91.0		
	1′588.1	100.0
	per end 1998 689.1 378.0 13.0	per end 1998 million Sfr. 416.9 1'171.1 689.1 378.0 13.0 91.0

¹ I and II Credit Line

² Without administrative costs

3. Commitments by country as per end of 1998 CL I and CL II

	Tech. co- operation		Financial co-operation without credit guarantees		Credit guarantees	
	million Sfr.	%	million Sfr.	%	million Sfr.	%
Central Europe	190.0	46	362.6	44	123.1	33
Czech Republic	15.4	4	34.2	4	-	-
Estonia	1.6	0	20.0	2	-	
Hungary	36.0	9	41.7	5	-	
Latvia	5.1	1	21.0	3	5.5	1
Lithuania	5.3	1	20.1	2	2.7	1
Poland	37.5	9	116.0	14	109.4	29
Slovakia	13.7	3	35.5	3	3.8	1
Slovenia	3.4	1	-	-	1.7	0
Regional	72.0	17	74.1	9	-	
South-Eastern Euro		30	236.3	28	65.8	17
Albania	34.2	8	48.7	6		-
Bosnia and Herzego	ovina 18.8	5	35.1	4		-
Bulgaria	27.4	7	62.0	7	45.0	12
Croatia	-	-		-	10.8	3
Macedonia	5.4	1	17.1	2	10.0	3
Romania	30.2	7	55.9	7		-
Regional	8.1	2	17.5	2	-	_
CIS	102.8	25	229.5	28	189.1	50
Azerbaijan	-	-	3.1	0	-	-
Belarus	-	-	12.3	1	9.1	2
Georgia	-	-	3.1	0	-	-
Kyrgyzstan	33.9	8	31.1	4		-
Moldova		_	6.4	1		_
Russia	51.4	12	62.8	8	100.0	26
Tajikistan	0.3	0	9.1	1		-
Ukraine	4.3	1	35.1	4	30.0	8
Uzbekistan/Kazakst		-	7.5	1		_
Regional	12.9	3	59.0	7	50.0	13
Total	416.9	100	828.3	100	378.0	100



4. Grafic: Commitments by country as per end of 1998

5. Breakdown of technical co-operation by sectors as per end of 1998

	million Sfr.	%
Technical Co-operation		
Political and constitutional development	63.9	15
Economy/Education	73.7	18
Health/Social matters	69.4	17
Agriculture	82.7	20
Energy/Environment	50.6	12
Science/Culture	76.6	18
Total	416.9	100



6. Breakdown of financial subsidies by sectors as per end of 1998

	million Sfr.	%
Financial subsidies		
Energy	223.3	32
Environment	135.3	20
Health	122.6	18
Infrastructure (cadastre, metrology)	54.9	8
Telecommunications	43.7	6
Banking Industry	43.5	6
Transports	21.5	3
Agricultural Products	13.8	2
Other sectors	30.5	4
Total	689.1	100



7. Switzerland by international comparison

Technical and Financial Assistance to Eastern Europe and CIS as % of GNP, 1996





The Women's Legal Aid Centre in Kaluga (Russia). Switzerland is financing the start-up phase.



The private Nilov cheese dairy in Kaluga (Russia) was expanded in 1998 with a credit from Switzerland.

TECHNICAL COOPERATION

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Improvement of living conditions of children: Rehabilitation of the Nursery-System in Bulgaria.

