



PROJECTS TO COMBAT HUMAN TRAFFICKING IN BULGARIA AND ROMANIA

PREVENTION OF HUMAN TRAFFICKING, REINTEGRATION OF VICTIMS AND IMPROVING LAW ENFORCEMENT



Prevention campaign against human trafficking in Romania. © DEZA / ANITP

Human trafficking is a modern form of slavery and a serious violation of human rights. Switzerland is determinedly combating human trafficking through a number of measures. Various projects in Bulgaria and Romania aim to protect the victims more effectively, to take preventative measures in the countries of origin, and to strengthen state institutions in the partner countries and expand their social services. In addition, Switzerland is working actively to ensure that Roma and other disadvantaged groups in these countries are given social recognition. These groups are particularly vulnerable to falling victim to human trafficking.

WHAT IS HUMAN TRAFFICKING?

Human trafficking is when a person is exploited under duress, deception or violence for the purposes of sexual exploitation, forced labour or removal of human organs. The perpetrators exploit the victims' poverty and lack of future prospects to lure them into false promises of work or marriage in a foreign country. When the victims arrive in the destination country they are placed in a situation of dependency by means of coercion or violence and exploited. Often there is a link between human trafficking and

migration, as the victims are more vulnerable outside their home country and have insufficient information or access to the legal system.

WHO ARE THE VICTIMS?

According to Eurostat, the EU member states reported more than 30,000 cases between 2010 and 2012. The true figure is assumed to be significantly higher, however, since victims are difficult to identify and rarely identify themselves as such. Switzerland is both a destination country and a transit country. Most of the victims are from Eastern Europe. That is why Switzerland is also active in Bulgaria and Romania as part of the enlargement contribution.

WHAT IS SWITZERLAND DOING TO COMBAT HUMAN TRAFFICKING?

Swiss projects include the following measures:

- **Identification of victims.** Victims must first be identified: they rarely identify themselves as such. They do often have certain distinctive features, however, for example traces of abuse or missing identity documents. In order to improve international cooperation, members of the police forces of all three countries organise joint action weeks, where they exchange valuable experiences and useful knowledge.
- **Victim protection, repatriation and reintegration.** Victims of human trafficking have generally suffered psychological and physical violence. They are given temporary shelter and care and provided with medical, psychological, financial and legal support. The goal is to help them regain a normal life, free of violence.
- **Improving law enforcement and strengthening cooperation between police forces.** These measures curb human trafficking indirectly. All measures are implemented in close cooperation with the Bulgarian and Romanian authorities.
- **Prevention.** The identification of possible dangers and risks in connection with job offers in foreign countries or migration is crucial in order to avoid potential victims. As part of the projects in Romania and Bulgaria, prevention campaigns are carried out, aimed mainly at the younger members of

Prevention campaign against human trafficking in Bulgaria, warning against fake promises of work abroad and encouraging people to examine any job offer carefully before departure.

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the population. As a preventive measure, various products have been made highlighting potential dangers and providing a contact address for victim support. Some of these are as follows: posters displayed in public places, e.g. at the airports in Sofia and Bucharest; a commercial shown on Romanian television; a hotline for counselling victims; presence on social media; targeted awareness-raising among young people who belong to groups at risk. Thousands of people are reached through this prevention work.

FOCUS ON ESPECIALLY VULNERABLE GROUPS

With projects for the social recognition of Roma and other minorities, Switzerland contributes indirectly to preventing human trafficking. 5–10% of the population of Bulgaria and Romania are Roma, who are particularly vulnerable to human trafficking. Roma people are among the poorest in Romania and Bulgaria. They have poorer access to education and consequently poorer career prospects. For this reason, Switzerland supports projects for the social integration of Roma in selected municipalities in these countries. The goal is to facilitate their access to education and the health system. In the long term, the Roma community will thus have better social and economic prospects.

THE PROJECTS IN BRIEF

OBJECTIVE

Improving social security

AREA OF ACTIVITY

Security: Combating corruption and organised crime

COUNTRIES

Bulgaria and Romania

PARTNERS

NGOs; police and government agencies engaged in combating human trafficking; the judiciary (public prosecutors office); Swiss partners (fedpol, FIZ, IOM Switzerland)

BACKGROUND INFORMATION/COOPERATION IN SWITZERLAND

Switzerland is both a destination country and a transit country for human trafficking. Many victims come from Eastern Europe, including Romania and Bulgaria. All three countries have signed the Palermo Protocol, confirming their common interest in combating human trafficking. The protocol has created organisational structures to deal with this crime at the national and international level

PURPOSE

Identification and protection of victims; prevention; strengthening national stakeholders

ACTIVITIES

- Raising awareness among young people (for example orphans) and marginalised social groups (for example Roma communities) about the risks of human trafficking
- Strengthening national and transnational repatriation programmes for victims
- Strengthening national and regional networks, organisations and key stakeholders
- Support for victims (safe contact point, repatriation, reintegration)

TARGET GROUPS

Victims of human trafficking and particularly vulnerable groups (young people, members of minorities)

COSTS

CHF 5.3 million (projects specifically concerning human trafficking)

RESPONSIBILITY FOR PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION

Bulgarian and Romanian institutions; Swiss Intermediate Body

DURATION

2011–2019
(differs according to project)

Additional information and documents

The project database of the website on Switzerland's contribution to EU enlargement contains detailed information on the projects in Romania and Bulgaria mentioned above.

SWITZERLAND'S CONTRIBUTION TO THE ENLARGED
EU

November 2016

www.erweiterungsbeitrag.admin.ch