

1st January 2016

Swiss Migration Partnership Strategy for the Western Balkans 2016-2019

Migration partnerships

Based on Article 100 of the Foreign Nationals Act (FNA), Switzerland has formed migration partnerships with Bosnia and Herzegovina (April 2009) and Kosovo (February 2010). The aim of these partnerships is to enhance migration cooperation with countries of origin and of transit by carefully considering the interests of all parties. An interdepartmental strategy for 2012-2015 was devised and serves as a strategic framework for cooperation efforts in the area of migration. This strategy ended on 31 December 2015. The new Swiss Migration Partnership Strategy for the Western Balkans 2016-2019 was approved by the IMZ Committee on 29 October 2015 and has been in force since 1 January 2016. It will run until 31 December 2019.

Geographical focus

Within the framework of its migration partnerships, Switzerland is in regular dialogue with Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia and Kosovo. One of the purposes of this dialogue is to identify and implement joint projects that address the migration-related needs of the partner authorities. However, given there is also a cross-border dimension to the challenges faced by the Western Balkans in the area of migration, Switzerland may, in certain instances, extend its support to other countries in the region, such as Albania, Macedonia and Montenegro, whether in the form of bilateral assistance or support for regional projects.

Goals

The overarching goal of the Swiss Migration Partnership Strategy for the Western Balkans 2016-2019 is to strengthen the capacities of partner countries to deal adequately with the challenges of migration and to use the economic and social development potential of migration to benefit their respective countries. Through dialogue and joint projects, Switzerland shall endeavour to build the institutional and operational capacities of the partner authorities in relation to migration policy and migration management.

The strategy also focuses on regional capacity-building and cooperation, which includes encouraging the greater use of regional platforms and networks. Such approaches will enable Switzerland to consistently secure its migration policy interests and at the same time give due consideration to the interests of its partner countries, their communities and the migrant populations concerned.

Priorities

The six main priorities are:

- asylum management (through support for efforts to establish functioning, coherent systems that comply with international standards);
- return and reintegration (whether from Switzerland to partner countries or from partner countries to third States, including IDP and migrants from within the region);
- migration and development (through coherent migration policies that promote an holistic approach to migration, through conditions of labour migration as well as by fostering the development potential of migration and diaspora communities for their countries of origin);
- preventing irregular migration;
- protection of migrants' rights;
- combatting human trafficking and migrant smuggling.

Further stakeholders

The 2016-2019 Strategy shall be implemented in close cooperation with the SEM, SDC, SECO, the Principality of Liechtenstein, international organisations, the private sector and civil society.

Switzerland's commitment in the Western Balkans is intended to be flexible and to complement current activities and projects launched by the European Union. Becoming a member of the EU is subject to stringent conditions. Introducing visa-free travel within the Schengen area for nationals of Western Balkan states is a first important step to EU integration but it also requires these states to establish appropriate border management structures, amongst other things.

Resources

Funds allocated for implementing the Swiss Migration Partnership Strategy for the Western Balkans (million CHF):

Direct contributions

SEM	6
SDC Global Programme Migration and Development (GPMD)	max. 2
Principality of Liechtenstein	2

Indirect contributions

SDC	4.5-5
SECO	2

Further information

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