



Swiss Migration Strategic Framework for the Western Balkans 2020-2023

Background

The Swiss Migration Strategic Framework for the Western Balkans is an interdepartmental framework of reference for coordinated migration-related interventions in the region. It serves as a guidance for Switzerland's Migration Partnerships (MPs) with Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia and Kosovo, and for programs and projects beyond MPs. Migration ties between Switzerland and the Western Balkan states have been strong for decades. In addition to the already complex migration situation, the Western Balkans turned from 2015 onwards into an important transit route for migrants from the Middle East, Asia and Africa. Switzerland remains committed to partnering with the concerned countries in view of the proximity of the region and the Swiss interest to contribute to its political and economic stabilization.

Geographical scope

The Strategic Framework covers Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia, Kosovo, North Macedonia, Albania and Montenegro with a particular focus on the first 3 countries, given the existing MPs. It foresees country specific projects and promotes regional initiatives.

Goal and objectives

In line with the involved partners' interests and needs, the overarching goal of the Strategic Framework is that the countries in the Western Balkans address in an appropriate way their migration challenges, and make the best possible use of the potential of migration. Towards this goal, Switzerland contributes to the achievements of the following objectives:

- The authorities and institutions in the partner countries are in a position to manage migration effectively, efficiently and transparently in accordance with international standards.
- Migrants, their families and the host communities in the partner countries benefit from inclusive social and economic services, livelihood opportunities and (human) security.
- The partner countries participate collectively in and advance reciprocal learning processes towards safe, orderly and regular migration management in the region.

Areas of intervention

Based on the field of competence of each federal office involved and in line with the objectives set out in this Strategic Framework, six areas of interventions have been defined:

- Asylum management: coherent and functioning asylum legislation and procedures.
- Protection of the human rights of migrants: respect, the

protection and the fulfillment of the rights of all migrants, in particular for victims of human trafficking, internally displaced people and minors.

- Prevention of irregular migration: better and inclusive access to basic services, information and livelihood; accurate information at all migration stages; efficient border management as well as strengthening the transnational response to smuggling of migrants; options for regular pathways.
- Fight against human trafficking and smuggling of migrants: bilateral and regional responses between authorities, and relevant stakeholders in order to prevent, investigate, prosecute and penalize both crimes.
- Return and reintegration: return of third country nationals residing without a legal authorization in the Western Balkans to their countries of origin.
- Migration and Development: coherently reflect and address migration in national, regional and local migration-related policies; improve the management of labor migration; foster framework conditions allowing the diasporas to fully realize their potential.

Implementation and stakeholders

The Swiss engagement on migration is based on the three principles of Switzerland's foreign policy on migration:

- A comprehensive approach to migration taking into account the opportunities and risks as well as internal, regional and international specificities.
- A partnership approach and a balanced consideration of the interests of all stakeholders.
- A close interdepartmental cooperation (Whole-of-Government Approach) to ensure coherent action.

Part of this Strategic Framework are the State Secretariat for Migration, the Federal Office of Police, the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation, the Directorate of Political Affairs, the State Secretariat for Economic Affairs and the Principality of Liechtenstein.

A total indicative budget of CHF 10 Mio is allocated for the four-year period of the Strategic Framework.

Further information

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