



Ministry
of Foreign Affairs
Republic of Poland

Polish Development Cooperation in the Eastern Partnership States



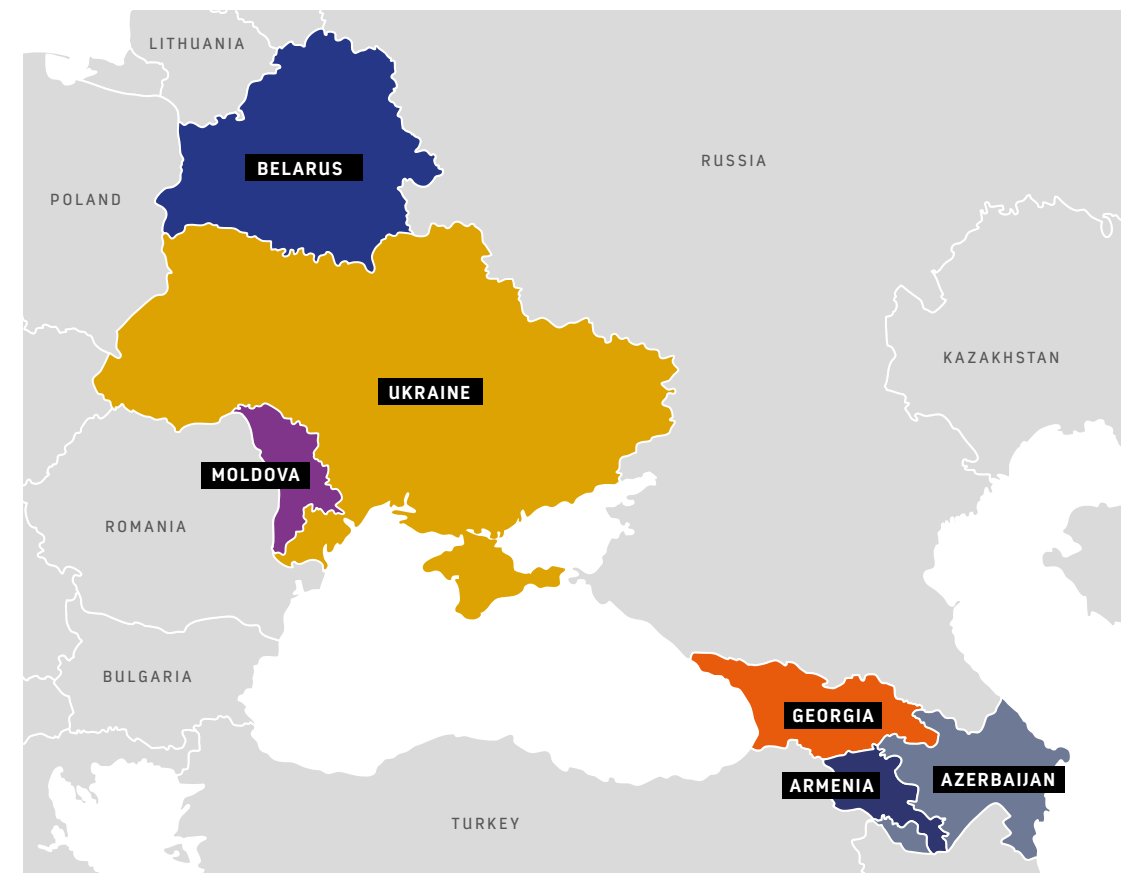
Polish Development Cooperation in the Eastern Partnership States

What is the 'Eastern Partnership'?



The Eastern Partnership is a joint initiative of the European Union and partner countries from Eastern Europe. It is a part of the EU's foreign policy pursued within the framework of the European Neighbourhood Policy and the Global Strategy. It is addressed to six countries: Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine. Poland

and Sweden proposed the creation of the Eastern Partnership to create a policy supporting regional cooperation and fostering close relations with Eastern European partners. The initiative was officially presented in June 2008. The first Eastern Partnership Summit was held in Prague, in 2009.



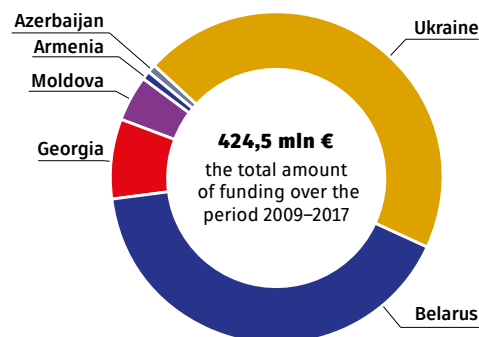
Polish Development Cooperation

Polish Development Cooperation, also referred to as *Polish aid*, is an integral part of Poland's foreign policy and a modern instrument for achieving its objectives. Poland supports its partner countries in numerous areas. The priorities are: supporting democratisation and good governance, developing human capital, supporting entrepreneurship, the private sector as well as the development of agriculture and rural areas. Considerable significance is attached to scholarship programmes, which constitute a major part of the bilateral development aid. Foreigners who study in Poland gain knowledge and experience, which they can use to improve living conditions in their home countries.

The purpose of the *Polish aid* is to create a stable international environment for Poland, improve its security, strengthen Poland's importance internationally and build its brand. The activities also consolidate Poland's presence in partner countries and serve the purpose of opening up new business opportunities to Polish enterprises.

Polish development aid for the Eastern Partnership states 2008–2017
Million EUR

	Armenia	Azerbaijan	Belarus	Georgia	Moldova	Ukraine	
2009	0,37	0,16	11,16	8,06	0,76	6,57	11,6
2010	0,42	0,14	11,39	4,67	0,86	8,31	25,79
2011	0,81	0,29	15,25	4,73	1,23	8,66	30,96
2012	0,36	0,33	12,38	2,01	1,50	9,59	26,17
2013	0,41	0,25	15,09	2,52	1,60	11,55	31,42
2014	0,17	0,14	14,97	1,89	2,34	15,94	35,46
2015	0,27	0,02	15,82	1,77	2,20	25,87	45,95
2016	0,15	0,05	17,34	1,66	1,94	21,79	42,93
2017	0,24	0,51	29,29	1,58	1,87	53,99	87,46
	4	2,6	174,7	32,8	18,8	191,6	



Scholarship aid for citizens of the Eastern Partnership states

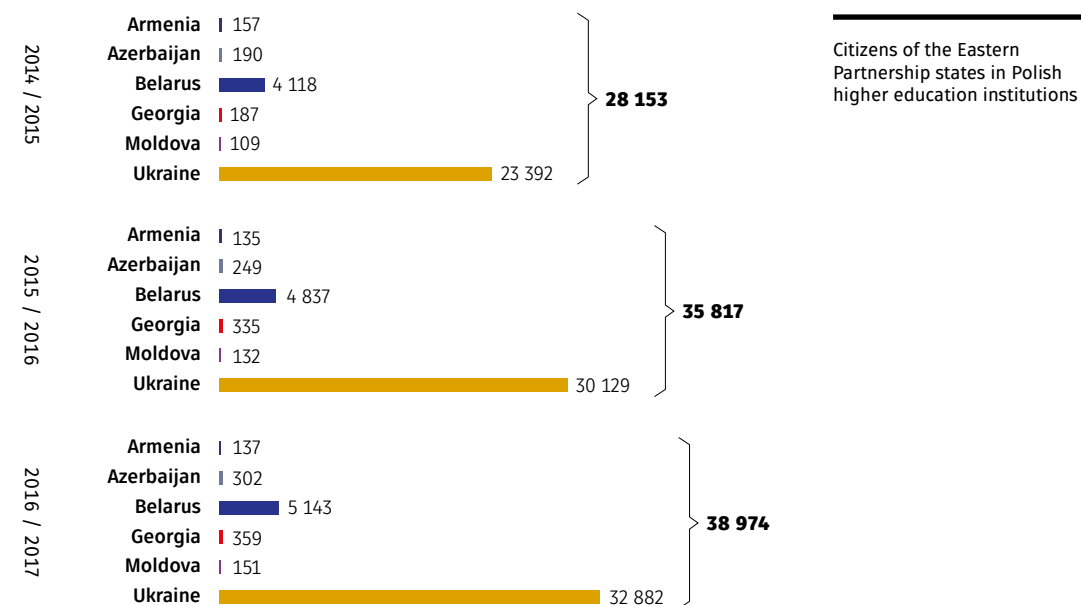
Every year, 45,000 citizens of the Eastern Partnership states receive education in Poland. Students from Ukraine and Belarus are most numerous. Many of them benefit from various forms of support, such as exemptions from education fees or scholarships. The best students join the scientific personnel and enhance the international cooperation of Polish higher education institutions.



Photography: the National Agency for Academic Exchange

Aid is provided, among others, pursuant to contracts and agreements with certain countries, the Polish Card or within the framework of scholarship programmes. The estimated value of aid provided to citizens of the Eastern Partnership states studying in Poland amounts to over PLN 270 m.

The most talented scholarship holders have the opportunity to receive education from best Polish higher education institutions within the framework of the Stefan Banach Scholarship Programme financed by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Science and Higher Education



Stefan Banach Scholarship Programme

The Stefan Banach Scholarship Programme, launched in 2013, is aimed at students from the developing countries of Europe and Central Asia, including all of the Eastern Partnership states. The patron of the programme is Stefan Banach, a prominent Polish mathematician, co-creator of the Lviv School of Mathematics.

The programme is aimed at the socio-economic development of developing countries, made possible by raising the level of education and vocational qualifications of their citizens. In 2019, almost 200 scholarship holders are participating in the programme.



Photography: Tymon Markowski / Ministry of Foreign Affairs



Photography: the National Agency for Academic Exchange

The Stefan Banach Scholarship Programme provides an opportunity to study at higher education institutions supervised by the Ministry of Science and Higher Education in the following fields: engineering and technology, agriculture, exact sciences, and natural sciences. Participants also receive monthly scholarships to cover living expenses when receiving education in Poland and they are exempt from education fees at state universities. The Programme comprises a compulsory 1-month language and adaptation course with a scholarship or a 1-year preparatory course before the commencing of the studies in Poland. The aim of the course is to improve the participants' knowledge of the Polish language and their knowledge on the subjects related to the course of their future studies. The Stefan Banach Scholarship Programme is a joint initiative of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Science and Higher Education, and the Polish National Agency for Academic Exchange NAWA is the manager of the programme. (More details about the programme and the information on the current application processes can be found on: <https://nawa.gov.pl>).



Scholarship Programmes as seen by scholarship holders:

Sofiya Nesimko, participant of the Stefan Banach Scholarship Programme

I started my studies in Poland, because I wanted to gain better vocational qualifications, but my true dream has always been to become a real scientist. Now, I am really happy that the Stefan Banach Scholarship Programme is my companion in this voyage, because dreams actually do come true. And even though I am not a scientist yet, the Programme made it possible for me to continue my education at the PhD level at the Cracow University of Economics. So, it puts me on the right track to finally make my dream come true. To all those who hesitate whether to come to Poland, I would like to remind you that "Rome was not built in one day" and that at first it might not be easy, but every success, even a little one, will help you become a strong, capable, wise and successful person. Therefore, choose your own goals and pursue them with confidence, knowing that you will achieve them.

Sofiya Nesimko, Ukraine

Eastern Partnership Academy of Public Administration

The Eastern Partnership Academy of Public Administration (EPAPA) is a programme of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the National School of Public Administration, in operation since 2011, aimed at public officers from the Eastern Partnership states, i.e. Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine. Professional public officers ensure expert background necessary to implement reforms that develop a democratic country governed by the rule of law as well as the modern knowledge economy.



Photography: Karolina Sawicka / the National School of Public Administration

From 2011 to 2018, 28 training modules were organised for 504 public administration representatives from the Eastern Partnership states. Georgian representatives constituted the largest group of participants (138 persons), followed by Ukrainian (134 persons) and Moldovan representatives (92 persons). The Belarusian government administration was represented by 53 officials, Azerbaijani by 44 and Armenian by 43.



Photography: Karolina Sawicka / the National School of Public Administration

The training courses covered the topics of civil service, local government reform, counteracting corruption, cooperation within the framework of WTO, European integration as well as the implementation of association agreements with the European Union, including the agreements on Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Areas (DCFTA).



Photography: Karolina Sawicka / the National School of Public Administration



A remark made by one of the programme participants, Irina Dakhundaridze, Deputy Director of HR Management at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Georgia:

I found my two-week apprenticeship in Poland extremely rewarding and interesting, because it was a great opportunity to learn more about the Polish civil service in general and about practices and expert knowledge applied in the Polish civil service and also to extend the network of direct contacts both with

Polish officials and my counterparts in the Eastern Partnership states. One of the most valuable aspects was the exchange of experience on their ongoing civil service reform. I would also like to emphasize how interesting our long, everyday conversations with the mentors at the Office for Foreigners were, when we discussed a variety of issues connected with human resources. It also gave us an additional opportunity to exchange ideas and views on fascinating topics. I am going to use this experience at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in my country and I think that it may be a good start for interesting conversations on personnel issues.

Armenia

The development aid activities benefiting Armenia pertained to environment protection, support for groups facing challenging social circumstances as well as agriculture and the development of rural areas.

Polish aid was extended to disadvantaged groups of people facing challenging social circumstances, especially children and teenagers from rural areas and the disabled. Many actions focused on improving the conditions in educational facilities and childcare centres for children and teenagers, thus giving them a better start in life. The purpose of this aid was primarily to carry out renovations, with particular emphasis placed on health and hygiene conditions, and to purchase equipment and furniture for such centres and facilities.

Armenia is an agricultural country, therefore Poland provided support for small-sized agriculture enterprises by purchasing equipment and developing infrastructure. The purpose of the implemented projects was, among others, to strengthen and increase the number of small agricultural producers' associations and to professionalise the marketing system for agricultural produce and agricultural advisory services. They also provided for professional and social activation of rural population. Armenians also participated in trails marking in areas attractive for tourists.



Tatev-Harzi tourist trail, photography: Maciej Falkowski / the Embassy of the Republic of Poland in Yerevan



Tatev-Harzis tourist trail, photography: Maciej Falkowski, the Embassy of the Republic of Poland in Yerevan

One of the tourist-related projects pertained to delineating and marking a tourist trail in the Syunik Province. With the help of the Embassy, the village residents delineated and marked a 13km hiking tourist trail from the Tatev Monastery to the Harzis village. The project allowed for the preparation and printing of an information brochure disseminated among tourists visiting Armenia. Thanks to the popularisation of the route and the increased interest in hiking there, the residents of Harzis gained an additional source of income.

The majority of the projects was implemented by the Polish Embassy in Armenia. By cooperating closely with local authorities and local governments, actions were taken to reduce poverty, improve the population health as well as to secure and support an increase in the conditions of living standards, e.g. by renovating educational facilities, medical or cultural centres.

Azerbaijan

The development activities for Azerbaijan pertained to environment protection, support for groups facing challenging social circumstances as well as for agriculture and the development of rural areas.

Environment protection actions involved sharing specialist knowledge with the representatives of the Azerbaijan administration regarding the issue of water and waste management, protection of the environment and forestry, assessment of the impact on the →



Soil map of the Shaki Region, photography: The Institute of Technology and Life Sciences in Falenty

environment, access to the information on the environment and its protection, climate change, geology and the power industry. The implementation was based on training courses and study visits.

Polish aid was also extended to disadvantaged groups of people facing challenging social circumstances, especially disabled children and teenagers, children under foster care and those in juvenile detention centres. Specialists working with autistic children had an opportunity to deepen their knowledge and learn about work methods by participating in training courses and study visits. One of the centres providing children from orphanages, low-income families and foster families with care was expanded in order to improve conditions of their stay, education and rehabilitation. In order to enhance the quality of life and education of teenagers in one of the juvenile detention centres, classrooms were equipped with educational aids and equipment for extra-curricular activities.

Within the framework of projects aimed at agriculture and the development of rural areas, experts of the Azerbaijan veterinary services were able to expand their knowledge on Polish veterinary standards applied to animals and products of animal origin as well as veterinary supervision over the food chain safety. Moreover, the long-term cooperation of surveying services provided for support in the preparation of tools for



Soil map of the Shaki Region, photography: Magdalena Opatka / Department of Development Cooperation, Ministry of Foreign Affairs

strengthening spatial planning for better use of natural and agricultural resources in the northern and western part of Azerbaijan.

The long-term project implemented under the cooperation of the Institute of Erosion and Irrigation and the Technology and Life Sciences Institute in

Falenty consisted in technological, subject matter and organisational support for the sustainable management of environment resources in rural areas. The assistance activities comprised the digitalisation of cartographic materials, identification of the mechanism of landslides as well as the start of the building of a database containing information on

spatial differentiation and intensity of soil erosion. The created tools can serve to monitor and prevent erosion processes and salinisation of soils in areas with unfavourable economic conditions. These instruments may constitute a perfect support in the strategic planning of desirable economic development directions in Azerbaijan.

Belarus

Since 2006, Poland has treated Belarus as one of the priority addressees of development aid. The support for entrepreneurship and the private sector plays an important role among all areas of cooperation. The aim of the projects is to develop instruments of aid for entrepreneurs, increase knowledge and improve planning and managing business activity skills as well as to improve the operation of micro-enterprises by modernising their technical resources. The results include new agreements and job creation as well as broadening contacts of Belarusian entrepreneurs.

The Polish Agency for Enterprise Development, among others, in cooperation with the Belarusian Ministry of Economy and the Belarus Fund for Support of Entrepreneurship Actions implemented actions what aim to develop micro, small and medium Belarusian enterprises. Belarusian partners learned about systems supporting entrepreneurship, with a particular emphasis placed on funding instruments, such as credit and loan guarantees, the methodology of economic legislation and supporting the internationalisation of Belarusian enterprises, including marketing Belarusian goods in the European Union.



Bakery in Komarow, photography: Aleksandr Kanotop

Tourism constitutes a promising area for developing entrepreneurship in Belarus. An example of cooperation in this field is the project implemented by the UNDP Office in Minsk within the framework of *Polish aid*. Its results will include the promotion of new goods and services as well as the cre-

ation of new jobs in tourism. The framework of *Polish aid* also provided for the implementation of initiatives aimed at improving local tourism infrastructure. The establishment of the sailing school for teenagers at the lake Dryvyaty, the “Mereya” camping in the Myory District or the cycling route connecting Grodno with the Belarusian part of the Augustow Canal are perfect examples of those initiatives.



Boarding school in Antopol, photography: Aleksandr Kanotop



Sailing school in Braslaw, photography: svaboda.org

In recent years, *Polish aid* helped to increase the access to social services and improve the infrastructure and the operation of centres for groups at risk of exclusion, especially the disabled and children deprived of parental care. Belarusian beneficiaries had the opportunity to participate in training courses, workshops and study visits conducted by Polish specialists. Thanks to those projects, among others, the equipment was improved and the rooms were adjusted to the requirements of work in care centres. An important purpose of further actions is to activate the beneficiaries professionally and socially and, in the long run, change the attitude of the society towards these groups.



Centre for Social Service in Astravyets, photography: Aleksandr Kanotop

An example here may be the development of the network of community day care centres, which enable the social inclusion of disabled children and those deprived of parental care. The Embassy of the Republic of Poland in Minsk has implemented many projects in cooperation with special needs schools, social care centres and organisations specialised in work with disabled children and those deprived of parental care.



Polish house in the "Borowljany boarding house" for families of patients of the Centre for Paediatric Oncology, photography: Aleksandr Kanotop



Carpentry shop in Molotkoviche, photography: Aleksandr Kanotop

One of the beneficiaries of the projects aimed at activating the disabled vocationally were pupils of a school for special needs children in Molotkoviche. The framework of *Polish aid* also covers the implementation of projects of the UNDP Office in Belarus for the disabled in Lida and Brest as well as projects of the UNICEF Office in Belarus aimed at the protection of rights and social activation of children and teenagers, including young disabled persons.

Polish aid for schools in Molotkovich

In Molotkovich, in the Belarusian part of Polesia, there is a boarding school for children with special needs. It provides schooling and boarding to over 150 children with different degrees of intellectual disabilities. They mostly come from low-income families in need of support. The facility uses appropriate educational aids and makes every effort to prepare its pupils for future independent and professional life.

In order to improve the process of vocational education of pupils and create jobs for disabled graduates, school authorities decided to cooperate with Poland within the framework of Polish Development Cooperation. The existing studios as well as carpentry, construction and sewing workshops were modernised and some new workshops were created: pottery, floor tiles production and a forge. Moreover, a service point was created in the nearby Pinsk, where orders are placed and completed (e.g. for carpentry services, photocopying, binding documents). The flagship of the existing cooperation has been the launch of the furniture manufacturing facility which employs pupils from the school. The projects carried out in Molotkovich made it possible to create a model supported employment enterprise.



School in Molotkovich, photography: Aleksandr Kanotop

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“The most important thing is to captivate children's interest and make them feel needed. When children discover their interests, we can see them change before our very eyes. Recently, an orphaned boy from a special needs school arrived here. He was a difficult child both in terms of his personality and behaviour. When we showed him how to produce furniture, he began to spend almost his entire free time in our carpentry facility. From dawn to dusk, he learned how to make cabinets. Finding something that really captivates a child, their real vocation – this is a great success and real happiness...”

Wiaczesław Izotow, principal of the school in Molotkoviche



School in Molotkoviche
photography: Aleksandr Kanotop

Georgia

The aid for Georgia was focused on supporting groups facing challenging social circumstances; education, crisis management and regional development.

Within the framework of the cooperation between Polish and Georgian centres for the disabled, Georgian therapists and teachers learned about programmes and modern methods of educational and therapeutic work with disabled children and teenagers. Workshops were organised for their families and guardians. Also, centres for the disabled were supported by supplementing their specialist equipment. At the same time, the development projects were aimed at professional activation and help for the disabled and socially excluded to become independent. Another major group that was offered aid were victims of domestic violence who received psychological support and professional training

Playground at the Georgia Caritas Day Care Centre, photography: the Embassy of the Republic of Poland in Tbilisi



Playground at the Georgia Caritas Day Care Centre, photography: the Embassy of the Republic of Poland in Tbilisi

courses so that they could become economically independent. They also could seek help in shelters and crisis centres created under the project. Doctors, psychologists, teachers and police officers could participate in training courses on how to counter domestic violence. In terms of supporting children deprived of care, the implementation of Polish solutions for reintegrating families by creating networks of small family-type children's homes was a success of the long-term cooperation.

In order to improve the operation of one of the childcare centres (the Caritas Day Care Centre), the sports and leisure facilities were created. They

serve as a tool of social integration for children and to improve their mental, physical and emotional condition.

Poland's involvement in education primarily focused on the improvement of the access that children have to high quality kindergarten education. The projects contributed to making the educational opportunities of children from rural regions equal. Moreover, with the participation of Polish specialists and in cooperation with UNICEF, a project focused on supporting Georgian government in improving the qualifications of the kindergarten and early school educational personnel was imple-

mented. Furthermore, aid was provided to Georgia during the implementation of inclusive education in schools, in compliance with the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities ratified by Georgia. The actions were aimed at strengthening the competencies of the education personnel with respect to working with children with special educational needs.

The framework of supporting the crisis management system provided for the implementation of actions supporting the creation of a coherent rescue system, including the development of professional system of training fire services and the creation of mountain rescue structures. Polish experts provided local authorities in some of the Georgian regions with help in preparing and implementing crisis management plans. Border protection services of Georgia received support in counteracting and combating cross-border criminal activity connected with illegal transboundary



Day care centre in Georgia, photography: Alexander Kalandadze

movement of dangerous substances. Also, some actions pertained to modelling mountain rivers, which are at risk, in order to prepare plans for the management of flood risks.

One of the areas of Development Cooperation included the support for the reform of the local government. During the preparation period before the implementation of the Georgian regional development reform, Poland shared its expertise both at the level of government and local administration. A multi-annual programme was launched to strengthen these actions. Moreover, local tourism and promotion of the regions (Imereti, Racha, Mingrelia and Adjara) were supported.

School readiness centres, modelled after the Polish ones, have been created in Georgia since 2008 to enable pre-school children to access early education, thus making their educational and life opportunities equal. As a result, about 170 kindergarten facilities were opened in rural areas, so that over two thousand pre-schoolers could begin their education journey. Support programmes were prepared for the children to account for their individual needs. Local communities, including parents of the children participating in the project, engaged in, among others, renovating and equipping day care facilities. Teachers chosen to work in the new centres were trained in the methodology of working with groups of children of different ages, cooperating with parents, identifying problems with development, shaping and testing school readiness of children as well as developmental psychology. Representatives of local authorities responsible for



Day care centre in Georgia, photography: Alexander Kalandadze

supervising these facilities participated in training courses on legal and organisational aspects of preschool education.

These actions met the needs of the Georgian government and consequently early school education was formally added to the education system. The law on early and pre-school education and teaching entered into force in 2016.

Polish fire-fighting services cooperating with Georgian emergency response services supported changes in national units responsible for crisis management. The cooperation mostly pertained to the implementation of European formulas for internal security and protection of the population against the effects of catastrophes, natural disasters or threats caused by the human factor. Specialist training courses allowed for the process of training future fire fighters to be conducted independently. Moreover, project participants received personal rescue equipment. Training stations were created within the area of the training centre, as they were necessary to conduct rescue exercises. All actions were aimed at helping Georgia to improve the quality of training courses for rescuers and managing fire services courses.



Flashover chamber at the Fire-fighting Rescue Unit in Tbilisi,
photography: Archil Zoidze / Emergency Management Service of Georgia

Moldova

Poland appreciates the determination of the Chisinau authorities to continue pursuing the European integration and supports actions aimed at good governance. The Ministry of Investment and Economic Development used the *Polish aid* funds to support the preparation and implementation of the National Strategy for Regional Development 2016-2020. It completed a three-year modular project aimed at urban revitalisation in close cooperation with the Ministry of Regional Development and Construction of Moldova.

A breakthrough in the implementation of development projects came with the year 2012, when the Representative Office of the Foundation for International Solidarity was established under the name of the Information Centre for Local Authorities of the Republic of Moldova. This is a joint governmental initiative of Warsaw and Chisinau supporting the development of Moldova by promoting systematic solutions for local development, including actions conducted on the basis of the principle of solidarity and subsidiarity.



The Representative Office supports public administration in implementing policies focused on the local development of rural areas. It also cooperates with local governments, entrepreneurs as well as citizen initiatives and institutions in order to build an efficient system for initiating and managing regional development processes.

Thanks to the support for local development, the Centre is now building mutual trust between the side of the Transnistria conflict – so far, over 40 agreements were concluded between the two banks of the Dniester river. The Centre, acting as the partner of the Ministry of Investment and Economic Development, also supported the development of cities through revitalisa- →

Photography: Monika Janus-Klewiado
Department of Development Cooperation,
Ministry of Foreign Affairs

tion. The implementation of the pilot project paves the way for the introduction of systemic solutions for the management of city development, based on cross-sectoral partnerships and the people's involvement in the policy of developing the city. This is the first stage of changing the way that people think about city management and serves

as inspiration for developing municipal policy solutions in Moldova. The pilot programme covered 7 cities in Moldova.

The area of public security and border management is another particularly important element of support for Moldova. The Ministry of Interior

and Administration used the *Polish aid* funds to implement several projects contributing to the strengthening of the border police in Moldova and concentrated on counteracting cross-border criminal activity as well as ensuring safety and public order. In recent years, the implemented projects pertained to criminal analysis, performing procedural steps, cooperating during an intervention, managing migrants, counteracting human trafficking and providing first aid. Thanks to the experience they gathered, in 2018, Polish

police together with its partner from Lithuania began the implementation of the reform of the police system project which was subsidised by the EU's Twinning Project.

As a part of projects focused on agriculture and developing rural areas, the development of agricultural and non-agricultural services received support in rural areas in order to facilitate the development of small enterprises and farm advisory services. The *Polish aid* resources also helped to develop rural tourism due to the sustainable use of natural resources.

In recent years, some support actions were also aimed at the National Bureau of Statistics of the Republic of Moldova to harmonise the statistics in Moldova with the EU standards and to improve the competencies of the managerial personnel of the education system to prepare them from implementing education reforms, especially in the area of the professional development of teachers and strengthening the partnership among teachers, students and their parents as well as institutional and social partners.

Since 2012, the Information Centre for the Local Authorities in Moldova has facilitated development of Moldova by promoting systemic solutions for local development on the basis of the principle of solidarity and subsidiarity. It cooperates with various donors, e.g. EuropeAid, USAID, UNDP. Its activities include sharing experience, supporting development processes, helping to create strategies and action plans and offering support to its partners.

As a result of five year's work on creating first local action groups in Moldova, i.e. the partnership among institutions and people representing local



Photography: Monika Janus-Klewiado / Department of Development Cooperation, Ministry of Foreign Affairs

private, social and public interests and developing a joint vision of developing the area, the LEADER National Network in December 2018 was created. The Organisation associates both Local Action Groups and organisations engaged in promoting and implementing the LEADER approach (LEADER is the EU's instrument of developing rural areas, with empha-



The development of agricultural and non-agricultural services in Moldova, photography: Monika Janus-Klewiado, Department of Development Cooperation, Ministry of Foreign Affairs

sis placed on economic development based on local resources, which allow the potential of the village to be discovered anew). Now, there are 19 Local Action Groups in operation. The support provided by the Centre helps to develop local development strategies, e.g. aimed at developing micro-and small enterprises.

Ukraine

Since 2009, Poland has supported the implementation of over 500 of projects in Ukraine and the annual Official Development Assistance for that country grew in this period from almost € 7m to around € 54m. In the last 10 years, Polish support covered almost all spheres of life of our neighbour. Some of their priority areas are worth mentioning here.



Fire fighters from the Lviv Oblast photography Lviv State University of Life Safety



Photography: Lviv State University of Life Safety



Night actions of medical rescuers – volunteers, photography: Marta Yaruczyk

Development Cooperation. Fire fighters were trained in road, water and chemical accident rescue. Presently, a voluntary fire-fighting units system is being developed.



Activities for children at a café in Mariupol, created with the financial support of Polish aid and the UNDP in Ukraine, photography: Ukraine UNDP

Aid for victims. This has been an important area of cooperation since the beginning of the conflict in Donbass. In response to the Ukrainian authorities' call, Poland organised three transports of in-kind aid consisting of food parcels, hygiene products, school kits, sleeping bags, blankets, the essential medicines. The next step was to provide basic medical and social care. Except for emergency humanitarian aid, displaced persons were provided with support to facilitate their integration with residents of cities and towns where they found their new home. In collaboration with Caritas Poland, the first Family Support Centre was

set up in Ukraine and now it offers psychological support and complex assistance in dealing with difficult life situation to thousands of displaced persons every year. Furthermore, employment assistance is provided in a new place of residence. Within the framework of the cooperation with the United Nations Development Programme in the Donetsk and Luhansk Oblasts, 160 micro and small enterprises were supported and over 500 new jobs were created.

Support for regional development and strengthening the government and local government administration. Promoting good administrative practices and the principles of good governance, improving the quality of public utility services or the energy efficiency constitute only some of the *Polish aid* action areas. *Polish aid* is specially focused on supporting the Ukrainian local government. Today, it is close to impossible to find an oblast where none of its representatives have participated in study visits in Poland. During such visits, Polish local governments shared their knowledge, experience and good practices. Polish ministries and experts participated in the preparation and then the implementation of the decentralisation reform. This Polish experience was used when creating legal solutions, constitutional framework and the system for managing the country's territorial division.

Support for the modernisation of the education system in Ukraine. The Polish Aid served to create the basis for introducing entrepreneurship education in Ukrainian schools. Within the framework of the reform of the education system, a Polish-Ukrainian team of experts prepared a complete core curriculum of general education for each type of school. Supporting vocational

schooling constitutes a special course of action. Within the framework of the EU's U-LEAD programme, upon the initiative of Poland and with the contribution of Polish experts, the "Concept of vocational education reform 2018-28" national strategy was created.



Training courses at the Youth Entrepreneurship Incubator in Lviv, photography: Lviv City Institute



Children's play centre in Sloviansk, created with the financial support of Polish aid and the UNDP in Ukraine, photography: Ukraine UNDP



Night actions of medical rescuers - volunteers, photography: Marta Yaruczyk

Support for entrepreneurship and the private sector.

Entrepreneurship centres and incubators were created in several Ukrainian cities. Often, these places are aimed at young people - the Youth Entrepreneurship Incubator in Lviv may serve as an example. Entrepreneurs are trained in innovative technology, including the application of renewable energy sources. The application of purchasers' groups turned out to be an interesting initiative. A network of entrepreneurship support agencies was created in cooperation with the Ministry of Investment and Economic Development.



Activities at the Youth Entrepreneurship Incubator in Lviv, photography: Lviv City Institute

Polish contribution into developing the volunteer medical rescue system in Ukraine

Winter 2013 / 2014, Maidan, Kiev. This is where people not only from the capital city, but also from the entire country gather. They are protesting against the decision to suspend the signing of the European Union Association Agreement. First shots are fired, some get wounded and killed. Rescuers are needed, but the authorities forbade the medical personnel to help victims, or else they will be dismissed. People who know how to provide first aid would help a lot now. This is when the idea of creating voluntary rescue teams modelled after the ones in Poland and the rest of the Europe was born. In the mid-2015, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs decided to implement the Maltese Relief Service project: "Developing the volunteer medical rescue system in Ukraine".

There were many more people who were eager to participate than expected. Training groups are growing each year. Almost 700 volunteers are trained in first medical aid. First, rescue teams are created in Lviv, Ivano-Frankivsk and Kiev. In the following years, new ones are created in Berehove, Kamianets-Podilskyi, Yuzhnoukrainsk, Mariupol, Zaporizhia,

Fastiv and Kamianske. Volunteers receive uniforms, necessary training courses and rescue equipment. They are asked to help to provide medical support during mass events, also including the World Youth Days in Krakow. Poland provides support for creating and equipping the training centre for rescuers, which is being built in the vicinity of Ivano-Frankivsk. Polish aid made it possible to create the first voluntary emergency medical system in Ukraine. The long-forgotten idea of volunteer work was reborn in Ukraine. Now, 130 rescuers work in 10 cities. Also, changes to volunteer work law were initiated and the cooperation with schools began. The project contributed to activating many people, mostly younger ones, where some of them suffered as a result of the conflict in the eastern part of Ukraine.

Barbara Michałowska – the supervisor of the project of "Developing the volunteer medical rescue system in Ukraine" in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs



Activities for the children of displaced people in Borodianka, photography: Monika Andruszewska

Within the last two years, *Polish aid* made it possible to donate €60,000 to support social and psychological rehabilitation centres in small towns in central Ukraine, where those who had to leave their homes because of the war in Donbass can receive help.

The armed conflict in the eastern part of Ukraine has continued since 2014. The social and psychological rehabilitation centres were created to help those who suffered as a result of the Chernobyl disaster, those who live in the contaminated areas or were evacuated from the vicinity of the power plant and the city of Pripyat. Presently, these centres actively provide social, psychological, information and training support to military veterans, participants of anti-terrorist operations in the eastern part of Ukraine and people displaced from temporarily occupied territories or territories in war.

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A participant who wishes to remain anonymous, describes how she and her husband, together with their son and a three-week old daughter, fled Donetsk in 2014. With tears in her eyes, she describes that right before she gave birth to her daughter, who is now four, her husband decided to renovate their flat. They found a one-room flat in Borodianka where they live now together with their grandparents. She added that her husband has a job, they even send some money to their older son who went back to Donetsk to take care of their flat.

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