

## **Reform Cooperation in Eastern Europe, the Western Balkans and Turkey – a summary of Sweden's strategy for 2014-2020**

Since 2014 Sweden has a comprehensive regional strategy for cooperation with Eastern Europe, the Western Balkans and Turkey. The strategy covers the period 2014-2020 and is focused on increased EU integration, which is a key driver of change and an important tool for democratization and modernization, fighting poverty and strengthening human rights.

**The strategy for 2014-2020 focuses on three results areas:**

**1) Enhanced economic integration with the EU and development of market economy.** This includes efforts to strengthen economic development and increase employment by improving the conditions for small and medium-sized enterprises and by facilitating trade between countries.

**2) Strengthened democracy, greater respect for human rights and more fully developed state under the rule of law.**

Efforts are needed to strengthen public administration and the judiciary. Support is also designed to strengthen human rights, civil society, media and gender equality.

**3) A better environment, reduced climate impact and enhanced resilience to environmental impact and climate change.**

The third results area is focused on sustainable community services related to water and sanitation, waste management, energy efficiency and renewable energy.

In Eastern Europe four countries are given priority. Sweden has allocated funds for bilateral programs and projects in Georgia, Moldova, Ukraine and Belarus. There are also regional projects where two more countries, Armenia and Azerbaijan, can participate. The Swedish support is coordinated with EU's support within the framework of the Eastern Partnership.

The Western Balkans also has four priority countries with bilateral programs and projects: Albania, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Kosovo and Serbia. Regional projects may also include Macedonia and Montenegro. If the countries in the Western Balkans implement the required reforms, there is a promise from the EU on future membership. Swedish support for reform cooperation is coordinated with the EU support.

The cooperation with Turkey is only focused on results area 2, with focus on efforts to strengthen the judiciary, the local administration, human rights, civil society and gender equality.

Sida and the Swedish embassies have a close collaboration with government level and civil society in the concerned countries. The Swedish support is implemented by many different partners. Multilateral organizations such as the EBRD, the World Bank and UN agencies play an important role. Another group consists of international and regional organizations and networks, such as Regional Cooperation Council (RCC), European Roma Rights Centre (ERRC), Regional Environmental Center for Central and Eastern Europe (REC). Many Swedish government authorities and organizations are also involved as project managers, for example the Swedish Environmental Protection Agency, the Swedish Tax Agency, the National Police, Statistics Sweden, Lantmäteriet, the Swedish Association of Local Authorities and Regions, the Kvinna to Kvinna Foundation, Olof Palme International Center and the Civil Rights Defenders. A fourth group is Swedish or international consulting firms contracted for project implementation through competitive bidding. A part of the support is also implemented through direct agreements with local organizations and government agencies in each country.