

For understanding and a peaceful resolution to the conflict in Ukraine

swisspeace promotes dialogue among the population

Background

Since the start of the crisis in eastern Ukraine, some 1,250,000 people have been driven from their villages and cities and 800,000 have fled abroad, the great majority of them (660,000) to Russia. Both parties to the conflict spread propaganda through the media, heightening the risk that the conflict will take on an ethnic character.

Challenge

The supply situation along the Russian-Ukrainian border is precarious on both sides; there are aid organisations and volunteers caring for displaced persons and refugees. Although they face the same problems, however, there is no regular exchange of information among the aid groups. The population lack opportunities to communicate with one another and are exposed to one-sided propaganda on both sides.

Project objective

The goal of the project is to create a foundation of trust from which to launch a dialogue among the population in Ukraine and Russia, especially between the Ukrainian and Russian population along the border, with the aim of countering the ongoing development of the conflict along ethnic lines, or "ethnicisation". The cross-border dialogue is intended to have a positive impact on two levels: on a professional level in organisations that are struggling with similar problems, and in countering the results of propaganda on both sides by serving as a channel for information and communication.

Concretely, the project aims to link non-governmental organisations as well as concerned citizens in Ukraine and Russia with each other. The first step is to organise separate meetings in the two countries. For the second step, an ex-

change of information between Russian and Ukrainian participants is planned at joint discussion forums. The results will be analysed to develop recommendations to organisations and individuals promoting understanding and a peaceful resolution to the conflict.

Swiss contribution

Acting on Switzerland's behalf, the Human Security Division (HSD) of the Federal Department of Foreign Affairs (FDFA) is financing roughly 90% of the dialogue project under its peace policy activities. It is also represented on the project committee allowing the HSD to influence the project on a regular basis.

Country

Ukraine and Russia

Theme

Dialogue and civil society

Project name

Promoting dialogue between the Ukrainian and Russian population

Objective

Strengthen the cohesiveness of civil society and counter "ethnicisation" of the conflict

Target groups

Ukrainian and Russian population, displaced persons and refugees

Partner organisation

swisspeace

Total budget

CHF 190,000

Swiss contribution

CHF 170,000

Set-up phase

1 November 2014 – 31 October 2015