



## PRESS RELEASE

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### Solidarity Fund PL

Solidarity Fund PL (the Fund), founded in 1997, is a State Treasury foundation whose activities cover development cooperation with a strong focus on the Eastern Partnership Countries. It collaborates with social organisations, self-governments, central authorities, and international organisations. In Poland, the main partner of the Fund is the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

### Scope of Activities

Through its actions, the Fund aims to facilitate democratic transformations, human rights protection, and—in broad terms—social, civic, and economic development. It actively supports free media, self-government reforms, and promotes European values across the states that have emerged after the collapse of the Soviet Union. Together with the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE/ODIHR) it organises observation missions. In Ukraine, the Fund assists self-governments in improving social services, in Moldova it supports the development of local communities and entrepreneurs, while in Georgia it paves the way for the dialogue between the central government, the self-governments, and the citizens.

The Fund implements projects both on its own and in partnerships and, being a State Treasury foundation, it carries out tasks related to development cooperation assigned by the Polish Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Throughout the last weeks, in agreement with the Ministry, the Fund has been supporting societies struggling with the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. As part of collaboration with neighbouring countries, the Fund has arranged transfers of disinfectants and face masks to its partners. The activities of the Fund not only strengthen security and cooperation with partner countries, but also promote the image of Poland abroad.

### Fighting COVID-19

COVID-19 has proven itself to be one of the largest challenges for the Fund and for its partners. Following the principles of solidarity, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Poland and Solidarity Fund PL have earmarked part of the funds within the 'Polish Aid Programme' to address the impact of the coronavirus epidemic.

How does Poland help its partners through the Fund? The Representative Office of the Fund in Ukraine (SFPL UA) has launched a support programme for hospitals in Chernihiv, Lviv, Rivne, Zhytomyr, and several other oblasts, i.e. regions with which the Polish Ministry of Foreign Affairs had collaborated before and



where the Fund has been assisting in the introduction of the self-government and education reforms. Importantly, in the context of the ongoing war in Ukraine, Polish support is also reaching military and veteran hospitals.

All the medical centres involved have received, among other things, oxygen concentrators, bodysuits, touchless thermometers, medical diagnostic displays, beds, gloves, and face masks. The value of the donated equipment amounts to PLN 500,000.

The Fund also helps the citizens of Moldova in their struggle against the pandemic. The Fund's Representative Office in Chisinau has launched a Crisis Fund, which allowed for purchasing, among other things, several dozens of oxygen concentrators, 800 protective bodysuits, thermometers, liquid disinfectants, and liquid disinfectant spraying devices. More than PLN 200,000 were earmarked to address the pandemic in Moldova.

In Georgia, the Fund is engaged in preventing the spread of the virus. The government in Tbilisi has already received heating systems for field hospital tents, disinfectants, liquid disinfectant spraying devices, face masks, and faceshields. Through volunteers and self-government officials the equipment has reached those most in need in 18 territorial self-government units. Salome Zourabichvili, President of Georgia, expressed her gratitude for the assistance offered through the Fund to Polish President Andrzej Duda. The value of the aid amounts to approx. PLN 100,000.

For more detailed information about the Fund, photographs, and videos please contact: [media@solidarityfund.pl](mailto:media@solidarityfund.pl)

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## **The Fund Additional information**

### **UKRAINE**

Solidarity Fund PL has a permanent representative office in Ukraine (Solidarity Fund PL in Ukraine). For the past several years the Fund has been engaging in such issues as:

- social policy reform, i.e. consultancy in lawmaking and trainings on the provision of social services, especially at the level of Ukrainian self-governments;
- supporting vocational education reform along with German, Finnish, and Estonian partners under the EU4Skills programme, with the goal of modernising the system and adjusting it to the EU standards;
- decentralisation of the education sector in collaboration with the EU and Sweden, i.e. training amalgamated hromadas-level education managers and assistance for self-governments;
- empowering regional media to facilitate better information services to residents and secure reliable information supply e.g. on issues related to the European Union.

In the past, Representative Office in Ukraine also collaborated with the Government of Canada during the works on the decentralisation of the state and the reform of the media system. Additionally, the Fund has been involved in carrying out the reforms of education and media, the process of amalgamation of



hromadas into larger self-governmental bodies, and in other initiatives related to human rights protection, e.g. addressing the matter of displaced persons from Crimea and Donbass.

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More information available at: <https://solidarityfund.kiev.ua/ua/>

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## **MOLDOVA**

In Moldova the Fund carries out its activities through its Representative Office (Solidarity Fund PL in Moldova). The Fund focuses on such issues as facilitating access to European funds for local citizens, fostering the development of civil society, improving living conditions, and stimulating entrepreneurship.

The main fields of activity of the Representative Office in Moldova include:

- Supporting rural development:
  - implementation of the EU LEADER programme;
  - supporting entrepreneurship in rural areas.
- Supporting urban development:
  - revitalisation;
  - supporting the implementation of a regional development policy.
- Building mutual trust between the two banks of the Dniester river:
  - development of local communities.
- Mitigating the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic:
  - launching the Crisis Fund through which Solidarity Fund PL supports entrepreneurs in transforming their businesses in order to save jobs, supplies disinfectants, bodysuits, face masks, etc.

Visit our Facebook profile at: <https://www.facebook.com/SolidarityFundPLinMD/>

More information available at: <https://solidarityfund.md/>

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## **GEORGIA**

Established in 2019, Solidarity Fund PL Representative Office in Georgia (Solidarity Fund PL in Georgia) carries out activities in two primary fields:

- supporting good governance mechanisms;
- supporting crisis management mechanisms.

As part of these two priorities, the Fund supports the development of various forms of participation and social dialogue, using such tools as participatory budgeting, local initiatives, or participatory planning. Since 2019 the Fund has been running the “Academy of Participation” that trains professionals who are to foster the dialogue between the authorities and the citizens. Jointly with the Georgian National Emergency Management Service, the Fund has been sharing Polish experiences related to voluntary work, such as the Voluntary Fire Service (OSP), with the local citizens.



In the past, the Fund has also subsidised non-governmental organisations through grant competitions. The projects covered, among other things:

- support for the media (especially local and regional outlets);
- citizenship education;
- social participation;
- promotion of voluntary work and mediation;
- support for self-governments in implementation of participatory budgeting.

Visit our Facebook profile at: <https://www.facebook.com/SolidarityFundPLinGEO/>

More information available at: <http://solidarityfund.pl/gdzie-pracujemy/gruzja/>

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