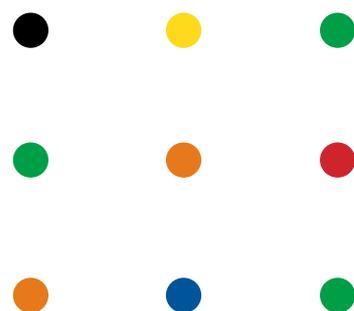
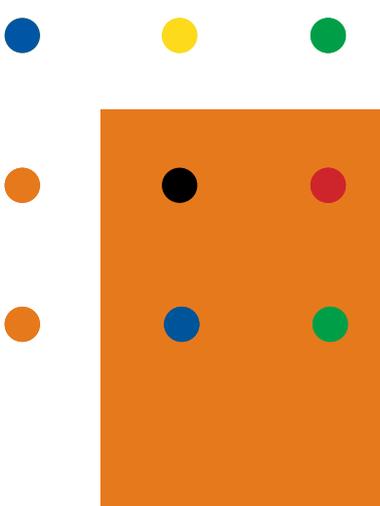
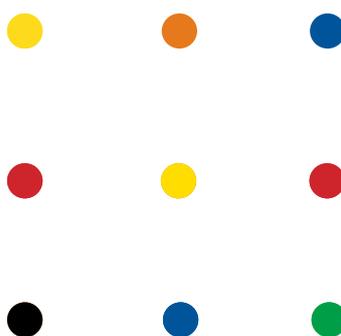




Solidarity Fund PL



Annual Report 2021

Extract from the full report

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Dear Readers,

In 2021 — a year still marked by pandemic restrictions — our efforts focused both on bolstering developmental gains in the countries where Solidarity Fund PL (SFPL) has already had a long-standing presence, and, through expanding its scope of commitment and entering new geographical areas, addressing new challenges.

In line with our creed, i.e. to further freedom, safety, and shared prosperity, driven by the belief that only lawfully governed democratic countries have the capacity to guarantee their free citizens safety and well-being, we have continued our efforts to support Belarussian civil society. It is our natural priority to intervene wherever people are ready to take action and defend their freedoms — even if only constrained to the privacy of their homes. Although we cannot disclose any details, we certainly owe solidarity and respect to those brave Belarussians who did not give in to terror and persecution and chose to remain in their own country. It is such persons that SFPL supports.

In mid-2020 in the face of regime's crack down, involving detentions and brutal interrogations, SFPL had to face yet another challenge: a wave of immigration into Poland. SFPL has actively joined the efforts to help the victims of the repressions and assist those who had made their way to Poland to adapt to their new environment.

We have been supporting free Belarussian media, educational and civic initiatives that operate in Poland, building NGO activists' competences and enhancing our partners' digital security. We trust that such actions will benefit the future free Belarus and are, in fact, an investment in the prosperity of the nations of our region.

Ukraine, striving to join the European Union, arduously and persistently continues its efforts initiated in 2014 to modernise and reform the state in accordance with the European standards. We have consistently been part of



this process, and for many years we have been involved in subsequent stages of decentralisation of Ukraine. Working jointly with hromadas (self-governments, we have transcended our prime field of expertise, i.e. development of social services systems, and moved on to building national-level competences. Hence, in July, we have signed a memorandum on collaboration with the National Agency of Ukraine for Civil Service regarding the introduction of the European quality assessment mechanism for administration (CAF). Polish experience in deployment of this method will be useful in raising the qualifications and the quality of work of Ukrainian public offices and self-government institutions.

We have also taken upon ourselves to participate in the creation of an oblast- and hromada-level emergency security system and the establishment of a network of volunteer fire service units similar to the one used in Poland, which is considered to be among the best in the world. Pilot works with several dozen hromadas, central-level consultancy, and collaboration with the State Emergency Service of Ukraine — formalised by a memorandum on collaboration — are a starting point to extending the project in the following years and converting it into a flagship SFPL initiative in Ukraine. Still, the key impact of these activities will be the improved response capacity of Ukrainian emergency services and increased security of Ukrainian

citizens.

In 2021 SFPL has also continued to implement the EU4Skills programme, dedicated to the vocational education reform. The programme allowed to create a database on Ukrainian labour market and lay theoretical foundations for vocational education system and its financing model. This is yet another area where SFPL contributions to modernisation and change converge with Ukraine's European aspirations.

After pro-European forces won parliamentary and presidential elections, Moldova has begun a process of deep, country-wide reforms, and the SFPL Representative Office in Chisinau is a prominent contributor to the process. Apart from our flagship initiative, i.e. the development of rural areas via LEADER method – which, owing to our commitment, has become Moldovan state's political instrument for addressing rural issues, enshrined in parliamentary acts – we are involved in the process of urban regeneration, creation of networks of urban activists, and initiatives directly aimed at changing urban spaces.

As a novelty, in 2021 SFPL has begun preparations to assist in the creation of a voluntary fire service and in the reform of disaster risk management system. We trust that the achievements, the experience, and the reputation of our Moldovan team will contribute to the modernisation of the country and will secure Poland's participation in the process.

In Georgia, SFPL has used subsequent rounds of the Academy of Participation to develop civic competences and contribute to joint decision-making at the local level via participatory budgeting. We have employed this tool to generate civic activism at the lowest self-governmental level, i.e. the municipalities, and to develop mechanisms for channelling this energy in an efficient manner. We have also initiated a new project focused on improving energy efficiency in Chokhatauri, one of Georgia's lowest-income local self-government units. It comprises identification of issues and putting forward changes aimed at increasing comfort of living without

increasing the costs or the consumption of energy. The project has already proven to have substantial potential and is bound to become SFPL's flagship initiative in the upcoming years in Georgia.

2021 brought SFPL's commitment in Armenia – heavily affected by the war. Initially, driven by the need to provide urgent humanitarian aid, together with Armenian Caritas, we have organised support for refugees and internally displaced persons from regions affected by the conflict. Subsequently, SFPL implemented two fully fledged developmental pilot projects. The first one was dedicated to economic activation of refugees through ecologically oriented actions. The second one used monitoring of court hearings to inspire social activism and raise young Armenians' awareness regarding the rule of law and legality.

As an organisation, the major challenge we are facing are the preparations – formally initiated in 2020 – to meet the requirements of the Pillars Assessment certificate. Acquiring the certificate will enable SFPL to participate in European projects as a partner. With this goal in mind, we have initiated verification and unification of our central and foreign branch-level procedures, introducing necessary modifications in line with the requirements of European law and national legislations of the countries we operate in. This complex and demanding task needs to become our daily practice over the next months if we are to extend the scope of our activities in the coming years.

The variety of tasks, the ample field of activities, and the exponentially growing work intensity have set the bar high for the entire SFPL team. All the greater is my gratitude towards my colleagues, and I commend their effort and the results achieved through their personal commitment and skills.

Rafał Dzięciołowski

President of the Management Board
of the Solidarity Fund PL



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Date of entry into the National Court

Register (KRS): 12 July 2001

National Court Register (KRS) No. 0000024453

REGON statistical number: 012345095

VAT Number: 526-22-64-292

SFPL Board during the reporting period:

Rafał Dzieciołowski – President of the Board

**SFPL Supervisory Board during
the reporting period:**

Paweł Jabłoński – President

Piotr Mieczysław Babinetz

Władysław Teofil Bartoszewski

Barbara Halina Bartuś

Ryszard Henryk Czarnecki

Marek Mirosław Plura

Krzysztof Marek Słoń

Edward Siarka

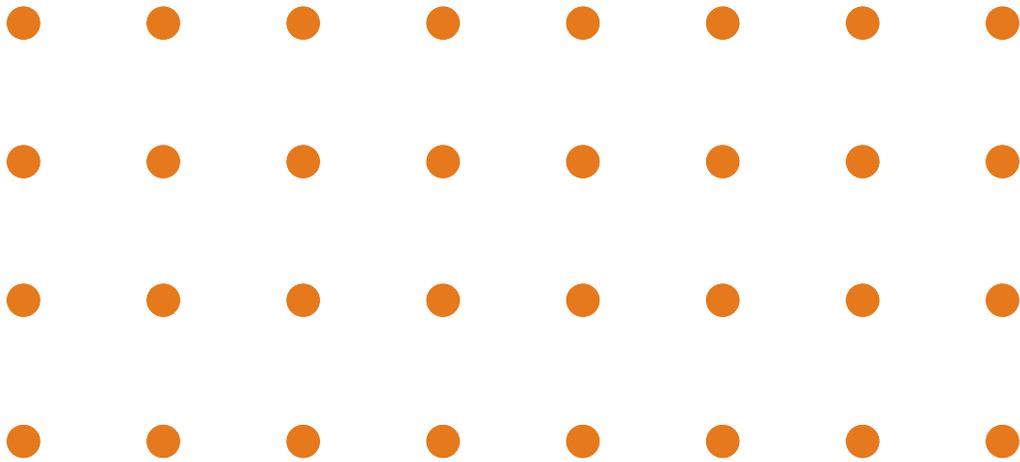
Ryszard Jan Wilczyński

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Ukraine



In 2021 Solidarity Fund PL has continued supporting Ukrainian authorities in the implementation of three major reforms related to the process of decentralisation, i.e. the reform of social services, vocational education, and population protection and safety system.

SFPL assistance comprised consultancy on legislative aspects, sharing know-how, and implementation of selected local-level solutions in collaboration with partner hromadas (self-governments).

SFPL has signed two memoranda on cooperation: with the State Emergency Service of Ukraine and with the National Agency of Ukraine for Civil Service.

Additionally, SFPL has implemented two pilot projects: one dedicated to implementing quality management through Common Assessment Framework in Ukraine's public sector, and one dedicated to improving psychological support system for veterans of the military conflict in Donbass and their families.

These activities have brought Ukraine closer to European standards in terms of social services, young people's education, and safety of civilian population.

Support for social policy reform

Since 2017 this area has been one of SFPL's priorities in Ukraine. As part of its 2021 activities, SFPL implemented two projects in Chernihiv, Cherkasy, Vinnytsia, and Zhytomyr oblasts.

PROJECT

Development of social services-related competences in hromadas

PILOT PROJECT

Individual facilitation of hromadas for improved social services management

Support for the reform of population safety and protection system

Protection of population and improvement of security is, apart from social services and vocational education, another field in which Solidarity Fund PL has been supporting the decentralisation reforms in Ukraine. The goal of the reform is to transfer population protection tasks to hromadas.

PILOT PROJECT

Fire Busters. Improvement of local-level civilian population protection system in Ukraine



20 hromadas



10 oblasts



4 study visits to Poland for 59 persons



5500 information folders on Voluntary Fire Service (OSP) for hromadas across all of Ukraine

Vocational Education Reform

PROGRAMME

EU4Skills: Better Skills for Modern Ukraine

Supporting the reform of vocational education system (VET) in Ukraine, under the EU4Skills programme represented one of SFPL's key activities in 2021. The programme, initiated in 2019, is aimed to improve the opportunities generated by vocational education, to make vocational education more attractive through adjusting the system to the needs of the labour market, to train education managers and teachers, and to modernise selected centres for vocational education in seven pilot oblasts: Chernivtsi, Lviv, Mykolaiv, Poltava, Rivne, Vinnytsia, and Zaporizhia.

SFPL's last year activities have been part of the second stage of the so-called EU4Skills Polish component. It includes drafting regional strategies for vocational education, creating labour market information system (LMIS), developing a vocational orientation system, reforming VET financing mechanisms, along with its multi-annual budgeting system.



22 oblasts involved in the EU4Skills programme



47 trainings/workshops – 1600 attendees



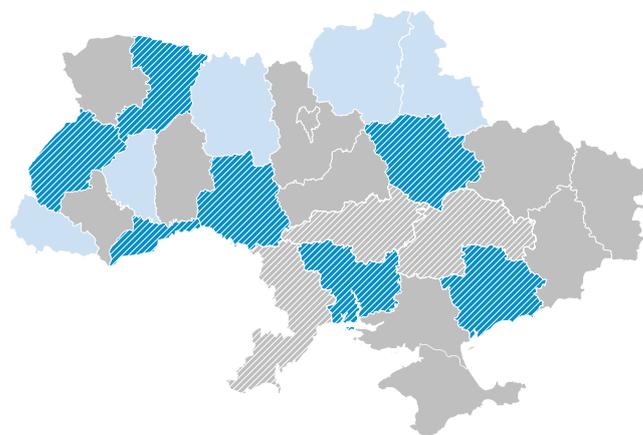
10 conferences – 406 participants



2 study visits to Poland – 28 participants



>1000 trained teachers



Oblasts covered by the EU4Skills programme since 2019 (Vinnytsia, Poltava, Zaporizhia, Rivne, Lviv, Chernivtsi, and Mykolaiv)

Oblasts covered by labour market studies in 2021 (those listed in 1. as well as Odessa, Kirovohrad, and Dnipropetrovsk)

Oblasts that carried out the SWOT analysis (Ternopil, Zakarpattia, Chernihiv, Sumy, Zhytomyr)



PILOT PROJECT

Quality management through implementation of the Common Assessment Framework (CAF) in Ukrainian public sector

The decentralisation reform is not merely limited to strengthening the position of local self-governments. It also entails the necessity to develop rules for assessing the performance of local public servants and institutions responsible for the provision of social services. Common Assessment Framework (CAF) is a tool that facilitates such evaluation.



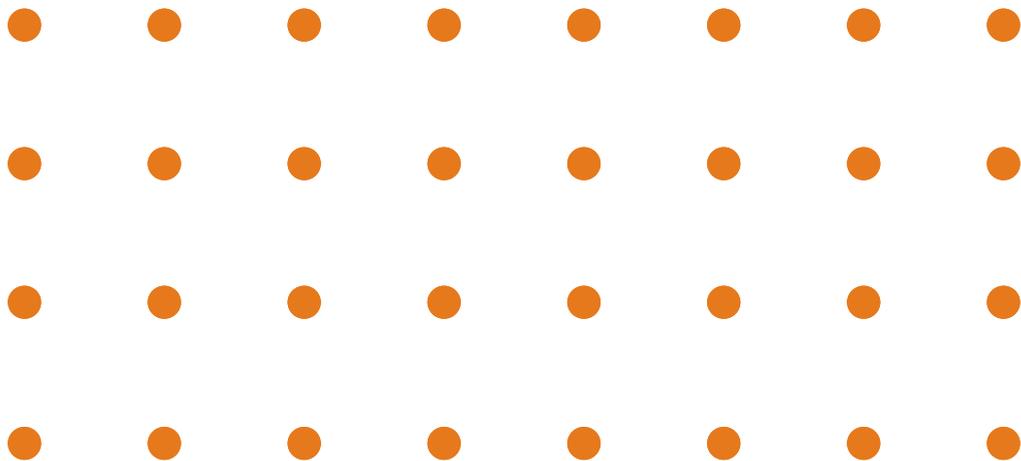
PILOT PROJECT

Improvement of psychological support in hromadas that provide social services for veterans of the Anti-Terrorist Operation / Joint Forces Operation Zone (ATO/JFO)





Belarus



Throughout 2021 Solidarity Fund PL has continued to fulfil the objectives of the Solidarity with Belarus programme, announced in 2020. SFPL has supported persons repressed by Aleksandr Lukashenko's regime, human rights organisation, independent educational institutions, societal organisations and pro-democracy movements, as well as freedom of speech advocates.

Support for adaptation of Belarussians in Poland



14 667 individual consultations (on-site and online)



773 hours of Polish classes



1537 hours of education and personal growth classes for children and adolescents



Approx. 3.3 m interactions and instances of advice provided via mobile app



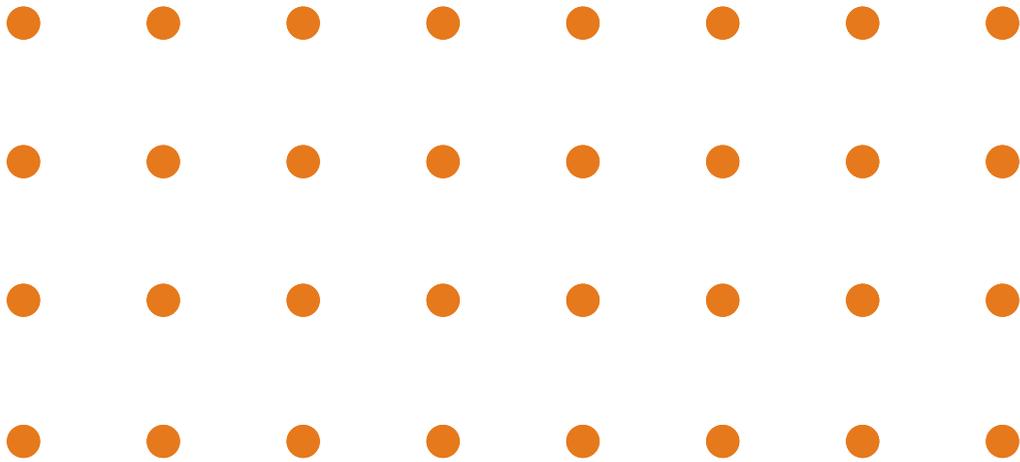
74 integration events



851 persons supported directly, either financially or in kind, including medical or legal counselling and emergency housing

IV.

Moldova



Solidarity Fund PL promotes the idea of development founded upon local resources and managed by local population as an efficient alternative to top-down management. The goal of equipping citizens of urban and rural areas with developmental tools – through engagement of local communities, authorities, and organisations – is to improve their living conditions and, in a longer term, encourage people to remain in the country, and thus curb the progressing depopulation.

In 2021 SFPL Representative Office in Chisinau has continued promoting LEADER approach for the development of rural areas and followed up on the programme for urban regeneration and development. Both of these processes have passed on to their respective institutionalisation stages, i.e. a phase in which state actors and social partners take over the responsibility for their implementation.

Apart from the two major programmes the Representative Office has continued its efforts for building trust between local communities from the two banks of the Dniester river.

Rural Development Programme

STAGE 1

establishment of dialogue between local authorities, the citizens, and local entities, designation of the areas to undergo regeneration coupled with a comprehensive diagnosis



STAGE 2

establishment of dialogue between local authorities, the citizens, and local entities, designation of the areas to undergo regeneration coupled with a comprehensive diagnosis



STAGE 3

implementation of the programme and establishment of local and national partnerships



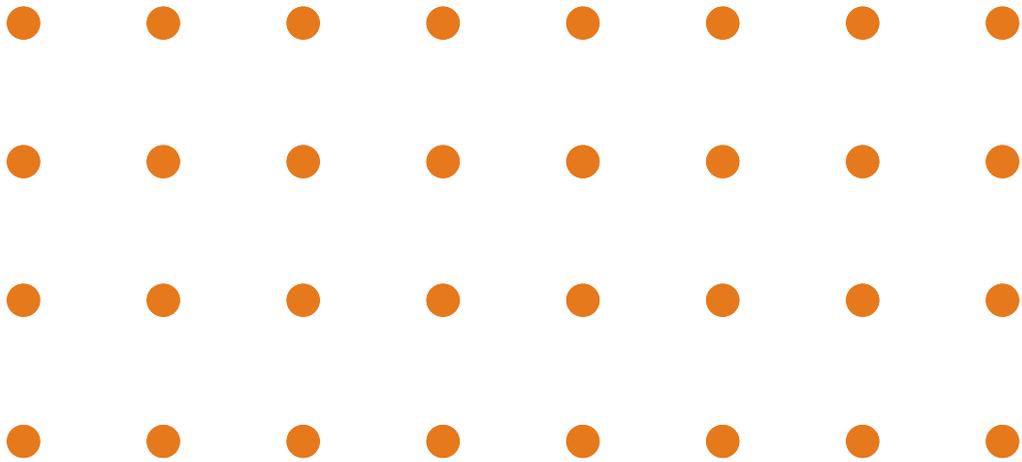
Strengthening trust between the communities on both banks of the Dniester river.

In 2020 Solidarity Fund PL concluded the *EU Access to Success: Partnership for Sustainable Community Development (A2S)* project that has continued since 2017. The main objective of the project, carried out in collaboration with Moldovan-based organisations, was to foster social development of 42 local communities in localities on both banks of the Dniester river – one controlled by Moldovan authorities and the other by Transnistria. Another goal was to improve the quality of life by supporting joint socio-economic initiatives and to use local development to foster trust between the communities.

To support partnerships existing in 2021 and strengthen the sustainability of future actions, SFPL has announced a competition under the A2S+ Small Project Funds. Three partnerships that connect both banks of the river were selected, offering eight innovative projects. Subsequently, all of these projects received support from the Representative Office.



Georgia



The public administration reform, the drafting of the new Local Self-government Code (2014), and the modification of the Law on Local self-government (2017) marked the beginning of the process of decentralisation of power. New legislative and infrastructural framework, especially the 2020-2025 Decentralisation Strategy paved the way for the citizens to participate more actively in the daily activities of local self-governments and have a say on matters important to local communities. Solidarity Fund PL supports Georgian local authorities in implementing selected aspects of the reform. In 2021 SFPL has focused on building trust between the authorities and the citizens, as well as on seeking energy efficient solutions for local administration.

Academy of Participation



Action for energy efficiency

PILOT PROJECT

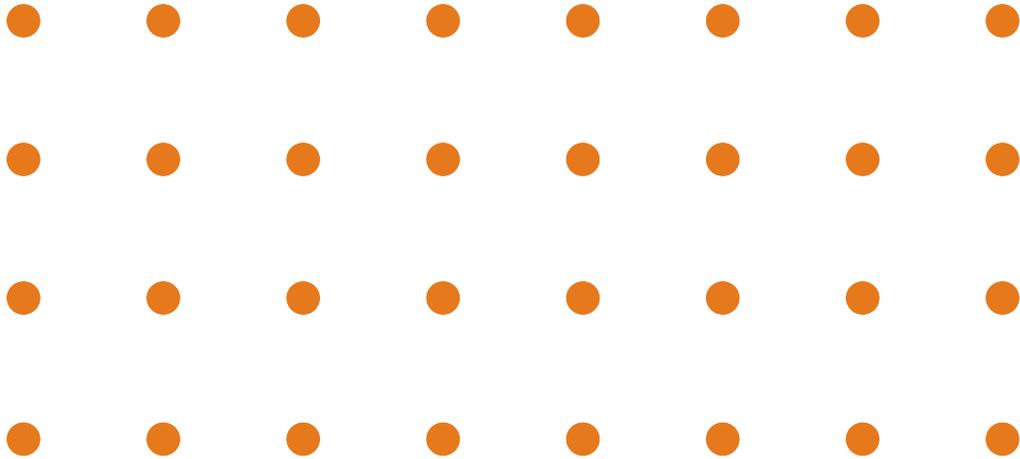
Energy efficient self-government

By signing the Association Agreement with the EU, Georgia has taken upon itself to, among other things, promote energy efficiency and the use of renewable energy sources. Energy efficiency is factored into the activities of local authorities. Solutions aimed at saving heat and electricity are not, however, common in Georgia. Upgrading the infrastructure, to increase its energy efficiency is mainly done by larger and medium-sized local self-governments. Projects focusing on renewable energy sources usually are not preceded by energy audits, hence they represent interventions rather than a systemic approach. SFPL project answers to the challenges faced by Georgian partners and is aimed at supporting local self-government of a small locality of Chokhatauri, in Guria region, in increasing energy efficiency without incurring excessive costs.



VI.

Armenia



For years Caucasus has been an area where Solidarity Fund PL has had a significant presence, as, among other things, reflected in the actions of our Georgian Representative Office in Tbilisi. In 2021 SFPL has extended its activities to include Armenia, implementing pilot aid projects for persons affected by the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. Legal education of young people is another point of focus. One of the goals is to motivate young Armenians to become actors of change in the judiciary system.

In the countries where SFPL does not have its Representative Offices, for pilot projects to succeed, it is crucial to find reliable and trustworthy local partners. SFPL has succeeded in finding such partners. Collaboration with Helsinki Association for Human Rights in Armenia (HAHR) and the Innovative Solutions for Sustainable Development (ISSD) organisation allowed to fully implement the projects.

Apart from the above-mentioned initiatives, SFPL has carried out a humanitarian project, funded by BGK, aiding persons affected by the Nagorno-Karabakh.

PILOT PROJECT

United by waste

Support for displaced persons, integration with local population, professional activation, and equipping participants with tools that allow to gain sustenance through ecologically oriented activities are the key objectives of the project.



The outcomes of several weeks-worth of participants' effort are impressive. Their works include: 63 bags made of recycled plastics and textile fabrics, 80 pillows, 100 decorative rings, 60 pieces of jewellery, 40 wooden ornaments, 275 Christmas accessories (decorations, socks), as well as handmade wine bags, tablecloths, wine and hair accessories, keyrings, candle holders, and other decorations.



PILOT PROJECT

Young people as a custodian of independent and transparent judiciary

The justice system reform is considered by to EU to be the key condition for successful democratic transformation in Armenia. Since the local government supports this reform, Solidarity Fund PL in Armenia has launched a pilot project aimed at fostering it. The project focuses on judiciary's transparency to civil society.



110 young observers have gained practical experience in monitoring courts' work



198 monitored hearings



2 languages of the report on the list of breaches and recommended changes



794 visits to courts

In-kind Assistance to Persons Affected by the War in Armenia

SFPL has organised a project to directly aid the persons affected by the conflict in Nagorno-Karabakh. Solidarity and support in the face of unexpected, difficult situations caused by conflicts and humanitarian threats represent an integral part of SFPL mission. The plight of affected Armenians could not be left unanswered. The subsidy offered by the BGK Foundation allowed for a quick and targeted action, responding to the needs of the victims of the conflict who made their way to Shirak, a north-western province of Armenia.



404 families (1774 people)



food and hygiene packs

→ 204 families (877 persons)



durable goods

→ 200 families (897 persons)



accommodation paid

→ 23 families (107 persons)



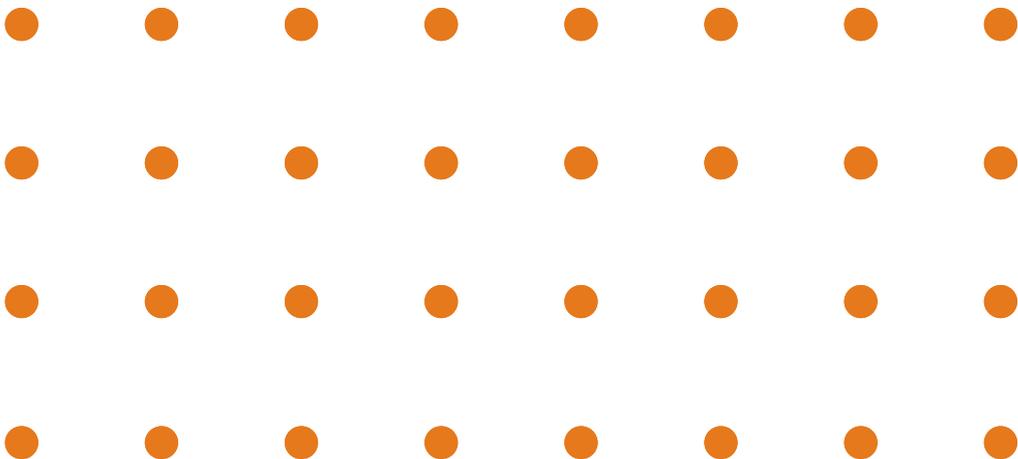
materials for
renovation of houses

→ 20 families (104 persons)



VII

Election monitoring missions



Solidarity Fund PL, in cooperation with Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Poland, has been recruiting, training, and sending Polish observers to monitoring missions. Supporting freedom is an integral part of SFPL mission. Free elections are the cornerstone of democracy and the way they are organised is an important test of performance and robustness of democratic procedures in every country. The missions are organised by the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights of the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe ([ODIHR/OBWE](#)).

Observers on 2021 missions



82 observers



**76 short-term
observers
(STO)**

**6 long-term
observers
(LTO)**



Armenia:

parliamentary elections
20 June: 2 LTO, 17 STO



Georgia:

local elections
1st round – 2 October: 14 STO;
2nd round – 30 October: 3 STO



Kyrgyzstan:

parliamentary elections
28 October: 8 STO



Moldova:

parliamentary elections
11 July: 2 LTO, 19 STO

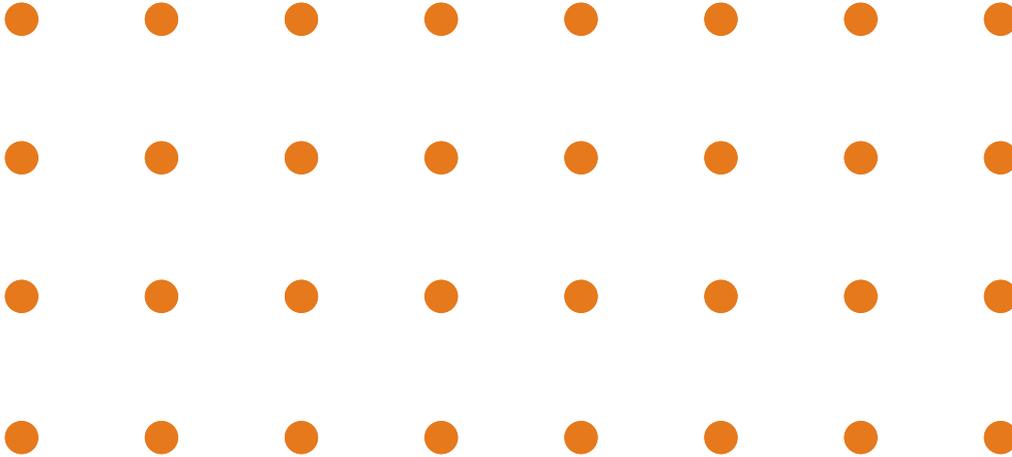


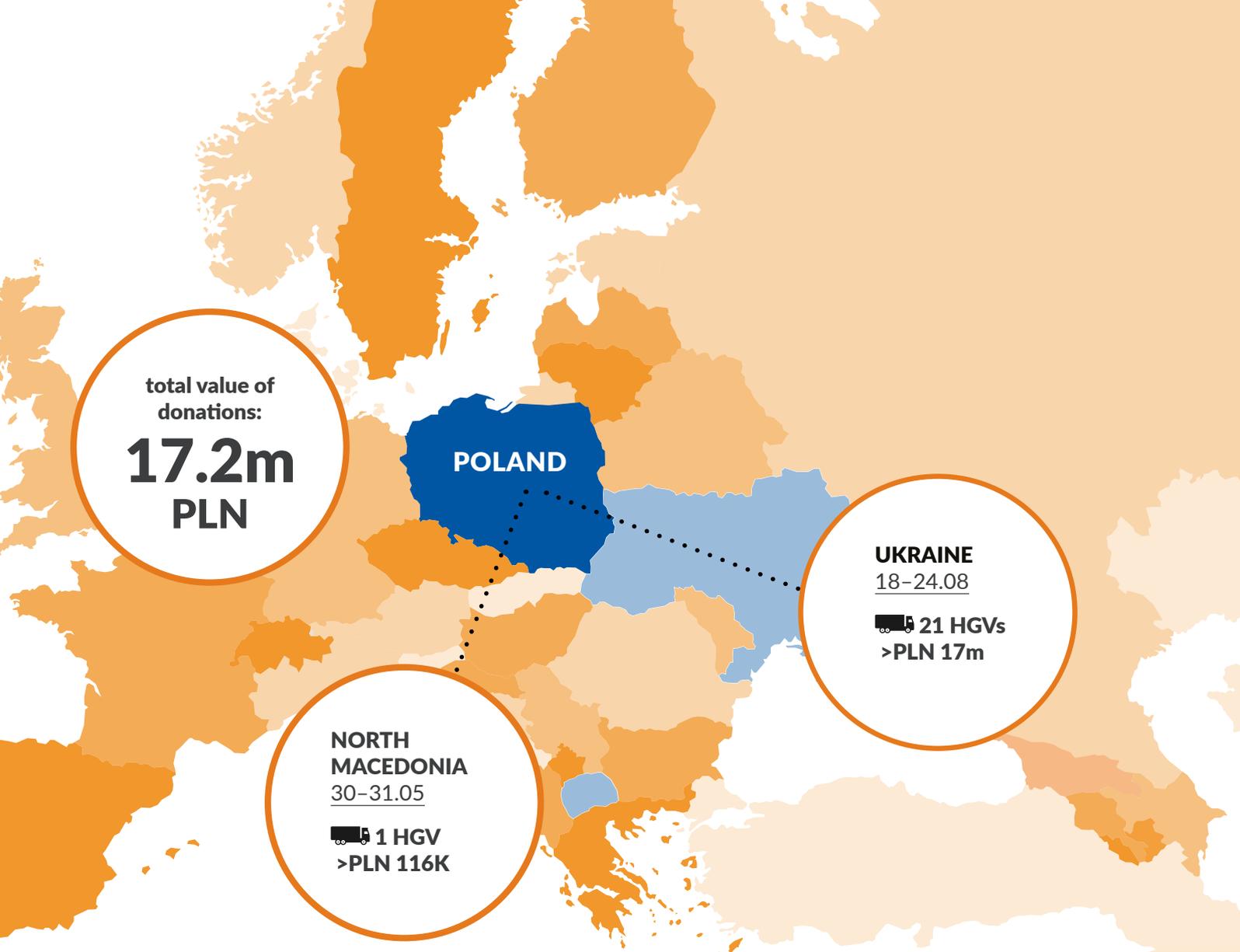
Uzbekistan:

presidential elections
24 October: 2 LTO, 15 STO

VIII

Supporting the fight against SARS-CoV-2: solidarity convoys





In 2021 Solidarity Fund PL has arranged two humanitarian aid convoys to North Macedonia and a solidarity convoy to Ukraine



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