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Discussion paper

Program Migration

Understanding the Romanian Diaspora

The missing link

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Biographies

Andra-Lucia Martinescu

Andra-Lucia Martinescu is pursuing a part-time PhD in the geopolitical history of the Black Sea at University of Cambridge in the UK. She has worked for prestigious think-tanks such as RAND Europe, the Royal United Services Institute for Security & Defence (RUSI) and the Foreign Policy Centre (London), where she is currently Research Fellow for the post-Soviet space. She was also a Resident Fellow in the British Army (RMAS), specialising in military history, operational and conflict analysis. In 2018 she founded The Diaspora Initiative (TDI) with Cătălina Moisescu, a non-profit and independent research project registered in Luxembourg, focusing on migration and diaspora analysis. Andra-Lucia addresses a variety of topics, with her most recent publications focusing on: the war in Ukraine, humanitarian and ecological impacts, concepts of resistance and resilience in a conflict zone (building on extensive field investigations). Andra is an EUDiF (EU Global Diaspora Facility) affiliated expert, and since last year, she has been coordinating humanitarian operations for a consortium of civil organisations in the UK.

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Cătălina is a PhD candidate in European Studies and International Relations at the University of Fribourg (Switzerland), focusing on the role of national and international actors in conflict resolution. Since 2018, Cătălina has been researching issues related to migration, civil society and good governance, founding together with Andra-Lucia Martinescu, The Diaspora Initiative (TDI), a non-profit and independent research project (recently registered in Luxembourg). Previously, Cătălina led the Survey of International Organisations, at the American College Program. From 2012-2014 she was research coordinator at the Luxembourg Institute for European and International Studies, overseeing the implementation of international projects and organizing high-level academic conferences. Cătălina maintained close liaison with the Permanent Representation of the European Commission in Luxembourg as well as with other diplomatic missions. In 2011 she was awarded a Government Excellence Scholarship by the Swiss Federal Government. Cătălina is UN Network on Migration's Migration Network Hub and EUDiF (EU Global Diaspora Facility) affiliated expert, and since last year, she has been coordinating humanitarian operations for a consortium of civil organisations in the UK.

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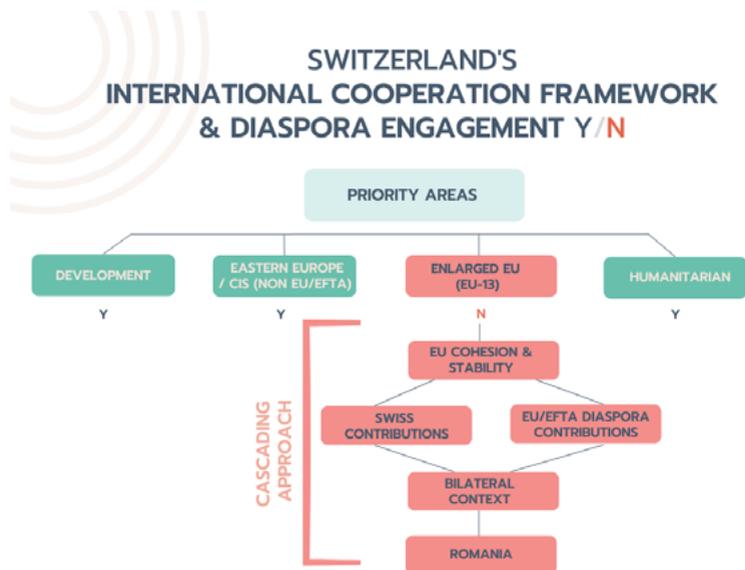
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Executive Summary

^{English} Our report builds on Switzerland's posture vis-à-vis the implementation of the European cohesion agenda, whilst scoping strategic opportunities for diaspora engagement, thereby linking a yet untapped social capital with Swiss foreign policy objectives and their areas of impact. As a departure point, we explored the bilateral context/framework between Switzerland and Romania. For instance, Swiss direct investment has been on the rise, pointing to Romania's increasingly attractive and predictable investment milieu. We then argued that a more targeted engagement of the Romanian diaspora in Switzerland in common areas of interest could bolster the impact of bilateral cooperation frameworks. To this end, we analysed the Swiss contributions to selected EU member states, with a focus on Romania. After Poland, Romania is the second largest beneficiary of the Swiss CHF 1.302 billion cohesion funding. However, the diaspora has not been actively engaged in the process, a status quo inconsistent with the current demographic trend and the international cooperation discourse that puts emphasis on diasporas. To this end, and based on a unique relational dataset, the social network analysis of diaspora organisations mapped the interactions and rapports with home and host societies. It showed not only that the number of Romanian migrants to Switzerland has grown at a steady rate over the years but also how diaspora organisations are facilitating integration, building transnational networks of cooperation centred on campaigning, reforms and participation, all activities which contribute towards European cohesion.

Understanding diasporas/migrant communities is the first step towards evidence-based policymaking. But whom to engage and how? We set forth a template that may be replicable to researching other diasporic communities (including non-EU/EFTA with their associated impact on sustainable development in countries of origin), whilst focusing our study on Romanians in Switzerland for several reasons:

- Between 2010 and 2021 the percentage increase of Romanian nationals (by citizenship) in Switzerland reached 295.1%, a trend likely to continue. Anticipating the aspirations and grievances of these strategic constituencies, whilst scoping their potential contributions strengthens the European foreign policy outlook of both countries of origin and destination.
- Romania is the second largest beneficiary of Swiss cohesion funding. Thus, we thoroughly assessed the impact of the Swiss contributions on good governance reforms, civil society, and the domestic economy (including bilateral trade), whilst presenting some ongoing challenges, particularly the high emigration rate and rapid depopulation – a trend indicative of other CEE (Central Eastern European) countries.
- Our policy solutions are focused on what can be actually achieved, building on a thorough analysis of current bilateral frameworks, and the implementation of the Swiss cohesion funding.
- Last but not least, this report is informed by three years of rigorous research, including primary data collection and interpretation, with robust quantitative and qualitative components. We also sought to put forward an actionable proposal, whilst creating opportunities for future research, translatable to other/European diasporas.



Whilst acknowledging that bilateral agreements are highly structured in terms of conceptual elaboration/ implementation, the Romanian diaspora in Switzerland can and should be engaged in (at least) a process of wider consultations. Such a reflection body would foster the exchange of valuable know-how, bolstering Swiss institutional awareness of localities and the overall sustainability of programme results for a number of reasons:

- **Improved accountability, monitoring, and evaluation**

Providing an additional measure for checks and balances will build trust in the effectiveness of funding mechanisms and encourage civic participation as well as reporting capabilities (transparency). There is still pervasive mistrust in Romania's public institutions and access to funding is often associated with bureaucratic hurdles or patronage which dissuades local NGOs from applying. Dispelling these perceptions requires a grassroots approach whereby diaspora representatives mediate an understanding within their communities of such opportunities, imparting know-how and provisional assistance.

- **Local intelligence and improved programme outreach**

The diaspora has direct knowledge of issues affecting local communities of origin and can provide insights regarding local needs, or problematic areas where investment can be effectively targeted. Demonstrably, the most deprived, low-income, and low-productivity regions are affected by the highest emigration rates. Engaging diaspora organisations in consultations may expand access to Swiss programs for other actors (local charities, schools, NGOs, and local public administrations), who may not be sufficiently informed about funding opportunities. Therefore, an inclusive framework premised on diaspora engagement will help ensure that funds reach those communities in most need.

- **Knowledge Transfers / Information Ecosystems**
Building on existing diaspora networks and their local/regional connections in the country of origin would streamline the flow of information, know-how and skills, in an institutionalised manner. Diaspora professional associations, communities of expertise, practitioners, and academic networks from abroad engage in informal twinning programmes (similar initiatives are already in place) and partnership clusters with a unique capacity to reverse brain drain and drive innovation. Moreover, diaspora knowledge flows play a critical role in encouraging specialised human capital development (skilled labour) in countries of origin.

Deutsch In dieser Publikation untersuchen wir, wie Diaspora- Populationen im Rahmen der Schweizer Umsetzung der europäischen Kohäsionsagenda in die Stärkung der innereuropäischen Kohäsion und Stabilität einbezogen werden können. So legen wir ungenutztes Sozialkapital offen, das die aussenpolitischen Zielsetzungen der Schweiz mit deren Wirkungsbereichen verknüpft. Als Ausgangspunkt haben wir den bilateralen Rahmen zwischen der Schweiz und Rumänien untersucht. Zum Beispiel haben die Schweizer Direktinvestitionen zugenommen, was auf ein zunehmend attraktives und berechenbares Investitionsklima in Rumänien hinweist. Wir argumentieren anschliessend, dass eine gezieltere Einbindung der rumänischen Diaspora in der Schweiz in gemeinsame Interessensbereiche die Wirkung bilateraler Kooperationsrahmen stärken könnte. Zu diesem Zweck haben wir die Schweizer Beiträge zu ausgewählten EU-Mitgliedstaaten analysiert, wobei der Schwerpunkt auf Rumänien liegt. Nach Polen ist Rumänien der zweitgrößte Empfänger der schweizerischen Kohäsionsfinanzierung im Umfang von 1,302 Milliarden CHF. Allerdings wurde die Diaspora bisher nicht aktiv in den Prozess einbezogen, was im Widerspruch zum aktuellen demografischen Trend und dem Diskurs zur internationalen Zusammenarbeit steht, Diasporas zunehmend in den Mittelpunkt zu rücken. Zu diesem Zweck haben wir anhand eines einzigartigen relationalen Datensatzes eine soziale Netzwerkanalyse von Diasporaorganisationen durchgeführt, um die Interaktionen und Beziehungen mit Heimat- und Gastgesellschaften zu erfassen. Diese Analyse zeigt nicht nur auf, dass die Anzahl der rumänischen Migrant:innen in der Schweiz im Laufe der Jahre kontinuierlich gewachsen ist, sondern auch, wie Diasporaorganisationen die Integration erleichtern und transnationale Kooperationsnetzwerke aufbauen, die sich auf Kampagnen, Reformen und Beteiligung konzentrieren – alles Aktivitäten, die zur europäischen Kohäsion beitragen.

Das Verständnis von Diasporas / Migrant:innengemeinschaften ist der erste Schritt zur evidenzbasierten Politikgestaltung. Aber wen soll man einbeziehen, und wie? Wir präsentieren ein Modell, das auf die Erforschung anderer diasporischer Gemeinschaften (einschliesslich Nicht-EU/EFTA) übertragbar sein kann, wobei deren Auswirkungen auf nachhaltige Entwicklung in Herkunftsländern berücksichtigt werden. Gleichzeitig konzentrieren wir uns aus mehreren Gründen auf Rumän:innen in der Schweiz:

- Zwischen 2010 und 2021 stieg der Anteil rumänischer Staatsangehöriger in der Schweiz um 295,1%, ein Trend, der voraussichtlich anhalten wird. Durch die Berücksichtigung der Erwartungen und Anliegen dieser strategischen Wählergruppen und die Untersuchung ihres potenziellen Beitrags wird der europäische aussenpolitische Ausblick sowohl für Herkunftsländer als auch für Zielländer gestärkt.
- Rumänien ist der zweitgrößte Empfänger der schweizerischen Kohäsionsfinanzierung. Daher haben wir den Einfluss des Schweizer Beitrags auf Reformen im Bereich der guten Regierungsführung, der Zivilgesellschaft und der heimischen Wirtschaft (einschliesslich des bilateralen Handels) bewertet und dabei einige laufende Herausforderungen aufgezeigt, insbesondere die hohe Auswanderungsrate und die schnelle Bevölkerungsabnahme – ein Trend, der auch für andere Länder in Mittel- und Osteuropa kennzeichnend ist.
- Unsere politischen Handlungsempfehlungen konzentrieren sich darauf, was tatsächlich erreicht werden kann. Sie bauen auf einer vertieften Analyse der aktuellen bilateralen Rahmenbedingungen und der Umsetzung der schweizerischen Kohäsionsfinanzierung auf.
- Nicht zuletzt liegt diesem Bericht drei Jahre rigorose Forschung zugrunde, einschliesslich der Erhebung und Interpretation von Primärdaten mit robusten quantitativen und qualitativen Komponenten. Wir legen einen umsetzbaren Vorschlag vor, der zukünftige Forschungsmöglichkeiten eröffnet und auf andere europäische Diasporas übertragen werden kann.

Zwar sind die bilateralen Abkommen in Bezug auf die konzeptionelle Ausarbeitung/Umsetzung stark strukturiert, doch kann und sollte die rumänische Diaspora in der Schweiz (zumindest) in einen breiten Konsultationsprozess eingebunden werden. Ein solches Reflexionsgremium würde den Austausch von wertvollem Know-how fördern, das Bewusstsein der Schweizer Institutionen für die lokalen Gegebenheiten stärken und die Nachhaltigkeit der Programmergebnisse aus mehreren Gründen insgesamt verbessern:

- **Verbesserte Rechenschaftspflicht, Überwachung und Bewertung**

Die Schaffung einer zusätzlichen Massnahme zur Kontrolle und Balance wird das Vertrauen in die Effektivität der Finanzierungsmechanismen stärken und die Beteiligung der Bürger:innen sowie die Berichterstattungsfähigkeiten (Transparenz) fördern. In Rumänien herrscht immer noch weit verbreitetes Misstrauen gegenüber öffentlichen Institutionen und der Zugang zu Finanzierungsmitteln wird oft mit bürokratischen Hürden oder Protektionismus in Verbindung gebracht, was lokale NGOs davon abhält, sich zu bewerben. Um dies zu ändern, ist ein Grassroots-Ansatz erforderlich, bei dem Diaspora-Vertreter:innen innerhalb ihrer Gemeinschaften ein Verständnis für solche Möglichkeiten und Fachwissen vermitteln und vorläufige Unterstützung anbieten.

- **Lokale Expertise und erhöhte Wirkung der Programme**

Die Diaspora hat direkte Kenntnisse über die Probleme, die lokale Herkunftsgemeinschaften betreffen, und kann Einblicke in lokale Bedürfnisse oder problematische Bereiche geben, in die effizient investiert werden kann. Nachweislich sind die am stärksten benachteiligten Regionen mit niedrigem Einkommen und geringer Produktivität von den höchsten Auswanderungsraten betroffen. Die Einbindung von Diaspora-Organisationen in Konsultationen kann den Zugang zu Schweizer Programmen für andere Akteure (lokale Wohltätigkeitsorganisationen, Schulen, NGOs und lokale Verwaltungen) erweitern, die möglicherweise nicht ausreichend über Finanzierungsmöglichkeiten informiert sind. Daher wird ein inklusiver Rahmen, der auf der Einbindung der Diaspora beruht, dazu beitragen, dass die Mittel jene Gemeinschaften erreichen, die sie am dringendsten benötigen.

- **Wissenstransfer / Informationsökosysteme**
Aufbauend auf bestehenden Diaspora-Netzwerken und deren lokalen/ regionalen Verbindungen im Herkunftsland würde der Informationsfluss von Fachwissen und Fähigkeiten auf institutionalisierte Weise erleichtert. Diaspora-Berufsverbände, Fachgemeinschaften, Praktizierende und akademische Netzwerke aus dem Ausland beteiligen sich an informellen Partnerprogrammen (ähnliche Initiativen sind bereits vorhanden) und Partnerschaftsclustern mit einer einzigartigen Fähigkeit, den Braindrain umzukehren und Innovationen voranzutreiben. Darüber hinaus spielen Wissensflüsse der Diaspora eine entscheidende Rolle bei der Entwicklungsförderung von spezialisiertem Humankapital (qualifizierte Arbeitskräfte) in den Herkunftsländern.

Français

Notre rapport s'appuie sur la position de la Suisse vis-à-vis de la mise en œuvre de l'agenda européen de cohésion, tout en identifiant des opportunités stratégiques pour l'engagement de la diaspora, reliant ainsi un capital social encore inexploité aux objectifs de la politique étrangère suisse et à leurs domaines d'impact. Comme point de départ, nous avons exploré le contexte/cadre bilatéral entre la Suisse et la Roumanie. Par exemple, les investissements directs suisses sont en hausse, ce qui indique que la Roumanie est un milieu d'investissement de plus en plus attrayant et stable. Nous avons ensuite soutenu qu'un engagement plus ciblé de la diaspora roumaine en Suisse dans des domaines d'intérêt commun pourrait renforcer l'impact des cadres de coopération bilatérale. À cette fin, nous avons analysé les contributions suisses à certains Etats membres de l'UE, en particulier la Roumanie. Après la Pologne, la Roumanie est le deuxième plus grand bénéficiaire du financement de cohésion suisse de 1,302 milliard de francs suisses. Cependant, la diaspora n'a pas été activement engagée dans le processus, un statu quo incompatible avec la tendance démographique actuelle et le discours sur la coopération internationale qui met l'accent sur les diasporas. Sur la base d'un ensemble unique de données relationnelles, l'analyse du réseau social des organisations de la diaspora a permis de cartographier les interactions et les rapports avec les sociétés d'origine et d'accueil. Elle a montré non seulement que le nombre de migrant·e·s roumain·e·s en Suisse a augmenté à un rythme régulier au fil des ans, mais aussi que les organisations de la diaspora facilitent l'intégration, construisent des réseaux transnationaux de coopération axés sur les campagnes, les réformes et la participation, autant d'activités qui contribuent à la cohésion européenne.

Comprendre les diasporas/communautés de migrant·e·s est la première étape vers l'élaboration de politiques scientifiquement fondées. Mais qui impliquer et comment ? Nous avons établi un modèle qui pourrait être reproduit pour étudier d'autres communautés diasporiques (y compris les pays non membres de l'UE/AELE avec leur impact sur le développement durable dans les pays d'origine), tout en concentrant notre étude sur les Roumain·e·s en Suisse pour plusieurs raisons :

- Entre 2010 et 2021, le pourcentage d'augmentation des ressortissants roumain·e·s (par nationalité) en Suisse a atteint 295,1%, une tendance qui devrait se poursuivre. Anticiper les aspirations et les points sensibles de ces groupes stratégiques, tout en évaluant leurs contributions potentielles, renforce les perspectives de la politique étrangère européenne des pays d'origine et de destination.
- La Roumanie est le deuxième plus grand bénéficiaire des fonds de cohésion suisses. Nous avons donc évalué de manière approfondie l'impact des contributions suisses sur les réformes de bonne gouvernance, la société civile et l'économie nationale (y compris le commerce bilatéral), tout en présentant certains défis permanents, en particulier le taux d'émigration élevés et le dépeuplement rapide - une tendance indicative d'autres pays d'Europe centrale et orientale.
- Nos solutions politiques sont axées sur ce qui peut être effectivement réalisé, sur la base d'une analyse approfondie des cadres bilatéraux actuels et de la mise en œuvre du financement de la cohésion en Suisse.
- Enfin, ce rapport est le fruit de trois années de recherches rigoureuses, y compris la collecte et l'interprétation de données primaires, avec des composantes quantitatives et qualitatives solides. Nous avons également cherché à présenter une proposition réalisable, tout en créant des opportunités pour de futures recherches, transposables à d'autres diasporas/européennes.

Tout en reconnaissant que les accords bilatéraux sont très structurés en termes d'élaboration conceptuelle/de mise en œuvre, la diaspora roumaine en Suisse peut et doit être engagée dans (au moins) un processus de consultations plus larges. Un tel organe de réflexion favoriserait l'échange d'un savoir-faire précieux, renforçant la connaissance institutionnelle suisse des localités et la durabilité globale des résultats du programme pour un certain nombre de raisons :

- **Amélioration de la responsabilité, du suivi et de l'évaluation**
La mise en place d'une mesure supplémentaire de contrôle et d'équilibre renforcera la confiance dans l'efficacité des

mécanismes de financement et encouragera la participation civique ainsi que la capacité à rendre compte (transparence). La méfiance à l'égard des institutions publiques roumaines reste omniprésente et l'accès au financement est souvent associé à des obstacles bureaucratiques ou au favoritisme, ce qui dissuade les ONG locales de se porter candidates. Pour dissiper ces perceptions, il est nécessaire de se rapprocher de la source de cette méfiance. Les représentant·e·s de la diaspora pourraient aider leurs communautés à comprendre ces opportunités, en leur transmettant un savoir-faire et une assistance provisoire.

- **L'intelligence locale et l'amélioration de la portée des programmes**
 La diaspora a une connaissance directe des problèmes qui affectent les communautés locales d'origine et peut fournir des informations sur les besoins locaux ou les zones problématiques où l'investissement peut être ciblé de manière efficace. Il est évident que les régions les plus défavorisées, à faible revenu et à faible productivité sont touchées par les taux d'émigration les plus élevés. L'implication des organisations de la diaspora dans les consultations peut élargir l'accès aux programmes suisses pour d'autres acteurs (organisations caritatives locales, écoles, ONG et administrations publiques locales), qui ne sont peut-être pas suffisamment informés des possibilités de financement. Par conséquent, un cadre inclusif fondé sur l'engagement de la diaspora contribuera à garantir que les fonds atteignent les communautés qui en ont le plus besoin.
- **Transferts de connaissances / écosystèmes d'information**
 S'appuyer sur les réseaux de diasporas existants et leurs connexions locales/régionales dans le pays d'origine permettrait de rationaliser le flux d'informations, de savoir-faire et de compétences, d'une manière institutionnalisée. Les associations professionnelles de la diaspora, les communautés d'expertise, les praticien·ne·s et les réseaux universitaires de l'étranger s'engagent dans des programmes de jumelage informels (des initiatives similaires sont déjà en place) et des groupements de partenariat qui ont la capacité unique d'inverser la fuite des cerveaux et de stimuler l'innovation. En outre, les flux de connaissances de la diaspora jouent un rôle essentiel en encourageant le développement d'un capital humain spécialisé (main-d'œuvre qualifiée) dans les pays d'origine.

Introduction

Policy issue, analytical approach, case-study selection

This report argues there is scope in expanding Switzerland's approach to diaspora engagement and migration, policies which currently target development in the Global South and non-EU/EFTA countries. Within the same overarching international cooperation framework, Switzerland's European foreign policy is centred on cohesion and stability, aimed at reducing social and economic disparities across an enlarged EU, through a gamut of financial instruments disbursed to thirteen (13) EU member states (the majority from Eastern Central Europe) - the Swiss contributions.

However, despite a significant intra-European mobility, and Switzerland's ongoing support towards European cohesion and stability agendas, there is no mention of EU/EFTA diasporas in the programmatic documents governing the Swiss contributions to selected member states, nor in the overall international cooperation strategy focused on the EU.

Whilst diasporas are widely acknowledged as development actors with a transformative impact in their countries of origin there is scope in expanding this framework to other foreign policy areas, such as the reduction of economic and social disparities across the EU (the cohesion and stability agendas), which Switzerland actively supports.

The cascading approach provides a general overview of Switzerland's priority areas of cooperation (migration, development, cohesion contributions etc.), which we cross-referenced with themes that mention or include diasporas as strategic stakeholders. After

identifying the policy gap (missing link), we zoomed in further on those areas which do not engage diasporas, particularly Switzerland's European foreign policy targeting cohesion and stability, and its main funding instrument. The Swiss contributions are briefly surveyed, then examined within a bilateral context to capture impact, measurable benefits over the years, as well as ongoing challenges. We round up the argument by showing how diaspora contributions respond to similar objectives through civic, political, and financial remittances, albeit indirectly and in absence of being recognised as a (cohesion) stakeholder. Whereas we are acutely aware that an institutional reshuffling of migration-related programs cannot happen instantly, our policy prescriptions explore ways in which current frameworks can be tweaked and expanded to include a better-targeted diaspora engagement with a wider, more inclusive geographical outreach. Where to start?

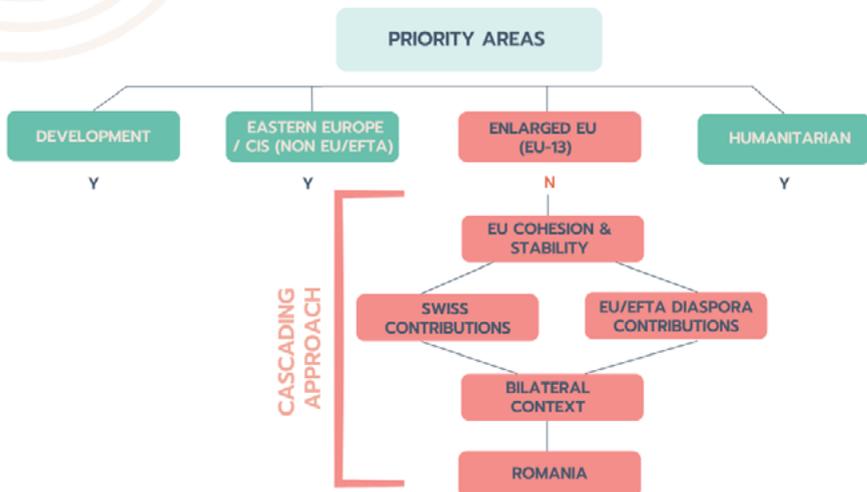
Understanding diasporas/migrant communities is the first step towards evidence-based policymaking. But whom to engage and how? A one-size-fits-all approach tackling all EU/EFTA diasporas may not be as effective, simply because each diaspora has its own particularities. Moreover, the framework agreements governing the Swiss contributions for cohesion and stability are specific to each beneficiary country, hence the bilateral contexts differ. So as not to dilute our argument, we set forth a template that may be replicable to researching other diasporic communities (including non-EU/EFTA with their associated impact on sustainable development in countries of origin), whilst focusing our study on Romanians in Switzerland for several reasons:

- Between 2010 and 2021 the percentage increase of Romanian nationals (by citizenship) in Switzerland reached 295.1%, a trend likely to continue. Anticipating the aspirations and grievances of these strategic constituencies, whilst scoping their potential contributions strengthens the European foreign policy outlook of both countries of origin and destination.
- Romania is the second largest beneficiary of Swiss cohesion funding. Thus, we thoroughly assessed the impact of the Swiss contributions on good governance reforms, civil society, and the domestic economy (including bilateral trade), whilst presenting

some ongoing challenges, particularly the high emigration rate and rapid depopulation – a trend indicative of other CEE (Central Eastern European) countries.

- Our policy solutions are focused on what can be actually achieved, building on a thorough analysis of current bilateral frameworks, and the implementation of the Swiss cohesion funding.
- Last but not least, this report is informed by three years of rigorous research, including primary data collection and interpretation, with robust quantitative and qualitative components. We also sought to put forward an actionable proposal, whilst creating opportunities for future research, translatable to other/European diasporas.

SWITZERLAND'S INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION FRAMEWORK & DIASPORA ENGAGEMENT Y/N



Structure

The report is structured into three main sections. The first explores current gaps in the Swiss foreign policy framework, suggesting a better targeted engagement of diasporas, by including the EU/EFTA resident communities and diaspora organisations active in Switzerland. To this end, deploying the Romanian diaspora in Switzerland as a case study demonstrates how diasporas effectively contribute towards European cohesion and stability. Furthermore, by exploring the Swiss cohesion contributions, within the purview of the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) and SECO (both institutions with equal rights and responsibilities in administering the funding), we show how and why should diasporas be considered when assessing and implementing this gamut of financial instruments (Swiss contributions), the cornerstone of Switzerland's European policy.

The second section delves into the case study, analysing the demography (first part) as well as the diaspora's associative environment (cooperation, impact and rapport with home and host country institutions). This approach enables an in-depth assessment of diasporic communities, on which we build our argument for better targeted diaspora engagement across different policy areas. In a nutshell, the population of Switzerland has more than doubled since the 1900s, growing from 3.3 million to 8.6 million in 2021, of which 2.2 million are foreign nationals.¹ The number of Romanian migrants to Switzerland has grown at a steady rate as well. Whereas in 2002, the Federal Office reported 3.267 permanent residents, by 2021 the population reached 29.849.

The second part focuses on how Romanians in Switzerland associate, the interactions and the overall impact of diaspora organisations and initiatives, ranging from cultural to civic and political. We also examine rapports (notably, the frequency) with public institutions from Switzerland (at federal/cantonal levels) and Romania. This is built on the assumption that diaspora organisations often act as an interface between public authorities and migrant communities (Romanian or otherwise). Using Social Network Analysis methodology, we visually mapped cooperation and distinctive forms

of interaction (their intensity and frequency over two years). Though not exhaustive, the graphs also show how Romanians and diaspora associations are anchored geographically, and which connections are more prevalent (with the country of residence or origin). This dimension attests to the nature of migration and the degree of assimilation/integration in the host society.

The third and last section of our report presents a matrix of policy recommendations, departing from the foreign policy analysis in the first part, as well as the comprehensive mapping of Romanian communities, in section two. These actionable policy prescriptions are specific to the bilateral context governing the Swiss contributions to Romania, as they explore a more targeted diaspora engagement within existing institutional frameworks. The second set of conclusions draws on the wider implications of engaging EU/EFTA diasporas showing how the integration and active participation of migrant communities in the host society, would bolster Switzerland's posture vis-à-vis the implementation of European cohesion agendas, thereby linking a yet untapped social capital with Swiss foreign policy objectives and their areas of impact.

1. The missing link: diaspora engagement for european cohesion & stability

The foreign policy implications of analysing and engaging diasporas are manifold, and this is precisely what our study aims to highlight, the pathways through which diasporic communities can contribute towards and advance the foreign policy objectives of both countries of origin and destination. In recent years, governments have been aligning their policies with the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) and turned to international bodies² to facilitate and streamline diaspora contributions for development agendas.³ Switzerland not only recognised the contextual importance of diasporas but is also amongst the very few with a whole-of-government approach to development cooperation.⁴ Such progress is indeed commendable and reflects a necessary policy response to the complex realities and motivations surrounding migration.

However, considering the vast intra-European mobility, and the fact that EU member states advance policies/engagement strategies for their own nationals living abroad, the interconnections between European (EU/EFTA) diasporas and their impact on cohesion and stability agendas remain underexplored at best. It is not within the remit of our study to delve into questions of EU citizenship or comparative diaspora governance. Instead, we focus on three interrelated issues: Swiss European foreign policy, bilateral relations, and diaspora engagement, placed within the overarching framework of European cohesion and stability.

1.1. Contextual assessment

Switzerland totals a population of 8.646.000 (2021). According to the Federal Statistical Office, in 2021 almost 40% (2.890.0000) of permanent residents aged 15 and over had a migratory background. Out of this, approximately 25% do not have Swiss nationality, while 15% are Swiss citizens. More than 80% of the permanent foreign residents are European, mainly from EU/EFTA member states, including Italy (14.6%), Germany (13.9%), Portugal (11.4%), France (6.7%), and Romania (1.9%). The Asian, Oceanic, African, American, and stateless residents represent 17.3% of the total foreign resident population.⁵ As indicated by the OECD, among the top 15 countries of origin for newcomers in Switzerland (2019), Romania registered the highest increase (2100).⁶

Analysing Switzerland's international cooperation framework we notice four priority areas of engagement, with a regional as well as global focus. The European cohesion and stability agenda encompasses the Swiss contributions to the enlarged EU, the funding mechanism disbursed to 13 member states⁷ aimed at reducing economic and social disparities across the EU (amongst other specific objectives). The matrix below summarises which areas of cooperation include, mention, or engage diasporas as a stakeholder.

Demographic data paints a rather interesting landscape when juxtaposed with the Swiss foreign policy approach towards diasporas. The Swiss State Secretariat for Migration (SEM) is the institution mandated to oversee the migration dossier, including diasporas and the Swiss foreign policy on migration implementation.⁸ The SDC's Global Programme Migration and Development (GPMD) "helps migrants contribute to sustainable development (...) and supports initiatives carried out by diaspora organisations."⁹ However, although the majority of the permanent foreign residents are EU/EFTA citizens, most of the SDC's current diaspora projects have an external focus, geographically directed towards the Global South or non-EU/EFTA countries.¹⁰

Priority Engagement Areas	Geographical Focus	Diaspora Engagement
Bilateral Development Cooperation	Africa, Asia, Latin America, Eastern Europe and the CIS, the Middle East, and North Africa	Y
Cooperation with Eastern Europe and CIS	Eastern Europe and the CIS*	Y
Contributions to the Enlarged EU	Enlarged EU (EU-13)	N
Humanitarian Aid	Global	Y

Matrix 1 - * Non-EU/EFTA countries, including the Republic of Moldova, Ukraine, Serbia, Albania, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Kosovo, as well as regions: South Caucasus & Central Asia (Cooperation with Eastern Europe and CIS priority engagement area).

The infographic summarises demographic data showing the percentage of EU/EFTA and Other European migrant populations from the total of permanent foreign residents in Switzerland (2021), supporting the argument that a targeted engagement of EU/EFTA diasporas may act as a bilateral driver towards an effective implementation of the Swiss contributions.

The pie chart on the following page exemplifies the distribution of cohesion funding among the EU-13 beneficiaries (2022).

In contrast with current demographics, the Swiss diaspora policy focuses on a limited segment of the immigrant population, leaving out most diasporas (and diaspora organisations), despite their measurable impact on cohesion and stability agendas, both at home and in the countries of destination - a potential that remains yet (fully) untapped.

FOREIGN RESIDENTS & COHESION FUNDS

2021

8.738.791

2.244.200

Permanent foreign resident population in Switzerland in 2021

1.441.200

EU/EFTA Permanent foreign resident population in Switzerland in 2021

1.855.000

EU/EFTA & Rest of Europe Permanent foreign resident population in Switzerland in 2021

FOREIGN POPULATION:

26%

of the total Swiss population

EU/EFTA POPULATION

16%

of the total Swiss population

64%

of the total permanent foreign resident population in Switzerland

EU/EFTA & Rest of Europe

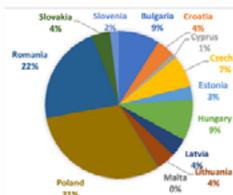
83%

of the total permanent foreign resident population in Switzerland



9.7%

Permanent foreign resident population in Switzerland of the EU-13 countries (cohesion funds receivers) of the total EU/EFTA



CHF 1.302 BILLION

2ND SWISS COHESION CONTRIBUTION (2022)

1.2. The bilateral framework

“The Swiss are terrified by people who move too quickly and by political gossip. Nor do they like dust being thrown in their eyes. So, let’s stick with our discreet diplomatic practice and serious diplomacy, which is not suited to spectacular visits.”¹¹ Against all odds and established foreign policy ethos, cabinet minister Willy Spühler undertook the first visit behind the Iron Curtain, on 18 April 1969, in Bucharest. At the time, the communist apparatus was engaged in a brutal domestic repression whilst, externally, presenting itself as independent from Moscow, a smokescreen that misled Western powers into pursuing a limited détente. The visit, however, marked a significant change in the Swiss foreign policy outlook and opened the path to Switzerland’s participation in the conference on security and cooperation in Europe (CSCE). This format would eventually expose the plight of captive nations behind the Iron Curtain and the grievous human rights abuses to which they were subjected, paving the way to freedom decades later. Worth reminding is the fact that Switzerland became a safe haven for Romania’s political refugees who fled totalitarian repression, an informal bilateral bridge that determinedly solidified Romania’s post-Soviet transition and European standing. Then as now, transnational communities of solidarity advocated not only for liberation but also for democratic rule, using foreign policy levers to influence governments into supporting their cause.

For what is worth, placing the Swiss European policy in a historical context of bilateral relations helps broaden our understanding of current cooperation frameworks, their effectiveness, and Switzerland’s commitment towards Romania, the region and Europe as a whole. We commence by providing a brief overview of Swiss financial contributions of which Romania is the second largest beneficiary among EU-13 and their overall impact across thematic areas. The following section identifies key challenges and limitations that, if left unaddressed, may hinder the effectiveness of cohesion/stability agendas in the long term, and potentially be detrimental to Swiss foreign policy interests. Romania has the highest emigration rate in the region, with a population of over 4 million (by modest

estimates)¹² residing outside the country, which has much to do with domestic reforms failing to deliver as well as post-accession EU mobility opportunities. Notwithstanding such negative demographic trends, we show how the Romanian diaspora actively contributed to domestic growth, albeit from abroad, briefly surveying its impact on *de facto* cohesion and stability (i.e.: financial, political, and civic remittances), despite failing to be recognised as a stakeholder in both.

Switzerland's European foreign policy, and contributions to the enlarged EU focus on several activities and corresponding themes (table below).

Activities	Themes
Economic Development	Improving infrastructure Promoting trade and investment Supporting SMEs
Governance and institutional development	Promoting good governance Strengthening civil society Supporting rule of law
Environment and sustainable development	Improving energy efficiency Reducing greenhouse gas emissions Promoting sustainable agriculture

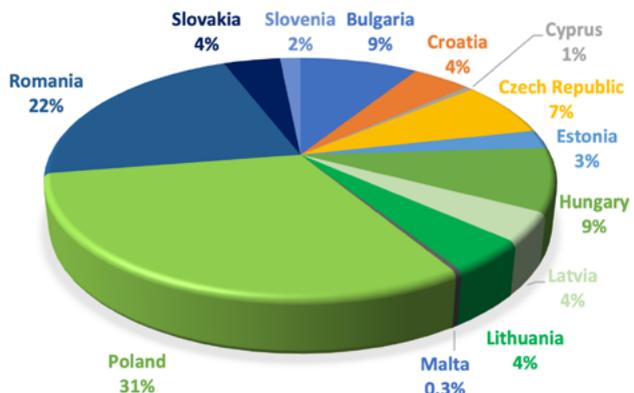
Table 1 – Swiss contributions for EU cohesion & stability – activities and themes.

We argue that a deeper, more targeted engagement of the Romanian diaspora in Switzerland builds on a long-standing bilateral tradition that places communities at the heart of foreign policy. Moreover, our main policy prescriptions focus precisely on this aspect: can the Romanian diaspora maximise the impact and implementation of the Swiss contributions, effectively acting as a facilitator, and if so in which foreign policy areas?

1.3. The swiss contributions – a bilateral driver for cohesion and stability

As Europe is currently facing a profound paradigmatic shift prompted by Russia's invasion of Ukraine, the imperatives of reaffirming shared values¹³ as well as strengthening European cohesion and stability, are at present more momentous than ever.

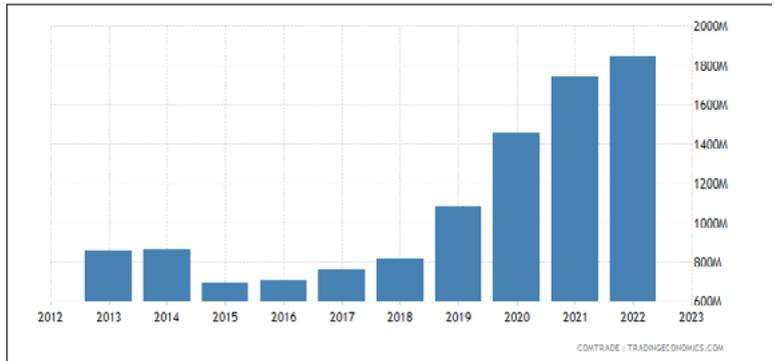
Despite a lingering stalemate in negotiations for a framework agreement, Switzerland continues to play an active role in fostering European cohesion and stability through a gamut of financial instruments (contributions). Coordinated at a federal level by the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) and the State Secretariat for Economic Affairs (SECO), the contributions remain a central component of Switzerland's European policy, strengthening bilateral cooperation with partner countries.¹⁴ While the relationship with the EU is 'complicated', a term often used by media pundits, this ongoing commitment amply shows a unity of scope between Switzerland and EU institutions as well as between Switzerland and EU partner states benefiting from enlargement and cohesion funding. The graph below renders the distribution of the second Swiss contribution by receiving member states (EU-13).



After Poland, Romania is the second largest beneficiary of Swiss funding, a robust assistance framework that since 2009 has helped consolidate economic growth, social security, environmental protection, and civil society to name a few.¹⁵ The first enlargement contribution (2009-2019) led to the implementation of 17 projects and 7 thematic funds. More than 100 civil society organisations (CSOs) also benefited from Swiss financial support, aimed at strengthening organisational capacities, public outreach, and civic participation. The Bilateral Framework Agreement for the second contribution was signed in December 2022, by the two Presidents (Swiss and Romanian) and reinforces common interests across economic development, energy efficiency, sustainability, and social integration.¹⁶

In terms of *de facto* impact, the Swiss contributions produced a stable bilateral framework, which in turn enabled the flow of good governance norms (i.e.: accountability, transparency), in a country that, much like its regional counterparts, has struggled with a challenging democratic transition, entrenched corruption, and a continuous brain drain (substantial emigration). While measurable progress has been achieved in several thematic areas, social and economic disparities endure (i.e.: rural-urban divides, low productivity, fiscal uncertainty), largely exacerbated by negative demographic trends.¹⁷ Top-down domestic reforms lack substantive progress in critical domains such as healthcare, education, institutional digitalisation, and public administration. However, even if government reforms appear slow-paced, there are islands of good practice with a vast outreach and transformative community impact, which the Swiss financial contributions not only enabled but also determinedly empowered.¹⁸

Broad civil society coalitions, as well as grassroots civic initiatives, gained significantly from the knowledge transfers and regular exchanges with Swiss experts. This transnational diffusion of norms cemented advocacy networks and emboldened the participation of civil society actors in decision-making processes of consequence, for instance: sectoral digitalised healthcare, assistance provision to vulnerable groups in deprived areas,¹⁹ a bilateral cooperation platform for businesses,²⁰ local community development,²¹ etc. Moreover, “Switzerland is perceived as a barometer abroad,”²² an indicator of soft power projection, considering the whole-of-society approach,



which fosters high civic engagement and institutional transparency in decision-making processes (both features of Switzerland's semi-direct democratic system).

At a macro-level, economic and trade indicators fare even better, pointing to enhanced cooperation in terms of Swiss investment opportunities and export flows. According to UN international trade data, in 2022 Switzerland's exports to Romania amounted to \$1.84 billion, while historical trends show a steady increase over the years (*Figure 2 above*).²³ Swiss direct investment has been on the rise, with the highest proportion registered in 2020, at CHF 3.6 billion (for categories such as services, pharmaceuticals, and manufacturing).²⁴ These optimistic trends in bilateral relations also point to Romania's increasingly attractive and predictable investment milieu.²⁵

This contextual assessment indicates positive trends in key strategic foreign policy areas, beneficial for both countries. However, we argue the missing link is a more targeted engagement of the Romanian diaspora in Switzerland in common areas of interest, which could potentially bolster the impact of bilateral cooperation frameworks. As previously mentioned, challenges to the implementation of cohesion and stability agendas endure, in some measure compounded by negative demographic trends affecting Romania and most CEE countries: high emigration rates (brain drain, skilled labour), rampant domestic depopulation, and ageing.²⁶

In other words, despite palpable progress in numerous sectors, including better living standards, Romanian nationals consistently opt to migrate abroad, in search of labour-related opportunities, access to superior public services and social security, or as our

report shows a stable, predictable, and meritocratic socio-political system. In Switzerland alone, immigration rates from Romania increased year by year.²⁷ Whereas in 2002 the Federal Office reported 3.267 permanent residents by 2022 the population size had reached 26.453 (an exponential increase).²⁸ Overall, according to OECD estimates, Romania registered the highest emigration rate among the ten main origin countries of emigrants living in OECD countries, a significant proportion being a highly educated/skilled cohort.²⁹ By some conservative estimates, one in five working-age Romanians now reside abroad.³⁰ Needless to mention, what is often considered an 'exodus'³¹ (and rightly so) has occurred in a context of peace and relative stability. Conversely, repatriation/return figures are significantly lower, though polling shows one in four Romanians wishes to return after having lived or worked abroad.³²

1.4. The romanian diaspora – contributions to cohesion and stability (impact)

So what? It becomes evident, the Romanian diaspora forms a strategic constituency not only in the country of origin, through its ability to cast a ballot in most domestic elections (except local),³³ but also in destination countries where Romanian communities became prominent in terms of demographic presence and political/institutional representation. Moreover, in 2020 remittances³⁴ sent from abroad surpassed the level of foreign direct investments, with a 3.2% share (approx.) of the GDP (in excess of EUR 3.4 billion), registering the highest volume amongst EU-28 member states.³⁵ By and large, the diaspora has become one if not the leading ‘foreign investor’ in Romania’s economy and economic revival following a crippling pandemic.³⁶ Unsurprisingly, the uppermost remittances flowed from Germany, Italy, Spain, and the United Kingdom.³⁷ It is worth noting that in 2021, Romanians living in Switzerland sent over EUR 61 million,³⁸ which is by no means negligible given the much smaller demographic compared to other destination countries.

COMPARATIVE SERIES

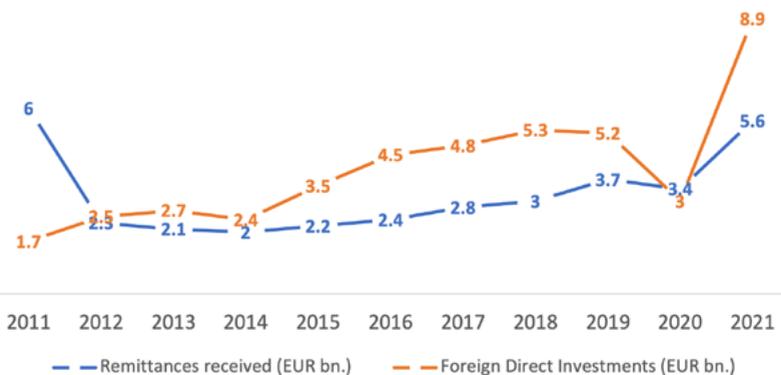


Figure 4 -Compiled from Eurostat, World Bank and Romania's National Bank (data)

Such contributions largely materialise in higher domestic consumption rates,³⁹ but partly also indicate a flourishing transnational entrepreneurship, and opportunities for more targeted, constructive investment, should appropriate policy frameworks permit. In the same way that migrant remittances contribute (as an additional source of income per household) to poverty reduction in developing countries,⁴⁰ a similar logic applies to economic growth (increase in the GDP and GDP per capita), especially for an upper-middle-income country such as Romania. Between 2007 and 2022, the impact of remittances on domestic growth was visible in rising household incomes, improved living standards and relative community welfare, despite fluctuations in yearly volumes.⁴¹ Yet much remains to be addressed by way of substantive reforms. As we shall further explore in the policy recommendations matrix, an integrated, programmatic approach to diaspora investment may facilitate a more sustainable growth model in the long term.

Comparatively higher voting participation abroad indicates a civically active diaspora,⁴² an alternative civil society, capable of influencing political outcomes in countries of origin and destination. Over the years, the diaspora's civic mobilisation has been sporadic, but impactful, often coinciding with electoral cycles or reactive to certain political dynamics (mostly centred on Romania).⁴³ However, transnational campaigning initiatives and diaspora advocacy networks premised on domestic reform agendas have become more frequent/long-term oriented. As the following sections argue, this trend is also visible in Switzerland where diasporic advocacy aims to shape both home and host country politics.

A survey conducted by the Swiss National Centre of Competence in Research (NCCR), purports to measure the affective component and migrant attachment to Switzerland and the countries of origin. Although Romanian nationals are included in the Eastern EU/EFTA cohort of respondents, the findings are quite revealing: 63% reported strong feelings of attachment to their country of origin and an even higher proportion (74%) to Switzerland.⁴⁴ Our analysis reinforces this assumption by exploring how the diaspora is anchored in the two geographies of origin and destination, which largely mirrors the associative patterns and civic agency of Romanian communities abroad. In other words, civic engagement in home country politics and

participation in the public sphere of host societies are not mutually exclusive. On the contrary, integration and cohesion are two facets of the same coin.

Diaspora organisations (DOs) benefit from embeddedness in host societies, providing an interface between migrant communities at large and public institutions, essentially acting as a vector for integration in destination countries. For instance, affiliation to a diaspora association exposes its members to the inner workings of the public system, its legal frameworks and norms.⁴⁵ As our study shows, most of these entities offer assistance for obtaining legal status (permits), advice on labour rights and employment, promote national interests abroad, encourage multicultural exchanges, and engage through advocacy networks in reforming their country of origin, bringing the Swiss model of civic participation and engagement closer to home and to their aspirations.

1.5. An adaptive and actionable policy framework for diaspora engagement

Despite its considerable impact on bilateral relations and de facto contributions (economic, civic, cultural etc.), the diaspora fails to be included in the programmatic agreements that govern the Swiss contributions to Romania, and by default, the cohesion agenda. We believe that Switzerland, in light of its integrated, whole-of-government approach to international cooperation, including European cohesion and stability, is in a unique position to benefit extensively from the diaspora's untapped contributions and networked potential, which spans transnationally. We also argue that in order to achieve this, not much is needed by way of additional protocols, apart from a solid knowledge base and a mapping exercise of diasporic communities, which this publication sets out to achieve.

The double-thronged roadmap below exemplifies how strengthening and acknowledging the diaspora's role needs to occur simultaneously at national and international/bilateral levels.

- At national levels: political rights, effective integration and the diasporas' impact on Swiss foreign policy agendas (European cohesion & stability, as well as sustainable development) are interrelated. Therefore, diaspora communities can actively contribute to democratic decision-making processes should the legislation align. Specifically, a standardisation for obtaining permit C after 5 years (instead of 10) for all EU citizens,⁴⁶ irrespective of nationality, would enable Romanian nationals to participate in the body politic, together with other Swiss residents, and have a voice in cantonal and communal ballots⁴⁷ on topics affecting them directly. This participatory enfranchisement incorporates organically into Switzerland's semi-direct democratic system and contributes to "its permanent evolution (...) in which the people are the stakeholder."⁴⁸ Conversely, an extensive provisional status as is the case, has a negative impact on the integration of Romanian migrants, precluding entire segments from participating civically and politically in matters of interest. Enabling political rights for migrant communities leads to their effective integration, thereby linking civic and political participation in the country of residence with Switzerland's foreign policy objectives (whether aimed at Europe's cohesion and stability or more generally at sustainable development).
- At multilateral/bilateral levels: in recent years, governments have aligned their policies with the UN's Sustainable Goals in conjunction with international bodies such as the IOM (International Organization for Migration) and/or EU Global Diaspora Facility to implement diaspora programming. The Swiss government acknowledges that a "closer cooperation between development actors who recognise the diasporas' potential will open up new horizons as regards the development of migrants' countries of origin."⁴⁹ However, this nominal recognition does not include the diaspora's contributions to European cohesion

and stability, Switzerland's Second Financial Contribution to Selected EU Member States (including Romania) could integrate the diasporas' role as foreign policy (civic) actors thereby "strengthening and deepening bilateral relations with its partner countries and the EU as a whole."⁵⁰ Despite these stated objectives, the diaspora is not explicitly mentioned in the framework agreement, nor is there any solid information advising otherwise for the forthcoming period.

The following section (parts 1 & 2) zoom in on Romanian communities in Switzerland tackling the demography and networked dimension of diaspora organisations, as well as the overall impact of cooperation.

2. The Romanian diaspora in the focus

2.1. The historical continuum

Before exploring the more recent demographics, some historical considerations would further illuminate migratory trends. Similar to other places, Romanian migration in Switzerland followed a wave pattern. The arrival of Romanians escaping the communist regime, particularly in Geneva, dates to the early 1970s, when Romanians represented one of the most important groups of asylum seekers. (...) Between 1973 and 1979, 771 Romanians demanded asylum in Switzerland.⁵¹ In the following decade, the number almost tripled, reaching 2.070 asylum seekers.⁵² These former political refugees shared “some similar characteristics: many with a high level of education, a liberal profession, such as doctors and architects, and cases of people belonging to religious minorities, such as the Pentecostals, who had religious ties in Western Europe and were rather marginalised in Romania.”⁵³

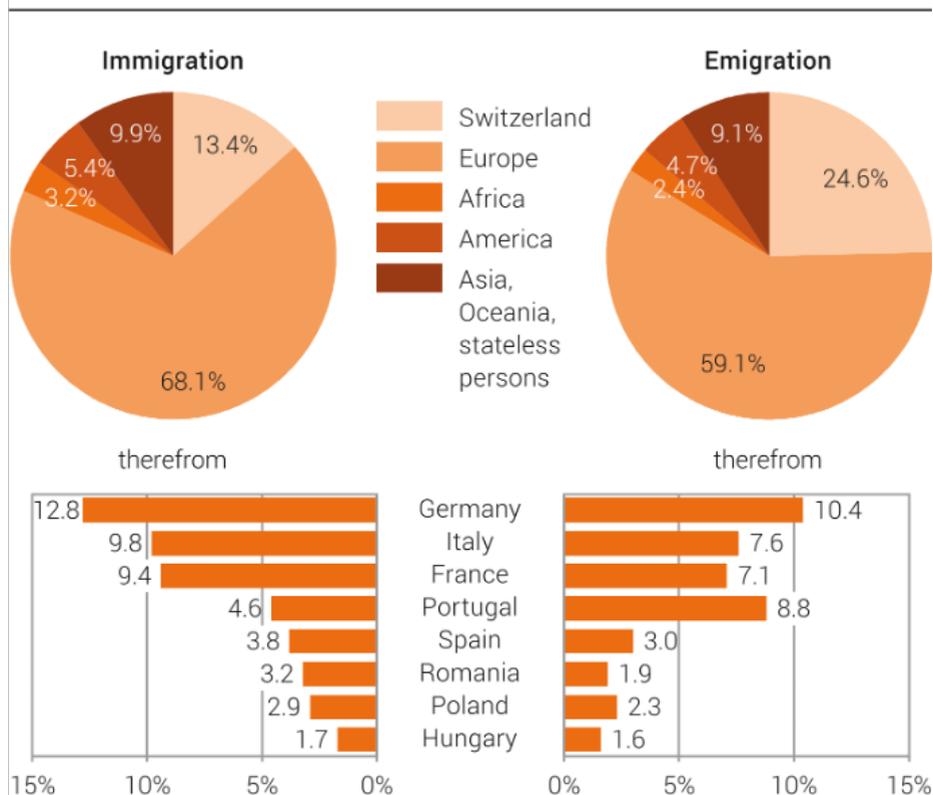
A less visible facet of bilateral relations is the relocation of Swiss nationals living in Romania towards the end of the 19th century, prominent merchant families and private Swiss tutors, some attached to Romania's aristocracy. They subsequently returned to Switzerland escaping communist encroachment. Swiss nationals nevertheless maintained a profound affinity with the Romanian language and culture, which they sought to preserve and impart in the decades to come (some had Romanian names, for instance, Mr Costache Scheidegger). Some exponents even founded a statute-based association, the Friends of Romania, assisting those fleeing the communist dictatorship and seeking political asylum in Switzerland. Their role in facilitating integration was truly invaluable despite remaining hardly known.⁵⁴

The fall of the communist regime in the 1990s did not alter the influx of Romanian migrants. Nevertheless, the situation gradually changed after 2007, with Romania's EU accession. Freedom of movement, however, was not guaranteed outright. Protocol II, an extension of the Agreement on the Free Movement of Persons (see footnote 56 below), entered into force on June 1st, 2009, stipulating “a transitional period of up to 10 years – i.e., until May 31st, 2019 – during which the [Swiss] Federal Council can limit the number of residence permits granted to nationals of these two states [Romania & Bulgaria]. The Federal Council used this option and introduced a safeguard clause and residence permit quotas”,⁵⁵ perhaps fearing large-scale immigration. Consequently, the number of residence and short-term permits was limited, though timid increases in granted applications continued: from 362 (in 2009-2010) to 1.207 (in 2015-2016), with more significant surges for short-term permits, from 3.620 (in 2009-2010) to 11.664 (in 2015-2016).⁵⁶ Indeed, migration saw a steady rise after Romania's EU accession, despite the federally imposed safeguards and quotas, the latter reinforced by the 2014 Swiss referendum.

In May 2019 the Federal Council adopted an amendment, formally ending the quota-based system. In effect, Bulgarian and Romanian nationals have enjoyed the same rights as other EU citizens, though they had to provide evidence of employment or sufficient financial means to remain in Switzerland.⁵⁷ To further contextualise, immigration from Romania ranks 6th at 3.2% of the foreign nationals who immigrated to Switzerland in 2021 (see *overview for 2021, next page*).

Immigration and emigration, 2021

By citizenship



Source: FSO – STATPOP

© FSO 2022

2.1.1. Recent migration trends

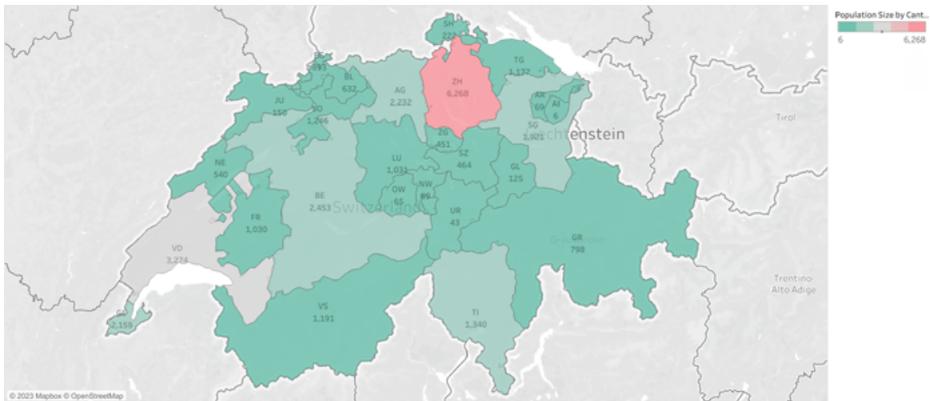
In 2021, The Federal Statistical Office reported a total of 29,849 Romanian residents (permanent and non-permanent). By population type, permanent residents are prevalent, totalling 20,114, most holding a (B) permit, followed by settlement C (*Table 1, below*). Overall demographic trends are ascending, with a steady inflow over the next two years (see the statistical forecast for males and females reported below). In Switzerland's case, migrant stocks have been influenced by migration policies adopted at the federal and cantonal levels.

Type Of Permit	Population Type	
	P	N
Residence permit (B)	20,621	0
Settlement permit (C)	4,675	0
Short-term residence permit (L)	965	2,835
International civil servant without diplomatic immunity	137	0
Diplomat, international civil servant with diplomatic immunity	51	0
Residence permit with gainful employment (Ci)	4	0
Swiss	0	0
Provisionally admitted person (F)	0	0
Not attributable	0	561
Asylum seeker (N)	0	0

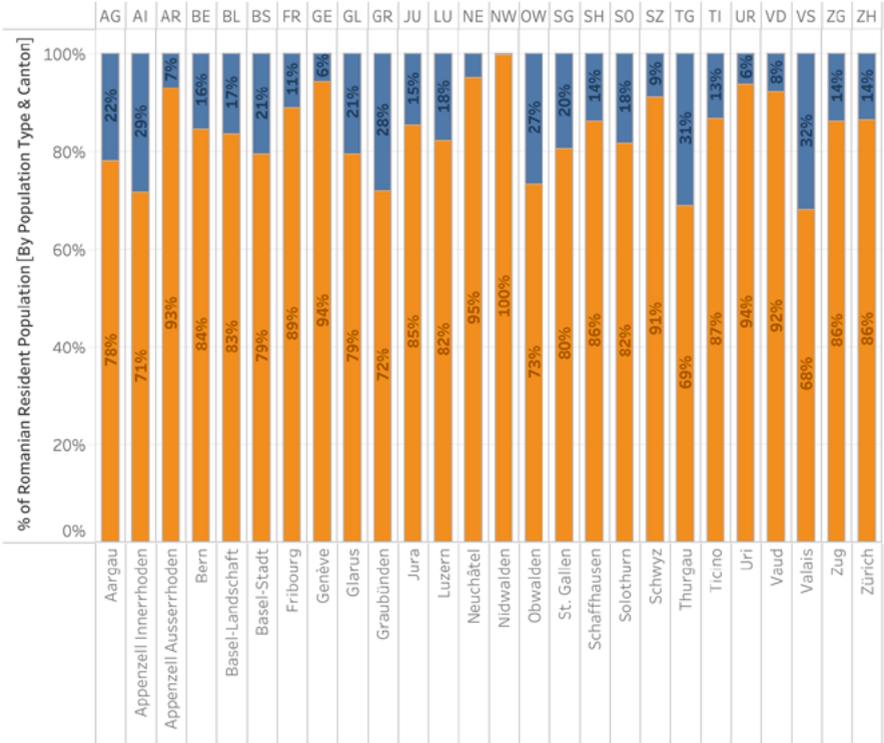
Table 2 – Romanian nationals in 2021, by population type and residence permit. Colour intensity indicates the prevalent cohort.

Regarding geographical distribution by administrative cantons, most Romanians live and work in Zurich, followed by Vaud, Bern, and Geneva. The four cantons are particularly attractive for a professional migrant elite, owing to their cosmopolitan nature and labour market opportunities. When asked about what influenced his decision to settle in Zurich (permanently), a Romanian professional working in a Swiss bank stated that “the high living standards, relative political stability, and career prospects were determining factors.”⁵⁸ The ecumenical dimension is vibrant, with Orthodox parishes and churches flourishing as communities grew in all four

cantons (four in Geneva and Zurich, one in Vaud and Bern). The maps below indicate the geographic concentration of Romanian nationals by total number of residents and population type (*Maps 1 and 2, below*). In a nutshell, permanent residents are prevalent, attributed to the entry, residence, and work permit requirements at federal and cantonal levels. Essentially, “anyone who works during their stay in Switzerland or who remains in Switzerland for longer than three months requires a permit. Residence permits are issued by the Cantonal Migration Offices.”⁵⁹



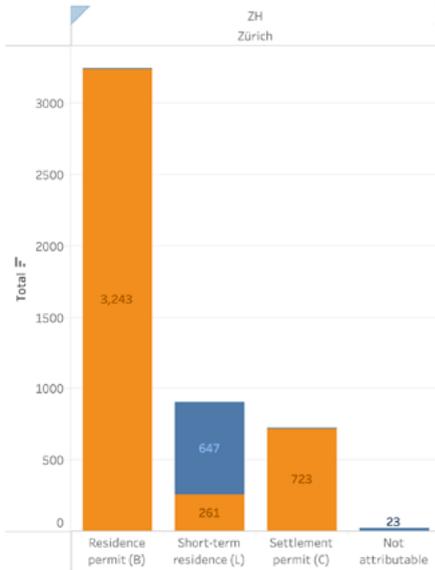
Romanian Residents by Canton & Population Type (%)



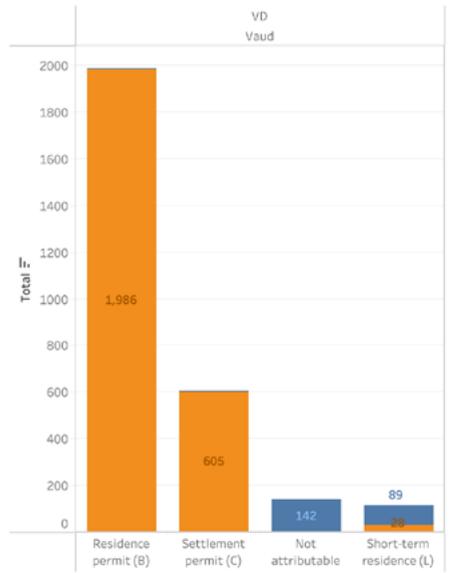
The following graphs (2 to 5) show which residence permits are predominant in Zurich, Vaud, Bern, and Geneva, by population type (permanent and non-permanent). Both Geneva and Bern host a range of international organisations and institutions. Hence, we notice an additional permit category for diplomats and international civil servants with diplomatic immunity (for instance, members of permanent national representations or those working for UN agencies). The banking sector is also prominent, attracting highly skilled professional talent across a diverse range of expertise, from IT to economics and monetary policy.

If we are to analyse distribution by age groups, Romanians in the 30-34 years cohort are prevalent, followed by 35-39 years (*Graph 6, below*). Compounded with entry, residence, and work permit requirements, this trend reinforces a migration pattern structured along with skilled labour. Professionals opt for better-paid jobs (with specialised expertise), career advancement (from mid to higher tiers), and exposure to an international, multicultural environment. Over the years (between 2010-2019), the (young) adult cohorts (30-34; 35-39 years) have been steadily ascending, followed by the 25-29 years tier, most likely graduates/postgraduates opting to enrol in Swiss universities, which attests to significant academic mobility. The Swiss Government actively encourages international exchange through educational grants (awarded by the Federal Commission for Scholarships for Foreign Students, FCS), a scheme that comprises over 180 countries, including Romania.⁶⁰

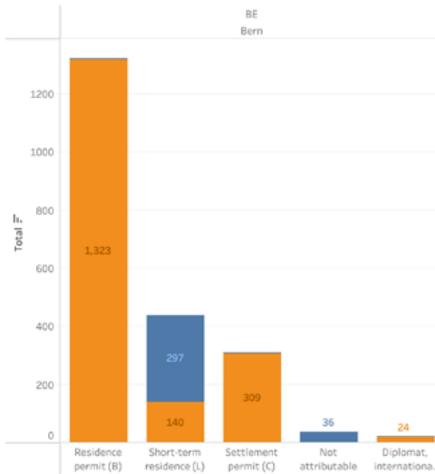
Zurich - Resident Population / Permit Type



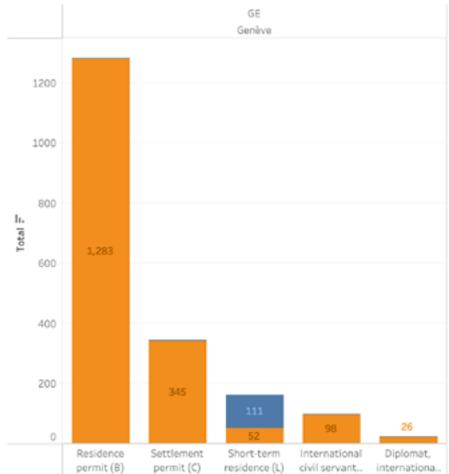
Vaud - Resident Population / Permit Type



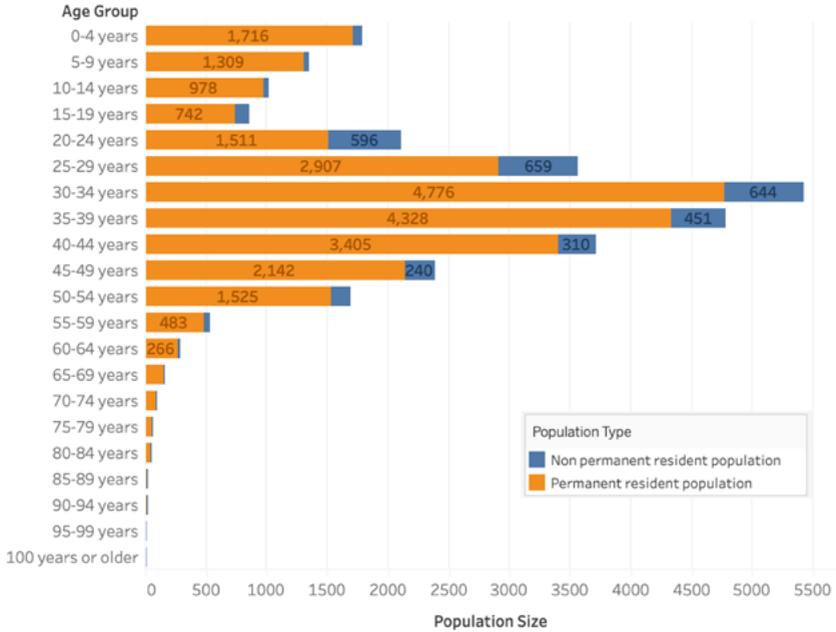
Bern - Resident Population / Permit Type



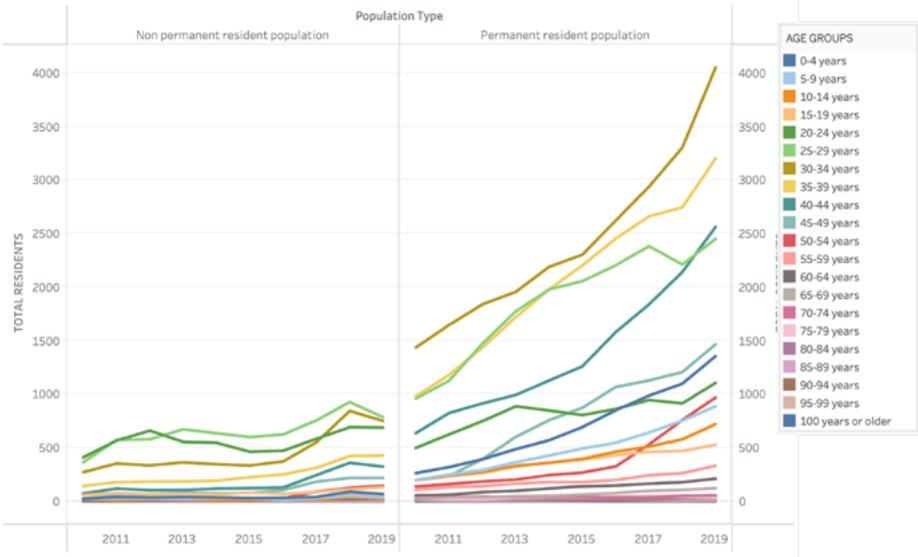
Geneva - Resident Population / Permit Type

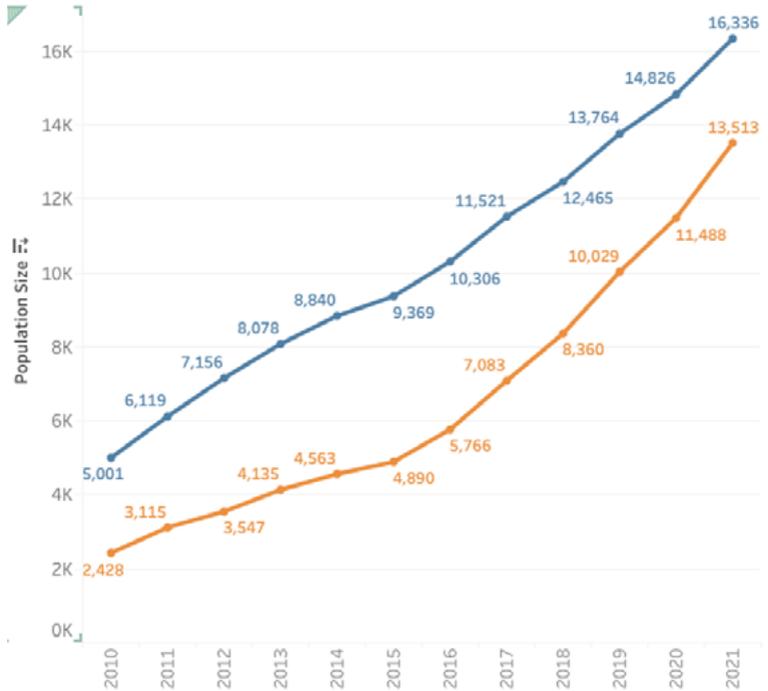


Romanian Residents by Age Group & Population Type (2021)



Romanian Residents by Age Group & Population Type (2010-2019)





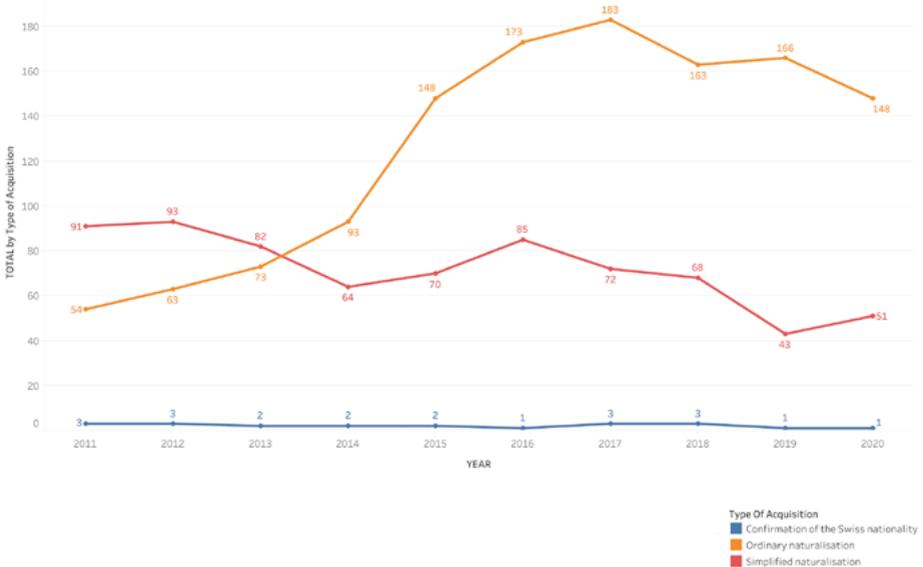
Graph 8 – Female / Male population by Year

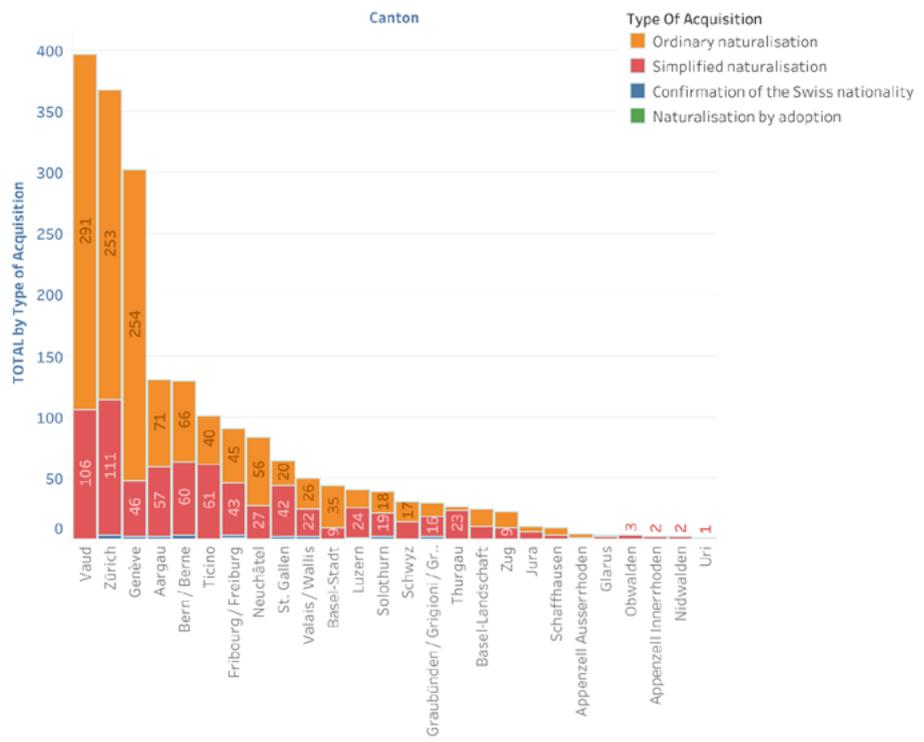
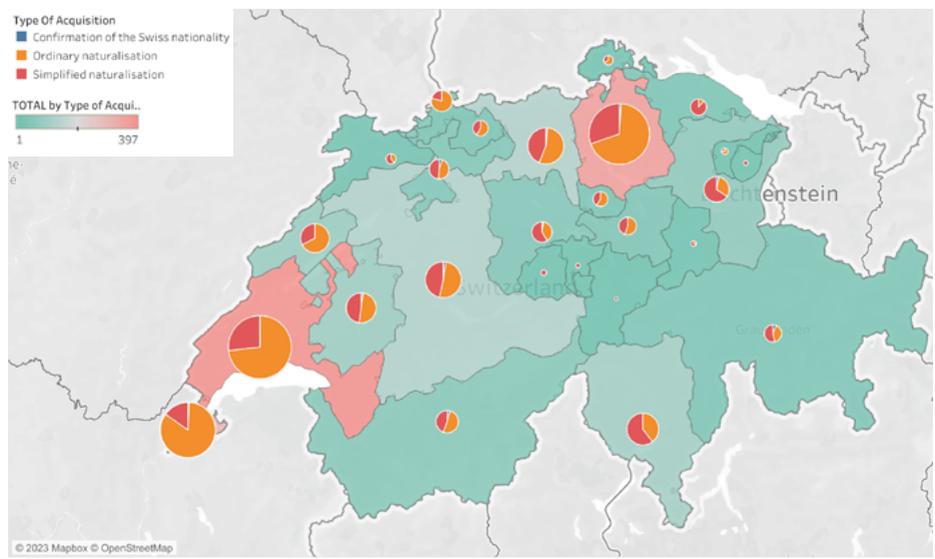
As exemplified in the graph above, Romanian female residents have been steadily dominant over ten years, thus contributing to the increase in emigration (from Romania). This trend can be attributed to several factors, from skilled migration seeking labour-associated opportunities to bi-national marriage rates. However, at Swiss national levels, the proportion of women in total immigration flows is lower (47%).⁶¹ Regarding the labour market, the employment rate for foreign women (68.6%) is lower than for foreign men (78%), Swiss women (83%), and Swiss men. The Federal Commission on Migration also points out that foreign women are more likely to be affected by overqualification than Swiss nationals.⁶² One primary concern for Swiss authorities and international organisations (i.e., IOM, International Organisation for Migration) is the growing vulnerability of Romanian women to trafficking.⁶³ Swiss media reported extensively

on dismantling a vast European network based in Romania alleged to force women and young girls into prostitution.⁶⁴

Because Switzerland has an extensive history of immigration, the Federal Statistical Office offers a rich data repository on naturalisation and the different paths toward acquiring Swiss citizenship.⁶⁵ Based on federal data analysed by the University of Neuchâtel Mobility and Migration centre, Romania holds the highest cumulative rate for naturalisation among EU/EFTA countries.⁶⁶ As we shall explore in the following section, Romanians still opt for acquiring Swiss citizenship, despite the lengthy process and complex procedures. This trend can be partly explained from the actual and perceived benefits of holding double citizenship: from a more effective integration into the host country, to broader access to services and benefits available to Swiss citizens.

The graphs below summarise naturalisation demographics, geographically (by cantons) and by acquisition type: ordinary naturalisation, simplified naturalisation, confirmation of Swiss nationality and naturalisation by adoption.





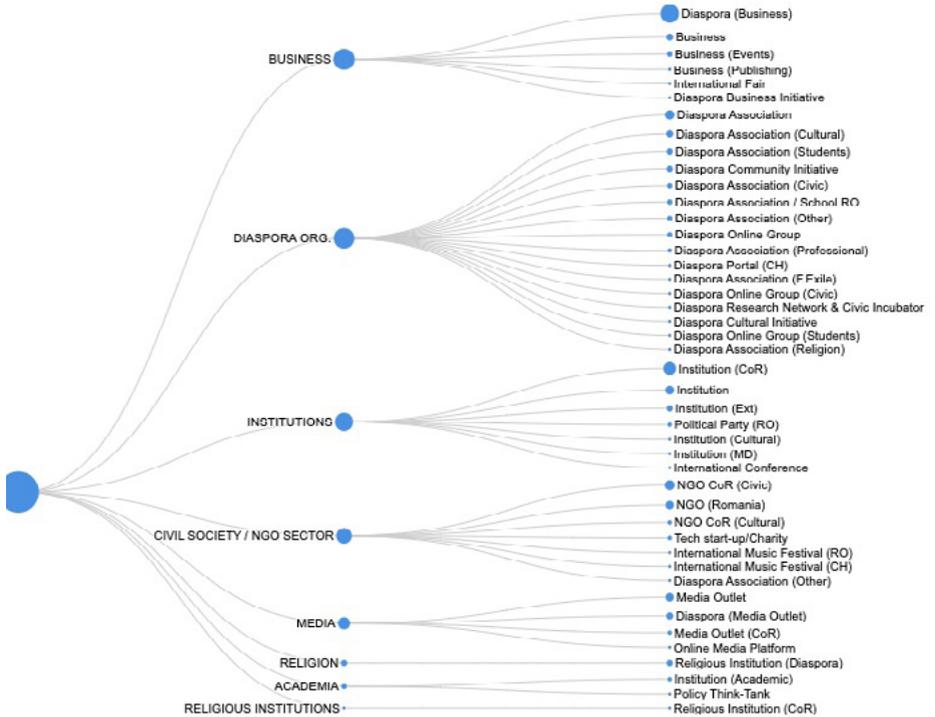
2.2. Understanding communities through networks

2.2.1. Methodological considerations & typologies

We analysed the diaspora associative environment and the interactions within, including rapports with institutions, civil society / the NGO sector in Romania and Switzerland. Such an approach helps us assess the degree of embeddedness in the host society and country of origin. Which (geographical) relationships prevail? How do Romanians in Switzerland associate, and what is the scope of their activities? Do organisations cooperate, and if so, what is the impact? The section builds on a unique database, which identifies diaspora interactions (and beyond) based on frequency and impact. Without delving into methodological considerations, certain aspects of our dataset require interpretation to better understand the network.

The diaspora network (mainly from Switzerland and Romania) comprises 169 nodes or entities, a web of diaspora associations, online groups, businesses, institutions, NGOs, media, and churches, all interconnected to variable degrees based on the scope place, duration, and frequency of cooperation. An interaction's weight (strength) depends on how often and with what purpose two entities (or more) form relationships.

This networked approach enabled us to explore the critical question: **what types of actors shape the diaspora ecosystem?**

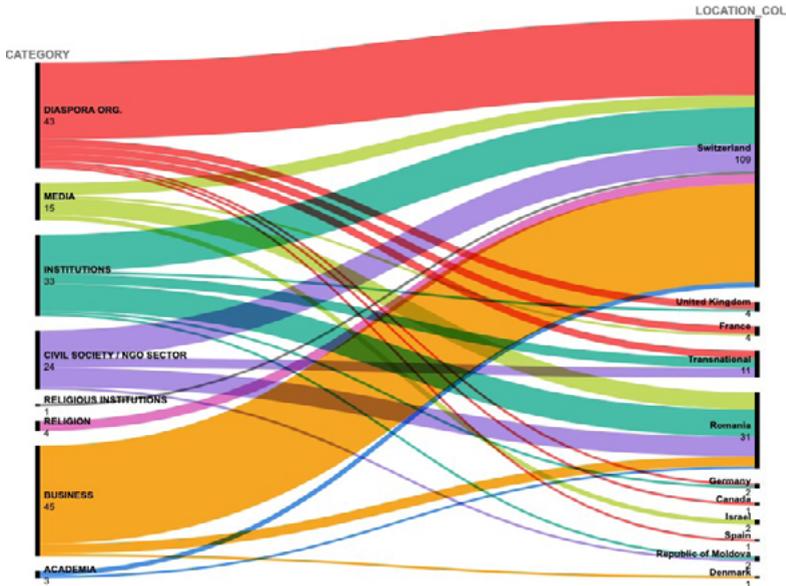


The general category 'Diaspora' (*Diaspora.org.*) comprises diaspora associations, formal and informal, more recent and historical, online, offline or both. For instance, the sub-category *diaspora association (f.exile)* indicates an organisation founded by former exiles and political asylum seekers, whose primary function was to facilitate integration into the host society. Over time, the purpose of these organisations adapted to respond to the community's evolving needs: the preservation of culture, administrative and legal assistance, and residence permit applications. In the second category (*Institutions*), we differentiated between Romanian and Swiss public institutions. The latter appears with (CoR) at the end, implying it pertains to the country of residence. As for diplomatic missions or external representation, the subcategory is *Institution (Ext.)*.

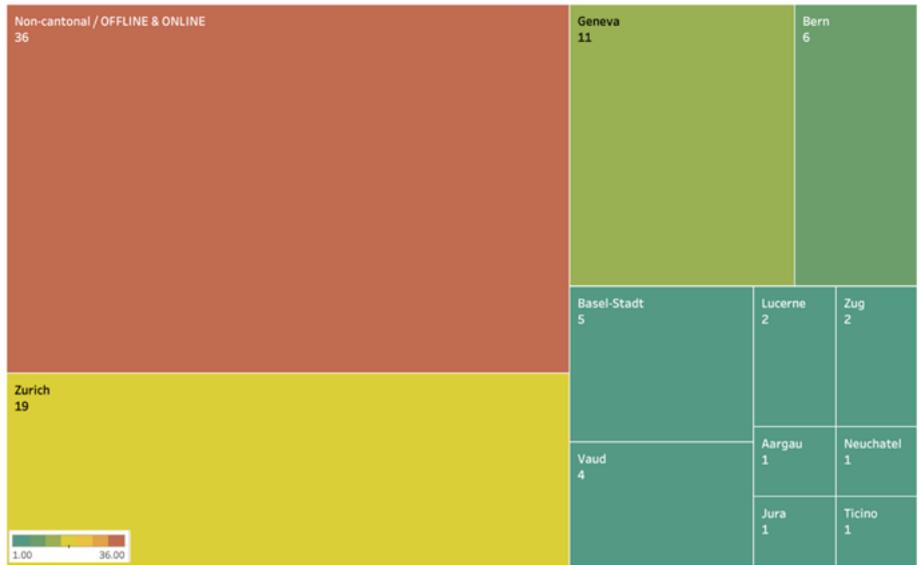
Category	Type	
ACADEMIA	Institution (Academic)	2
	Policy Think-Tank	1
BUSINESS	Diaspora (Business)	34
	Business	5
	Business (Events)	3
	International Fair	1
	Diaspora Business Initiative	1
	Business (Publishing)	1
CIVIL SOCIETY / NGO SECTOR	NGO CoR (Civic)	10
	NGO (Romania)	7
	Diaspora Association (Other)	1
	Tech start-up/Charity	2
	NGO CoR (Cultural)	2
	International Music Festival (RO)	1
	International Music Festival (CH)	1
DIASPORA ORG.	Diaspora Association	9
	Diaspora Association (Cultural)	5
	Diaspora Community Initiative	4
	Diaspora Association (Students)	4
	Diaspora Association (Other)	3
	Diaspora Online Group	3
	Diaspora Association / School RO	3
	Diaspora Association (Civic)	3
	Diaspora Association (Professional)	2
	Diaspora Research Network & Civic I.	1
	Diaspora Portal (CH)	1
	Diaspora Online Group (Students)	1
	Diaspora Online Group (Civic)	1
	Diaspora Cultural Initiative	1
	Diaspora Association (Religion)	1
Diaspora Association (F.Exile)	1	
INSTITUTIONS	Institution (CoR)	16
	Institution	8
	Institution (Ext)	4
	Political Party (RO)	2
	International Conference	1
	Institution (MD)	1
	Institution (Cultural)	1
		1
MEDIA	Media Outlet	7
	Diaspora (Media Outlet)	5
	Media Outlet (CoR)	2
	Online Media Platform	1
RELIGION	Religious Institution (Diaspora)	4
RELIGIOUS IN..	Religious Institution (CoR)	1

So far, the dataset integrates some online diaspora groups but not all. As in the case of other host countries, online groups often provide a means of socialisation (at times, offline) without a clearly defined purpose, or a legal statute, apart from the rules set by online administrators. These groups are mainly informative outlets for advertising or disseminating information (official or promoting diaspora events). Online groups act as fluid communities of interest, depending on the topic and geography, the latter catering to Romanians in a specific canton or region.

The table exemplifies how many entities we analysed by category and type. Although institutions represent the second largest category, they are not as prominent within the network. The frequency of interactions is relatively reduced compared to other host countries (i.e., the UK). We notice the presence of diaspora community initiatives analysed as a separate category. These are spin-offs or repetitive events organised by some diaspora associations: feasts gathering Romanian and Swiss communities, religious celebrations, fundraising initiatives, and other community functions.



By category and location, most entities are based in Switzerland, followed by Romania, though there are some interactions with diaspora organisations from other countries. The preliminary analysis does not include all diaspora entities in Switzerland. Some may be active offline but have a scarce online presence. From the focus group, it transpired that most diaspora organisations are manned by volunteers. With few resources and most volunteers employed full-time, maintaining a website or even a social media page becomes time-consuming.⁶⁷ In effect, diaspora organisations are not professionalised bodies, with paid staff and largely rely on membership contributions and community resources: donations, enlisting volunteers for specific events etc. 'At best, there is a core of three to four people managing day-to-day operations and keeping things afloat [...]. It's not an easy task since volunteer-based activities are not a priority, with most people dividing their time between family and work'.⁶⁸ More recently founded professional, or business associations cater for small enterprises with Romanian ownership; without formal affiliation to the Chambers of Commerce or an officially sanctioned mandate, the structure largely resembles forums of discussion. However, there is more opportunity for growth.



The figure above (Figure 2) indicates where most diaspora entities are based and what is their area of operation (only for Switzerland).

2.2.2. Interactions, cooperation, and impact

How do entities connect within the network? What relationships do they form? And based on the frequency, location, and scope of cooperation, what is the strength of such interactions?

For our initial dataset, we used a core of twelve (12) Swiss-based diaspora entities: formal/officially registered associations (civic, cultural, of mixed scope), informal online diaspora groups, diaspora portals - an online umbrella group hosting the pages of other associations or supporting their community-based activities online as well as offline - and Romanian schools. In Switzerland, registering an association or organisation is somewhat lax compared to other countries. Therefore, even a simple statute confers legality and does not require a notarised application with a charity registration office. With few exceptions, we noticed very little to almost no interaction when we analysed relationships with Romanian public authorities (including funding bodies, such as the Department for Romanians Abroad). The focus group with diaspora organisations revealed that applying for funding in Romania is time-consuming and burdensome, if not impossible, given all the legal requirements, which essentially do not recognise diaspora associations in Switzerland as legal entities (just based on their statute and bank account).⁶⁹ In effect,

such bureaucratic constraints dissuade organisations from applying for funding in Romania, no matter how active and impactful (even if logistical support is needed, for instance, Romanian schools in Switzerland need teaching material).⁷⁰

In compiling our primary relational database and being as comprehensive as possible, we triangulated between several sources (including the Romanian Embassy/Ministry of Foreign Affairs websites and snowball sampling and web-crawling techniques). For each entity (node), we mapped connections (edges) with other actors, partitioning the network based on the scope and types of interaction. We applied queries (filters) to the global network to discern patterns in cooperation, observing how diaspora associations interact with institutions and whether connections with the public sector in Romania or Switzerland are more frequent.

Apart from frequency, the strength of relationships (weight) is also conferred by the scope, location, and type of interaction, which can partly indicate the level of coordination between two or more entities. Online promotion activities (website, social media) carry a lower weight than participating in or organising an event, implying higher degrees of coordination (resources, physical presence). Moreover, the same interaction/relationship can take different weight values by factoring in location and scope. For example, associations from other countries organising an event implies cooperation at a transnational level, hence a higher impact. Whereas associations from the same country organising an event is an instantiation with a lower weight. Receiving financial support, grants, sponsorships (in fact, any material contribution) from another entity and engaging in fundraising initiatives (charity) translate into more robust, more pronounced connections (edges) since they tend to indicate a certain level of organisation, outreach, and higher impact. However, in the absence of a standardised approach, financial auditing, and transparent reporting, particularly managing a donor base, are not common practices among diaspora organisations.

A higher weight value also applies to other types of relationships: organising/initiating campaigns, community initiatives (cultural, civic, or otherwise), and subsidiary/branches of the same entity. If repeated

interactions between the same entities occurred over time, the type of connection with the higher-weight value was recorded in the dataset. Apart from exploring partitions (subsets of data corresponding to the scope and variety of interactions or actor categories), a visualisation of the entire network may reveal influential actors (nodes) with high connectivity, hubs of cooperation (i.e., high density of connections based on geographical proximity), bridges (entities or nodes that connect clusters, groups).

The table below (*Table 4*) analyses relationships between entities based on the category and type of interaction. Participating/Organising event is the prevalent category of interaction, counting sixty-six instances (66) in total;⁷¹ this shows that events remain a habitual form of community socialisation and the main scope of activity for most diaspora organisations. Most events cater for traditions, folklore, and cuisine, providing a space for Romanian communities to interact whilst maintaining a connection with the homeland. Nonetheless, no matter how cohesive such activities may be, events remain limited in scope. Promoting events, initiatives, other diaspora associations, or public announcements (from institutions) are also prominent within the network. Social media enables cross-promotion, by which diaspora organisations team up and disseminate a common message or post to each other's audiences, a strategy that also bolsters outreach.

Interaction Scope (gr..)	Interaction Scope	
EVENTS	Participating / Organising Event	66
	Funding/Sponsorship/Grant	2
FUNDING/GRANTS	Fundraising Initiative	1
	Hosting (Community Centre)	1
	Member/Founder	29
MEMBERSHIP/BRANCH	Subsidiary/Branch	1
	Organising Campaign (Civic)	15
ORGANISING CAMPAIGN/RESEARCH	Organising Campaign (Cultural)	5
	Organising Campaign (Humanitarian)	1
	Research Initiative	2
	Official Partnership (Website listed)	15
PROMOTION	Promotion	44
	Promotion (Campaign)	5
	Promotion (Event)	14
	Promotion (Initiative)	4
	Promotion / Publishing	13
	Spin-off Initiative (Business)	1
SPIN OFF INITIATIVES	Spin-off Initiative (Cultural)	4
	Spin-off Initiative (Education)	1
	Spin-off Initiative (Humanitarian)	1

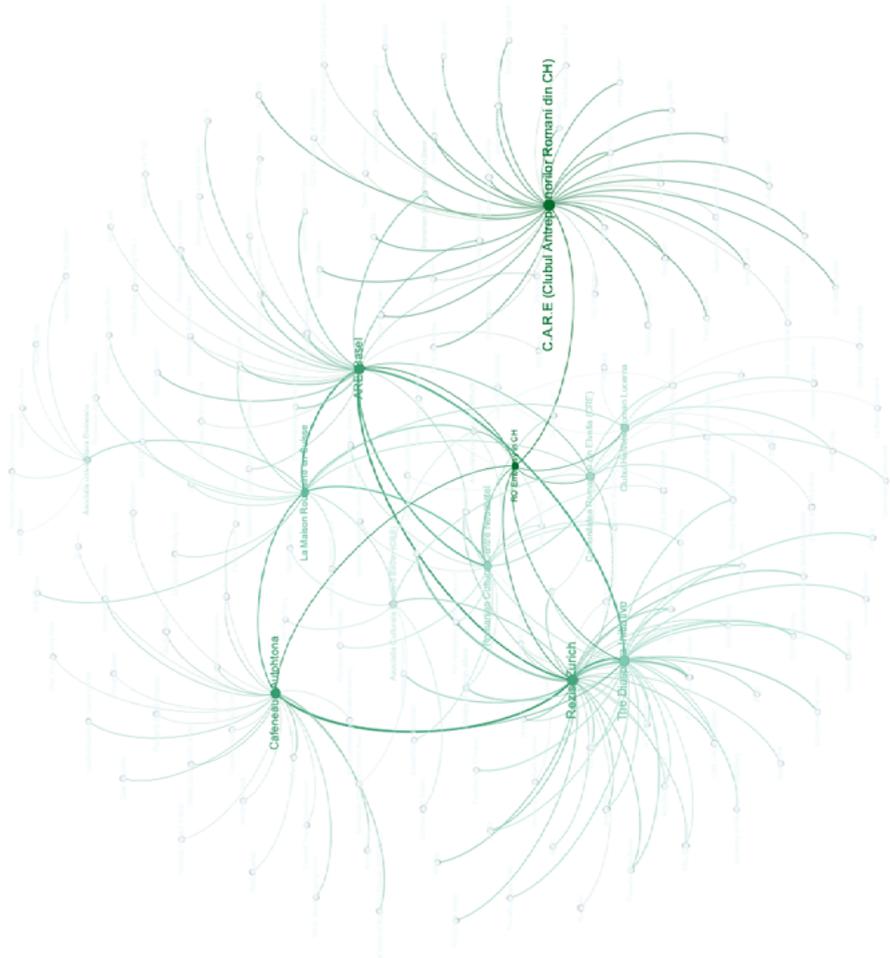
Table 4 – Number of interactions/relationships based on the scope & category of interaction

We notice that the funding category (sponsorships, public/private grants) has the lowest proportion of all relationships (based on the scope of interaction). This may be because diaspora associations (those registered) fund their day-to-day operations through membership fees or other contributions. Some community events are also aimed at gathering donations from the public, depending on the scope of such initiatives (i.e., charity, sending packages to orphanages in Romania, funding the event itself). Except for two diaspora associations, there are no branches or subsidiaries across regions or cantons, as in the case of Italy, Spain or even the United Kingdom.

Although not necessarily prevalent within the network, some diaspora organisations are active in initiating or organising campaigns with a civic / community impact. In such endeavours, interactions with Swiss institutions and public authorities are significant and impactful. These campaigns focus on the integration and rights of migrant communities (including but not limited to Romanian nationals), purported by coalitions of associations and NGOs. The diaspora association AREI is one such case (with two branches), active in Basel-Stadt and Lucerne.⁷² AREI has been an effective campaigner, despite its small, volunteer-based team (three active members involved in the day-to-day operations). Part of an umbrella coalition of organisations and supported by cantonal public authorities, they bring to the Parliament's agenda (sometimes at the federal level) issues about the integration of foreign nationals and minority rights, thus demonstrating successful coordination with Swiss public authorities and the overall Swiss civil society. One of their more recent contributions is an event at Basel Parliament, that was held on October 29th, 2022. The date is revealing, as on this day the non-voting population (migrants) can vote in the cantonal Parliament, and their vote alone will be counted. AREI noted in their public appeal, that the Migrant Session, as it is called, takes place only once a year and is the result of a year's research and debates on critical topics concerning migrants in Basel. In partnership with other associations, they put forward motions on five important topics, among which:

a tax deduction for remittances, as well as the inequalities and disadvantages of the L residence permit.⁷³ This initiative attests to a higher impact since such coordinated efforts influence cantonal policies whilst benefiting multiple migrant/diasporic communities.

Other civic diaspora associations, particularly Resist Zurich, organise campaigns focused on Romania - voting abroad and transnational mobilisation involving other diaspora organisations (transnational cooperation) for domestic electoral reforms. The Campaigning dimension involves a long-term outlook on a broad spectrum, from civic to cultural and community based. Its successful implementation depends on coordination between entities, their outreach, and the capacity to liaise with institutions (in Switzerland and Romania). For some initiatives, Resist Zurich also interacts with other (foreign) diaspora organisations, for instance, Belorussian, promoting and disseminating information about events and campaigns (i.e., freedom of speech). Some Orthodox churches and parishes assist communities in a more localised manner, 'on a need-to basis', gathering donations after mass or during specifically tailored events, for instance, helping with funds for repatriation.⁷⁴



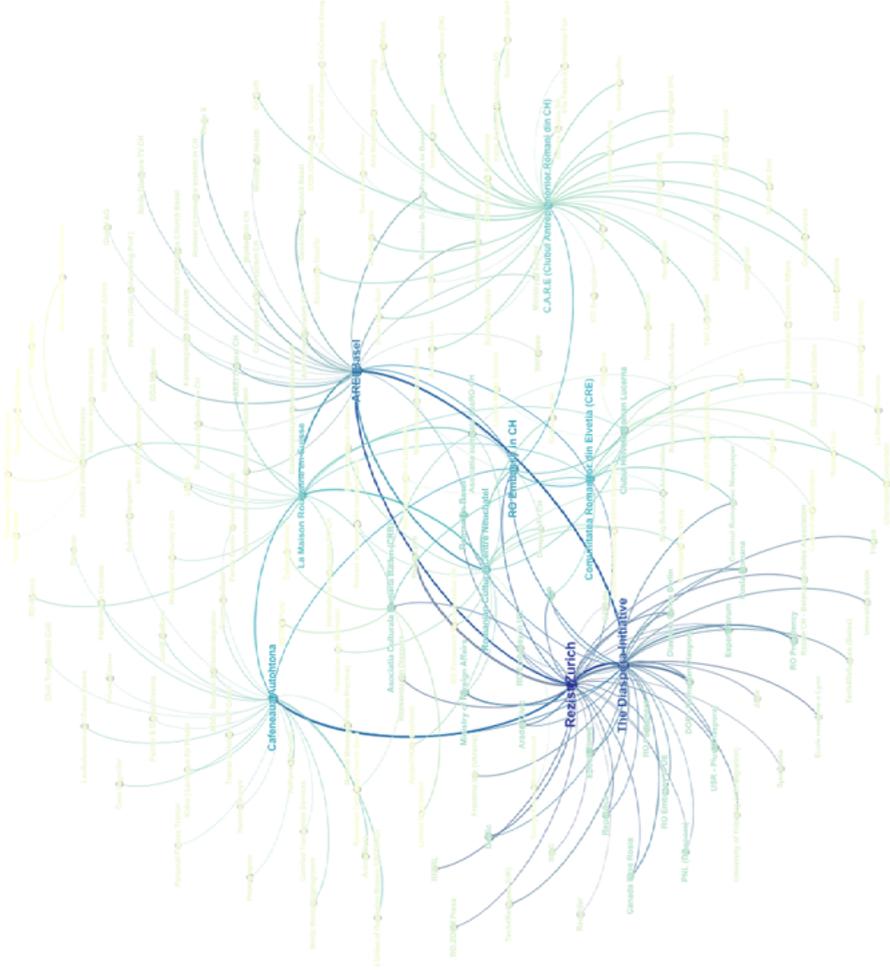
Eigenvector Centrality

The algorithm measures the transitive influence of a node within the network. Relations or connections from high-scoring nodes contribute more to the score/weight of a node (entity). In effect, a high eigenvector score means that a node is connected to other nodes with a high score or value.

For instance, diaspora organisations or initiatives engaged in organising or initiating campaigns (civic, cultural, humanitarian etc.) have the highest score because this type of interaction implies the need for long-term coordination, standardisation of practices, and depending on the location, transnational outreach.

Deeper cooperation with a long-term outlook and clearly defined public and civic agendas carries benefits for the wider community as well, indicating a community's potential to become a strategic constituency relative to both home and host countries.

In the case of Switzerland, we notice certain similarities with the previous measure (betweenness centrality). Those actors/entities that act as bridges are also influential within the network.



2.3. Vignettes – Underexplored Community Dimensions

The social network analysis captures the diaspora's associative environment and the impact of cooperation at a certain moment in time. Hence, networks are never static, they constantly transform and are influenced by a community's social capital and collaborative drive. How engaged are diaspora organisations and how capable of pursuing long-term agendas with policy impact in home and host countries? This indicates the collective capacity to strategically alter decision-making outcomes to benefit the community.

In Switzerland, only a few diaspora associations initiate or engage in campaigns with a long-term goal due to limited organisational capacity, know-how and institutional support. A historical lack of trust in institutions means that effective engagement with home and even host-country public authorities remains limited in scope. In Romania, bureaucratic inefficiencies related to funding diaspora initiatives and a political environment generally perceived as unstable compound public mistrust in the state apparatus. Despite Romania's vast institutional infrastructure for diaspora engagement, spanning government bodies and various agencies, there is no strategic outlook or policy continuity regarding nationals abroad. Romania's central strategic axis for diaspora engagement remains the repatriation of its citizens living and working abroad, which is far from a realistic objective given that migration outflows (emigration from Romania) continue apace. ⁷⁵

2.3.1. The Romanian historical diaspora in Switzerland: the case of Ethnic Romanians from Vojvodina and the Timok Valley (Serbia)

In this vignette, we capture a poorly understood community, ethnic Romanians from Vojvodina and the Timok Valley (Serbia) and their presence in Switzerland. Accurate data on the Romanian minority from Serbia living in Switzerland is scarce, thus we built this part entirely on semi-structured interviews with community members.⁷⁶

Similar to those having escaped the communist regime, ethnic Romanians from former Yugoslavia started arriving in Switzerland, in the 1970s and 1980s. “In 1970, some 25,000 Yugoslavs resided in Switzerland. (...) During the 1980s, immigration from Yugoslavia boomed and its population almost tripled in Switzerland.”⁷⁷ Most Romanian ethnics from Vojvodina and the Timok Valley settled preponderantly in German-speaking cantons, including Zurich, Winterthur, Appenzell Ausserrhoden and Innerrhoden, Sankt Gallen, and Bern. Once settled, these Romanian communities formed associations, actively supported by Swiss and cantonal institutions. For instance, the community in Winterthur received financial support at the local level, including space for organising events at lower prices.⁷⁸

However, the reality of this new space the ethnic Romanians inhabited, the sense of communion and the communities in-betweenness proved to be variable: each generation had defined their belonging anew. The glue that prevented social and cultural detachment from the place of origin, was the 1st generation of immigrants, now in their 80s. Whereas for them, the Romanian culture and language anchored their identity, the 2nd generation “feels Swiss”, using the native language mainly at home, in a familial context. Consequently, the associative activities of Romanian ethnic minorities from Serbia dropped significantly in the past years. Engagement with other minorities and diaspora communities was

adversely affected despite the Serbian community in Switzerland being quite active at a cultural level. Most activities organised in Switzerland are multi-layered, focusing on ethnocultural identity, and language.

In spite of an effective relationship with Swiss institutions, contact between Romanians from Timok Valley and the Romanian Embassy in Switzerland remains scarce. Conversely, the relationship with institutions from Romania, particularly the Parliament, and the Department for Romanians Abroad, has been more dynamic, seconded by engagement with the Orthodox Church.

2.3.2. Voting from abroad

As to whether Romanians abroad form a strategic constituency requires a more nuanced approach. Over the years, the diaspora has significantly impacted Romania's political landscape, not only because of the high voting turnout rates but also through the civic mobilisation that often-accompanied specific political options. The diaspora's vote proved instrumental, particularly during presidential elections with overwhelming support for centre-right incumbents (from which Klaus Iohannis, the current President, hails). Elections abroad were marred by profound irregularities, which in 2019 amounted to vote suppression (though the 2014 presidential elections prompted a similar public outrage). An inadequate number of polling stations (only 441 set up abroad) and generally poor organisation⁷⁹ culminated in hours of queuing in front of embassies and consulates, waiting times extending beyond seven hours in many European cities.

In absence of official statistics, estimates suggest that across Europe and the United Kingdom, tens of thousands were unable to cast a ballot. At the time, the mismanagement of polling stations was perceived as intentional, prompting widespread public outrage, especially after the ruling coalition, led by the social democrats, deflected the blame entirely. Instead, the Minister of Foreign Affairs

accused the surprisingly high turnout at polling stations and the fact that “[...] nobody knows how many Romanians live abroad,” of the unfortunate outcome. The statement rings somewhat true, albeit the deep-seated cynicism. Over the years, there has been no sustained institutionally driven effort to gather data on the actual population size of Romanian emigrants. Figures oscillate between 800,000 and over five million, depending on the source. This statistical uncertainty aggravates the diaspora’s representation in Parliament⁸⁰ and its overall impact on legislative outcomes. Paradoxically, the millions of nationals living and working abroad form a constituency powerful enough to decisively impact electoral outcomes, but with an agenda that remains peripheral to mainstream politics.

2.3.3. Diasporas as an Ecosystem of humanitarian support 81

Since the Russian invasion on 24 February 2022, and the outbreak of full-scale war, one-third of Ukrainians have been forced from their homes.⁸² In Switzerland alone, approximately 65.000 refugees applied for protection status S.

Humanitarian interventions are not traditionally associated with diasporas, yet the roles diasporic communities perform during crises often transcend conventional boundaries. The sheer scale of the unfolding humanitarian crisis prompted these relatively small community-oriented diaspora organisations to mobilise in support of Ukraine, through various means. Generally understaffed and with limited resources, diaspora associations had to rely on pre-existing partnerships and ad-hoc logistical clusters for the procurement, and distribution of aid. Apart from aid, other responses focused on digital information campaigns about the evolving situation in Ukraine.

A diaspora civic organisation from Zurich expanded a pre-existing transnational partnership with other Romanian associations based in the United Kingdom and France, and launched a series of Ukraine-focused podcasts, inviting policy experts and academics to share opinions, across various social media channels. Civically active diaspora organisations, already embedded in a culture of political protest and transnationally attuned to human rights issues, were also

the most digitally active. One respondent mentioned a partnership with Belarusian civic organisations from Switzerland during their recent protests (May 2020 – March 2021). From a humanitarian perspective, transnational civic alliances between diasporic grassroots groups were quite effective in raising the salience of human rights issues on public agendas. By means of petitioning and even protesting, the same organisations also coalesced to pressure home and host country governments to commit aid for Ukraine, while adopting a more radical stance towards Russia. Such a participatory approach was largely indicative of Eastern and Central European diasporas.

Diaspora associations, whether civic or community-oriented, can act as effective humanitarians, through the resilient networks and partnerships which they successfully forged in response to the humanitarian crisis in Ukraine. However, the impact of diasporic relief should be bolstered through more effective coordination, humanitarian know-how, and standardisation of practices, particularly how to organise logistical clusters.

3. Conclusions & policy recommendations

The previous sections edify an overarching argument: knowing whom to engage and why opens the path to a more targeted, informed, and inclusive foreign policy approach towards migration and diasporas.

Our report builds on Switzerland's posture vis-à-vis the implementation of the European cohesion agenda, whilst scoping strategic opportunities for diaspora engagement, thereby linking a yet untapped social capital with Swiss foreign policy objectives and their areas of impact. As a departure point, we explored the bilateral context/framework between Switzerland and Romania. For instance, Swiss direct investment has been on the rise, pointing to Romania's increasingly attractive and predictable investment milieu. We then argued that a more targeted engagement of the Romanian diaspora in Switzerland in common areas of interest could bolster the impact of bilateral cooperation frameworks. To this end, we analysed the Swiss contributions to selected EU member states, with a focus on Romania. After Poland, Romania is the second largest beneficiary of the Swiss CHF 1.302 billion cohesion funding. However, the diaspora has not been actively engaged in the process, a status quo inconsistent with the current demographic trend and the international cooperation discourse that puts emphasis on diasporas. To this end, and based on a unique relational dataset, the social network analysis of diaspora organisations mapped the interactions and rapports with home and host societies. It showed not only that the number of Romanian migrants to Switzerland has grown at a steady rate over the years but also how diaspora organisations are facilitating integration, building transnational networks of cooperation centred on campaigning, reforms and participation, activities which contribute towards European cohesion.

3.1. Targeted diaspora engagement within a bilateral framework

The second framework agreement governing the Swiss contributions to Romania includes nine related thematic areas (juxtaposed with foreign policy objectives): i) Education and vocational training; ii) Research and innovation; iii) Funding for micro, small, and medium-sized enterprises; iv) Improving public safety and security; v) Energy efficiency and renewable energy; vi) Public transport; vii) Health and social protection; viii) Minorities and socially disadvantaged groups; ix) Civic engagement and transparency.⁸³ The matrix below contextualises diaspora contributions across three engagement frameworks (at national, bilateral, and European levels), suggesting policy recommendations, documenting good practices and providing specific examples of bilateral (institutional) coordination.

In effect, the diaspora has the capacity to contribute horizontally and bilaterally - to the nine thematic domains of interest covered by the framework agreement-, but also at a European level – by reinforcing a shared normative dimension centred on values, exchanges, and people. In adding the European framework, we were inspired by a newly released Swiss policy paper constructively advocating a bilateral pact between Switzerland and the EU.⁸⁴

BILATERAL RELATIONS SWITZERLAND – ROMANIA				
Foreign Policy Objective	Thematic area	Program	Swiss commitment (CHF)	Project supervisor (coordinator)
Promoting economic growth and social dialogue, reducing (youth) unemployment	i) Education and vocational training (VET)	Dual Education (VET)	10 million	ROMANIA: Ministry of Education
	ii) Research and innovation	Research Romania	20.4 million	ROMANIA: Ministry of Research, Innovation, and Digitalization SWITZERLAND: The Swiss National Science Foundation for the multilateral joint research projects (specific sectors)
	iii) Funding micro, small, and medium enterprises;	Strengthening SMEs - access to finance	39 million	ROMANIA: Ministry of Economy, Entrepreneurship and Tourism
Managing migration and supporting integration. Increasing public safety and security	iv) Improving public safety and security	Public Security and Safety (Home Affairs)	20 million	ROMANIA: Ministry of the Interior
		Public Security and Safety (Justice)	10 million	ROMANIA: Ministry of Justice
Protecting the environment and climate	v) Energy efficiency and renewable energy;	Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy	60 million	ROMANIA: The Ministry for Development, Public Works and Administration
	vi) Public transport	Improved access – Bucharest metro	9.7 million	ROMANIA: The Ministry for Development, Public Works and Administration
Strengthening social systems	vii) Health and social protection	Health Services	10 million	ROMANIA: Ministry of Health
	viii) Minorities and socially disadvantaged groups	Social Inclusion	20 million	ROMANIA: Ministry of Labor and Social Protection
Civic engagement and transparency	ix) Civic engagement and transparency	Civic Engagement	18 million	SWITZERLAND: selected directly by Switzerland

Normative dimension: values, people, exchanges (recommendations for a normative dimension – switzerland-eu)

(Framework agreement, Second Swiss Contribution)

Swiss Partners	Evaluation	Policy recommendation (for Swiss institutions/public authorities, NGOs) Overall: Provide a clear monitoring and evaluation framework for all programs and promote open participation in the information sessions.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Swiss public VET schools Professional associations and expert organisations and expert organisations involved in dual vocational education & training. Swiss authorities 	Assessment by a Swiss expert to guide the design of the measure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish an exchange network and twinning system in education/research between researchers based in Romania and Romanians studying in Switzerland. These networks of support enable the pooling of resources, expertise, knowledge transfers, and spark academic excellence and innovation. Build on the diaspora's local intelligence, local networks, and embeddedness within their communities of origin, particularly in the disadvantaged regions of Romania, severely affected by mass emigration. Enhance project implementation monitoring by strengthening bilateral connections at a community level. Increase program geographical outreach and access to funding, by engaging diaspora organisations in reporting issues/problems faced in their local communities of origin.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Swiss research/innovation institutions and agencies Swiss research infrastructures 	X	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Target strategies at those individuals who are most exposed to the risk of unemployment, including identifying potential/interested returnees from the diaspora, therefore tapping into existing transnational professional networks and schemes for reintegration and skills training.
X	X	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Target strategies at those individuals who are most exposed to the risk of unemployment, including identifying potential/interested returnees from the diaspora, therefore tapping into existing transnational professional networks and schemes for reintegration and skills training.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fedpol Cantonal police forces Institutions in the field of intervention (specialised) 	X	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Raise the profile of anti-trafficking campaigning, and reach out to people on the move through social media, community leaders, volunteers, and diaspora representatives (e.g. join the UNHCR 'Telling the Real Story' initiative). Research findings published in 2016 in the Journal of Human Trafficking showed that traffickers rely on exploitation networks in destination countries as well. Engage Romania diaspora organisations in Switzerland as stakeholders in institutional consultation, and awareness campaigning for more effective identification of vulnerabilities within communities (instances of trafficking and modern slavery). Engage diaspora organisations in training provision so they develop organizational capacities for first response and reporting.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Federal and cantonal bodies, specialised institutions in intervention domains 	Romanian & Swiss Experts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Raise the profile of anti-trafficking campaigning, and reach out to people on the move through social media, community leaders, volunteers, and diaspora representatives (e.g. join the UNHCR 'Telling the Real Story' initiative). Research findings published in 2016 in the Journal of Human Trafficking showed that traffickers rely on exploitation networks in destination countries as well. Engage Romania diaspora organisations in Switzerland as stakeholders in institutional consultation, and awareness campaigning for more effective identification of vulnerabilities within communities (instances of trafficking and modern slavery). Engage diaspora organisations in training provision so they develop organizational capacities for first response and reporting.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Swiss energy engineering (design) experts, Swiss European Energy Award (EEA) specialists 	Joint evaluation Romania – Switzerland with the participation of the European Energy Award Secretariat	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Adopt a long-term approach by channelling diaspora investments (from Switzerland to Romania) in areas of renewable energy and energy efficiency (converting remittance flows from consumption to investment).
X	X	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Build on the diaspora's experience of mobility and accessibility in Switzerland for an effective community outreach in Romania.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Swiss public health actors Organisations in the field of healthcare Lugano Public Health Summer School 	Joint evaluation by Romanian and Swiss experts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide a sustainable strategic framework for primary healthcare centres in remote areas by building networks of support and short-term exchange programs for medical staff between Switzerland and Romania. Diaspora medical professionals/associations – about 1/3 of doctors working in Switzerland have qualified abroad – can provide contacts and support.
Swiss public entities and universities, experts, and associations in the field of social services, integration, disability, etc.	X	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure EU legislation and policies address the protection of minorities and anti-discrimination of socially disadvantaged groups. The diaspora should be directly involved as a stakeholder in identifying the needs, services, and applications (as diaspora communities might also benefit), and in sharing their experiences and lessons learnt as Swiss residents.
Swiss NGOs	X	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use a bottom-up approach to include Swiss NGOs run by the Romanian diaspora in Switzerland. To garner legitimacy, the appeal should include the associations that have been actively involved in elections monitoring and anti-corruption campaigning. The diaspora associations are mapped in the first section.

The Swiss cohesion contributions should involve the Romanian diaspora in all program areas. Although this goes beyond the traditional mode of bilateral cooperation, the matrix (above) reflects the following: the framework becomes comprehensive once the diaspora is engaged as a stakeholder. The five objectives, encompassing nine thematic areas, are aimed at:

- Promoting economic growth and social dialogue and reducing (youth) unemployment
- Managing migration and supporting integration. Increasing public safety and security
- Protecting the environment and climate
- Strengthening social systems
- Civic engagement and transparency

The Swiss contribution allocated for Romania totals 221.5 million CHF (including technical support). Programs focused on 'Energy efficiency and Renewable Energy' as well as 'Strengthening SMEs through improved access to finance' benefit from most funding (CHF 60 million and CHF 39 million respectively). Each thematic area was assigned an institutional coordinator tasked with oversight and implementation, mainly from Romania (the Ministries of Labour, Health, Justice, and Interior). The only area with a Swiss counterpart as project supervisor is 'Research and Innovation'. Regarding implementation partners (including NGOs and other public bodies) only two of the nine areas include Swiss entities. When it comes to the evaluation of programs less than half contain this information. All the other areas will be evaluated, depending on the theme, by Swiss federal and cantonal authorities, research institutes, expert forums, and NGOs.

Whilst acknowledging that bilateral agreements are highly structured in terms of conceptual elaboration/ implementation, the Romanian diaspora in Switzerland can and should be engaged in (at least) a process of wider consultations. Such a reflection body would foster the exchange of valuable know-how, bolstering Swiss institutional awareness of localities and the overall sustainability of programme results⁸⁵ for a number of reasons:

1. **Improved accountability, monitoring, and evaluation.**
Providing an additional measure for checks and balances will build trust in the effectiveness of funding mechanisms and encourage civic participation as well as reporting capabilities (transparency). There is still pervasive mistrust in Romania's public institutions and access to funding is often associated with bureaucratic hurdles or patronage which dissuades local NGOs from applying. Dispelling these perceptions requires a grassroots approach whereby diaspora representatives mediate an understanding within their communities of such opportunities, imparting know-how and provisional assistance.
2. **Local intelligence and improved programme outreach**
The diaspora has direct knowledge of issues affecting local communities of origin and can provide insights regarding local needs, or problematic areas where investment can be effectively targeted. Demonstrably, the most deprived, low-income, and low-productivity regions are affected by the highest emigration rates. Engaging diaspora organisations in consultations may expand access to Swiss programs for other actors (local charities, schools, NGOs, and local public administrations), who may not be sufficiently informed about funding opportunities. Therefore, an inclusive framework premised on diaspora engagement will help ensure that funds reach those communities in most need.
3. **Knowledge transfers / Information ecosystems**
Building on existing diaspora networks and their local/regional connections in the country of origin would streamline the flow of information, know-how and skills, in an institutionalised manner. Diaspora professional associations, communities of expertise, practitioners, and academic networks from abroad engage in informal twinning programmes (similar initiatives are already in place) and partnership clusters with a unique capacity to reverse brain drain and drive innovation. Moreover, diaspora knowledge flows play a critical role in encouraging specialised human capital development (skilled labour) in countries of origin.

3.2. Other considerations

A Eurobarometer Survey commissioned by the European Parliament (2021) poignantly reveals that Romanians value and consider the right of free movement worth protecting the most, above democracy or freedom of speech.⁸⁶ What drives Romanians to emigrate in troves and build a livelihood elsewhere is also symptomatic of their social alienation and profound mistrust of Romania's public system.

While this status quo is deeply unfortunate if not demographically catastrophic, some of its negative effects can be gradually mitigated, not through a top-down imposition of return migration,⁸⁷ but by enabling a civically participative ecosystem connecting the countries of destination with the homeland. The policy section traced how the Romanian diaspora resiliently contributes to domestic growth (social and economic cohesion) and structural reforms through civic mobilisation/advocacy.

Juxtaposing Swiss foreign policy actions and diaspora contributions we notice similarities and unity of scope, which could be further integrated and developed, for instance, in terms of accountability, local intelligence and knowledge transfers. In this sense, the methodology and multiple research trajectories of the report enable replicability and can therefore be used as a framework for future research, for instance, by contextualising the Swiss contributions to other selected EU member states (i.e.: Poland, Bulgaria, Estonia, Croatia, Malta, Hungary, and Cyprus).

Firstly, we build on the widespread recognition of diasporas as international actors, whilst expanding this conceptual framework to reflect impacts on cohesion and stability agendas. Secondly, the cohesion funds are a key component of Swiss European policy, contributions that Switzerland must disburse in return for access to the European single market, amongst other associated trade-offs. The backbone of this mutually beneficial partnership is centred on common values, people, and exchanges, including free movement. Therefore, diasporas are an intrinsic part of a shared normative framework that governs bilateral relations. Thirdly, the Swiss cascading foreign policy

strategy seeks to strengthen cohesion and build bridges. Last but not least, having examined diaspora contributions from a Swiss and European foreign policy perspective, the previous sections provide a comprehensive overview of Romanian communities in Switzerland. Based on a unique relational dataset, the social network analysis of diaspora organisations, gauges the diaspora's impact, interactions and rapports with home and host societies, providing communities of practice with an innovative exploratory tool for agile policy-making.

At a macro level, revitalising the relationship with the EU/EFTA diasporas in Switzerland, while actively involving them in national (legislative) initiatives and in bilateral cooperation frameworks, needs to occur on several layers:

- **Strengthening democratic participation**
Supporting the participation of diasporas and diaspora organisations in raising motions and voting on legislation that concerns them directly will punctually inform Swiss lawmakers at the federal level on current trends and shortcomings. Moreover, direct participation will educate and empower diasporas, while facilitating their integration into Swiss society. Moreover, a standardisation for obtaining the C permit after five years (instead of 10) for all EU citizens irrespective of nationality, would enable migrants to actively participate to Switzerland's political system, and therefore have a voice in cantonal and communal ballots.
- **A knowledge repository mapping EU/EFTA & other diasporas**
Further developing a knowledge base regarding diasporas would inform Swiss foreign-policy trajectories, which can be adapted to respond to the specific profiles of diasporic and migrant communities. Such a repository would also enable a case-by-case approach to thematic/priority areas of international cooperation.

- Actively including diasporas in bilateral cooperation frameworks, centred on cohesion & stability.
A deeper, more targeted engagement of diasporas in Switzerland builds on a long-standing bilateral tradition that places communities at the heart of foreign policy. Diaspora's 'on the ground' know-how and expertise at home and in the countries of residence can maximise the impact and implementation of the Swiss contributions for instance, effectively acting as a facilitator in bilateral cooperation. Strengthening cooperation with diaspora regional and international actors, including the EU Global Diaspora Facility, and UN agencies.

The Swiss government acknowledges that a 'closer cooperation between development actors who recognise the diasporas' potential will open up new horizons as regards the development of migrants.' In this sense, expanding the Swiss foreign policy framework on migration, and therefore the Swiss strategic engagement of diasporas, could help strengthen the international cooperation agenda in these areas.

Annex

Residence permits for EU/EFTA nationals

Permanent Resident Population - The permanent resident population is the reference population for population statistics. As of 2010, the permanent resident population includes all Swiss nationals having their primary place of residence in Switzerland and foreign nationals who have held a home or permanent residence permit for a minimum of 12 months (permits B, C, L, F or N or FDFA permit-holding international civil servants, diplomats, and their family members).

Source: FSO - Federal Statistical Office

<https://www.bfs.admin.ch/bfs/en/home/statistics/population/effectif-change.html>

Residence Permit (B)

B EU/EFTA permit (Resident foreign nationals) - Foreign nationals are foreign nationals who reside in Switzerland for a more extended period for a particular purpose, with or without gainful employment. The residence permit for EU/EFTA nationals is valid for five years. It is issued if the foreign national has an employment contract of at least twelve months or an unlimited period. The only exceptions are for Croatian nationals (see below). The residence permit will be renewed for another five years if the foreign national satisfies the requirements. However, the first-time renewal of the licence can be limited to one year if the holder has been involuntarily unemployed for more than twelve consecutive months. Nationals from all EU/EFTA member states without gainful employment are entitled to a

B permit to prove they have sufficient financial means and adequate health and accident insurance. Since 1 January 2017, Protocol III of the Agreement on the free movement of persons between Switzerland and the EU applies to nationals from Croatia. A residence permit B EU/EFTA for gainful activities is issued to Croatian nationals provided they fulfil the specific transitory provisions (quotas and priority clause for local workers and control of wages and work conditions).

Source: SEM - State Secretariat for Migration SEM

https://www.sem.admin.ch/sem/en/home/themen/aufenthalt/eu_efta/ausweis_b_eu_efta.html

Settlement permit (C)

C EU/EFTA permit (Settled foreign nationals) - Settled foreign nationals are foreign nationals granted a settlement permit after five- or ten years of residence in Switzerland. The right to settle in Switzerland is not subject to any time restrictions or conditions. The State Secretariat for Migration (SEM) determines the earliest date from which the competent national authorities may grant settlement permits. In the case of EU/EFTA nationals, settlement permits are governed by the provisions of the Foreign Nationals and Integration Act and the settlement treaties. The Free Movement of Persons Agreement does not contain any provisions relating to settlement permits. If they meet the required conditions, nationals of Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Portugal, Spain and Sweden, as well as EFTA nationals (Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway) are granted settlement permits under settlement treaties or reciprocal agreements after five years' regular and uninterrupted residence in Switzerland. No such treaties exist for nationals of the other EU member states.

Source: SEM - State Secretariat for Migration

https://www.sem.admin.ch/sem/en/home/themen/aufenthalt/eu_efta/ausweis_c_eu_efta.html

Short-term residence permit (L)

L EU/EFTA permit (Short-term residents) - Short-term residents are foreign nationals who reside in Switzerland for a limited period, usually less than a year, for a particular purpose with or without

gainful employment. Short-term residents are foreign nationals who reside in Switzerland for a limited period, usually less than a year, for a particular purpose with or without gainful employment. EU/EFTA nationals are entitled to this permit provided an employment contract valid from three up to twelve months. Employment contracts of less than three months' duration within a calendar year are not subject to a permit but are regulated via a notification procedure. The only exceptions are for Croatian nationals (see below). The period of validity of the permit licence is identical to the employment contract term. It can be extended for a total period of fewer than twelve months. L EU/EFTA permits without gainful employment are granted to job seekers from all EU/EFTA states. However, this practice does not create an entitlement to social insurance. Since 1 January 2017, Protocol III to the Agreement on the free movement of persons between Switzerland and the EU applies to nationals from Croatia. A short-term permit L EU/EFTA for gainful activities is issued to Croatian nationals provided they fulfil the specific transitory provisions (quotas and priority clause for local workers and control of wages and work conditions). Croatian citizens cannot use the notification procedure and, therefore, have to hold a permit when taking up employment in Switzerland, regardless of the duration of the work contract.

Source: SEM - State Secretariat for Migration

https://www.sem.admin.ch/sem/en/home/themen/aufenthalt/eu_efta/ausweis_l_eu_efta.html

International civil servant without diplomatic immunity

For further information, see: Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations, 1991

https://legal.un.org/ilc/texts/instruments/english/conventions/9_1_1961.pdf

Diplomat, an international civil servant with diplomatic immunity

For further information, see: Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations, 1991

https://legal.un.org/ilc/texts/instruments/english/conventions/9_1_1961.pdf

Residence permit with gainful employment (Ci)

Ci EU/EFTA permit (Resident foreign nationals with gainful employment) - The residence permit with gainful employment is intended for members of foreign representations and family members of intergovernmental organisations (spouses and children up to 25 years old). The permit's validity is limited to the duration of the primary holder's function.

Source: SEM - State Secretariat for Migration

https://www.sem.admin.ch/sem/en/home/themen/aufenthalt/eu_efta/ausweis_ci_eu_efta.html

*Permit F (provisionally admitted foreigners) - Temporarily admitted foreign nationals are persons who have been ordered to leave Switzerland and return to their native countries but in whose cases enforcement of this order has proved unlawful (violation of international law), unreasonable (genuine risk to the foreign national concerned) or impossible (for technical reasons of enforcement).

Source: SEM - State Secretariat for Migration

https://www.sem.admin.ch/sem/en/home/themen/aufenthalt/nicht_eu_efta/ausweis_f__vorlaeufig.html

Swiss

Acquisition of Swiss citizenship - Swiss citizenship may be acquired through birth, naturalisation or renaturalisation.

Source: FDFA - Federal Department of Foreign Affairs

<https://www.eda.admin.ch/countries/usa/en/home/services/citizenship/acquisition.html>

Endnotes

- 1 Ibidem.
- 2 This framework is not limited to the UN constellation of agencies and organisations (IOM etc.) but was also adopted by the European Union, which launched the European Union Global Diaspora Facility precisely for this purpose.
- 3 The Swiss federal government acknowledged that 'closer cooperation between development actors who recognise diasporas' potential will open up new horizons as regards the development of migrants' countries of origin.' Available at: <https://www.eda.admin.ch/deza/en/home/themes-sdc/migration/diaspora-migrant-communities.html>.
- 4 Kathleen Newland (May 2022). Destination-Country Policies to Foster Diaspora Engagement in Development (Migration Policy Institute Brief). P.: 8. Available online at: https://www.migrationpolicy.org/sites/default/files/publications/mpi-diaspora-policies-2022_final.pdf.
- 5 Federal Statistical Office. 'The „population with a migration background“ as defined by the FSO includes all foreign nationals and naturalized Swiss citizens, except for those born in Switzerland and whose parents were both born in Switzerland, as well as Swiss citizens at birth whose parents were both born abroad.' Available at: <https://www.bfs.admin.ch/bfs/en/home/statistics/population/migration-integration/by-migration-status.html> & <https://www.bfs.admin.ch/bfs/en/home/statistics/population/migration-integration/foreign/composition.html>.
- 6 OECDiLibrary, International Migration Outlook 2021. Available at: <https://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/sites/0d0c25bd-en/index.html?itemId=/content/component/0d0c25bd-en>.
- 7 The 13 beneficiary EU member states include: Poland, Hungary, Slovenia, Slovakia, Czech Republic, Estonia, Lithuania, Latvia, Cyprus, Malta (acceded to the EU in 2004); Romania, Bulgaria (2007), and Croatia (2013).
- 8 There is also an inter-ministerial body (IMZ) for coordination on migration related issues between SECO, SDC & SEM.
- 9 SDC Migration and Forced Displacement. Diaspora - a development factor. Available at: <https://www.eda.admin.ch/deza/en/home/themes-sdc/migration/diaspora-migrant-communities.html>.
- 10 Ibidem.
- 11 Archival source: Sacha Zala et al. (ed.). Diplomatic documents of Switzerland (vol. 23, doc. 164). dodis.ch/31628, Zürich/Locarno/Genève 2011. Quote by Antonino Janner, a prominent lawyer and Swiss diplomat (1917-1982), referencing the visit to Socialist Republic of Romania (SSR) in 1966 during the Cold War.
- 12 For population estimates please see section 1.4 below. Essentially, there is no agreement as to how many Romanians live, work and study abroad, with estimates compiled by multiple sources ranging between 4 million and 9 million.
- 13 'Pour un pacte bilatéral Suisse-UE. Valeurs, personnes et échanges européens comme fondement politique pour la pérennisation de la voie bilatérale.' Foraus. Papier de discussion. February 2023. Available at: https://www.foraus.ch/wp-content/uploads/2023/02/20230203_Europa_WEB_FR.pdf.
- 14 According to the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC). 'Key questions and answers on the second Swiss contribution'. Available at: <https://www.eda.admin.ch/schweizerbeitrag/en/home/zweiter-schweizer-beitrag/qa.html>. Apart from the cohesion framework, Switzerland has also supported EU states facing high migratory influxes, allocating funding to countries such as Greece, Italy and Cyprus (from the first contribution). The migration framework credit falls within the purview of the State Secretariat for Migration (SEM).
- 15 Swiss enlargement contributions for Romania and Bulgaria were granted starting with 2009 (after the 2007 EU accession). For a detailed overview of implementation and thematic funding please see, <https://www.eda.admin.ch/schweizerbeitrag/en/home/the-swiss-contribution/countries/rumanien/resultate-in-rumaenien.html>.
- 16 SDC Press Release. 'Switzerland and Romania sign agreement on implementation

of second Swiss contribution'. Available at: <https://www.admin.ch/gov/en/start/documentation/media-releases.msg-id-92168.html>.

17 Based on the 2022 population census, from 42 administrative counties, 39 registered depopulation trends. Compared to the 2011 Census, overall, there are 1,1 million fewer inhabitants, however, the figures are much higher if analysing demographic statistics in emigration destination countries. 'Sociological analysis: Muntenia the region with the highest degree of depopulation' in Adevarul (January 2023). In Romanian, available at: <https://adevarul.ro/stiri-interne/societate/analiza-sociologica-muntenia-regiunea-romaniei-2232115.html>.

18 Link to 2019 report.

19 Project launched by the National Association for Children and Adults with Autism from Romania – Iasi branch. Description and impact available at: <http://elvetiaromania.ro/en/proiecte/increasing-the-capacity-of-non-governmental-organizations/>.

20 Project implemented by the Chamber of Commerce Switzerland-Romania Association (CCE-R). Description and impact available at: <http://elvetiaromania.ro/en/proiecte/ccer-sec/>.

21 Project implemented by the National Association of Citizens Advice Bureaux (NACAB). Description and impact can be consulted at: <http://elvetiaromania.ro/en/proiecte/the-power-of-participation/>.

22 Marceau Schroeter (2022). *Au cœur de la démocratie Suisse* (Geneva: Editions Slatkine). P. 94

23 Trade balance, Swiss exports to Romania, historical trends. Data available at: <https://comtrade.un.org/>.

24 According to the Swiss National Bank data on Swiss foreign direct investment in Romania. Available at: [https://data.snb.ch/en/topics/aube/cube/fdi/ausbla?fromDate=2012&toDate=2021&dimSel=d0\(RO\)](https://data.snb.ch/en/topics/aube/cube/fdi/ausbla?fromDate=2012&toDate=2021&dimSel=d0(RO)).

25 According to Switzerland Global Enterprise, Economic Report (2022). Available at: <https://www.s-ge.com/en/publication/country-information/romania-market-information>.

26 Craig Turp-Balasz (March 2018). 'New Statistics Confirm Romania's Demographic Catastrophe' in Emerging Europe. Available online at: <https://emerging-europe.com/news/new-statistics-confirm-romanas-demographic-catastrophe/>. The brief argues that Romania has lost almost a third of its young

people, compared to other countries across East Central Europe,

27 The *Demography* section of our report shows immigration yearly rates, with an overview of immigration legislation.

28 For a detailed analysis please see, Section 1 – The Demography. P. 8.

29 OECD (2019). *Talent Abroad: A Review of Romanian Emigrants* (Paris, OECD Publishing). Available online at: <https://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/sites/27927b96-en/index.html?itemId=/content/component/27927b96-en>.

30 'One in five Romanians between 25 and 40 live and work abroad' in Romania Insider (March 2018). Available at: <https://www.romania-insider.com/one-five-romanians-25-40-live-work-abroad>.

31 Some estimates point to as many as 8 million Romanian nationals currently living abroad, though the population size differs depending on the source, demographic criteria, and national statistical reporting. On rural depopulation, please refer to: 'A Romanian village feels the country's emigration pain' in Politico (August 2018). Available at: <https://www.politico.eu/article/intorsura-romania-village-migration-feels-the-countrys-emigration-pain/>. As well as Ovidiu Cornea (February 2023).

'Country in service. The number of Romanians for whom abroad has become a home reaches 6 million. Who will stop the exodus?' in Free Europe/Europa Libera Romania. Available in Romanian at: <https://romania.europalibera.org/a/romani-strainatate-romania-scadere-populatie/32262375.html>.

32 Ibid.

33 The vignettes section of this report provides an overview of how the Romanian diaspora altered voting outcomes through high mobilisation and participation rates during past elections.

34 Remittances are usually understood as the money or goods that migrants send back to families and friends in their origin countries, some targeting investments as well. The figures include only bank transfers, not cash, hence in reality, the volume may be much higher.

35 According to World Bank data on personal remittances, received (% of GDP) – Romania. Available at: <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/BX.TRF.PWKR.DT.GD.ZS?locations=RO>.

36 The diaspora has been particularly affected by the effects of the global pandemic. A

detailed overview can be consulted here: A-L Martinescu, A. Balatchi-Lupascu (October 2020). Understanding the Romanian Diaspora. Diaspora mobilisation during Covid-19'(Policy Brief, the Foreign Policy Centre). Available at: <https://fpc.org.uk/understanding-the-romanian-diaspora-diaspora-mobilisation-during-covid-19/>.

37 In 2021 remittance inflows by sending country show that the United Kingdom overtook Germany, which can be attributed to Germany's post-pandemic economic contraction.

38 According to World Bank data on personal remittances, received (% of GDP) – Romania. Available at: <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/BX.TRF.PWKR.DT.GD.ZS?locations=RO>.

39 A negative outcome may result in high inflationary pressures, driving prices upwards.

40 John Nana Francois, Nazneen Ahmad, Andrew Keinsley & Akwasi Nti-Addae (April 2022). 'Remittances Increase GDP with Potential Differential Impacts Across Countries' in People Move Blog (World Bank). Available at: <https://blogs.worldbank.org/peoplemove/remittances-increase-gdp-potential-differential-impacts-across-countries>. Referring to the relationship between remittances and domestic output, the authors contend that 'in countries where the increase in remittances is associated with an increase in investment, we observe a stronger positive relationship between remittance and output.' Passim.

41 There were sharp declines in remittance inflows during the financial crisis and Covid-19 pandemic.

42 Our study bridges the more recent diaspora (labour-oriented migration) and the former political dissidents that fled Romania's communist repression and settled in Switzerland.

43 Such as the anti-corruption protests that occurred not only in Romania but also abroad. Bogdan Neagu (December 2017). 'Romanian street protests continue as MPs press on with justice law change' in Euractiv. Available online at: <https://www.euractiv.com/section/justice-home-affairs/news/romanian-street-protests-continue-as-mps-press-on-with-justice-law-change/>.

44 NCCR – on the move (2020). Migration-Mobility Survey, available at: <https://nccr-onthemove.ch/indicators/how-strong-is-the-attachment-to-switzerland-and-the-country-of-origin/>.

45 Kathleen Newland (May 2022). Desti-

nation-Country Policies to Foster Diaspora Engagement in Development (Migration Policy Institute Brief). Passim.

46 This aspect is also mentioned in the Foraus publication: 'Pour un pact bilatéral Suisse-UE. Valeurs, personnes et échanges européennes comme fondement politique pour la pérennisation de la voie bilatérale.' Foraus. Papier de discussion. February 2023. Available at: https://www.foraus.ch/wp-content/uploads/2023/02/20230203_Europa_WEB_FR.pdf.

47 At the communal level 'the cantons of Fribourg, Vaud, Neuchâtel and Jura have awarded the right to vote, to elect and to be elected at communal level. Conditions vary from one canton to another, but in most cases a certain length of stay and/or a settlement permit are required.' At the cantonal level, 'only the cantons of Neuchâtel and Jura have given the right to vote and the right to elect to foreign citizens, subject to certain conditions. In contrast, no canton has given the right to be elected to foreign citizens (excepting the canton of Fribourg for the election of judges)! For further information: <https://www.bfs.admin.ch/bfs/en/home/statistics/population/migration-integration/integration-indicators/indicators/vote-eligibility-foreigners.html>

48 Marceau Schroeter (2022). *Au cœur de la démocratie Suisse* (Editions Slatkine: Geneva) P. 118. Translated from French. 'Le système crée une évolution permanente dont le peuple est partie prenante.'

49 Swiss Confederation Government. Available at: <https://www.eda.admin.ch/deza/en/home/themes-sdc/migration/diaspora-migrant-communities.html>.

50 Swiss Confederation Government. Available at: <https://www.eda.admin.ch/europa/en/home/weitere-dossiers/beitrag.html>. The Memorandum of Understanding between Switzerland and the European Union on a contribution by Switzerland towards reducing economic and social disparities and for cooperation in the area of migration in the European Union was signed in Brussels on 30 June 2022.

51 Ruxandra Oana Ciobanu, Claudio Bolzman (2019). 'The Construction of personal geographies among Romanian older migrants in Switzerland' in *Population, Space and Place*. P.:4.

52 Ibidem.

53 Ibidem.

- 54 History kindly revealed in writing by Mrs Cornelia Saurer, from the Association RO-Chance (August 2021).
- 55 Bulgarian and Romanian nationals, restricted access to Swiss labour market (May 2019). Available at: <https://blogs.deloitte.ch/tax/2019/05/bulgarian-and-romanian-nationals-restricted-access-to-labor-market-ends-june-1.html>.
- 56 According to: European Nationals in Switzerland. Information on the Free Movement of Persons (Federal Department of Foreign Affairs, FDFA). P.:7. Can be accessed at: <https://www.sem.admin.ch/dam/sem/en/data/eu/fza/broschueren/blau-europaeer-in-ch-e.pdf.download.pdf/blau-europaeer-in-ch-e.pdf>.
- 57 *Bulgarian and Romanian nationals, restricted access to Swiss labour market ends June 1* (Deloitte, 2019). Available at: <https://blogs.deloitte.ch/tax/2019/05/bulgarian-and-romanian-nationals-restricted-access-to-labor-market-ends-june-1.html>.
- 58 Semi-structured interviews were conducted (online) between the 30th of August and the 3rd of September 2021 with members of the Romanian community.
- 59 According to the State Secretariat for Migration SEM, available at: <https://www.sem.admin.ch/sem/en/home/themen/aufenthalt.html>.
- 60 According to the State Secretariat for Education, Research & Innovation (SERI). Data on Romanian enrolments is not provided. Refer to: <https://www.sbf.admin.ch/sbfi/en/home/education/scholarships-and-grants/swiss-government-excellence-scholarships.html>.
- 61 La migration féminine en Suisse: situation, apport et potentiel, published by the Federal Commission on Migration (June 2019). Available at: https://www.hevs.ch/media/document/3/rapport-sommaire-migration-feminine-en-suisse_f_2.7.pdf.
- 62 Ibidem
- 63 Vulnerability of Young Romanian Women to Trafficking in Human Beings, report published by the International Organization for Migration (October 2015). Available at: <https://publications.iom.int/books/vulnerability-young-romanian-women-trafficking-human-beings>.
- 64 Swiss police help uncover Europe-wide sex trafficking ring, available at: <https://www.swissinfo.ch/eng/joint-effort-swiss-police-help-uncover-europe-wide-sex-trafficking-ring/44697588>; see also Le Temps: <https://www.letemps.ch/suisse/un-reseau-proxenetisme-roumain-demantele-police-lausannoise>.
- 65 A competent analysis of naturalisation: Galeano J., Pont A., Wanner P. (2022). 'Longitudinal Analysis of Naturalisation and International Migration in Switzerland 2011-2017' in International Migration (23). Pp.: 889-910.
- 66 Ibidem. Pp.: 909-10. Sample analysed between 2011-2017.
- 67 Focus group with community members and diaspora associations, August 2021.
- 68 Ibidem.
- 69 Ibidem.
- 70 The Diaspora Initiative analysed the funding mechanism administered by the government's Department for Romanians Abroad (the public agency managing diaspora relations while also acting as a funding body). The comprehensive analysis of diaspora governance in Romania can be accessed by following this link: <https://diasporainitiative.org/governance/>.
- 71 The total number of interactions reports the categories of interaction with the highest values. To show trends in associative initiatives (why and with whom diaspora organisations interact/form relationships), we did not codify all the events an association organised or participated in (same applies for other categories of interactions/relationships).
- 72 We are grateful to Cristina Bronner, President of AREI Basel for imparting her experience, and offering suggestions and recommendations for an improved relationship with the Romanian institutions.
- 73 Newsletter AREI, October 2022.
- 74 Focus group with associations and a member of an Orthodox Parish in Winthour, August 2021.
- 75 See graphs above, Section 1 on Demography. There is no data on how many Romanians actually repatriated.
- 76 The semi-structured interviews were conducted between 2020 and 2021 with Romanian ethnics living in Switzerland and Serbia.
- 77 Rosita Fibbi, Philippe Wanner, Ceren Topgül & Dusan Ugrina, The new second generation in Switzerland. Youth of Turkish and Former Yugoslav Descent in Zürich and Basel. IMISCOE Research. Amsterdam University Press. Available at: <https://library.oapen.org/bitstream/id/26fe97e5-9d53-4916-b790-39e31e0a5501/530350.pdf>. Pp. 38-39.
- 78 Semi-structured interviews with ethnic

Romanians from Serbia who settled in Wintertur (September 2020).

79 Elections abroad and organising the polling stations falls within the purview of Romania's MFA (Ministry of Foreign Affairs), a process overseen by the Central Electoral Office (Biroul Electoral Central).

80 In the Romanian Parliament, the diaspora is represented by a total of 6 MPs.

81 This part contains extracts from the paper submitted to the International Organisation for Migration (IOM), MPP Report, on October 14th, 2022, written by Andra-Lucia Martinescu and Cătălina Moisescu, "Humanitarian Ecosystems: Can Diasporas act as effective humanitarians?".

82 United Nations Refugee Agency (UNHCR). 2022. Internally Displaced Persons (IDP). UNHCR, Report, Ukraine.

83 Framework Agreement between the Government of Romania and the Swiss Federal Council on the implementation of the second Swiss contribution in certain Member States of the European Union for the reduction of economic and social disparities in the European Union, of 12.12.2022.

84 Conseil fédéral (2020). Stratégie de politique extérieure 2020-2023. <https://www.eda.admin.ch/eda/fr/dfae/politique-exterieure/mise-oeuvre-politique-exterieure/aussenpolitischestrategie.html> in 'Pour un pact bilatéral Suisse-UE. Valeurs, personnes

et échanges européennes comme fondement politique pour la pérennisation de la voie bilatérale.' Foraus. Papier de discussion. February 2023. Translated from French : 'Les interconnexions et interdépendances humaines entre la Suisse et l'UE sont fortes et doivent recevoir une attention particulière'. Available at: https://www.foraus.ch/wp-content/uploads/2023/02/20230203_Europa_WEB_FR.pdf.

85 We are grateful to Dr. Ulrich Sturzinger (former Head of Division New member States, SDC/FDFA), who kindly provided thorough feedback on the report and actionable suggestions in line with current institutional frameworks governing bilateral relations.

86 Apud R.G. Anghel, R. Trandafoiu. 'A glimpse of humanity: how Romanian have mobilised to help Ukrainian refugees' in LSE Blogs (March 2023). Available at: <https://blogs.lse.ac.uk/europpblog/2022/03/08/a-glimpse-of-humanity-how-romanians-have-mobilised-to-help-ukrainian-refugees/>. The Eurobarometer Survey (2021) can be accessed here: https://multimedia.europarl.europa.eu/en/package/eurobarometer_22003.

87 Romania's main strategic objectives for diaspora engagement centre on Return Migration/Repatriation and the preservation of an ethno-cultural identity in countries of destination.

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Disclaimer

This study reflects the personal opinion of the authors, which is not necessarily the same as that of the association foraus.

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