

Regional Research Promotion Programme in the Western Balkans (RRPP) – Over 1 million Swiss Francs to be invested in Serbia into research projects in the field of social sciences

In the next two years, Switzerland will invest more than **1 million CHF** into Serbian social sciences projects, especially focusing on support to the emerging generation of researchers (PhD students or recent PhD graduates) and internationalisation of their research work. **Research institutions from Serbia will be leading 8 regional research projects with over 100 researchers.** Over the last five years, RRPP supported 50 research projects in the Western Balkans worth 3.7 million CHF, with 1 mil. CHF invested into 16 projects in Serbia involving more than 125 Serbian researchers.

RRPP supports projects addressing the practical problems societies in the region are experiencing in the process of transition. The following questions will be tackled with the newly selected projects:

- *Have the public policies in Serbia been adopted on the basis of intuition or on scientific evidence?*
- *What are the informal ways of capturing economic resources by political elites and how to reform the Serbian tax system?*
- *How to improve social care system for citizens living in rural areas?*
- *How to improve relations among different ethnic groups in the region?*
- *What is the role of the media in the process of shaping public discourse on LGBT population?*

The aforementioned questions are only some of the issues to be tackled by the RRPP researchers in the following two years. The Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) through the University of Fribourg is to support 21 research projects in the Western Balkans as a part of the RRPP consolidation phase 2014-2016. The programme is aimed at fostering and promoting research in the field of social sciences and its relevance for the on-going reforms.

More information about the RRPP and selected projects can be found at the web page www.rpp-westernbalkans.net or by sending an email to serbia@rpp-westernbalkans.net

The RRPP is coordinated and operated by the Interfaculty Institute for Central and Eastern Europe (IICEE) at the University of Fribourg (Switzerland). The Local Coordination Unit in Serbia is the Institute of Economic Sciences from Belgrade. The programme is fully funded by the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC), Federal Department of Foreign Affairs.