



Solidary with the People in Eastern Europe



Renewal and Reconstruction

Renovabis is the solidarity initiative of the German Catholics with the people in Central and Eastern Europe. Renovabis was founded in March 1993 by the German Bishops' Conference at the suggestion of the Central Committee of the German Catholics. The initiative supports its partners in the pastoral, social and societal renewal of the formerly communist countries of Central, Eastern and South-Eastern Europe. In the statutes of Renovabis it is among other things stipulated that: "It is the purpose of the association to further the pastoral objects in Central and Eastern Europe and the societal reconstruction in these regions, which the overall population shall benefit from, as well as to support people in need of help, regardless of their nationality and religious affiliation." (Art. 2)

During the past 16 years, Renovabis has supported the realization of more than 16,100 projects in 29 countries of

Central, Eastern and South-Eastern Europe – with an overall volume of around 470 million Euro.

Support for Self-Help

An important criterion for the support of projects is the "partner principle". This means that Renovabis becomes active when and where partners ask for the support of concrete projects. It is a precondition that the project partners contribute sufficiently to the realization of the project through material contribution or personal activity. Furthermore, a project can only be supported on the condition that it will remain viable without help also after the cessation of the subsidization. Therefore, the capability of the partner organization to shoulder responsibility and its qualification are indispensable prerequisites for the commitment of Renovabis, which always aims at offering support for self-help.

Solidarity is Essential

After the collapse of the communist regimes in 1989/1990, many countries in Eastern Europe have made great progress from a political and an economic point of view. However, one thing should not be overlooked: In most of the states, the necessary transformation processes have brought about a considerable, long-term deterioration of the material living conditions of many people. The social divide within the societies of these countries has become even greater; a "social network" mostly does not exist. By the way, this is also true for new EU states such as Hungary, Poland and the Czech Republic.

Our solidarity with people in need in Central, Eastern and South-Eastern Europe will remain indispensable for a long time to come.



Renovabis - this Latin initiative stems from Psalms 104:24, "Renovabis faciem terrae", which means to renew the face of the earth.

Partnership and Dialogue

The solidarity initiative Renovabis initiates and accompanies several hundred partnerships between West and East in Europe and thus furthers the exchange of experience, human encounters and common learning.

Renovabis keeps close contact to more than 1,800 partnership groups. With their primarily voluntary commitment, these groups are building living bridges of mutual understanding to the people in Central, Eastern and South-Eastern Europe, who live in a multitude of traditions and have a rich spiritual heritage. This is a chance for a fruitful "exchange of gifts".

Information on Eastern Europe

It is the aim of Renovabis to promote an understanding of this need for solidarity with the people in Eastern Europe in overall Germany by conducting publicity, educational and lobby activities vis-à-vis donors, parishes, churchly and non-churchly institutions. In press releases, radio reports and

telecasts as well as on its homepage Renovabis informs about the situation in the states in question, supported projects and the situation of the churches on the spot. Educational events and exchange programs offer the possibility to study political, social, churchly and European issues intensively in a dialogue with partners from Central, Eastern and South-Eastern Europe. It is the aim of Renovabis to sensitize politics and the public also for particular problems by means of lobbying activities – for instance by its membership in the Aktionsbündnis gegen Frauenhandel (alliance against trafficking in women) and in the Aktionsbündnis gegen Aids (alliance against aids). One important instrument of Renovabis's publicity activities is the "Pfingstaktion" (Pentecost campaign) which is organized in two dioceses every year and which features opening and closing events taking place on several days.

Project Sponsorship by Renovabis

Concepts Made to Measure

Renovabis's projects in the countries of Central, Eastern and South-Eastern Europe are developed in close cooperation with partners in the field and are therefore oriented on their needs and possibilities.



Albania: Assistance for street children in the day-care center "Eden" in Tirana.

Projects are as a rule sponsored upon prior request. This means that the partners file requests for projects with

Renovabis, which requests describe the planned projects and already contain detailed cost and funding planning. An adequate contribution of the partners – commensurate with the partners' capabilities - is required.

The project policy of Renovabis is geared to the real demand, meaning that the implementation of a project focuses on the concrete living conditions of the people on the spot. The point is to find concepts which are made to measure. In order to monitor the progress of assisted projects, reports about the use of the provided means are required. This is supervised by internal auditing and external auditors. Renovabis checks up regularly on the development and progress of a project on the spot and consults specialists and internal advisors.

The principle underlying all these tasks is that the support of projects does not create any new dependencies, and that the tenet "support for self-help" is adhered to consistently. Accordingly, one component of Renovabis's policy is that many projects merely provide start-up financing and that long-term funding is avoided. Another component of our policy is that in the case of so-called program financing the partners are the solely responsible project managers.

Renovabis

name of the solidarity
salm 104: „Renovabis
means: „You (God) will
earth.“

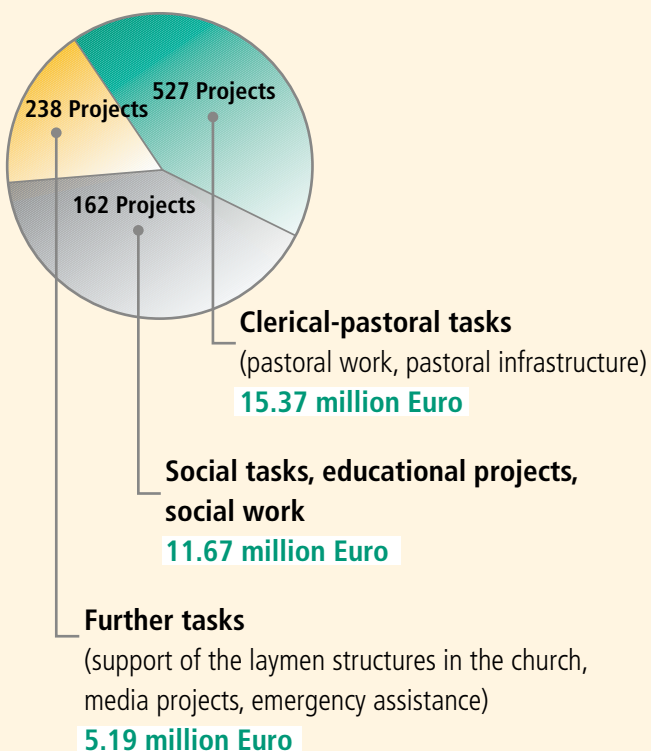
Broad Spectrum

The project sponsorship by Renovabis follows a holistic approach encompassing both churchly and social projects. During the past years, an ever-increasing number of educational projects were added. This shows clearly that such projects are

prioritized which offer a direct benefit for the people, or to put it differently: In the light of the scarcity of means, investment in the wellbeing of the people takes priority over investment in the material infrastructure.

The spectrum of projects is conceivably broad. Within the framework of the necessary social and societal renewal Renovabis is for example supporting work with children and adolescents, for instance by establishing kindergartens and schools or by supporting international youth meetings. Furthermore, assistance is given to soup kitchens or homes for homeless persons, orphans and handicapped persons. The organization of socio-political and economic-political seminars to impart the Christian social teaching and to further democratic awareness is – among the training of priests and laymen for service in the parishes – a further element of the assistance given.

Types of Projects Assisted in 2008



Clerical-Pastoral Tasks

Pastoral work, e. g.:

- Pastoral care tasks
- Youth counseling
- Family counseling
- Prisoner counseling
- Training of priests, members of the order, catechists

Pastoral infrastructure, e. g.:

- Construction/renovation of churches and community centers in pronounced Diaspora regions



Members of the order and priests – indispensable for the pastoral care of and social work with people in Eastern Europe.

Social Tasks, Educational Projects

Social work, e. g.:

- Construction and equipment of orphanages
- Work with street children
- Support of facilities for handicapped people and old people's homes
- Operation of welfare centers and hospices
- Programs for the protection of life and family
- Holiday camps for children in need
- Aid projects for victims of the trafficking in women

Education and training, e. g.:

- Sponsorship of schools and vocational training centers
- Vocational training workshops
- Training scholarships
- Sponsorship of colleges and universities

Further Tasks

Support of the laymen structures in the church, e. g.:

- Training of laymen as parish council members
- Coordinators of youth and family work
- Support of church association work

Support of media work, e. g.:

- Training of journalists
- Assistance to Christian media



The Downside of the Development

Since the turning point of the years 1989/1990, the former Eastern Bloc has changed dramatically. Many things have changed for the better. However, the downside of this development is often overlooked by the people in the West. One of the critical problems, which also the new EU member states are confronted with, is the dramatic increase in unemployment, above all in structurally weak regions. Market-economical systems have been established which do not provide any social fallback systems. A further problem is the drain of qualified workers through emigration to the West, where considerably higher wages are paid. The disadvantaged and victimized people at the edge of society in the Eastern European countries have been the focus of Renovabis's work since its foundation in 1993. Renovabis takes up commitments regardless of whether the state in question is an EU member state or not. After all, the hardships suffered by the people do not simply disappear upon the signing of a membership treaty. In addition, the "pastoral wasteland" left by the communist systems of the past decades requires sustained commitment. The care for the people "forsaken" by the transformation covers a broad spectrum of activities: pastoral care, pastoral help and guidance are equally important as the support and the sponsorship of socially weak people. Renovabis regards education and training in particular as key factors and an investment in the future.

936 Projects and Scholarships

In the year 2008 Renovabis sponsored a total of 936 projects (including 125 scholarships) in almost all countries of Central, Eastern and South-Eastern Europe, including overall Russia, the Central Asian republics and the Transcaucasian countries. This number also contains 53 transnational projects and 48 subsistence allowances for priests and permanent deacons.

Renovabis, the solidarity initiative of German Catholics with the people in Central and Eastern Europe, understandably has a special affinity with the Catholic congregations on the spot. However, the initiative also cooperates with other congregations and denominations, among them especially the orthodox congregations, and helps all people of good faith within the framework of its possibilities.

Information and Inquiries

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