

**SDG 17: STRENGTHEN THE MEANS OF IMPLEMENTATION AND REVITALIZE THE GLOBAL PARTNERSHIP FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT**



**Global sustainable development needs global partnerships.** They will help mobilise financial resources, boost international knowledge sharing, make global trade more just and reduce the over-indebtedness of poor countries. Multi-stakeholder partnerships will be developed in order to support achievement of the SDGs in all countries.

**SUSTAINABILITY KNOWS NO BOUNDARIES**

**➔ WHAT ARE THE ACTIVITIES ALL ABOUT?**

The City of Leipzig in the federal state of Saxony and the Municipality of Travnik in Bosnia and Herzegovina have been cooperating since 1997, initially on the level of an informal friendship. Ideas are generated by a vibrant bilateral citizens' association. In 2003 the two sides turned their relationship into an official twinning scheme.

**➔ WHAT HAS BEEN DONE SO FAR?**

The focus is on exchange between people, enabling each side to get to know how people on the other side work, live and think, and to get to know their strengths and weaknesses. Citizens and businesses in Leipzig are supporting the town of Travnik in the Balkans in overcoming the legacy of war and building sustainable structures. One sign of friendship is that in Leipzig there is now a 'Travnik Street', and in Travnik there is a 'Leipzig Square'.

**➔ HOW WAS THIS IMPLEMENTED?**

The members of the association get involved selectively in projects for democracy, the environment, sports, culture and economic affairs. They also cultivate personal friendships. Since 1998 citizens have made annual visits to strengthen links at the grassroots level. In 2016, donations collected in Leipzig were used to fund a new organ at the Guca Gora Monastery.

**➔ WHAT ARE THE NEXT STEPS?**

In January 2017 the two municipalities raised their cooperation of 20 years to a new level by agreeing to enter into a 'Municipal Partnership for Sustainability' as part of a Service Agency pilot project. This involves embarking on a dialogue process, and long-term and systematic cooperation in the context of the 2030 Agenda and the 17 SDGs.



**Leipzig** ➔ Saxony

Population:  
**575,000**

Mayor:  
**Burkhard Jung**





## FROM HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE TO SUSTAINABLE COOPERATION

The civil war in ex-Yugoslavia that lasted until 1995 has left traces that can also be seen and felt in Travnik in central Bosnia. When the association to promote the partnership between Leipzig and Travnik was founded in 1997, the primary aim was to therefore to build networks and provide humanitarian assistance.

One of the first successful projects involved installing a heating system for a child day-care centre in Travnik. One result of the war was the destruction of the organ in the Guca Gora Franciscan Monastery. The visitors from Saxony were impressed by the courage with which the monks had given refuge to members of all ethnic groups during the war. They therefore organised four concerts with Bosnian elements in Leipzig, thus raising the 7,000 euros needed for a new organ.

The work of the association now focuses more on promoting youth and economic development. In close cooperation with Leipzig town hall, many projects have been realised that were designed chiefly 'to support the systematic objective of enabling a municipal partnership to grow from the bottom up', says Michael Weichert, who has chaired the association for many years as well as being a member of the federal state parliament. He explains that a cooperation arrangement of this kind can only be made sustainable in the long-term if ambitious citizens are actively involved in generating ideas.

The association currently has 120 members in Leipzig and 33 in Travnik. They work to facilitate exchange between institutions, organisations and private individuals in the two municipalities. There are a number of joint projects, school exchange schemes, reciprocal internships, business trips and many other activities besides. Small and medium-sized enterprises in Saxony get involved and make a contribution through campaigns such as 'Water meters for more sustainability'. In 2009 the European Parliament recognised this engagement by awarding the European Citizens' Prize. 'This partnership works because both sides benefit from it – and it works well perhaps for the very reason that Travnik is so 'small' and Leipzig so 'big'', thinks Mr Weichert.

In 2016 the two municipalities decided to take part in the Service Agency's pilot project 'Municipal Partnerships for



Signing up to the Leipzig-Travnik partnership for sustainability (Photo: Barbara Frommann)

Sustainability'. They are supporting each other in integrating the themes of the 2030 Agenda into existing urban development plans and strategies. Regular expert meetings and joint workshops are held for this purpose. Here too, the differences between the two municipalities are an advantage. Dr Gabriele Goldfuß, Head of Department for International Cooperation, City of Leipzig, gives the following example: In Leipzig, urban agriculture is currently being developed in manifold ways. In Travnik, agriculture is part of people's everyday lives. Leipzig, which is in eastern Germany, is sharing the lessons it learned in its process of development and transformation for more sustainability after 1989. In the process of developing a new and viable economy, sustainability needs to play a role as early on as possible, explains Dr Goldfuß. It is then important to get citizens and councillors on board right from the start. The exchange of ideas and expertise on strategic local development between Leipzig and Travnik takes this into account. In the end both sides profit: 'You always learn the most by teaching', says Dr Goldfuß. She also emphasises that sustainability is a topic that must be harmonised Europe-wide.

### INTERNET ADDRESSES

<http://english.leipzig.de>

<http://skew.engagement-global.de/municipal-partnerships-for-sustainability.html>