60 years

of European solidarity



CEB

COUNCIL OF EUROPE DEVELOPMENT BANK
BANQUE DE DEVELOPPEMENT DU CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

ORIGINS

Ravaged by World War II, Europe faced a difficult period of reconstruction and the largest movement of populations in its history. An estimated 30 million people were displaced during and after the war, either fleeing the fighting or expelled from their native lands. Refugees from Eastern Europe rushing to escape to the other side of the Iron Curtain added to the vast population transfer that threatened the stability of the continent already exhausted by the war.

In response to the plight of people driven from their homes by the upheavals of the 20th century, the "Council of Europe Resettlement Fund for National Refugees and Overpopulation in Europe" was established on 16 April 1956. Described by its first Governor, René Plas, as "an organisation for human solidarity on a banking basis", the Fund was tasked to aid the integration of refugees and migrants.

The CEB was thus born out of a vision of European solidarity, as a step forward in the building of a European community. Since then, its gradual transformation into a fully-fledged, multilateral development bank with an exclusively social vocation has been inextricably linked with the history of the European continent itself.



GROWING MEMBERSHIP

Established as a Partial Agreement of the Council of Europe, the CEB was founded by eight member states, already reflecting very diverse horizons: Belgium, France, Germany, Greece, Iceland, Italy, Luxembourg, and Turkey.

Today, the CEB has no fewer than 41 members and its membership reflects Europe's own geographical and cultural diversity: in addition to all but two EU countries, the Bank counts among its members all the Nordic and Baltic states, Georgia, the Republic of Moldova and Turkey, all the Balkan states, Switzerland, Liechtenstein, San Marino, and the Holy See. It thus constitutes a unique platform of cooperation between countries of all sizes and from all corners of Europe, united in their firm resolve to advance integration and strengthen social cohesion.

THE BANK'S MEMBER STATES (YEAR OF ACCESSION)

- Albania (1999)
- Belgium (1956)
- Bosnia and Herzegovina (2003)
- Bulgaria (1994)
- Croatia (1997)
- Cyprus (1962)
- Czech Republic (1999)
- Denmark (1978)
- Estonia (1998)
- Finland (1991)
- France (1956)
- Georgia (2007)
- Germany (1956)
- Greece (1956)
- Holy See (1973)
- Hungary (1998)
- Iceland (1956)
- Ireland (2004)
- Italy (1956)
- Kosovo (2013)
- Latvia (1998)
- Liechtenstein (1976)
- Lithuania (1996)
- Luxembourg (1956)
- Malta (1973)
- Republic of Moldova (1998)
- Montenegro (2007)
- Netherlands (1978)
- Norway (1978)
- Poland (1998)
- Portugal (1976)
- Romania (1996)
- San Marino (1989)
- Serbia (2004)
- Slovak Republic (1998)
- Slovenia (1994)
- Spain (1978)
- Sweden (1977)
- Switzerland (1974)
- "the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia" (1997)
- Turkey (1956)

COUNCIL OF EUROPE

Created in 1949, the Council of Europe is the continent's leading human rights organisation. It has 47 member states, 28 of which are members of the European Union. All Council of Europe member states have signed up to the European Convention on Human Rights, a treaty designed to protect human rights, democracy and the rule of law.

KEY MOMENTS



1956

The CEB was created in the form of a Resettlement Fund to contribute to financing projects for the resettlement of refugees from World War II and its aftermath.



1993

The Vienna Summit signalled a wave of new member countries from Central, Eastern and then South-Eastern Europe.



1997

The Strasbourg Summit widened the CEB's mandate to include strengthening social cohesion, alongside the statutory priorities set out in its Articles of Agreement.

KEY MOMENTS



2005

The Warsaw Summit invited the CEB to contribute in its own way to the development of a free, democratic and more inclusive European society.



2015

In the wake of the biggest influx of migrants and refugees into Europe since WWII, the CEB established its Migrant and Refugee Fund.

EVOLUTION

1950s

Acting where the needs were most acute, the CEB focused its funding on four countries: Germany, which, having suffered substantial destruction during the war, was grappling with the influx of millions of refugees from Eastern Europe; Italy, Greece, and Turkey, which, in their turn, were facing recurrent influxes of refugees while also having to deal with internal migration into urban areas. The majority of CEB projects during this period essentially involved the construction of housing at a time when it was in short supply throughout Europe.

1960s

Booming Western European economies in need of labour attracted steady streams of migrants, mostly from the south of the continent.

Equipping migrants with the necessary job market skills and helping them settle were among the priorities for the CEB during this decade. In addition to the traditionally strong housing component of its project portfolio, the CEB invested significantly in vocational training. Financed projects were also aimed at accompanying structural changes in the economy by facilitating the transfer of workers between rural and urban areas.

1970s

In the 1970s, Europe faced a difficult time on account of a slowdown in growth and rising unemployment. As countries struggled to finance social investments, they increasingly turned to the CEB. Six new countries joined the organisation during this period.

For the CEB, projects aimed at fighting unemployment through vocational training were a priority, followed by rural development projects aimed at curbing emigration and rural exodus. During this period, the CEB also funded comprehensive urban renewal operations to eliminate areas of slum housing – in Ankara, Istanbul, and Valetta, to name but a few.

EVOLUTION

1980s

The second oil crisis ushered in a period of renewed inflation and economic slump in Europe. At the same time, high rates of unemployment persisted, particularly among the young. In this deteriorating economic situation, countries began restricting immigration, while some of the existing migrants struggled to find work.

Recognising that migrants needed help in order to voluntarily return to their countries of origin, the CEB funded projects aimed at facilitating migrant resettlement through vocational training, housing support and assistance to small and medium-sized businesses. A large number of projects were also financed in support of the fledgling democracies in Portugal, Spain and Greece.

1990s

The fall of the Berlin Wall made it possible to carry out the project for which the CEB had been created – the construction of a unified, democratic, solidarity-based Europe. The CEB took up the challenges posed by reunification, renewing its working methods in order to best be able to provide support to its new members from Central and Eastern Europe.

In 1997, the CEB's mission was refocused under the umbrella of supporting social cohesion in Europe. For the first time, managing the environment became one of the CEB's priorities.

2000s ...

Support to the transition countries of Central and Eastern Europe and the resettlement of refugees from the wars in former Yugoslavia dominated the CEB's agenda during this decade. However, funding public infrastructure, including health and education, and aiding victims of natural disasters were also among its priority projects.

To enhance solidarity between its members, the CEB created a group of target countries which, at the time, represented less than one fifth of the Bank's subscribed capital.

CEB TODAY



The CEB is the only European multilateral development bank with an entirely social purpose. The Bank has a deep understanding of the social infrastructure project needs throughout Europe and the ability to stay engaged with its borrowers.

The CEB invests in social projects that foster inclusion and contribute to improving the living conditions of the most vulnerable populations across Europe.

The CEB funds projects in the following sectoral lines of action:

- Strengthening social integration
- Managing the environment
- Supporting public infrastructure with a social vocation
- Supporting micro, small and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs)

In order to maximise the Bank's contribution to strengthening social cohesion in its member countries, the CEB finances bankable projects through a range of financing instruments that provide flexibility for its borrowers and can thus best address their specific needs.

LOOKING AHEAD

60 years after the establishment of the CEB, Europe is once again confronted with serious challenges. In this context, advancing social cohesion remains a key objective for European policymakers, who are seeking effective ways to address issues such as the migrant and refugee crisis.

It also underlines the continued relevance of the CEB, which possesses the expertise, lending instruments and financial soundness to support its member countries in implementing their social policies.

Firmly committed to our social mandate and well prepared to tackle present and future challenges, we, at the CEB, are determined to work towards building a better Europe.

Rolf Wenzel, Governor



CEB: Building a better Europe

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