



EUROPEAN COMMISSION
DIRECTORATE-GENERAL FOR EUROPEAN CIVIL PROTECTION AND HUMANITARIAN AID
OPERATIONS (ECHO)
Neighbourhood and Middle East
Southeast Europe and Eastern Neighbourhood

FIRST HUMANITARIAN SENIOR OFFICIALS MEETING ON UKRAINE

26 September 2022, Brussels, Belgium

CHAIR'S SUMMARY

Note: This Chair's summary reflects the understanding of the EU about the key messages shared by participants and of the overall thrust of the discussions at the Senior Officials Meeting.

The first Senior Officials Meeting (SOM) on Ukraine of 26 September 2022 brought together representatives of the Ukrainian government, EU Member States, key donors, United Nations organisations, the International Committee of the Red Cross, the World Bank, EU funded humanitarian organisations, the General Secretariat of the Council and the European Commission. The meeting focused on taking stock of the current humanitarian situation in Ukraine, identifying the immediate priorities, addressing the main challenges, and discussing possible steps forward for a more sustainable, effective, efficient and comprehensive response encompassing both humanitarian and development aid.

The SOM took place in an extraordinarily concerning situation. As Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine rages on, humanitarian needs in the country continue to rise rapidly, driven by devastating economic and financial downturn, food insecurity, deteriorating infrastructure and services and continued armed conflict. A staggering number of people – 17.7 million as of September 2022 – are in need of humanitarian protection and assistance, namely, winterised shelter, health, food, multi-purpose cash assistance (MPCA) and education in emergencies, including safe and accessible learning spaces.

The humanitarian community is facing serious challenges in Ukraine, most notably with regard to setting up winterised shelters, ensuring humanitarian access across the country to reach all those in need, working more closely with local actors, providing flexible and sustained funding and enhancing demining actions. An effective and efficient response requires close coordination and synergies between donors, international and local humanitarian organisations, and local, regional and national authorities within Ukraine. It also calls for cooperation between humanitarian aid and development actors and the respective coordination structures.

Strengthening the Emergency Response

- Donors and humanitarian actors reaffirmed their **unwavering commitment** to continue providing life-saving support to the people of Ukraine in line with the humanitarian principles.
- Participants highlighted the need to ensure the **unimpeded safety of humanitarian relief personnel and health workers** as well as the ability of both national and international humanitarian and health workers to work within Ukraine.
- In view of current access restrictions in non-government-controlled areas (NGCAs) and areas under heavy fighting and hostilities, participants called on all parties to provide **full, safe, unhindered and durable humanitarian access** in line with International Humanitarian Law (IHL). Participants remain engaged in their efforts to carry out authorised crossline operations through flexible and innovative approaches.
- Participants called for **greater and immediate presence of humanitarian actors in newly accessible areas** where humanitarian needs are dire. This includes an imminent need for **demining activities** and equipment to facilitate the safe distribution of humanitarian aid.
- Participants urged all donors to ensure that their **funding is sustained, flexible and not at the expense of other humanitarian crises**. There is a need for additional earmarked **sector-wide and geographically focused funding** to meet the most acute needs on a local and regional level.
- The meeting affirmed the importance of **strengthening the complementarities and synergies** between humanitarian actors, donors and the Ukrainian government, and **improving the linkages between respective coordination structures**. Enhanced coordination mechanisms should be applied on a regular, structured and sector-oriented basis, including the exchange of best practices, lessons learnt and identification of main priorities and goals.
- The meeting concluded that robust coordination structures and partnerships are closely linked to **enhanced consultations and trust-building with the government of Ukraine** as well as **with local and regional authorities** in view of the decentralised structure of the national government, with the objective of adopting more effective and results-oriented approaches.
- Participants agreed on the need to **cooperate more closely with local civil society organisations** considering their role as first responders in tandem with their presence and capacity to reach people in hard-to-reach and newly accessible areas. This entails reinforcing their financial and operational capacities to procure and deliver humanitarian assistance as well as focus on tailor-made assistance, subject to the needs of the population in each region. This would mean **moving towards area-based and sector-oriented programming and responses**. In addition, the involvement of local entities in coordination structures is vital to ensure access to local services and needs-based guidance.

Key short and mid-term priorities

- The meeting affirmed wide-ranging support for **scaling up and speeding up winterisation efforts** across Ukraine, including the reconstruction and rehabilitation of emergency shelters, accommodation centres, schools and learning spaces, the provision of warm clothing, electricity and gas for heating, as well as cash, food and health care assistance. Recognising the efforts already underway, participants stressed the urgency with which partners and donors must scale up their support to protect the most vulnerable and instil long-term positive consequences on the entire population of Ukraine. Targeted assistance ahead of the coming winter should also be provided to Ukrainian refugees in Moldova.
- More assistance is needed to support children's access to **education and safe learning spaces**, as well as on reinforcing their – now limited – ability to learn by overcoming the trauma and psychological stress associated with the war.
- **Multi-purpose cash assistance (MPCA)** represents an important modality in the winterisation response, as well as for economic development. It should therefore be prioritised where appropriate and feasible in humanitarian aid responses, particularly in hard-to-reach areas and in areas not controlled by the Ukrainian government, where other types of humanitarian assistance is not easily accessible. A more targeted, yet flexible, approach should be applied to allow for adaptation to changing circumstances and ensure sustainability of the response.
- Participants stressed the importance of addressing the destruction of **healthcare** facilities as well as the deprivation of civilian access to essential health services, including sexual and reproductive healthcare services, in conjunction with the winterisation process. Donors and humanitarian actors will support the repairs of healthcare facilities procurement of mobile health units to reach conflict-affected people across Ukraine and efforts to prevent and/or limit the outbreak of infectious diseases. Taking into account the increasing psycho-social needs of war-affected and displaced people as well as of first responders, participants called for action in mental health and psycho-social support.
- Participants stressed the importance of providing effective and timely **protection** services in view of war-inflicted atrocities, with specific attention to psycho-social support to vulnerable groups, notably to women, children, persons with disabilities and the elderly.
- Considering the current and future **food security** challenges within Ukraine and beyond, participants support the continuation of the Black Sea Initiative to meet global demands while also reinforcing Ukraine's economic activities and development amid the war.

The humanitarian-development nexus in Ukraine

- Participants agreed that both humanitarian aid and support to reconstruction and livelihoods need to be simultaneously provided in the current context of Ukraine. Ukraine's recovery cannot be achieved without one or the other, there is a need to increase already now the recovery assistance in basic services, education and health services.
- The following parameters for strengthening the nexus were jointly identified:
 - Donors should sustain their humanitarian and development funding by targeting the different needs of the people in different parts of the country.

- The international humanitarian and development communities need to rapidly step up their efforts and coordination mechanisms. Enhanced coordination among the main actors in terms of the activities undertaken, timelines and geographical locations will facilitate a more efficient, effective and sustainable response.
- Considering the vital and reliable role played so far by local entities in the humanitarian response, the inclusion of regional authorities and local civil society organisations will form one of the key components in consolidating the nexus between humanitarian and development aid. Local entities have the knowledge and experience to drive and shape the response in line with geographically tailored and sector-based needs.
- There is a critical need to help build up local and regional capacities rather than substituting them.
- Wherever possible, the humanitarian response in the newly accessible areas should be accompanied with development assistance and reconstruction efforts.

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