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DIRECTORATE-GENERAL FOR EMPLOYMENT, SOCIAL AFFAIRS AND INCLUSION

Social Rights and Inclusion
Disability and Inclusion

Brussels
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**STRATEGIC DIALOGUE ONLINE MEETING
ON UKRAINIAN REFUGEE CRISIS – SUPPORT MEASURES**

14 MARCH 2022

MEETING REPORT

Civil Society organisations: see the enclosed attendance list

Commission participants: Andriana Sukova, Katarina Ivankovic-Knezevic, Ruth Paserman (DG EMPL), Chiara Gariazzo (DG HOME), Jose Blaquez Yeste, Franciska Barabas Komives, Andrea Borbely, Michele Calandrino, Loris Di Pietrantonio, Marianne Doyen, Andrea Glorioso, Maria Ilies, Stefan Iszkowski, Olga Jablonowska, Anna-Carin Johansson, Plamen Kolev, Klara Larsson, Isabelle Laurent, Georgiana-Ioana Mozer-Schonborn, Roxana Osiac, Miriam Toplanska, Maria-Anna Paraskeva, Louise Reid, Jaume Tardy Martorell, Karen Vandersickel (DG EMPL), Enrique García Martín-Romo (DG HOME), Otilia Ciobanu, Justyna Pakula (DG REGIO), Elo Raimla (DG EMPL - the meeting organiser)

Objective of the dialog

The aim was to provide information on the EU funding developments to support to the EU Member States and stakeholders in addressing the Ukrainian refugee crisis and to provide a platform for civil society organisation to present their observations on the ground and help to identify the most pressing needs. The *Background note* has been sent in advance of the meeting (*Annex 2*).

In her welcome, *EMPL Director for Social Rights and Inclusion Katarina Ivankovic-Knezevic* highlighted that since the start of the invasion, over 2.8 million refugees are estimated to have fled Ukraine to the EU and neighbouring countries (as of day of the dialog) and numbers are growing every day. The first priority now is to address the immediate needs of displaced persons seeking safety - to secure adequate reception, finding accommodation and addressing material needs. She welcomed a great solidarity and mobilization from governments, non-governmental organizations and volunteers offering help. Nevertheless, it is important to look at medium and long-term too.

Working together addressing unprecedented situation and needs

EMPL Deputy Director-General Andriana Sukova presented the **CARE – Cohesion Action for Refugees in Europe**. The aim is to make available resources more **flexible**, to **reimburse** expenditure at 100% by the EU budget, and to **simplify** reporting arrangements on participants. The retroactive eligibility date is **24 February 2022**. She also note that

FEAD is amended too with a view to allow the EU Member States (MSs) to amend their programs by only notification to the European Commission on changing certain elements of the programme (e.g. the target group). She highlighted already existing availability and strong support from the **European Social Fund** for inclusion of ‘refugees’ – as one of eligible groups to receive support in labour market and social inclusion if legally residing in the MSs. The *Temporary Protection Directive* (TPD) was activated on 4 March 2022, she noted it gives among others the access to the labour market and education for all children. For the **ESF+**, negotiations with the MSs continue and will reflect new challenges. Complementarities between ESF+, AMIF and ERDF are being strengthened too. For the ESF, FEAD and ESF+ possible measures, see attached presentation for examples of actions:



CARE ESF PPT
14032022.pptx

Chiara Gariazzo, Director HOME Affairs Funds, highlighted a quick response from the EU, among others, by adopting the TPD. The MSs are being supported through several funds that will work in close coordination to ensure synergies and avoid double funding. The **AMIF** and the **Internal Security Fund** are currently being amended to be able to use available sources for longer (by 1 year). The proposal to increase flexibility includes the new funds openness for voluntary contributions. It is foreseen that the amendments are adopted by Easter. She also noted that actions such as psychological support, language training, family tracking and early integration measures can be covered by AMIF. In addition, emergency assistance for MSs is available for those in need, but sources are limited, as they were used in the previous crisis (e.g. the Afghanistan refugee crisis).

Discussion with the audience was centred on the following questions

- *Can you share with us your observations and analysis on the situation linked to the displaced persons fleeing Ukraine?*
- *What are the most acute challenges and the most pressing needs on the ground? What are the needs from the mid and long-term perspective (for example in areas such as housing, healthcare, social services, education, training and employment, etc.)?*
- *Are measures in place addressing the needs of the most vulnerable groups sufficient and implemented (e.g. targeting women with children)?*

Summary and key highlights from discussion

- **The challenges and needs we face are unprecedented in scale.** Many CSOs representatives welcomed the Commission’s quick reaction (e.g. TPD, CARE, border relaxation) and reported the needs on the ground from short and long-term perspectives, often interlinked. Some of them proposed that TPD is extended as broad as possible.
- Many CSOs recalled the importance of measures addressing basic needs linked to **healthcare, psychosocial support, restoring family links**, together with **ensuring food, medicine and shelter and protection of those most vulnerable**.

- In the context of the Covid-19 pandemic, it was underlined that **Ukraine is one of the least vaccinated countries in Europe**, with only 1/3 people vaccinated so far. The efforts to offer vaccination must be stepped up.
- Many participants highlighted the protection of **vulnerable children** should be priority. Many children are crossing borders **unaccompanied**, therefore, special support should be ensured to avoid human trafficking. A tracking system at the borders together with dissemination of information should be set up, also possibly with a direct funding supporting children, including in foster families or quality community-based services. Institutionalization should be avoided (in line with the EU general approach in this area). It is important to immediately and substantially strengthen child protection in all procedures (at the border and in countries of arrival).
- Many interventions underlined the need to protect **women** both young and older, including by improving dissemination of information on risks-related issues already at the borders (currently missing in some countries). Also, they called for a comprehensive legal aid; for a training for social workers and other professionals who support fleeing Ukrainians; and for support to mental health provision and other healthcare services (e.g. immunization, prenatal and maternal care, pediatric, long-term care).
- An important point was raised regarding **people with disabilities**; around 15% of persons from Ukraine might be people with disabilities arriving without sufficient support. In response, reallocation to other MSs is needed, while strengthening focus on disability issues in all measures is important too. Furthermore, a coordination of the rehabilitation equipment, tools and drugs as well as very close collaboration among relevant organizations should be also ensured.
- CSOs also mentioned cases of **discriminatory treatment on border**, e.g. against Roma or other people than Ukrainians. People of statelessness should not be denied of protection, and minorities and LGBTIQI+ rights should be ensured in line with the EU values and policies. Support to specific needs for Roma families is needed, there are case when they might have been left out from offer of the people's private accommodation, and therefore, municipal level organizations should consider appropriate resources to address this challenge.
- **Financial support** to frontline CSOs is urgently needed, some are running out of resources. Moreover, municipal budgets are stretched thin and in need of urgent assistance. Some noted that there are many voluntary workers and financial support for them will be needed.
- Moreover, in many MSs **housing** is already a great challenge. The quality of accommodation needs to be closely monitored, as some housing solutions might not be adequate due to an already overwhelmed homelessness sector across the EU. While TPD is welcome, more needs to be done to avoid creating competition between vulnerable people in search of asylum in the EU.
- And last but not least, the issue of **translation** was highlighted too, apart from urgent needs for interpretation and translation after arrival, for example, the

employment and rental contracts should also be **translated** into Ukrainian language or other understandable language.

- Finally, some CSOs noted that there will be economic and social consequences of the crisis on the **EU citizens too**, the sanctions will have impact in particularly on the most vulnerable groups too.

Interventions from the CSOs in more detail

Red Cross EU Office (Mette Petersen) highlighted that food and shelter are urgently needed both in Ukraine (and the EU) for the Ukrainian displaced persons. Ukraine is one of the least vaccinated countries in Europe; only 1/3 had vaccination. *The Red Cross* is stepping up its efforts to offer vaccination but more needs to be done. Psychosocial support is very important because people are highly traumatized. Restoring family links is needed too, restoring them would help to reduce anxieties (e.g. in RO, SIM cards are being distributed). Women and children (many of them unaccompanied) must urgently be protected; TPD should be extended; and solidarity between MSs is crucial. Finally, she also called for immediate financial support to the frontline CSOs.

Eurocities - Network of major European cities (Katharina Bamberg) stressed that cities are stepping up coordination of humanitarian aid, food, accommodation, healthcare and psychological support. Public services and municipal budgets are put under a lot of strain due to years of underinvestment in social infrastructure and the COVID-19 the pandemic. Further to the re-direction of current home affairs and cohesion policy funding, she called for the additional funds to be available to local authorities on the ground to ensure the continued provision of the emergency assistance and to expand the medium and long-term integration services. The AMIF calls should also reflect the needs of local authorities. Finally, she suggested that the newly created *Solidarity platform* should also include the local-level representation.

Eurodiaconia (European network of churches and Christian NGOs, Abriel Schiefflers) noted that small organisations, service providers and individuals are supporting refugees, but many are running out of resources and support is needed (e.g. reimbursement of costs, quickly accessible funding). There is a need for long-term support with a focus on women and children, psychosocial counselling, and targeted actions to ensure they are safe. She called for providing services and information at borders urgently to reduce the risk of trafficking.

New Women Connectors (Anila Noor) underlined importance of solidarity and offered her organisation's support to share experience and expertise to address refugees' challenges.

Don Bosco International (Cursi Renato) stressed that food and medicine are urgently needed in Ukraine. In the EU, there is a serious need for psychological support to deal with trauma, for targeted actions for women, children and unaccompanied minors. Funding is needed beyond the donations from private partners.

Lumos (Irina Papancheva) called for the Commission's support to create an effective international joint response mechanism including on ensuring measures against tracking of children. She stressed that direct funding to children and community-based services is needed, in particular for unaccompanied children. Assistance to Moldova is equally important, the actors there need access funding. (*Note: DG NEAR has mobilised funding that can be available for Moldova*).

European Disability Forum representing also the European Association of Service Providers for Persons with Disabilities and Inclusion Europe (Gordon Rattray) highlighted that at least 15% of the refugee population would be persons with disabilities. Many of them are arriving without essential medicines and without the most basic assistive technologies like wheelchairs. They are exposed to an increased risk of abandonment, injury and violence; including sexual and gender-based violence and trafficking. Aid is not accessible, even basic shelter, food and psychosocial support. Similarly, relocation services (including transport) are not accessible. Therefore, full access to immediate aid is needed, and so is accessible relocation to the third countries. Long-term planning must be disability-inclusive (both for those crossing the border and for those who have settled in different countries), and attention must be paid to the fact that while this difficult situation causes systems overload, it must not affect the ongoing implementation of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD). Disability should be recognized in all policies - including housing, education, transport, social protection - and in all tools and processes. There must be coordination in provision of rehabilitation equipment, drugs and medical supplies, and there should be collaboration with organisations of persons with disabilities (OPDs) in all of this work. Crucial enabling factors include disaggregation of data of populations by disability and earmarking significant budget for accessibility and reasonable accommodation. Finally, he added that specific effort must be made to ensure that fostering of children is disability inclusive and to avoid financing the creation, restoration or support of institutional care settings.

International Federation for Spina Bifida and Hydrocephalus (Roozen Sylvia) noted that people suffering from hydrocephalus and spinabifida have specific needs that make them extra vulnerable. Displacement can provoke medical challenges such as epileptic seizures or surgeries. These people therefore need adequate support and medical supplies. Collaboration with the local member associations and medical groups is of utmost importance.

World Organization of Scout Movements European Support Centre (Catriona Graham) stressed the need to provide emergency education, safe spaces for social interaction and psychosocial support in particularly for young people. She called for more resources on the ground for civil society organizations providing the frontline services.

European Network of Migrant Women (Anna Zobnina) noted that trafficking risk for women and unaccompanied minors has increased. In Poland, there is a massive lack of information on border (in particularly for fleeing women). Information and awareness campaigns are necessary as soon as they cross the borders. She also acknowledged the need to protect women who perhaps cannot leave Ukraine (in the context of their surrogacy arrangements). She also called for the TPD implementation guidelines and ensuring safe spaces for women and children.

In discussion, *EMPL DDG Andriana Sukova* explained the available ESF funding (2014-2020) and reallocations (around 10 billion from the React-EU 2022 is available). The 2021-2027 programs, especially those focused on social inclusion, employment or education, can already start implementing. The MSs who continue implementing operations for the social inclusion of people and want to involve in these operations Ukrainian refugees can safely do it. She also agreed that there is a big responsibility in the MS to ensure that women and children are protected from exploitation. She reminded the *Council of Ministers of Justice and Interior* where all ministers have been trying to ensure that. The protection should be in place for everyone in the EU territory.

She agreed that special needs of persons with disabilities or unaccompanied children needs to be met. The Commission is not going to support setting up new institutions to place refugees. Foster care families for children should be found and suitable accommodation for people with disabilities should be ensured. Thus, any temporary accommodation should be temporary, she said, the objective is to comply with the *Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities*. Whenever people with disabilities are coming to the EU, they will be given the right attention and care, without any type discrimination. She stressed that the principle of equal treatment is valid for the implementation of all EU funded actions.

Enrique García Martín-Romo from HOME noted the Commission seeks for the most appropriate funding possibilities for the different stages in the response to the crisis. The *Solidarity Platform* was set up and identifies the opportunities for funding and accompanying measures for the MS. The work programme of [AMIF](#) supports actions on to protect children in migration, he also referred to a published report and integration of victims of trafficking of human beings.

REGIO (Otilia Ciobanu) noted that ERDF can support the provision of access to mainstream services in education, employment, housing, health and social care. There are two toolkits available on the use of EU funds for the integration of people with a migrant background. A [version](#) published in 2018 reflecting on 2014-2020 regulatory provisions; and a updated [version](#) published in December 2021 reflecting on 2021-2027 regulatory provisions. Social housing is one of the most important elements.

Social Platform (Alva Finn) pointed at discriminatory treatment against Roma, refugees and poor people at the EU borders. It is seen as a structural challenge and should be further addressed, and so should the long-term needs linked to quality of housing.

Eurochild (Network of organizations and individuals working with and for children in Europe) Jana Hainsworth asked about what happens when the MSs are not compliant with the EU values and policies e.g. on deinstitutionalisation. She stressed that children evacuated from Ukrainian orphanages need immediate care and accommodation. The current responses includes placing them in the large-scale residential centres with no attention to the quality of care. Therefore, the EU needs to step up the monitoring and quality standards of accommodation for children.

Save the children Europe (Anita Bay) added that the majority of children who are arriving unaccompanied or with their mothers are under 14 year olds. Identification is extremely challenging. Supporting those in need of protection needs to be urgently addressed. Ensuring access to education is also worrying. She also welcomed the information regarding funding but more detailed information is needed.

UNICEF Europe and Central Asia Regional Office (Pamela Dale) called for a comprehensive legal aid, case management, as well as training for the frontline social workers. Professionalizing the skills and making sure that everyone on the frontline has the key messages on care and risks for children is essential at this point. Support to mental health and other health services is important (e.g. immunization, maternal and pediatric care). She also noted that specific needs of Roma children and families. They are often left out from the offers for housing. Municipal and local level bodies needs appropriate resources for addressing this challenge as well as for the inclusion measures of children into schools and social protection systems.

European Youth Forum (Joe Elborn) mentioned the importance of the recognition of non-formal education, non-university education and qualifications. He also highlighted the situation of those fleeing Russia. In his view, they are likely to share the European values and they should be taken into consideration. The rebuilt efforts in Ukraine will be huge. There will be thousands of destroyed youth centers and civic areas. He questioned about how to ensure funding specifically for the youth and youth organizations that will likely lead that rebuild.

Junior Achievement Europe (Salvatore Nigro) stressed the importance of recognition of non-formal education. The MSs should facilitate the flexible and remote recruitments, and transitions from schools. People (in rural areas) should be given the possibility to be recruited remotely.

Young European Federalists (JEF-Europe) (Juuso Järviemi) mentioned that this weekend the Young European Federalists will host a meeting in Budapest for youth organizations to coordinate their response to the crisis. Representatives of National Youth Councils, European Youth Forum, Red Cross Youth Network, ETUC Youth Committee and CoE Advisory Council on Youth have been invited.

ERGO Network – European Roma Grassroots Organisations Network (Isabela Mihalache) noted that despite not having exact information about how many Roma have fled Ukraine, it is known that there is around 400 000 Roma living in Ukraine. Many of them do not have funds or transportation. Once at the border, they are often not allowed to cross or if they cross, they receive a discriminatory or unfair treatment in countries such as Poland, Czech Republic, Moldova or Romania. She asked for protection against discrimination at the border and when receiving humanitarian assistance and for close monitoring of human rights and non-discrimination of Roma and other minorities. She also mentioned that many Roma from Ukraine do not have personal documents, already before the war, which puts them at disadvantage.

FEANTSA (European Federation of National Organisations Working With the Homeless) (Freek Spinnewijn) asked if the the right to accommodation in the TPD exist as an enforceable right for asylum seekers when they apply for asylum in the EU. He added that the homelessness sector was already overwhelmed across the EU, and asylum seekers and refugees ended up in shelters for the general homeless population because of a lack of accommodation solutions, or were sleeping rough while waiting for a decision on their application.

Moreover, he also underlined that adequate resources and support are required to cope and to deliver a dignified response to housing needs. The quality of accommodation needs to be closely monitored, as some solutions might not be adequate. In this context, the issues of racism and discrimination were mentioned too, as differences appear in the treatment of Ukrainian citizens and non-Ukrainians who are in exile in Europe.

The TPD is very welcome; however, more needs to be done to avoid creating competition between vulnerable people in search of asylum.

European Network of Social Integration Enterprises (Patrizia Bussi) noted the social economy organizations are also asking for the EU funding as it is not clear how much money is coming to the regional and local level. She underlined the need of the EU to check and monitor that these funds are effectively and immediately used. She suggested

the creation of fast programs for education and starting new social enterprises in order to integrate newly arrived people into the labor markets.

The European Anti-Poverty Network (EAPN) (Helder Ferreira) noted that the national governments have mobilised funds but most of the in-kind donations and volunteering are being provided from CSO's and citizens. Their members signalled the increased need for coordination at the European, national and local level. The current effort needs to be sustained in time, particularly in regards to:

- Access to care services for children as well as for unaccompanied minors;
- Access to health services (long-term) and psychological support;
- Access to employment, including support services regarding information, orientation, and integration;
- Access to education is being prepared, but additional support for the integration of Ukrainian children in national education systems is needed;
- Most of the accommodation solutions are limited, long-term response in housing provision is necessary, in many MSs housing is already a big issue;
- Measures to prevent and protect the refugees against all forms of abuse and exploitation, as they are lacking at the appropriate level.

EAPN Czech Republic (Karel Schwarz) mentioned that before the current crisis, Ukrainians were the largest national minority in the Czech Republic (around 300,000 people), and out of the total number of refugees who entered the country 2/3 remain in the Czech Republic. He estimated that in total about 1/3 of those currently arriving from Ukraine will remain in the Czech Republic in the future. Nevertheless, there is a long-term shortage of rental and social flats. Privately owned apartments, which predominate in the offer, are not available to the vast majority of refugees. He foresees that many Ukrainians can find employment in health, social and education sectors. However, it is necessary to quickly recognize their education and teach them the Czech language. The measures implemented by the Government are sufficient in his view.

International Federation of Social Workers Europe (IFSW Europe) (Jon Brennan) noted that fleeing people are extremely traumatized and suffer from serious anxieties. There is a real need for psychological and emotional support alongside food and shelter. She called for translators and interpreters at the borders and in host countries. On accessibility, many measures or procedures are often not accessible to deaf people. The specific needs of deaf people must be therefore taken into account. He highlighted the importance of restoring family links (e.g. need of phone chargers). Veterinary assistance is also required for those arriving with animals. He also mentioned need for financial support, and serious racist concerns that were reported at the borders.

Association Consumers Unite (Monica Calu) highlighted the importance of having access to basic payments accounts. Moreover, it is of utmost importance that refugees receive the information in their native language. In order to have access to the labor market and to residence, they need to have their employment and rental contracts translated.

European Network on Statelessness (Patricia Cabral) noted that most of people affected by statelessness who are residing in Ukraine are not able to prove their residence or nationality status and this is preventing them from accessing protection and assistance. She also reported cases of racial profiling, differential treatment or additional screenings at the EU borders. The MSs should ensure that stateless people and those in risk of statelessness are not prevented from accessing the same level of protection.

European Food Banks Federation (Angela Frigo) highlighted that the most needed products in Ukraine, Moldova, Poland, Hungary, Czech Republic and Slovakia are non-perishable food, water and hygiene products especially for women and babies. She recalled the need for long-term perspective solutions, especially since inflation, rising prices and the lack of raw materials in parallel to increasing numbers of people in need can put food security at risk all across Europe. Therefore, she encouraged Member States to involve and dialogue with civil society organisations at national level to take measure cushioning the negative effects of the crisis in Ukraine on vulnerable groups.

SOS Children's Villages International (Ceccherini Valerie) highlighted that Ukraine was already the country with the highest number of children living in institutions in Europe (around 100,000). A great number of children arriving from Ukraine are undocumented and unaccompanied. They are at very high risk of abuse and trafficking. Therefore, it is critical to immediately and substantially strengthen child protection in all procedures at the border and in countries of arrival. Regarding children deprived of parental care, they recommend assessing EU MSs' capacity to provide them with quality alternative care beforehand to ensure that relocation decisions are always made in the best interests of the child. Finally, it is also critical to quickly address the access to education for children and youth. The EU could support programs to enable this access (e.g. including through the provision of tablets; employing displaced Ukrainian teachers etc.)

HOME (Enrique García Martín-Romo) in response to questions clarified that ECHO provides humanitarian aid and AMIF provides reception, protection and accommodation support inside the European Union.

Regarding TPD in terms of accommodation, he said the MSs shall provide suitable accommodation, which means suitable to the needs to the person, while being realistic. The Commission is also looking for solutions in the long-term but we are at the crisis moment and quick responses are needed.

In responding to the question on how decisions are made regarding relocation, he informed that it will be done with the help of the recently set up *Solidarity Platform*. A first meeting already took place last week and one of topics discussed was the capacity of MS for housing according to refugee's needs. This crisis is unprecedented in scale and lot of work is being done to maximize resources. AMIF talks into account the past experience as well as all concerns the CSOs mentioned.

Some comments from the chat:

Autism Europe (Aurelie Baranger): Autism-Europe estimates that there are around 440.00 autistic people in Ukraine. Families are experiencing acute problems getting sufficient support to evacuate or to move on from temporary refugee centers near the borders the fact that some autistic people are in state of shock prevent some families from evacuating. There is a need to find suitable accommodation for autism families with members who have high support needs and who are very traumatized and restless.

European Union of the Deaf (Martyna Balciunaite): To complement to what the European Disability Forum stated, EDF member, the European Union of the Deaf (EUD adds that it is important not to forget that among refugees with disabilities

various and different accessibility needs exist, and different perspectives of inclusion must be considered. Deaf refugees particularly are facing very specific set of barriers because they are sign language users. Deaf refugees fleeing Ukraine lack accessibility of information and communication in sign languages which excludes them from the vital information which is absolutely necessary. Especially during the asylum procedure, which is crucial for any applicant, as in most cases sign language interpreters are not guaranteed. Moreover, deaf refugees are exposed to isolation in reception centres. They face inability to communicate with hearing staff, inability to communicate with other hearing refugees as they lack sign language interpreters. EUD also highlights, that deaf children and deaf women and girls face even more discrimination due to their intersecting identities.

ILGA Europe - The European Region of the International Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans and Intersex Association (Akram Kubanychbekov): Operational guidelines for external border management to facilitate border crossings at the EU-Ukraine borders should include clear guidance against any discrimination, including against LGBTI people. Any humanitarian aid to Ukraine needs to include hormones and HIV/Aids medication as indicated by the WHO essential medication list. Transposition of TPD needs to be inclusive of experiences of LGBTI people and rainbow families.

AGE Platform Europe (Maciej Kucharczyk): Donations seem to focus, for the moment, on the needs of babies and young children (the most obvious emergency needs), at the risk of neglecting the specific needs of older people, such as incontinence pads or medicines. In the first wave of refugees, there are fewer older people, but this will change as the conflict escalates. Continued provision of care will be a priority for older people or persons with disabilities who have specific health and/or long-term care needs.

European Parents' Association (Arja Krauchenberg): It is extremely important to provide quality education for the children and youngsters who arrive in several European countries. There are 300.000+ people in the Western part of the country in and around Lviv where they intended to wait for the end of the fighting. After the attack on the area this morning it is very likely that these people will now also move towards the neighboring countries.

Concluding remarks

DDG Adriana Sukova again strongly welcomed the unprecedented solidarity which was a good signal that Europe can be strong in addressing any challenge. She informed about the EPSCO meeting that will further discuss measures for tackling the crisis. She repeated that no new money is being allocated, and the MSs are invited to maximize and reprioritize available funds. She acknowledged the daily and practical problems on the ground, and that the coordination at national level is in some cases delayed. The Commission's work will continue and this is just a start of the discussion on addressing this extraordinary challenge. She also ensured that the Commission will do whatever is needed to support Ukrainian people in need and encouraged CSOs to have a close cooperation with the national level administration and managing authorities in the MSs.

Finally, Director Katarina Ivankovic-Knezevic closed the meeting and thanked for participants active involvements. The Commission will continue in its updates if any new

developments. She also invited for a close cooperation among all involved actors to make refugees feel welcome and provide them the support they need. Special attention to those most vulnerable is crucial, and so is focus to ensure basic assistance, housing, medical care, psychological support and early inclusion. In these terms, lots of recalculation, reprogramming, and additional work will be needed.