



Ukraine Updates

Standing with the people and local governments in Ukraine

10 March 2022/1

The Council of European Municipalities and Regions (CEMR) is launching a dedicated newsletter “Ukraine Updates” to raise awareness about the situation in Ukrainian municipalities, highlight examples of concrete actions taken by the EU municipalities in support of their Ukrainian peers and to encourage other towns and regions in Europe to provide direct and urgent help to Ukraine. In addition, we have created a [section](#) on the CEMR website fully dedicated to the situation in Ukraine.

As has been stressed in the CEMR’s [statement](#) of 24 February 2022, signed by 730 local and regional elected officials (see [list of signatories](#)), Ukrainian municipalities are “in the front line to protect the population and provide basic services to offer them good quality living conditions and daily survival”. EU municipalities can provide their Ukrainian peers with the materials and expertise they need in order to protect their citizens and the country. We stand with Ukraine!

New – CEMR Members’ Taskforce on Ukraine

To support its members, the CEMR Secretariat has decided to set up a Taskforce on Ukraine. It will exchange on how to address the impact of the war in European territories, dealing with questions such as: support to Ukrainian municipalities, hosting of refugees fleeing from Ukraine, EU sanctions and the consequences for procurement and cooperation with Russian municipalities and the actions of national associations of local and regional governments.

Voices of Ukrainian municipalities

➤ Ukrainian mayors resist the Russian invasion

In the videos, taken from the Telegram channel of the Association of Ukrainian Cities (AUC), mayors of Kharkiv, Kyiv and Mykolayiv provide a glimpse into the kind of extraordinary challenges Ukrainian mayors now face. They are organising distribution of food and medicine, evacuation of women and children and urgent repairs to basic infrastructure damaged by Russian bombs. Ukrainian mayors are resisting the Russian invasion by assuring the continuation of public services in an extremely dangerous environment. Simultaneously, the mayors are keeping people’s morale high. [Watch the full video](#) (with English subtitles).

➤ Know the needs of Ukrainian municipalities

Many EU cities are ready to help their Ukrainian peers. It is important that this help is in line with the realities on the ground. For this reason, a detailed assessment has been carried out in recent days by the Association of Ukrainian Cities, the [U-LEAD with Europe](#) programme and the Ministry of Communities and Territories Development of Ukraine. For the time being, the priority should be material aid. There is a need for defence equipment, long-lasting food for adults and children, medicines and hygiene products. You can find the list of needs, prepared by the AUC, [here](#). At the same time, do not hesitate to directly get in touch with your Ukrainian partners, where this is possible, in order to help address their specific needs.

➤ Close the sky over Ukraine

Ukrainian local governments around the country have been appealing to world leaders and NATO members to close the Ukrainian sky. This will stop the advance of the Russian army and protect the lives of thousands of innocent civilians. Russia has already used prohibited weapons in Ukraine, killed women and children, destroyed civilian infrastructure – hospitals, schools, kindergartens – and put nuclear power plants at risk of environmental catastrophe. The local governments of Ukraine demand that the actions to protect the sky are taken immediately and without further procrastination. Read the full article [here](#).

Stories of support through action

➤ Poland

Not only did Poland accept the highest number of displaced Ukrainians, Polish towns are also providing various forms of support to their Ukrainian partners. The city of Kielce has been mobilising resources to provide helmets, bulletproof vests, thermal underwear and medical supplies to help the partner town, Vinnitsa, defend the city against the Russian aggressor. The city of Przemyśl also collected €100,000 to address the needs of their partner towns in Ukraine. The Association of Polish Cities is coordinating and keeping a track of all actions by Polish cities in support of Ukraine on this [website](#) (in Polish).

➤ Lithuania

The Association of Local Authorities in Lithuania (ALAL) took a prompt decision, during a Board meeting on 28 February, to provide financial assistance to Ukrainian municipalities and asked Lithuanian municipalities to terminate partnership agreements with their Russian and Belarussian counterparts. According to ALAL's President, it is important to make it clear to the local authorities and residents of Russia and Belarus that military aggression by their countries makes any cooperation impossible. ALAL has also requested Russia's exclusion from United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG), the global association of local governments. Read the full text [here](#) (in Lithuanian).

➤ France

In response to the appeal of the Mayor of Kyiv and President of AUC, Vitali Klitschko, the President of our French Association (AFCCRE) called on all French municipalities to provide financial help to Ukrainian cities, to demonstrate willingness to host displaced Ukrainians and to show solidarity by flying or lighting the Ukrainian flag on public buildings. Read the full text [here](#) (in French).

➤ Finland

The City of Tampere has pledged to assist the inhabitants of war-stricken Ukraine with a sum of €150,000. Kyiv, the twin city of Tampere, is to receive the aid as soon as possible. Finland's other major cities have resolved to support the people of Ukraine with about €1.5 million in total aid. The cities will provide their aid either in monetary form or in humanitarian material aid in collaboration with the Finnish state, a relief NGO or another trustworthy partner. Read the full article [here](#).

➤ “Bridges of Trust” partner-municipalities

Following the participation of the mayor of Dolyna (Ukraine) in the extraordinary meeting of Šiauliai District Council (Lithuania), €50,000 was allocated to help address the needs of the Ukrainian partner-municipality. In addition, Šiauliai district terminated partnership agreements with Russian and Belarussian towns. The two partners first met in November 2021, in the framework of the “[Bridges of Trust](#)” Initiative, implemented by CEMR and supported by the U-LEAD with Europe programme. Read the full article [here](#) (in Lithuanian).

➤ European Committee of the Regions

The European Committee of the Regions has urged “all local and regional governments in the European Union to support Ukraine in these times of need” and supported Ukrainian cities' call for “the hardest possible sanctions to be imposed on the government of the Russian Federation”. The declaration was adopted on the eve of a European Summit of Regions and Cities, on 3-4 March, that brought together more than 2,000 representatives of regional and local authorities. Read the full declaration and about the Committee of the Regions' other actions [here](#).

➤ Eurocities

Eurocities is calling for a shared moment of solidarity for Ukraine to be held in front of city halls around Europe on Saturday, 12 March. All mayors and cities are invited to join however best suits them, whether through a large or smaller gathering of people. Already, the cities of Bologna, Braga, Florence, Milan, Marseille, Nice, Rotterdam, as well as Rome have joined in to support the call. Read the full text [here](#).

New – Cohesion funding to support people fleeing Russia's invasion of Ukraine

The Commission has adopted today a [proposal for Cohesion's Action for Refugees in Europe](#) (CARE) allowing Member States and regions to provide emergency support to people fleeing from Russia's invasion of Ukraine. CARE is introducing the necessary flexibility in the 2014-2020 Cohesion policy rules to allow a swift reallocation of available funding to such emergency support. On top, the 2022 envelope of €10 billion of the Recovery Assistance for Cohesion and the Territories of Europe ('REACT-EU') funds can also be used to address these new demands within the overall aim of post-pandemic recovery.

How you can help?

There are many ways in which your organisation, municipalities and regions can support local governments in Ukraine during this difficult time.

1. Get in direct touch with your partners in Ukraine. Ask what specific help they need at this moment. If you do not have partners in Ukraine, please contact one of the cities that submitted a plea for help to [CEMR](#) or the [Committee of the Regions](#).
2. Spread information about the [urgent needs of Ukrainian municipalities](#) among your national and international partners. Encourage them to reach out and send direct and fast aid to them. Please note and inform others that Ukrainian municipalities prefer material help to financial contributions because it is very difficult to buy most things in the country at the moment.
3. Encourage your citizens through awareness-raising events and social media campaigns to donate funds for humanitarian aid in Ukraine. Individuals can donate to the [Ministry of Social Policy of Ukraine](#), or other [organisations](#) that work on the ground. Translate information on how to donate into your own language.
4. Support the Association of Ukrainian Cities (AUC) with a charitable donation to help ensure stable AUC statutory activity and assistance to communities. The AUC is collecting information about the urgent needs of municipalities, coordinates volunteers and cooperates with the civil-military administration. More information on how to help AUC can be found [here](#).
5. Coordinate all actions of support to Ukrainian municipalities with your national governments. Inform CEMR about inspiring stories of support through [this form](#).

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