



# Ukraine Updates

## Standing with the people and local governments in Ukraine

[‘Ukraine section’ on the CEMR website](#)  
[CEMR statement on Ukraine](#) | [List of signatories](#)

**21 March 2022/2**

“Ukraine Updates” is the Council of European Municipalities and Regions (CEMR) dedicated newsletter to raise awareness about the situation in Ukrainian municipalities, highlight examples of concrete actions taken by European municipalities in support of their Ukrainian peers and to encourage others 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”. European 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!

### **CEMR Members’ Taskforce on Ukraine**

On 18 March a first meeting of the Taskforce took place. Association of Ukrainian Cities and Ukrainian Association of District and Regional Councils presented the current situation and the needs of Ukrainian municipalities. They include: medicines, protective equipment, long-lasting food and autonomous power generators. Other member-associations spoke about their initiatives in support of Ukraine, and suggested ways for CEMR to strengthen their actions by sharing information, coordinating and communicating the [needs](#) of Ukrainian municipalities to their European peers.

### **Voices of Ukrainian municipalities**

#### ➤ **Abductions of Ukrainian mayors**

Russia continues to kidnap mayors of Ukrainian towns. “CEMR wholly condemns the kidnapping of democratically elected Ukrainian mayors”, said CEMR President Stefano Bonaccini. “This is part of an attempt to establish illegitimate alternative government structures in a sovereign country. All kidnapped Ukrainian elected officials must be released immediately.” The Association of Ukrainian Cities ([AUC](#)) is urging others to join them in calling for the release of Yevheniy Matveev, the mayor of Dniprorudny, Oleg Myroshnyk, Bilovodsk settlement mayor and Vasyl Mitko, Nikolske settlement mayor. Fortunately, the kidnapped mayor of Ukrainian city of Melitopol [has been freed](#) in a prisoner exchange.

#### ➤ **International Marathon: Local Governments Unite for Welfare and Peace**

During the International Marathon which took place on 18 March, Ukrainian mayors made three main appeals to their European and international colleagues: close the sky over Ukraine, tighten sanctions against Russia and support Ukraine’s aspirations for European and Euro-Atlantic integration. The full video (in English) and a short summary of the event can be found [here](#). The International Marathon will continue on 22 March in presence of representatives of local governments and “sister” municipalities from Austria, France, Germany, Switzerland and the United Kingdom. To join the Marathon please consult [this page](#).

#### ➤ **Mayor of Mariupol speaks out on the destruction of his town and people**

After a Russian bomb hit the Drama Theatre on 17 March, which city council officials say had been housing over 1,000 people, the mayor of Mariupol, Vadym Boychenko, recorded [this video](#) message. For many weeks, the mayor and the local officials have been appealing for a humanitarian corridor to be created to evacuate some of the city’s 400,000 residents. Despite the pleas, Russian troops continue with heavily bombardment of the town. Local officials estimated that about 80% of residential buildings are either damaged or destroyed, a third of them beyond repair. For [more](#) on apocalyptic destruction in Mariupol.

### ➤ **Role of municipalities in Western Ukraine**

Municipalities in western Ukraine, where active fighting is currently not taking place, play a special role in the fight against the Russian troops. They are welcoming millions of internally displaced, accepting humanitarian aid from abroad and are sending trucks with food, medicine, hygiene products and protective equipment to other regions of the country. In [this article](#), the heads of municipalities talk about Russian attack and how they are helping the Ukrainian army and their peers to defend the country.

## **Stories of support through action**

### ➤ **Press release | Local governments across Europe mobilise to support Ukrainians**

On 15 March, CEMR disseminated a [press release](#) highlighting how local and regional governments support their peers in Ukraine and the Ukrainian people. The press release also refers to the associations' important role in coordinating actions taken by municipalities and regions across Europe.

### ➤ **“Bridges of Trust” partner-municipalities**

Lazdijai District Municipality (Lithuania) is continuing to support its partner-municipality, Novohuyvinske, in Zhytomyr region of Ukraine. After receiving appeal for humanitarian aid, Lazdijai district was able to mobilise resources in just a few days and purchase the requested goods. Novohuyvinske has been under attack especially because of the proximity of the Zhytomyr Armoured Plant. The Lithuanian partner provided thermal clothing (183), shoes (100) and sleeping bags (100) for territorial defence, medicines, non-perishable foods and hygiene products. 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.

### ➤ **United Kingdom**

The Local Government Association (England) is working closely with government to co-design a large-scale support programme for new arrivals. Over 150,000 residents [as of 21.03.22] have registered their homes under the recently-launched [‘homes for Ukraine’](#) scheme. This will be supported by a payment to those households of £350 per month. There will also be funding of around £10,000 to the local authority, per arrival, per year to provide additional support. A key consideration for local governments currently is how the safety of both the new arrivals and their hosts can be properly ensured without delaying the availability of the accommodations. The LGA is currently drafting guidance for local authorities with government. The LGA has also set up [web resources](#) for local governments and has created a series of internal workstreams to coordinate activity across the association.

### ➤ **Poland**

During an online meeting on 14 March, initiated by the Municipality of Gdansk, 100 European Mayors issued a joint call to European governments and the European Commission to raise efforts to end the war in Europe. They urged to force the Russian government to open humanitarian corridors, swiftly adopt decisions concerning the refugees' reception and relocation in Europe, so stop all trade relations with Russia and Belarus until the Russian army withdraws from Ukraine and demanded the immediate release of the captured and detained Ukrainian mayors. Please read the full document [here](#) and join the call by filling in [this form](#).

### ➤ **France**

French Association of the Council of European Municipalities and Regions (AFCCRE), in cooperation with the Association of Polish Cities (ZMP), is organising a meeting on 31 March to allow French and Polish elected officials and local officials to discuss the situation in Ukraine, to know how the two countries are mobilized to respond to the humanitarian emergency and to learn examples of action carried out or envisaged jointly by French and Polish communities. For more information, please see their [website](#) (in French).

Cités Unies France opened a Ukraine solidarity fund. The primary purpose of the fund will be to help refugees and provide for their needs by strengthening the capacities of local authorities on the borders of Poland, Romania and Moldova. The actions proposed will be decided according to needs and in coordination with the local elected representatives of the territories concerned and will include activities to improve quality public services (emergency accommodation, catering, care, psychological support, etc.). For more information on the Ukraine solidarity fund, please consult the Cités Unies France [website](#) (in French).

➤ **Romania**

The city of Suceava sent much needed equipment and goods to its twin city of Chernivtsi. The delivery included: sleeping bags, mattresses, military tents, water tanks and first aid kits. Earlier Suceava, together with another town of Timisoara, already sent power generators to the Ukrainian town. For photos and information, please [see here](#) (in Ukrainian). Suceava is also hosting Ukrainian refugees and providing housing, food, clothing and transfer.

➤ **Spain**

Catalan Fund for Development Cooperation has launched a campaign to collect contributions to support the victims of Russian war against Ukraine. The fund will identify the needs and provide help to the municipalities hosting internally displaced in Ukraine as well as in the neighboring countries Poland, Hungary, Slovakia, Romania and Moldova. For more information, please consult the [website](#) (in Spanish).

The city of Manresa is supporting Ukraine and its people. The city council organised a demonstration in solidarity with Ukraine and launched a campaign "Manresa with the people of Ukraine". It aims to raise public awareness, bring together all actions by local NGOs and public bodies, as well as to provide truthful information on humanitarian emergency caused by the military attack of the Russian regime in Ukraine. More information can be found on [this website](#) (in Spanish).

➤ **Cyprus**

Union of Cyprus Municipalities called on the citizens to contribute and donate long duration dry food and packaged goods, such as cereals, biscuits, infant milk powder and dry infant formula, at the dedicated collection points all over Cyprus. Cyprus municipalities stand by the people of Ukraine and will provide humanitarian aid where it is the most needed. For more information, please consult the [press release](#).

➤ **Austria**

Austrian Association of Municipalities is calling on everyone to join the "Operation Snowflake – Snowball – Avalanche" and to ask the mayors from numerous countries to write letters and call on their Russian colleagues to put the well-being of their fellow citizens first and to stand up for peace. [Join the movement](#) and encourage your members to send letters to Russian municipalities, especially if they have an existing twinning.

➤ **Portugal**

Municipality of Amadora has joined citizens' initiative, Portugal United for Ukraine, and is collecting non-perishable foods, first aid supplies, clothes, blankets and other necessities to send them to the people of Ukraine. Until now, more than 10 tons have been collected. The municipality is also providing social support to every Ukrainian person who arrived in the city. For more information, please consult the [website](#) (in Portuguese).

The municipality of Braga (north of Portugal) established a logistical connection to Wroclaw (Poland) to send humanitarian help and welcomed 45 Ukrainian refugees in the city Braga. This will be followed by other support measures of Ukraine and its citizens by the community based on the needs and the situation on the ground. For more information, please consult the [website](#) (in Portuguese).

➤ **NALAS the Network of Associations of Local Authorities of South-East Europe**

NALAS provided emergency assistance to the Association of Ukraine Cities (AUC) via a non-refundable financial contribution to AUC in the amount of €10.000. In addition, NALAS offered to host AUC's staff in Skopje or Tirana, or in any other country which is member of NALAS (Romania, Moldova, as locations closest to Ukraine, but also Istanbul and Slovenia). In addition to securing the travel and accommodation, NALAS is ready to create conditions, monthly salaries and other resources for the AUC office (or part of the office) to function from exile. This invitation is an open offer from NALAS with no expiry date, and if accepted, NALAS will immediately take the necessary steps to implement it.

## ➤ URBACT

URBACT cities across Europe have mobilised to identify verified sources of local and national governments' initiatives in favour of Ukrainian people. The aim is to make the initiatives per EU country more visible to people in need or to people wanting to help, as well as to inspire other cities that want to organise similar support. The list will be regularly updated and can be found [here](#).

## ➤ EU Neighbours East

EU Neighbours East is collecting and publishing information on initiatives in the European countries that have sprung up to provide practical support to more than three million refugees fleeing Ukraine. The list includes the range of initiatives from small volunteer NGOs to major international organisations and state services. Please consult the list [here](#).

## European measures

### ➤ Council of Europe

Russia has been officially excluded from the Council of Europe. It had itself notified on Tuesday 15 March that it wanted to leave the Council of Europe, but the Committee of Ministers continued its own procedure. The Russian Federation ceased to be a member of the Council of Europe on 16 March, 26 years after joining.

### ➤ OECD

The accession process of the Russian Federation is now officially terminated (formally suspended since 2014). The OECD office in Moscow is now closed, and all invitations to Russia are now suspended. All sums received from Russia and Belarus are also immediately frozen. The OECD will now work on how to support the recovery and reconstruction in Ukraine, and on the economic and social impact of the war in Ukraine. The OECD has developed a note on [the Economic and Social Impacts and Policy Implications of the War in Ukraine](#).

### ➤ NATO

NATO issued sanctions against Russian individuals, Russian State-Owned Entities and banks.

### ➤ EU institutions

- Activation of the [Temporary Protection Directive](#) to deal with the massive influx of people fleeing Ukraine.
- [Series of measures for cohesion policy](#) to welcome all people fleeing war, to simplify the reporting procedure and to allow 100% co-financing for one year to support the recovery of regions – the money should come from remaining 2014-2020 funds.
- [REPowerEU](#): Joint European action for more affordable, secure and sustainable energy. The objective is to phase out our dependence on fossil fuels from Russia well before 2030: *diversifying gas supplies and larger volumes of biomethane and renewable hydrogen production and imports; and, reducing faster the use of fossil fuels in our homes, buildings, industry, and power system, by boosting energy efficiency, increasing renewables and electrification, and addressing infrastructure bottlenecks*. The Commission intends to present by April a legislative proposal requiring underground gas storage across the EU to be filled up to at least 90% of its capacity by 1 October each year.
- [The European Commission suspends cross-border cooperation and transnational cooperation with Russia and Belarus](#)
- Agreement signed for €1.2 billion for [macro financial assistance for Ukraine](#).

## How to help Ukraine?

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 municipalities 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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