

HUMANITARIAN IMPLEMENTATION PLAN (HIP)

UKRAINE, WESTERN BALKANS and EASTERN NEIGHBOURHOOD

The activities proposed hereafter are still subject to the adoption of the financing decision ECHO/WWD/ BUD/2021/01000

AMOUNT: EUR 46 900 000

The present Humanitarian Implementation Plan (HIP) was prepared on the basis of financing decision ECHO/WWD/BUD/2021/01000 (Worldwide Decision) and the related General Guidelines for Operational Priorities on Humanitarian Aid (Operational Priorities). The purpose of the HIP and its annexes¹ is to serve as a communication tool for DG ECHO²'s partners and to assist in the preparation of their proposals. The provisions of the Worldwide Decision and the General Conditions of the Agreement with the European Commission shall take precedence over the provisions in this document.

0. MAJOR CHANGES SINCE PREVIOUS VERSION OF THE HIP

MODIFICATION 3 – JULY 2021

UKRAINE

The humanitarian situation in eastern Ukraine has been seriously exacerbated by the Covid-19 pandemic, along both sides of the line of contact and mainly in the non-government controlled areas (NGCA). The Covid-19 pandemic has added a significant factor of instability and vulnerability. The obstacles that humanitarian partners and the conflict-affected population are facing due to the COVID-19 induced restrictive measures with the closure of almost all crossing points on the contact line since March 2020 are negatively impacting the humanitarian situation. The restrictions of movements for hundreds of thousands of people hamper the food provision and transport of basic relief items and services, which in turn affects the population in remote communities with no access to alternative means of transport and to large food supply chains. This has a particular impact on the elderly living in the NGCA, which are deprived of access to their pensions and other essential services accessible in the government-controlled areas (GCA). The impact on mental health and psychosocial is also significant.

The additional funding of EUR 3.5 million will be used to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic in the sectors of health and basic needs on both sides of the contact line. The present modification might also extend the support to vulnerable Ukrainian refugees living in the Russian Federation.

BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA

The humanitarian situation of refugees and migrants remains difficult. Currently some 6,000 People of Concern (PoCs) are present in the country of which over 2,600 people

¹ Technical annex and thematic policies annex

² Directorate-General for European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations (ECHO)

sleep rough or in makeshift shelters in large majority in the Una Sana Canton (USC), including families and unaccompanied children. The situation of those sleeping rough is very worrying, as they lack access to basic services (safe shelter, water and sanitation, food, clothing) and are exposed to difficult weather conditions as well as to serious protection and health risks. Given the lack of available shelter, the provision of outreach assistance is the only way to bring relief to those in need.

Following the outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic, provision of health assistance remains of essence. It is also essential to continue providing psychosocial support and mental health assistance to PoC. People on the move are exposed to numerous protection risks, the situation of unaccompanied minors requires particular attention.

Consequently, further support is urgently needed to extend the provision of comprehensive health, outreach and protection assistance, including child protection. The additional allocation of EUR 2.5 million will address those needs.

MODIFICATION 2 – APRIL 2021

NAGORNO KARABAKH REGION

Almost 6 months after the signature of the ceasefire agreement between Armenia and Azerbaijan, the conflict-affected population is still suffering from the impact of the conflict in and around Nagorno-Karabakh. The humanitarian situation remains dire with thousands of people in need of assistance on both sides of the line of contact.

While the emergency phase is coming to its end, there are still significant unmet humanitarian needs, it is timely to ensure a gradual transition from the humanitarian aid towards early recovery assistance and to strengthen the resilience of the conflict-affected communities.

The amount of EUR 10 million will focus on reinforcing the humanitarian assistance for the most vulnerable individuals affected by the recent conflict through support in the areas of food / cash distribution, shelter, health, including Mental Health and Psychosocial Support, education in emergency and protection assistance, including humanitarian demining. The humanitarian assistance should also strengthen the resilience of the crisis-affected population through support to livelihoods and facilitate the gradual transition towards early recovery, in line with the humanitarian-development-peace-nexus.

MODIFICATION 1 – JANUARY 2021

NAGORNO KARABAKH REGION

The conflict in and around Nagorno-Karabakh raged unabated for six weeks and caused significant casualties, damages and displacement. The ceasefire agreement of 10 November 2020 has enabled some conflict-displaced people to return. However, despite the cessation of hostilities, the humanitarian situation remains dire with significant unmet humanitarian needs of vulnerable displaced persons on both sides of the line of contact in Armenia and Azerbaijan, vulnerable persons in or returning to Nagorno-Karabakh and some vulnerable host communities in Armenia.

The amount of EUR 3 million will complement the prompt EU humanitarian response provided at the onset of the conflict to address humanitarian consequences of the conflict

and will strengthen the provision of much needed assistance during the winter in and around Nagorno-Karabakh. It will focus on addressing basic needs through provision of multipurpose cash, whenever possible, including food and non-food items, shelter and WASH; support to primary and secondary health care, psychosocial support and protection assistance.

1 CONTEXT

The HIP for Ukraine and Eastern Neighbourhood covers the following countries:

- 1) Ukraine
- 2) Bosnia and Herzegovina, and potentially other countries in the Western Balkans (Albania, North Macedonia, Kosovo³, Serbia, and Montenegro)
- 3) Other Eastern Neighbourhood countries: Armenia, Azerbaijan, and Georgia (Southern Caucasus), Belarus, Moldova⁴.

1.1 Ukraine

DG ECHO's Integrated Analysis Framework for 2020 identified very high humanitarian needs in Ukraine. The vulnerability of the population affected by the crisis in Ukraine is assessed to be very high. Ukraine's INFORM risk index ranks at 4.6/10⁵, and Human Development Index at 0.75/1⁶. According to DG ECHO's Forgotten Crisis Assessment, the humanitarian impact of the conflict in eastern Ukraine is a "*forgotten crisis*"⁷. Besides, Ukraine, prone to natural hazards, environmental and industrial risks, might lead to potential serious and dangerous humanitarian consequences. Entering the seventh year of conflict, the situation in eastern Ukraine remains extremely volatile and is expected to remain so in 2021. Despite President Zelensky's commitment to an inclusive policy towards the population in eastern Ukraine and important steps that Ukraine has taken in conflict resolution, progress in the Trilateral Contact Group and Normandy format has remained limited. The decreasing engagement of humanitarian donors and actors is not yet adequately replaced by development/reform support in the Government-Controlled Areas (GCA). Despite some improvements, there continues to be deficiencies in terms of coordination, funding allocation, and comprehensive legislative framework, which have an impact on the quality and opportunities for the humanitarian response.

The impact of COVID-19 in the conflict-affected areas is comparatively higher than in other parts of Ukraine, due to i) the proportion of elderly people, many of whom with chronic illnesses; ii) the dilapidated healthcare system; and iii) pre-existing access constraints to the Non-Government Controlled Areas (NGCA). The impact of COVID-19 has been dramatic: the entry/exit crossing points (EECPs) have all been sealed off for civilians since mid-March 2020, disallowing access to pensions and social payments for

³ This designation is without prejudice to positions on status, and is in line with UNSCR 1244/1999 and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo declaration of independence.

⁴ The present HIP is focusing on the ongoing crises, while the situation in others parts of the region is not elaborated at present.

⁵ <http://www.inform-index.org/Countries/Country-profiles/iso3/UKR>

⁶ <http://hdr.undp.org/en/countries/profiles/UKR>

⁷ http://ec.europa.eu/echo/what/humanitarian-aid/needs-assessments_en

hundreds of thousands of civilians residing in the NGCA. International aid humanitarian cargos have passed with extreme difficulties and in smaller numbers than planned.

In 2020, access to the NGCA for humanitarian actors was further reduced, which can be partly attributed to real, but also politicised, threats pertaining to COVID-19. Only a few DG ECHO partners have been granted permission to operate in the NGCA. Although operational modalities remain restricted, there are nevertheless windows of opportunity to scale up the assistance. However, there are no prospects for the implementation of a humanitarian-development nexus approach in the NGCA in 2021.

UKRAINE	Score
INFORM Risk Index ⁸	4.6/10
Vulnerability Index	3.9/10
Hazard and Exposure	5.4/10
Lack of Coping Capacity	4.7/10
Projected conflict risk	10/10
Uprooted People Index	8.1/10
Humanitarian Conditions	1.8/10
Natural Disaster Index	3.3/10
Global Crisis Severity Index ⁹	
Crisis severity	High 4/5
HDI Ranking ¹⁰ (Value)	88 (0.750)
Total Population ¹¹	44,385,155

1.2 Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH)

Following the refugee flows along the Western Balkans Route in 2015, a new migratory route leading through Bosnia and Herzegovina towards Croatia and Slovenia emerged in early 2018. Since then, Bosnia and Herzegovina has faced a linear increase of arrivals of refugees, asylum seekers and migrants (People of Concern, PoCs) transiting to Northern and Western European countries. In 2019, over 29 196 PoCs were officially reported by the authorities, compared to 24 046 for 2018 and 755 for 2017, it is estimated that there is a significant number of unregistered PoC in the country. Following the easing of COVID-19 movement restrictions since May, there is an increase in new arrivals. Around 8 000 PoCs are constantly stranded in BiH at any given moment. The turnover rate is directly influenced by the measures put in place at the border by Croatia, including alleged violent pushbacks. The complex political situation and the growing anti-migrants rhetoric also have an impact on the humanitarian situation. The provision of accommodation for PoCs remains the key problem as the authorities are not capable of identifying suitable premises. The humanitarian assistance still relies primarily on financial support from international donors and the response capacity of international actors.

⁸ INFORM is a global, open-source risk assessment for humanitarian crises and disasters

⁹ <http://www.inform-index.org/Global-Crisis-Severity-Index-beta>

¹⁰ Humanitarian Development Index (HDI) developed by UNDP

¹¹ World Bank data, year 2019

Bosnia and Herzegovina	Score
INFORM Risk Index¹²	3.7/10
Vulnerability Index	3.7/10
Hazard and Exposure	3/10
Lack of Coping Capacity	4.7/10
Projected conflict risk	2.5/10
Uprooted People Index	7.1/10
Humanitarian Conditions	1,8/10
Natural Disaster Index	4.1
Global Crisis Severity Index¹³	Not included
HDI Ranking¹⁴ (Value)	75 (0,769)
Total Population¹⁵	3 301 000

1.3 Other countries

Besides the migration crisis that affects the entire region of the Western Balkans, natural hazards should also be considered, as demonstrated by the recent earthquake in Albania in November 2019, as well as the floods recorded in Serbia and Bosnia and Herzegovina in 2014 and 2018. The region of Southern Caucasus is also exposed to natural hazards. While the frequency of hazards and numbers of affected people are increasing, the numbers of casualties are decreasing, as a result of a better preparedness of the population. In case of any unforeseen, large-scale natural disasters, and potential conflict-related emergencies, funding of life-saving activities might be considered, based on a sound, coordinated, needs assessment. The resurgence of the conflict in Nagorno-Karabakh in October 2020 may require in the course of 2021 additional EU support under this HIP to help address possible further humanitarian consequences of this conflict. These regions may also be requiring support for natural disaster preparedness as well as COVID-19 preparedness and response, should the situation significantly deteriorate.

2 HUMANITARIAN NEEDS

2.1 People in need of humanitarian assistance

	Ukraine	Bosnia and Herzegovina
Conflict-affected population	3.4 million	
Refugees, migrants and asylum seekers		Turnover of around 30 000 people/year

¹² INFORM is a global, open-source risk assessment for humanitarian crises and disasters

¹³ <http://www.inform-index.org/Global-Crisis-Severity-Index-beta>

¹⁴ Humanitarian Development Index (HDI) developed by UNDP

¹⁵ World Bank data, year 2019

2.1.1 Ukraine

The estimated number of most vulnerable people in need of humanitarian assistance is **3.4 million**¹⁶, living in the NGCA and in the areas along both sides of the contact line. Elderly account 32% of the entire conflict-affected population (the highest proportion among humanitarian crises worldwide) while the number of people with disabilities reaches up to 12%¹⁷. Among affected people in need 57% are women, 16% are children (over half a million)¹⁸.

The Non-Government Controlled Areas (NGCA)

In terms of vulnerability, the NGCA can be divided into two subzones:

- i. **Areas near the contact line on the NGCA side (within 0 to 5 km from the contact line)** are characterised by very high vulnerability. Persons living in this area are exposed to threats against life and safety (shelling, mines), often in blatant violation of International Humanitarian Law (IHL). The population in need (around 0.4 million) lives in extremely precarious conditions. Essential social services are largely unavailable; very limited access to markets and transport facilities or social services. The overall humanitarian situation is outstandingly severe.
- ii. **In the rest of the NGCA**, the vulnerability of the population (around 1.9 million)¹⁹ remains very high, with limited access to essential services, markets and livelihood/job opportunities. The context is characterised by the absence of rule of law, deprivation of liberty, arbitrary arrests and other human rights violations and abuses, and IHL violations. The worsening socio-economic trend, compounded with the impact of COVID-19, may prompt additional displacements from the area. The situation of people in social institutions is of concern, due to an inadequate level of service provision. Reduced freedom of movement across the line of contact, including a complete disruption thereof during the acute phase of COVID-19 pandemic, and continued extreme difficulties in accessing social benefits, raise critical protection concerns. The overall humanitarian situation in the NGCA in 2021 is expected to become yet more severe.

The Government-Controlled Areas (GCA)

Areas near the contact line in the GCA are characterised by very high vulnerability. The population in need (0.2 million within 0-5 km from the contact line (CL))²⁰ is often exposed to violent incidents in densely populated areas and remote villages. The access to basic public services is severely limited; the health sector is affected by an exodus of health professionals and lack of access to medical supplies and referral centres.

¹⁶<https://www.humanitarianresponse.info/en/operations/ukraine/document/ukraine-2020-humanitarian-needs-overview-hno>

¹⁷ <https://www.humanitarianresponse.info/en/operations/ukraine/document/ukraine-2020-humanitarian-needs-overview-hno>

¹⁸ <https://www.humanitarianresponse.info/en/operations/ukraine/document/ukraine-2020-humanitarian-needs-overview-hno>

¹⁹<https://www.humanitarianresponse.info/en/operations/ukraine/document/ukraine-2020-humanitarian-needs-overview-hno>

²⁰<https://www.humanitarianresponse.info/en/operations/ukraine/document/ukraine-2020-humanitarian-needs-overview-hno>

Protection and access to water are critical concerns. The humanitarian situation is exacerbated by the disrupted access to supply routes and the inability of authorities to ensure basic services. Beyond 5 km, attention should be paid to isolated communities and the catchment areas, which may be further away from the CL, but equally vulnerable²¹. COVID-19 has further deepened the vulnerability of this population²².

Neighbouring countries

Hundreds of thousands of Ukrainian refugees are located in the Russian Federation²³ and in Belarus²⁴. Some of them, particularly those with non-regularised status in the Russian Federation, are very vulnerable and may require support for basic needs, protection and health.

2.1.2 Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH)

Since January 2018, 59 327 refugees, asylum seekers and migrants irregularly transited through BiH, many of whom are Unaccompanied and Separated Children (UASC). 67% are single men, 1% single women, 22% family with children and 11% are unaccompanied or separated children. At the end of August 2020, a highly fluctuating estimation indicates that around 9 000 refugees, asylum seekers and migrants are stranded in the country. On average, around 6 000 persons are accommodated in the six existing Temporary Reception Centres (TRCs) distributed in the Una-Sana and Sarajevo cantons, while a very small number is accommodated in the government-run centres. Up to 3 500 PoCs are currently sleeping rough all over the country in various types of squats, mainly in the Cantons of Una-Sana, Tuzla and Sarajevo.

2.2 Description of the most acute humanitarian needs

2.2.1 Ukraine

Health/Mental Health and Psychosocial support (MHPSS): Up to 57% of people face difficulties of accessing healthcare²⁵. Nearly all the elderly have at least one chronic disease and report conflict-related mental health issues, with shortage of medical professionals, high costs of medical treatment and medicine. The situation of people with disabilities remains difficult in terms of access to healthcare, of assistive devices and treatment. The economic repercussions of COVID-19-related measures will likely worsen. In the NGCA, supply lines for vaccines, chronic diseases treatments and other specialised drugs are disrupted. Psycho Social Support (PSS) and MHPSS remain among

²¹ Other areas of government-controlled territories of Donetsk and Luhansk Oblasts. The main needs of IDPs are related to access to social services, housing and employment. Early recovery and development/reform support programming need to be further stepped up, in order to promote IDP integration and build their resilience.

²²<https://www.humanitarianresponse.info/en/operations/ukraine/document/ukraine-2020-humanitarian-response-plan-hrp-revised-requirements-due>

²³ <http://reporting.unhcr.org/sites/default/files/pdfsummaries/GR2017-RussianFederation-eng.pdf>

According to UNHCR, since 2014 the number of Ukrainian temporary asylum seekers in Russian Federation stands at 449,500 people

²⁴ <https://www.ifrc.org/en/what-we-do/where-we-work/europe/belarusian-red-cross/> According to the Emergency Appeal of IFRC for Belarus (published on 28 February 2019).

²⁵ <https://www.humanitarianresponse.info/en/operations/ukraine/document/ukraine-2020-humanitarian-needs-overview-hno>

the most requested forms of assistance with up to 83% of unmet needs²⁶. Promotion and support to quality case management, community engagement and management as well as capacity building are also needed.

Shelter/Non-Food Items (NFIs): The hostilities continue causing destruction of private housing and civilian infrastructures, particularly in urban or semi-urban areas although in smaller numbers compared to previous years. In the GCA, up to 2,000 households are estimated to be still impacted by different levels of damage, including fully destroyed housing²⁷. The situation is significantly worse in the NGCA due to the predominantly urban nature of frontline communities, with 25 000 to 30 000 damaged or destroyed houses and residential buildings²⁸. Due to the sharp increase in prices, NFIs, including for winterisation, coal in particular in the market are not affordable for up to 70 000 of the most vulnerable.

Food security: the current crisis is affecting the regular local supply chain in the east, eroding the resident population's purchasing power. Food insecurity persists and more than 530 000 people, including IDPs outside Donbas region, are food insecure, while about 480 000 require livelihood support. Access to food and basic needs are mostly hampered by limited purchasing power and high inflation²⁹, further compounded following the increase of food prices upon COVID-19 epidemics. The harsh period poses significant additional challenges to food security, with a requirement for higher caloric intake.

Protection: The safety of the population living in the conflict zone is constantly under threat and these remain in need of humanitarian protection. The high concentration of military and armed groups enhances the risk of a range of violations, including gender-based violence (GBV). The right of access to documents for people living in the NGCA depends on GCA authorities, in order to obtain social entitlements, including pensions. The Housing, Land and Property (HLP) rights of the population have also been affected by destruction, unauthorized use and confiscation of land and property. The contact line in Ukraine remains highly contaminated by mines and explosive remnants of war (ERW) and the civilian casualties remain high³⁰.

Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH): Since the beginning of the conflict, up to two million people, especially in the NGCA and along the line of contact, have been affected by regular and frequent interruptions of water supply. Shortages in water supply have led to the failure of central and individual heating systems and to problems with water quality and wastewater systems. The security situation has a huge impact on maintenance and reparation of the damaged piped water network and the water treatment plants. COVID-19 threat has intensified the urgency for more sustainable WASH solutions.

Education in Emergencies: The conflict has resulted in significant gaps in learning, non-availability of specialised teachers and prohibitive education costs for many families. Nearly 250,000 children and teachers in schools located along the contact line regularly experience shelling and face extreme levels of mine/ERW contamination. Some 50

²⁶<https://www.humanitarianresponse.info/en/operations/ukraine/document/ukraine-2020-humanitarian-needs-overview-hno>

²⁷<https://www.humanitarianresponse.info/en/operations/ukraine/document/ukraine-2020-humanitarian-needs-overview-hno>

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹<https://www.humanitarianresponse.info/en/operations/ukraine/assessment/ukraine-socio-economic-and-market-review-2018>

³⁰<https://www.ohchr.org/en/countries/enacaregion/pages/uareports.aspx>

conflict-related incidents were reported in 2019, a 200% increase compared to 2018. There is a constant need for emergency repairs, including WASH facilities, provision of key education materials and supplies. Children and teachers living under extreme stress and fear, require sustained support and training in PSS and life skills.

Disaster Preparedness (DP): Ukraine's feature is multiple and constant threat of industrial and ecological risks, a situation substantially aggravated due to the conflict and COVID-19 pandemic. This exacerbated already existing trends of general neglect and inability to cope with the compounded natural and man-made hazards. These threats may lead to potential serious and dangerous humanitarian consequences and could trigger new significant population displacements.

2.2.2 *Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH)*

Shelter: Six EU-funded Temporary Reception Centres (TRCs) are available with a maximum capacity of around 6500 beds. However, the recent closure of one of the biggest TRCs by local authorities of the Una Sana Canton has led to an overstretching capacity in the existing centres. It is estimated that up to 3 500 PoC are left without proper shelter solutions all over the country, leaving them exposed to harsh weather conditions, safety risks inherent to squats and disused buildings, and protection threats, especially for vulnerable groups.

Food and Non-Food Items: overall, most food needs are met inside the six IOM-run TRCs. The provision of food for people outside the TRCs proves challenging, also due to the prohibition by the local authorities to provide any outreach assistance. The blanket provision of dry food package is the last resort for humanitarian actors to meet the most urgent needs. There is also a great need for NFIs. The situation remains extremely critical outside the centres, in particular for those PoCs who are victims of pushbacks from Croatia, often left without any cash, clothes or bags.

Water, Sanitation, Hygiene: despite considerable structural improvements inside TRCs, the provision of adequate sanitary facilities remain extremely challenging. Access to water and sanitation facilities outside TRCs is of great concern for PoCs squatting in abandoned buildings or sleeping in tents. Risks related to public health are critical.

Health/MHPSS: due to the hardship of the traveling conditions (scabies, body lice, respiratory infections), needs for first aid and primary health care are constantly increasing. Needs to access secondary health care have also been considerably increasing for life-saving surgery. From the onset of the response, an integrated approach has been defined in collaboration with the cantonal and municipal health authorities, with the provision of medical staff and equipment inside TRCs. Outside TRCs, First aid service and referral system are provided. In TRCs accommodating children, paediatric care, vaccinations and pre-school examination are needed as well. Access to MHPSS services remain challenging, mainly reflected through substance abuse, tensions and fights. Although the referral mechanism to individual counselling sessions or to psychiatric care is now reliable, PSS is still to be enhanced, with children and UASC as a priority focus.

Protection: the general protection environment inside TRCs is essentially jeopardised by an overcrowded environment and lack of safety and security. While irregularly entering BiH, nearly 94% of the PoCs are declaring their intention to seek for asylum, less than 5% end up submitting an asylum claim, mainly because of their intention to move on, but also due to limited capacities allocated by the authorities to process asylum claims. With saturated TRCs, access to adequate humanitarian services remain a challenge for the PoCs who are denied entrance. Security is of concern with violent behaviours occasionally reported. The existing referral mechanisms for the most at-risk population

remain to be enhanced. A case management system is in place for GBV-related threats, essentially for girls and women, but accessible also to men and boys victims of GBV. UASC are likely to be the most exposed group to protection risks due to a lack of proper identification and referral at registration phase.

Vulnerable groups outside the centres are at high risk of exposure to human trafficking, extortion, robbery, sexual harassment, etc. Identification capacities need to be constantly reinforced with a better engagement from local institutions, including the police. Limited adequate dedicated spaces inside TRCs or in any other specialised safe houses constitute a major impediment.

3 HUMANITARIAN RESPONSE AND COORDINATION

3.1 National / local response and involvement

3.1.1 Ukraine

The Ukrainian leadership has taken important steps towards the resolution of the conflict. It has reiterated its commitment to an inclusive approach, advocated by the EU, international community and civil society. However, despite progress notably in the legislative and regulatory framework and areas like voting rights of IDPs and some reduced administrative burden, outcomes are still insufficient especially with regard to the humanitarian plight in the NGCA (pensions, trade blockade etc.). The civil society continues to play a pivotal role in delivering aid to conflict-affected populations. However, restrictions affecting the humanitarian space in the NGCA still seriously hamper the access to and delivery of humanitarian assistance.

3.1.2 Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH)

Despite repeated and high-level EU advocacy and financial support, State authorities have not succeeded to ensure a comprehensive response to the ongoing migration crisis essentially seen by the authorities through the lens of a security-based approach. The topic is highly politicised and essentially leads to exacerbating rivalries between entities, cantons, political parties and communities. The humanitarian aspects are either ignored or de-prioritised in the political agenda.

3.2 International Humanitarian Response

3.2.1 Ukraine

The revised 2020 UN Humanitarian Response Plan (UN HRP) targets the 2.1 million most vulnerable among the 3.4 million conflict-affected people. The funding requested increased from USD 162 million in 2019 to USD 205 million in 2020 (including USD 47 million for COVID-19 response)³¹.

The low level of funding of the protracted crisis (as of October 2020 the UN HRP is funded by 28.2 %³²) underscores donor fatigue. For 2021, DG ECHO will advocate for a

³¹<https://www.humanitarianresponse.info/en/operations/ukraine/document/ukraine-2020-humanitarian-response-plan-hrp-revised-requirements-due>

³² <https://fts.unocha.org/countries/234/summary/2020>

strong priority setting at the level of the UN HRP underlining the importance of coordinated needs assessments as committed in the Grand Bargain, as well as for keeping multi-annual planning and applying a humanitarian-development nexus approach within the Humanitarian Country Team (HCT) for Ukraine, even if it presently refers to GCA only. Despite continuous advocacy efforts, the international humanitarian presence in the NGCA is still patchy, limited, and inadequate to cope with humanitarian challenges. The EU, together with its Member States, is the biggest donor of humanitarian and early recovery/development assistance to Ukraine. Since the beginning of the conflict, DG ECHO has allocated to Ukraine EUR 164.8 million and the EU Member States EUR 268 million in humanitarian aid.

3.2.2 Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH)

The EU is by far the biggest donor in response to the migration crisis in BiH. Some ad hoc support has been provided in the past by other donors (i.e. Kuwait, Qatar, Switzerland). Refugees, asylum seekers and migrants transiting in Bosnia and Herzegovina rely primarily on the mobilisation of the international community, including UN agencies, IFRC/Red Cross Society and few international non-governmental organisations. Some support is also provided by local volunteers and the civil society.

3.3 Operational constraints

3.3.1 Ukraine

The successful implementation of programmes funded by DG ECHO will depend on the partners' capacity to access people in need. The unstable security situation on both sides of the contact line and in the NGCA has an impact on the partner's operational capacity on the ground. The humanitarian response is still constrained by ceasefire violations at the contact line, as well as by bureaucratic and political impediments, which limit free access to the NGCA and in the areas along the contact line. An escalation of violence could quickly raise the level of insecurity, further hampering implementation and follow-up of humanitarian operations. Conversely, in case of the progress of the peace process and steps towards reintegration of NGCA into government-controlled Ukraine in 2021, the dynamics of work and humanitarian priorities may warrant a thorough modification. COVID-19 pandemic may yet cause further sizeable adjustments in programming in Ukraine. An upgraded legislative- and regulatory framework is also paramount to ensure speedy and smooth delivery of humanitarian assistance. DG ECHO will continue to advocate for improved humanitarian space and access at all levels and with all parties to the conflict.

3.3.2 Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH)

Overall, access to PoCs has been secured by international and local actors in all TRCs and outreach locations despite risks of inter-community clashes, violent demonstrations and/or clashes with police forces due notably to tensions related to overcrowding and lack of privacy, and movement restriction measures adopted by local authorities. There were some attempts by local authorities to criminalise humanitarian assistance in the Una Sana Canton, mainly by threatening humanitarian staff to be arrested and/or deported. An increased involvement of local actors is encouraged to extend the areas of intervention,

with a better acceptance from local authorities and a better integration in the existing social services.

4 HUMANITARIAN – DEVELOPMENT – PEACE NEXUS

4.1 Ukraine

Under the European Neighbourhood Instrument (ENI)/European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument (ENPI), EUR 85 million were allocated in response to the conflict since 2014. A further EUR 30 million resilience programme, which aims at enhancing Ukraine's overall resilience, including hybrid threats and destabilisation, such as the COVID-19 pandemic, and increasing its peacebuilding capacity is in preparation. In 2017, a comprehensive programme in support of good governance, economic development, community security and sectoral reforms and structural adjustments in the GCA of Donetsk and Luhansk regions (as well as the Azov coastline in Zaporizhzhia region since 2019) was adopted under ENI funding. This large-scale action reflects the nexus approach to the conflict response and lays the basis for more reform support-oriented action in the GCA, including, in conjunction with humanitarian assistance, as close as possible to the contact line. The EU Instrument contributing to Stability and Peace (IcSP) has since 2014 allocated EUR 90 million to support IDPs and conflict-affected populations through notably human rights monitoring, regional media support, reintegration of former combatants, provision of PSS to youth and children and mine-related actions. In 2019/2020, IcSP has funded new projects related to peacebuilding and facilitating dialogue regarding the conflict and the future of the country. IcSP's engagement in Ukraine will remain robust with future initiatives including countering disinformation activities and additional work on protection of civilians in conflict.

The priority sectors of the Ukraine 2017-2020 JHDF endorsed by DG ECHO/DG NEAR-SGUA (Support Group for Ukraine)/FPI (Foreign Policy Instrument) are human security; economic development and support to livelihoods, and health. DG ECHO operates along both sides of the line of contact and the NGCA, where the EU can provide only humanitarian assistance. For political and security reasons, DG NEAR/SGUA assistance and European Investment Bank (EIB) loans mostly target areas away from the line of contact and the FPI's portfolio addresses needs in-between. In the future, the most realistic scenario for the nexus implementation is further reinforcement of government services and reform processes in the GCA – particularly in the health, WASH/shelter, education, DRR, livelihoods, and also partly in the protection sector. The current reality will be subject to further annual review taking into consideration the evolution of the conflict, the nation-wide reform processes and the impact and experiences from implementing assistance projects. In case of progress regarding the conflict resolution, the EU is committed to immediately support various activities, e.g. additional EECs in Luhansk oblast, assistance in disengagement areas and increased demining in GCA. Another promising stream for enhanced intra-EU coordination and nexus is the recently established 'Conflict response thematic area', which DG ECHO has joined (and which covers IDPs, veterans, resilience as cross-cutting, humanitarian-development nexus) in the framework of the EU and EU Member States' 'Working Better' approach. This approach aims to enhance the effectiveness and coherence of EU cooperation programmes; to increase the impact of interventions and deliver better results; to reduce fragmentation; and to increase transparency, predictability and accountability of aid-funded programmes.

Health: DG NEAR aims to develop a common programmatic response in the sector, in close cooperation with the Ukrainian authorities, ensuring that the healthcare reform initiated at central government level fully encompasses and starts to reach the isolated

population in conflict-affected areas in the East. EIB's contribution support the improvement of healthcare services in the government-controlled areas through investments in infrastructure.

Basic Needs/Socio-eco support: DG NEAR support includes assistance to micro, small and medium enterprises through business development services with a focus on agriculture, better access to financing and professional skills training, and support to vocational education and displaced universities. FPI provides some livelihood support to local residents. A handover to DG NEAR/FPI in the food security sector is not envisageable since their support seeks rather to stimulate the development and address economic regeneration of the region. Livelihood, on the other hand, may be supported through various micro-business and micro-credit initiatives by other donors, which can gradually extend closer towards the contact line in GCA.

Wash/Shelter: DG NEAR/FPI support aims at strengthening local government capacity to fulfil its functions through a range of interventions, including on housing policy and capacities to tackle the rehabilitation of critical infrastructure. EIB granted a EUR 200 million framework loan for multi-sector investments in conflict damaged municipal and transport infrastructure). DG ECHO has already exited from shelter support in the GCA.

Education: DG NEAR supports displaced universities, relocated from non-government to government controlled areas, improve academic and accommodation facilities, develop curricula and offer better student support services. Based to future developments and stabilisation of needs, DG ECHO will pursue a gradual exit strategy from this sector in those geographic areas, although it may continue to assist activities such as PSS, conflict-sensitive education, life-skills education, mine-awareness in schools along the line of contact – activities for which the exit strategy may be longer.

Protection: DG ECHO already handed over humanitarian demining activities to the IcSP in 2019. DG NEAR works on the capacity building of national and local authorities on IDP integration and social protection, and community security and social cohesion activities. DG NEAR will possibly support activities around potential new crossing points on the line of contact. Generally, EU support to government reforms, should enhance the social protection network also in eastern Ukraine, which should ensure the basic support for the most vulnerable populations in GCA. Therefore, the new JHDF should update the division of tasks between DG ECHO and DG NEAR, with the prospect for full handover in 2022.

DP/DRR: DG NEAR intends providing capacity building and implementation of confidence-building projects at selected GCA locations which are characterised by high natural, industrial, or other hazards compounded with the conflict situation. This can be pursued in coordination with the DG ECHO Disaster Risk Reduction consortium – paving the way for a possible full handover in 2022.

All donors working in Ukraine, including the EU with its Member States, the US, Canada, Switzerland and others, are fully committed to the nexus approach in eastern Ukraine. While such approach is clearly not possible, at present, in the NGCA, donors' efforts are focused on the GCA, especially near to the line of contact. Administrative service delivery is a good example of such activities, with a good cooperation with local authorities. For example, the EU Support to the East of Ukraine programme is supporting the renovation of stationary centers of administrative services such as the one in Stanytsia Luhanska. In addition, the activities focus on innovative solutions in order to integrate administrative and social services and effectively reach out to the population living along the contact line. The same approach applies to all sectors, with more emphasis on social cohesion and participatory decision-making. In the coming period, the peace component will gain even more importance within the nexus approach in Ukraine. All planning processes shall be planned in view of triple nexus.

Exit scenarios

DG ECHO will continue advocating for opportunities to seek longer-term commitments from development/reform support donors in the GCA, both among EU and non-EU donor community. Any DG ECHO exit strategy in the GCA will be based on a specific implementation of the updated JHDF for Ukraine. On the other hand, no exit strategy at the contact line and in the NGCA could be currently envisaged in view of the current political context and the persisting conflict activity, the situation which is further exacerbated by the pandemic. Partners are invited to incorporate gradual exit strategies in the GCA in their proposals and in particular in those sectors that are considered for DG ECHO assistance, while at the same time describing how they could expand their activities in the NGCA. In example, DG ECHO has started phasing out from the shelter in the GCA. In the protection sector, the EU and its partners are continuously advocating towards the government to implement the IDPs integration strategy, payment of pensions and social payments to NGCA residents, etc.

4.2 Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH)

Support to asylum, migration and integrated border management was already foreseen in the Indicative Strategy Paper (ISP) for BiH 2014-2020 under the Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance II (IPA II), within the Rule of Law and Fundamental Rights sector. Between 2015 and 2017, additional funds were allocated for strengthening Migration Information Systems and equipment, including biometric data. Between 2016/2021, all Western Balkans partners benefit from the regional programme “Support to Protection-Sensitive Migration Management” with a budget EUR 14.5 million. Its aim, implemented jointly by the European Border and Coast Guard Agency (EBCGA), the European Asylum Support Office (EASO), IOM and UNHCR, is to support the target countries in developing a protection-sensitive response to migration situation while aligning with EU policies and international standards. EUR 8 million have been allocated in April 2020 to support a regional action through the IcSP to address the COVID-19 challenges amongst migrant, asylum seekers and refugees in Western Balkans.

Since 2018, DG ECHO and DG NEAR are working in close collaboration and complementarity in response to the great number of persons of concern in need of humanitarian assistance and protection; three successive special measures from the IPA have been adopted for a total amount of EUR 50.2 million from October 2018 to September 2020, in a complementary approach with EUR 10.3 million allocated by DG ECHO from June 2018 to December 2020.

Health: DG ECHO supports provision of primary and secondary health, paediatric care, provision of mental health and accompaniment of patients to health services. The lack of funding visibility of DG NEAR does not allow DG ECHO handover of the health component to DG NEAR, initially foreseen by the end of 2020.

Wash/shelter: DG NEAR supports the establishment and the running costs of the six TRCs located in the Una Sana and Sarajevo Cantons. The assistance covers as well provision of WASH to the centres and the needed repairs.

Food security: In the frame of its outreach assistance, DG ECHO provides dry food packages and non-food items to the PoCs leaving outside the temporary centres. DG NEAR funds cover the provision of food and non-food items in all of the centres.

Education: DG NEAR is covering this sector providing assistance for formal and non-formal education, child-friendly spaces and mother and baby corners.

Protection: DG ECHO’s assistance includes protection monitoring, referral and case management, individual counselling, alternative/protective shelter for particularly vulnerable individuals and protection response to UASC. DG NEAR funding will

enhance the capacity of BiH authorities for identification, registration and referral to services for refugees, asylum-seekers and migrants.

DP/DRR: DG ECHO is currently exploring opportunities to build a disaster preparedness actions in the Western Balkans.

Support was also provided by DG NEAR to locally identified and driven initiatives to promote social cohesion among PoCs and host communities in the Una-Sana and Sarajevo Cantons.

Several bilateral donors from EU Member States, as well as the Council of Europe Development Bank and other partner countries are supporting BiH in the area of migration and border management.

Exit scenarios

As regard to the short term strategy, bearing in mind that there is a continuous influx of refugees and migrants transiting the country, needs for basic needs and services persist. Whereas this should be the responsibility of BiH authorities, DG ECHO will remain engaged for capacity building and DG NEAR for technical support. Accordingly, DG ECHO will maintain a strong engagement on humanitarian activities in 2021 but with a gradually reduced engagement over the following years. The authorities were requested by the EU to put in place a proper migration management system and to take over the support to vulnerable migrants. Humanitarian partners are expected to play a significant role in this regard especially when it comes to capacity building in the areas of health, in particular on MHPSS, and on protection, with a focus on legal aid.

5 ENVISAGED DG ECHO RESPONSE AND EXPECTED RESULTS OF HUMANITARIAN AID INTERVENTIONS

5.1 Envisaged DG ECHO response

General considerations for all interventions

The humanitarian response shall be compliant with EU thematic policies and guidelines that are described in detail in the HIP Policy Annex. For instance, mainstreaming of protection, gender (including mitigation of risks of SGBV), age, and disability inclusion should be duly reflected in all proposals.

Furthermore, the increasingly negative consequences of environmental degradation and climate-related challenges and the COVID-19 pandemic will continue to impact humanitarian crises and the provision of humanitarian assistance for the foreseeable future. For these reasons, in their proposals partners are requested to follow an all-risks assessment approach, to contemplate measures to reduce the environmental footprint of operations and to factor in as appropriate the COVID-19 dimension.

DG ECHO will release an operational guidance on its renewed approach to preparedness in January 2021, for the consideration of its partners as well. This document will be the result of an extensive consultation with partners on the key policy elements and operational modalities of the approach.

5.1.1 Ukraine

Mainstreaming of protection, gender, age and disability inclusion based on a comprehensive risk analysis, will be a pre-condition for selection. This includes taking into account strategies to prevent risks of GBV and protection from sexual exploitation

and sexual abuse (PSEA), and appropriate measures ensuring inclusion of elderly, people with disabilities and other groups at high risk of discrimination. DG ECHO will give particular attention to climate-proofing humanitarian response.

DG ECHO intervention should continue prioritising as follows:

- 1) The population living along the line of contact (within a 5 km radius) in the NGCA, directly affected by the fighting. Their number estimated at around 400,000 persons;
- 2) The population residing along the line of contact (within a 5 km radius) in the GCA, directly affected by the fighting. Number estimated at around 200,000 persons;
- 3) The particularly vulnerable resident population in the NGCA living in some highly vulnerable isolated communities beyond 5 km radius in the NGCA. The targeted population should not exceed 100,000 persons.

In all three areas, priority will be given to the needs of **elderly and people with disabilities**. Elderly account 32% of the entire conflict-affected population (the highest proportion among humanitarian crises worldwide) while the number of people with disabilities reaches up to 12%³³, and for most of them the access to quality healthcare is critical. In protection, the risks are particularly acute for the local resident population and IDPs, in particular taking into account that among affected people in need 57% are women, 16% are children (over half a million) and 12% are people with disabilities³⁴.

Considering funding limitations and limited humanitarian access to the NGCA, DG ECHO will prioritise the following specific activities per sector:

- ✓ **Health (including MHPSS):** DG ECHO will continue to support the provision of emergency and primary health services (fixed and mobile medical units) and address the gaps in secondary/tertiary health care; through supply of medical equipment, medicines and capacity building, reinforcement of the patient referral system, and MHPSS; case and community management and the right to health. DG ECHO will give special emphasis to strengthening the health system and community capacities for COVID-19 preparedness and response in the prioritised geographical areas.
- ✓ **Shelter & NFIs:** In the NGCA, DG ECHO will support the enhancement of housing conditions through urgent rehabilitation and repair works (including thermal insulation works) of conflict-damaged accommodation of low and medium level damages, without excluding light repairs of potential fresh damages. Urgent and light rehabilitation of civilian infrastructures, such as school and health facilities, may also be supported in the NGCA. DG ECHO will also support the supply of coal and NFIs for winterisation, primarily in the NGCA.
- ✓ **Basic Needs:** DG ECHO will support the most effective and efficient modality of providing basic needs assistance, using multi-purpose cash or vouchers whenever possible and justified. Funding of emergency livelihood opportunities might also be considered for the contact line settlements.
- ✓ **Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH):** DG ECHO will support activities that aim to ensure adequate and sustained access (in terms of quality and quantity) to safe water, including small rehabilitation of water supply and sanitation infrastructures

³³ <https://www.humanitarianresponse.info/en/operations/ukraine/document/ukraine-2020-humanitarian-needs-overview-hno>

³⁴ <https://www.humanitarianresponse.info/en/operations/ukraine/document/ukraine-2020-humanitarian-needs-overview-hno>

damaged by the conflict. Provision of hygiene kits, such as diapers for the elderly, will be ensured. Support may be provided for hygiene awareness campaigns due to threat of epidemics, with particular focus on COVID19.

- ✓ **Education in Emergencies:** DG ECHO will support initiatives aiming at ensuring access to safe, quality and accredited primary and secondary education, provision of life-saving and life-sustaining skills and protection. Gaps in conflict-related repairs, school equipment, education materials, capacity building, non-formal and life skills education, advocacy and technical support, will also be addressed whenever relevant and justified. PSS will also be supported. Priority will be given to the NGCA.

DG ECHO will also support initiatives to address **protection risks and violations** in an integrated manner, while ensuring centrality of protection and protection sensitive targeting in all activities. Dedicated standalone protection activities (including case management, PSS, Child Protection, GBV, Mine Risk Education, and Information, Counselling and Legal Assistance) can also be considered. A comprehensive multi-disciplinary case and community management approach should be applied to address compounded protection vulnerabilities of specifically vulnerable groups such as the elderly and persons with disabilities.

DG ECHO will support **humanitarian advocacy** activities, which aim at raising awareness about the humanitarian crisis, IHL, and at improving the local and international response to the needs highlighted above.

Disaster Preparedness (DP): Upon assessment of the ongoing pilot project, DG ECHO may continue DP efforts at the contact line in the GCA. In view of the current acute health crisis, which amplifies the threat in the region, specific health-related action in DP is recommended, among others mass casualty management and safe hospital concepts. DG ECHO will promote actions that facilitate an integrated disaster management able to deal with industrial/environmental risks, and as epidemics or other shocks and natural hazard related disasters.

DG ECHO will continue to support the operationalisation of the **Humanitarian Development Peace nexus approach** with NEAR FPI and EEAS in the GCA only.

In addition, in line with the exit strategy, pilot projects aimed at enhancing the **restoration of adequate government services** may be considered in the GCA, particularly in the Protection, Health and WASH sectors.

Further contribution to the existing OCHA-managed **Ukraine Humanitarian Fund** (a 'country-based pooled fund' or CBPF) may be considered pending further assessment of the impact of previous actions.

5.1.2 *Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH)*

In a complementary approach with DG NEAR, DG ECHO's strategy aims at enhancing the general health and protection environment of the PoCs, inside and outside the TRCs, with the respect of the environment.

In 2021, DG ECHO will continue engaging on humanitarian activities with a gradually reduced engagement after 2021. DG ECHO will also advocate for an increased engagement of the authorities in view of a proper migration management including capacity building and a future handover.

- ✓ *Health programme* (Primary Health Care, Secondary Health Care and MHPSS): As most of the People of concern are in need of health care, health services are instrumental to monitor protection risks/threats and refer those in need of protection services.

- ✓ *Protection programme to be strengthened*, including by developing services for UASCs (unaccompanied and separated children) with stronger involvement of the Centre for Social Welfare-CSW (Shelter, case management), continuity of GBV-related services.
- ✓ *Outreach assistance to be maintained (if not extended)*: provision of assistance outside the centres will remain a life-saving operation, mainly during wintertime.
- ✓ *Alternative shelter solutions* for the most vulnerable should be further developed through local actors.

5.2 Other DG ECHO interventions

The Emergency Toolbox HIP may be drawn upon for the prevention of, and response to, outbreaks of Epidemics. Under the Emergency Toolbox HIP, the Small-Scale Response, Acute Large Emergency Response Tool (ALERT) and Disaster Relief Emergency Fund (DREF) instruments may also provide funding options.

In line with DG ECHO's commitment to the Grand Bargain, pilot Programmatic Partnerships are envisaged with a limited number of partners. Part of this HIP may therefore be awarded to the selected pilot Programmatic Partnerships.