European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations

Ukraine

Introduction

The security situation in eastern Ukraine remains volatile with frequent clashes across the front line, where humanitarian needs persist. Civilians fall victim to the conflict, with frequent damage to housing and civilian infrastructure such as water supply and electricity systems, schools, and health facilities. Residents affected by the conflict, internally displaced people (IDPs) and returnees face difficulties in accessing essential services, such as healthcare. In addition, civilians endure many hardships such as the loss of income and livelihoods in addition to prolonged psychological distress.

What are the needs?

The conflict, which began in 2014, between armed groups and government forces continues. 3.5 million people are in need of humanitarian assistance. The humanitarian situation remains grim along the ‘line of contact’. In the non-government controlled areas freedom of movement and humanitarian access are restricted. Few humanitarian organisations formally registered there, although the access is still denied or limited for most international humanitarian organisations. The Ukrainian government decree on the restriction of movement of people and goods combined with suspension of cargo transfers to and from non-government controlled areas (except humanitarian), continues to have an adverse impact on the needs and wellbeing of people.

Hundreds of thousands of displaced people and residents in non-government controlled areas face difficulties in accessing pensions, which poses a risk of falling further into poverty. Because of heavy shelling, critical civilian infrastructure is constantly damaged. Ukraine ranks third worldwide behind Afghanistan and Syria for civilian casualties resulting from landmines and unexploded ordinance.
How are we helping?

Since 2014, the European Union and its Member States have contributed more than €754.5 million in humanitarian and early recovery aid. The EU addresses the needs of people in the areas directly affected by the conflict, the internally displaced people and refugees who have fled the conflict areas, and the returnees. EU-funded humanitarian projects include food assistance, providing and repairing shelter, water, protection activities, health assistance (including psychosocial activities), education in emergencies, demining activities and distribution of essential household items.

Being one of the largest humanitarian donors to the crisis in eastern Ukraine, the EU has provided more than €133.8 million in emergency financial assistance; this figure includes €17.7 million committed in 2019. About half of the assistance benefits vulnerable people living in the non-government controlled areas. This relief aid targets those most in need, including female-headed households, the elderly, children, and people with disabilities.

The EU’s European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations (ECHO) have operated in Ukraine since February 2014. The EU’s humanitarian department plays a key role in facilitating humanitarian coordination and information sharing with various humanitarian organisations, including donors, authorities and aid partners. The EU also assists displaced Ukrainians in Belarus and the Russian Federation.

Humanitarian assistance is currently delivered through the European Commission’s humanitarian partners, including the PIN-led ‘ACCESS’ consortium (with Médecins du Monde and ACTED, IMPACT Initiatives, HelpAge International, Right to Protection and the Ukraine NGO Forum); the ACTED-led Consortium (with IMPACT Initiatives, Danish Red Cross and Right to Protection) the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), UNHCR, OCHA, IOM, UNICEF, Save the Children, Première Urgence Internationale, Norwegian Refugee Council, and Danish Refugee Council.