

Highlights from the Call for Action – Helsinki+50 follow-up meeting on

“The role of the OSCE in addressing the war in Ukraine and its consequences”¹

Wednesday, 11 May 2022, 14:30 – 17:00 CEST, Zoom

Main points raised by panelists:

- Raised grave concerns about the global impact of the war, including the ongoing mass displacement of Ukrainian citizens, the global pressure on energy prices, and rising food insecurity across the world;
- Underlined that damage to Ukraine, a main first sector trading partner of Europe and far beyond, has a cascading negative effect on basic commodities and food security that might lead to poverty and famine across the globe, affecting disproportionately the most vulnerable, especially in countries with armed conflicts;
- Unequivocally condemned the use of all types of weaponry, including light weapons and small arms, against civilians as well as the exercise of sexual violence, which violates the Geneva Conventions and their Additional Protocols;
- Denounced alarming statistics on the civilian impact of the war, reporting over 3000 killed, more than 4000 wounded, and over 7000 civilian facilities damaged or ruined;
- Noted with concern that the ongoing crisis is the fastest displacement in world history with approx. 14 million people were displaced in total: 5.9 million outside and 8 million inside the country. In addition, there are 16 million people currently in need of assistance, including for accessing services, finding relatives, and employment;²
- Warned about the upcoming winter season that will exacerbate the already dire humanitarian situation. Thousands of civilians will be imperiled as a result of damaged energy production and distribution infrastructure (e.g., gas pipelines, and energy centers);
- Noted with concern that 1 million people are currently returning to Ukraine and one-fourth of the Internally Displaced People (IDPs) are planning to return, who will need urgent assistance;

¹ The Highlights from the OSCE PA Call for Action - Helsinki +50 Meetings are not intended to be official conclusions, nor an exhaustive list of all issues or suggestions raised during the debate, but rather a compilation of points recorded for possible future reference. As this compilation is not exhaustive, any comments or suggested additions are welcome.

² Data provided by speakers

- Informed about the work of the United Nations (UN), the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), and of other international and local organizations that are scaling up humanitarian support to meet the growing humanitarian needs of the affected population;
- Updated on the latest developments in humanitarian aid, including the provision of safe access to the city of Mariupol in a joint mission of the UN and ICRC that resulted in the evacuation of 600 people;
- Informed about the UN Secretary General's proposal to set up a humanitarian contact group between the Russian Federation, Ukraine, and the UN with the mandate to address humanitarian needs;
- Informed about the work of the OSCE Project Co-ordinator in Ukraine (PCU) that is continuing to deliver on its mandated activities as well as on its extra-budgetary projects aiming to address immediate humanitarian needs;
- Informed about PCU's planned projects on mine action strategy, combating trafficking of weapons and of human beings, and cyber security awareness. These projects, however small, can contribute to larger efforts in alleviating the ongoing crisis;
- Underlined the need for a continued OSCE engagement on the situation in Ukraine, regardless of the outcome of the tragic conflict;
- Outlined the work of the ICRC on the ground, including concerning the provision of critical protection activities, and emergency assistance;
- Noted the role ICRC played as an intermediary in facilitating safe passage to Mariupol and in providing clean water access to Bucha, as well as in other operations and evacuation efforts of civilians;
- Underlined that small strands of dialogue, such as facilitating access to clean water, and other operations addressing local needs, open up a window for a larger cooperation.

General recommendations:

- Called on participating States, the OSCE PA, and the international community to provide urgent support and facilitate the evacuation of people from the Azovstal plant in Mariupol;
- Taking note of the growing number of those in need of immediate support, called for a humanitarian scale-up, which is likely to be halted due to growing fuel shortages and damage to critical infrastructure and transportation systems;
- Called on participating States to scale up support and assistance in addressing human trafficking, internal displacement, and ensuring adequate refugee protection;
- Called on participating States to provide support in gas supplies and other fuel sources, as well as alternative sources of energy;
- Urged participating States to collectively support accelerating exports and restoring trade relations with Ukraine – by exploring alternative trading routes and bypassing the blockage in the Black sea;

- Urged participants to prioritize above all rehabilitation and restoration of civilian infrastructure, including water and electricity, in light of the growing number of returnees and IDPs;
- Called for enhancing cooperation and coordination of efforts between International Financial Institutions (IFIs) and the national authorities to leave no one behind;
- Called for a creation of a standing mechanism for all the IFIs and donors to oversee and alert about the developments on the ground;
- Emphasized that humanitarian problems should not be mistaken for political ones and called for practical and tangible solutions;

Recommendations by individual participants:

- Urged participating States to cease relations with the Russian Federation, especially in relation to the energy supply sector;
- Called on all participating States to recognize the level of violence and aggression against the Ukrainian civilian population as genocide;
- Called on the OSCE PA to actively engage in promoting the need to swiftly and duly investigate atrocities committed in the territory of Ukraine;
- Urged OSCE PA delegations to initiate an official discussion regarding a possible expulsion of the Russian Federation from the PA and wider OSCE structures;
- Suggested that the OSCE PA should lead by example and amend its Rules of Procedure to allow for the discontinuation of a delegation's membership;
- Suggested that the plenary sessions and other discussions at the upcoming 2022 Annual Session in Birmingham should focus on the war in Ukraine, and delegates should consider issuing a declaration in this regard.