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NOTE

Origine:	Secrétariat général du Conseil
Destinataire:	Délégations
Objet:	Évacuations médicales et soutien sanitaire à l'Ukraine - <i>Informations communiquées par la Commission</i>

Les délégations trouveront en annexe une note de la Commission sur les « Évacuations médicales et soutien sanitaire à l'Ukraine » qui sera traitée en tant que point « divers » lors de la session du Conseil EPSCO (santé) du 14/06/2022.

Medical evacuations and health support for Ukraine

On 15 February, Ukraine activated the EU Civil Protection Mechanism in preparation for a large-scale emergency.

On March 23, the Commission published a Communication¹, which outlined the need to provide **access to healthcare to those fleeing the war against Ukraine and arriving in the EU**. To ensure such access, the Temporary Protection Directive was adopted. The Communication identified those in urgent need of specialized hospital treatment and care, whether emergency care or treatment for chronic diseases, as a priority population to receive immediate support. For this purpose, the Commission established a medical evacuation mechanism (for the transfer of Ukrainian patients with serious illness, life-threatening conditions, in need of continued treatment or urgent medical assistance) to EU/EEA countries.

Requests for evacuation of patients made by Ukraine, Moldova or any of their EU bordering countries are posted in the Common Emergency Communication and Information System. To date, **761 requests for medical evacuations** were received (208 from Poland, 73 from Moldova, 1 from Slovakia and 479 from Ukraine), and **529 Ukrainian patients in need of continued treatment or urgent medical assistance have so far been transferred** from Ukraine, Moldova and EU-neighbouring Member States² to European hospitals through the EU Civil Protection Mechanism.

To support transfers of Ukrainian patients, the Commission, the World Health Organisation and the EU bordering countries are in the process of **setting up medical hubs**. The aim of these medical facilities is to support and coordinate the safe transfer of patients under evacuation and their family members to other EU countries. Medical hubs are **under preparation** close to airports **in**:

- **Rzeszow (Poland)** – three new locations for hubs are under assessment in Poland in the Podkarpackie region near the Rzeszow (Jasionka) airport;
- **Iasi (Romania)** – ready to be deployed; and
- **Kosice (Slovakia)** – is functional and Ukraine plans to use it for chronic disease patients.

The patients' health records are shared using the Early Warning and Response System in full compliance with data protection. Access was granted to Ukraine and Moldova to facilitate direct communication with EU/EEA countries' health authorities.

The EU patients' medical evacuation scheme supports the transfer of patients that fulfil the eligibility criteria, be they civilians or military personnel³. Up to date, **126 military patients have been transferred**. Lately, Ukraine has mainly been requesting the transfer of military patients. Currently, there are about 25 requests for transfers per day.

¹ [Communication welcoming those fleeing war in ukraine.pdf \(europa.eu\)](#)

² The main host countries are currently Belgium, Germany, Denmark, Spain, France, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Romania and Sweden.

³ On 5 April, Ukraine adopted a regulation that allows the transfer of patients with war wounds, including civilians and soldiers. The coordination role for the organisation and prioritisation of patients to be transferred remains with the Ukrainian Health Ministry Task force, supported by the Commission and the World Health Organization.

Requests for prosthetics as well as access to rehabilitation centres are increasing, for which additional support from Member States will be needed, especially for young soldiers and children.

As the humanitarian situation in Ukraine is worsening, the Commission is working on all fronts to provide assistance to Ukraine and to Member States hosting Ukrainian refugees. The **provision of medical items (medicines, equipment) and support to mental health are of highest priority.**

The Commission, through the European Health Emergency Preparedness and Response Authority (HERA) is also ensuring coordinated efforts by anticipating and assessing short and medium-term health needs of Ukrainian refugees, e.g. for **paediatric vaccines and treatment for tuberculosis and HIV**. It is also supporting Member States on **wastewater surveillance** for different pathogens, to monitor the health of Ukrainian refugees. Finally, the Commission is working on **direct procurement of the most urgently needed items** for which donations do not suffice.⁴

The European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC) is monitoring the health situation on a permanent basis, including the risk from infectious disease due to the humanitarian situation.

The Commission published a **specific webpage⁵ on the access to health care in EU countries for persons displaced from Ukraine**, with country specific procedures for requesting temporary protection for Ukrainian citizens to reassure patients and their family members. The Commission has also created a **dedicated health stakeholders' network on the EU Health Policy Platform⁶, called 'Supporting Ukraine, neighbouring EU Member States and Moldova'** on which specific focus is given to trauma and mental health support to refugees as well as victims of crisis related sexual violence. Members are mainly representatives of civil society organisations and health professionals' associations. The Commission is set to sign an agreement with the International Red Cross societies to also provide mental health support in addition to a call for civil society organisations via the EU4Health Work Programme 2022. In addition, a communication and liaison channel for organisations within the Network to/from the Ukrainian Ministry of Health has been established.

In the coming months the requests for mental health and trauma support as well as for prosthetics and access to rehabilitation centres will increase. Furthermore, Ukraine has requested to receive aid in equipping an evacuation train as well as evacuation busses. Therefore, additional support by Member States will be required.

Concerning **medicines shortages**, the Commission is following the action of the EU Medicines Shortages Single Point of Contact (SPOC) Working Party, which monitors possible shortages that could affect the supply of medicines in the EU, including those due to the war in Ukraine. No critical shortages have been reported so far.

⁴ For example, potassium iodide tablets that were procured and then rapidly dispatched to Ukraine upon a Ukrainian request.

⁵ [Fleeing Ukraine: Healthcare | European Commission \(europa.eu\)](https://european-council.europa.eu/media/1000000/attachment/data/00000000/1660000000/1660000000.pdf)

⁶ <https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/hpf/>

On 7 March, the coordinators of the 24 **European Reference Networks** initiated “#ERNcare4UA”, a support action for the Ukrainian refugees suffering from a rare or complex disease. The initiative focusses on diagnosis, urgent and major therapies, surgery, therapy adaptation, medical equipment, and drug access. It offers support by providing medical guidance for triage or transfer, medical advice and recommendations, and medical support and replacement (in the event of a drug or medical supply shortage).

Given the increasing likelihood of a protracted war in Ukraine, the EU should ensure that this support is sustained for as long as necessary.
