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NOTE

From:	General Secretariat of the Council
To:	Delegations
Subject:	Presentation of recommendations stemming from the mission of Special Advisor Asscher on Ukraine - <i>Information from the Commission</i>

Delegations will find attached information from the Commission on the above subject, with a view to the meeting of the EPSCO Council on 13 March 2023 (Any Other Business item).

Presentation of recommendations stemming from the mission of Special Advisor Asscher on Ukraine

Mr Lodewijk Asscher is a former Deputy Prime Minister and Labour Minister of the Netherlands and former acting Mayor of the City of Amsterdam. He was appointed as a Special Adviser to Commissioner Nicolas Schmit (Commissioner for Jobs and Social Rights) in June 2022. The objective of this mission is to help gather evidence and good practices, as well as to coordinate stakeholders at various levels, in order to promote the social integration of people fleeing Ukraine in terms of work, housing, education and healthcare in the Member States. The mission will end in March 2023.

Mr Asscher accompanied Commissioner Schmit to Prague for the informal EPSCO in October 2022 and shared some preliminary findings with delegations, calling for a long-term integration strategy, taking into account the needs of those who will return to Ukraine and those who will stay in the EU.

On 13 March, Mr Asscher will update EPSCO Ministers as regards his final conclusions, shortly before officially delivering those to Commissioner Schmit.

Summary of mission activities

During those months, Mr Asscher has visited four frontline Member States (Lithuania, Poland, Slovakia, Czechia) and met with NGOs in charge of both emergency and long-term response, civil society organisations, employment and social services, as well as mayors, vice-mayors and national government representatives.

Those visits aimed at discussing short, mid- and long-term solutions; gathering good practices and sharing successful examples of integration from the Member States, NGOs, cities; shaping the narrative in a positive way around refugees and discuss risks linked to disinformation and solidarity fatigue; involving refugees themselves in the discussions and decisions affecting them.

First conclusions

- EU solidarity stands strong and ready to support the Ukrainian people in getting employment, skills and education - as reiterated by President von der Leyen and the college of Commissioners when visiting Kyiv at the beginning of February.
 - The Temporary Protection Directive has had a positive impact.
 - People and services have quickly adapted to a new reality (additional capacity, new ways of working, integrated services).
 - Channelling funding – including from the EU – to the local level remains a challenge.
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