



Council of the
European Union

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LIMITE

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NOTE

From: Presidency
To: Council
Subject: European response to the situation in Ukraine; actions to be taken

The European Council, meeting on 24 February, firmly condemned the unprovoked and unjustified military aggression by the Russian Federation against Ukraine. It agreed to new restrictive measures, subsequently formally adopted, that will have massive and severe consequences for Russia for its action, and called for the urgent preparation and adoption of a further individual and economic sanctions package that will also cover Belarus.

The European Union also showed its solidarity with Ukraine and its people, who are receiving political, financial, humanitarian and logistical support from Europe.

Finally, this act of aggression against a country bordering the European Union is giving rise to a significant influx of people in several Member States and concerns the Union as a whole. Support must be made available to those Member States which request it, whether it takes the form of the reception of people fleeing or border management.

With regard to those different aspects, the EU's collective response must be comprehensive, coordinated and based on a sense of solidarity.

Ministers are invited to express their views on the following proposals.

Humanitarian support

On 15 February, Ukraine sought assistance under the EU Civil Protection Mechanism (EU CPM). The assistance initially proposed by 17 Member States within that framework mainly relates to healthcare and medical supplies, as well as accommodation capacities (tents, blankets, etc.). All Member States are invited to respond as best they can to the requests for assistance from the Ukrainian authorities. That assistance is being coordinated at European level by the Emergency Response Coordination Centre (ERCC) in order to ensure that all of Ukraine's requests are met as quickly as possible.

Given the situation on the ground, it may be difficult for us to actually get those supplies into Ukraine. If the Member States most directly concerned consider it necessary, logistical support could be put in place.

Moldova has also asked the EU CPM for assistance with accommodation. Contributions from the Member States are also welcome.

Action in terms of reception and solidarity

The war in Ukraine has led to an influx of people seeking refuge in the European Union. It is important to monitor these population movements closely. The Blueprint Network, coordinated by the Commission, has been activated to that end.

Reception capacity has been made available in several Member States, in particular in the countries bordering Ukraine. The European Union can provide coordinated support to any countries which request it.

The EU CPM could help coordinate the Member States' contributions.

The European Union Agency for Asylum could provide support if necessary.

Beyond that, it was suggested that the establishment of an adapted temporary protection mechanism could be examined. Ministers are invited to express their views on the expediency of such an arrangement for the reception of these nationals in good conditions.

Management of the external borders and security issues

Should the influx of people increase, neighbouring countries could be offered support in carrying out their tasks of checks and registrations at borders.

In that event, European instruments could be mobilised in order to contribute to that, notably in the form of support from Frontex and Europol. The support needs of the Member States could be coordinated at European level.

Measures on visas

In accordance with the European Council conclusions of 24 February, the Council adopted a decision on 25 February announcing the partial suspension of the agreement on the facilitation of the issuance of visas with Russia, which has been in force since 2007.

As part of the implementation of this decision, ministers are invited to coordinate their national measures and, in general, their visa policy towards Russia.

Anticipation of hybrid threats

Recent experience has shown that actors hostile to the European Union are ready to use new means of pressure (instrumentalisation of migration flows, cyber threats, disinformation, etc.). The European Union and the Member States must continue to strengthen their capacity to anticipate and respond to such threats.

In the context of the situation in Ukraine, the Presidency invites the Member States and the European Commission to report on the preparatory measures taken at national and European level and to indicate their possible needs.

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Finally, in order to monitor the situation, coordinate solidarity measures and involve all relevant actors, it is proposed to activate the EU Integrated Political Crisis Response (IPCR) arrangements. The IPCR will thus be able to set up the solidarity platform at the external borders, which will aim to ensure that all available resources and instruments are mobilised from the European Union and the Member States.