

# ADVOCACY DIGEST

JANUARY – MARCH 2025

## INTRODUCTION



Welcome to the first 2025 edition of the Ukrainian Red Cross (URC) quarterly digest, designed to keep our partners and stakeholders informed about our activities in the field of humanitarian operations and diplomacy. **This edition highlights our key achievements and key advocacy events from January to March 2025.** The first quarter of 2025 was marked by a series of humanitarian events in Brussels, focusing on engagement with local humanitarian organisations, rebuilding Ukraine's human capital and strengthening communities' resilience. In support of bottom-up development, the URC advocated for increased investment in flexible, multi-year funding for local solutions. In this regard, the URC highlighted the need for further action to bring the private sector to the humanitarian table as one of the contributors to the country's recovery.

## OPERATIONS IN UKRAINE

As the war in Ukraine enters its fourth year, the humanitarian crisis remains acute, with civilians continuing to bear its devastating impact. In Ukraine, **12.7 million people** still require humanitarian aid, while **10.6 million Ukrainians** have been displaced. Additionally, Ukraine is the most heavily mined country in the world. On April 4th, the world observes the annual International Mine Awareness Day. **Since the start of the full-scale invasion, the URC has achieved the following milestones in mine risk training:**

### MINE RISK TRAINING



≈ 300 000

people received mine risk education including 190 940 children



≈ 16 000

information sessions were held



The number of instructors is  
**203**



# MOVEMENT PARTNERSHIP – BEST PRACTICES

## Red Cross EU Office

National Societies from countries that have made an official request to join the EU and for which an official date for EU entry has been fixed are invited to join the Red Cross EU (RCEU) Office as observing members. **The URC became eligible as an observing member on 28 February 2022**, when Ukraine officially submitted a letter of application for EU membership. Since the full-scale invasion on 24 February 2022, the RCEU Office has provided regular updates to its members on EU policy and funding initiatives for Ukraine and facilitated members' input towards the EU institutions on their individual and joint operations. This support included an analysis of the Temporary Protection Directive, regular assessments of the European Commission's guiding documents, and recommendations on the EU's response towards people displaced from Ukraine. The RCEU Office also promoted URC's participation in high-level EU events, such as the European Humanitarian Forum, organised briefings for the URC with the EU Member States in the Council working parties for humanitarian aid (COHAFA), civil protection (PROCIV), and political crisis (IPCR), and facilitated bilateral exchanges with the European Commission (DG ECHO, DG NEAR, DG HOME, and DG SANTE) – complementing ongoing dialogue in Kyiv with the EU Delegation and DG ECHO field representatives.



*The Lithuanian Red Cross organised a children's clay modelling masterclass for families displaced from Ukraine. The initiative was supported by #EU4Health. 28 October, 2024. Credit: Diana Hohol.*

In 2022, the RCEU Office and members stepped up their engagement with DG SANTE and DG HOME to assist people displaced from Ukraine. The Secretariat of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) and several National Societies partnered with DG SANTE on a €7.4 million project through the **EU4Health programme** to develop and implement psychological first aid for people fleeing the armed conflict and partnered with DG HOME on the 'Safe Homes' initiative to leverage private housing within the accommodation response and to develop guidelines for Member States on organising accommodation in private homes. Most recently, the RCEU Office supported the URC in developing its strategic approach to humanitarian diplomacy by offering a training session to its members on engaging in humanitarian diplomacy towards the EU. The training also provided an opportunity for the URC to network with colleagues from National Societies in the EU.

## HUMANITARIAN DIPLOMACY SPOTLIGHT

### Side Event of the Humanitarian NGO Platform in Ukraine

On 27 January, on the eve of the Fifth Humanitarian Senior Officials Meeting on Ukraine, URC Director General Maksym Dotsenko spoke at an event organised by the **Humanitarian NGO Platform in Ukraine**. Held **at the residence of the British Ambassador in Brussels**, the event aimed to bring together Ukrainian NGOs to discuss the needs of donors, embassies, international organisations, and European institutions in addressing the humanitarian crisis and supporting the country's recovery. In his speech, Maksym Dotsenko emphasised the importance of Ukraine's early recovery and long-term social development. He also highlighted the role of civil society in rebuilding the country, noting that support for local humanitarian initiatives is key to Ukraine's sustainable and just recovery. The Director General also drew attention to Russia's numerous violations of international humanitarian law, including attacks on medical personnel and humanitarian missions, as well as on 22 January 2025 shelling of the URC emergency response team's headquarters in Sloviansk.

### Empowering Localisation in Ukraine for Long-Term Resilience

As part of the Fifth Humanitarian Senior Officials Meeting on Ukraine, an event titled "**Empowering Localisation in Ukraine for Long-Term Resilience**" took place. The event was organised by the URC and the Alliance of Ukrainian Civil Society Organisations. The main objective was to highlight best practices in localising humanitarian response as a crucial element of Ukraine's sustainable recovery. The discussion took place in an open format **at the Info Hub of the European Parliament in Brussels**, bringing together more than 70 representatives from international organisations, senior EU officials, and government agencies.

The participants focused on the need to combine humanitarian and development efforts in order to create long-term solutions driven by local initiatives. In Ukraine, successful localisation relies on close partnerships with organisations that have a deep understanding of the needs of affected communities. Particular emphasis was placed on empowering local leadership in the recovery and development processes.

## Key speakers at the event:

- **Iryna Vereshchuk**, Deputy Head of the Office of the President of Ukraine;
- **Juha Auvinen**, Deputy Director-General of the Directorate-General for European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations (DG ECHO);
- **Matthias Schmale**, UN Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator in Ukraine.

The URC serves as a platform for the Alliance of Ukrainian Civil Society Organisations, facilitating the coordination of humanitarian efforts and strengthening local initiatives.

## The Fifth Humanitarian Senior Officials Meeting (SOM) on Ukraine

On 28 January, the European Commission hosted the Fifth Humanitarian Senior Officials Meeting on Ukraine. The event brought together over 100 representatives from diplomatic missions, European institutions, and government agencies to discuss the humanitarian situation in Ukraine. **Four organisations**, including the URC, were among **the invited representatives of Ukrainian civil society**. Iryna Vereshchuk, Deputy Head of the Office of the President of Ukraine, also represented Ukraine at the meeting.

In his speech, Maksym Dotsenko, Director General of the URC, emphasised that traditional humanitarian funding remains critical in responding to emergencies. At the same time, **the involvement of the private sector in the provision of humanitarian aid can be a key factor in securing long-term financing and promoting sustainable development**. The social responsibility of businesses can become a new milestone in strengthening the interaction between humanitarian initiatives and local communities. Meanwhile, the financial involvement of the private sector will enable us to move beyond emergency response and contribute to rebuilding human capital and developing sustainable communities. Combining the efforts of the state, international partners, and businesses is key to the effective recovery of the country and the long-term support for the population.





**The Fifth Humanitarian Senior Officials Meeting (SOM) on Ukraine. January 2025, Brussels.**

*Credit: Ukrainian Red Cross.*

## **Meeting of the EU Working Group on Humanitarian Questions and Food Aid**

Maksym Dotsenko spoke online at **the meeting of the EU Working Party on Humanitarian Aid and Food Aid (COHAFA)** held on 25-26 February 2025 in Brussels. The panel, dedicated to Ukraine and focused on building the resilience of the affected population in Ukraine, was organised under the Polish Presidency. The URC's participation not only kept the Ukrainian issue high on the agenda but also provided an excellent opportunity to present the URC's experiences and the conclusions drawn from them for the benefit of EU Member States and the European Commission.

## **Hosted and Accompanied International Diplomatic & Advocacy Visits to Ukraine**

### **IFRC President's Visit to Ukraine**

The leadership of the URC, led by President Mykola Polishchuk and Director General Maksym Dotsenko, met in Kyiv with a delegation from the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC), headed by President Kate Forbes. The meeting focused on key areas and outcomes of the URC's work during the full-scale war in Ukraine and the major challenges the country is currently facing. The URC leadership outlined the organisation's future plans and development prospects, with particular emphasis on areas such as humanitarian response, recovery, and rehabilitation.

Representatives of the IFRC and the URC also held working meetings with Iryna Vereshchuk, Deputy Head of the Office of the President of Ukraine; Oleksiy Chernyshov, Deputy Prime Minister of Ukraine and Minister for National Unity; Viktor Liashko, Minister of Health of Ukraine; and Mariana Betsa, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine, to discuss further humanitarian support for the population of Ukraine.



**IFRC President's visit to Ukraine. February 2025, Kyiv.** *Credit: Ukrainian Red Cross.*

## French Red Cross Visit to Ukraine

A delegation from the French Red Cross (FRC), headed by President Philippe Da Costa, visited the URC. The main focus of the meetings with the URC was on key areas of cooperation, including humanitarian support, the development of social projects, and strengthening the capacity to respond to the challenges of war. The parties discussed further support from the FRC for the URC's activities and assistance to the people of Ukraine.

The delegation also visited the Lviv and Kyiv regional branches of the URC, where they learned about the activities of the psychosocial support unit and attended a first aid masterclass.



**URC President Mykola Polishchuk and FRC President Philippe Da Costa. March 2025, Kyiv.** *Credit: Ukrainian Red Cross.*





*Visit of the French Red Cross delegation to a household recently affected by a UAV strike. March 2025, Bucha. Credit: Ukrainian Red Cross.*

## Swedish Red Cross Visit to Ukraine

The leadership of the URC met with a delegation from the Swedish Red Cross. During the meeting, Mykola Polishchuk, President of the Ukrainian Red Cross, Maksym Dotsenko, Director General of the Ukrainian Red Cross, and Ulrika Modéer, Secretary General of the Swedish Red Cross, discussed the next steps for cooperation and priority areas of activity aimed at assisting Ukrainians affected by the war, particularly in the Sumy and Odesa regions. Following the meeting, Maksym Dotsenko and Ulrika Modéer visited the Odesa region. The focus of the visit was on initiatives to improve access to non-potable water and measures to enhance resilience in local communities.



*Working visit of the Swedish Red Cross to the Odesa region. March 2025, Odesa. Credit: Ukrainian Red Cross.*

## ADVOCACY-RELATED PUBLICATIONS:



**Information leaflet about the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and activities of the Ukrainian Red Cross**

This leaflet aims to raise awareness about the nature, structure, and features of the components of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, as well as the role of the Ukrainian Red Cross as a National Society in Ukraine, its interaction with government bodies, its auxiliary role, and other important aspects of its activities.



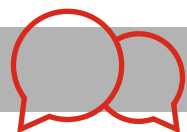
**More advocacy publications of the Ukrainian Red Cross**



## UPCOMING ADVOCACY-RELATED EVENTS:



**European Humanitarian Forum, Brussels, 19-20 May 2025**



**High-Level Lessons Learned Exchange on Preparedness for Armed Conflict, Kyiv, June 2025**



**Ukraine Recovery Conference, Rome, 10-11 July 2025**



[FACEBOOK](#)



[INSTAGRAM](#)



[FLICKR](#)



[TWITTER](#)



[YOUTUBE](#)



[TIKTOK](#)



[LINKEDIN](#)



[TELEGRAM](#)



[REDCROSS.ORG.UA](#)