



**European Committee
of the Regions**

The President

Brussels, *date of official registration*

PCab/PLB/rm (2022) D710

Elisa Ferreira
Commissioner for Cohesion and Reforms

Johannes Hahn
Commissioner for Budget and Administration

Dear Commissioner Ferreira, dear Commissioner Hahn,

More than 5 million refugees have reached the European Union with an even higher number of people having been displaced from their homes in Ukraine. From these refugees, more than 2 million are children. During the recent visit to the border areas in the Polish region of Podkarpackie with REGI Chair Omarjee, we witnessed the extraordinary efforts by regional and local leaders and their communities to welcome refugees, in particular in the cities of Rzeszów, Przemyśl and Warsaw.

We have listened to mayors, governors, civil servants and volunteers from Poland, Romania, Hungary and Slovakia and learnt that:

- the theoretical availability of EU funding will have a limited impact on their capacity to shelter refugees and provide housing, schooling, medical care, education social and psychological support unless there is drastic simplification measures to make it easier and faster to access funds;
- since regional and local authorities would be eligible for funding under five different EU programmes, the use of EU funds is far too complex and bureaucratic. It is absurd to expect fund managers to cope with five different regulations and liaise with five different European Commission's offices, alongside national governments' departments, to receive funding.

This is why we are proposing the establishment of an EU Ukraine Refugees Local Facility, not as a new fund but instead as an operational instrument tool that offers the following features:

- mobilise funds from all relevant EU programmes under one single set of simplified rules;
- rely on an ad-hoc Ukraine crisis task force of relevant European Commission services offering a "one-stop shop" to potential regional and local beneficiaries;
- grant direct and timely access to these funds to the eligible regional and local authorities.

- 2 -

The European Committee of the Regions is ready to facilitate this process through its CoR-Ukraine Working Group which has been supporting cooperation at regional and local level since 2014, as well as through its [Help Ukraine InfoSupport Hub](#).

Dear Commissioner Ferreira, your proximity to the EU's local and regional authorities and your past experience in regional, national and EU institutions makes you fully aware of how demanding the situation is on the ground.

Dear Commissioner Hahn, you have been regional minister, EU Commissioner for regional policy and for enlargement. You are now responsible for ensuring the EU budget is delivered during two unprecedented crises: COVID and the Russian war against Ukraine. I am sure that you are fully aware of how difficult it is to face the daily challenge of providing protection, cohesion and hope to citizens and refugees facing these difficulties.

We look forward to receiving your answer on this matter and on the feasibility of launching the EU-Ukraine Refugees Local Facility, not as a new fund but to simplify and speed-up access to EU funding to regional and local beneficiaries.

The European Committee of the Regions will hold a debate on this topic on [27 April from 13h30-16h00](#), with a wide participation of high level EU and Ukraine regional and local leaders.

I wholeheartedly thank you for the effort you have devoted to this tragic situation and to the demands of Europe's local communities.

For any further information, members of Cabinet Mr Filippo Terruso (filippo.terruso@cor.europa.eu) and Mr Pierluigi Boda (Pierluigi.boda@cor.europa.eu) are at your team's disposal.

Yours sincerely,

Signed
Apostolos Tzitzikostas
President

Signed
Nathalie Sarrabezolles
COTER Chair

Signed
Aleksandra Dulciewicz
Chair CoR-Ukraine Working Group

Copies to:

- Janez Lenarčič, Commissioner for Crisis Management
- Ylva Johansson, Commissioner for Home Affairs