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TO: European Committee of the Regions
Mr. President Apostolos TZITZIKOSTAS
All members of the CoR

Honourable Mr. President,
Dear colleagues,

In these troubled times, please let me bring out to you Maramureș County's actions taken in dealing with the massive number of refugees fleeing to us because of the war in Ukraine. I would have done it sooner, but all our energies and efforts were catalysed last month to organize activities and help refugees pass our borders in Sighetu Marmăției. Our region has the longest border with Ukraine from all the counties in Romania, more than 163,1 kilometres, so we can say Maramureș is on the frontline of the Ukrainian crisis.

From the first moments of the Ukrainian crisis, we set up the followings:

- Three centres were designated to receive donations from local, national and international donors in Baia Mare, Sighetu Marmăției and Halmeu, which were shipped by trucks in Ukraine at our twin-regions Transcarpathia and Ivano-Frankivsk, which reached out to us for help. More than 50 trucks as humanitarian convoys were directed to our Ukrainian partners for the people in need with goods and first aid supplies through our Humanitarian HUBs located in Halmeu and Sighetu Marmăției.
- In partnership with more than 30 local and international NGOs, including UNICEF, Red Cross and our Child Protection Institution, we established the first *<Blue Dot - Integrated Centre of Assistance and Support>* for the refugees and their children. Here they can ask for transport, accommodation, specialized psychological support for the youngsters and seniors, medical care and food. More than 5.000 refugees and 3.000 children have been helped through this facility.
- You will find more information on this project here: <https://www.unicef.org/romania/blue-dot-providing-critical-support-refugees-ukraine>
- Tents, containers and a Refugees Camp were deployed on the Municipal Stadium of Sighetu Marmăției in partnership with the Inspectorate for Emergency Situations and the Mayorality.
- We offered free COVID-19 testing for all the refugees and medical care in our subordinated hospitals through our local medical programs. Local and national companies offered the refugees accommodation, food, internet access to job offers with decent wages.
- We facilitated plane transfer for more than 200 Ukrainian children and their attendants who flew to Turkey from our county airport.

All these were made possible through the implication and dedication of our institution's staff in cooperation with local and national institutions, volunteers and international help from different EU regions.

Mr. President, please let me extend an invitation to you and our CoR colleagues to come and visit Maramureș at a convenient time, to see with your own eyes all the activities we took on the field regarding the Ukrainian refugees. I appreciate all the action taken by CoR and all the institutions from the European level to help in the Ukrainian crisis. I endorsed all the political and institutional initiatives meant to end the war in Ukraine and bring peace to all of Europe.

Finally, I hope this situation will end soon and wish you all energy in the endeavour we embarked together as Europeans open in helping our Ukrainian partners.

Friendly yours,

Ionel Ovidiu BOGDAN
President of Maramureș County Council

