

Tracking Social Protection Responses in Ukraine and Neighboring Countries

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Ugo Gentilini, Mohamed Almenfi, Hrishikesh TMM Iyengar, Yuko Okamura,
Emilio Raul Urteaga, Giorgia Valleriani, Jimmy Vulembera Muhindo, and Sheraz Aziz*

* Authors are with the World Bank, and they are grateful to Michal Rutkowski and Cem Mete for their precious support. Special thanks go to Helena Makarenko for kind assistance. Views are only those of the authors. For more information, please contact ugentilini@worldbank.org.

This note provides an initial overview of social protection measures in Ukraine and for displaced Ukrainian populations in neighboring countries, i.e., Hungary, Moldova, Poland, Romania, and Slovakia. Information on interventions in select European Union countries is also collected (e.g., Germany). Data is preliminary and meant to elicit comments, additions, integration, and revisions to be incorporated in next living paper versions.

Measures include typical social protection programs (social assistance, insurance, and active labor market measures), while select services in the realm of housing, health, education, and other human development dimensions are also reported. This is because such measures are often part of an integrated package of interventions for refugees, asylum seekers and other displaced populations.

Specifically, we initially report on five measures, namely cash transfers; in-kind transfers; labor markets; other select measures related to food, housing, subsidies, and social services; and budget support. Not all countries have available information on all those measures. Because of the nature of displacement support, humanitarian assistance in the form of programs similar to government-supported social protection (e.g., cash transfers, food assistance) is also recorded. In total, we recorded 96 measures being planned or implemented in the surveyed countries.

Details are still preliminary and incomplete. More information on specific measures will be provided as data becomes available. To this effect, continuous monitoring of institutional and government websites and announcements, as well as scanning of news outlets and programmatic materials by humanitarian organizations is ongoing. Data sources for reported measures are provided as weblinks. Suggestions on materials and measures to be included in future updates are welcome and could be signaled to the team directly.

Ukraine

Cash transfers

- Ukraine announced that it will continue to pay cash transfers and other social protection benefits¹ to beneficiaries without the need for reapplications and recertification over the entire period of martial law plus, an additional month after it.² Payments will be made in accordance with existing lists of recipients in the unified social information system. Funds will be directed to Oschadbank JSC, which will in turn transfer them to bank accounts and Ukrposhta (via My Transfer international payment system).³
- A transfer of UAH 6,500 (\$216) would be received by insured Ukrainians within the framework of President's program (ePidtrymka) starting from March 8. The payment is made to people who have lost their salary/income (partially or fully) or whose livelihood (economic activity) was temporarily suspended. It is provided to areas which are affected the most by war. The transfer is for people on wage employment, gig contracts, other formal contract, on other grounds provided by law, and individual entrepreneurs.⁴ In other words, employees whose Unified Social Contribution (USC) is paid, and individual entrepreneurs of all groups, are eligible for the one-off payment.⁵
- The Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO) will provide agricultural assistance combined with cash transfers for the most vulnerable smallholder farmer households (about

240,000 people) from affected regions (e.g., Donetska, Luhanska, Kyivska, Kharkivska, Khersonska, Mykolaivska, Odeska, Sumska and Zhytomyrska oblasts, etc.). This intervention will last for 3 months (March-May 2022). Households would receive unconditional cash assistance of UAH 2,220 (\$74) per person/month. In addition, households would be provided with short-cycle vegetable and potato seeds, which can be harvested in less than two to three months, and animal fodder to increase their own food production, and prevent the loss of their valuable livestock assets.⁶

In-kind transfers

- On March 4, 2022, it was reported that the Ukrainian Red Cross distributed humanitarian assistance to more than 30,000 people via its emergency stockpiles, including hygiene and food kits, warm clothing, and medicine. It also distributed food and water to around 8,000 people seeking shelter in Kyiv's metro stations and 4,000 people staying in shelters in Mariupol.⁷
- Ukraine's Red Cross along with Doctors Without Borders donated medical kits to two hospitals in Kyiv caring for injured people.⁸
- The Donbas Development Centre, a national NGO, continues to provide assistance in non-Government controlled areas of Donetska oblast, including water, hygiene items, food, heating equipment, shelter materials and other non-food items. Donbas SOS expanded protection and legal counselling through its hotline, providing advice to around 400 people per day.⁹
- UNHCR delivered non-food items to Vinnytsia to be distributed in various locations for around 5,000 people.¹⁰
- Caritas, with the support from Cordaid, is providing emergency assistance to some 5,000 displaced families, including food, water and hygiene supplies. With support from the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation, Caritas is also providing winter-proof tents, woolen blankets, sleeping mats, heaters and medicines to displaced people in border areas in western Ukraine.¹¹
- The World Food Programme (WFP) transported 265,000 High Energy Biscuits from Dubai to the Ukraine-Poland border to affected families.¹²
- WFP-contracted bakery produced 4.8 mt of bread (equivalent to 10,000 loaves) and delivered it to hospitals in Kharkiv. When operating at full production, daily distribution of 15 mt of fresh bread is expected to support 60,000 crisis-affected people per day, for a duration of ten days.¹³
- On March 5, 2022, food packages and water were provided for 500 people in Chop, Zakarpattia Oblast near Ukraine's border with Hungary and Slovakia; and on March 6, UNHCR partner NEEKA supported more than 1,000 displaced persons in Chop and Uzhhorod cities with shelter, food and clothing.¹⁴
- On March 5, 2020, Ukraine supplied food packages from Ukrainian producers to war victims and people from vulnerable categories to the regions. The products will be distributed among the people with disabilities and areas most affected by the war. The packages contain a variety of items, including ready-made breakfast cereals, canned meat and vegetables, pasta, sugar, condensed milk, oil, packaged cookies, etc.¹⁵
- On March 6, 2020, Ukraine announced that 30 tons of humanitarian aid had arrived from Germany;¹⁶ similarly, the UAE sent a plane with 30 tons of medical and humanitarian aid;¹⁷ also, the UK has sent 300,000 items of essential medical supplies.¹⁸

- An airlift with 26,000 thermal blankets arrived in Poland on 7 March. A four-truck convoy was immediately dispatched to Ukraine to support the response within the country and arrived on the morning of 8 March to Lviv.¹⁹
- On March 9, 2022, medicines, medical equipment and food for long-term storage arrived from France. This includes 20 tons of in-kind aid, of which one-fifth is food. It is targeted for the needs of the National Police of Ukraine and residents of Kyiv region.²⁰
- Trucks carrying 400 mt of dry rations from Turkey arrived in Poland and Romania, with goods planned for onward transport into Ukraine²¹.
- 41 railway containers were delivered from Poland with fire and rescue equipment.²²
- Among planned activities, WFP intends to reach 3.15 million people with food assistance in the next 4 months, including both food and cash transfers.²³ Also, UNHCR plans to roll out a voucher system, coordinated through a network of local stores. The system is currently being piloted in Mariupol at a small scale.²⁴
- ICRC has provided over 200,000 medical items/kits to mobile clinics in Luhanske, Novoluhanske, Oleksandropil, Verkhnotoretske (Donetska oblast, GCA).²⁵
- In Romania, the Bucharest General Council approved, on March 7 an agreement between the city's hospitals administration ASSMB and the Romanian Red Cross by which about \$1.2 million will be spent on medicines and medical supplies to be sent to Ukraine.²⁶

Labor markets

- On March 7, 2022, Ukraine imposed a moratorium on inspections of all types for business.²⁷ Also, it announced that it will postpone the payment of taxes for all enterprises that are unable to pay.²⁸
- Ukraine has approved a measure to involve students of pharmacy (or industrial pharmacy) to work in pharmaceutical or other health care establishments for the period of martial law in order to close staffing gaps.²⁹

Other select measures related to food, housing, subsidies, and social services

- Price control (on in-kind): on March 8, Ukraine announced that, during martial law, it would monitor the prices of basic necessities. It includes flour, pasta, bread, meat, milk, certain groups of medicines, fuel for cars, and more. Pricing for these products will be controlled by military administrations along with the National Police, the State Food and Consumer Service, and the State Medical Service.³⁰
- Export restrictions (on in-kind): under martial law, Ukraine has imposed export ban on goods like oats, millet, sugar, wheat, alive cattle, salt, among others; export under specified licensing occurs for meat (chicken), corn, sunflower oil, and others.³¹
- Creating a food reserve: the state will purchase grain and other stocks to match the annual consumption of country through its state budget.³²
- Housing rent: Ukraine has adopted a resolution banning the accrual and collection of fines/penalties for late or incomplete payment for housing and communal services.³³
- Ukraine's Ministry of Veterans Affairs is partnering with FranklinCovey Co to provide psychological rehabilitation and the development of positive mental health of children, internally displaced persons, veterans, and their families.³⁴ Also, Ukraine's Ministry of Education and Science prepared a series of information materials, "Psychological care from Svetlana Roiz." Video tutorials and infographics have been created to help parents and teachers providing practical advice for parents who currently are with children in

shelters or bomb shelters; on a move to other cities; or stay at home. In addition, a separate page has been created for children on the official website of the Ministry of Education and Science, and on the YouTube channel of the Ministry of Education and Science.³⁵

- On 7 March 2021, Ukraine announced that it will introduce exemption for individual entrepreneurs of the first and second groups from paying the Unified Social Contribution (USC) during martial law and one year after it is lifted.³⁶ Exemption for enterprises of the third would be granted for employees who were drafted into the Armed Forces and other armed formations (including territorial defense). Contribution will be paid by the state.³⁷

Budget support

- As per recent press release, the World Bank announced a supplemental budget support package, namely the Financing of Recovery from Economic Emergency in Ukraine (FREE Ukraine) for \$489 million. The package consists of a supplemental loan for \$350 million and guarantees in the amount of \$139 million. It is also mobilizing grant financing of \$134 million and parallel financing of \$100 million, resulting in total mobilized support of \$723 million.³⁸
- The European Investment Bank will provide EUR 639 million (\$707.3 million) from other projects to the state budget of Ukraine.³⁹
- The European Bank for Reconstruction and Development announced a resilience package of EUR 2 billion (\$2.2 billion).⁴⁰
- The International Monetary Fund is considering a package of about \$1.5 billion in emergency funding to Ukraine.⁴¹

Hungary

In-kind transfers

- Centers being set up for provisions of food and shelter.⁴²
- State-Owned Company for Hungarian Rail (MÁV) providing free train rides into Hungary from Ukraine as well as within Hungary.⁴³
- Ministry of Human Resources (EMMI) providing 24-hour health services to refugees coming from Ukraine.⁴⁴

Labor markets

- Asylum-seekers entitled to work in public works and as public employees.⁴⁵

Other select measures related to food, housing, subsidies, and social services

- The government announced temporary protection in accordance with the Council of the European Union Regulation (update to Hungary's existing Asylum Act). This is set to last for one year with the possibility of extension up to three years in the EU.⁴⁶ This allows access to welfare services (healthcare, education, work, etc.) for those who apply and are approved for temporary protection.⁴⁷
- A Humanitarian Council was created to help Ukrainian refugees (focusing in Transcarpathia) to coordinate between government services and charities providing services.⁴⁸ Charities and NGOs are assisting and coordinating with local government

authorities to provide services and humanitarian aid at the border and in main cities such as Budapest.⁴⁹

- Hungary has offered students in Ukraine the chance to continue their studies in Hungary.⁵⁰

Moldova

Cash transfers

- UNCHR will provide cash transfers to refugees, with government authorities arranging for payment implementation details with local banks.⁵¹

Labor markets

- Ukrainian citizens can be hired based on an identity number and card given to them at the border crossing, including individual fixed-term employment contracts.⁵²
- The Ministry of Internal Affairs has initiated a collaboration with private businesses and groups to coordinate aid and assistance to refugees, including a new webpage portal.⁵³

Other select measures related to food, housing, subsidies, and social services

- 78 temporary placement centers for refugees are being set-up.⁵⁴
- The Ministry of Health will provide Covid-19 vaccines and other vaccines of preventable disease for free to all refugees, as well as free access to healthcare.⁵⁵
- Moldova's largest mobile phone operators are providing free prepaid cell phone cards to Ukrainian refugees and have reduced prices for calls to Ukraine.⁵⁶
- Small and medium businesses are providing shelter and food for refugees.⁵⁷
- A private hospital in Chisinau has announced free medical services to refugees.⁵⁸
- Private educational institutions began offering free education services for Ukrainian children.⁵⁹

Poland

Cash transfers

- Ukrainian parents will have access to the flagship "500+" child benefit program; if families will stay in Poland, other accessible programs will include the Family Care Capital and Good Start.⁶⁰
- A family hosting refugees will receive a monthly transfer of PLN 1,200 (\$280/month) for a period of two months.⁶¹
- Refugees who declare their willingness to stay in Poland would receive a one-off allowance of PLN 500 (\$115) for a one-person household, and PLN 300 (\$70) for each person in a multi-person household. The allowance would be granted upon a declaration of the applicant, without conducting a community interview and without issuing an administrative decision. The transfer would be financed from the state budget⁶² and it is expected to cost about PLN 291.6 million (\$67 million).⁶³
- Among planned interventions, UNHCR is working to set up a multi-purpose cash assistance program. A pilot will be rolled out in the coming days targeting 100,000 households.⁶⁴

In-kind transfers

- Food parcels and meals under the Food Aid Operational Programme 2014-2020 will be provided, including being co-financed by the European Fund for Aid to the Most Deprived.⁶⁵
- WHO shipped 36 tons of life-saving medical supplies to Warsaw to meet the needs of 1,000 patients requiring surgical care and other medical supplies to address the needs of around 150,000 people.⁶⁶
- 27 border points providing meals and temporary accommodation were set up.⁶⁷

Labor markets

- The “special law” will grant Ukrainian citizens the right to work in Poland and receive social benefits. The draft also assumes that Ukrainian citizens who are fleeing the war will have the right to work on Polish territory. This will result in access to social benefits or subsidies for the reduction of parent's fees for child daycare.⁶⁸
- The private company Biedronka announced that each of its Ukrainian staff will receive a payment of PLN 1,000 (\$230).⁶⁹

Other select measures related to food, housing, subsidies, and social services

- On March 7, the “special law” on assistance to displaced populations was published. The draft amends a number of preexisting legal acts.⁷⁰
- The government has announced the preparation of an electronic system for registering refugees and assigning them a PESEL number. This will allow for a quick implementation of the possibility to benefit from social or health services.⁷¹
- At the moment, Ukrainians have guaranteed food and accommodation for two months, until the end of April. The special law provides for a special fund with an initial allocation of PLN 8 billion (\$1.9 billion).⁷²
- The “special law” is a basis for insurance in the National Health Fund (NFZ). In addition, every citizen of Ukraine legally residing in Poland will have guaranteed access to the public health care system on a par with Polish citizens. The National Health Fund will pay for each medical service for a Ukrainian citizen in the public health service. The financing of these services will be guaranteed from the state budget.⁷³
- Local governments can create additional places in nurseries and daycare.⁷⁴ They will also accommodate additional support for foster care, family foster homes, as well as institutional care.⁷⁵
- Accommodation centers with capacity for around 280,000 people have been arranged by local authorities. The government launched an official website for NGOs to coordinate and appeal for funding, while volunteers continue to mobilize assistance for arrivals.⁷⁶
- UNHCR is supporting access to social workers and specialist guidance, including finding housing, institutions and activities focused on integration.⁷⁷
- 0% VAT on supplies of goods/services for displaced population.⁷⁸
- Deduction of certain donations made both in cash and in kind⁷⁹, including being up to 6% of personal income or 10% for firms⁸⁰.
- Ukrainian citizens will not pay personal income taxes on assistance related to housing,⁸¹ food or financing medical treatment.⁸² The preference will apply from 24 February to 31 December 2022.⁸³

- Children aged 7-18 that relocate to Poland will have the right to free education in a Polish school.⁸⁴
- The number of pupils would rise from 15 to 20 in preparatory classes, as well as by 1-2 children in kindergarten classes and by 1-3 children in primary school classes. “Temporary guardians” will have the possibility to represent a child when enrolling to school or a doctor, as well as to obtain social benefits.⁸⁵
- Additional locations for teaching, upbringing and caring services in schools or kindergartens will be created (funding from state budget). Ukrainian students will be able to continue their education at Polish universities (source of funding will be the Assistance Fund). These measures will enter into force on the day of announcement in the Journal of Laws and will apply with retroactive effect from 24 February 2022.

Romania

Labor markets

- Ukrainian citizens who legally enter the territory of Romania and who do not request a form of protection according to Law no. 122/2006 on asylum in Romania, may be employed without the employment permit provided by Government Ordinance no. 25/2014 on employment and secondment of aliens in Romania.⁸⁶
- Ukrainian citizens can also benefit from employment measures as well as protection under the unemployment insurance system under the conditions provided by law for Romanian citizens.⁸⁷

Other select measures related to food, housing, subsidies, and social services

- Around 2,500 refugee women and children received at least one service in “Blue Dot”, i.e., child and family support hubs.⁸⁸
- An Emergency Ordinance outlined the rights to education, health, work, child protection, protection of persons with disabilities.⁸⁹
- Free medical assistance and care services similar to those available to Romanian citizens, for a period of 90 days. Particular provisions are established based on status, including asylum seekers, Ukrainian citizens who are not beneficiaries of a form of international protection, but have a right of legal residence.⁹⁰
- Persons with disabilities, accompanied or unaccompanied, can benefit, upon request, from social services provided in all types of residential centers for adults with disabilities, including sheltered housing, centers for independent living, rehabilitation and rehabilitation centers, care, and other assistance centers.⁹¹
- Shelters include over 13,000 places for refugee placement, of which 8,200 are occupied.⁹²
- The approved Emergency Ordinance also includes measures to facilitate and encourage civil society, the private sector, and individuals to continue to make donations for the benefit of Ukrainian refugees, and for international organizations to have a simpler mechanism for cooperation.⁹³
- Ukrainian children in Romania, including those who do not seek protection under the Asylum Law, benefit from the right to education in Romanian schools under the same conditions and from the same budgets as Romanian preschoolers, preschoolers, and

students. At the same time, they will have the right to free accommodation in boarding schools, food allowance, the right to school supplies, clothing, footwear, and textbooks.⁹⁴

- The right of free transportation is being granted as provided by law for orphans, students with special educational needs, as well as those for whom a special protection measure has been established. Also, the right to allow basic food for all children in primary and secondary education through ongoing social programs.⁹⁵
- Also, Ukrainian children will benefit from the examination of their state of health in schools, and if they are not vaccinated, they can benefit from the vaccination scheme according to the National Vaccination Program carried out by the Ministry of Health.⁹⁶
- Code4Romania, an NGO established in response to the COVID-19 crisis, offered digital solutions for people in need, quickly set up a new database, listing services available to refugees. It's available in Ukrainian, Russian, Romanian, and English.⁹⁷
- Since March 7, a total of 3,288 Ukrainian citizens have applied for asylum in Romania.⁹⁸ Applicants can benefit from accommodation in the centers of the General Inspectorate for Immigration, as well as measures of material, financial, medical assistance, specialized psychological and legal counseling, access to the labor market, and cultural adaptation activities.⁹⁹

Slovakia

Cash transfers

- Slovakia will support people who shelter refugees from Ukraine with financial assistance.¹⁰⁰

In-kind transfers

- “People in Need Slovakia” is supplying mobile toilets, building insulated tents for children, and preparing food distribution for people who are forced to wait in long queues.¹⁰¹
- Temporary accommodation, meals and information from customs, police, and volunteers is being provided.¹⁰²

Other select measures related to food, housing, subsidies, and social services

- Some Slovak mobile operators provide SIM cards and internet free of charge at the border.¹⁰³
- The Education Ministry is organizing webinars and lectures for teachers who will teach to Ukrainian students; prepared documents to support pupils' admission to schools (in Slovak and Ukrainian language).¹⁰⁴
- Healthcare assistance is provided on the basis of their status, including in-transit populations, asylum seekers, temporary refuge status, etc. In case of Covid-19 related care, in the absence of insurance the cost will be covered by state budget.¹⁰⁵
- The Slovak railway company (Železničná spoločnosť Slovensko) has introduced free travel in InterCity trains for the citizens of Ukraine carrying a valid passport.¹⁰⁶
- Financial and material support is also being provided by local communities, who are supporting refugees with food and hygiene items, offers of free transport, and accommodation. Local municipalities and villages are also creating temporary shelters for refugees.¹⁰⁷

- The Slovak University of Technology has offered the use of its facilities to house “war-torn Ukrainian citizens, including families with children” and that it will simplify the conditions of admission to study for students from war-affected areas.¹⁰⁸

Other non-neighbouring countries

Germany

Cash transfers

- Germany is providing cash benefit to Ukrainian refugees under the Asylum Seekers’ Benefits Act (*Asylbewerberleistungsgesetz*), which is mainly funded by states.¹⁰⁹

Labor markets

- The government announced that refugees will have access to the labor market;¹¹⁰ approval would be required by the foreign office (*Auslaenderbehoerde*).¹¹¹

Other select measures related to food, housing, subsidies, and social services

- A total of 50,000 accommodation places across Germany were made available, many of which are already occupied. An additional 5,000 spots could be added in the short term.¹¹²
- As per the Asylum Seekers Benefits Act (*Asylbewerberleistungsgesetz*), Ukrainian refugees receive medical assistance.¹¹³

Endnotes/data sources

¹ This is applicable for the following programs: assistance to low-income families; Child benefit of single mothers; child assistance under guardianship or custody; assistance for children with serious illnesses or disability; monthly financial assistance to individuals living with a person with a disability of group I or II due to a mental disorder; temporary state assistance to children whose parents evade paying alimony, are unable to maintain the child or their place of residence is unknown; monthly targeted assistance to IDPs; temporary state social assistance to an unemployed person who has reached the general retirement age but has not acquired the right to a pension payment.

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³ <https://www.kmu.gov.ua/news/marina-lazebna-groshovi-dopomogi-pilgi-ta-subsidiyi-lyudi-otrimayut-navit-yakshcho-cherez-bojovi-diyi-organi-soczhahistu-ne-pracyuyut>.

⁴ <https://news.dtki.ua/society/community/75215>

⁵ <https://www.kmu.gov.ua/en/news/mihajlo-fedorov-6500-grn-mozhut-otrimati-ukrayinci-v-mezhah-yepidtrimki-uzhe-vidsogodni>

⁶ <https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/cb8935en.pdf>.

⁷ <https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/Ukraine%20Humanitarian%20Impact%20Situation%20report%204%20March.pdf>

⁸ https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/2022-03-07_Ukraine%20Humanitarian%20Impact%20SitRep_final.pdf

⁹ <https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/Ukraine%20Humanitarian%20Impact%20Situation%20report%204%20March.pdf>

¹⁰ <https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/Ukraine%20Humanitarian%20Impact%20Situation%20report%204%20March.pdf>

¹¹ <https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/Ukraine%20Humanitarian%20Impact%20Situation%20report%204%20March.pdf>

¹² <https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/Ukraine%20Humanitarian%20Impact%20Situation%20report%204%20March.pdf>

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¹⁴ <https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/Ukraine%20situation%20flash%20update%20No%201%20%2008%2003%202022.pdf>.

¹⁵ <https://www.kmu.gov.ua/en/news/produktovi-nabori-vid-ukrayinskih-virobnikov-dlya-postrazhdalih-vid-vijni-talyudej-z-vrazlivih-kategorij-popryamuvali-v-regioni>

¹⁶ <https://www.kmu.gov.ua/en/news/operativna-obstanovka-na-diplomaticchnomu-fronti-shchodo-rosijskogo-vtorgnennya-stanom-na-1000-6-bereznya>

¹⁷ <https://www.kmu.gov.ua/en/news/operativna-obstanovka-na-diplomaticchnomu-fronti-shchodo-rosijskogo-vtorgnennya-stanom-na-1900-7-bereznya>

¹⁸ <https://www.kmu.gov.ua/en/news/operativna-obstanovka-na-diplomaticchnomu-fronti-shchodo-rosijskogo-vtorgnennya-stanom-na-1000-6-bereznya>

¹⁹ <https://data2.unhcr.org/en/documents/details/91208>

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²⁴ <https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/Ukraine%20Humanitarian%20Impact%20Situation%20report%204%20March.pdf>

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²⁸ <https://www.kmu.gov.ua/en/news/zvernennya-premyer-ministra-denisa-shmigalya7032022>

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