



EUROPA DONNA - The European Breast Cancer Coalition Statement 10th March 2022

As EUROPA DONNA – The European Breast Cancer Coalition, we are being approached daily by many of our partner organizations and affiliates enquiring as to what to do and how to help with the emergency situation of the people of Ukraine, both those remaining in their country and those fleeing it. They are all in dire need of reliable effective information, practical and timely support and assistance. In particular, the weak and the sick always risk falling in the “secondary” category; it happened during the covid outbreak and is happening now in this catastrophe. We are asked how to send money, medical supplies, equipment and drugs. We are asked to convey a link between those who are in need and those who can help, and this is a major issue when communication means are cut off and facilities difficult to reach.

We are actively cooperating on a daily basis with fellow European patient organisations, all committed to sharing information and contacts, with the aim of locating reliable local, national and international help providers in all areas of need. Our main concern is the lack of medical supplies, state of the art technology, availability of drugs for patients undergoing treatment and specialized facilities for those in need of urgent surgery and immediate treatment. We are putting together and sharing data bases, in order to keep track of all available facilities (and their current and ongoing state of operativity) in Ukraine and in neighboring countries. For the moment, this data cannot be open source for obvious reasons.

We are in daily touch with our national EUROPA DONNA representatives in Ukraine and have just today received indication of what is crucial to make available in terms of drug supplies and practical help in Ukrainian cities and in the refugee camps at the borders. We have reached out to our patient advocates in Poland, Romania, Slovakia and Hungary as well as others in close by countries. We are asking each of our national representatives to report on their countries’ national plan to face emergency, to welcome and assist refugees fleeing from the war zone. We are especially interested in patients having access to health system for oncological services.

We were also in contact with our organisation in Russia. During our exchange they conveyed concern, grief, great sorrow and shock.

In the past week, the European Commissioner for Health and Food Safety Stella Kyriakides has been in constant touch with EUROPA DONNA and with our President Tanja Spanic. We have been dialoguing with other European medical societies and patient organizations discussing the desperate need for medicine of cancer patients left in Ukraine and in the war zones with lack cancer treatment and shortage of cancer drugs. We have a (constantly updated) list which we are running through our channels to facilitate effective support to trusted and reliable associations.

Human tragedy and emergency calls for swift, effective truly useful action by us all. But being fast is not always beneficial. The risk is duplicating efforts, concentrating on one sole mission which perhaps is already being covered at a systematic, more organized, and effective level, pouring money in potentially unreliable hands and wasting resources because they are less needed than others.

PRACTICAL HELP TIPS:

Organization, coordination and method – both in the short term and in the long term – are far more reliable and preferable. We suggest that anyone who intends to support, sustain, and help out should COOPERATE with other organisations on all possible levels and work as a TEAM.

We strongly suggest to turn to the EU and other inter-governmental bodies which have already started working in this direction. International bodies such as WHO, IARC, UICC, civil society groups, medical societies, hospital facility networks, umbrella and national patient organizations are ALL working together and cooperating with the international and European institutions and European Union towards obtaining effective humanitarian corridors for patients who are in Ukraine and for coordinating and supporting hosting countries, preparing for an influx of cancer patients arriving in their country as refugees.

International organisations, such as UNICEF and the International Red Cross, are also intensifying their support to the Ukrainian population. The European Commission is working on all fronts to provide emergency assistance.

Please refer to the following websites, which are being updated on a regular basis, and please check out the links therein which convey all necessary information:

European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations:

https://ec.europa.eu/echo/where/europe/ukraine_en

https://ec.europa.eu/echo/partnerships/humanitarian-partners_en

https://ec.europa.eu/echo/who/accountability_en

List Of Diplomatic Missions of Ukraine other Countries:

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_diplomatic_missions_of_Ukraine#cite_note-UkraineEmb-Zagreb-80

PLEASE TAKE DUE NOTE:

On the 4th March 2022, the Council of the EU unanimously introduced [temporary protection for persons fleeing the war in the Ukraine](#). This means that for one year, on an application based system, refugees will have a right to access educational and labor market, right to housing and to medical assistance in all EU countries, for one year, renewable for the same period. This is a great sign of unity and solidarity. But let us not forget that not all countries held to host and welcome refugees have adequate healthcare budgets (especially after Covid and the huge backlog of detection, surgery, treatment and therapies it left behind).

EU member countries and Ukraine have 2 different mechanisms to ask for support and get drugs or any other supply they need.

Health Security Committee

For drugs – EU member countries health ministers or other national entity have meetings every morning at the Health Security Committee (https://ec.europa.eu/health/health-security-and-infectious-diseases/preparedness-and-response/health-security-committee-hsc_en#latest-updates) – at the meeting, the health minister from Romania/Poland makes a request (for a specific drug) and all other member countries lodge their request (they also can ask for transportation of patient) – and countries have 24 h to respond. (So far there was only 1 request through this mechanism...) – we should bring this information to as many PAGs in Poland and Romania to appeal to their minister/representative to do that

European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operation

https://ec.europa.eu/echo/index_en

All countries including Ukraine can make any request to the European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operation (Ukraine does it daily! But so far not for cancer therapies). We should encourage oncologists to make requests through those mechanisms. Trucks are going daily from EU to UA.

https://ec.europa.eu/echo/where/europe/ukraine_en

Our heart goes out to all cancer patients affected by the extra burden of this horrible and unjust war.

We will keep you all updated.