



**Press Release**

**22/10/2020**

## **The Future of Eastern Ukraine: from Humanitarian Needs to Development and Peace Perspectives**

*On October 23<sup>rd</sup> 2020, an online conference will address the precarious situation in eastern Ukraine, where civilians continue to bear the brunt of an armed conflict at the doorstep of the European Union. The conference will address the ongoing humanitarian crisis and explore development opportunities in the Donbas region and peace perspectives to ensure that decision makers take informed action to improve the lives of people affected by the hostilities. This conference is organised by the ACCESS Consortium (People in Need, ACTED/ REACH, Medicos del Mundo, HelpAge International and Right to Protection) with support from the European Commission's Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations (ECHO) in cooperation with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Lithuania.*

The conflict in eastern Ukraine, now in its 7th year, has long dropped off the world's radar, but 3.4 million people are still in need of humanitarian aid. The conference 'The Future of Eastern Ukraine: from Humanitarian Needs to Development and Peace Perspectives' aims to engage Ukraine's international partners and major stakeholders to find short, medium, and long-term solutions for the conflict-affected population.

"People in eastern Ukraine are now preparing to survive the seventh winter while caught up in conflict. The EU has been supporting vulnerable civilians since the start of the hostilities, and will continue to do so. The world must not forget that there is an ongoing humanitarian crisis in eastern Ukraine, and that a political solution is needed to end it," says Janez Lenarčič, EU Commissioner for Crisis Management.

The conference will shed light on humanitarian needs as well as development opportunities in the Donbas, including system strengthening and the important role of women as first responders and community leaders. This event will highlight opportunities meeting the short- and longer-term needs of people living in eastern Ukraine and channel support to the region and its civil society amidst a severely underreported conflict and underfunded response. The event will also tackle reintegration aspects and legislative initiatives in the Donbas.

Representatives of the European Commission, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Lithuania, and the Government of Ukraine will be among the speakers, as well as lawmakers and field experts. Those will include representatives of the United Nations, of the local administration of the conflict-affected regions, and of service providers, as well as representatives from local community.

"NGOs' accounts will contribute to a full picture of the humanitarian situation on the ground. We have organised this conference to ensure that Ukraine remains on the agenda of decision makers, and inform them on the complexities of the humanitarian situation and the development of the Donbas region", says Ania Okinczyc, Country Director of People in Need.



Stakeholders will be invited to join the formation of a National Task Force for the Mainstreaming of the Nexus in the Donbas.

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## **About us:**

The ACCESS Project is implemented by a group of five international and national organizations: People in Need (PIN), Médicos del Mundo (MDM), ACTED in partnership with IMPACT Initiatives, Right to Protection (R2P) and the Ukraine NGO Forum. Through sectoral and geographical synergies, the project responds to the emergency needs of populations residing in eastern Ukraine. Alongside water and food security assistance, shelter rehabilitations and winterization, the project provides health and psychosocial services, and advocates for people's access to essential services. ACCESS provides humanitarian assistance on both sides of the contact line in Ukraine, with funds from the European Commission through its Directorate-General for Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations (ECHO).

## **Links:**

- [Story map](#) by ACCESS consortium, stories along the line of contact;
- Video series by ACCESS Consortium: [This is Us, This is Ukraine](#);
- [Explanatory video](#) by People in Need on water issues in the Donbas.

## **Notes for editors:**

The conference will be broadcasted starting on 23/10 at 9:00 (Kyiv time) on Facebook page of the Lithuanian Embassy to Ukraine [@LTembassyUA](#).