

August 4, 2020
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To: **Office of the Chancellor of the Federal Republic of Germany**
H.E. Dr. Angela Merkel, Presidency of the Council of the EU

Ukraine's ACCESS Consortium welcomes
the start of the German Presidency of the Council of the European Union

Your Excellency,

Ukraine's ACCESS Consortium, consisting of European and national organisations: **People in Need** (PIN), **Médicos del Mundo** (MDM), **ACTED** in partnership with **IMPACT Initiatives**, **Right to Protection** (R2P) and **HelpAge International** (HAI), welcomes with great enthusiasm the start of the German Presidency of the Council of the European Union.

Germany has been a longstanding partner of Ukraine and a key actor in the Normandy Format Talks and the Minsk Protocol. Through its institutions and partners, the European Union has been promoting the rights of conflict-affected people and communities in the east of Ukraine, being one of the major donors responding to vulnerable populations living along both sides of the contact line since 2014.

In your speech before the European Parliament on July 8, 2020, you underscored Germany's advocacy for stronger European solidarity, cohesion, support for neighbouring countries and the protection and promotion of human rights.

The ACCESS Consortium reiterates the importance of continued prioritisation and support to the peacebuilding process in Ukraine, as well as to the civilian population trapped in an armed conflict in the east - for the seventh year in a row - at the doorstep of the European Union and heavily affected by its consequences.

The COVID-19 pandemic is having severe implications on civilians living near the contact line, about 45 percent of them being elderly people and persons with disabilities and over 15 percent being children. This is a reminder on our duty and commitment to ensure that vulnerable populations are able to access fundamental rights and basic services in safety and dignity and without delays.

Our front-line workers can confirm the severity of the situation for the lives and wellbeing of vulnerable people, particularly in the absence of coordination between all parties of the conflict and increase in civilian casualties since January 2020, according to the UN Human Rights Monitoring Mission in Ukraine.



ACCESS TO MULTISECTORAL HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE

We call on a renewed commitment of the European Union on finding strategic, sustainable and long-term solutions to the armed conflict in eastern Ukraine in line with the twelve points consisting the Minsk II protocol and urge for a strengthened consideration and long-term assistance to conflict-affected populations during this presidency and in such critical times.

The ACCESS Consortium stands ready to provide timely and evidence-based information and recommendations on the situation in the Donbas with the ultimate goal of ensuring humanitarian access to communities we serve and pathways for social and economic recovery in eastern Ukraine.

Yours sincerely,



Ania Okinczyc

On behalf of ACCESS Consortium

Ania Okinczyc

Country Director, People in Need

For information:

- **Office of the Presidents of the EU Commission, EU Parliament, EU Council**
- **Delegation of the European Union to Ukraine**
- **Ambassador of the Federal Republic of Germany to Ukraine**
- **Directorate-General of the European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations (DG ECHO)**
- **DG for Neighbourhood and Enlargement Negotiations European Commission (DG NEAR)**
- **European Union External Action Service (EEAS)**
- **Embassies of EU Member States in Ukraine**
- **European Parliament's Delegation to the EU-Ukraine Parliamentary Association Committee**

