



# HUMANITARIAN

## Crisis in Ukraine

THE EU  
SUPPORTS AND  
ADVOCATES  
FOR INTERNALLY  
DISPLACED  
PEOPLE IN  
UKRAINE

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A number of crises are unfolding in different parts of the world. The European Union is engaged in managing and mitigating many of these situations (e.g., the Ebola virus). But closer to home in Europe, there is a crisis in which a joint, coordinated approach by the international community is of utmost urgency. Increasing security concerns in Ukraine, in the region and in Europe, if not dealt with now, will have an adverse impact on all of our lives in the near future.

A humanitarian crisis exists in Ukraine, even though Ukraine itself is not calling it such. The crisis has evolved from Ukraine's military conflict with Russia and entails three components: internally displaced people (IDPs) within Ukraine, Ukrainian refugees in neighboring countries and returning refugees and IDPs.

This conflict is viewed from different angles by various stakeholders. It is vital to understand many issues and the complexity of the situation as a whole. The crisis is evolving, and the international community is responding.

### Main stakeholders

The State Emergency Services (SES) of Ukraine is the main counterpart of the EU Civil Protection sector and, until December 24, 2012, was part of the Ukrainian Ministry of Emergencies. Now under the Ministry of Interior, it is the main institution specifically tasked to protect the population and territories during emergencies, including firefighting, industrial accidents and flooding.

Additionally, the SES has been tasked with the IDP situation — a task that Ukraine is struggling to manage, given that the country has no prior institutional knowledge. It lacks information

management, coordination and capacity, and it needs to create new structures because leadership is frequently changing — all creating confusion. These issues are substantial enough to be the subject of a separate study.

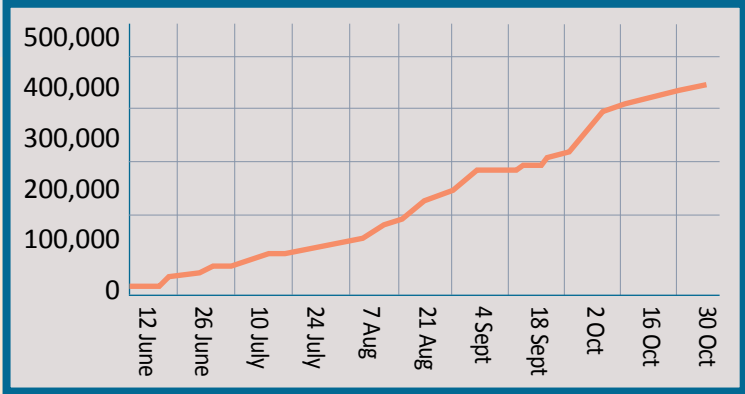
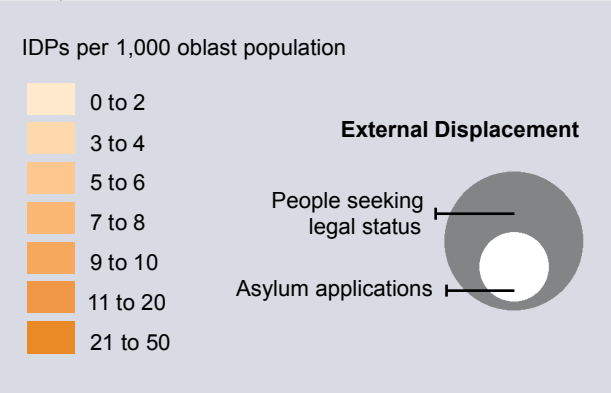
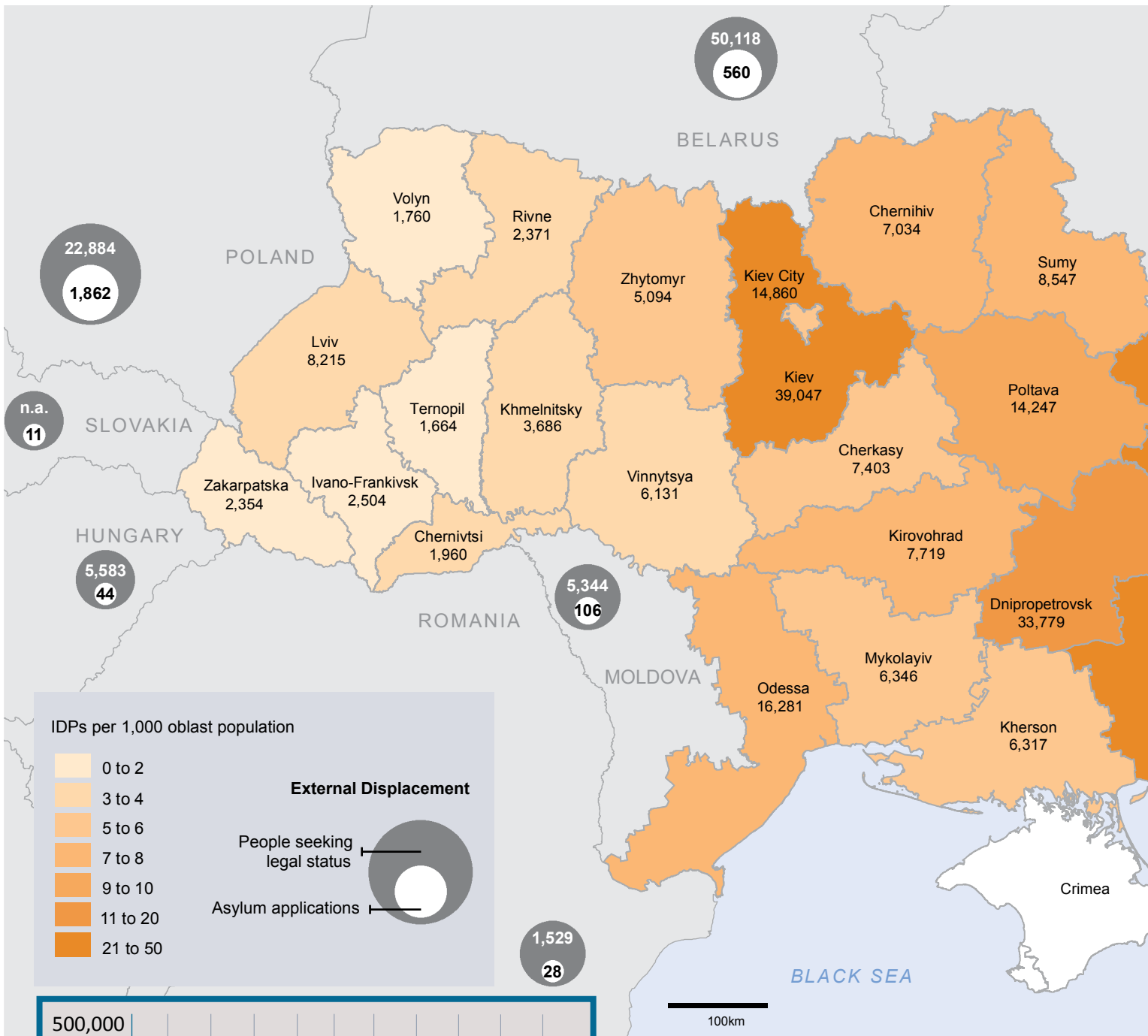
Vice Prime Minister and newly appointed Speaker of Parliament Volodymyr Groysman coordinates humanitarian issues for the Ukrainian government and chairs the commission for humanitarian aid within the State Emergency Services. However, the coordination needs to be reinforced, because government institutions are overwhelmed or not yet functioning as they should. The most significant assistance is being provided through networks of volunteers, civil society and the international community (the United Nations, Doctors Without Borders, the Red Cross and others).

The EU Directorate-General for Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection (ECHO) has played an important role by supporting the Ukrainian government and plans to continue to do so. ECHO aims to save and preserve life, prevent and alleviate human suffering and safeguard the integrity and dignity of populations affected by natural disasters and man-made crises. The EU, one of the world's largest providers of humanitarian assistance, has enshrined these ideals in the Treaty of Lisbon, and it is supported by EU citizens as an expression of European solidarity with those in need.

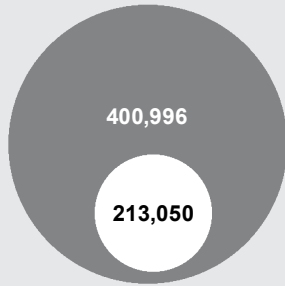
Through a global network of field offices, ECHO ensures rapid and effective delivery of EU relief assistance through two main instruments: humanitarian aid and civil protection. By bringing together the two under one roof in 2010, the European Commission created a more robust and effective mechanism for disaster response both inside and outside the EU.

Eastern Ukrainian children displaced by conflict play at the "Father's House" shelter near Kiev in late 2014. EPA

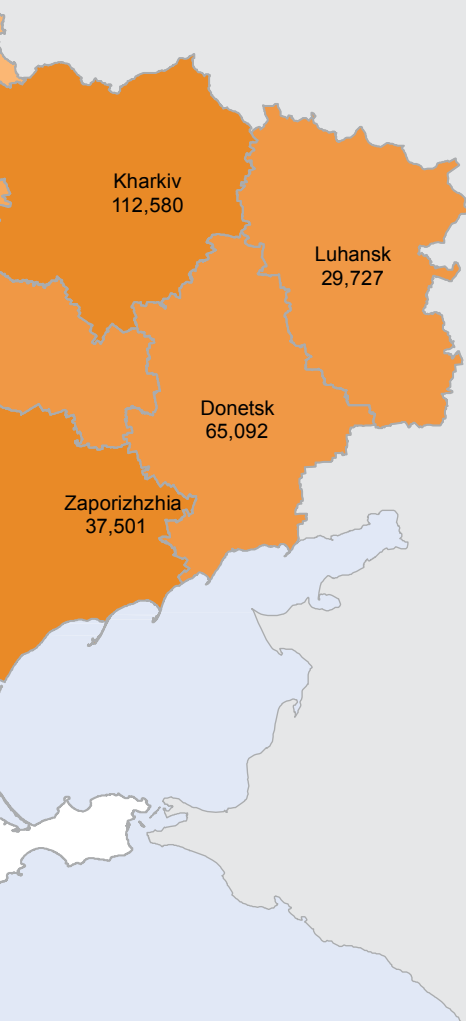
# UKRAINE: Overview of population displacement



Growth in the number of displaced Ukrainians in 2014



RUSSIAN  
FEDERATION



Sources: Ukrainian State Emergency Services, Belarusian, Hungarian, Moldovan, Polish, Romanian, Slovakian and Russian governments, UN Office for Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs

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Russian intervention has displaced hundreds of thousands of Ukrainian citizens. Most are clustered in the eastern part of the country.

The EU announced in December 2014 that it will provide an additional 3.3 million euros in shelter, food and non-food assistance, and health services “to help the most vulnerable ... meet their basic needs and prepare for the approaching winter.” This brings the EC’s humanitarian aid to Ukraine to more than 11 million euros since the crisis began.

ECHO provides humanitarian assistance through partner organizations, such as the UN, the Red Cross and Red Crescent societies and international nongovernmental organizations. Assistance is based on needs assessments carried out by ECHO or partner organizations in consultation with authorities and other relevant stakeholders. ECHO is visible in Ukraine and has been holding regular meetings since February 2014 with partners and donors to provide coordination and leadership.

ECHO coordinates civil protection assistance through the Union Civil Protection Mechanism (UCPM), which can be activated by an official request from any country in need. The UCPM was established in 2001 and has since undergone qualitative and quantitative changes. Civil protection assistance is provided by participating states (28 EU member states, Iceland, Macedonia, Montenegro and Norway) and can take the form of in-kind assistance or expertise. The operational heart of the UCPM is the Emergency Response Coordination Centre (ERCC), which monitors emergencies around the globe 24/7 and coordinates crisis response.

There are two channels of ECHO aid: humanitarian aid delivered to beneficiaries through partners and civil protection assistance to the government of the affected country. It is important to differentiate between civil protection assistance, which is generally immediate crisis response covering two to three weeks, and humanitarian aid, which covers months or years.

### ECHO and Ukrainian cooperation

Ukrainian authorities have requested emergency assistance four times in the past: for an oil spill in the Black Sea in 2007, for massive flooding in western Ukraine in 2008, for an outbreak of the H1N1 respiratory infection in 2009, and for the potential collapse of a dam holding back industrial waste in Kalush in 2010. In each of these cases, the UCPM was promptly activated and in-kind assistance and/or technical advice and expertise were provided.

Ukraine is intensively covered by the capacity-building activities of the regional Programme for the Prevention, Preparedness and Response to Natural and Man-Made Disasters (PPRD-East). PPRD-East I (2010-2014) is one of the six flagship initiatives of the Eastern Partnership. The primary target group is National Civil Protection/ Disaster Management Authorities. The initiative aims to enhance the national civil protection capacity of the six Eastern Partnership countries and bring them closer to the EU Civil Protection Mechanism. It is financed through the European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument (ENPI) at 6 million euros for four years, and managed by Development and Cooperation-Europeaid (DEVCO) with the active technical support of ECHO. PPRD-East II (2015-2018) started in January 2015, and Ukraine is a participant.

### The IDP crisis

ECHO has been active in Ukraine since February 2014 and has played a key role in coordinating and facilitating information sharing with partners and donors. It conducted a number of field visits

together with various partner organizations and government counterparts. Since the beginning of the conflict, ECHO opened an office in Kiev and has deployed humanitarian and civil protection experts. It has provided support to the Ukrainian Red Cross via the International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies and partner organizations. ECHO also supports, through its humanitarian partner organizations, capacity building for local actors dealing with humanitarian issues and IDPs to ensure sustainability and better coordination of activities by national, regional and local authorities.

### Activating and deploying the UCPM in Ukraine – a timeline

- **February 25, 2014:** Based on the situation in Ukraine, ECHO's ERCC activated the UCPM.
- **April 16, 2014:** The ERCC received a request for assistance from Ukraine to conduct a preparedness mission and help Ukrainian authorities build a modern civil protection system in the country. Owing to circumstances, the terms of mission, scope and timing are still being finalized.
- **October 7, 2014:** The ERCC received a second request for assistance from Ukraine for various medical supplies.
- **October 9, 2014:** A list of in-kind materials to support the needs of people affected by the conflict during winter was circulated to UCPM participant states. As of late 2014, only Latvia had offered technical assistance through the UCPM.
- **October 10, 2014:** An amended request (following unsuccessful attempts to form a team of civil protection experts) for experts was posted in the Common Emergency Communication and Information System), which facilitates day-to-day and crises communications.
- **October 16, 2014:** A UCPM expert team was deployed for four weeks to support the government of Ukraine in the management of IDPs.

A number of countries are helping bilaterally to address immediate, mid- and long-term needs based on geographical or sector choices, but it is possible to address Ukrainian needs in a more coordinated way. ECHO has been an active advocate to ensure better coordination among member states and convened a number of meetings in late 2014 to assess the situation and strengthen overall EU coordination. It may be that political pressure and hidden agendas are obstructing technical assistance.

Interestingly, the cooperation between and coordination of the two aspects of ECHO – humanitarian aid and civil protection – has been very good, though it has been exercised in difficult environments and circumstances. Much can be achieved with dedicated experts and common efforts.

### Population displacement in Ukraine

The conflict in eastern Ukraine has damaged infrastructure and security, resulting in a humanitarian crisis and

substantial displacement from the eastern regions to Kiev, Lviv and Kharkiv. Other regions affected by the humanitarian crisis are Dnipropetrovsk and Zaporizhzhia. At the end of October 2014, about 442,000 Ukrainians were internally displaced and an estimated 488,000 had fled to neighboring countries, according to the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs. Those numbers were expected to grow day by day.

The Ukrainian government must manage IDP, refugee and returnee issues, including coordinating programs and information exchange, performing contingency planning and allocating resources – all demanding tasks. However, regional governments are addressing problems, coordinating efforts and supporting people in need quite well. The main challenge is a lack of resources – technical and manpower – and overall coordination and communication within and among respective decision-making bodies.

Even though a cease-fire was agreed to on September 5, the numbers of IDPs continued to increase dramatically. The numbers will increase more, and the situation will likely deteriorate if the conflict becomes frozen. There is a notion that Ukraine has conceded the loss of the Donbass and that the Donetsk and Luhansk regions will not be part of Ukraine, at least for some time. However, that is not an option for the Ukrainian government. It has launched its response plan for IDPs and recovery efforts for Donetsk and Luhansk regions, requesting 159 million euros to meet the basic needs of IDPs and 732.8 million euros for recovery efforts. And the EU is there to assist.

On October 20, 2014, the Ukrainian parliament adopted a law on the rights and freedoms of internally displaced people. The law, developed with support from the UN and civil society, extends a specific set of rights to IDPs, providing protection against discrimination and forcible return, and assistance in voluntary returns. The law also simplifies access to social and economic aid.

The government of Ukraine decided not to set up IDP camps, but has tried instead to accommodate the IDPs with host families and within available government buildings (schools, sanatoriums), but many were adapted for winter conditions. It is also necessary to look beyond this winter because IDPs will need to find work in their new locations and/or will be considering returning to their homes.

There are also shortages of basic nonfood items and medicines. In fact, needs have arisen in every sector. Ukraine can use any help and support. In a mission from October 16 to November 13, the European Union Civil Protection Team (UCPT) addressed a portion of the need and helped the Ukrainian government with Regional Winterization Response Planning. Planning was based on scenario development, taking into account all scenario drivers (resources, information management, etc.), risk factors (severe weather, increasing numbers of IDPs, etc.), but UCPT was not mandated to perform socio-economic impact analysis. Some sources suggest that Ukraine needs technical assistance rather than advice. Some sources argue that money is needed for people to cover basic needs. I fear

## Background on Union Civil Protection Mechanism

- Since its launch in 2001, the Union Civil Protection Mechanism (UCPM) has monitored over 300 disasters and has received more than 180 requests for assistance. When the mechanism is activated, the European Commission ensures the coordination of assistance.
- In 2011, the UCPM assisted in the aftermath of the devastating earthquake and tsunami that hit Japan, helped evacuate European citizens and third-country nationals from Libya, and facilitated the delivery of emergency assistance to Turkey following a major earthquake.
- In 2012 and 2013, the UCPM was activated to deliver aid to Syrian refugees in Jordan and to fight destructive forest fires in Greece, Portugal, Montenegro, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Albania.
- In 2013 there were 16 requests for assistance. The UCPM responded in the aftermath of overwhelming disasters around the globe, such as Typhoon Haiyan that hit the Philippines.
- In May 2014, the UCPM responded to requests for assistance from Bosnia and Herzegovina and Serbia after devastating floods in the region. Twenty-two participating countries responded.

## Ukraine and the UCPM

- The administrative arrangement between the Directorate General for the Environment (now DG ECHO) and the Ukrainian Ministry of Emergencies and Affairs of Population Protection from the Consequences of Chernobyl Catastrophe (now State Emergency Services) was signed in December 2008 and mainly focuses on establishing cooperation during disaster response.
- The UCPM was activated during three recent emergencies in Ukraine: an outbreak of respiratory infections (2009), the potential collapse of a dam in Kalush (2010) and floods (2010). Ukraine also has been given a few places in the Mechanism Training Programme.
- Ukraine is a beneficiary of the Programme for the Prevention, Preparedness and Response to Natural and Man-Made Disasters (PPRD-East), one of the six Flagship Initiatives of the Eastern Partnership. The program was launched at the beginning of 2011 and is financed through the European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument (ENPI) at 6 million euros for four years and managed by Development and Cooperation-Europeaid (DEVCO) with the active technical support of ECHO. (More information is available at: <http://www.euroeastcp.eu>).
- Ukrainian State Emergency Services and ECHO have shown interest in strengthening cooperation, possibly in disaster prevention. Based on new UCPM legislation, which came into effect in January 2014, some UCPM activities can be extended to partner countries from the eastern neighborhood, including Ukraine. The new initiative opens possibilities for joint EU-Ukraine disaster prevention and preparedness projects, civil protection exercises and exchange of experts.

that direct financial support to the authorities, rather than to the affected people, might foster corruption. According to Ukrainian news agency Ukrinform, “A year after the events on Independence Square in Kiev, Ukraine remains the most corrupt country in Europe.”

The UCPT visited all the affected regions and evaluated the situation. A number of UCPM participating states have provided support bilaterally, mostly medical aid for the injured and financial assistance. Latvia has provided nine power generators through the UCPM that are very helpful to Ukrainian authorities, but more assistance is needed in every sector.

### What's next?

Ukrainians expected winter to be difficult. Politics have hindered the European response. International efforts to help Ukraine with donations of in-kind, nonfood items and financial contributions should be increased.

The international community must continue to support Ukrainian capacities in contingency planning, information management and coordination. It is vital to consult with and train SES and its regional departments to improve inter-agency coordination on civil protection matters. There should be coordination of efforts between SES and UCPM to identify needs in case of disasters and improve preparedness and response.

SES needs better coordination with international partners and nongovernmental organizations on the ground. Its activities should be aimed at protecting and evacuating people from the temporarily occupied (or infected) territories and areas of counterterrorism operations.

The Regional Winterization Response Plan should be reassessed and revised regularly. Long-term capacity building for the Ukrainian government should be developed and implemented. It is vital to help Ukraine integrate into EU policies and mechanisms. Infrastructure damaged as the result of terrorist attacks needs to be restored.

Ukraine's legal framework in the field of civil protection needs revision by following a more detailed approach and gradually introducing EU requirements into national legislation. External and internal risks that hinder the development of the Ukrainian civil protection system should be addressed and eliminated. This is a difficult task, but with common efforts and determination by the Ukrainian government, a modern and reliable Ukrainian civil protection system can be developed. □