

His Excellency
Mr. Jean-Claude Juncker
President of the European Commission
Brussels

Prague, 8 June 2016

Regional Development and Protection Programme (RDPP) for Ukraine

Dear Mr. President,

We, the undersigned Prime Ministers of the Czech Republic, Poland, Hungary, and the Slovak Republic would like to express our sincere concerns about the situation in Ukraine and the constantly growing number of the internally displaced persons (IDPs).

The Czech Republic together with the consortium of states (Hungary, Poland, Slovenia and Slovakia) launched project on Assistance to Manage Internal Displacement in Ukraine in November 2015. This project identified multiple migration-related challenges that require a coherent, coordinated and comprehensive response. Ukraine is strongly affected by challenges deriving from internal displacement, its position as a destination and transit country for persons seeking international protection, and the increasing emigration pressures on its own population due to the simultaneous political, economic and security crises.

The overall number of IDPs registered in Ukraine has been constantly growing in 2015 and has reached more than 1,700.000 by March 2016. There is no indication that conflict will be solved in the near future and that the number of IDPs in Ukraine has reached its maximum. Thus, a large number of the already registered IDPs continue to find them in a vulnerable position and encounter harsh living conditions. Consequently, the issue of internal displacement in Ukraine requires further attention and concrete action.

The methodology applied by Regional Development and Protection Programme (RDPP) represents the most developed and best suited approach in this regard. RDPPs, which have been defined as one of the main priorities by the new European Agenda on Migration, provide for new thinking on durable solutions for countries hosting large numbers of refugees and displaced persons which moves away from a purely problem-centred approach to one that aims at unleashing the potential that refugees and people in need for protection have. They represent comprehensive programmes which equally address protection needs of refugees and development aspects relevant for host countries, and promote the transition of refugees and displaced persons towards increased resilience, self-reliance and (temporary) economic integration.

Ukraine is and will be confronted with a broad number of migration induced challenges, which require a coherent, coordinated and comprehensive response that goes beyond the current focus on IDP-emergency related actions. This comprehensive response needs to equally address 1) the strengthening of state capacities to manage migration and to provide protection at the eastern borders of the EU; 2) the enhancement of local actors' capacities to ensure temporary or longer-term integration of IDPs and refugees; and 3) IDPs and refugees' access to concrete programmes and support improving their individual situation. Based on close cooperation between EU MS and Ukraine as a country of origin, transit and first asylum, the protection of displaced persons needs to become a political priority; even more among those countries which are practically and potentially most affected by it, i.e. Ukraine and the neighbouring EU MS countries as well as those countries with large Ukrainian diaspora communities.

Such a program should be carried out by a consortium of Member States, in a close cooperation with the Commission, the Ukrainian government and international organisations.

The RDPP program should be launched as a matter of urgency. We therefore ask the Commission to allocate financial resources and launch the RDPP for Ukraine.

We are ready to lead RDPP and will also actively contribute to this programme. In the same moment we encourage other Member States to support this initiative.

Yours sincerely,

Bohuslav Sobotka

Prime Minister of the Czech Republic

Beata Szydło

Prime Minister of the Republic of Poland

Viktor Orbán

Prime Minister of Hungary

Robert Fico

Prime Minister of the Slovak Republic

