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EUPHA calls on Europe's governments to do more to respond to the humanitarian and health crisis facing Ukraine

The crisis in Ukraine, which started just over one year ago, has been framed as a political and economic crisis leading to a new cold war. However, it is also a health and humanitarian crisis. Today the European Public Health Association calls on all Europeans to recognise the scale of this crisis and on their governments to come together to stop the suffering.

Before the unrest and conflict, Ukraine was already experiencing a health crisis characterized by one of the world's worst demographic declines, a life expectancy of more than 9 years less than in the EU, an ineffective and underfunded health care system, and a population with poor self-reported health and health outcomes, high levels of stress and little hope for the future.

The year's events have only exacerbated the situation. To date, it is estimated that there have been more than 4,300 deaths, 10,000 war-wounded, nearly 470,000 internally displaced persons and more than 1,000,000 refugees seeking asylum in neighbouring countries. All these numbers are expected to grow if fighting continues.

In the east, health and medical facilities have been damaged and destroyed, and in other parts of the country, the existing infrastructure is under immense strain. The Ukrainian government has cut off funding to areas under rebel control in the east, including hospitals, clinics and doctors. The country's pharmaceutical supply is on the verge of collapse, and vital medicines are running out to treat HIV, tuberculosis and other communicable and non-communicable diseases. The emotional consequences of the armed conflict also continue to mount and there is virtually no capacity to provide adequate trauma or PTSD counseling.

Ongoing conflict will further destabilize a country that is in a critical and strategic geographic location in Europe. The rest of Europe will have to contend with a growing number of Ukrainian refugees. If Ukraine continues to be unable to deal with its population health needs, including immunization programmes, there is a real risk of epidemics in Ukraine and beyond. For these reasons, Europe has a clear interest in providing immediate humanitarian assistance and finding longer term solutions and reforms to Ukraine's health crisis.

EUPHA calls on all European citizens to recognize the scale of the crisis on their doorstep and for their governments to act urgently in ways that reduce the massive toll of suffering.

Note to editors: The European Public Health Association, or EUPHA in short, is an umbrella organisation for public health associations and institutes in Europe. EUPHA was founded in 1992 by 15 members (12 countries). EUPHA now has 71 members from 40 countries:

- 41 national associations of public health
- 18 institutional members
- 8 European NGOs
- 4 individual members.

EUPHA is an international, multidisciplinary, scientific organisation, bringing together around 14,000 public health experts for professional exchange and collaboration throughout Europe. We encourage a multidisciplinary approach to public health.

Our vision is of improved health and reduced health inequalities for all Europeans. We seek to support our members to increase the impact of public health in Europe, adding value to the efforts of regions and states, national and international organisations, and individual public health experts.