

Brussels, 27 November 2023

Joint open letter on ensuring that the Ukraine Facility delivers on the environmental acquis of Ukraine

Dear Presidents von der Leyen and Michel,

Cc: Executive Vice-President Maroš Šefčovič, Commissioners Olivér Várhelyi, Virginijus Sinkevičius, and Wopke Hoekstra

Russia's war on Ukraine has caused tremendous human suffering, infrastructure destruction, and nature loss. The country depends on quick and adequate support from the international community to recover from the war and build a prosperous future as a member of the European family. The proposed Ukraine Facility, without doubt, can contribute to this goal. However, the efficiency of this support mechanism will depend on its priorities and implementation mechanisms. With this letter, we, the undersigned organisations, want to draw your attention to the urgent need to monitor the application of environmental and climate safeguards and incentives when disbursing funds under the Ukraine Facility and to use it to the largest possible degree for meeting the environmental acquis.

The EU's Ukraine Facility has been drafted and undergoes co-decision at record speed, which has greatly limited the possibility of environmental stakeholders engaging in its development. There is consequently a considerable risk that this new funding instrument will not deliver as much as it could and should on mainstreaming sustainability in recovery plans and projects and engaging environmental CSOs in programming and monitoring to mobilise their support and know-how. The consequences are obvious: Ukraine's compliance with the environmental acquis and its contribution to a resilient, prosperous Europe will be slowed down while the European Commission just recommended starting negotiations on Ukraine's accession to the EU.

To ensure the Ukraine Facility can contribute as much as possible to meeting the EU environmental acquis, we call on the European Commission to:

- Request the immediate application of the EU Environmental Impact Assessment and Strategic Environmental Impact Assessment Directives as a condition for spending funds under the Ukraine Facility.
- Apply the EU's Do No Significant Harm and Polluter Pays principles and allocate at least 20% of the funding to environmental, biodiversity, and climate investments as requested by the EU Parliament. Prioritisation of these "green" investments, however, should be done by Ukrainians through an inclusive process, to ensure local ownership and relevance to the country's context. This would greatly contribute to Ukraine meeting its international and EU accession-related commitments on these issues and ensure the conservation of Ukraine's precious natural capital.
- Empower civil society, both EU level and in Ukraine, according to the European Code of Conduct on Partnership to engage in programming and monitoring of funds by bringing in place respective mechanisms and funding.

We appreciate that it is not only up to the EU to decide how funds will be spent. Considering the enormous socio-economic challenges and the horrors brought by Russia's war, environmental and climate issues are often overlooked by the decision-makers in Ukraine, but potentially also by other donors and investors. At the same time, we see many communities around the country implementing or planning green projects and initiatives to become more resilient to current and future threats. We believe that the above-mentioned conditions can contribute to further improvement of environmental security and resilience which Ukrainians need today and in the future. Knowing your commitment to the Green Deal, we are hopeful that you and your Services will help us convince Ukraine policy and decision-makers to use the Ukraine Facility as an outstanding opportunity for moving toward a sustainable, resilient future for the country.

Yours sincerely,



Ester Asin,
Director of WWF European Policy Office and current chair of the Green 10.

Also on behalf of the Green 10 Directors:

Mark Martin, Executive Director Bankwatch Network

Ariel Brunner, Regional Director BirdLife Europe and Central Asia

Chiara Martinelli, Director Climate Action Network (CAN) Europe

Patrick ten Brink, Secretary General European Environmental Bureau (EEB)

Jagoda Munić, Director Friends of the Earth Europe

Jorgo Riss, Executive Director Greenpeace European Unit

Génon K. Jensen, Executive Director Health and Environment Alliance (HEAL)

Andrea Lichtenecker, Executive Director Naturefriends International

William Todts, Executive Director European Federation for Transport and Environment (T&E)