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10963 Berlin

Copy:

Federal Chancellor
Olaf Scholz
Bundeskanzleramt
Willy-Brandt-Straße 1
105557 Berlin

Dear Federal Minister for Economic Cooperation and Development,
Dear Ms. Schulze,

We, the undersigned Ukrainian non-governmental organisations (NGOs), are very grateful for Germany's continued political, financial, humanitarian and military support provided since Russia's full-scale invasion, as well as for supporting the adoption of eleven sanction packages against the aggressor state.

We are thankful for Germany's initiative to host next year's Ukraine Recovery Conference (URC) in Berlin. It is generally viewed that the URC in Lugano (2022) was more focused on ensuring the international commitment to rebuild Ukraine and the URC in London (2023) was centered around the role of the private sector in this process. Now we are looking to the third edition of the conference that should focus on Ukrainian communities and civil society.

It is important for the people of Ukraine to lead the reconstruction process. Real actions will and are already happening on the ground, in many communities around the country. The voices and recommendations of the representatives of local self-government and civil society should be amplified during the planning process.

We are sure that empowerment of communities will lead to a more just and sustainable reconstruction. It will also help strengthen one of the most successful Ukrainian reforms on decentralisation, which was strongly supported by the German government ever since 2014 with dedicated projects funded through GIZ, KfW, international cooperation (U-LEAD), and with the appointment of the Special Envoy of the Government of Germany on Decentralisation, Good Governance and Reforms in 2017.

Since the start of the Russian full-scale invasion, Ukrainian communities have repeatedly demonstrated high level of resilience, investment potential and capacity to implement sustainable reconstruction solutions. For example, there are already numerous cases of bankable projects in renewable energy sources and energy efficiency for municipal sector infrastructure that increase local energy security, realised by municipalities by themselves or with support of Ukrainian NGOs. Building on the already successful cases, Minister Habeck announced the start of the IKI pilot project 'Renewables for Resilient Ukraine' during his visit to Ukraine in April 2023¹.

It is essential to preserve the Ukrainian ownership and local knowledge during the preparation, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of reconstruction programs and projects through a structured and inclusive space for exchange with partners. The partnership principle applied for the EU funds can be instrumental in Ukraine allowing public authorities at national, regional and local levels as well as socioeconomic actors and civil society to be involved.

In our opinion, Ukraine Recovery Conference in Berlin could:

- promote further development of the key decentralisation reform;
- provide space for Ukrainian communities to share their successful reconstruction stories and challenges they are facing today;
- serve as a platform to bring together business representatives, international institutions, European cities and Ukrainian communities to discuss cooperation and strengthen partnerships;

¹ Reconstruction with renewables: emergency aid, security of supply and climate change mitigation:
<https://www.international-climate-initiative.com/en/iki-media/news/reconstruction-with-renewables-emergency-aid-security-of-supply-and-climate-change-mitigation/>

- highlight the role of civil society in reforming and rebuilding a more sustainable Ukraine on the way to its EU membership.

We strongly believe that Germany can play a key role in our country's reconstruction and see the upcoming Ukraine Recovery Conference in Berlin as a pivotal moment to really empower local communities by highlighting their needs, assessments, and already gained experiences and recommendations.

Signatories:

Center for Environmental Initiatives "Ecoaction" NGO
NGO Ecoclub
Razom We Stand
Anti-Corruption Research and Education Centre
NGO Center for international cooperation and project implementation
ICO Environment - People - Law
ForestCom
Luhansk Regional Human Rights Centre Alternative
All-Ukrainian Sustainable Development & Investments Agency
Environmental Humanitarian Association "Green World"
StateWatch Think Tank
ADASTRA NGO
Green Deal Ukraina Project Berlin-Warsaw-Kyiv
Kyiv Municipal League of Public Organizations of People with Disabilities
NGO Zero Waste Society
NGO Plato
NGO Khmelnytskyi energy cluster
RePower Ukraine Charitable Foundation
NGO Agency for Recovery and Development
NGO "Kharkiv Anticorruption Center"
NGO "Anti-Corruption Headquarters"
CO Energy Act for Ukraine Foundation
NGO Ecosense
Zaporizhzhia Recovery Committee
NGO UEC Green Wave
NGO Vision Zero
NGO Environmental Club Eremurus
NGO Wetlands park Osokorky
Ukrainian School of International and Innovation Entrepreneurship, Law, and Communication
NGO "The Territory of New Changes"
NGO DiXi Group
NGO Modern Format
NGO CELA
UNBA
NGO Initiative center Toloka
NGO SPORT AKTIV
NGO Tvoe nove misto
NGO "DOBRO"
NGO "Space of sustainable development"
RISE Coalition
WWF Ukraine