

2022 ECONOMIC AND ENVIRONMENTAL DIMENSION IMPLEMENTATION MEETING
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Closing Session

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Dear Ambassador Raunig,
Dear participants,

Thank you for invitation and for opportunity to participate today in this important discussion about women's leadership and meaningful participation in economic and environmental activities in the OSCE region.

Before I start my statement, I would like to put your attention at the fact that while we're discussing here today, Ukraine is again under attack – as stated by the Ukrainian Air Forces, Russia launched 100 rockets and we already know about the damages in our capital Kyiv and in 15 regions of Ukraine. As our President stated, the situation after attack on infrastructure facilities is critical.

However, Ukraine demonstrates resilience and **Ukrainians today hold the economic front**. They relocate their business and start it in the rear regions. Personally, I see those example. I am a Ukrainian woman, whose husband joined the Armed Forces of Ukraine and is fighting for Ukraine's freedom; I'm the woman with a small son, who was forced to leave the city of Kyiv, where I lived for 18 years, because of the war and to move to my hometown in Western Ukraine. In my native city, I often visit a small coffee shop started by young women from Kherson. They saved their business and restarted it in the rear. This weekend, I was happy to congratulate these young people on the liberation of their hometown!

I also know examples of tailoring businesses from Kharkiv that found support from local entrepreneurs in Ivano-Frankivsk and quickly expanded their production.

Even more impressive are Ukrainian rural women, who cannot take the main resource – land with them, but who find opportunities to develop an agricultural business in the rear territories moving their powers from *Lugansk* or *Donetsk* region in the East to *Lviv* or *Chernivtsi* region in the West, and overcome challenges and threats to lives while returning to the de-occupied territories for example, near *Zaporizhzhya* in the South of Ukraine. We hear about this from our partners – *Business Network of Rural Women*.

Despite the large number of IDPs and the vulnerability of women, the number of new enterprises is growing and relocating. As stated by the International Organization for Migration, every sixth person (*or 17.5% of the total population*) in Ukraine has become an internally displaced person, and about 60% of IDPs are women. As national survey stated, women from among internally displaced persons are economically more vulnerable than men experiencing additional burden of care-work and supporting the relatives.

At the same time, as of July this year, 678 enterprises were relocated to safe regions under the relocation program (*data from the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine*), and more than 50,000 new businesses were registered in Ukraine as of February 24, 2022 (*data from the Unified State Register*).

Relocated business is a support for the economy in Ukraine, and that is what increases our chances for victory. It is important to support this process – it is especially important to support entrepreneurship developed by women. Here is a good example to lean on – the *Save Business Now* initiative in Ivano-Frankivsk that was established in the first month of the war and is consulting the relocated businesses, incl. female, on the new environment they are currently working in.

Supporting economic opportunities for women today is part of the plan to rebuild Ukraine after the victory. And here is the opportunity for the OSCE – to design and to start with the special programmes supporting Ukrainian female entrepreneur – *peer-to-peer meetings, mentoring and consulting, experience exchange visits* or *small targeted grants* for women, who keep running or start their businesses. That is what is needed today, and that is what would become a part of Ukraine's national recovery plan, in which women will have an important place.

You actually know that almost 6 million of Ukrainians have fled the country because of the war. But here comes another fact that – 87% of Ukrainian refugees are women, most of whom are highly qualified professionals, entrepreneurs or skilled workers, and who are planning to return home after the end of the war (*Razumkov Center survey data*). And that brings me to the idea that now is a good moment – to assess, to evaluate and to understand the needs of Ukrainian women entrepreneurs in Ukraine in order to prepare the grounds and to create for them good conditions for getting back home. The OSCE could be active in this process and start those evaluation projects that would become a part of bigger package of support to our country.

Here, I would like to put your attention on important move. At a time when Ukrainian men are on the frontlines, **Ukrainian women are changing professions, entering the fields that may traditionally be considered masculine** and require proper training. We already know the stories of women serving in the Armed Forces, incl. on the command positions, women leading the critical enterprises like the Chairwoman of the *Bakery Factory* in the Western Ukraine that kept working at every day of war and providing people with bread, or women advocating for supporting critical infrastructure like the Chairwoman of Communication of the big investment business aimed to rebuild the *AzovStal* plant – the fortress and the symbol of Ukrainian resistance in Mariupol. But we also expect many women to become involved into infrastructure and energy projects, urban and environmental projects.

Educational programs for Ukrainian women, who are eager to get new professions, is what OSCE may and could plan for the future activity. A good

example in this regard is Poland, which has introduced in several universities training programs for women, who are currently in Poland and are interested in professions that will be in demand for country's rebuilding in the near future. In those educational and experience exchange programs, we encourage to design the respective projects based on intersectional approach. There're in Ukraine several women's organizations that are working with environmental issues or urban reconstruction initiatives, so those organizations might become partners. Today's solutions require creativity!

Ukrainian women, who'll become a part of those educational and experience exchange programs, would build a community of pro-active professionals, whose experience and voice will ensure them the active role and meaningful participation in the post-war reconstruction of Ukraine.

In the end of my statement, I would like to emphasize that a part of Ukrainian resilience and withstanding the aggression, are the **horizontal connections that are fantastically working in the communities**. 70% of Ukrainian women participate in volunteer work (*data from the UN Women survey*) and unite their small efforts fo big social support. And that is exactly the leadership that women experience and demonstrate in relation to their communities, but sometimes do not realize their extraordinary role in this most challenging time for our country.

The **grassroot activism discovers new female leaders**, and today, we encourage the OSCE countries to support this move and to develop horizontal connections between Ukrainian women's organizations and women's communities in your countries, to build bridges for cooperation and to support the respective inter-nation initiatives in all possible ways – financially, expertly and informationally. The *Ukrainian Women's Congress* stands ready to provide any necessary assistance and coordination in this regard.

We also encourage you to talk tirelessly about women's resilience in the extraordinary security situation, about the potential of women in making economic decisions, and the necessity to ensure women's seat at the table in the process of rebuilding the country. This meeting today is an extraordinary opportunity in this regard, and we really appreciate to be a part of this important conversation and to share our experience on what we have already went through and our vision about Ukraine we are dreaming of and fighting for.

Thank you for your attention!