

War against Ukraine



Swiss government action since the start of Russian military aggression on 24 February 2022

The Federal Council condemns Russia's military aggression against Ukraine in the strongest possible terms. These actions constitute a grave violation of international law, in particular against the prohibition on the use of force as well as against Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity. The Confederation has multiplied its support for Ukraine in order to help contribute to a comprehensive, lasting and just peace in the country in accordance with the UN Charter.

Switzerland continues via regular bilateral and multilateral channels to call on Russia to de-escalate the situation immediately, cease all combat operations, and withdraw its troops from Ukrainian territory without delay. It has also offered its good offices to both parties.

Switzerland focuses on providing support for the Ukrainian people where needs are most acute on the ground, drawing on its long-standing presence and experience in Ukraine which dates back to the country's reform efforts in the 1990s. It also works in particular to improve living standards for people, improve the efficiency of public services and promote sustainable economic development.

Around half of the Ukrainian population is currently dependent on humanitarian aid as a result of Russia's military aggression. Thus, Switzerland's current engagement there has a strong humanitarian focus. Nevertheless, it is also aligned with the thematic priorities of the previous long-term cooperation programme in Ukraine. To this end, projects are aimed at joint and effective results in a complementary manner.

International cooperation

Switzerland has been supporting Ukraine's reform efforts since the 1990s. In particular, it is committed to improving the population's living standard, improving the public services' efficiency and promoting sustainable economic growth.

Due to Russia's military aggression, Switzerland's commitment after 24 February 2022 has a strong humanitarian component. However, this is aligned with the thematic priorities of the previous long-term cooperation programme, which includes the following priorities

- Strengthening democratic institutions,
- Improving health (improvement of basic services)
- sustainable urban development (e.g., energy efficiency, sustainable mobility),
- strengthening the competitiveness of small and medium-sized enterprises (agricultural businesses, access to financial services).

This long-term commitment will be continued with the necessary adjustments.

- In the area of development cooperation, for example, a project for the rehabilitation of war trauma was adapted.
- Switzerland has also been committed to digitalisation and decentralisation since 2015. The E-Governance for Accountability and Participation (EGAP) programme offers important administrative services digitally, thereby increasing government transparency even during the war, promoting the population's participation in decision-making processes and reducing corruption.
- The urban development and mobility projects were also adapted to take account of internally displaced persons and the new socio-economic circumstances (e.g., barrier-free access to services and transport).

[Ukraine \(International Cooperation\)](#)

First response: Needs analysis and relief supplies

Today, around half of the Ukrainian population is dependent on humanitarian aid. In an initial phase, the focus was on assessing needs and delivering relief supplies. Immediately after the start of Russia's military aggression against Ukraine, the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) assessed needs in Ukraine, Poland and Moldova and set up hubs to provide concrete support to people affected by the war. Initially, deliveries of relief supplies were coordinated from there.

To date, Swiss Humanitarian Aid has transported over 1,200 tonnes of relief supplies (e.g., medical equipment, generators, winter clothing) from Switzerland to Ukraine and neighbouring countries and purchased over 4,765 tonnes of essential foodstuffs in Ukraine to support the population.

Winter aid

The targeted attacks on civilian infrastructure last winter resulted in over 40 per cent of the energy grid being destroyed, there is still no access to drinking water in many places and the power supply and telecommunications are often interrupted. Particularly in view of the harsh winters in Ukraine, the Federal Council decided on an action plan totalling CHF 100 million for winter aid at the end of 2022. In particular, the federal government supported projects for the urgent repair of destroyed civilian infrastructure (e.g., emergency repairs in the energy, road and health sectors). It has also taken various measures for the coming winter.

On 21 February 2023, the Federal Council approved the 2023 Action Plan for Ukraine and Moldova, amounting to CHF 140 million. This includes measures in the areas of peace-building (e.g., demining), health (e.g., repairs to hospitals), economic development (e.g., small loans to agricultural SMEs), sustainable cities (e.g., repairs to schools) and multi-sectoral support (e.g., delivery of requested material).

Support from Swiss experts on site

Since February 2022, more than 70 Swiss Humanitarian Aid Unit (SHA) specialists have been deployed in Ukraine and Moldova to reinforce Swiss representations in both countries and support humanitarian organisations on the ground (ICRC, UN, NGOs).

For example, following the destruction of the Kakhovka dam, two SHA specialists in engineering and WASH (water, sanitation and hygiene) were able to help with short and

medium-term solutions to alleviate the effects of the dam's destruction. Switzerland has also supplied urgently needed locally purchased pipes and pumps to the water network operators upstream of the dam. Thus, the water supply systems can be operated even when water levels are low. 31 water tanks also procured in Ukraine and water filling racks from Switzerland supply an additional 60,000 people with drinking water.

[Ukraine news overview](#)

[Ukraine \(international cooperation\)](#)

Financial assistance and multilateral support

In providing financial assistance, the Confederation makes use of instruments of international organisations such as the World Bank and the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD), which have set up funds to pool the contributions of various countries to Ukraine.

As tax revenues in Ukraine have collapsed due to the war, the World Bank's Peace Fund ensures that Ukraine's state budget can be maintained and that, among other things, public sector employees – such as teachers and the police – continue to receive a salary. Switzerland supported the fund with CHF 10 million in 2022 and a further CHF 20 million in 2023.

Through the Ukraine Relief, Recovery, Reconstruction and Reform Trust Fund, the Confederation is helping to urgently repair destroyed energy infrastructure with a contribution of CHF 54 million. It has also allocated CHF 10 million to the Energy Community's Ukraine Energy Support Fund, to provide equipment needed to repair the country's energy infrastructure for example (where possible via Swiss partners).

The Confederation has also contributed CHF 3 million to a World Bank initiative that is assessing the damage caused by the war and evaluating which repairs need to be prioritised. In addition, the Confederation is supporting an EBRD initiative aimed at ensuring that Ukraine's recovery builds on the country's reform process.

Through the EBRD, the Confederation's commitment mainly targets Ukraine's private sector. The Small Business Impact Fund is helping to improve framework conditions for SMEs. This is done through advisory services, strengthening supply chains, access to financing and the establishment of industrial parks. Through the IFC (International Finance Corporation), the Confederation is supporting a mixed financing instrument with CHF 10



million, through which loans can be granted to farmers and other businesses in the agricultural sector. Through the Swiss Investment Fund for Emerging Markets, the Confederation invests in the Horizon Capital Growth Fund, which promotes start-ups in the IT and export sectors and through which agricultural businesses continue to have access to loans.

Financial overview

Since February 2022, Switzerland has provided more than CHF 350 million for international cooperation in Ukraine and neighbouring countries. Parliament approved three supplementary loans, in particular to alleviate the humanitarian emergency, for winter aid in 2022 and other measures such as supporting healthcare systems, promoting decentralisation and strengthening the agricultural sector.

As part of the next strategic period for international cooperation (IC) 2025-2028, the Federal Council has reserved funds totalling around CHF 1.5 billion for Ukraine. The amount is made up of 5-10% of the total international cooperation budget, which will be used for support measures (humanitarian aid and development cooperation) in favour of Ukraine and the region, plus the increase in expenditure during this strategy period, which will be reserved as a precautionary measure for reconstruction in Ukraine.

[Ukraine-Newsticker](#)

[Ukraine \(SECO\)](#)

Humanitarian demining

Since the beginning of the war, Ukraine has become one of the most heavily mined countries in the world. A third of its territory – a 174,000 km² area. This corresponds to four times the area of Switzerland.

On 29 September 2023, the Federal Council approved CHF 100 million for mine clearance in residential and agricultural areas in order to support Ukraine's reconstruction and recovery process. The funding is split equally between the FDFA and the DDPS. Switzerland has already been involved in mine action in Ukraine: in 2022 and 2023, the FDFA allocated CHF 15.2 million for the Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining (GICHD) and the Fondation suisse de déminage (FSD), while the DDPS has supplied Ukrainian aid organisations with demining devices from the Jura-based Digger Foundation and funded the training of Ukrainian mine clearance experts by the GICHD.

Peace, human rights and international humanitarian law

Without justice, lasting peace will not return to Ukraine. The Confederation therefore supports mechanisms and processes for the prosecution of crimes under international law, including war crimes and the crime of aggression. For example, Switzerland, along with 42 other states, referred the situation in Ukraine to the International Criminal Court. This was the prerequisite for the ICC prosecutor to start the investigation immediately.

However, given the scale of crimes related to Russia's military aggression, it will be impossible to prosecute all cases. Thus the Confederation is supporting Ukraine in adding further mechanisms and activities to address criminal accountability. The Confederation is therefore supporting Ukrainian NGOs, the OSCE and the UN in documenting violations of international humanitarian law and human rights, to be used in any truth-seeking mechanisms that may be established in future.

In addition, it is helping the Ukrainian authorities in the search for and identification of missing persons. Not knowing the fate of a disappeared relative is an enormous burden for families as well as an obstacle to efforts to foster peace and social cohesion.

The Confederation is also supporting the Ukrainian initiative to provide comprehensive reparation measures for war victims. It is a member of the international war damage register and is funding consultations between the Ukrainian authorities and war-torn communities aimed at ensuring that their needs are considered in future reparation measures and mechanisms.

[International humanitarian law](#)

[Human rights diplomacy](#)

[Peace](#)

Recovery process

At the beginning of July 2022, the then president of the Swiss Confederation, Ignazio Cassis, together with the Ukrainian prime minister, Denys Shmyhal, brought all major partners (EU, international organisations) to the table for the first time in order to advance the political process of Ukraine's recovery. The Lugano Declaration proposed the political framework, noting that Ukraine was responsible for steering the process, but that reforms must continue in parallel. The Lugano Principles, which are contained within the Lugano Declaration, list common benchmarks for the future. At the conference in Lugano, 59 states and organisations were represented by delegations.

The Lugano Principles were taken up at the conferences in Berlin (October 2022) and Paris (December 2022), each of which focused on supporting Ukraine and continuing the recovery process, as well as the 2023 Ukraine Recovery Conference in London.

Support for future measures

Within the framework of the next IC strategy period 2025–28, the Federal Council has reserved funding of around CHF 1.5 billion for Ukraine. The amount comprises 5–10% of the total IC budget, which will be allocated to support actions (humanitarian aid and development cooperation) in favour of Ukraine and the surrounding region, plus an additional contingency fund of around CHF 650 million in this strategy period for reconstruction in Ukraine.

Together with the approximately CHF 300 million allocated for 2023–24, this brings the estimated total to around CHF 1.8 billion.

Good offices

Switzerland offered its good offices to both parties at the beginning of the war. At the request of Ukraine, Switzerland and Ukraine negotiated an agreement on the representation of Ukrainian interests in Russia by Switzerland (protecting power mandate). As Russia publicly rejected the mandate, it could not be activated. In mediation, it is up to the parties to the conflict to agree on an external mediating party.

Switzerland also offers an established platform in the form of International Geneva. As the European headquarters of the UN, Geneva offers considerable added value for peace processes, bringing together in one place continuity, expertise, infrastructure and the relevant actors.

[Good offices](#)

International organisations

Since the start of Russia's military aggression, the situation in Ukraine has also been repeatedly discussed in various organisations. The UN Security Council, for example, has regularly debated the situation in Ukraine.

In the UN General Assembly and, since the beginning of 2023, as a non-permanent member of the UN Security Council, Switzerland has strongly condemned the military aggression in its statements on Ukraine and repeatedly called for compliance with international law and the protection of the civilian population.

The UN Human Rights Council in Geneva – also with the support of Switzerland – has set up a commission of inquiry that gathers information on violations of human rights and international humanitarian law in connection with the conflict.

Switzerland has also taken a stand each time the situation in Ukraine has been discussed at the Council of Europe and the OSCE.

[UN Security Council news overview](#)

[OSCE](#)

["It is essential in the medium term to bring everyone to the table"](#)

[Council of Europe](#)

["It was a major shock but it hasn't weakened the Council of Europe, it has made it stronger"](#)



Research and conservation of cultural heritage

A credit of CHF 9 million for scientific solidarity in favour of Ukrainian researchers in Switzerland has been set up via the Swiss National Science Foundation (SNSF).

The Swiss government has been working to protect Ukraine's rich cultural heritage by funding projects run by civil society actors and by providing financial support to international organisations such as UNESCO and the OSCE. In order to prevent the destruction or illegal transfer of Ukrainian cultural property, funds have been allocated to increase border controls and to establish an online platform to facilitate the exchange of information between countries.

Protective and packaging materials that are no longer available in Ukraine have been delivered to over 50 museums in the Odesa and Kharkiv regions. In addition, several unique works from the collection of the National Art Museum in Kyiv have been brought to Switzerland for conservation and public exhibition. A collection of books in Ukrainian has been built up for public libraries in Switzerland with financial support from the Swiss government.

[War in Ukraine: measures for researchers \(SNSF\)](#)

Sanctions

On 28 February 2022, the Federal Council decided that Switzerland would adopt EU sanctions against Russia and Belarus, thus strengthening their effect. Switzerland also applied the EU's subsequent sanctions packages within a very short period of time.

The sanctions include targeted measures against over 1,450 individuals and 206 organisations (freezing of assets and travel bans), numerous measures in the financial sector, trade bans on certain goods, and a ban on providing certain services to the Russian government or Russian companies. In addition, Switzerland participates in the price caps on Russian crude oil and petroleum products. Switzerland ensures that sanctions contain exemptions so as not to hinder humanitarian activities.

Switzerland's adoption of EU sanctions does not alter its neutrality in any way. Switzerland continues to fully uphold its neutrality in the strict sense of the term, i.e., the law of neutrality. It does not favour any warring party militarily. However, the Federal Council used the leeway allowed by its neutrality policy in

deciding to adopt the EU's sanctions against Russia, taking into account the fact that Russia's military aggression against Ukraine is a serious violation of the most fundamental norms of international law.

Full, effective implementation of the sanctions imposed is a priority for the Federal Council. Cooperation between Switzerland and its international partners functions smoothly in this area at the technical level, with those responsible in the Federal Administration exchanging information with sanctioning authorities from various countries on a daily basis. The exchange of information is possible under the Embargo Act and is actively practised by the Swiss authorities. Switzerland is determined to continue its good cooperation with partner countries in a constructive manner, based on shared values and objectives, and to intensify it where necessary.

[Measures related to the situation in Ukraine \(SECO\) \(de,fr,it\)](#)

[Questions and answers on Switzerland's neutrality](#)

Migration

In March 2022, the Federal Council decided initially to activate protection status S, which grants asylum seekers from Ukraine a right of residence without having to go through the usual asylum procedure. In November 2023, the Federal Council announced that it would keep the S protection status in place until March 2025, unless long-term stability returns to Ukraine before that date. By the end of October 2023, Switzerland had granted protection status S to more than 88,000 people from Ukraine, of which more than 66,000 had active S status at the end of October 2023.

Within the framework of the Moldova Support Platform, Switzerland has agreed to take in 500 Ukrainian refugees who are currently in Moldova. Furthermore, Switzerland has taken in civilians from Ukraine for treatment of acute physical illnesses. In addition, other particularly vulnerable groups including orphans and foster children have found refuge in Switzerland.

The reception and care of Ukrainians seeking protection and the high number of asylum seekers in Switzerland are placing a significant demand on the asylum system. Since January 2023, the Swiss Armed Forces have been offering additional accommodation, also providing support in setting up and managing this infrastructure.

In order to facilitate the integration of persons with protection status S into the labour market, self-employment is permitted in addition to salaried employment, and the waiting period of three months has been abolished. Furthermore, in April 2022 the Federal Council decided on additional support measures for persons with protection status S, in particular for promoting language learning and entering the job market.

In Ukraine's EU neighbour states, Switzerland is contributing CHF 5 million to a UNICEF project focusing on the protection and integration of people who have fled Ukraine. This funding comes under the Rapid Response Fund of the second Swiss contribution to selected EU member states. In 2022, it allocated CHF 5 million to an International Organization for Migration (IOM) project aimed at improving protection for people displaced within Ukraine as a result of the war. In Ukraine's EU neighbour states, an additional seven projects run by international organisations and NGOs will also receive around CHF 9 million from the end of 2023.

Switzerland is also assisting Ukrainian refugees in Moldova, a non-EU state, with CHF 1 million for a UNHCR project for the implementation of temporary protection status as well as the integration of Ukrainian asylum-seekers in the local labour market.

[Information for refugees from Ukraine \(SEM\)](#)



Photo: Keystone