



The voice of blind and partially sighted people in Europe

Protect blind and partially sighted people

Stop war immediately

EBU Press Release | 07/03/2022

The Board of the European Blind Union (EBU), the voice of 30 million blind and partially sighted people in Europe, expresses deep concern about the tragic developments in Ukraine, and calls on all parties involved to ensure the protection and safety of blind and partially sighted people and of all persons with disabilities in the country.

The EBU recalls the obligations of all actors in the crisis to respect the UN Convention on the rights of persons with disabilities, in particular article 11 on the situation of risk and humanitarian emergencies, as well as the UN Security Council Resolution No. 2475 (2019) on the Protection of Persons with Disabilities in Conflict.

We underline that in every humanitarian emergency, persons with disabilities are disproportionately at risk of abandonment, violence, death, and suffer from lack of access to safety, relief and recovery support. In particular, women, children and older people are particularly exposed to be left behind.

There are 2.7 million persons with disabilities in Ukraine, among them more than 100,000 blind and partially sighted people. They all are in an appalling situation due to inaccessible shelters and the difficulty to move to safe areas for themselves and their families.

The invasion has met general condemnation and requires support and aid to Ukraine. All national member organizations of EBU are committed to provide unconditional support and aid to blind and partially sighted persons evacuating from the country, as well as to participate in all initiatives to offer information and give assistance to both the Ukrainian organizations of persons with disabilities and those of the neighbouring countries receiving refugees.

A strong European response to the invasion must reflect the values of Europe of advancing human rights.

EBU President Rodolfo Cattani said: “Europe has already suffered from two world wars, and for more than 70 years has been immune from armed conflicts, except the war in the Balkans in the 1990s. Now we are even facing the invasion of an independent state by an overwhelming foreign army. We are all moved and indignant by this unacceptable aggression. Let’s put together all our moral energies and practical resources to protect and support all innocent victims. *Si vis pacem para ... pacem.*”

Ends

The European Blind Union (EBU) is a non-governmental, non-profit making European organisation founded in 1984. It is one of the six regional bodies of the World Blind Union, and it promotes the interests of blind and partially sighted people in Europe. It currently operates within a network of 41 national members including organisations from 25 European Union member states, candidate countries and other countries in geographical Europe.

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