

Resolution on the impact of the war against Ukraine on women

2022/2633(RSP) - 05/05/2022 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The European Parliament adopted by 462 votes to 19, with 89 abstentions, a resolution on the impact of the war against Ukraine on women.

The invasion of Ukraine by Russia has forced a large number of people to flee the country. Approximately 5 million refugees have fled from Ukraine to the EU since the beginning of the invasion, with an estimated 90 % of refugees being women and children. A further 7.1 million people have been displaced internally within Ukraine, including women and children in need of medical and mental health care, employment possibilities, proper schooling for children and accommodation and protection against sexual and gender-based violence.

On the other hand, many women have stayed in Ukraine and mobilised for combat with around 300 000 women in the battlefield as well as those who make up a second line of defence, providing non-combat support as well as vital logistics including assistance in the evacuation of civilians. Those who do leave often come to the EU with their children or the children of their extended family and friends.

The resolution highlighted that there are currently an estimated 80 000 women waiting to give birth in Ukraine. The difficult situation on the ground is resulting in a lack of proper access to sexual and reproductive health and rights for the women still in the country. Access to sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) is also becoming increasingly difficult for the refugees arriving in the EU notably in Poland where there is a *de facto* **abortion ban**.

Parliament restated its condemnation in the strongest possible terms of Russia's illegal, unprovoked and unjustified military aggression against and invasion of Ukraine and condemned any war crimes being committed against the civilian population, including women and girls in all their diversity. It praised the solidarity shown by EU citizens, civil society, Member States and the EU itself towards Ukraine and people fleeing Ukraine.

The EU should work towards swiftly granting EU candidate status to Ukraine, in line with Article 49 TEU and based on merit, and, in the meantime, continue to work towards the integration of Ukraine into the EU single market along the lines of the Association Agreement in order to adequately protect Ukrainian women and girls.

The Commission is asked to ensure correct and full implementation of the Temporary Protection Directive across all 27 Member States and to make sure that women refugees fleeing the war in Ukraine fully benefit from the rights enshrined therein, especially regarding health services, maternity, childcare and access to the labour market.

Members insisted that all Ukrainian citizens who were forcibly deported to Russia should be immediately returned to Ukraine.

The EU is called on to:

- address the specific needs of women and girls in reception centres and to guarantee access to **sexual and reproductive health and rights services**, particularly emergency contraception, post-exposure prophylaxis and abortion care, including for survivors of rape;

- use additional measures, EU funds and mechanisms to respond to the sexual and gender-based violence protection and sexual and gender-based violence;
- swiftly identify and prosecute the trafficking networks profiting from the sexual exploitation of refugee women and girls;
- prioritise the need for an **EU-wide registration platform** for people applying for temporary protection, which is especially needed to support tracing and reunification efforts of unaccompanied minors, but also regarding those at risk of trafficking, such as women and girls;
- support Ukraine in investing in **anti-trafficking** awareness raising as well as setting up an **EU-wide helpline** number specifically for refugee victims or those at risk of human trafficking or sexual and gender-based violence, free of charge and monitored in Ukrainian.

Ukrainian legislation allows **surrogacy** and the country accounts for over a quarter of the world's commercial surrogacy market. Although Parliament condemns this practice, it asked the EU and its Member States to pay particular attention to the protection of surrogate mothers during pregnancy, childbirth and puerperium and to respect all of their rights, as well as those of the newborns.

To further assist Moldova in its efforts to host refugees fleeing Ukraine, Parliament called on the Member States and the Commission to share responsibility and provide specific assistance to meet the needs of refugee women and girls.