

Immediate Need for Action to Secure the Research and Innovation Capacity of Ukraine

 **STATEMENT, 15 SEPTEMBER 2022**



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The war that has been caused by the invasion of Russian troops into Ukrainian territory is bringing enormous suffering to people in Ukraine and is devastating the country. It is also a major threat to its future due to loss of intellectual capital and capacity. A major brain drain from Ukraine would impair its ability to educate future generations, to innovate, and to succeed economically.

In view of this danger, the European Council highlights the necessity to put in place appropriate support to allow Ukraine to maintain and regain its higher education and scientific capacities.¹ To prevent irreparable damage, it is of utmost importance to secure adequate working conditions for students and scientists in Ukraine now. Only if they are able to continue their work will students and scientists remain in Ukraine, and refugees be able to return soon.

On its own, the Ukrainian government will not manage to prevent a massive loss of intellectual capital. For example, the budget for the National Research Foundation of Ukraine, which was projected at €35m for 2023, had to be frozen, leaving Ukrainian researchers without access to project funding for research. Immediate actions and measures are therefore needed to complement the aid that most European countries already provide to refugee students and scientists, and to individual cooperation agreements that have been established with research and higher education institutions.

In view of this situation, European STI policy councils call on their governments for these immediate actions:

Secure ability of National Research Foundation of Ukraine (NRFU) to fund research

- **Action:** Together with European partners, provide monetary support to NRFU for the next three years to continue competitive research funding and provide a mid-term perspective for Ukrainian researchers to stay in the country.
- **Action:** Provide assistance to NRFU in recruiting experts from European countries if requested.

Initiate Research Infrastructure Initiative for Ukraine

- **Action:** Provide substantial budget for a three year programme to supplant research equipment at Ukrainian research and higher education institutions that has been lost or is inaccessible due to the war.
- **Action:** Provide expertise to aid in programme design, and in procurement processes.

¹ Council of the European Union: Statement by the Council on Russian military aggression against Ukraine and its impact on R&I. 10125/22, Brussels 10 June 2022.

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Assist future oriented transformation of Ukrainian research and innovation

→ **Action:** Provide expertise to advise on the future design of the ecosystem and the processes that lead to the transformation of the system.

The Austrian Council for Research and Technology Development (RFTE) recommends to implement these actions immediately in a collective effort of willing European countries. It calls on the European institutions to join this effort.

The RFTE is willing to advise Ukraine, as required and within the limits of its capacities, in its effort to rebuild and transform the Ukrainian system of higher education, research and innovation in years to come.

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