

Beat: News

The European Democratic Resilience Initiative

US Department of State

Washington, D.C., 27.04.2022, 18:51 Time

USPA NEWS - The following is a press release from the US Department of State - Office of the Spokesperson, released April 27, 2022.

On March 24, President Biden announced the launch of the European Democratic Resilience Initiative (EDRI) to bolster democratic resilience, advance anti-corruption efforts, and defend human rights in Ukraine and its neighbors in response to Russia's war of aggression. Working with Congress, the Biden Administration aims to harness the EDRI to provide up to \$320 million in new funding to address immediate and medium-term needs in Europe and Eurasia. The EDRI will complement the global Presidential Initiative for Democratic Renewal announced by President Biden at the December 2021 Summit for Democracy, as well as efforts to counter Russia's kleptocracy through the International Russian Elites, Proxies, and Oligarchs (REPO) and the U.S.-interagency law enforcement KleptoCapture task forces. EDRI-supported programs and projects will be closely coordinated with the EU and other donors. This Fact Sheet provides information on the EDRI's initial funding priorities and focus. Additional information will be released as the U.S. Government continues to address evolving needs in Ukraine and the region.

Urgent Needs: The EDRI will prioritize support for immediate human rights priorities in Ukraine and its surrounding region, including by promoting accountability as a deterrent to further atrocities, and addressing risks to vulnerable and at-risk groups fleeing Ukraine and repression across Eurasia. Working with Congress, the State Department and USAID anticipate providing an initial \$80 million of the overall EDRI funding amount to support the following urgent needs:

Advancing Accountability: To promote justice and accountability for atrocities committed by Russia's forces in Ukraine, the EDRI will: Provide expert support and capacity-building for the war crimes units under the Ukrainian Office of the Prosecutor General (OPG), assisting these offices in accomplishing their mandate of investigating and prosecuting war crimes and other serious international crimes.

Support an online platform for the documentation, verification, and dissemination of evidence of Russia's human rights violations and abuses, war crimes, and other violations of international humanitarian law in the conflict in Ukraine.

Support the UN Human Rights Monitoring Mission in Ukraine (HRMMU) to expand its work in response to Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine.

Support Ukrainian civil society efforts to monitor and document violations of international humanitarian law and human rights violations and abuses; and provide training for legal professionals and monitors on international human rights law; and training and support for media coverage of war crimes and atrocities

Defending Journalists, Civic Activists and At-Risk Groups: The EDRI will enhance the safety, security, and operational effectiveness of journalists, and pro-democracy, human rights, and anti-corruption activists inside and outside of Ukraine. The EDRI will specifically support:

Logistical and operational support to civil society activists, lawyers, journalists, and human rights defenders who have been forced to flee their home country to help them remain engaged in their relevant work from abroad.

Core funding for Ukrainian national media outlets to maintain operations and continue support for sub-national media.

Digital security and connectivity of Ukrainian civil society activists and organizations, and civil society efforts to address urgent needs of IDPs and vulnerable populations.

Programming to mitigate the impact of disinformation campaigns, including implementation of specific countermeasures.

Grantmaking, convening, and emergency support to a wide range of civil society and media entities throughout Eurasia.

Medium-Term Needs: The State Department and USAID anticipate that, working with Congress, the EDRI will maintain its focus on pressing needs, while also expanding its focus to address medium-term needs in Ukraine and the Europe and Eurasia region, including by:

Bolstering Human Rights and Democracy in Europe: The EDRI will strengthen government institutions and non-governmental capacity and resiliency to support the needs of both local populations and refugees in Europe and Eurasia.

Advancing Anti-Corruption Efforts: The EDRI will expand rapid response capabilities and technical assistance to build resilience in the face of Kremlin-led and -influenced strategic corruption and kleptocracy.

Sustaining Civil Society and Independent Media: The EDRI will work to sustain civil society, pro-democracy organizations and movements, and independent media operating throughout the region, including in restrictive operating environments.

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Source: US Department of State press release April 27, 2022

Article online:

<https://www.uspa24.com/bericht-20593/the-european-democratic-resilience-initiative.html>

Editorial office and responsibility:

V.i.S.d.P. & Sect. 6 MDStV (German Interstate Media Services Agreement): Wendy Westhoven, based in Hungary

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Official Federal Reg. No. 7442619