

The Czech Republic

Address to the Regional Committee for Europe, Special Session

Dear Regional Director, distinguished delegates,

the Czech Republic aligns itself with the statement delivered on behalf of the EU and its 27 Member States.

Usually, we are pleased to have the opportunity to address the Regional Committee for Europe. Today, unfortunately, it is not the case. The unprovoked, unjustified and illegal act of Russian aggression against Ukraine, with an active involvement of Belarus, is causing needless deaths, severe pain, and irreparable damages. The Russian Federation has grossly violated international law and the UN Charter, and seriously undermined international security and stability, with serious consequences for global health. The Czech Republic expresses full solidarity with Ukraine and the Ukrainian people.

Russia's aggression against Ukraine has triggered a humanitarian crisis with a massive number of casualties and injuries to civilians, prompting more than 5.6 million Ukrainian citizens to seek refuge in nearby countries, including the Czech Republic, and further 7.7 million to become internally displaced people so far. In parallel, Russian deliberate attacks on health care infrastructure have devastating impact on the Ukrainian health system and people. Thus, the health consequences of the war in Ukraine belong to the most pressing issues and need to be addressed with urgency.

The Czech Republic has been providing comprehensive assistance, not least health and nutrition related, to people in Ukraine and refugees from Ukraine in the neighbouring countries, in particular Moldova. In recent weeks, the Czech Republic has delivered to Ukraine medicines and medical equipment worth several millions euro, and we continue to monitor further crucial needs. Moreover, the Czech Republic hosts more than 330 thousand Ukrainian refugees who are fully included into the Czech health care system, and they benefit from identical universal health coverage as available to Czech citizens.

The health consequences of the Russian war against Ukraine will be long-lasting and it is necessary to start discussions on the reconstruction of the Ukrainian health system. We invite the whole WHO EURO membership to offer know-how, human capacities, and financial

resources in order to contribute to the recovery and building back better of the health sector in Ukraine. The upcoming Czech EU Presidency is going to devote a lot of attention to this reconstruction process towards a successful outcome.

The Czech Republic fully supports the draft resolution “Health emergency in Ukraine and neighbouring countries, stemming from the Russian Federation’s aggression”.

Thank you for your attention.