

Why donating cash rather than goods is better for Ukraine

I have received the enclosed letter from Ministers at the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office and the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport:

Dear Colleagues,

Why donating cash rather than goods is better for Ukraine

Firstly, thank you to colleagues who have been in touch over the last few weeks on this matter. It is clear that you and your constituents are making great efforts to support those who have been forced to flee their homes because of the Russian invasion of Ukraine. As President Zelenskyy said when he spoke directly to us last week, “we are looking for help from civilised countries, and we are thankful for this help”.

As such, we wanted to give you an update on the best ways to do this. How Government is supporting Ukraine’s immediate humanitarian needs

As the Foreign Secretary wrote in her letter of Monday 7 March, the UK has now committed £394m in aid, including £220m in humanitarian assistance which will be used to save lives; and protect vulnerable people inside Ukraine and in the wider region.

The government’s focus is on supporting the UN and other humanitarian partners to respond effectively to the deteriorating humanitarian situation; as well as strengthen the effectiveness of the overall international humanitarian response.

Advice for the public and organisations

We welcome the public’s eagerness and generosity to support the people of Ukraine at this time of crisis. It is fantastic that the Disasters Emergency Committee’s appeal for Ukraine has now reached more than £130m, including £25m in government funding, our largest ever aid-match donation.

Details of the appeal and how to donate can be found on www.DEC.org.uk.

We do however request that organisations and people who would like to help do so by donating cash through trusted charities and aid organisations, rather than by donating goods. The Polish Embassy in London also reiterated this request in their [statement](#) of 01 March.

Cash can easily and safely be transferred quickly to areas where it’s needed. Individuals and aid organisations can then use it to buy what’s most appropriate at that moment. If your constituents or organisations have excess donated goods they could consider donating these to a charity shop who may, depending on the nature of these items, be able to sell these to raise cash

which may support the Ukraine crisis. Alternatively, local fund-raising efforts using donated goods can also raise cash.

Unsolicited donations of goods, although well-meant, can obstruct supply chains and delay more urgent life-saving assistance from getting through given the huge logistical and coordination challenges associated with handling and onward distribution. Goods provided may not be what is most needed and run the risk of not reaching affected populations, including looting and theft or being sold further on informal markets thereby distorting the local economy. Distribution is difficult to control and manage well, particularly in conflict affected contexts – the most vulnerable like women, the elderly, disabled and children often do not receive goods.

If members of the public or organisations would still like to take forward a donation of goods we encourage them to reach out to a charity or organising body based in country to establish what is needed and how to deliver it safely before they begin to collect goods. Some useful links can be found in the attached Annex.

Once this has been done, to help facilitate transportation the Government has removed the requirement to complete unfamiliar customs paperwork. [Guidance](#) is here and an Export Support Service helpline available on 0300 303 8955. Charities can also contact their online [support team](#).

We will continue to update you and keep you abreast of developments as the situation continues to evolve.

With thanks to you and your constituents for their generous offers of help. We have also included a link to more information on what your constituents and local charities [can do to help](#) the people of Ukraine.

Best wishes