

10 March 2022

Dear Minister Borne,

Social Platform is writing to request the French Presidency to put the Ukraine crisis on the agenda of the forthcoming EPSCO on Monday 14 March.

The crisis has already led to more than 2 million people fleeing Ukraine. If Member States do not act in solidarity and in a coordinated fashion from the outset, we will have a looming social crisis compounded by rising energy prices and inflation.

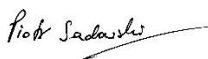
Our members represent civil society organisations who are fighting disinformation, reporting on human rights abuses, helping migrants and refugees and others in vulnerable situations and providing vital services in Ukraine and neighbouring countries. Our work shows just how crucial independent civil society is to democracy, peace and solidarity, and how important not-for-profit service providers are to fill gaps to ensure people can flee, obtain information, and access the services we offer.

Regular avenues to safety and access to basic services like food, shelter and medical care must be guaranteed at all costs. While ensuring that basic safeguards against abuse are properly guaranteed, all possible support must be given to individuals and organisations helping the most vulnerable and those at risk of being left behind in the panic of war, including people housed in institutions. Regular avenues must be complemented by practical measures to facilitate those fleeing, such as accessible transport services.

Social and employment ministries have a crucial role in responding to this crisis and should coordinate their approaches at the forthcoming EPSCO on 14 March 2022 as a matter of absolute urgency. Ministers should talk about how they will use EU funds in a way that provides access to those fleeing the war, without discrimination, to private, public and not-for-profit essential services and does not cause competition for scarce resources between different groups of vulnerable people.

Beyond the current crisis, it is important that we are invited to all EPSCO discussions, especially when those discussions are about some of the people we represent, like women, older people and people with disabilities who are currently outside the labour market and are not represented by Social Partners. Social Platform is the leading civil society network working on social justice in Europe and the only civil society organisation to co-sign the Porto Declaration. To deliver on roadmap to a more social Europe, we need to be in the room to provide the perspective of those in the most vulnerable situations and of the services and enterprises who respond to their needs.

Yours sincerely,



Piotr Sadowski, President of Social Platform