



EUROPEAN CLUSTER
COLLABORATION PLATFORM

Ukraine: How can clusters support business integration and recovery?

Summary

EU Clusters Talks
19 October 2022, 8:30 – 9:30 CEST

An initiative of the European Union





EU Clusters Talk “Ukraine: How can clusters support business integration and recovery?”

The European Cluster Collaboration Platform organised this EU Clusters Talk on 19 October 2022, 8:30 – 9:30 CEST, to learn about the Ukrainian recovery plan, discuss project proposals with Ukrainian partners, and speak about collaboration opportunities between Ukrainian and European businesses and clusters.

Agenda of the meeting

Moderation: Chris Burns

1. News from the European Cluster Collaboration Platform
2. Perspectives from the European Commission
Jakub Boratynski, Director, DG Internal Market, Industry, Entrepreneurship and SMEs (GROW), Networks and Governance
3. Proposals from the Ukrainian Cluster Alliance
Alexandre Yurchak, President, Ukrainian Cluster Alliance
4. Panel debate: B2B and C2C collaboration for Ukraine's recovery
Monika Matusiak, Team leader on Smart Specialisation – Global Outreach, within the Territorial Development Unit, Joint Research Centre
Taras Holub, Advisor to Vice Prime Minister for European and Euro-Atlantic Integration, Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine
Tereza Samanova, Member of the Board and CEO, CzechInno
5. Funding opportunities

Key messages:

- Despite the war, Ukraine is open for business and is collaborating with European partners on recovery projects. It is important to create value for both sides.
- Ukrainian Cluster Alliance is an entry point to establish connections with Ukrainian clusters. They are very active to accelerate Ukraine's internationalisation.
- The main challenges for Ukrainian businesses are orders (=jobs), logistics, production relaunch, staff, and new suppliers.
- The EU continue their support to Ukraine. DG GROW is working to facilitate Ukraine's access and integration into the Single Market Programme.
- The strong support from EU partners is a shift of paradigm for many Ukrainian SMEs and clusters.
- Entities in Czech Republic and Slovakia have been very active in initiating new projects to support Ukrainian export, logistics, and innovation actions.



1. News from the European Cluster Collaboration Platform

Nina Hoppmann, team member of the European Cluster Collaboration Platform

After the introduction by moderator Chris Burns, the following news items were presented:

1. There are still needs in the [EU Clusters support Ukraine Forum](#). Invitation to register any offers of assistance.
2. Application to the [Cluster Booster Academy](#) is open until 31 October 2022.
3. Save the dates for the next [Clusters meet Regions](#): Katowice, Poland - 7-8 November 2022; Zagreb, Croatia - 29-30 November 2022; Barcelona, Spain - 14-16 December 2022
4. [Updates on profiles](#) and profile registration process are coming for Cluster Organisation, Cluster Organisation Members, and European Cluster Partnership or Initiative

2. Perspectives from the European Commission

Jakub Boratynski, Director, DG Internal Market, Industry, Entrepreneurship and SMEs (GROW), Networks and Governance, European Commission

Jakub Boratynski highlighted the resolve of Ukrainian citizens and businesses that we have seen in the past months. He affirmed that EU support for the country is unshaken. After addressing immediate needs in the first months, we are now ready to speak about the recovery and future of Ukraine.

He reflected on the various actions that Ukrainian clusters have set up, including the **creation of the Ukrainian Cluster Alliance**, which links more than 1,900 companies and research organisations, and **real business connections and bilateral agreements**. Collaborations have been established in automation, fashion, and food. Cluster representatives from Ukraine participated in over 80 matchmaking meetings at the European Cluster Conference in September 2020. The European Commission will support the actions of the Ukrainian Cluster Alliance.

Regarding direct support to Ukraine, the EU has mobilised over 19 billion in **financial support** and has adopted **8 sanction packages** against Russia. Solidarity lanes were set up to export Ukrainian grains. The whole set of measures seems to be working well, as grain exports are almost back up to pre-war levels. Furthermore, he referenced suspended import duties and safeguard measures for Ukrainian steel for one year. Another milestone was **Ukraine's candidate status** to become member of the European Union.

Jakub Boratynski explained that DG GROW is working to make Ukrainians **part of many networks and measures to participate - to the possible extent - in the Single Market**. They are in the final stages of the accession of Ukraine to the Single Market Programme. He emphasised that all measures should be taken with a clear focus on the future.

3. Proposals from the Ukrainian Cluster Alliance

Alexandre Yurchak, President, Ukrainian Cluster Alliance

Alexandre Yurchak explained that the main question is how to be resilient in war times. They identified **five main challenges** for the SMEs, which are **orders (=jobs), logistics, production relaunch, staff, and new suppliers**. In June 2022, they developed a strategy for export for the government with two axes: the integration into European value chains and the integration into European innovation ecosystem.



The Ukrainian Cluster Alliance has organised many online and offline meetings for a **fast internationalisation** and has signed 12 Memorandum of Understandings with European associations and clusters. They participated in the European Cluster Conference to build trust and a relationship with the European partners.

He presented the messages that the Ukrainian Cluster Alliance developed to support trade and investment. Clusters and companies can support them by:



The Ukrainian **national recovery programmes** cover different sectors, and the Ukrainian Cluster Alliance published **10 proposals for clusters and SMEs**. The proposals include outsourcing in industrial engineering, emergency support centre for critical infrastructure, education/talents in industry 4.0, cluster initiatives, standardisation initiatives, circular economy initiatives, industry roadmap of DT, accelerators/incubators, and development of DIHs in Ukraine.

Alexandre Yurchak concluded with the lessons learned until now. The strong support from EU partners is a **shift of paradigm for many SMEs and clusters**. The main challenge for the integration into EU value chains is to **create value for both parts**. He further stated that financial aid is more helpful if it is received quickly. The next steps include multilateral agendas for various sectors, prepare a UCA conference in Slovakia, and increase exchanges with EU countries about industrial policies and programmes for Ukraine. The priority needs are a programme oriented towards critical industries and infrastructure, support for engineering and industrial outsourcing programmes, support for cluster capacities growth, and all kinds of support for UA clusters and management.

4. Panel debate

Monika Matusiak, Team leader on Smart Specialisation – Global Outreach, within the Territorial Development Unit, Joint Research Centre

As head of Grow & Innovation for 4 years, Monika Matusiak led the **smart specialisation platform** for EU Member States, which saw the incorporation of non-EU Member States, with Ukraine being one of the first to join. To develop a smart specialisation strategy, it is necessary to use the knowledge of clusters to add value to innovation and increase competitiveness. She highlighted that the definition of smart specialisation strategies is a common effort of different stakeholders. Although the situation in Ukraine has changed drastically because the war, she stated that **all regions were prepared for the stage of the capacity building process** to connect their stakeholders and organise awareness raising events.



In addition to the creation of a methodology for identifying priority areas in terms of economic, innovative, or scientific potential, some regions already started the entrepreneurial discovery process, at which point clusters can join the table and have a potential impact on identifying business needs in areas where the potential impact of the transition is greatest.

Taras Holub, Advisor to Vice Prime Minister for European and Euro-Atlantic Integration, Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine

Taras Holub thanked the European Commission and the European community for the support in this hard situation. Economic development and activity play an important role in the defence of the country. In Lugano, Ukraine presented a declaration about the general needs for the recovery. A current need is the support of the energy infrastructure.

He underlined that the recovery is an **economic opportunity** to cooperate and initiate new projects. The first opportunity lies in **projects to prepare the future recovery**, for example a digital geological register for regional development. The second line of action is for **projects with Ukraine as the beneficiary**, which are being developed outside of Ukraine, for example a joint declaration with Slovak government for common infrastructure for transport and mobility. These examples show that some recovery projects can already be started today. For the Ukrainian side, there are open questions as to how these projects can be funded. He hopes that the cluster community can be involved in the planning of recovery projects.

Tereza Samanova, Member of the Board and CEO, CzechInno

Tereza Samanova shared that CzechInno is involved in some of the pilot projects between Ukraine and the Czech Republic. CzechInno is working with clusters and are co-founders of several digital innovation hubs. Since February, they have **supported Ukraine in staying in touch with the European community of innovators** and they have submitted various projects. They organised a smart export forum for Czech-Ukrainian collaboration and digital innovation. The three main points on CzechInno's support agenda are: 1) cybersecurity, Industry 4.0, and smart manufacturing; 2) smart cities, regions, and communities; and 3) import and support to SMEs in Ukraine.

She highlighted that they have quickly received the support from their government and are in close contact with the embassy in Kyiv. The Czech government approved a three-year support programme for the recovery of Ukraine, and CzechInno is involved in defining the concrete projects and action lines.

Tereza Samanova **encouraged European partners to reach out to the Ukrainian Cluster Alliance** and said that these are examples for interregional and innovative collaboration, an underlying concept of many European projects.

With regards to barriers that need to be overcome to encourage the collaborations, Alexandre Yurchak spoke about the financial risks because of the war and the needed warranties for the export and import. Taras Holub added that the Ukrainian government is collaborating with the Slovakia to put up stores at the Slovak border so that Ukrainian companies can safely store goods. Jakub Boratynski said that it is our responsibility to spread the message that Ukraine is open for business.



5. Funding opportunities

Nina Hoppmann, team member of the European Cluster Collaboration Platform

Closing the EU Clusters Talk, Nina Hoppmann highlighted the following funding opportunities that are accessible to Ukrainian entities:

1. [Horizon for Ukraine](#): Displaced researchers or other specialists from Ukraine can search for opportunities to become involved in ongoing EU-funded research & innovation projects
2. Several funding opportunities available under the [Programme for Environment and Climate Action \(LIFE\)](#). Deadline to apply is 16 November 2022.
3. [Danube Region Programme](#). Ukrainian organisations can participate in the 1st call for proposals as project partners. Deadline to apply is 21 November 2022.

Further opportunities and services are explained in the published presentation for this Talk.