

Business and Human Rights Resource Centre: Ukraine and Russia Human Rights Due Diligence

Unilever Response 14 April 2022

Thank you for reaching out to us regarding our human rights due diligence relating to our operations in Ukraine and Russia.

We have publicly condemned the war in Ukraine as a brutal and senseless act by the Russian state. We join calls for an end to this war and hope that peace, human rights, and the international rule of law will prevail.

We have been present in Ukraine since 1993. We have an office in Kyiv, and one factory; and in total we employ 146 people. Our operations in Ukraine have had to stop because of the war. From the start of this crisis, the safety of our colleagues and their immediate families has been our priority.

We have maintained twice-daily communications with our employees who wish to be contacted, to account for their safety. We have carried out detailed employee needs assessments to discern whether any medical support was needed and have provided psychological support services.

We have arranged evacuation or relocation, as appropriate (many of our employees are men and are therefore remaining in Ukraine), offering temporary housing and financial support to employees forced to leave their homes.

Our Eastern Europe team has mobilised to form a volunteer organisation to support both our employees and other Ukrainian refugees at border crossings – including offering transportation from the border, accommodation, food, medicine, financial assistance and assisting with booking medical appointments. We support these efforts and have extended paid volunteer days and use of company vehicles to help.

In addition, to support the humanitarian relief effort in Ukraine, we are donating €5m of support and essential Unilever products, working closely with NGOs to get help to where it is needed the most. We are helping the NGOs' response by donating hygiene products such as soap and sanitiser and household goods and helping them raise donations by providing TV advertising time. Our product donations are being distributed by NGOs within Ukraine and in neighbouring countries such as Poland, Hungary, Moldova, Romania, and Slovakia. Unilever Poland is providing food to refugee shelters in Warsaw in collaboration with NGOs.

Unilever has also set up an employee-donation programme, which Unilever is matching, with proceeds going to the UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR). This has had an unprecedented response, with support coming from employees all around the world. At this point our employee donations are at EUR 250k.

We have been present in Russia since 1992. We have four factories, and a head office in Moscow; altogether employing 3,000 people.

We have suspended all imports and exports of our products into and out of the country and have stopped all media and advertising spend. We support the international economic sanctions and will not invest any further capital into the country – nor will we profit from our presence in Russia.

We will continue to supply our everyday essential food and hygiene products made in Russia to people in the country.

We are continually discussing with others to understand the situation on the ground, remaining in close contact with our employees in Ukraine, Russia, and neighbouring countries; seeking internal and external guidance, keeping our external stakeholders informed and engaging with peer companies. Our position remains under close review.