

ESPGHAN action points on Ukraine

Children belong to the most vulnerable groups in society and any child caught up in a warzone will suffer, not least from loss, fear and pain. Children with pre-existing illness are at even more risk, as they may be deprived of a minimum standard of care.

It is the mission of our Society, ESPGHAN, to reduce the burden of digestive and nutritional diseases and to improve and promote digestive and nutritional health in children living in Europe and beyond. The ESPGHAN Council has carefully considered how our organisation should respond to the current situation in Ukraine and how best to support the welfare and healthcare of Ukrainian children, as well as assist our colleagues who care for them.

As an immediate first step of support, ESPGHAN Council has initiated the following Action Plan:

- ESPGHAN will make an immediate donation of €10,000 to the Foundation of the Society of Friends of the Children's Health Centre in Warsaw, Poland. The Foundation is helping to transport sick children from Ukraine, via Poland, to specialist centres around Europe in order that they may receive urgent critical care. In addition, we are investigating longer term options for financial support, to assist with covering the specific needs of children with gastrointestinal and nutritional diseases.

- We are immediately initiating mechanisms to provide more direct health support to children with digestive and nutritional issues and to create referral networks. This action is being carried out in consultation with ESPGHAN colleagues in Ukraine and neighbouring countries, and with umbrella organisations including EAP and ECHO (European Children's Hospital Organisation). Ukrainian doctors can obtain immediate medical advice on the management of children with digestive or nutritional disorders or make specific requests by contacting ukraine_support@espghan.org
- In line with our mission to provide education in the field of paediatric gastroenterology, hepatology and nutrition in order to improve the care of children, we will offer free online access to our 2022 annual conference for Ukrainian paediatricians involved in the treatment of children with digestive and nutritional issues.

The ESPGHAN Council has also decided that in the current situation it is inappropriate to hold ESPGHAN events in Russia and planned events will therefore be cancelled. Active, in-person, participation at ESPGHAN events for colleagues from Russia will also not be possible under the current circumstances. However, consistent with the mission of our Society to improve the health of children and promote dialogue, online participation at the ESPGHAN annual meeting will be possible. The objective of these measures is to balance our concerns regarding the safety of our members and our strong disapproval of the aggression by the Russian Federation with the need to promote the health of children in all countries around the world.

There appears to be no end in sight for this catastrophic war in Ukraine and the above action plan is merely a first step in our support. ESPGHAN will continue to monitor the situation closely with the aim of providing ongoing assistance as the situation evolves, and in line with the needs and requests of our Ukrainian colleagues.

ESPGHAN Council



twitter.com/espghansociety



www.espghan.org



office@espghan.org



European Society for Paediatric
Gastroenterology, Hepatology and Nutrition

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Our mailing address is:
Rue Pellegrino Rossi 16,
1201, Geneva, Switzerland