**Situational Report on the cultural policy actions and instruments that the Ministry of Culture of the Slovak Republic and its subordinated organisations have initiated, implemented and/or plan to implement in the context of the protection of the culture of Ukraine and its inhabitants in their home country and in Slovakia.**

The Slovak Republic, a State party to several international UNESCO conventions, has strongly condemned Russian Federation’s aggression against Ukraine on a number of occasions. The Slovak government and citizens express their solidarity with the suffering Ukrainian people, respect and pursue democratic values and desire to remain part of the European family to which they belong. We continue utilising all available resources of state and non-profit organisations, as well as activities of individual citizens to provide assistance, help and relief to people fleeing Ukraine. The Slovak Culture Minister maintains regular contacts with her Ukrainian partners to respond to the needs of the Ukrainian cultural sector. She has offered the Ukrainian Culture Ministry the possibility to transfer and temporary deposit articles of cultural value in Slovakia. They have also discussed expanding the existing sanctions on media services imposed by the EU which Slovakia supports. The Slovak Culture Ministry pursues the EU-imposed media sanctions in cooperation with the Council for Broadcasting and Retransmission and adopts, through the Act on Media Services, legislative measures to enforce the international sanctions on Russian state-controlled media.

The state-run cultural organisations have discontinued their cooperation with official cultural and artistic organisations in the Russian Federation. A Ukrainian-speaking contact person has been appointed in order to facilitate communication and exchange of information with the Ukrainian Culture Ministry. The same approach has been taken with respect to communication with museums and galleries in Ukraine.

**The Culture Ministry** issued ministerial instruction No. 5/2022 on 2 March 2022 laying down the measures concerning the situation in Ukraine (hereinafter only referred to as the “Instruction”) whose Article V contains a “Measure to facilitate provision of humanitarian aid” through which it has instructed to amend its internal organisational acts to enable providing accommodation, warehousing premises or other premises for humanitarian purposes. In addition to accommodating refugees or displaced persons from Ukraine, the humanitarian purposes also include temporary and safe storage of articles of cultural value, technical components, costumes or musical instruments of cultural institutions and artistic ensembles.

In Article IV of the instruction, the Culture Ministry adopted “Communication measure” by which it has ordered to immediately remove any information and materials, or their parts, that contain sensitive information, particularly the information on the cultural heritage that is necessary for its preservation, from all web sites, social media networks and similar publicly accessible sources.

As far as legislative framework is concerned, the Culture Ministry has amended §6 and §21b of Act No. 2006/2009 Coll. on museums and galleries and on the protection of articles of cultural values and on amendments to Act No. 372/1990 Coll. of the Slovak National Council on offences, as amended, and supplemented §15 and §26 of Act No. 126/2015 Coll. on libraries and on amendments to Act No. 206/2009 Coll. on museums and galleries and on the protection of articles of cultural values and on amendments to Act No. 372/1990 Coll. of the Slovak National Council on offences, as amended, as amended by Act No. 38/2014 Coll. as amended by Act No. 160/2018 Coll.

In May 2022, the Culture Ministry opened a call for applications to support projects focused on the support under the Culture of Marginalised Groups grant scheme. Cultural integration of migrants is also one of the priorities of support for this year.

The Culture Ministry is a member of the working group led by the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family of the Slovak Republic that is working on a document entitled “Strategy for Integration of Displaced Persons from Ukraine in the Slovak Republic”. In order to integrate displaced persons from Ukraine, it is also important to create conditions for them to realise their potential and establish themselves as authors and performers in Slovakia; this could effectively be supported through *Fond na podporu umenia* (the Slovak Arts Council) creative stipends. The measure will allow supporting individual artists and cultural professionals and introduce their specific views and artistic work to the Slovak public, thus enriching the Slovak cultural domain.

In providing support and assistance, the Slovak Culture Ministry communicates with the Ukrainian embassy, the Ministry of Culture and Information Policy of Ukraine, and individual organisations in Ukraine, such as museums, galleries, theatres, etc.

**UNESCO has established an International Advisory Group for Museums in Ukraine which comprises directors of internationally renowned museums willing to support Ukrainian authorities in their concrete efforts to protect Ukraine’s cultural heritage. The Slovak Culture Ministry has nominated Mgr. Alexandra Kusá, PhD, the director-general of the Slovak National Gallery, to the UNESCO working group. The Slovak National Gallery also joined the International Advisory Group for Museums in Ukraine.**

The group’s objective is to provide legal and scientific expertise and technical assistance for emergency protection of cultural heritage and art collections, including their safe storage, evacuation and preventive measures against illicit trafficking in cultural property, and to strengthen cooperation between its members and Ukrainian authorities, including through residencies for conservation and restoration professionals and provision of technical consultations for the future plans of extensive reconstruction.

In response to the request of Ukrainian authorities for the supply of protective materials and equipment (e.g., packaging materials, fire extinguishers, etc.), the Slovak Culture Ministry held a fundraiser in early March in which individual donors, independent and state organisations participated. The financial donations had been used to buy the necessary protective materials and equipment which were transported to Ukraine by two buses that subsequently brought Ukrainian refugees and displaced persons to Slovakia on their return trip.

Slovakia continues monitoring the situation in Ukraine and maintains contacts with its Ukrainian partners. During a videocall on 18 March 2022, a Culture Ministry state secretary offered the representatives of the Ministry of Culture and Information Police of Ukraine help with saving their cultural heritage, including intangible cultural heritage. He also offered another supply of packaging materials to Ukraine. The state secretary said Slovakia was prepared to receive, temporary store and protect art collections, books, movable national heritage, musical instruments, rare traditional folk costumes and other articles related to the Ukrainian intangible cultural heritage and traditional folk culture, including digitised items and elements of intangible cultural heritage (e.g., digital backups, memory media, etc.). He also offered assistance and support to collectives and ensembles of living culture and living heritage and to non-state (regional, municipal, independent NGOs) institutions. Ukrainian authorities are now mapping and identifying the needs in their country. Slovak authorities have also suggested organising an exhibition of Ukrainian cultural heritage saved and temporarily stored in Slovakia. We have also informed our Ukrainian partners that Slovakia is working on new legislation to simplify the import of articles of cultural value – practical administrative measures have been implemented to facilitate the communication and process of importing evacuated articles of cultural value for their temporary storage in emergency situations. We are now waiting on our Ukrainian partners to specify their priorities.

The Slovak Culture Ministry participated in an extensive information and communication campaign to help Ukraine in cooperation with the public, government authorities, volunteers, and other partners and stakeholders. The ministry cooperated in the manufacture and installation of information lightboards at all border crossings between Slovakia and Ukraine. It printed and distributed the first batch of “Temporary Refuge” information leaflets for Ukrainian refugees, containing the basic information about the movement and stay within Slovakia and the EU, as well as on how to seek assistance, accommodation, psychological support, etc. It helped to distribute all printed materials prepared by individual ministries, such as “Don’t fall Victim to Human Traffickers” or “Road Network in Slovakia”. We have pushed forward the establishment of a Communication Group that functions within the Ministry of the Interior under the command of the Bratislava Crisis Staff, specialising in communication with Ukrainian refugees as well as with Slovak residents. Culture Ministry communication experts have prepared newsletters for local governments, district offices and the police to improve the distributions of information materials to Ukrainians who are already staying in Slovakia.

The ministry allocated two of its accommodation facilities to accommodate Ukrainian refugees and all ministry-run organisations, within their capacities, provided accommodation with meals in their premises, e.g., in the form of 1 or 2 rooms in a museum, gallery or theatre. Accommodation is provided mainly to cultural professionals and their families, as the ministry also seeks, as far as possible, to enable their inclusion through job offers in their professional domain, and children are provided education in their respective field of study (ballet, dance, music, etc.).

The ministry has provided accommodation to around 90 children from Kharkiv and Kyiv dance conservatories, accompanied by their teachers and parents; some of them enrolled in the Eva Jaczová Dance Conservatory in Bratislava. The ministry has also accommodated other young musical and artistic talents who now attend Slovak primary and secondary schools and basic arts schools. It currently provides assistance to more than 200 persons, including accommodation, meals, financial support, health care and support in search for jobs and schools.

On its pomahamekulture.sk website, the Culture Ministry has launched the “Culture Helps Ukraine” subpage that contains information about ongoing initiatives to support Ukraine carried out by cultural and creative industry actors. They include, for example, donation campaigns, cultural events and other forms of expressing solidarity with Ukrainian refugees and displaced persons.

At an informal meeting of EU Member States’ culture ministers in Angers, the Slovak ambassador speaking on behalf of the Slovak minister of culture called upon the participants to be more responsive to accepting Ukrainian artists and cultural professionals in their countries.

On 16 March 2022, Slovakia supported the UNESCO Executive Board decision to condemn the aggression of the Russian Federation with the help from Belarus against Ukraine, including the request that Russia immediately ceased its offensive against Ukraine in order to stop further attacks against civilians and ensure the protection of Ukrainian cultural heritage in all its forms against further damage and destruction.

On the same date, the culture minister’s advisory body – the Council for Safeguarding Intangible Cultural Heritage – discussed possible ways to save Ukraine’s intangible cultural heritage, including by storing digitised elements of intangible cultural heritage in Slovakia.

The ministry has prepared a crisis plan on the transfer of articles of cultural value/art collection articles from Ukraine, their transport, and identification of premises for their safe storage in Slovakia. In the context of the protection of cultural heritage of Ukraine, the ministry has prepared a document for the Government entitled “Proposal for allocation of financial resources to cover the expenditure of the Ministry of Culture of the Slovak Republic in connection with preventive protection of Slovakia’s cultural heritage and assistance in protecting the collections and art collection articles of Ukraine”. The proposal covers the costs of production of “BLUE SHIELD” sheets, shields and badges, expenditure on the safe storage and transport of collections, and expenditure on packaging and protective materials to be supplied to cultural institutions in Ukraine in order to evacuate collections and cultural articles from hazardous zones.

In these extraordinary circumstances, the ministry has also focused on the protection of national cultural sites in Slovakia and prepared a crisis list of national cultural heritage to be protected by the “BLUE SHIELD” emblem of the International Committee of the Blue Shield (ICBS) which includes approximately 300 selected objects. The proposal has also been consulted with the Ministry of Defence of the Slovak Republic in terms of national security and protection of national cultural heritage, and incorporated in the defence ministry’s internal standards. The Blue Shield emblem will protect individual cultural heritage sites as well as their personnel.

In collaboration with the University Library in Bratislava, the Culture Ministry has drawn up an emergency plan for safeguarding Slovak collections and cultural heritage items, digital data of the Central Data Archive (CDA), their backups and potential transport to depositories; for this purpose, protective transport cases have been purchased and storage premises selected. In addition, the University Library has offered a long-term archiving of digital audio and video recordings of performances by Ukrainian artists in the Central Data Archive.

The Culture Ministry has requested museums, galleries and libraries to join an initiative aimed at organising exhibitions and performances for Ukrainian refugees and displaced persons as a free service. These institutions have provided premises and technical equipment, as well as cooperation with psychologists, consultation services in various areas, e.g., information, education, etc., as necessary. Libraries, for example, have prepared the “Ukrainian Books in Libraries” project for children, arranged for their translation, and provided their premises for children to spend their free time in libraries.

**SĽUK**, the Slovak State Traditional Dance Company, contacted its Ukrainian partner – the Pavlo Virsky Ukrainian National Folk Dance Ensemble in Kyiv – with an offer to evacuate and store their musical instruments and folk costumes. The offer has not been utilised yet.

Children from Ukrainian dance schools can attend ballet lessons in the SĽUK premises. Two last-grade students from a Kyiv conservatory attend dance training together with the SĽUK dance ensemble. Nearly fifty children from three Ukrainian conservatories continue their dance training in Slovakia.

SĽUK is preparing performances for children, workshops, presentation of traditional Ukrainian cuisine and “Ukrainian Yard” for children from Ukrainian dance conservatories and schools as part of the Children’s Day in SĽUK event to be held on 28 May 2022 in cooperation with the Rusovce municipality and the Centre for Folk Art Production (ÚĽUV).

**ÚĽUV**’s activities so far:

1. In cooperation with Mrs. Panáková of the Institute of Ethnology and Social Anthropology of the Slovak Academy of Sciences who is in regular contact with the Ukrainian community in Slovakia, ÚĽUV organised the “Easter with Ukraine” event including presentations of traditional Slovak Easter egg decorating techniques, presentations of Easter egg decorating techniques used in Ukraine and creative workshops for Ukrainian women and children. Unfortunately, out of the large number of registered Ukrainian women and children, no one attended the event.
2. ÚĽUV provided accommodation to two Ukrainian female refugees with two children in their premises; the children now attend our pottery course for children.
3. The Museum of Folk Art Production organised an excursion for Slovak and Ukrainian students of the Academy of Fine Arts and Design (AFAD) in Bratislava.
4. ÚĽUV prepared a job offer for the manufacture of traditional products in the ÚĽUV’s portfolio (textile dolls, place mats, wooden figures, etc.) with which we have approached the AFAD’s Studio of Fibre Art to participate in the manufacture of selected products of Ukrainian students. The final form of cooperation is currently being discussed.
5. Through its Regional Craft Centre in Košice, ÚĽUV approached a contact person of the Ukrainian community in Košice who provides assistance to refugees under the auspices of Košice’s Old Town authority. Upon consultations, we offered to organise creative workshops and/or short courses mainly for Ukrainian children and their mothers – organised groups. The offer also benefits from the fact that the workshops could be led by ÚĽUV lecturer Mrs. Grešlíková, a born Ukrainian, which would remove the language barrier. The offer received a very positive response, but no feedback has been provided so far.
6. At the request of a Prešov University teacher, the Regional Craft Centre in Košice sought possibilities for a Ukrainian student, finishing her studies at a university in Ukraine, to prepare her graduation work. She is finishing her pottery and cultural management study programme, and the assignment for her graduation work is to craft and decorate six large-sized plates (70 cm in diameter) in line with the assignment. Our craftsmen and lecturers helped to find a pottery workshop (Mr. Macák from Košice) and a kiln of sufficient size (Mr. Lipaj from Michalovce). We have no feedback from the student so far.
7. Exhibitions in the ÚĽUV Gallery in Bratislava and Košice visited by several Ukrainian women with children.

Further activities planned by ÚĽUV for and with Ukrainian refugees.

1. On 7 June 2022, ÚĽUV will open the “Medium Textile” exhibition in its gallery premises at Dobrovičova 13 in Bratislava, to present the textile as a multifaceted medium, showcasing its experimental and exclusively artistic forms in the work of two students from the AFAD’s textile department. One of the exhibiting authors is Diana Bilichenko from Ukraine who will present her final thesis research work – plant-based textiles.
2. The “ÚĽUV Craftsmen Days 2022”, an event showcasing the traditional folk arts and crats of Slovak craftsmen, will traditionally be held during the first weekend of September. This year, Ukrainian craftsmen have also been offered an opportunity to present and sell their traditional products. Traditional Ukrainian cuisine will be presented in the food zone, too.
3. The Regional Craft Centre in Banská Bystrica prepares a survey to find if any Ukrainian traditional craftsmen are living in the city and its vicinity with whom it could establish targeted cooperation aimed at preserving their intangible cultural heritage.
4. A cultural programme is planned to be performed as part of the traditional *Radvanský jarmok* craft fair for the community of Ukrainian refugees and displaced persons temporarily residing in Banská Bystrica.
5. As part of its Open Day event programme, the Regional Craft Centre in Košice plans to create room for the presentation of Ukrainian culture – a small exhibition, lecture – presentation of intangible cultural heritage, creative workshops – in cooperation with craftsmen from Ukraine.
6. The Days of Ukraine 2022 are scheduled to be held between 22 and 29 September in Košice, where we intend to offer and establish cooperation with the organiser in order to seek shared areas of interest, or to establish cooperation with Ukrainian craftswomen who live in and around Košice.

The Slovak Monuments Board will organise and participate in a project to be held in July 2022 in Slovakia under the auspices of the Expert Working Group on Cultural Heritage of the Visegrad Group countries entitled “V4 Heritage Academy – Summer School of Management of UNESCO World Cultural Heritage Sites in Visegrad Countries.” The programme of the V4 Heritage Academy will focus on the crisis management and protection of cultural values in crises and emergencies, including military conflicts.

**The State Research Library in Prešov** has examined the situation in terms of possible activities to provide assistance in the city of Prešov and its surroundings and contacted third parties in order to find out the needs and requirements of people fleeing from Ukraine to Slovakia due to the war. We have tried to identify what kind of support people coming from Ukraine need and how our institution can help.

We found that the third parties, such as first-contact points, regional and local authorities, the City of Prešov and non-government organisation, deliver social inclusion services and provide basic information for people coming from Ukraine to Slovakia to be able to navigate through the methods and types of support and assistance available in Slovakia. These institutions provide guidance and official information in the form of FAQs in Ukrainian, Slovak and English, information about temporary refuge, accommodation and job opportunities, practical information on what to do after arriving in Slovakia; some of them also provide psychological and social support, children’s corners, assistance when visiting authorities, physicians, immigration police, help to find jobs or schools for children, etc.

They now need mainly accommodation capacities, in-kind donations, meals, medical equipment, hygienic products and financial assistance, which the State Research Library in Prešov cannot procure and provide. Library employees as private individuals contribute to various fundraisers organised in Prešov and provide various support and assistance, including funds, food, hygienic products and clothing.

The State Research Library in Prešov has extensive experience with providing library and information services to users from Ukraine as the number of Ukrainian students at the University of Prešov has significantly increased in the recent years. They are registered as users in the State Research Library in Prešov and regularly use its library and information services.

The library has set new objectives and decided to expand its offer of library and information services for Ukrainian citizens who had to flee their country due to the ongoing war and have applied for a temporary refuge status in Slovakia with the following services:

* free registration and access to the library;
* access to the Internet in study halls and a reading room in the library;
* scanning and copying of personal and other important documents;
* book and document lending.

The State Research Library in Prešov has also joined the activities of the *Fond na podporu umenia* (FPU)(the Slovak Arts Council) as a sponsor for implementation and representation of individual projects under an extraordinary FPU call – Art in Exile – intended for artists and cultural professionals who were forced to leave Ukraine due to the war or who face persecution for their opposition to the Russian aggression in other countries. The library is registered with the FPU as an organisation with a year-round engagement in arts and/or culture and will supervise and guarantee the implementation of individual projects and ensure their subsequent public presentation. Financial support to projects will be provided from the FPU exclusively in the form of stipends for 2 to 6 months.Ukrainian artists may apply for grants in the area of drama, dance, music, visual arts, literature, and research projects. In order to be eligible to apply, they must present an acceptance letter from a registered organisation with a year-round engagement in arts and/or culture.

**Summary:**

**The Culture Ministry** has prepared a comprehensive integration programme for displaced artists/cultural professionals (currently about 200 people). The ministry has adopted the following measures in cooperation with state institutions, independent culture, foundations and NGOs:

• accommodation and meals in temporary housing facilities and institutions (chateau in Budmerice and the Červený Kameň castle);

• personal assistance 24/7 – one employee lives with them and is in regular contact from 14 March 2022;

• an introductory lecture on Slovakia’s social security system – health care insurance, social insurance, pension system, etc.;

• basic humanitarian aid – clothing, footwear, meals and food; hygienic products, school supplies;

• provision of complete ballet gear (financed by donors), provision of musical instruments – contrabass, piano, etc. (in cooperation with the Culture Ministry institutions);

• provision of ballet halls in SĽUK and SND (the Slovak National Theatre), including regular shuttle bus transport (cooperation with SĽUK, SND and Lúčnica);

• organising the submission of a collective application for DISPLACED PERSON status in Nitra and Bratislava, including transport (cooperation with the Migration Office, the Central Office of Labour, Social Affairs and Family, and SĽUK);

• assistance with the completion of an application for minimum subsistence allowance in cooperation with the Central Office of Labour, Social Affairs and Family;

• assistance and support with arranging for guardianship based on powers of attorney from families (cooperation with district courts and the Central Office of Labour, Social Affairs and Family);

• the Culture Ministry in cooperation with NGOs organised a goods collection in aid for families from Ukraine – suitcases, kitchen equipment, bed linen;

• Slovak language teaching publications – *First aid with Slovak, practical dictionary (Russian-Slovak, Slovak-Russian – Lingea*);

• free medical check-ups at a paediatrist and procuring medical certificates necessary for work and school;

• ensuring transport and accompanying Ukrainian refugees to doctors/hospitals in case of accidents and other illnesses requiring urgent care;

• free-of-charge setup of SIM cards with a Slovak phone number;

• free-of-charge opening of bank accounts and pre-preparation for health care insurance;

• provision of daily personal transport from accommodation facilities to conservatories and back;

• regular free-of-charge psychological support in the Ukrainian language and art therapy provided in cooperation with experts;

• assistance with writing CVs, registration at the profesia.sk website and graphical design of CVs;

• assistance and support in seeking jobs and part-time jobs for students (procuring the necessary documents, proof-reading/reviewing emails, etc.);

• ensuring personal transport to view apartments to rent in Bratislava (approx. eight a day);

• free-of-charge accommodation in the ministry’s own apartments in Bratislava for 12 months;

• general apartment furnishings (furniture, household appliances, kitchen equipment and utilities, bed linen, detergents and cleaning products, brooms, mops, dryers, irons, …);

• personal assistance with moving into apartments in Bratislava;

• starting kits containing foodstuff and hygienic products – on the first day of arrival to an apartment;

• basic information provided individually to each family according to the apartment location – information about transport to SĽUK, SND, a list of nearby schools, pharmacies, stores, etc.;

• free-of-charge setup of Internet connection and wi-fi network in households;

• obtaining a financial donation from a foundation that will primarily be used to cover the wages of pedagogues from Kharkiv and Kyiv;

• organising regular humanitarian aid and material assistance at the Culture Ministry;

• providing IT equipment/devices for children to continue with online classes;

• organising regular visits to cultural events – commented tours of the Červený Kameň castle, theatrical performances *Alice in Wonderland* (the Červený Kameň castle), *Cavalleria rusticana/Pagliacci* (SND Opera), *Rusalka* (SND Opera), *Manuscripts of the Masters* (SND Ballet, premiere), Bratislava book festival BRaK, etc.

Prepared by: Mgr. Jaroslava Balažovičová, senior state advisor; crisis management, national security and classified information department, Ministry of Culture of the Slovak Republic