

## Udice 2023 Forum

### Round table summary

#### **Round Table 2 *From urgent response to crisis to reconstruction. Lessons learned and new challenges in Ukraine and beyond***

The second round table, moderated by Irini Tsamadou-Jacobberger, Vice-President International at the University of Strasbourg, focused on crisis response and the challenge of post-crisis reconstruction in Ukraine and beyond.

The various speakers discussed the following questions: What conclusions can be drawn from welcoming Ukrainian refugees to our universities? How can we better prepare for future crises? Were the programs set up to welcome Ukrainian refugees adapted to their needs? While the conflict continues, how can we avoid a brain drain and help rebuild Ukrainian scientific and academic capacity?

The round table was introduced by Pierre Heilbronn, the French President's special Envoy for aid and reconstruction in Ukraine. He underlined the devastating impact of the war on certain Ukrainian university and scientific infrastructures, and recalled the major European solidarity effort in welcoming refugees at the start of the conflict, from which a large number of students and academics benefited. He stressed the importance of the higher education and research sector in the country's future reconstruction. Ukraine has excellent research capabilities in science, engineering, agriculture and the social sciences, and is renowned for the quality of its training. The Ukrainian crisis is also an opportunity to rethink France's involvement in scientific cooperation with Eastern Europe.

One of the highlights of the round-table discussion was the testimony of Volodymyr Bugrov, Rector of Taras Shevchenko University in Kiev. He gave a very concrete and poignant illustration of the destruction and disruption suffered by universities during the Russian attack, but also of the resilience shown by the Ukrainian academic sector in responding to a critical situation.

Several solidarity mechanisms implemented by French players were presented: the PAUSE program for hosting scientists and artists, the actions taken by the Campus France agency to meet the needs of Ukrainian students wishing to join a French institution, and the measures put in place by the Cité Universitaire Internationale de Paris.

The major role played by Poland in welcoming Ukrainian refugees was also highlighted.

Discussions on the prospects for rebuilding Ukraine and its higher education system brought out the following conclusions:

It is imperative to avoid brain drain and to contribute to the return to Ukraine of the refugees welcomed in our establishments, whose skills will be indispensable to the country's reconstruction.

International cooperation initiatives have already been set up, notably with neighboring Eastern European countries as part of university networks offering virtual mobility programs.

Given the uncertainties surrounding the duration and outcome of the conflict, a gradual approach is preferable. In the medium term, the aim is to create the right conditions for reconstruction, through cooperative actions such as thesis co-supervision or joint degrees.