

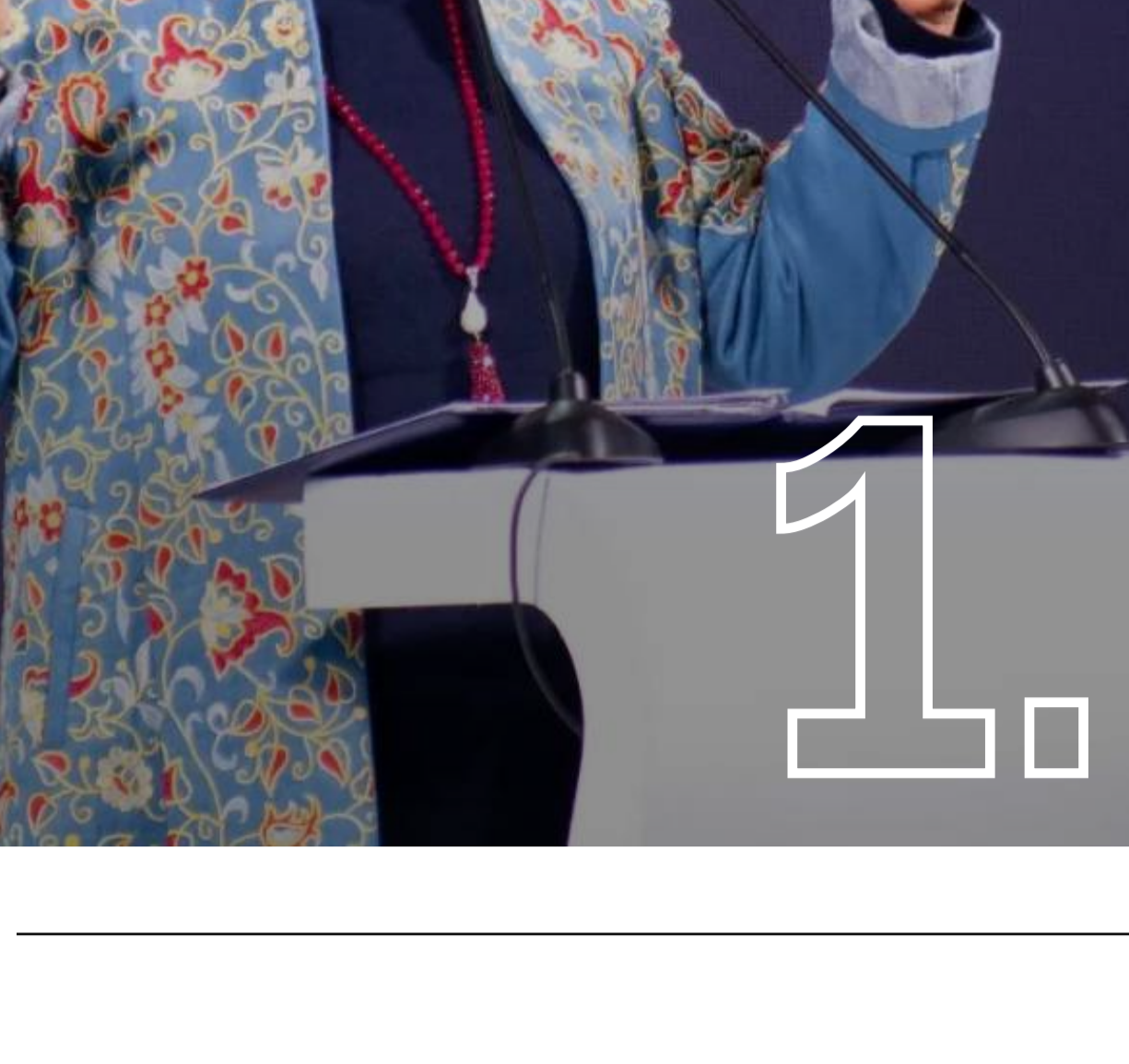
# EU-Ukraine: Responding to Challenges Together

Media Digest, December 2024



The latest issue of Media Digest features publications on the key events of December reflecting the condition and prospects of EU-Ukraine relations.

## Top 3



### Katarina Mathernová: Civil society is a source of unbelievable strength and resilience

European Union Ambassador to Ukraine Katarina Mathernová announced two major support programmes for Ukraine, together worth €25 million. Of this, €15 million will support the capacity of small NGOs in communities across Ukraine for the next three years. An additional €10 million will support civil society work on EU integration. Katarina Mathernová made her announcement at the opening of 'we)STAND', the XIII Civil Society Development Forum. "Volunteering lies at the heart of civil society in Ukraine. I am proud that, with EU funding, smaller local organisations will continue their critical work for Ukraine's victory and our shared European future," said EU Ambassador Mathernová.

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### Kaja Kallas: "The European Union wants Ukraine to win this war. We will do everything in our power to achieve that."

On 1 December, the first day of the new European Commission's work, Antonio Costa (President of the European Council), Kaja Kallas (EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy) and Marta Kos (European Commissioner for Enlargement) visited Ukraine. Antonio Costa assured that the EU will continue to provide economic, humanitarian, and military assistance to Ukraine and will open two negotiation clusters with Ukraine on accession in the first half of 2025. "Ukraine can count on unwavering and strong support from Europe on its path to freedom, peace, and a fully European future," emphasised Marta Kos.

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### EU Council commends Ukraine's EU integration reforms

In the EU enlargement conclusions adopted on 17 December, the Council of the European Union commended Ukraine's commitment to the reform process and reaffirmed its unwavering support for Ukraine on its path to joining the European Union. The document states that the EU Council supports Ukraine's reform efforts and the formal opening of accession negotiations with Ukraine in June 2024. It also acknowledges the significant progress in reforms achieved over the past year, despite the extraordinary challenges caused by Russia's full-scale war.

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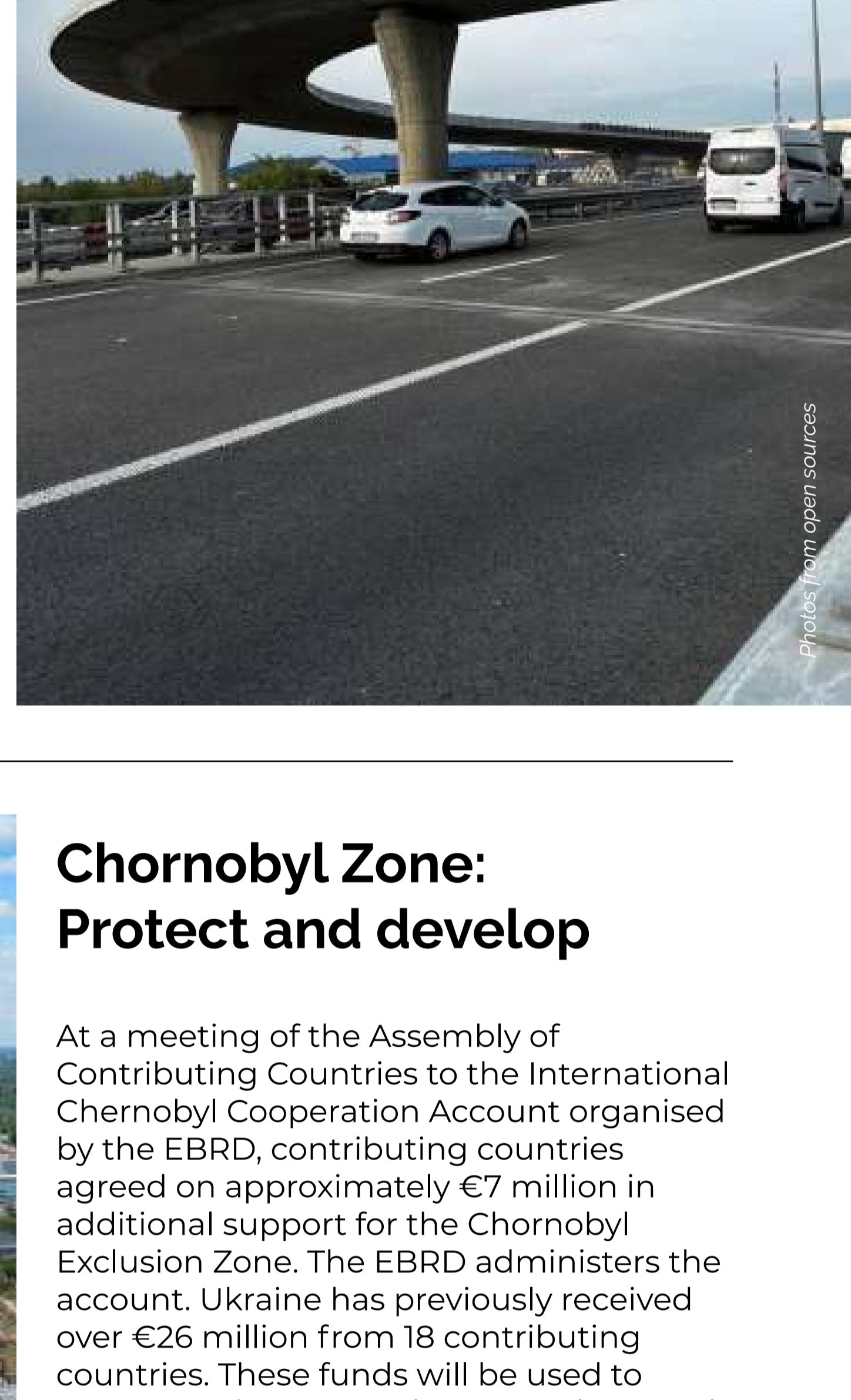
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### ECONOMY, FINANCE, BUSINESS

#### Strengthening 'Solidarity Lanes'

The European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD) has reallocated part of its existing sovereign loan to the State Agency for Restoration and Development of Infrastructure of Ukraine, directing €267 million to fund emergency repairs on sections of the M-06 road heading west from Kyiv towards the Slovak and Hungarian borders, which is overloaded due to the war. The road repairs will enhance existing transport links between Ukraine and its EU neighbours, improve internal logistics by reducing freight costs, and facilitate the export and import of critical goods within the 'Solidarity Lanes' initiative. A second tranche of €160 million will be used to improve road safety and reduce the negative impact on the climate in the Kyiv, Rivne, and Zhytomyr Oblasts.

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#### Chornobyl Zone: Protect and develop

At a meeting of the Assembly of Contributing Countries to the International Chernobyl Cooperation Account organised by the EBRD, contributing countries agreed on approximately €7 million in additional support for the Chernobyl Exclusion Zone. The EBRD administers the account. Ukraine has previously received over €26 million from 18 contributing countries. These funds will be used to restore equipment and systems damaged during the Russian occupation, for nuclear and radiation safety projects at the Chernobyl Nuclear Power Plant, and for other purposes.

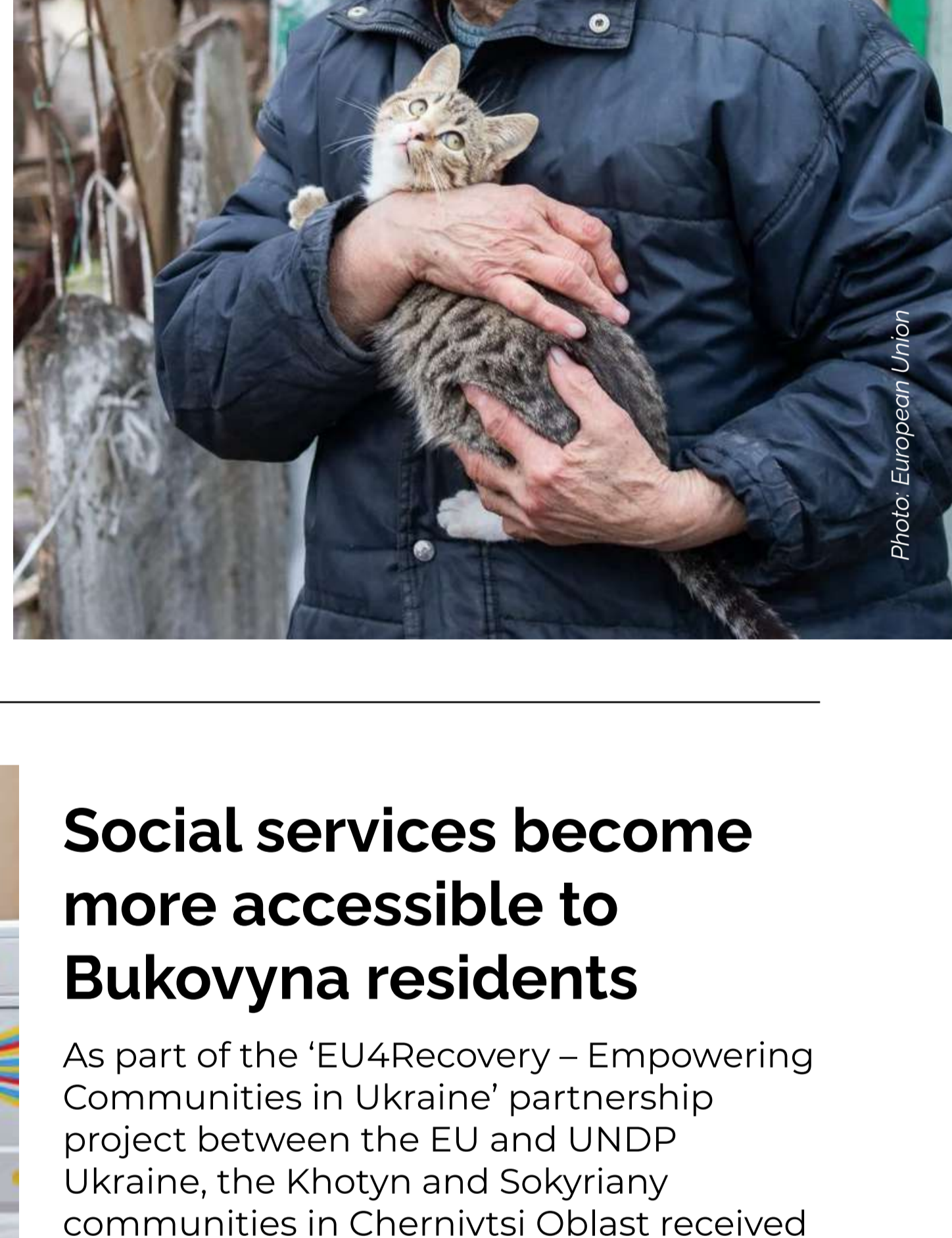
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### HUMANITARIAN AID AND SOCIAL SUPPORT

#### Overcoming winter: EU provides additional funding to help the most vulnerable

With winter approaching, the EU has allocated an additional €26.4 million to Ukraine to support a vital winter response programme implemented by the UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR) across the country. This timely contribution complements the €175 million the EU has already provided to UNHCR's operations in Ukraine in 2024, as well as the €4 million in financial support to UNHCR for Ukrainian refugees in Moldova.

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#### Social services become more accessible to Bukovyna residents

As part of the 'EU4Recovery – Empowering Communities in Ukraine' partnership project between the EU and UNDP Ukraine, the Khotyn and Sokyriany communities in Chernivtsi Oblast received two specialised vehicles to provide 'Care at Home' and 'In-Kind Assistance' social services. The mobile social service units will be able to provide quicker initial paramedical examinations at the place of residence, hygiene and hairdressing services, and assistance with household issues. The vehicles are equipped with tools to help people with disabilities, older people, and people with limited mobility in remote areas.

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### GOOD GOVERNANCE

#### Twelve Ukrainian cities join SUN4Ukraine initiative

SUN4Ukraine empowers Ukrainian cities to seamlessly integrate Climate Neutrality Plans into their recovery strategies, paving the way for sustainable and resilient urban development. A total of 105 Ukrainian municipalities of all sizes have expressed interest in taking part in the SUN4Ukraine initiative, with the aim of becoming climate-neutral by 2050 at the latest. The 12 Flagship Municipalities were selected among the 33 applications from cities with over 50,000 inhabitants that also expressed an interest in developing city-wide and cross-sectoral Climate Neutrality Plans for the period up to 2050.

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#### Ternopil open EcoHub: A place for developing ideas in green economy and technology

Open Space Ternopil hosted the 'GoGreen Ternopil: Creative Journey' launch event, marking the opening of the city's first EcoHub. In 2021, Ternopil became one of the winners of the Portfolio Approach to Municipal Transformation competition, funded by the European Union through the M4EG Facility and implemented by the UNDP. "Ternopil is becoming even greener and more comfortable," emphasised Ternopil Mayor Serhiy Nadal. "EcoHub will become a centre for ideas and innovations that will make our city even better."

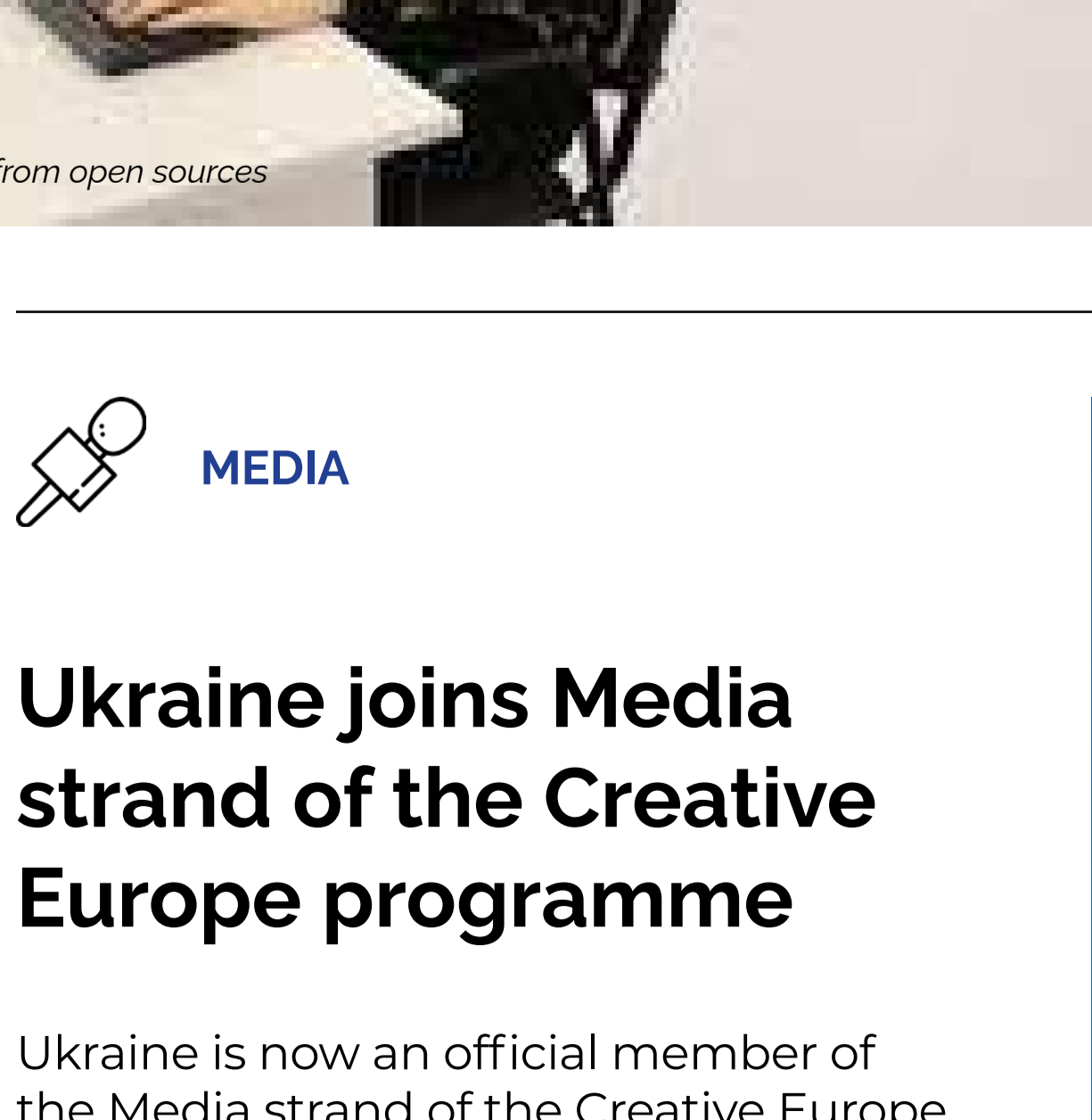
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### EDUCATION, SCIENCE, CULTURE

#### EIB allocates over €13 million to renovate Ukrainian universities

The European Investment Bank (EIB), together with the EU Delegation to Ukraine and other partners, is working to strengthen the resilience of the country's education sector. The EIB is providing €10 million from its Emergency Solidarity Package, backed by EU guarantees, to improve the energy efficiency of Ukrainian universities in 16 cities. Another six universities are receiving grant support from the Eastern Europe Energy Efficiency and Environment Partnership (ESP) multi-donor fund, which recently allocated €3.25 million to accelerate renovations.

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#### EU supports modernisation of vocational education in Ukraine

The European Union has allocated over €615,000 to renovate and modernise Higher Vocational School No. 19 in Drohobych. Future IT and beauty industry specialists will study in new computer labs, workshops, and laboratories with state-of-the-art technology and equipment, as well as live in comfortable conditions. The European Union consistently and systematically supports Ukrainian education and youth. Since Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine, EU aid has totalled over €200 million.

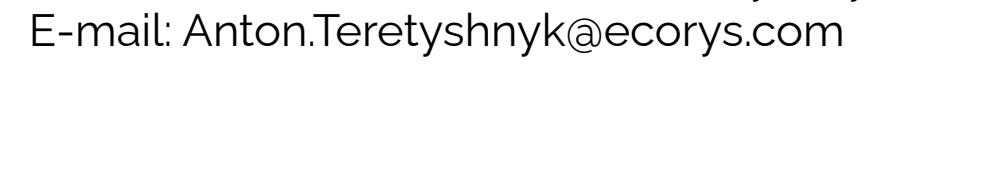
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### MEDIA

#### Ukraine joins Media strand of the Creative Europe programme

Ukraine is now an official member of the Media strand of the Creative Europe programme. The agreement between the EU and Ukraine was signed in Brussels by Henna Virkkunen (European Commission Executive Vice-President for Tech Sovereignty, Security and Democracy) and Olha Stefanishyna (Deputy Prime Minister of Ukraine). Previously, as an associated country, Ukraine participated in the Culture and Cross-sectoral Cooperation sub-programmes of Creative Europe. Now, Ukrainian organisations will be full participants in all Creative Europe sub-programmes.

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The media digest was prepared by the EU project 'Communicating EU for Ukrainians CEU4U.'

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