

Women's Policy Group NI

Northern Ireland Members of Parliament
House of Commons
London

March 2nd, 2022

Dear Northern Ireland Members of Parliament,

I am writing on behalf of the Women's Policy Group NI with urgent concern about provision for refugees fleeing Ukraine due to life-threatening invasion and occupation by Russia. We strongly believe that the United Kingdom has an obligation to meet the humanitarian needs caused by this crisis and to provide safety for our Ukrainian sisters and brothers forced from their homes by this aggression. Northern Ireland knows the devastating impacts of armed conflict, and it is our obligation, our duty, and our privilege to support those who are now in danger.

We ask that you please put forward the following questions to the House of Commons:

- 1) Are the Home Office and UK Government working to remove the requirement for family members to make an in-person application for EU Settlement Scheme family permits for EU/EEA nationals at UK visa centres, since none can be safely accessed in Ukraine?
- 2) Can an expedited process be introduced for family members of EU/EEA Nationals awaiting decisions on applications to the EU Settlement Scheme, to match the announced introduction of an expedited decision-making process for family members of UK nationals?

- 3) Can eligibility to apply for EU Settlement Scheme Family Permits be extended to all dependent relatives, including siblings or other family members, where dependency can be demonstrated to the extent that is safely possible at this time?
- 4) Has any consideration been given to the unique position of Northern Ireland to accept and accommodate refugees from Ukraine, considering that the Republic of Ireland has lifted all visa requirements and there is no hard border between the two nations?

We hope that, as an MP representing the people of Northern Ireland who has consistently advocated for the dignity of our communities, you will raise these questions about the ability of the UK and Northern Ireland to accommodate refugees fleeing Ukraine and support those who can claim status they are entitled to under the EU Settlement Scheme.

Please advocate for those who need it most. Please advocate for those escaping violence, conflict, and war. We are ready to support those who find safety and refuge here.

Kind regards,

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