Since the beginning of 2014, the population of Eastern Ukraine has had to live with armed conflict between Ukrainian forces and pro-Russian separatists. Around four million Ukrainians are affected by the conflict; more than 1.5 million people have fled their homes.

The resources of the Ukrainian municipalities and communities have been and still are overstretched in trying to host and care for these people. The provision of public services in particular has been very inadequate in the past. This includes the protection of the population and the provision of supplies and services in the event of an emergency, for which the State Emergency Service of Ukraine (SESU) – which includes the fire service as well as the disaster relief and rescue services – and the Ukrainian Red Cross, are responsible.

A shortage of funds, obsolete organisational structures, and outdated and defective technical equipment have led to rescue workers often being unable to respond quickly enough, resulting in a high number of casualties. In addition, rescue workers themselves have been exposed to high risks during rescue operations due to a lack of adequate protective equipment such as helmets, safety shoes and breathing apparatus.

The Ukrainian emergency management warehouses and storage systems were also outdated: At the beginning of the crisis in eastern Ukraine, it was difficult to procure, store and distribute relief supplies and to maintain the drinking water and power supply in the settlements for internally displaced persons (IDPs).

The Ukrainian emergency management personnel protect the population effectively using modern equipment and new know-how.

**Effective emergency preparedness**

**Ukrainian emergency management personnel protect the population effectively using modern equipment and new know-how**

**The challenge:**
**Inadequate protection in emergencies**

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**Our approach:**
**Equipping rescue workers for emergencies**

In 2015, the German Government launched the “Initiatives of the Infrastructure Programme for Ukraine (IIPU)” to help municipalities and communities in Eastern Ukraine deal with the consequences of the conflict. In the context of this programme, GIZ is supporting the key actors of Ukraine’s emergency management system, particularly in Kyiv, in the regions Dnipropetrovsk, Kharkiv and Zaporizhia and in the areas of the Luhansk and Donetsk regions controlled by the Ukrainian Government. A large number of IDPs were seeking shelter in the villages and towns in these regions. Like the resident population, they benefit from the improved capacity of SESU and the Ukrainian Red Cross.
We received today modern protective firefighting uniforms that enable us to perform our duties of extinguishing and fighting fires fast and efficiently. We also acquired new helmets and firefighting footwear – protective equipment essential for our daily work. Built in 1970, our fire rescue station no longer met modern requirements. Now it is renovated and has new ventilation and heating systems, making it possible for us to respond quickly to emergency calls and to perform our duties professionally.

Ukraine’s emergency management system has great potential: the rescue workers are motivated and able to work under considerable pressure. GIZ is harnessing this potential and organising training for them. German experts – mostly practitioners – from fire services and the Federal Office of Civil Protection and Disaster Assistance (BBK) are teaching Ukrainian staff modern rescue techniques, the proper use of new equipment and how to handle search and rescue dogs. In cooperation with the Ukrainian partners, the German trainers are developing viable new structures to help promote the current decentralisation process in Ukraine’s emergency management system: On the basis of international standards, procedures are being developed for civil protection and disaster relief and for cooperation with volunteers, for example. In addition, GIZ is equipping the emergency management services with ambulances, rescue vehicles and thousands of new items of equipment. These additional resources are increasing the effectiveness of emergency preparedness services, enabling them to provide effective emergency management and hence better protection for the entire population.

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