



EMPOWER UKRAINE

“Making the Human Dimension Future-Proof”

Ukraine Recovery Conference

24 June 2026

Side-Event co-organised by Empower Ukraine



NAPD
National Assembly of
People with Disabilities
of Ukraine



P F O N
POLSKIE FORUM OSÓB
Z NIEPEŁNOSPRAWNOŚCIAMI



THE LEAGUE
OF THE STRONG



EUROPEAN
DISABILITY
FORUM



EMPOWER UKRAINE
disability rights

Concept

Ukraine's recovery is not only about rebuilding infrastructure. It is about rebuilding human capital, restoring communities, strengthening resilience, and creating the conditions for long-term economic growth and stability.

As Ukraine advances on its EU accession pathway, recovery efforts present a unique opportunity to build a modern, future-oriented society aligned with European values and standards.

The human dimension of recovery will be critical to the country's long-term competitiveness, workforce participation, demographic resilience, and investment environment.

Millions of Ukrainians have been directly affected by the war, including veterans, displaced populations, women-led households, persons with disabilities, families facing new barriers to participation in society and the economy. At the same time, businesses, local authorities, and recovery actors are navigating challenges linked to labour shortages, reconstruction, service delivery, and community resilience.

Recovery efforts that place people at the centre deliver stronger and more sustainable outcomes. Future-proof recovery efforts will strengthen labour market participation, support return and reintegration, and improve investment sustainability.

Human-centred recovery must therefore be embedded across reconstruction planning, financing, infrastructure, governance, and service delivery. Investments made today will shape Ukraine's future workforce, competitiveness, and social cohesion for decades to come.

Future-proof recovery also creates significant opportunities for businesses and investors. Companies integrating accessibility, inclusive design, and user-centred approaches into reconstruction, infrastructure, housing, technology, transport, and service delivery will be better positioned to access emerging markets, strengthen workforce resilience, improve talent retention, align with evolving European standards, and deliver more sustainable long-term investments. Recovery solutions designed to meet the needs of Ukrainians will not only support social resilience, but also drive innovation, usability, and competitiveness across sectors.

This is particularly important for veteran reintegration, workforce recovery, and demographic resilience. Ukrainians will only return and reinvest in their communities if they can access housing, transport, employment, education, healthcare, and public services that enable full participation in society and the economy.

A recovery that is resilient, locally grounded, and future-oriented will be stronger, more competitive, and more sustainable. Investing in people is not only aligned with European values and international commitments. It is smart economics, good governance, and a strategic investment in Ukraine's long-term recovery and stability.

Let's not miss that chance.

Proponent	Side-Event co-organised by the European Disability Forum (EDF) with members and partners	
Event title	“Making the Human Dimension Future-Proof”	
Event description	<p>This side event brings together representatives from European institutions, Ukrainian stakeholders, business leaders, investors, and civil society to explore how human-centred and future-proof recovery approaches can strengthen Ukraine’s long-term economic resilience, competitiveness, and European future.</p> <p>The discussion will focus on practical solutions across workforce participation, veteran reintegration, infrastructure, housing, accessibility, digitalisation, and public services, highlighting how resilient and inclusive recovery models can support sustainable investment outcomes and stronger communities.</p> <p>Participants will exchange perspectives on how recovery efforts can help address labour shortages, strengthen workforce participation, support return and reintegration, improve service accessibility, and contribute to a stable and attractive investment environment aligned with EU standards and values.</p> <p>The session will also explore how businesses and investors can benefit from future-proof recovery approaches through stronger workforce resilience, improved talent retention, more sustainable infrastructure investments, and services designed to meet the needs of a changing population. Companies integrating accessibility, usability, and inclusive design into reconstruction, employment, housing, technology, and service delivery will be better positioned to contribute to resilient growth, align with evolving European standards, and support long-term economic recovery.</p> <p>Join us to explore how investing in people, alongside infrastructure and business recovery, can help build a stronger, more competitive, and future-oriented Ukraine.</p>	
Dimension	<input type="checkbox"/> 1. Business Dimension <input type="checkbox"/> 3. Local and Regional Dimension <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 2. Human Dimension <input type="checkbox"/> 4. EU Reform Dimension	
Date & Time	24 June, 15h00 - 16h30 CET (Panel 90 minutes) followed by networking and cocktails till +-18h00.	
Location	Grano Old Town Hotel , Address: Pszenna 3, 80-749 Gdańsk, Poland	
Programme		<p>Welcome</p> <p>Keynote Speech: The Role of Business in Advancing Human Rights for Ukraine’s Accession</p> <p>European Commission DG ENEST</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Marta Kos (TBC) <p>European Commissioner for Enlargement Marta Kos is the European Commissioner for Enlargement, leading the European Union’s engagement with candidate countries and overseeing one of the EU’s most strategically important policy portfolios. With extensive diplomatic and political experience, including as Slovenia’s Ambassador to Germany and Switzerland, she plays a central role in shaping Europe’s future through enlargement, democratic reform, regional stability, and international cooperation.</p> <p>(15-20 minutes)</p>

Panel Discussion: Perspectives on Future-Proofing Ukraine's Recovery: Inclusion, Investment, and Growth



• Alessandra Locatelli (TBC)
Minister for Disabilities, Italy
Alessandra Locatelli is the Italian Minister for Disabilities and a prominent political leader driving national policies on inclusion, social innovation, and workforce participation. She has played a leading role in advancing accessibility and inclusive public policy within Italy, positioning these issues as central to economic resilience, demographic sustainability, and long-term social development across Europe.



• Dmytro Lubinets
Ukrainian Parliament Commissioner for Human Rights
Dmytro Lubinets is Ukraine's Human Rights Commissioner and one of the country's most internationally recognised institutional figures during the war and reconstruction period. He has led major initiatives on civilian protection, accountability, and international cooperation, working closely with governments, multilateral organisations, and global stakeholders engaged in Ukraine's recovery and future development.



• Mariia Levchenko
CBM International and Luxembourg Peace Prize Laureate
Mariia Levchenko is an internationally recognised expert in inclusive humanitarian action, reconstruction, and social impact leadership. As a Luxembourg Peace Prize laureate and representative of [CBM International](#), she has contributed to high-level international discussions on resilience, inclusive recovery, and cross-sector partnerships supporting sustainable development in conflict-affected contexts.



• Gunta Anca
President, [European Disability Forum](#)
Gunta Anca is President of the European Disability Forum, representing the interests of over 100 million persons with disabilities across Europe. A respected leader within European policy circles, she has been instrumental in advancing EU-level dialogue on accessibility, inclusive growth, and equal participation, engaging with institutions, businesses, and civil society to shape more inclusive economic and social policies.



• Debra Ruh
Founder and CEO, [Ruh Global IMPACT](#)
Debra Ruh is an internationally recognised business leader, technology strategist, and global advocate for disability inclusion in the workforce and digital economy. Through partnerships with governments, corporations, and international organisations, her work has focused on accessible innovation, inclusive employment, and leveraging disability inclusion as a driver of economic growth and post-conflict recovery.

(35-40 minutes)

Interactive Q&A with Audience (20 minutes)

Closing & Call to Action

(Total duration: 60-90 minutes)

Comments and additional information	Additional information on Accessibility: <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Simultaneous Ukrainian/English/Polish interpretation online2. Sign language interpreters (on the basis of registration needs) + live captions (as per registration requests)3. Accessible venue & live stream tech4. One-page takeaway policy brief (distributed post-panel)
Contact person	European Disability Forum (EDF) with the Polish Disability Forum, National Assembly of Persons with Disabilities (Ukraine) and the League of the Strong (Ukraine), with CBM Italia. phillipa.tucker@edf-feph.org

