



CCI Europe 2023/2024 Ukraine Report

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Opening Remarks

Dear Members and Friends,

It has been three years since the start of the war in Ukraine. During this time, we have faced unprecedented challenges, which, as a united childhood cancer community across Europe and beyond, we have navigated together to support children and adolescents with cancer and their families throughout this ongoing conflict. We are deeply grateful to be part of this community with such dedicated and determined partners.

The war, which began in February 2022, has not only violently disrupted children's lives but has also brought unimaginable hardships for children facing cancer. The breakdown of medical services and the displacement of families have posed severe threats to their treatment and well-being. At CCI Europe, staying true to our mission, we responded to these events by joining forces with international partners to launch the “Supporting Action for Emergency Response in Ukraine (SAFER Ukraine)” initiative. This collaborative effort aimed to provide safe passage and continued care for these young patients amidst the chaos and uncertainty of war.

Through the collective dedication of organizations such as St. Jude Global, Tabletochki Charity Foundation and Herosi Foundation, and many others, a humanitarian corridor was established, which enabled the evacuation of over 1.700 childhood cancer patients and their families, ensuring their much-needed medical care in specialized centers across Europe.

Looking ahead, we remain unyielding in our mission to ensure that every child with cancer, regardless of their circumstances, has access to life-saving treatment and support. The SAFER Ukraine initiative has provided a model for responding to health crises¹, demonstrating the power of collaboration in global health.

We deeply appreciate your unwavering support, which has been instrumental in this journey of hope and solidarity. Together, we have made a meaningful difference in the lives of children with cancer in Ukraine and their families.

As we move forward, we invite you to stand with us in supporting those who need it most.

With gratitude,

Anita Kienesberger

Chair of CCI Europe Committee

¹As published on *The Lancet* under the title “Global effort to evacuate Ukrainian children with cancer and blood disorders who have been affected by war”. Access the paper at:

[https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lanhae/article/PIIS2352-3026\(22\)00259-9/abstract](https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lanhae/article/PIIS2352-3026(22)00259-9/abstract)



Introduction

Ukraine Response Overview - the start of an organised evacuation pathway and treatment and care plan: SAFER Ukraine

Right after the war in Ukraine started three years ago on February 24th, 2022, CCI Europe joined St. Jude Global, other member organisations in Ukraine, the Polish Society of Paediatric Oncology and Haematology (PSPOH), and an international network of hospitals and governments in creating a **Supporting Action for Emergency Response in Ukraine (SAFER Ukraine)**². SAFER Ukraine quickly became a large humanitarian effort, launched with the mission to aid Ukrainian children with cancer and blood disorders to continue their medical care, in Ukraine or abroad, through

international collaboration and capacity building.

This diverse collaboration, bringing together various areas of expertise with a shared sense of urgency and importance, enabled swift and effective decision-making, leading to remarkable support and assistance.

Since its launch in 2022, CCI Europe has been actively involved in the SAFER Ukraine collaborative by providing financial support for patient evacuations, family reunifications, and the repatriation to Ukraine of those children who sadly died abroad from their disease. Additionally, CCI Europe acts as connector between the SAFER Ukraine headquarter in Poland and national contact points in various European countries, to facilitate psychosocial support and finding solutions for families whenever needed.

To date, SAFER Ukraine facilitated the support for over 1.700 patients and their families in more than 20 countries.

² Partners: St. Jude Global, Childhood Cancer International, Childhood Cancer International – Europe, Daruieste Aripi (Romania), Daruieste Viata (Romania), Fundación Aladina (Spain), Fundacja Herosi (Poland), GPOH (Germany), Mother and Child Institute (Poland), Polish Society of Paediatric Oncology and Haematology, SEHOP (Spain), International Society of Paediatric Oncology, Solterre (Italy), Tabletochki Charity Foundation (Ukraine), Ukraine Air Rescue, Viața Fără Leucemie (Moldova), Western Ukrainian Specialized Children's Medical Centre



Recurring Meetings and Updates

To ensure efficient and rapid interventions, CCI Europe created an internal **Ukraine Task Force** to handle all incoming requests.

In 2023 and 2024, the Task Force met monthly to continuously discuss any situational changes, as well as possible local issues such as changes in legislation regarding national support to Ukrainian families, as well as local resources available to refugees and families in need.

Moreover, to ensure efficient communication and effective management of the day-to-day operations, CCI-E had bi-weekly to monthly liaison meetings with the SAFER Ukraine patients and family coordinator.

In addition to the internal Task Force, CCI Europe representatives also participated in the regular larger SAFER Ukraine Coordination Meetings.

CCI-E Ukraine Task Force Meetings 2023 and 2024

- Participants: CCI-E Chair of Committee, Anita Kienesberger; CCI-E Vice Chair, Luisa Basset; CCI-E Managing Director, Carina Schneider; CCI-E Committee Member and expert in cross-border health care, Anne Goeres.
- Frequency: Monthly
- Topics of discussion / Aims of meetings: Updates reg. past, ongoing and upcoming patient evacuations; discussion of issues for families/patients in the host countries and alignment with member organisations to find solutions; updates on reunification, repatriation and funding efforts.

CCI-E and SAFER Ukraine liaison meetings

- Participants: CCI-E Chair of Committee, Anita Kienesberger; CCCI-E Managing Director, Carina Schneider; CCI-E Operations Coordinator Serena Giacomini, SAFER Ukraine Patients' & Family Coordinator Inna Alanbousi.
- Frequency: Bi-weekly - monthly
- Topics of discussion / Aims of meetings: Information on upcoming patient evacuations, reunifications, repatriations; discussion of challenges for families/patients in the host countries and alignment with member organisations to find solutions; planning of development, translation and integration of new support materials and tools on the website.



SAFER Ukraine coordination meetings

Participants:	SAFER Ukraine partners. CCI-E representatives: Anita Kienesberger, Anne Goeres.
Frequency:	Monthly
Topics of discussion / Aims of meetings:	Regular updates on ongoing and upcoming cases including medical updates and discussion of best location for treatment; logistics and transportation; travels and family reunifications; updates from country organisations including changes in policies, governmental support available to refugees, and other information.



CCI-Europe's continuous work and support

During 2023 and 2024 CCI-E was actively involved in:

- Liaise between families currently outside Ukraine and local CCI-E member organisations;
- Support patients that needed relocations to a different country or facility for further treatment (either evacuation from Ukraine or relocations within Europe);
- Financing family reunifications;
- Financing repatriations to Ukraine of those children and adolescents who died abroad due to their disease;
- Participate in working groups on Psychosocial Services Mapping & Language and Interpretation Toolbox.

Patient Evacuations

At the beginning of 2023, the SAFER Ukraine triage centre in Poland had to reduce the medical evacuation transports and therefore asked CCI Europe to financially and logistically support with evacuating patients in stable health conditions through commercial flights.

This process continued throughout 2024.

Repatriations

Despite all efforts to ensure continuity of high-quality treatment and care in host countries across the European Union, some young patients tragically die during their cancer journey. Every single loss of a young cancer patient is a devastating trauma for the whole family, and most Ukrainian families wish to bury their children in their home country. Thanks to CCI Europe's Emergency Fund, the repatriation costs of these children and adolescents were financed in 2023 and 2024.

Family Reunifications

While in 2022 and in the first half of 2023, large efforts and financial contributions were made to reunite with additional family members (mostly siblings and grandmothers) from Ukraine to already displaced young patients and their mothers, these efforts slowed down significantly over the course of 2023 and in 2024. One of the main reasons for this is that because of the long ongoing war, many of the host countries quickly approached the limit of their capacities in terms of housing and accommodation to welcome additional family members or further refugees.

Care Packages

Additionally, a corporate sponsor supported Ukrainian families in some host countries by engaging its European employees in a donation activity: Launched during Gold September 2023, AIT Worldwide employees organized care packages that were sent to different locations in Europe. CCI Europe and its local member organisations coordinated the distribution to families in need.

More than 150 care packages were delivered to families Spain, France and the Netherlands.



Working Groups on Psychosocial Care

During the consortium meeting in Poland in July 2022, the need of creating working groups on psychosocial care has been highlighted.

The aim of these working groups is to collect resources and tools, create guidelines, and overall support children with cancer and their families in the transition from Ukraine to another country.

The two groups are working on:

- Psychosocial Services Mapping
- Language and Interpretation Toolbox

The goal of the groups is to collect useful resources or contacts from different countries to then share them with the families who had to be evacuated and thus provide additional support throughout these challenging times. In a joint approach it is decided where these resources can be best made accessible for our CCI Europe members and caretakers to support the families in the best possible way.

CCI-E representatives are collaborating in both working groups.

Outcomes

The outcomes of the Language and Interpretation Toolbox Working Group have been published as a set of resources openly available on **CCI Europe's website**: <https://ccieurope.eu/ukraine-resources/>. The target groups for these tools are families, patients and carers, but also health care professionals and anyone who might need them when dealing with cross-border health care or with a foreign language.

The page is regularly updated whenever new resources become available.

The PFAB: Patient and Family Advisory Board

With the mission to engage Ukrainian patients and their families as active and respected partners in research, the so-called **PFAB** (the Patient and Family Advisory Board) was created, as to ensure that the patients' and their family's viewpoints are integrated in research activities related to the SAFER Ukraine initiative.

The overall objective is to use the PFAB experience to create models and methodologies for patient and family engagement in research, with a specific focus on vulnerable populations.

The PFAB consists of parents of childhood cancer patients and patients, who participate in specific SAFER Ukraine related meetings, share their experiences and insights in order to improve pathways, and give regular feedback to study-related material.

In addition to the parent & patient representatives, 3 external advisors are active members of the PFAB:

- Anita Kienesberger (CCI Europe)
- Yuliya Nogovitsyna (Tabletochki Foundation)
- Dilan Graetz (St. Jude Global)



Ukrainian Childhood Cancer Emergency Fund

The Ukrainian Childhood Cancer Emergency Fund was created in 2022 by CCI Europe to support the Ukrainian childhood cancer community with the aim to allocate funds where needed, and especially for the following requests:

- Travelling: fleeing Ukraine, reuniting families, travelling back home
- Medical: pharmaceutical or medical supplies, drugs, cancer treatment (if not covered by the state’s health insurance)
- Housing: pay of rent, hotel, parents house for families of children with cancer from Ukraine (if not covered by local NGOs)
- Daily expenses: food, clothes, hygiene goods
- Translation costs
- Expenses related to funeral costs or repatriation to Ukraine
- Coordination helpline

The fund is also open for grant requests submitted by CCI-E members: <https://ccieurope.eu/funding-ukrainian-childhood-cancer-emergency-fund/>

Any grant request is evaluated by an independent Grant Advisory Board.

So far, the Ukrainian Childhood Cancer Emergency Fund has been sustaining mostly travels (evacuations, reunifications etc.), funeral and repatriation costs, and to cover the professional coordination and management of the mission.

SAFER Ukraine in numbers

In 2023, the SAFER Ukraine supported:

- 67 family reunifications
- 29 patient evacuations
- 19 death repatriations

In 2024, the SAFER Ukraine supported:

- 80 patient evacuations
- 12 death repatriations
- 2 family reunifications³

Of the above, the CCI Europe Ukraine Emergency Funds contributed to:

Patient Evacuations per country

	2023	2024
Italy	5	7
France	6	2
Germany	11	5
Switzerland	3	3

³ Data provided by St. Jude team leading SAFER Ukraine mission.

The Netherlands	3	2
TOTAL	28	19

Family Reunifications per country

	2023	2024
Italy	2	0
Switzerland	1	0
The Netherlands	1	0
France	1	0
UK	1	0
Belgium	1	0
Canada	2	0
TOTAL:	9	0

Repatriations to Ukraine of children and adolescents who died abroad

	2023	2024
	9	8
TOTAL	17	



Financial Overview

Donations

The Ukrainian Childhood Cancer Emergency Fund was established at the beginning of March 2022 as the first response to the start of the war.

This Emergency fund is composed of different donations from all over the world and the expenses are controlled by an independent advisory board to ensure full transparency and the most efficient management of the funds.

In 2022 CCI-E raised more than €262,000.- in donations from more than 300 different donors from around the world, including several CCI-E members and industry contributions⁴.

The funds are solely allocated to the SAFER Ukraine mission and to cover the professional coordination and management of the mission.

Reunifications and patient evacuations

Reunification costs consisted of travel expenses for family members from Poland (mostly) to the country where the patients have been evacuated. These are one-way tickets, generally flights, for all the family members requesting support.

Patient evacuation costs are also flights and include at least one family member travelling with the patient.

CCI-E also covered part or full costs for repatriations back to Ukraine.

The total expenses for these efforts were over €96,000.- in the years 2023 and 2024.

Administrative costs

Administrative costs covered financial fees such as transfer fees or PayPal commissions, web development costs for the resource page on CCI Europe's Website.

Additionally, costs covered professional staff hours in supporting family reunifications, repatriations and patient evacuations, as well as the management of the care package distribution, and continuous internal as well as external coordination between SAFER Ukraine partners and ongoing communication and dissemination work.

⁴ For more details, see the CCI Europe's Ukraine Report 2022 at: https://ccieurope.eu/wp-content/uploads/2023/04/SAFERUkraine_CCI-Europe-Report-2022.pdf



Final Remarks

In the light of the war in Ukraine, although not being a humanitarian organisation and with no prior experience in such conflicts, CCI Europe was and still is determined to find ways to navigate the challenges that this unprecedented crisis poses. It has now been three years since the war began, and while the conflict in Ukraine goes on, we continue our efforts and firm commitment to ensure that children with cancer receive the best possible care.

Three years ago, within CCI-E we mobilised our network of members across Europe to ensure that children with cancer from Ukraine and their families received the support they needed while undergoing treatment away from home. Today, CCI-E's role has expanded—in addition to that initial mission, we took the responsibility for handling the logistics and funding of patient evacuations, reunifications, and repatriations. This effort has come with a significant financial burden, which CCI-E has been able to bear thanks to the generosity of individuals, foundations, and our member organisations.

The SAFER Ukraine initiative has been and keeps being an extraordinary testament to the power of collaboration, resilience, and commitment. Its effectiveness can be attributed to many factors, including centralised coordination and strong pre-existing collaborations between hospitals, NGOs, healthcare professionals, institutional and political bodies.

During these years, one key lesson learned is that it cannot exist a universal solution while supporting families affected by cancer. Instead, the support must be customised based on factors such as culture, national healthcare systems, policies, and organisational structures. At the same time, one of the most striking takeaways has been the critical role of psychosocial care for both patients and their families, a role which becomes even more vital when these patients are experiencing in addition to the difficult cancer pathway, the brutal effects of war.

Above all, SAFER Ukraine reaffirmed the strength of the CCI-E community. The bonds between CCI-E and our member organisations grew stronger, with members demonstrating exceptional dedication to supporting children with cancer and their families. This crisis also fostered new collaborations, bringing together members, committees, and staff. Most importantly, this initiative is proof of CCI-E's commitment to remaining true to our mission: ensuring that children across Europe receive the best possible care, in times of peace but especially in times of crisis.



ANNEX A

Financial Report

Donations	2024	2023	2022
Website donations	€28.00	€56.00	€30,330.68
Bank transfer donations	€0.00	€5,000.00	€231,808.37
TOTAL	€28.00	€5,056.00	€262,139.05
Expenses	2024	2023	2022
Family reunifications and repatriations / funeral costs	€36,935.43	€59,511.61	€11,323.71
Administrative Expenses			
Transfer Fees	€3.01	€51.13	€1,401.45
Travel and accommodation costs for Safer Ukraine expert presentations and meetings			€1,059.02
Project Management	€21,000.00	€30,721.11	€46,340.03
Other costs (website development)		€676.92	
TOTAL	€57,938.44	€90,960.77	€60,111.21
Balance end of year	€58,199.63	€116,110.07	€202,014.84

Last Update: 31.12.2024

Help us continue to support children with cancer in Ukraine!

Please consider donating to the [Ukrainian Childhood Cancer Emergency Fund](#).

Here is how you can do it:

- **Online through PayPal or Card**
Find the donation link [here](#).
Please indicate the keyword “Ukraine”
- **Directly through bank transfer:**
Name account holder: Childhood Cancer International – Europe
Keyword: Ukraine (indicating the keyword helps us allocate your donation)
Bank: Erste Bank
IBAN: AT51 2011 1843 5194 4400
BIC: GIBAATWWXXX

In both cases, please always indicate the word “Ukraine”. This will help us allocate your donation. If you have trouble donating or indicating the keyword, please write to us directly at ukraine@ccieurope.eu.



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