



STATEMENT by COMMISSIONER MARIYA GABRIEL
for
the International conference in Lublin,
Post War Innovative Transformation of Ukraine

Brussels, 1st December 2022

*Dear Chair,
Dear speakers,
Dear ladies and gentlemen,*

Today this Conference on “Post-War Innovative Transformation of Ukraine”, has a special focus on women – the subject that resonates ever stronger in the context of massive displacement of Ukrainian people and the many women who had to flee their country in order to secure the physical safety and wellbeing of their children and elderly.

I would like to congratulate the Perspektywy Education Foundation, the Ukrainian Talent Foundation and the Lublin City Office for hosting this timely and important event.

Ukraine’s better future and effective reconstruction depends on strong and skilled women and their inclusion in the key economic sectors, especially those that drive the green and digital transitions.

The “Incubating Freedom for Ukraine” initiative sends an important message: despite the war and its setbacks on gender equality, Ukrainian women have a huge potential to contribute to Ukraine’s recovery. Indeed, training girls and women in Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) can create new opportunities for economic growth and ensure better inclusion of women in the labour market.

Unfortunately, even in the EU, in the tech and ICT sectors, women remain largely under-represented and continue to face hurdles of gender bias and stereotypes. According to our latest She Figures study, women represent less than a quarter of doctoral graduates in ICT. Less than a third of self-employed professionals in ICT, Science, and Engineering are women. They are even less represented among the innovators with only 11 out of 100 patent applications coming from women between 2015 and 2018.

Such situation does not correspond to the education results, which illustrates a huge untapped intellectual potential amongst the female population and I am determined to change it through concrete actions.

I have launched initiatives to boost girls and women’s talents throughout my portfolio, from education to culture, and from research to the innovation field, making the most of the support programmes, Erasmus+, Creative Europe and Horizon Europe.

For Ukraine specifically, the EIC has launched a €20 million dedicated action targeting the Ukrainian deep-tech community. It seeks to prepare at least 200 Ukrainian start-ups ahead of their applications to the EIC Accelerator and specifically encourages applications from women-led companies and companies working on innovative solutions for Ukraine's recovery efforts.

And we are building up our efforts. In July, I have published my New European Innovation Agenda. It includes improved data collection actions on the gender innovation gap, a new Women Entrepreneurship and Leadership Scheme, a Deep Tech Talent Initiative, and Women2Invest that will introduce recent STEM graduates to the Venture Capital world.

Let me conclude by stressing that the "Incubating Freedom for Ukraine" initiative is an important step in the right direction to bridge the tech gender gap, and encourage women to fulfil their true potential.

Sustainable post-war reconstruction will depend on brain gain, talent retention and empowering the Ukrainian workforce. Women and girls must take centre stage in this process.

Providing upskilling opportunities to Ukrainian women is vital to ensure their active participation in the post-war reconstruction of Ukraine as a modern, digital, inclusive and knowledge-based society. The EU is firmly committed to helping through funding, fellowships, networking and mentorship aiming to grow their ventures and improve their competitiveness on a global scale.

Allow me to extend my best wishes to the future participants in the "Incubating Freedom" programme.

Thank you.

Mariya Gabriel

*EU Commissioner for Innovation,
Research, Culture, Education and Youth*