



To: Members of the World Customs Organization (WCO)

Vienna/Brussels, 21 March 2022

Dear Director General,

Being deeply concerned over the humanitarian crisis in Ukraine and its neighbouring countries and given the projections¹ that 18 million people will be affected, including up to 6.7 million people projected to be newly internally displaced, and reports² of 3 million people having fled Ukraine, we are writing to draw your attention to the need for urgent action to ensure unimpeded access to medications, including medicines containing internationally controlled substances. .

On 1 March 2022, the International Narcotics Control Board (INCB) sent a circular letter to all Governments, reminding them that in acute emergencies it is possible to apply simplified control procedures for the export, transportation and provision of medicines containing internationally controlled substances.

Adopting simplified control measures during emergency situations means that authorities may permit the export of medicines containing controlled substances to affected areas, in the absence of the corresponding import authorizations and/or estimates.

It is therefore important for Customs officers to be aware that emergency authorizations/export authorizations for internationally controlled substances would suffice during such acute emergencies and that they should expedite the delivery of medicines containing internationally controlled substances, while exercising necessary diligence and control on the cross-border movement of these goods.

Further information on this subject is available in the [Guidelines for the International Provision of Controlled Medicines for Emergency Medical Care](#) and [Lessons from countries and humanitarian aid organizations in facilitating the Timely Supply of Controlled Substances during Emergency Situations](#).

The INCB and the WCO will continue to closely monitor the situation and stand ready to provide further clarification on the matter.

Jagjit Pavadia
INCB President

Kunio Mikuriya
WCO Secretary General

¹ [2022-03-15_Ukraine_Humanitarian_Impact_SitRep.pdf \(reliefweb.int\)](#)

² [WHO/Europe | Media centre - WHO is working day and night to keep medical supply chains open and preserve Ukraine's health system](#)