



Activities of The United Methodist Church in the Central Conference of Central and Southern Europe with/for Refugees from Ukraine *Summary of April 28, 2022*



Developments of the past days

Volunteers and Employees

Jana Křížová, pastor and coordinator of the work with Ukrainian refugees in **Czechia**, shared that the work of committed volunteers is still very important – reality has proved, however, that in a longer-term perspective, the service of volunteers has to be complemented by the work of employed people who can commit more time in the various activities. The three United Methodist facilities accommodating a considerable number of refugees from Ukraine, therefore, have employed housekeepers (part-time, for an initial period of three months). Additionally, some students and other young people also help there.

Rares Calugar, district superintendent of the UMC in **Romania**, added another example: In order to continue bringing humanitarian aid to Ukraine week by week, a professional Ukrainian driver living in Romania was employed. (Because of the fact that he is older than 60 years, he will not face difficulties to leave Ukraine after having delivered the relief goods.)

Ctirad Hrubý, pastor of Brno UMC in **Czechia** reported that they, as part of an ecumenical project, financially supported the employment of a Ukrainian missionary worker working among Ukrainian refugees and taking care of their spiritual needs.

Language Issues

Sarah Putman, coordinator of the work with Ukrainian refugees in **Romania** pointed to a special «milestone»: while the worship services in Cluj-Napoca had been translated into English since the arrival of the first refugees, the Easter worship service on April 24, 2022 (→ Easter according to the Julian calendar) was the first service that was translated into Ukrainian so that the guests could hear the Easter message in their native language.

Szarlota Kaminska, coordinator of the work with Ukrainian refugees in **Poland**, wrote in a report about the Polish lessons for refugees that are offered by the UMC in Ełk, Kielce, Chodzież, and Grudziądz (in Grudziądz alone, there are 70 students). She added that people of Grudziądz UMC now also offer Ukrainian lessons for Polish people – which is an interesting example of not putting the "linguistic burden" on the shoulders of the Ukrainian refugees only, but to take steps towards each other in terms of language.

Humanitarian Aid Delivery

Several coordinators of the work with/for refugees reported about humanitarian aid deliveries from their respective countries to Ukraine that either were organized in the past few days or that are planned for the next few days: from **Czechia**, **Poland**, **Slovakia**, and **Romania**, for instance. Some of these goods were brought to Ukraine with relatively small vehicles (i.e. mini-buses or mini-vans), but there was also one big shipment of medicines and medical equipment from **Romania** to a hospital in Ukraine. Plans are currently developed to send another big shipment to this hospital and to positively respond to the plea for help of the persons in charge of this hospital

Refugees Returning to Ukraine

According to **Jana Křížova** from **Czechia**, more and more people are returning to Ukraine – also some of the people who had planned to stay in Czechia longer-term. They do not only want to take care of their houses and gardens (where they have not been destroyed), but they also say: "We can do more there for people who left their homes in the eastern part of the country." The hosts honor this decision and, in some cases, the local churches financially supported these returning Ukrainians – also with the aim to sustain the ministry with internally displaced people now living in the western part of the country.

Every Person Matters

In a meditation, **Jana Křížova** from **Czechia**, shared both about God's call and about human doubts: "When we care for one family, one mother and child, it seems like a drop in the ocean of what needs to be done. We feel helpless in the face of the immense suffering of so many people. However, every drop matters. One person matters.

There are those for whom thousands of lives are worthless. I believe that every single life is worth something to the LORD; and that it pleases God when we, like Him, care for every single person. It makes sense."

In this sense, the ministries with and for refugees will continue – in Poland, Czechia, Slovakia, Hungary, Romania, and Bulgaria.

April 28, 2022 / Urs Schweizer
based on reports from CZ, PL, RO, and SK