

Kraków helps Ukraine - summary of five weeks of activities

2022-04-29

Kraków has been a place to live for many Ukrainians for years. We estimated that about 60-70 thousand Ukrainian citizens live here. In the last six weeks, 150,000 people escaping from the war have arrived in Kraków. To host refugees is a huge effort and challenge for the city. Since the beginning of the war municipal institutions, residents and volunteers have been involved in the aid to people of Ukraine. Also international aid comes to Kraków, and it is either delivered to refugees living in our city or sent via Kraków to cities and institutions in Ukraine.

Refugee registration desk in TAURON Arena

So far 7,500 people have been served at the Point in TAURON Arena. Currently there are 22 registration desks, it is planned to increase the number to 30 be 30 of them (operated with the help of government employees). The Arena is also accepting applications for 300+ programme (about 5,600 applications have already been submitted).

Nearly 750 tons of supplies

On the day after the outbreak of war, the local government launched a collection of goods from the citizens and businesses of Kraków, thanks to which many needy towns in Ukraine have already received aid. Krakow sent there 50 trucks, 53 lorries, 1 ambulance and 5 city buses with gifts. The total amount of the donated goods is nearly 750 tons, and the transferred buses will be used for public transport in Lviv. The city has also opened a special account for donations in aid of Ukraine (since the launch of the accounts - about 3 weeks ago - about 53 thousand PLN and 400 euros have been collected).

In response to the Mayor of Kraków's appeal for aid for Ukraine distributed all over the world, our partner and cooperating cities have transferred financial donations and goods required for people of Ukraine. We are receiving shipments of medicines, medical equipment, foodstuffs, as well as generators. The support has already been provided and there are still new deliveries reaching Kraków, and are transferring to Ukrainian cities. Our partners cities also declare to accept refugees.

Help from partner and cooperating cities:

- Nuremberg - a shipment of medicines, hygiene products and medical equipment for hospitals has been delivered to Kraków. The gifts have already been transported to two hospitals in Ukraine (in Kiev and Bila Tserkva). Nuremberg also made a cash donation of 10,000 euros.
- Leipzig - sent a transport of specialized medicines to a warehouse in Kraków - it has already reached Ukrainian hospitals. More such transports are planned.
- Frankfurt am Main - organized a charity concert of Ukrainian and Russian pianist. During the concert 14 485 00 Euro were collected. These funds will be transferred to the account of the S. Zeromski hospital, which will buy medicines to be sent to Ukraine. Moreover, a shipment of goods for Ukraine (worth 100,000 euro) arrived in Kraków, including specialist medicines which will be transported to the hospital in Rivne on Monday.



- Orleans - 4 lorries were sent to Kraków with the humanitarian aid: the first one was unloaded in Kraków and the content left for the needy here, the content of the second one was reloaded and sent to Ukraine. The other two lorries were sent directly to Przemyśl.
- Lille - 2 lorries with medicines sent to Kraków and Caritas
- Trondheim - two medium sized generators arrived in Kraków and were forwarded to Lviv
- Innsbruck - a cash donation of EURO 40,000 has been declared for the S. Żeromski City Hospital.
- Vienna, Bratislava, Pécs and Olomouc in the Czech Republic - are organizing help on their own.

Declarations of reception of refugees from Ukraine

- Cannes - the delegation which visited Kraków on 9th March declares to accept refugees
- Orléans - the mayor of Orléans has declared readiness to accept 140 refugees. On 16 March, a bus with 48 refugees left Kraków for Orléans, second bus from Orlean transported people of Ukraine from Przemyśl.
- Innsbruck - has declared to accept 100 refugees.
- Solothurn - offered accommodation for 50 refugees. 1st April the bus with 46 Ukrainians left for Switzerland.
- Edinburgh - is preparing an offer to receive guests. A collection of sandbags to protect Ukrainian monuments has been sent to Kiev, via Kraków.

There are also offers from private persons to take in and transport Ukrainian refugees abroad.

However, organizing transport for refugees requires a systematic solution. We ask foreign cities making such offers to clarify the conditions of stay for refugees. We are working on an effective way of notifying and recruiting refugees who would like to leave foreign cities.

We are focusing on offers sent by city offices. For the sake of refugees' safety, offers from private individuals require verification of their credibility. The Municipality of Kraków does not have appropriate tools and competencies.

Shelter for several thousand people

Since the beginning of the war, the city has provided shelter in hotels, guesthouses, hostels and large halls, e.g. on Kolna Street, in the buildings at Śniadeckich Street, on Kopernika 21 Street. The Plaza and Tesco (former shopping centres) have been adopted as living accommodation. There are currently 1,681 people in these locations.

Since the beginning of 2020 we have also rented the Ibis Hotel, which was originally used as a quarantine facility. Recently, there have been very few people stayed there it, so the city decided to use hotel rooms by mothers with children from Ukraine.

The city has also opened a special place for mothers with children in Galeria Krakowska – shopping centre close to the Railway Station, where children can comfortably and quietly be dressed, fed and have a rest with their families.

At Kraków Główny Railway Station, a reception desk is operated 24/7 by the staff and Ukrainian-speaking employees. The work of the reception desk is supported by volunteers. Information leaflets in Ukrainian available at the station are a great help for visitors.

Funding to support refugees

Up to now, the city has committed over 20.5 million PLN to helping refugees. These funds have been used to organise accommodation for Ukrainian citizens, a childcare centre in TAURON Arena, transport costs provided by Municipal Transport Company (public transport is free of charge for refugees in Kraków), maintenance of cleanliness and distribution of goods by Municipal Cleaning Company, operation of a reception point at the railway station, food and the payment of cash benefits. Within the framework of the currently introduced national law on assistance to refugees residing in Poland, the city already receives reimbursement for the costs incurred for the Ukrainian citizens.

Schools and kindergartens receive children and pupils from Ukraine

Since the outbreak of the war, 5,700 children and young people have already been entered in Kraków's schools and kindergartens.

There are about 8,000 vacancies in primary schools and 2,000 in secondary schools. The city also has over 400 places in kindergartens. This offer will be bigger, as the Minister of Education has signed a regulation increasing the limits of places both in kindergartens and in classes I-III of primary school. This will allow the city to offer 2 thousand additional places in primary schools (grades I-III) and almost 1 thousand additional places in kindergartens. The city has given schools the green light to employ additional multicultural assistants and people to help teachers with children who do not speak Polish. There are 82 schools in Kraków with 140 Ukrainian-speaking teachers and almost 300 teachers qualified to teach Polish as a foreign language. This potential is invaluable also when it comes to linguistic training of Ukrainian teachers. The Municipality of Kraków has already received 120 applications from Ukrainian female teachers interested in working in Kraków schools and kindergartens. The city is also implementing a series of training courses to prepare teachers, pedagogues, psychologists and educators to work with children who have suffered the trauma of war. However, currently it is not possible to create preparatory wards in special schools. According to the law, preparatory classes can function only in mainstream schools. This is why Mayor of Kraków has applied to the Ministry of Education and Science to change the law in this respect. There are also children with disabilities among the newcomers from Ukraine, and it is difficult to imagine them being able to function in, for example, 30-person mainstream classes. Launching preparatory units in special schools would facilitate the diagnosis of children, observation



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and provision of appropriate support for them.