



Activities of The United Methodist Church in the Central Conference of Central and Southern Europe with/for Refugees from Ukraine *Summary of May 13, 2022*

Have we become accustomed to this war?

During the most recent ZOOM meeting of the coordinators of the work with/for Ukrainian refugees in the countries directly or indirectly neighboring to Ukraine – for the first time with a representative of the UMC in Ukraine in order to enhance the coordination – several participants mentioned that the situation in their country is stable and that there are no major new developments in regard to the work with/for refugees from Ukraine. There are still new people crossing the border and requiring assistance, but their number has decreased. Some refugees return to Ukraine, others move on to Western Europe. Aid has been structured, and the focus of a good number of activities has shifted from emergency assistance to longer-term support. This does, however, not mean that the responsible people of the UMC would now simply turn to other tasks. Or that the war in Ukraine would not still cause terrible suffering. Even if "the situation is stable" in the countries directly or indirectly neighboring to Ukraine, many people in these countries follow the advice of Paul in his first letter to the Thessalonians and pray (for peace) without ceasing. And they let their service go hand in hand with their prayers. Thank you for standing at the side of the suffering people in Ukraine, of the internally displaced, of the refugees that went to other countries – and of all helpers who, with an amazing commitment, do their best to meet the material, emotional and spiritual needs of those who lost so much and whose lives have been turned upside down.

Activities with and for Refugees from Ukraine

Superintendent **László Khaled** said in regard refugees camp in Debrecen (in the east of **Hungary**), to whom regular contacts have been established: "They do not just want to survive." Rather than, they would like to find a job and an apartment to rent in order to stand on their own feet. And some of them are interested in the church. They would like to have met their spiritual needs, as well, and they would like to experience fellowship. This is true for other places and countries, as well. And that's why many activities have this longer-term focus.

- According to pastor **Ivan Morunov**, a new center for Ukrainian children, run by the Methodist Church in Veliko Tarnovo (**Bulgaria**), was opened on May 9, 2022.
- Currently, plans are developed to accommodate children from a Ukrainian orphanage as well as some adults in Budakeszi (**Hungary**), a place near Budapest with a local UMC church and a home for elderly people.
- The plans to prepare the «House of Hope» in Przemyśl (**Poland**) for Ukrainian refugees and – at a later time – for other people in need of help of this kind are advancing.
- The UMC in **Romania** sent another two consignments to Ukraine – one to Transcarpathia in the west of the country, another one with medicines and medical equipment to a hospital in the south of the country.
- Some churches in **Poland** and **Hungary** also continue to send humanitarian aid to Ukraine – food, shoes, clothes, hygienic products, etc. They are in touch with Ukrainian friends to make sure that these consignments really reach those in need – be it in the west of the country or further to the east – and that the goods that are sent meet the real needs of people in Ukraine.
- Members of the Russian-speaking UMC in Prague (**Czechia**) act similarly, and they are currently exploring sending a consignment to the south of Ukraine.