

## Documentation

### Netcoops – Fortbildungen für Asylverfahrensbeteiligte

„Six months after: the Ukraine war and the situation of refugees in Europe –review and outlook“



Online- Conference: 23<sup>rd</sup>-24<sup>th</sup> 2022



Europäische Union



## IBB meeting on Ukraine's Independence Day

### Europe-wide wave of readiness to help refugees - and many deficits in health care provision

On the anniversary of Ukraine's independence, Wednesday 24 August 2022, the two-day online conference "Six month after - the Ukraine war and the situation of refugees in Europe" ended with an urgent appeal: "The commitment cannot only come "from below and grassroots ", but it urgently needs structural support and professionalization." The participants noted that aid for refugees is largely provided by private initiatives. Many supporters, they concluded, are at the edge of their endurance. However, many refugees continue to need medical and psychosocial support, especially for the upcoming winter.

It is estimated that one third of the Ukrainian population has been displaced. According to the European Parliament, more than 5.6 million refugees have been registered across Europe as of 6 July 2022. Around 90 per cent of them are women and children. "Some of the refugees are in an extremely precarious situation," explained Hildegard Azimi-Boedecker, head of the International Career and Migration Department at the Internationales Bildungs- und Begegnungswerk e. V. in Dortmund. Only few information does exist about how people with disabilities, injuries and mental illnesses are doing because most host countries have refrained from explicitly registering vulnerability. "With our conference, we want to take a look across the borders and make a contribution so that bad practice is not repeated and good practice finds imitation."

#### Reports from seven countries

IBB e.V. invited speakers from Ukraine, Slovakia, the Czech Republic, Romania, Moldova, Italy and Germany to a cooperation meeting at the virtual conference table as part of the netcoops project. Among the 50 listeners were not only full-time and voluntary workers from social services, but also many people involved in the asylum procedure from public authorities, who also wanted to find out about cross-border needs for help.

Taras Schewtschenko,  
(1814-1861)

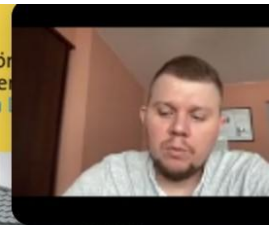
- Entscheidender Impulsgeber für die frühe ukrainische Nationalbewegung im Russischen Reich
- Zentral für die Formierung einer ukrainischen Literatursprache
- 1847 für zehn Jahre nach Zentralasien verbannt
- 1859 Rückkehr nach St. Petersburg
- Verkörperung des Schicksals des ukrainischen



Dr Franziska Davies from the Ludwig Maximilian University in Munich opened the two-day event with a historical summary. She compactly spanned the centuries from the settlement of Kievan Rus to independence from the Soviet Union in 1991 and the occupation of Crimea in 2014. "The war didn't just start in 2022," she noted. The Ukrainians' quest for independence has a

centuries-old tradition, she said. She particularly emphasized the different Russian, Ukrainian and Western perspectives on history. The Ukrainian Cossacks, for example, regarded the Treaty of Pereyaslav in 1654 as an alliance with the Russian Tsar on an equal footing - from the Russian perspective, however, it meant complete subjugation. A national movement had already emerged in the 19th century through the impulses of the poet Taras Shevchenko (1814 to 1861).

## Save House by FGQ



The NGO "GARUA", in which almost all employees are themselves in wheelchairs, cares for refugees with disabilities. Photo: Screenshot from the Zoom conference.

Vitalii Pcholkin from the NGO "GARUA" from Kiev then reported on the current desperate situation under Russian attacks. The attacks repeatedly hit civilians, most recently 17 deaf people in Kharkiv. Those who can are leaving the embattled areas. "We cannot stop the flow of people!" says Pcholkin.

The NGO's relief teams, where almost all staff are wheelchair-bound themselves due to spinal back injuries or disabilities, can be reached through a call centre that organizes evacuations, humanitarian aid and psychological support. Public buildings are being prepared to accommodate the IDPs, and recently modular and mobile cities have been built. But all this is only a drop in the ocean: medical care is difficult overall and this is especially true for people with disabilities. There is a lack of aids such as wheelchairs, special medication for acute or chronic illnesses, as well as access to rehabilitation services and medical assistance systems. People with disabilities had to be evacuated from several facilities - to makeshift accommodation. "We are really receiving a lot of relief supplies," he emphasized gratefully. "But the need is simply much greater, also for exchanges of professionals and training by professional colleagues in other European countries!" Accommodation in rehabilitation facilities abroad is also urgently needed.

Vira Topikha from the internationally working NGO "Hope" supports the volunteers on site. She added that the NGO has opened four branches in Ukraine in a very short time and is already actively supporting 89 health facilities. Medical equipment worth 4.7 million US dollars has been delivered. Four primary care

ambulances have already been able to provide mobile medical care to 4886 people and offer around 292 psychological sessions.

### Project HOPE's Ukraine Response

Opened four offices in Dnipro, Kyiv, Lviv, and Odessa, Ukraine

Partnered with 10 local organizations to support our emergency response



The NGO "Hope" has established four bases in Ukraine in Lviv, Kyiv, Dnipro and Odessa. Photo: Screenshot

One challenge is often to provide clean drinking water for the refugees and medical care. People from rural areas often do not manage to reach a hospital because roads are destroyed and transporting people lying down is not possible. "Hope" also trains aid workers for medical and psychological care,

including at partner organizations in Romania and Moldova that support refugees. "The burden is carried by the women! It's really hard to watch sometimes what the women are going through, but they are incredibly strong and believe in Ukraine's victory." However, it is with great concern that they look forward to the coming winter. "We will need warm clothes and blankets," Vira Topikha said. And, "Help is especially needed by the people in the countryside."

In the next panel, Timea Stranska, Maria Pislaraş and Djavid Paknehad reported on the psychosocial situation of refugees in Ukraine, Moldova and Slovakia.



## Our programs and activities



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Humanitarian Aid

Barma  
Čečensko  
Česko  
Filipíny  
Grécko  
Gruzínsko  
Haiti  
Indonézia  
Irán  
Kosovo  
Libanon  
Moldavsko  
Nepál  
Pakistan  
Slovensko  
Srbsko  
Sri Lanka  
Ukrajina



Global Education



Film Festival One World



Social Integration Programs

The NGO "People in Need" has already gained a lot of experience in accompanying refugees. Photo: Screenshot from the presentation.

Timea Stranska from the NGO "People in need", based in Slovakia and Ukraine, described how her organization had quickly sent volunteers to the border after the surprise invasion. At first, about 1,000 refugees arrived per day, but soon there were 15,000 per day, mostly women with children. At the border, it was also noticeable that women and children were being targeted, apparently with exploitative or abusive intentions. "People in need" had worked to ensure that existing accommodation for pupils and students could be used temporarily. Challenging: organising shelter and food in such large numbers in a very short time, providing education for the children and medical and psychosocial care. "From the beginning, we brought in our experience from refugee aid and were able to use our cooperation in all four regions of Slovakia," described Timea Stranska, because integration should be the goal. After some time, however, hate campaigns in the social media became public. There were also individual reports of sexualised violence. "We would like to set up a hotline."

According to official data, there are currently 607,200 refugees from Ukraine in Slovakia, around 85,000 of them with temporary refugee status. It is unclear whether this includes all refugees, whether there were returnees, where they found accommodation and where vulnerable groups with special support needs are located. Given the fact that many people in Slovakia are also accommodated privately this is particularly important. However, temporary protection expires on 1 September. Among those affected, fear is already spreading about what will happen after that. And the NGO wonders whether refugees will again seek refuge in Slovakia at the beginning of winter.



## The crisis at the border



Data source: UNHCR operational data portal Country - Republic of Moldova (unhcr.org)



Source: Moldova's General Inspectorate of Border Police, Palanca border crossing points



Source: Moldova's General Inspectorate of Border Police, Tudora border crossing points



Source: Moldova's General Inspectorate of Border Police, Palanca border crossing points

Maria Pislaraș reported on the situation on the border between Moldova and Ukraine in her presentation. Photo: Screenshot from the Zoom conference.

Djavid Paknehad and Maria Pislaraș from the Charity Center for Refugees, founded in 1999, described similar stories from Moldova: At the beginning of the war, there were 20-kilometre-long queues at the border crossings. On 18 August 2022, (August 18<sup>th</sup> ?) the country of three million inhabitants had taken in 573,257 refugees from the neighboring country, about half of them adults and eight per cent third-country nationals. The majority is accommodated privately and receives the equivalent of about 110 euros in cash. Yet Moldova itself is struggling with an economic crisis and 30 per cent inflation. Energy prices are unpredictable, Maria Pislaraș said. Against this background, access to the labor market is rather difficult. The private hosts themselves were under the greatest pressure. Around 8,700 people have already applied for asylum in order to extend their stay in Moldova. "Moldova wants to offer temporary protection to the refugees," said Djavid Paknehad. Therefore, he said, there are currently plans to accept children in the day-care centers in order to enable the women to work. However, a trend towards return of about 180,000 people is also observed in Moldova.

The Charity Centre for Refugees supports refugees and their private hosts financially, develops educational modules for children and adults and offers psycho-social aid - supported from Germany by Help e.V. – so called "help for self-help". The Bonn-based NGO "Help" has already been active in Ukraine since October 2021 and in Moldova since March 2022. The Great Uncertainty, Simone Walter from the partner organization Help reported, is the approaching winter season lasting around half a year.

In the afternoon, Marion Lich from the Office for Return Assistance in the City of Munich and Steve Borrmann from the Berlin State Office for Refugees (LAF) gave an insight into the situation in Germany. The arrival centre in Berlin is designed for 120 to 150 people per day, Steve Borrmann described. In March 2022, however, around 2,500 people would arrive daily. It was not only the accommodation that was difficult, but especially the medical care with medicines and aids, when current laboratory values, doctors and also possible cost units were missing. The LAF was able to engage four DRK paramedics at short notice and use the support of more than 100 volunteers from the health sector.

Marion Lich explained that there has hardly been any request for assistance in returning to Ukraine. However, third-country nationals from Ukraine who have fled to Germany have to think about their residence permit and possibly even apply for asylum, because the Ukraine Transitional Residence Regulation ends on 31 August and with it the equal treatment of third-country nationals from Ukraine. Third-country nationals are now faced with the question of whether to return to their country of origin. In practice, these are very individual cases, such as that of a couple from Morocco who live in a non-tolerated relationship in their home country, or the student from India who would actually have to return to Ukraine for a final examination.

The consequences of the respective residence status for the refugees from Ukraine and concrete problems were then discussed in parallel virtual working groups. The participants reported about chronically ill people from Ukraine who are incorrectly rejected at the doctor's with the indication that they could only be considered after a waiting period. In individual cases, access to medical aids was blocked by bureaucratic barriers such as missing identification papers.



In some cases, women receive dubious offers of help at the points of arrival near the border in Poland, making them suspicious.

On the second day, the conference participants dealt with the special problems of vulnerable groups in risk situations: Andrea Hitzke from the Dortmund Midnight Mission reported in her input on special risks for women from Eastern Europe. Often, at first glance, unsuspecting jobs are offered in private households, gastronomy, nail salons or as 24-hour care, exploiting those in need of protection as cheap workforce at hourly wages of one or two euros without any health insurance. In some cases, there is a threat of forced prostitution. "We assume that the cases are yet to become

known," said Andrea Hitzke. A particular problem is that most of the refugees are taken in privately.

Possible human rights violations thus elude social

control. "There have already been individual reports of sexualized violence against women, especially by providers of private accommodation," she described. In response, the Mitternachtsmission has produced information material in Russian and Ukrainian, which can be downloaded from the website. There is also a hotline for those affected. Sophia Wirsching from the "Bundesweiter Koordinierungskreis gegen Menschenhandel e.V. (KoK)" added that supporting trafficked persons is not charity work, but human rights-based lobbying.





In the second largest city in the Czech Republic, in Brno, the fire department has set up three tents, four site toilets, a water tank and a container. The Roma who are housed here, have to sleep on pallets. Brno is the first major stop for war refugees entering via Hungary. Photo: Roma Centre Göttingen e.V..

Sandra Goerend, Ivana Farahani-Čonková and Kenan Emini from the Roma Centre e.V. Göttingen gave a harrowing report on the situation of the Ukrainian Roma: Expressions of solidarity for the refugees from Ukraine explicitly excluded Roma in many countries. In some cases, the authorities systematically refused to provide assistance.

There had been violence against Roma in some places. The team reported on a research trip to Poland and the Czech Republic and showed photos of obvious



In a Roma shelter in the Czech Republic. Photos: Roma Centre e.V.

Diskurse um „echte“ und „unechte“ Geflüchtete  
Discourses around "real" and "fake" refugees

Stereotyp „Diebe“  
→ Hate Speech  
→ keine Unterstütz

Stereotype „thieves“  
→ hate speech  
→ no support

discrimination. Roma were tied to poles with parcel tape in order to pillory them as thieves.

Accommodation for Roma was sometimes in a pitiful condition in the immediate vicinity of building sites and scrap yards, and urgently needed health care was denied.



A look inside the tents. Instead of beds, there are pallets. Photo: Roma Centre e.V.

The complete reports on the research trips of Roma Centre e.V. can be found here:

<https://www.roma-center.de/gefluchtete-roma-aus-der-ukraine-in-tschechien/>

<https://www.roma-center.de/gefluchtete-roma-aus-der-ukraine-in-polen-ein-reisebericht-des-roma-centers/>

After another working group phase, Hildegard Azimi-Boedecker and Kirsten Ben Haddou gave an overview of how refugees are generally treated in other European countries. Here, the asylum policy for non-Ukrainians is clearly moving more and more in the direction of foreclose and rejection. Denmark and England are already arguing for reception camps with preliminary decision-making powers in non-EU countries such as Serbia or on the African continent. In the meantime, the situation on the Greek islands has eased slightly due to the relocation of refugees to the mainland. Nevertheless, the humanitarian and hygienic conditions in the camps are still worrying. The length of stay is often several years and illegal pushbacks back to Turkey and especially to the Serbian-Croatian-Bosnian border are confirmed by human rights organizations.

Finally, Enza Papa, asylum and migration expert from Rome, outlined the situation in Italy. Her monitoring showed that up to July, around 150,000 refugees from Ukraine had been received, including an unknown number of unaccompanied minors. In Italy, too, the existing Ukrainian communities in the large cities of Milan, Bologna and Rome provided particular support. The majority of the refugees in Italy also found private accommodation, often with relatives or in a church environment. Italy, a classic emigration country, has only had experience with immigration, mostly of refugees, for about 20 years. The various reception and integration programs also bear the hallmarks of political tendencies such as those of the Salvini government at the time.

In an emergency program, 16,000 new places were finally created in reception centers this year, half of which are to be used primarily for Ukrainian immigrants and - in contrast to other European countries - for refugees from Afghanistan who have arrived in Italy and for whom there are usually no special regulations in other EU countries.



Churches and non-governmental organizations that take care of the integration of war refugees receive a subsidy of 33 euros per person. With this, the responsibility for care and support has been transferred to civil society. "We are talking about mothers with small children who have lost everything and have nightmares at night that deprive them of sleep," Enza Papa clarified. "And psychosocial care is supposed to be provided by volunteers only?"

Private involvement is diverse, helpful and important. However, it must be supported by government agencies in order to really offer the refugees substantial help in their difficult situation. The conference managers added that this applies to all countries in Europe that take in refugees temporarily or permanently. At the end, the participants expressed their gratitude for the opportunity to exchange views on the current problems and for deeper insights into the country situation and the situation of the too often forgotten vulnerable social groups.



Europäische Union



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